

# INSECURITY

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*Tax Reform Bill:*

## How Tinubu Tumbles



**Making Peace in Kaduna**

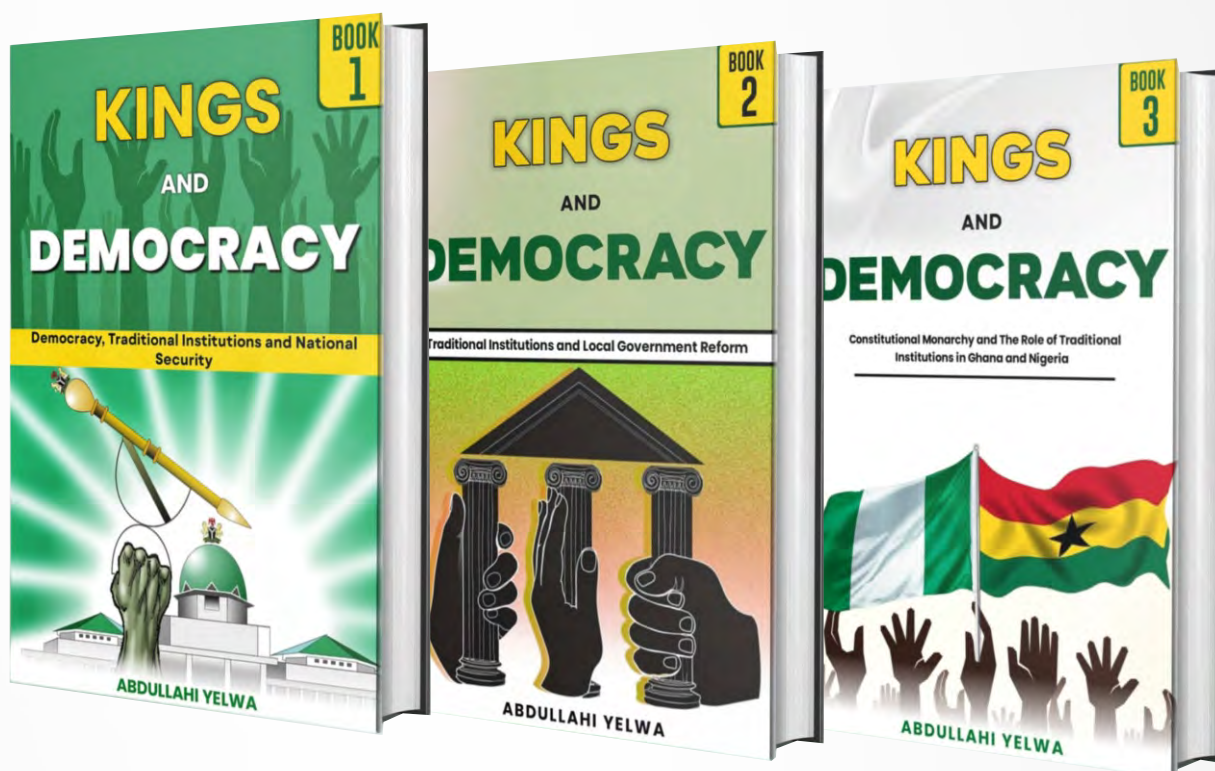
**LAKURAWA**  
ISLAMINIST TERRORISTS  
*in the Land of*  
**Bn Fodio**

Bon Apeti'  
**WHY TINUBU**  
**VISITED FRANCE**



**YAWURI**  
**RIGATA**  
**2025**

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  - Be a leading source for accurate information on security both at home and around the world.
- These constitute the core of the mission and vision of Insecurity Magazine.

## INSIDE INSECURITY

Three issues have occupied the attention of the Nigerian media in the past few weeks. There was the sudden discovery of the deadly Islamist group called the Lakurawa who according to reports have invaded some Nigerian communities in Kebbi and Sokoto states. While the nation's security ecosystem were mobilizing to confront the group, reports surfaced that the group had killed 15 people in Argungu Emirate.

The second was the state visit of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to France, a nation sacked and disgraced by our neighbours. The suddenness of the visit and the sense of endearment and comradeship exhibited by President Tinubu and President Macron have raised questions about the visit.

Inarguably, the biggest controversy was the Tax Reform Bill presented to the National Assembly by the President. The polarization it had brought about between the North and South has been the most continuous since the President came to power.

Who are the Lakurawas and what threat do they pose to our national security?

Where are they now?

Is the sudden rapprochement between Tinubu and Macron a mere infatuation between two leaders, or a sign of bigger things to come between Nigeria and France?

How will the controversy over the Tax Reform Bill be resolved, or will the baby be thrown with the bath water?

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# Editorial

## Who Is Bullying Who? Tax Bill Conundrum.



Senate President Godswill Akpabio has suddenly discovered his voice after he was done hiding from the fire that the tax bill controversy has generated.

Initially, the Tinubu administration had thought that it could distance itself from the crisis by allowing the Northern senators to battle one another, so that Tinubu and Akpabio will at the end take the glory for its passage.

Who would have forgotten the drama that took place on the Senate floor when Senator Ndume took on the Deputy Senate President, Barau, both of them ranking senators from the North, over the Tax Bill? It was the hostile exchange between the two top lawmakers that however energized Northern outrage over the bill.

Akpabio is however right in his tantrum. No one should bully the Senate. No one needs to.

Bullying senators is the exclusive preserve of Akpabio.

It's also the practice that whosoever wants to make inputs to any proposed bill should appear before a public hearing on the bill, as Akpabio reminded Governor Zulum.

His record has, however, shown that his public hearings are usually sham and stage-managed to achieve a desired and preconceived executive goals. Already, crowds have been rented from the pool of idle cash-for-money Abuja protesters to harass opponents of the Bill at every stage of its legislative process.

Much as no one should bully the Nigerian Senate, however, the Senate President's hysterics and Sabre rattling will not cow Nigerians from legitimately expressing their views on the Bill.

Nigeria is a democracy. It's federal structure protects the rights of all federating units to express their constitutionally guaranteed right to differ and dissent. Those who are happy with the bill, have the right and obligation to support its passage. But those who are opposed to the bill must also be protected in expressing and defending their position.

To call them names, as has been done in the media, because they come from a different region to that of the President and the Senate President, and because they differ in their understanding of the bill, is undemocratic and myopic.

The Senate President must therefore retrace his steps and return to the legitimate corner of neutrality expected of his exalted office.

Nigerian political leaders must be weary of the deficit trust that exists between them and the citizenry. When Akpabio said the Senate would do anything to promote the welfare of the people, it sounds hollow to most Nigerians because they don't believe him. They also don't believe the President, their governors, their lawmakers and every elected official.

So, those truly concerned as to why the Tax Bill encounters so much opposition from the public shouldn't look far for answers. They don't trust their leaders, they don't trust the intent, the timing and the haste on the passage of the bill.

They also don't believe that even if the bill is passed into law, it would be implemented judiciously and equitably.

# Tax Reform Brouhaha

## How Tinubu Tumbles

*"The decision of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to direct the Minister of Justice to work with the National Assembly to sort out the rough edges of the 2024 Tax Reform Bill is therefore commendable. There is no best tax policy in the world or a one-cap-fits-all policy prescription."*



By Abdullahi Yelwa  
Editor-in-Chief



In the more developed democracies of the world, especially in Europe, when a leader succumbs to pressure from the public over policy direction, it's usually seen as a sign of strength rather than weakness, not only of the leader, but also the democratic process.

The decision of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to direct the

Minister of Justice to work with the National Assembly to sort out the rough edges of the 2024 Tax Reform Bill is therefore commendable.

There is no best tax policy in the world or a one-cap-fits-all policy prescription.

*The young tax gurus who worked on the tax reform bill, under the*

*chairmanship of Mr. Taiwo Oyedele, are oblivious of the fact that taxation is essentially a political, rather than a purely economic issue.*

There are several countries that have stable economies, and the government does not need taxpayers' money to operate the affairs of the state.



Some of these countries include United Arab Emirate, Bermuda, Monaco, Bahamas and Vanuatu. There are also others with more liberal tax templates, consistent with their politics, economic endowment and sociocultural disposition.

However, convinced of their technical competency, proximity to the President and the belief that they are creating a system they would eventually operate, the tax tsars went ahead to create a tax system after their own image.

From the explanations of the chairman of the presidential task reform committee, the bill is self explanatory that doesn't need any further input of Nigerians. He couldn't therefore believe what the fuss is all about on his perfect creation.

Opponents of the bill, he opined, must not have read it at all, and are merely basing their objection to the bill on ignorance or half truth. He denied that the bill was put together to disadvantaged the North. To the contrary, he argued the bill was designed to create an Eldorado for the improvised North and it would give tax relief to millions of Nigerians and make lazy, consumptive Northern governors to think out of the box.

On the issue of timing, Oyedele argued that the best time is now. Speaking like a politician, he pointed out that the bill is designed to help the poor to escape the ongoing economic hardship in the country.

Even though some aspects of the bill clearly indicate a third party involvement, he

vehemently denied that the new tax body created by the bill wouldn't engage any company in the collection of taxes.

Most commentators on this, however, expressed the fear that the tax bill is hurriedly being forced down our throats so as to give contracts to Alpha Beta, a Lagos-based tax collection company with alleged links to the President. He, however, in a recent television appearance expressed willingness to consult stakeholders, after the fact, to educate them more and defend the contents of his landmark bill.

There are many lessons to be learned on the brahaha over the 2024 Tax Reform Bill. Nigeria is a democracy with a federal structure. While it should be the goal of government at all levels to unite the people towards the attainment of

desired national objectives, the uniqueness and individuality of the federating units must always be respected.

The proponents of the bill who are quick to accuse their fellow countrymen of bigotry and regional sentiments, have shown a culture of intolerance and poor sportsmanship.

The bill can only be said to be ripe if the concerns of all units are listened to and addressed. It's obvious that the President had sent a boy to do a man's job, who has neither the experience nor the clout to get the task accomplished.

*Tinubu came to power through a complex process of negotiations and political brinkmanship. Even with the sitting president, Buhari, in the Villa working against him,*

*Tinubu managed to wriggled out his way to the presidency. He therefore should have known that he needed to devolved more of his personal time, especially after the Northern Governors Forum had expressed reservations and called for the withdrawal of the bill for more consultations.*

Instead of staying the course at home to do the needful to ensure smooth passage of the bill, he engaged in foreign diplomatic trips to France and South Africa.

The lessons for the Presidency therefore is that the rubber-stamped 10th National Assembly may not always be able to deliver what they promised to the Villa.

The advise of the National Economic Council should have therefore been heeded by the President.

*For the legislators, especially those of them from the North, their complicity and willingness to abandone their constituents for pecuniary gains or promise of re-election or higher office in 2027, will have negative repercussions for them. The row over the tax bill has shown the limit to what the North can tolerate from their representatives.*

The maxim that says there's time for everything also aptly applies to the controversy over the tax bill. Much as Mr Oyedele may dismiss it, the







timing of the bill is wrong. Nigerians are groaning over the devastating effects of the economic policies of this administration.

The mention of a tax bill that engenders national controversy, at a time when the promised light at the end of the tunnel had not appeared will therefore raised more suspicion. The trust deficit between the government and people has never been this high in the history of governance in Nigeria.

*The silver lining to the whole saga may be the*

*decision of the Nigerian Senate to withdraw the bill. It had constituted a special committee to interact with the Minister of justice to fine-tune the bill.*

The committee, headed by Abba Moro, has the following members:

Tahir Monguno, Aliero Adamu, Kalu Orji, Dickson Seriake, Zam Titus, Yahaya Abdullahi, Adeola Solomon, Sani Musa, Abiru Mukhail as well as the entire Senate leadership.

The Senate plans to convene a special meeting at the National Assembly, chaired by the Minority Leader to harmonise its position. The meeting will provide a platform for lawmakers to address disagreements and fine-tune the bill to ensure it serves national interests while meeting stakeholder expectations. The outcome of these deliberations, according to the Senate, will determine the next steps for the tax bill, which it believes is critical to Nigeria's fiscal policy and economic growth.

For now, it seems, the Presidency has avoided a combustible situation that would have thrown the country into an unnecessary chaos. What is next to be seen, however, is the peaceful and equitable resolution of the controversy generated by the bill.

The tax bill even if eventually passed into law, must also address the fundamental question of value for money. Government tax citizens to raise funds for their welfare and upkeep.

The Tinubu administration has shown an unmatched capacity for profligacy and wasteful spending. It has also shown a voracious appetite for foreign loans that are wasted on consumption. Part of the oppositions to the bill are informed by the belief that taxes collected from the citizenry would end up in the deep pockets of rent seeking elites who are now governing us

# The Religious Dimension of President Tinubu's Tax Bills: Need for Further Amendment



By Umar Ardo, Ph.D

*“As a Muslim, I know that Islamic law (Sharia) unequivocally governs the distribution of inheritance through clearly prescribed shares.”*



As the debate rages in the public domain on President Bola Tinubu's proposed tax reforms, and as Nigeria's National Assembly deliberates on the tax bills before its floors, an essential religious concern has emerged on the matter that demands urgent attention. Within provisions of the proposed bills is a clause introducing taxes on

inheritance wealth in a way that conflicts with religious teachings. Nigeria is a multi religious country whose laws should accommodate and support religious injunctions and not repeal them.

2. As a Muslim, I know that Islamic law (Sharia) unequivocally governs the distribution of inheritance

through clearly prescribed shares. Islam decreed a maximum of 25 inheritors of deceased persons and ratios of their inheritance, and government is not on the list. Therefore taxing inheritance wealth effectively alters this formula, diminishes the value passed to heirs and contradicts Islamic injunction.

3. But the tax bills submitted by President Tinubu have added government on the list of inheritors. Within the provisions of the four bills sent by the president to the National Assembly, there are some provisions that make government an inheritor. For example, Chapter 2, Part 1, Section 4 (sub-section 3) of the National Tax Bill provides as follows:

“Income of a family recognized under any law or custom in Nigeria as family income in which the several interests of individual members of the family cannot be separately determined is chargeable to tax”. This is in direct conflict with Islamic law of inheritance.

4. Under Sharia, if a father leaves an estate of ₦10 million, for instance, a legislated inheritance tax reducing the sum would inadvertently disrupt the ordained shares for his divinely prescribed inheritors. This alteration is not just financial but religious, raising concerns about overstepping divine jurisdiction.

5. As a multi-religious state, Islam and Christianity dominate the cultural and legal landscape of Nigeria. The constitution guarantees freedom of religion and safeguards practices integral to faith. Mandating inheritance taxation under the proposed bills is a direct infringement on Muslims' right to practice their religion fully. Such legislation

alienates a significant portion of the population, potentially stoking religious tensions in an already polarized society.

*6. Proponents of inheritance tax may argue that it promotes economic equity and curbing wealth concentration. While this is practiced in secular economies, it is critical to recognize that Nigeria is not a secular but a multi religious society. Legislators must therefore strike a balance between fiscal reforms and religious principles, ensuring inclusivity without undermining constitutional rights.*

7. Consequently, I call upon the National Assembly to amend the tax bills submitted to exempt inheritance wealth from taxation, as the matter has already been divinely preordained. This amendment would not only uphold religious freedom but also foster national unity by respecting the cultural and spiritual diversity that defines Nigeria. This is not to say that income from inheritance cannot be taxed; it can, but after distribution to lawful heirs as per the acceptable Islamic sharing formula. But as individual beneficiaries injects their share allocations into the process of

trade, business, profession or vocation for income, profit or capital gains then the proceeds become taxable.

*8. In seeking to broaden its tax base, government must explore alternative revenue sources that do not conflict with religious doctrines. Wealth taxes, capital gains taxes and luxury levies offer viable options without encroaching on sacred grounds. I advise the president to engage religious leaders and scholars in policy formulation on this issue in order to achieve reforms that are economically sound and socially harmonious.*

9. In conclusion, it needs pointing out that central to legislators' roles is to bridge the gap between governance and the people's values. The expunging of the inheritance tax provisions from the tax bills is not just a religious necessity but a political one as well. Proponents and supporters of the Muslim/Muslim ticket need to raise their voices on this religious infringement. Only through such sensitivity can Nigeria build an inclusive, equitable and spiritually aligned society.

# Yauri Rigata

## *A Festival Like no Other*

*"The challenge before the Yauri Rigata Festival as in all festival of its nature is continuity and consistency,"*



By Talib A. Yelwa  
General Editor



**T**he Yauri Rigata Annual Festival is set to thrill the nation once more, as arrangements to host it in January have reached its crescendo.

The Festival holds annually between January and February in the historic town of Yauri, in Kebbi State.

In February 2024, tourists from all over the world were treated to a cultural extravaganza, the type of which is difficult to

find anywhere in the African tourism ecosystem.

It showcased centuries old dances cultural displays and pulsating water sports. It also featured new and exhilarating events that have contributed in making the festival a dream tourism destination.

The unwavering support of the Executive Governor of Kebbi State, Comrade Dr Nasir Idris, Kauran Gwandu, Gamjin Yauri, has been the catalyst for the growth of the festival. Since his



assumption of office, the Governor, Dr Idris has engaged in the promotion of the cultural heritage of the people of the state, as a cornerstone of his strategy for engendering unity and the socio- cultural development.

The Festival was held in February, 2024, spanning three days. Events of the Festival included agricultural show, trade fair and cultural dances, some of which were more than two hundred years old.

The grand Rigata finale of the Festival was held at the Rafin Sarki, along the bank of River Niger, near the Emir's Palace. The final day of the festival witnessed Grand Rigata, which comprises water sports of different varieties, as well as other cultural events and activities. It signifies the historical link of the people of the Kingdom with their littoral environment that has been a major source sustenance, communication and protection. The main highlight of the Yauri Rigata 2024 was the presentation of a live hippo to Governor Idris by His Royal Highness, Dr Mohammad Zayyanu Abdullahi, CON.

Historically, the Yauri Kingdom has been associated with the hippopotamus as a symbol of its authority and power. Yet many people in the Kingdom have never seen a live hippo up close. Therefore, the sight of a live hippo being led through a throng of excited spectators was the climax of the festival and a great historical feat.







Culture is the totality of a people's way of life. It encompasses their ideas, customs and social behaviours over a given period. Culture is dynamic and constantly evolving.

Yauri Kingdom has been in existence for over 600 years. Its strategic location along the trans Saharan trade route, economic prosperity and the vastness of the Empire, made Yauri a melting pot of cultures and civilizations.

Consequently, the Kingdom evolved unique cultural templates. Some of the dances and colourful events displayed at Rigata 2024, for instance, are over 400 years old, passed down from one generation to another.

The tradition of Rigata began

over 200 years, as a display of naval strength of the Gungu people in their relationship with their natural environment.

Annually, Gungu warriors, fully armed and mounted on canoes, attacked and killed wild animals, especially dangerous hippopotamus and crocodiles. While the Rigata battles were usually over dangerous animals, however, they offered vital lessons and valuable expertise for the gallant Gungu warriors in actual battles with invading enemies.

The challenge before the Yauri Rigata Festival as in all festival of its nature is continuity and consistency. It must hold regularly and continue to innovative. New ideas and events are critical for sustaining tourism traffic to

the Festival.

The proposal by the Kebbi State Government to build a permanent site for festival is also very laudable.

To compliment the permanent site, there is the need to also build a medium-sized motel to accommodate visiting tourists. In its efforts to develop tourism in the state, the Kebbi State Government must also engaged the services of tourism development experts to assist it with the necessary expertise to develop and manage its various festivals spread across the four emirates of the state.

This will ensure the commercialization of the festivals as a major revenue earner for the state, as well as create employment for the youth.

# A Rebel is born



**H**amdiya Sidi, a Nigerian woman has been apprehended by the Nigerian Police Force in Sokoto

The woman was reportedly arrested for allegedly "embarrassing" Sokoto State governor, Ahmad Aliyu, on social media.

SaharaReporters reports that Hamdiya was arrested during the weekend on the orders of the state government.

She was subsequently arraigned secretly on Monday without having access to a lawyer nor family members, a source said.

The woman had in a video lamented about insecurity in the state.

Hamdiya had also demanded an end to the incessant killings in the state by gunmen.

Sokoto is one of states in the Northern region plagued by criminals known as bandits who raid and loot villages, kill residents and burn houses to the ground.

Last week, bandits slaughtered four farmers in Isa local government areas of state.

*"Our sister was arrested by the Sokoto state government, all because she spoke about the insecurities in Wurno Local Government and Sabo Birnin Local Government," a relative of the detainee told SaharaReporters.*

*"We're appealing to the governor and the Commissioner of Police to release our daughter."*

Another source added, *"She was arrested on Sunday for calling out the governor on the lack of security in her town in a video. The young woman lamenting about insecurities in the state went viral on social media last week.*

*"After she was arrested, the secretly arraigned her in court on Monday for allegedly embarrassing the state governor. Her town is one of the areas that are suffering from killings by bandits.*

Gombe has joined in the harassment of social media and opposition voices over criticism of their governors.

Governors across the country are increasingly targeting opponents and social media users for allegedly insulting and embarrassing them.

Last Wednesday, a Chief Magistrate Court sitting in Makurdi, ordered the remand of one 35-year-old Paul Gyenger at a custodial centre in Makurdi for allegedly calling the Benue State governor a womaniser.

Gyenger was accused of insulting Governor Hyacinth Alia on social media, referring to him as a "chronic womaniser."

The police charged him with cyberstalking and defamation of character after a complaint was filed by the governor's Aide-de-Camp (ADC), ASP Ver Ingyatu.



# The Grave Dangers in Section 77 of President Tinubu's Tax Reform Bill for Northern Nigeria

The tax reform bill introduced by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, including its controversial Section 77, aims to restructure Nigeria's tax system to drive efficiency and transparency. However, its implementation raises significant concerns about the economic implications for Northern Nigeria while amplifying advantages for states like Lagos. Below is a detailed breakdown of its impacts, supported by figures and insights.



## Key Provisions and Their Implications

### 1. Section 77: VAT Redistribution Formula

Proposed Change: Transition to a consumption-based VAT distribution model emphasizing derivation (the location of consumption) over equality or population.

#### Impact on Lagos:

Lagos currently generates over 50% of Nigeria's VAT due to its status as an economic hub, housing multinational companies, high retail activities, and luxury consumption. For example:

In 2022, Lagos accounted for over ₦535 billion of VAT,

compared to Kano's ₦40 billion, despite Kano's larger population.

Under the new formula, Lagos stands to retain a larger share of the VAT, funneling more resources to infrastructure and business incentives.



Impact on Northern States: Northern states, relying heavily on equitable VAT redistribution, risk losing up to 30–40% of current allocations. This will severely affect states like Sokoto, Gombe, and Zamfara, which have limited economic activities and depend heavily on federal allocations.

## 2. Centralized Tax Administration

Current Model: States collect various taxes (e.g., environmental taxes, agricultural levies), allowing for localized revenue generation.

Proposed Reform: Centralizes tax collection

under federal agencies like the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS).

Impact:

States with diverse local taxes, such as Kano and Kaduna, could lose fiscal autonomy and revenues amounting to billions annually.

The North's agrarian economy could be disproportionately affected, as agricultural value chains are underdeveloped compared to the commercial services prevalent in Lagos.

## 3. Sectoral Impacts

The North's economic reliance on agriculture and informal trade contrasts

sharply with Lagos's diversified economy (finance, logistics, manufacturing). For instance:

Kano's informal trade generates significant economic activity but contributes minimally to VAT, making the derivation formula inherently biased.

Lagos's corporate taxes, tied to formalized sectors, would amplify its gains under the proposed framework.

## Detailed Figures and Analysis

National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) Data Insights

VAT Contribution Breakdown (2022):

Lagos: 55% of total collections.  
 Northern States Combined: Less than 25%, with the majority contributed by Kano and Kaduna .  
 Revenue Loss Estimate for Northern Nigeria: VAT redistribution could shrink allocations to Northern states by ₦150–₦200 billion annually, particularly affecting education, healthcare, and infrastructure projects.

### Economic Growth Disparities

GDP Growth:  
 Lagos State's GDP: ₦33.7 trillion (2022)—more than the combined GDP of the 19 Northern states.

Kano's GDP: ₦2.3 trillion, largely reliant on trade and informal markets [].

Population Density vs.

Economic Activity:  
 Northern Nigeria hosts over 60% of the national population yet accounts for less than 30% of economic activity, highlighting structural inequalities exacerbated by the proposed reforms.

### Case Studies

#### Lagos's Benefits

Infrastructure: Additional VAT revenues could finance new projects like the ongoing Lekki Deep Sea Port

and other mega-infrastructure developments.

Business Ecosystem: Favorable tax policies will likely attract more corporate headquarters, reinforcing Lagos's dominance.

### Northern Nigeria's Challenges

Agriculture Sector: Reduced funding for irrigation projects in Kano and Sokoto could jeopardize food security and rural livelihoods.

Social Programs: States like Borno and Yobe, grappling with insurgency recovery, may lack sufficient funds for reconstruction without equitable federal allocations.

### Call to Action

#### Recommendations for Northern Stakeholders

1. Legislative Advocacy: Northern legislators must push for revisions to the VAT formula, ensuring population and equity remain core components.

Engage in bipartisan coalitions to demand fiscal federalism that balances derivation with national development goals.

2. Governors' Forum: State governors should unify to lobby for compensation mechanisms that offset potential revenue losses.

Explore Public-Private

Partnerships (PPPs) to reduce reliance on federal allocations.

3. Economic Diversification: Invest in agro-processing zones and renewable energy initiatives to boost regional GDP.

Leverage the North's population advantage for labor-intensive industries like textile manufacturing.

### Public Awareness

Mobilize grassroots support through education campaigns highlighting the economic risks posed by the reforms.

Engage traditional and religious leaders to amplify advocacy efforts.

### Conclusion

Section 77 of the tax reform bill represents a structural shift that could deepen economic inequalities between Northern and Southern Nigeria. While Lagos consolidates its financial dominance, Northern Nigeria risks losing vital resources critical for its development. A united and strategic response is essential to safeguard regional interests and promote equitable national growth.

Engr. Bashir I. Bashir  
 30th November, 2024  
 Kano, Nigeria

## Tax Bill:

# I Am From The North And I Am Saddened By Notion That It Is North Vs South Thing

– Daniel Bwala



The special adviser to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on policy communication, Daniel Bwala, has, during an [interview](#) on Prime Time, an Arise Television program from 1:50, [expressed](#)

[disappointment that some people are generating a notion](#) in the media that the Tax Reform Bills are a move by the South to impoverish the North, as he maintained that he is also from the North and does not align with that opinion. Bwala noted that the Bills seek to boost the economic performance of states and lift the people out of poverty.

Daniel Bwala had said, *“You know, thank you for having me. I am from the North and I am really saddened by the notion generated in the media that it is a North versus the South thing; and not from the media in the sense of media people, but people creating the narrative that the Tax Reform Bills are Bills designed to afflict the North; that is not true.”*

## Special Focus:

# How Gov. Idris is changing Kebbi State



**G**overnor Nasir Idris of Kebbi State is set to celebrate his one year anniversary in office, amidst a flurry of developmental projects and initiatives that have transformed the state into a model of modernity in the north-west geo-political zone. Under his leadership, Kebbi State has witnessed a tremendous transformation, from infrastructure enhancements to economic empowerment and industrialization efforts.

The transformative journey of

Kebbi State from its rural roots to a shining model of modernity in the North-West geo-political zone and beyond is indeed a remarkable feat that stands out in the realm of development and progress.

Over the years, the state has witnessed a tremendous evolution in its infrastructure, governance, and overall socio-economic landscape, marking a significant milestone in its trajectory towards sustainable growth and prosperity.

One of the most striking examples of this

transformation can be seen in the capital city of Birnin Kebbi, which has undergone a remarkable face-lift and infrastructural enhancement that has truly elevated its status as a state capital. The development of asphalted road networks, the establishment of housing estates, and the construction of new government buildings such as the Government House have not only changed the physical landscape of the city but have also symbolized a new era of progress and modernity for the state.



The infrastructure improvements in Birnin Kebbi have not only enhanced the quality of life for its residents but have also positioned the city as a hub of economic activity, governance, and social development in the region. The upgraded road networks have facilitated better connectivity, improved transportation, and increased access to essential services, while the development of housing estates has provided affordable housing options for the growing population.

Governor Idris has also made significant strides in the agricultural sector, providing support to farmers through the distribution of solar powered irrigation pumps at subsidized prices on soft loans. He has focused on boosting agricultural development and ensuring the welfare of farmers in the state.

While Governor Idris' administration has achieved a great deal in a short amount of

time, there are calls for a town hall meeting and media briefing to be organized ahead of his one year anniversary. As Kebbi State continues on its path of progress and development, Governor Idris remains committed to serving the people and improving the overall well-being of the state

Furthermore, the construction of new motor Park, government secretaries buildings such as the Government House has not only strengthened the administrative capacity of the state but has also symbolized a commitment to transparency, accountability, and good governance. These modern structures serve as a testament to the state's dedication to providing quality public services, enhancing the welfare of its citizens, and driving inclusive growth and development.

The transformation of Kebbi State into a model of modernity is a testament to the vision, leadership, and collective efforts

of the government, private sector, and the people of the state. By prioritizing infrastructure development, investing in human capital, and promoting sustainable economic growth, Kebbi State has set a precedent for other states in Nigeria to emulate and aspire towards.

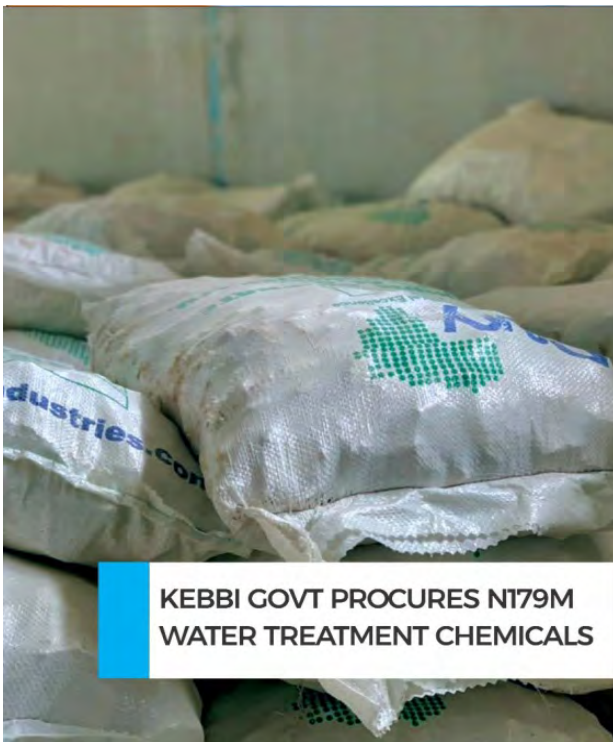
As Kebbi State continues on its path of progress and development, it serves as a shining example of what is possible when vision, determination, and commitment are combined to create a future of prosperity, opportunity, and success for all.

The state's journey from a rural backwater to a model of modernity is indeed an unrivaled marvel of development that showcases the transformative power of effective governance, strategic planning, and a shared commitment to building a better tomorrow for generations to come.



16th July, 2024  
Gov. Idris flags off distribution of agric inputs  
to 48,000 farmers in Kebbi State

KEBBI STATE GOVERNMENT



KEBBI GOVT PROCURES N179M  
WATER TREATMENT CHEMICALS





30th August, 2024

# Kebbi State Government Distributes New Vehicles to Boost Healthcare and Public Services

KEBBI STATE GOVERNMENT





# Tinubu's Tax Reform Bills: Everything You Should Know



In October 2024, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu introduced a series of tax reform bills to the National Assembly, aiming to overhaul Nigeria's tax system.

These proposals have sparked significant discussions among policymakers, businesses, and the general public. This article provides a comprehensive overview of

the key aspects of these tax reform bills, addressing common queries and concerns.

## Key Components of the Tax Reform Bills

The proposed tax reform legislation comprises four primary bills:

- 1. Nigeria Tax Bill 2024:** Seeks to consolidate existing tax laws into a unified framework, simplifying the tax system and making it more accessible for taxpayers.
- 2. Tax Administration Bill:** Aims to streamline tax administration processes, enhancing efficiency and reducing bureaucratic hurdles for both taxpayers and authorities.
- 3. Nigeria Revenue Service Establishment Bill:** Proposes the creation of a

centralized tax agency, the Nigeria Revenue Service, to replace multiple tax collection bodies, thereby improving coordination and effectiveness.

#### 4. Joint Revenue Board Establishment Bill:

Intends to establish a Joint Revenue Board to harmonize tax policies across federal, state, and local governments, ensuring consistency and fairness in tax administration.

### Notable Provisions

- o Value-Added Tax (VAT) Increment: The Nigeria Tax Bill 2024 proposes a phased increase in VAT from the current 7.5% to 10% by 2025, with further increments to 12.5% by 2026 and 15% from 2030 onwards.
- o Telecommunications Excise Duty: A 5% excise duty is proposed on telecommunications services, encompassing both postpaid and prepaid services regulated by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC).
- o Corporate Income Tax Adjustments: The bills suggest exempting small businesses with annual turnovers

below ₦50 million from corporate income taxes, while implementing a progressive tax structure for larger corporations.

### Implications for Individuals and Businesses

- o Individuals: The proposed VAT increase may lead to higher prices for goods and services, potentially affecting consumers' purchasing power.
- o Small Businesses: Exemption from corporate income tax is expected to alleviate financial burdens, fostering growth and encouraging entrepreneurship.
- o Large Corporations: The progressive tax structure aims to ensure that larger businesses contribute a fair share to national revenue, promoting equity in the tax system.

### Rationale Behind the Reforms

Nigeria's tax-to-GDP ratio has been relatively low, necessitating reforms to boost revenue generation for sustainable development. The proposed

bills aim to simplify the tax system, enhance compliance, and create a more business-friendly environment.

### Controversies and Debates

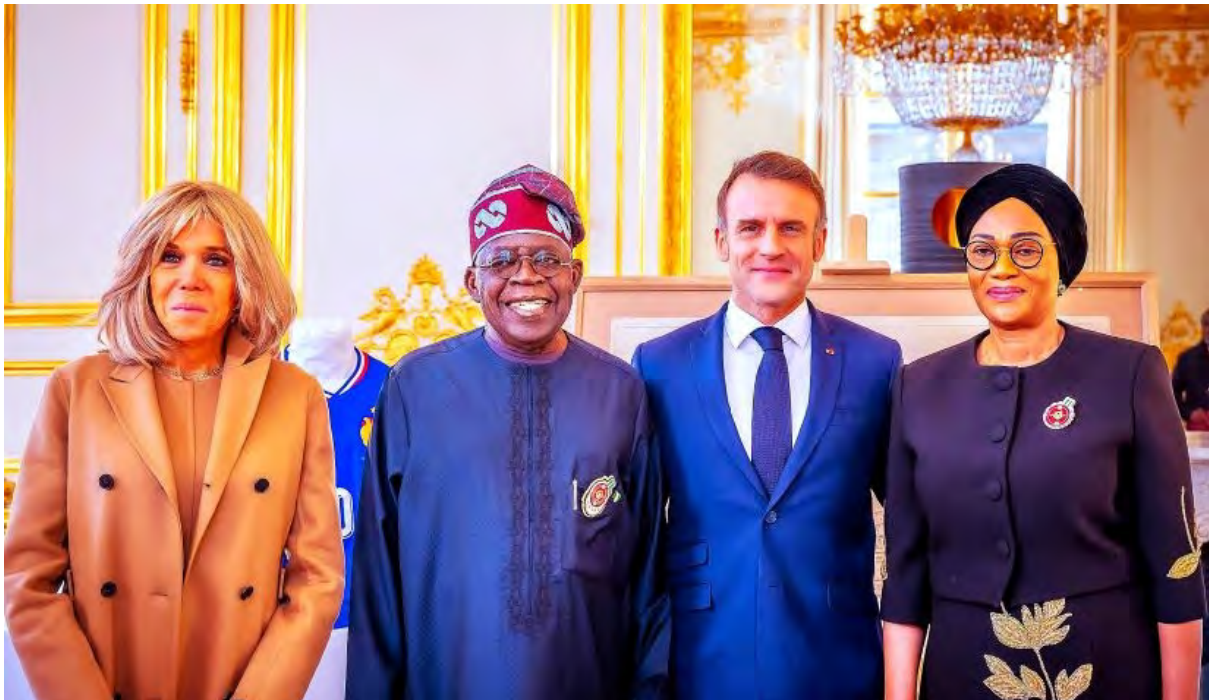
The tax reform bills have elicited varied reactions:

- o State Governments' Concerns: Some state governments argue that the reforms could centralize tax collection, potentially reducing their revenue autonomy. [The Cable](#)
- o Public Sentiment: There is apprehension that the VAT increase and new excise duties may exacerbate the cost of living, especially for low-income households.

### Current Status and Next Steps

As of November 28, 2024, the Senate has passed the tax reform bills for a second reading, referring them to the Senate Committee on Finance for further scrutiny. The committee is expected to engage with stakeholders, consider amendments, and report back within six weeks.

# Bon Apeti' Dinner with the Devil



It was all a Jolly, jolly affair in Paris, the "City of Light" and romance, as President Tinubu concludes his state visit to France.

It's, however, left for history to judge if this coming together of two Lagos boys ( Macron had lived in Lagos and was a regular visitor to the Fela Shrine), would change the course of Franco-Nigerian diplomacy for the better.

Nigeria and France had had a checkered diplomatic history dating back to colonial time. There were the periods of crises

and also rapprochement in the relationship. The historical landmarks in their diplomatic ties are suggestive of the iron laws that govern international relations. These laws favour the strong and sanction the weak. France's pre-eminent status in the international arena during this period, 1905-1985, dwarfed Nigeria's voice and actions and ensured that Nigeria pandered to the whims and caprices of France.

In the pursuit of its Afro-centric ideology, Nigeria in 1961 broke diplomatic ties with France on account of France's decision to

carry out a second atomic bomb test in Algeria's Sahara region.

France also supported the break-up of Nigeria through its diplomatic and military support to agitation for the creation of Biafra.

It had also constituted Nigeria's neighbours as a solid block against Nigeria's diplomatic ambitions.

The concerns expressed by Nigerians over the sudden clientele-cordial between

President Tinubu and Macron is therefore understandable. Macron has been completely rejected by our neighbours who knew France and Macron better. After over 60 years of exploitation and dehumanizing treatment by France, these nations suddenly woke up from slumber to take their destinies in their own hands.

The last attempt by France to hold on to the vestiges of neocolonialism in West Africa, incidentally was through the Ecowas under President Tinubu's chairmanship.

The goals of diplomacy are to advance a country's interests while maintaining peaceful relationships with other countries, especially its neighbours.

It has never been conjured by our founding fathers, however, that Nigeria would at any point in its existence be a "courtesan" for a partner jilted by our neighbours. Nigeria therefore shouldn't allow its fight against banditry or economic ambition to be exploited by France for its war against West African countries that had rejected and sacked it from their lands.

Under no circumstances should we make our neighbours suspicious of our intentions. The underbelly of France is filled with anger and outrage by the actions of its once docile serfdoms.

On the surface, there are many altruistic and mutually beneficial justifications for Nigeria to improve relationships with France.

Security, economic, technological and other mutually beneficial considerations may advertise themselves as genuine incentives for closer diplomatic ties between the two nations.

On security, however, there's not much France can do for Nigeria if Nigeria is not willing to help itself. We have not been able to win the battle against banditry and Boko Haram because we lack the capacity to do so singlehandedly. We have been unable to because we lack the political will to do so.

For the Three days Tinubu was in France, our neighbours, Mali, Niger, Chad, etc., have been wondering what "Boeuf Bourguignon"

Macron and Tinubu were cooking.

Sarcastically, these once Francophone African nations may wish us bon appetit. They have tasted the French cuisine for so long to know its pungent smell and bad taste.

Another fear of the French inspired rapprochement towards

Nigeria, may be a strategy of containing Chinese and Indian influence in Nigeria. It's abundantly clear that the West, at this point in African history, doesn't have much to offer the continent.

Economically, China and India have become important players in the Nigerian economy.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, NBC, Nigeria's main export partners are India (12.6% of total exports), Spain (12%), the Netherlands (9.6%), the U.S. (6.8%), and France (5.8%). Its main suppliers are China (22.7% of total imports), the Netherlands (10.4%), India (7.9%), the United States (5.6%), and France (2.6%).

There are therefore palpable fears that in the hasty pursuit of narrow diplomatic gains in France, we may lose a strategic gains in our backyard. Nigeria's links with its neighbours goes beyond the understanding of contemporary Western style diplomacy. Most of the





communities in Niger, Camaroun, Mali , Burkina faso, don't interact with Nigeria on the basis of their citizenship, but on the old age traditions and culture they shared as members of same tribe and ethnicity for centuries.

The Hausas, Kanuris and Zabarmawas in Nigeria don't consider their fellow tribes men and women across their often incognito borders as aliens.

A visitor once described Derby Line, Vermont - A town the US Canada Border splits into 2 countries in the middle of a street as the strangest border on earth.

To thousand of communities on the Nigerian borders, however, there's nothing strange about a road, river, stream or pass way dissecting communities on the Nigerian border with its neighbours.

For now, the diplomatic relationship between Nigeria and France appears to hing on

the personal relationship between Tinubu and Macron. The optics of the three day visit says it all. President Tinubu, his wife and sons had all received high diplomatic reconning reserved only very dear friends. Congeniality between two leaders is not a durable and sustainable strategy of building diplomatic relationships between nations.

The purpose of diplomacy is to strengthen the state, nation, or organization it serves in relation to others by advancing the interests in its charge.

France has a serious image problem in Africa.

The former colonial powe is facing deep resentment in many parts of Africa, not only in the Sahel region. President Emmanuel Macron's attempt to reset relations has failed.

On the southern fringes of the Sahara and elsewhere on the continent, people increasingly consider France to be a diminished European power that keeps meddling in their

nations' affairs. Many Africans see France importing natural resources, cosying up to dubious leaders and sometimes intervening with massive military force in their internal affairs.

Several military coups in francophone West Africa have shown that the French clout has weakened. Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger are now ruled by generals who do not want to rely on France anymore. In September, another military coup toppled the government of Gabon in Central Africa.

What does Macron wants from Nigeria, and how will his desperate quest for a friend close to the borders of his enemies further the course of security is the Sahel?

Beyond building personal business links with Tinubus, Macron's interest in Nigeria are basically two. One, he needs a proximate warehouse for France's mining businesses and military hardware ousted from



Niger and other West African nations.

Ability to move it's mining business and military forces would help meets it economic and military objectives. Accomodations within Nigeria would also allow France to do what it does best. It had found in the Tinubus a replacement for Bongos of the Central African Republic. I would also continue to exploit the resources of West Africa as it had done in Niger. Nigeria's mining industry is chaotic and unorganized, providing for France a cheap source of mining revenues without the political baggage of mining uranium in Niger.

Nigeria may also be a staging ground for France's war of

attrition with its former colonies and once economic partners.

It's not in the tradition of France to forget and forgive. It has been insulated by countries it once considered its slaves and comfort girls.

It must therefore do everything within its power to humiliate and antagonized these nations. If this happens, Nigeria will find itself in the middle of a cold at its backyard. For years, France's business interests in Nigeria have been dwindling. When Peugeot Automobile established an Assembling plant in Kaduna it was viewed as the grand entrance of France into the Nigerian economy. Today,

however, France's economic fortunes have substantial been on the decline.

TotalEnergies, while not entirely leaving Nigeria, it has reduced its onshore operations in the country due to security concerns and issues with oil theft.

Another company, Addax Petroleum, a French-Swiss oil company had operations in Nigeria but exited the country in 2019 after selling its assets to the Nigerian firm, NNPC. It's therefore this downward trajectory of France's economic investment in Nigeria that raises questions about this sudden France's show of interest in Nigeria's economic and business ecosystem.

# Banditry and Kidnapping: Matters arising from Birnin-Gwari Peace Deal

By Zubair Abdurra'uf Idris ( *Danmasanin Birnin-Gwari* )

The recent peace deal in Birnin-Gwari, facilitated by Governor Uba Sani and the Office of the National Security Adviser, marks a significant milestone in addressing the decade-long insecurity in the area. This deal, which involves the laying down of arms by bandits in exchange for peace and tranquility, is a welcome development.

Birnin-Gwari has been plagued by insecurity since 2014, with cases of kidnapping, abductions, and cattle wrestling becoming rampant. The area became a hotbed of kidnapping and mass abductions, with bandits operating from the Kamuku forest and adjoining Kuyanbana forest in Zamfara State. The western fronts of banditry in Birnin-Gwari also extended to Niger State and Kebbi State, creating an ungoverned space for non-state actors.

The peace deal was facilitated through a renowned Islamic cleric, Sheik Assadus Sunnah, the Emir of Birnin-Gwari, and representatives of bandits kingpins. This non-kinetic approach to solving the lingering insecurity in Birnin-Gwari is significant, as it shows the desire of both actors and citizens to adopt a peaceful resolution.

With the peace deal in place, the reopening of markets, and the

free movement of people and social activities, the wound of mistrust, agony, and tension will eventually heal. The reopening of the Kara Livestock Market in Birnin Gwari Local Government Area, which was closed for over a decade due to security concerns, is a testament to this.

However, despite this positive development, the security situation in Birnin-Gwari remains a significant threat to national and food security. The imminent infiltration of Lakurawas terrorists with extremist ideology into Kamuku forest from Kuyanbana forest in Zamfara State and Mashigi-Bena enclave, Kebbi State demands swift action to buffer security in the area.

The ANSARU, a splinter group aligned with ISWAP, has a strong presence in Eastern Birnin-Gwari towns, including ungoverned areas. The group is gradually adjudicating in all matters in these areas and enticing people with money and food to join them.

To address these concerns, it is essential to safeguard the peace deal and prevent the impending struggle for control of natural resources in the area. The government, stakeholders, and citizens must work together to ensure that the peace deal is sustained and that the security



situation in Birnin-Gwari is improved.

The Nigerian government has launched multiple military operations in the North West region to curtail the banditry menace, including Operation Harbin Kunama and Exercise Sahel Sanity. However, the government's strategy must also consider the various factors involved in the conflict, such as explosive population growth, climate change, and corruption.

In conclusion, while the peace deal in Birnin-Gwari is a significant achievement, it is crucial to address the ongoing security concerns and prevent a relapse into conflict. The government, stakeholders, and citizens must work together to ensure that the peace deal is sustained and that the security situation in Birnin-Gwari is improved.

Zubair Abdurra'uf Idris, is a Community leader and Public affairs analyst, based in Abuja)

# Unmasking Systemic Corruption: The Implications of Emefiele's Alleged 753 Duplex Scandal in Nigeria

By Oluwole Solanke (Phd)



**T**he case of a former Central Bank Governor, like Godwin Emefiele, reportedly owning 753 duplexes in an Abuja estate forfeited to the EFCC (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission), carries profound implications for corruption in Nigeria. Here's an analysis of the situation:

## Implications for Corruption in Nigeria

### 1. Systemic Failure in Oversight:

Such large-scale asset acquisition suggests weak or compromised regulatory frameworks, enabling public officials to accumulate wealth illicitly.

It highlights the failure of anti-corruption mechanisms within institutions like the Central Bank

and other government agencies.

### 2. Erosion of Public Trust:

Public confidence in governance diminishes when high-ranking officials are implicated in grand corruption schemes.

This perception reinforces the belief that the political and administrative elite prioritize personal gain over national development.



### 3. Stagnation of National Development:

Resources that could have been used for infrastructure, education, or healthcare are diverted for personal gain, hampering Nigeria's development.

### 4. Embarrassment on the Global Stage:

Cases like these reinforce international stereotypes about Nigeria being plagued by corruption, which could deter foreign investment and cooperation.

### Could He Be Alone in This Fraud?

It's highly unlikely that such a monumental fraud could be executed alone. Here's why:

#### 1. Collaborative Corruption Networks:

Large-scale corruption often involves a network of enablers, including real estate developers, legal practitioners, and officials within the banking and land registries who facilitate or overlook such acquisitions.

Politically exposed persons (PEPs) often rely on cronies or "fronts" to manage and conceal ill-gotten wealth.

#### 2. Weak Internal Checks:

Within the Central Bank, there may have been collusion or negligence from colleagues or subordinates responsible for



internal auditing and compliance.

#### 3. Political Patronage:

Emefiele's actions could be symptomatic of a broader culture of impunity among political elites who protect and benefit from such schemes.

#### 4. Complicity in Law Enforcement:

The delayed discovery and forfeiture of these properties suggest possible lapses or complicity within law enforcement and anti-corruption agencies.

### **Recommendations for Addressing Such Corruption:**

#### 1. Strengthen Oversight Mechanisms:

Audit processes within sensitive institutions like the Central Bank must be enhanced with real-time monitoring and external oversight.

#### 2. Independent and Swift Prosecution:

There must be transparent and expedited prosecution of all implicated individuals, including enablers and accomplices.

#### 3. Asset Recovery and Redistribution:

Recovered assets should be redirected transparently towards public welfare projects to restore public trust.

#### 4. Promote Whistleblowing:

Strengthen protections and incentives for whistleblowers to expose corrupt practices.

#### 5. Civic Engagement and Advocacy:

Encourage citizen involvement in demanding accountability from public officials and institutions.

This case is a stark reminder of the need for systemic reform to curb corruption and ensure that Nigeria's resources benefit the citizens rather than a few elites.

# The Lakurawa Lacuna

By Abdullahi Yelwa, Editor-in-Chief

The Northern frontier of West Africa, irrespective to claims to boundaries signifying modern statehood, has historically been a boundless thoroughfare for all manners of migrants, ideas and innovations.



The recent "discovery" of a deadly militant Islamist group, the Lakurawas, hibernating in the forests of Sokoto and Kebbi states, has again added to the despondency and apprehension enveloping the nation, occasioned by the scourge of banditry, Islamic insurgency and other sundry crimes.

There have been debate over the meaning and origin of the name of the group. Lakurawa, according to Audu Bulama Burkati, a lawyer and security consultant, the word is a French term, "le recrue", the recruit, meaning someone who has recently joined an army, a group, organisation or party.

According to Malam Nura Bodinga, a commentator and security analyst, however, the term 'Lakurawa' comes from the Fulani word "Lakurje Fulbe", which refers to groups within the Fulani community who act as local guards or advocates against terrorism and other forms of criminality.

The Fulani are a society similar to others like the Hausa and Yoruba, whose population are not limited to Nigeria alone. The Fulani community, like the Hausa and Yoruba, spans across multiple countries, including Ghana, Niger, and Chad.

Thus, the Northern frontier of West Africa, irrespective to claims boudries signifying

modern statehood, has historically been a boundless thoroughfare for all manners of migrants, ideas and innovations.

Dr Rufai Ahmed of Uthman Danfodio University, Sokoto, explored this theory on the origin of the group more deeply in a recent media chat.

According to him, this group, known as the Lakurawa, has a long history tied to jihadist ambitions and a desire to establish a kingdom under the banner of religion.

"It's not a new phenomenon in Nigeria or Niger, as some believe. In fact, this group has been active for almost 25 years, with nearly eight years of



activity in Nigeria. Locally, it's referred to as Lakurawa, but in the Sahel region, it's known as "Jinin" or the "Jama'atul Muslimina."

It comprises members from various backgrounds and tribes, including Hausa, Fulani, Buzaye (Tuaregs), Barebari (Kanuri), Zabarmawa, Arabs and others.

The group's leader, Amadou Kufa, originates from Kufa in Mali, and has siblings like Ibrahim, Iliyasu, and Umar Kufa.

"If we look back at their lineage, we see that their ancestry is connected to Nigeria, particularly the former Kebbi (Kabi) Kingdom."

The evidence of this linkage, according to Rufai, lies in their areas of influence today, such as Gudu and Tangaza Local Government Areas in Sokoto State. Historically, these regions were part of the Kebbi Kingdom before the Sokoto Caliphate was established.

The Kufa family, through generations, has therefore maintained connections to the Balle region of Gudu Local

Government, he said.

A more recent manifestation of this group dates back to 2016 when they surface around the Forest of Gada and environs.

Because of religious, ethnic and cultural affinities, they had lived in harmony with their resident communities.

In 2018, however, following alleged activities of an armed group in Tangaza area of Sokoto, the Sokoto State Police Commissioner, Murtala Mani intervened and concluded that the situation of the area has remained calm and that no ugly incident was recorded, adding that

Police intelligence and combat units were at red alert.

While confirming that the group had heavy and dangerous weapons, he said they didn't constitute any threats to the community, and they had actually left the area.

*The second coming of the group that was recently revealed by the Sokoto state deputy governor, was indeed the return of the*

*boomerang or in truth, the discovery of what has all along been there, hidden in the plain sight.*

They had intermarried, slaughtered a monarch, removed imams and replaced them with new ones. They had taken over communities and set up their Caliphate, issuing orders and administering justice.

They punished adults who fail to spot beard or wear flowing trousers.

They administered Islamic law, or their understanding of it, forbidding the consumption of alcohol and cigarettes, listening to music. They collect zakaat, the Islamic tax.

They claimed that they had no fight with the people, but the authority: government, police, army and agents of modernity.

They carried heavy weapons, like AK-47, RPGs, drones and other surveillance equipments. More importantly, they used the instruments of religion and fear to subdue the people, who are largely uninformed about the Islamic faith.



The Lakurawas are therefore deadly and may constitute a growing and future security challenge to Nigeria. Their Boko Haram-like disposition makes the goal of eradicating them even more urgent and desirable. The killing of 17 people in Mera, in Argungu Emirate in Kebbi Still is the chilling reminder of the danger they pose. Reports from Northern Kebbi and Southern Sokoto, however, indicate that they have disappeared from the locations they had invaded back into the forests they had crawled from.

They are most likely back into Niger Republic waiting for the next opportunity to return.

*The group, in the opinion of security commentators familiar with the activities of the group doesn't constitute the greatest security threat facing our nation today.*

*Our security threats do not emanate from new and migrant actors like the Lakurawas and the over 25*

*active or latent Islamist and criminal groups operating in the country.*

The threats posed by banditry in the Northwest and the resultant destruction of communities and way of life leading to the near collapse of agriculture and the economy remains the most existential security challenge confronting the nation.

A system of frontier governance

# Lakurawas' Ancestry is connected to Nigeria

*Interview with Nura Bello Bodinga Security Analyst.*

## Question 1?

*Mr. Nura, could you please elaborate more on Lakurawas?*

Malam Nura: The term 'Lakurawa' comes from the Fulani word 'Lakurje Fulbe,' which refers to groups within the Fulani community who act as local guards or advocates, standing against terrorism.

The Fulani are a society similar to others like the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo, and they are not limited to Nigeria alone. The Fulani community, like the Hausa and Yoruba, spans multiple countries, including Ghana, Niger, and Chad. They make up a significant population in some neighboring countries.

Before terrorism became

widespread in Nigeria, cattle rustling was the main issue, often arising from conflicts between farmers and herders. As a result, some Fulani communities from outside Nigeria began engaging in efforts to protect the interests of Fulani communities within the country. This situation led to a rise in cattle rustling, which greatly impacted the Fulani, as it was their livestock that was being stolen.

In response to this crisis, the Lakurje group emerged. Due to the lack of support from the government and armed forces, especially in combating cattle rustling, the Lakurje understood that they could not rely solely on external forces for security. To strengthen their ranks, Lakurje members in Nigeria began recruiting from

outside, including militants from Mali and other regions, to enhance their manpower. This shift, partly in response to terrorism, is what led people to call them {Lakurawa} initially as a defense group, but one that eventually became associated with militant actions.

## Question 2?

*If I understood your points those that are referring themselves as Islamic missionaries called Lakurawa that some of them are migrants to Nigeria?*

Absolutely, as I mentioned earlier, the Fulani are indeed a people without borders. Wherever their families or

lineages are found, they follow. For Fulani herders, migration is part of their way of life, moving from one country to another in pursuit of their livelihood. Their pastoral lifestyle is inherently cross-border, as they seek grazing lands across regions.

Since the onset of conflicts, many Fulani migrants have started moving into Nigeria. Within the Fulani community, there is no real sense of strangers among them. For instance, Fulani from Niger or Kwanni readily intermarry, some living in Nigeria their Mother's and Uncles are living Kwanni, and wherever they settle, they view each other as one people. This shared sense of identity and unity transcends borders, allowing them to integrate seamlessly, as they see themselves as part of the same extended community.

### Question 3?

*What kind of work are these people {Lakurawa} doing in the eastern parts of Sokoto, Gada, Tangaza, and Binji?*

That's exactly the point we need to make a clear distinction. The term 'Lakurje' originally referred to community guards, but some individuals have used this identity to mask their involvement in terrorism, claiming they are there to

protect the community from cattle rustling. These people, who are seeking a way out, are often seen as innocent, but the real issue lies with the government, armed forces, and elites. They need to focus on understanding the root causes of this terrorism.

### Question 4?

*What gives the reason to root causes of these terrorism?*

Yes, the emergence of groups like the Lakurawa, or 'Lakurje,' comes down to a major issue the inability of the armed forces to provide reliable security. This gap in security has led to the rise of informalisation or over informalisation of security architecture, such as community volunteer guards and local security groups. Unfortunately, as banditry and kidnapping have increased, bandits are accusing these volunteer guards of targeting their people and communities.

The Lakurawa, and volunteer security guards, gave the possible rise of terrorism because the armed forces have not coordinated with them or provided any guidelines. Meanwhile allowing communities to organize their own guards isn't necessarily a problem, but leaving them without oversight has led to issues, such as independent decisions that may escalate problems.

There's a phenomenon called 'penetration and infiltration' that terrorists and organizers of

violence have exploited. They understand Nigeria's vulnerabilities, particularly in communities with limited education and low exposure to modern ideas. The ongoing farmer-herder conflicts are also well-known issues between Fulani herders and the communities they share land with, complicated further by the illegal importation of firearms and drugs. As I always say, these weapons often come with illicit drugs, because many individuals wouldn't resort to violence if they were in their right minds.

### Question 5?

*What I want to discuss now is how, after initially focusing on protecting their people, they shifted toward defending religion, enforcing rules like banning smoking and formal schooling. What is the connection between their actions and religion?*

Remember, this is how groups like Boko Haram began. We need to understand the roots of terrorism, why they're doing it, and then judge whether they're terrorists or not. The nature of terrorism is covert—they don't openly announce their plans. They slowly recruit and indoctrinate people. Look at the case of Maitatsine: he spent years gathering followers under the guise of religious leadership, leading people down a path of no return before

finally revealing his true agenda. Boko Haram can be seen as a resurgence of the Maitatsine episode.

The Lakurawa seem to be following a similar path. With open borders and corruption, they can bring in weapons, recruit locally, and justify their actions as part of a supposed 'jihad.' They even bring in dubious 'evidence' to claim they're religious warriors. Meanwhile, they oppose formal schooling and monitor NGOs, believing they bring researchers to study our communities and report back on our culture, body language, and way of life. Many in our community already resist formal education, so they turn to religious justification for 'jihad,' gathering support and using extremism and radicalism to reshape people's beliefs.

However, the real agenda of these organizers is often different. There's even been speculation like one U.S. politician once almost disclosing that groups like Al-Qaeda had hidden backers. People need to understand these strategies and stop taking these claims at face value, even when they're presented under the cover of religion.

### Question 6?

*Let's examine the way they're using terrorism by collecting Zakat and enforcing laws under the guise of religion, as you mentioned earlier. It's also*

*said that they're collaborating with terrorists to fight against the armed forces and to target people who don't follow their rules. Could you elaborate on this connection?*

What I want you to understand is that when people from Mali arrived, they took on the name 'Lakuruje,' but this group has now become actual terrorists. They're not just collaborators they're full-fledged terrorists. If you ask those in places like Gummi and Anka, they'll tell you that the original Lakuruje group is gone. Terrorists have taken over, forcing people to hand over their cattle and fighting against them, which ultimately led to the downfall of the Lakuruje association.

Those with the power to help have neglected them, leaving them vulnerable. From my experience in defense matters, I can tell you that what they're doing now is clearly terrorism, regardless of the name they use.

### Question 7?

*The work of the Lakurawa has turned into terrorism. What impact will this have on Sokoto State or the Country at large?*

Groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP have brought insurgency into Nigeria. The Lakurawa also have a base in Mali, which they turned into a dangerous zone. Fortunately, with the

establishment of a military government in Mali and other changes across the Sahel, there have been near-revolutions in regions like Burkina Faso and Niger. People suspect the involvement of French forces, but since France's soldiers left Mali, the weaknesses in the Lakurawa group have become more visible.

However, Nigeria remains vulnerable, and the Lakurawa may seek areas with slower response times, unlike the swift action seen from Mali's military. This raises fears that jihadist groups from Mali could expand, worsening the situation in eastern Sokoto to the point where local bandits may seem insignificant by comparison.

### Question 8?

*Their actions are being talked about and seem similar to those of Boko Haram. Do you think this is a continuation of Boko Haram?*

Boko Haram is just a name, like ISWAP, Mali jihadists, Al-Qaeda, or ISIS. It's similar to a product line from one company that goes by different names but may have a single source. Boko Haram operates as an insurgent group, seizing territories illegally to control them and supply their backers with resources to exploit and have total control of the regions.

### Question 9?

*What solutions do you see for providing security to affected communities in Sokoto and Kebbi, and how can we protect these areas effectively?*

The way out is to find an effective solution for security architecture. There are three main points: structure, mass mobilization against terrorism, and activating the police force. To achieve this, both external and internal threats must be addressed. The borders must be controlled to prevent rifles from coming in, money laundering must be controlled to stop funds from aiding terrorism, and sponsors, both inside and outside the country, must be identified. You can't kill a snake by its tail; you have to cut off its head.

All these insurgencies that we haven't tackled in over 12 years are due to not taking the right

approach. We need an effective security system. This includes what we call effective security coverage and networking. Given Nigeria's geography, there are many vulnerable areas without security coverage. Many forests serve as terrorist bases. Years ago, we had forest guards, but now they're destabilized. Now that terrorism has taken root in Nigeria, we need strong collaboration between police and armed forces in areas where rifles are imported. We must employ a special squad to monitor rifle imports and money from foreign terrorist organizations, as well as the recruitment of local youth into terrorist groups.

Most importantly, we need clear-and-hold operations. Sometimes, the armed forces' clearing operations are not as thorough as they should be. They must train and increase manpower to fight terrorism effectively. If you just destroy terrorists' camps, they return as soon as the armed forces leave.

All these camps must be cleared and controlled by the armed forces. It's not enough to gather the Minister of Defense without securing these areas. Simply catching or killing terrorists is not enough; securing the land itself is the real solution. We need to take control of places where terrorists impose taxes and laws, ensuring that they are governed by the government.

I don't believe in the idea of 'ungoverned spaces.' Every place must be under government control. Security shouldn't be limited to urban areas alone; the security network and coverage must be effective everywhere, as though the whole country were under a single security network.



# Bwala: Life as a Boomerang

By Abdullahi Yelwa



**B**arrister Daniel Bwala recently unveiled himself before the Villa Press Corp as the presidential spoken person at a rather brief and uneventful ceremony.

Many saw the appointment coming. The growing post election affinity between President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the former spokesperson for the Atiku Presidential campaign, had for long stirred suspicion and premonition that something was afoot.

Since the swearing in of President Tinubu, there had been snippets of PR activities, suggesting a new realignment between the two.

Severally Bwala had spoken as the unofficial spokesperson of the Villa, commenting on issues

considered too politically sensitive and weighty for the official spokesperson of the President, Bayo Ananuga to partake.

Now it has been made official. He has been appointed the Special Adviser, Media and Public Communications to the President for State House. When Bwala suddenly decamped from APC to the PDP in the run to the 2023 Presidential election, many had viewed his action with suspicion, especially after reports emerged that he had had a brief meeting with Tinubu abroad.

He nonetheless immediately found his way into the inner circle of Atiku's presidential campaign, flying abroad with Atiku and

actively engaging in critical strategy sessions.

Bwala went on to be an effective Atiku attack dog against Tinubu. When he was ditching Tinubu for Atiku, he had chosen a then potent political sentiment to justify his action. The APC had at the time decided on a Muslim-Muslim ticket for the presidential contest.

This decision had erked the sensibility of many Northern Christians who believed that the VP position should have gone to one of them in the spirit of the tradition of fair religious balancing of the presidential ticket.

Leading Northern Christian politicians, like the former Speaker of the House Representatives, Hon Yakubu Dogara and former Secretary to Government of the Federation, Engineer Babachir David Lawal had left the APC in protest. Bwala is, however, yet to explain to the nation what had changed to justify his return to Tinubu's fold, with the Muslim-Muslim presidency still in place in the Villa.

His appointment, as expected,

had drawn sharp criticism, especially from within the Tinubu political family. Many of them have wondered why Bwala who had during the campaign referred to Tinubu as drug Baron, unworthy of Nigeria's highest office, should be engaged as a presidential spokesperson by President Tinubu.

Mr Jesutega Onokpasa, a leading member of the Tinubu inner circle and a "BATist", has expressed outrage over Bwala's appointment, describing it as an act of betrayal from President Tinubu.

*"It's such a shame, you stabbed all of us in the back," he said, referring to President Tinubu.*

*He further alleged that Tinubu had betrayed his arch supporters.*

*"You attack Yahaya Bello, you attack Rufai, you abandoned Fani Kayode," he queried.*

*Bwala has come to his new office with multitudes of controversies and baggages, most of them about his past. At personal level, he had built a public affairs imagery of being unreliable and often self-serving. For instance, there are many in the Atiku campaign who, regardless of his attacks on Tinubu during the campaign, considered him as a Tinubu mole*

*planted in their midst. Again, the appellation of "former spokesperson to the Atiku campaign", regularly used in reference to his relationship with Tinubu, inadvertently serves as a constant reminder of his betrayal of both Tinubu and Atiku.*

There's also the big elephant in the room in the Tinubu media ecosystem. The power struggle that ended the tenure of his predecessor in office, Ajuri Ngalale may still end his tenure if he fails to read the handwriting on the wall or attempts to contest power and influence with Bayo Ananuga. While his link with Tinubu may be purely personal and tactical, Ananuga's is institutional, deeply rooted in the Southwest dominance of the Nigerian media.

Though it may be politically correct to have people from other ethnic groups, like Bwala and Ngilale occasionally handling press affairs for Nigerian leaders, the Youbas have long considered it a right, moreso now that a Yoruba man is President.

From Doyin Okupe in 1999, spokespersons to the presidents of Nigeria: Oloremi Oyo, Segun Adeniyi, Ima Niboro, Reuben Abati, Femi Adesina and now Dele Alake, are all from the Southwest.

Bwala must also deal with the

competition that may come from the office of Special Adviser to the President for Media and Public Communications, located in the Ministry of information, Mr Sunday Dare.

Bwala's appointment, however, have its own supporters. The former majority leader of the Senate, Mohammed Ali Ndume, has praised President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for appointing Daniel Bwala as special adviser on Media and public communications, describing it as a rare *"demonstration of large-heartedness in leadership, a quality that is difficult to find in many leaders today."*

Ndume, however, advised Bwala to seek forgiveness from the Vice President, Kashim Shettima, whose appointment made him leave the APC because he is a Muslim.

*"You should also learn from Sunday Dare and Onanuga who are long and loyal associates of Tinubu who always defend the policies of Mr President without being abusive and offensive."*

Though Bwala at his unveiling had pleaded that his appointment should be about the president and president only, his past had made his new portfolio mostly about his own person and past.

As much as he wished his past utterances, especially against his now new employer, to remain in the real of the past, the past sometimes can be a boomerang that often returns to sender.

# 2027: List of first-time Governors who may lose 2nd term bid and why

*Why some governors may not return to office in 2027*



**N**igerian politicians have begun to debate the 2027 general elections, with each working tirelessly to secure their space in the future. However, some governors who are in their first term may lose out in the scheme of the 2027 permutations as time goes by.

This is due to the fact that many of these first-time governors began their first year in office with battles rather than building alliances and structures for their political careers.

Some of the battles these governors are fighting have existing structures that determine election outcomes in their state.

A careful analysis of the development showed that some governors began their first year in office fighting their godfathers without them having any political structure to fall back on, while others fought first-class monarchs, which may eventually turn the people against them.

Some of the governors in this category are Ahmad Aliyu Sokoto, Siminalayi Fubara, Uba Sani, Hyacinth Alia, and Abba Kabir Yusuf, to mention a few.

Below are the reasons the above-mentioned governors may not have their way to the governor's offices in their states.

#### Ahmad Aliyu Sokoto of Sokoto state



The governor of Sokoto state is one of the first-term governors in Nigeria who may not win in 2027 if tries to contest for the second term. Barely one year in office, the governor deposed about 15 emirs in the state for different offences, a development that may cost him his second-term aspiration.

A few months later, the Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) raised the alarm that the governor was plotting to depose the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar. Though the government denied the allegation, a bill in the State House of Assembly passed the second reading.

If the bill is passed into law, the Sultan would be stripped of some power, including the appointments of kingmakers and district heads, without the governor's input. While this move may be considered constitutional because of the legislation it passed through, it can cost the governor his second term because Sokoto state and the position of the Sultan are religious sensitives.

The Punch also reported that a political source in the state disclosed that the governor and his supporters never hid the impression of deposing the Sultan from their campaigns. The source stated that the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) campaigned with a "new government, new sultan."

In an interview with Legit.ng, Okanlawon Gaffar, a public commentator, called for respect for traditional stools in the country.

He lamented:

*"We can't say this is fair or not, the principle that has been exhibited is also the fact that our traditional system is now a mockery of its glory. This does not mean that our traditional system should be above the law principle."*

Governor Fubara of Rivers state is one of the first-time governors who may not secure re-election come 2027 due to his rift with his political godfather, Nyesom Wike, who

is now the minister of the Federal Capital Territory.

Fubara's rift with Wike started barely three months into the beginning of his administration as Rivers governor, which was not considered fair enough by many political observers.

However, there are insinuations that President Tinubu is supporting Fubara, which was why he appeared to have an edge above Wike.

Aisha Yesufu, a public commentator, in a tweet, posited that Tinubu would rather ensure that the FCT minister was stripped of his power in Rivers state so that he could become a proper errand boy at his disposal.

But Tinubu once publicly promised Wike that he would not let him down at the commissioning of a project in Abuja. Thus, with federal and presidential backing, Wike may defeat Fubara or plot his removal before the end of his tenure.

Also, an analyst, Okanlawon Gaffar, in an exclusive interview with Legit.ng, posited that Wike is more experienced. Based on his antecedent as governor of Rivers state, he knew how to win as a political godfather and how he could be defeated as one.

Gaffar said: *"Wike's position as a godfather, especially in the sense that he has passed through this before. He fought his godfather too to become the governor of*

*Rivers state, so he understands how this game is played. I also believe that he understands how it can be lost and how it can be won.”*

Another factor that should not be overlooked is Wike's astuteness in politics. He has been active in politics since 1999. His membership in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and retention of a ministerial position in the All Progressives Congress (APC) government are testaments to his astuteness.

Though Governor Fubara recently hinted at leaving the PDP, saying the party has failed him, Wike currently appears to have the hold of the PDP and APC in Rivers. It is not yet certain if Fubara has the strong political structure to form his political party or join a small party and believe he can defeat Wike in an election.

#### Abba Kabir Yusuf of Kano



Yusuf of Kano is another first-time governor who may not secure his second term via popular votes if the controversy surrounding the removal of the

Kano emir is not resolved as soon as possible.

Although his predecessor and current national chairman of the APC, Abdullahi Ganduje, was widely faulted for deposing Muhammadu Sanusi, he (Yusuf) was also being blamed for correcting Ganduje's wrong with another wrong.

Come 2027, the people of the state may be looking for a governor who will stabilise the emirship, especially now that it is being considered the reason why other governors have resorted to removing first-class traditional rulers, particularly the Sultan of Sokoto.

#### Governor Sani of Kaduna



Uba Sani is another first-time governor currently fighting his predecessor, Nasir El-Rufai, through the state House of Assembly. Unlike Fubara, Sani has a political structure as a former senator and appears to have the majority of the assembly members on his side.

However, the immediate past governor of the state appeared to be gaining the people's sympathy, and this may grow beyond expectation to orchestrate his removal.

There are indications that El-Rufai would also work to clear

his name, and the first step was his dragging the state assembly to court over lack of fair hearing in the N432 billion corruption allegation levelled against him and his administration by the lawmakers.

If El-Rufai wins at the Kaduna State High Court, it will boost his efforts to prevent the governor from securing a second-term victory in the state.

#### Reverend Father Hyacinth Alia



The governor of Benue state, Hyacinth Alia, may also not return to office come 2023 if he cannot secure the support of the secretary to the government of the federation, George Akume, who currently has the party structure under his control.

Alia did not have any political structure before his emergence as the APC governorship candidate in the 2023 election. Though he may use his position to build bridges and form structures ahead of 2027, the support and structure of Akure should not be overlooked.

# Kebbi State Takes Bold Stand Against Gender-Based Violence:

## Empowering Survivors with Confidence and Cash Support

*"We will not rest until we eradicate violence against women and children," Kebbi first lady*



*By Laiatu Augustine Bamaiyi,  
Kebbi State Editor*



In a powerful move to combat the pervasive issue of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Kebbi State has launched an initiative aimed at empowering survivors and fostering resilience.

As the world observes the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV, the Kebbi State has stepped up

its efforts to address this critical challenge that affects individuals across the globe.

The first lady Zainab Nasare Nasir Idris has assured Confidence and Resilience on Building Strategies aim to equip survivors with essential tools for healing and recovery.

In a generous gesture, the program will provide cash support of 50,000 Naira to 100 selected survivors, helping them rebuild their lives and regain their independence.

This initiative not only addresses the immediate needs of survivors but also fosters long-term resilience, enabling them to thrive in their communities.

The Kebbi State first Lady has passionately assured the general public of her unwavering commitment to the fight against all forms of abuse.

"We will not rest until we eradicate violence against women and children," she declared during the launch event. The first lady's dedication reflects a broader commitment from the state government to create a safer and more equitable environment for all citizens.

This initiative comes at a crucial time when awareness about GBV is growing globally, and Kebbi State is positioning itself as a leader in the fight against this social menace.

The support not only aims to uplift survivors but also sends a strong message that GBV will not be tolerated in any form and anyone found hidden or interfering on Gender based violence with the state will be dealt without mercy.

As Kebbi State wife of the governor first lady Zainab Nasare Nasir Idris Kaura takes this bold step, it called on international attention and collaboration to further strengthen its efforts. The first lady calls on global partners, NGOs, and advocacy groups to join hands in the fight against GBV, ensuring that survivors are supported and empowered to reclaim their lives.

The 16 Days of Activism was a the first of its kind full of activities where awards were presented to some organizations that highly contributed on fighting GBV in the state. The first lady kebbi state streets the need that by coming together, communities can work towards a future free from violence, where every individual can live with dignity and respect.

Kebbi State stands at the forefront of this movement, ready to inspire change and foster resilience among survivors of gender-based violence.



# What a second Trump presidency would mean for the world



*A 'deal' with Putin, tariffs on all imports, targeting Iran...if Donald Trump wins in November and is as good as his word, America may add to global uncertainty and hand its rivals diplomatic victories, writes Michael Cox*

In 2003, Michael Ignatieff, the Canadian writer and liberal politician, made the telling point – and this at the time George W Bush was deciding to invade Iraq – that America was probably the first imperial power in history that had no consciousness of itself as an empire.

He might have also added that there was and remains another important strain in the American world view: a profound belief that when it decides to act – as it did over Iraq – it would do so without seeking permission or worrying too much what impact its

actions might have on the world at large.

*Donald Trump claims the US establishment has destroyed working-class communities in pursuit of profit abroad while sending American kids overseas to die in unwinnable wars.*

Bush, to use a phrase common at the time, just didn't seem to 'give a damn'. Nonetheless, this once errant member of a well-established American dynasty remained

very much within the Republican mainstream when it came to thinking about America's role in the world.

Thus, like his father, and Ronald Reagan before him, he believed in formal alliances, supported free trade and of necessity saw an active – possibly too active – global role for the United States. It was fashionable at the time to argue that following 9/11 Bush junior had carried out a 'revolution' in foreign policy. But on essentials, there was little radical about his world view.



### Republican or Populist?

Clearly much has altered since those far off days when a confident America, still basking in the glow of victory over the Soviet Union and confident that globalization would always work to its advantage, felt it could reshape the world in its own image. As a result, not only has the country and the world changed beyond recognition – in 2001 it was possible to think that Russia and China could be made into 'responsible stakeholders' – but so too has the Republican Party.

Once a bastion of good old-fashioned patrician values, under Donald Trump it has been transformed into a populist movement hostile to an establishment whose policies he claims have destroyed working-class communities in pursuit of profit abroad while sending American kids overseas to fight and die in pointless, unwinnable wars.

Nobody has articulated this change better than Trump's running mate Senator JD Vance. As he put it recently: 'From Iraq to Afghanistan, from the financial crisis to the Great Recession, from open borders to stagnant wages, the people who govern this country have failed and failed again.'

Furthermore, they failed because they bought into a theory of the world that forgot to put the interests of the US front and centre. No longer. As Trump famously declared back in 2016 when he first won the

White House, 'Americanism, not globalism, will now be our credo'.

### Ukraine and NATO

Whether this credo will continue to appeal to a majority of Americans remains to be seen. America is preparing for a presidential election whose outcome is even more uncertain now that President Joe Biden has handed over the baton to Kamala Harris who, with her running mate Tim Walz, many think has a much better chance of winning – some polls are even now showing the Democrats moving ahead. Nevertheless, we still have to think through what a Trump victory might mean for the world at large.

*Should Trump not persuade Russia to strike a deal, he would face the prospect of having to increase military support for Ukraine.*

The election may not be determined by events unfolding outside the United States. There is little doubt, however, that what happens in a country that still spends more on its military than the next eight countries combined, continues to account for something close to a quarter of the world's GDP and sits at the centre of a global alliance system upon which so many other states depend, is bound to have a huge impact on the world. This is why what happens in November is crucial.

Ukraine might have most to be worried about. Trump after all has never shown much inclination to support Ukraine. Nor has the Maga – Make America Great Again – wing of the Republican Party which held up backing Ukraine for several critical months earlier this year. Nor can Vance's words have gone down very well in Kyiv, especially after he told an audience of Republican enthusiasts in July that it was no longer in the American interest 'to fund a never-ending war' there.

The European members of NATO are likely to be just as concerned; and even if, as seems probable, Trump is persuaded that NATO is worth hanging on to – as he was during his first term – there is little doubt he will be putting even more pressure on getting Europeans to spend more on their own security. Nor can the European Union be reassured by the possible election of someone who is not only threatening to impose a 10 per cent tariff on all imports from across the Atlantic but once even referred to the EU as a foe.

Of course, one has to distinguish between Trump's rhetoric and what he will be able to do if or when he takes over. But with a new Republican team in the White House less concerned to flatter politicians in Europe than deal with what it views as America's much bigger challenge in the shape of China, there are likely to be difficult moments in the days and months following the US election.

## And on to Beijing

How is Trump likely to play in a Beijing that has already come to the conclusion that whoever sits in the White House – Harris or Trump – the relationship is bound to be a deeply competitive one? Some in China will view Trump's election with a degree of schadenfreude if, as many believe, it casts doubt over America's relationship with allies such as South Korea, Japan and the Philippines whom President Joe Biden has gone out of his way to reassure.

### *Republican supporters with China interests, such as Elon Musk, may push a new Trump team to dial back on its hard line.*

Beijing may have also drawn comfort from what Trump recently said on Taiwan, when he proclaimed that 'Taiwan doesn't give us anything' and wondered why the US was still acting like its 'insurance company'.

Even so, there must be more than a few in Beijing who can hardly relish the prospect of a Trump-led team taking over in the White House. They might welcome the disarray a Republican Party victory would cause, both in America and among its allies. On the other hand, they are bound to be a little less happy with a Republican Party in power that has in the course of the campaign attacked the Democrats for being soft on Beijing while threatening to impose 60 per cent tariffs on

most Chinese imports.

Many more business-oriented Republican supporters with an interest in China, such as Elon Musk, may push a new Trump team to dial back on its hard line. But, having let the populist genie out of the bottle, it might be hard for Trump to put it back in, especially in an America where playing tough on China, and even tougher than the Democrats, goes down well with an electorate 8 out of 10 of whom have an unfavourable view of China, and 42 per cent of whom even [view](#) it as an enemy.

### Two wars

All this, however, begs a much larger question: how might a second Trump term impact our world that is already under enormous stress, the result in large part of ongoing wars on two fronts in Europe and the Middle East?

Take the war in Europe now into a third year with little end in sight. Trump talks of bringing it to an end within days of coming to power. But talk, as they say, is cheap. For even if his Maga base would prefer him to cut a deal with Russia, the overwhelming majority of Americans have by now become so hostile to Vladimir Putin – 88 per cent say they have no confidence in him – that any deal Trump tries to strike with the Russian leader that conceded too much could open him up to the politically damaging charge of appeasement.

Nor is Trump likely to risk a deal if, as seems probable, it will depend on the goodwill of

China to bring Russia to the negotiating table. Were Trump to fail in persuading Russia to strike some sort of deal, he would then face the prospect of having to increase military support for Ukraine, either to ensure that Putin did not win on the battlefield, or, more likely, as a way of putting further pressure on the Russian leader to get around the table. Either way, no easy road lies ahead.

But if the situation in Ukraine is fraught, because of US support for Israel over the war in Gaza, America's position has become dangerously exposed right across the Middle East. It has also handed Russia and China a diplomatic victory they could only have dreamed of a few months before.

So challenging has the situation become diplomatically, that a poll conducted in the spring of 2024 showed that Putin and Xi Jinping had become more popular and trusted across the Middle East than Biden. A possible Trump return to power is hardly likely to improve things. Trump's close relationship with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and their combined work together in scuppering the Iranian nuclear deal back in 2018, all point to an even more abrasive relationship with Iran than exists already.

As Jason Brodsky, the policy director of United Against Nuclear Iran, recently admitted: 'I believe that the second term of the Trump administration would witness a return of the maximum pressure campaign

and strong deterrent actions against the Iranian regime.'

### Global South

To add to this long list of challenges one needs to look further afield at the wider Global South and ask whether a new Trump administration would be able to build bridges back to a part of the world where the US – and the West as a whole – has come under sustained attack in recent years for a whole set of purported misdemeanours.

These range from practising double standards – supporting Ukrainian statehood while denying it to the Palestinians – through to imposing tough economic rules on those least able to protect themselves. Nothing so far indicates that the situation would get any better under Trump and Vance, both of whom seem to be either indifferent or ill-informed about the many challenges

facing poorer countries.

Were a new administration to impose tariffs on all imports as threatened, it would inevitably hit the less developed countries even harder than those in the OECD. If his new team then moved ahead with a 'right-sized' foreign aid package as it has been threatening to do, then the Global South would be confirmed in their view that America is just like any other great power looking after itself and caring not a jot for the rest of humanity.

*A second Trump term would witness a return of the maximum pressure campaign and strong deterrent actions against the Iranian regime.*

*Jason Brodsky, policy director of United Against Nuclear Iran*

All this, moreover, cannot but affect America's wider

competition with China and Russia, its two main rivals in the international arena who for the past decade or so have been making major inroads into the Global South. Some will reassure themselves that the West still holds most of the important economic cards and that at the end of the day Latin America, Asia and Africa have nowhere else to go but northwards.

But this would be short-sighted. With Russia having made recent political gains across Central Africa, China undertaking vast infrastructure projects from Indonesia to Pakistan, and the two together exploiting the many mis-steps taken by the West going all the way back to the colonial era and the Cold War, it would be foolish to think that the US and its western allies face anything but a difficult few years ahead, whoever happens to win the White House.

# Lakurawa not a new group

*Buhari: Recently, Sokoto State Deputy Governor Idris Muhammad Gobir revealed that a new criminal group which is idealist and faith-based, called LAKURAWA has emerged in the state, what more do you know about the group?*

Bashir: I'm so surprised seeing that it is now National dailies start writing stories about this group.

Everybody knew that five years ago, an American citizen was kidnapped around Tangaza and taken to musallata, a boarder community between Nigeria and Niger. He was rescued by the American Government, thereafter.

So, LAKURAWA Should had been known since that time.

There was a bandit kingpin called Charambe. He has base in Boni forest in Tangaza, terrorizing people of Gudu, illela Gada and Binji. That Charambe has only connection with LAKURAWA. This criminal group was from Niger. It is faith based like Boko Haram and ISWAP. They preach, impose laws, taxes and levies on communities. They have been in existence for more than ten years. It is not a new group, only the name of the group made headlines recently when the Sokoto Deputy Governor announced that they do exist.

I'm telling you that Charambe has been terrorizing those people for more than ten years. He abducted people for ransom several times. He was believed to have killed a village head.

*Buhari: Do you think their religious ideology has relationship with their criminal activities?*

Bashir: Yes, there is, because they came preaching their religious ideologies but

with sophisticated weapons. They also connive with criminal groups to get a base. That is what they did with Charambe.

*Buhari: How do they recruit?*

Bashir: LAKURAWA don't recruit or kidnap people for ransom. They are wealthy. They even support a community that listen to their preachings and show willingness to follow their ideologies. The group is against western ideologies. They don't kidnap people for ransom. They protect people from criminal activities such as bandits everyone from the communities can testify to this.

*Buhari; initially, you said they kidnap an American, is that not criminality?*

Bashir: yes, I told you that they are fighting against Westernism and things western people brought such as Western education, they have relationships with BH, ISWAP and Mujahedeen, their ideology are almost the same. So it's not surprising for them to kidnap Americans. Before, bandits didn't kidnap the masses or poor people, bandits like Dogo gide, Baleri, late Halilu and others they only kidnap foreigners for ransom, it's later on, they started kidnapping masses, destroy and attack villages. All above mentioned are now the activities of Lakurawa group.

They Are running a Government Contrary to Nigerian Laws

*Buhari: what will you say about the reports that Lakurawa are not thieving Bikes, robbing shops and stole items, in some places they impose levies, a times they collect zakkat as they claimed.*

Bashir: No, yet I didn't receive any information about what you

mentioned, they are preaching on social justice, they protect villages as they receive information on criminal activities of bandits. But they collect zakkat as much your animals are adequate for that they are insisted that it's compulsory. They're wealthy they give money to the unemployed youths to join their group.

*Buhari: why are they a threat to State Security?*

Bashir: they are a threat not only for the state but for the national security, they're forming policies that are contrary to government policies. They require peoples' support and loyalty, impose levies and taxes, they are directly fighting the government, and I care is not taken they can even make coupe, also if their criminality expended to Zurmi they will link up with Bello Turji by then they circled the state. All those criminalities they are related with transborder crimes, They should be a security agent safeguarding our border, but the entrance of those Lakurawa revealed that there is no adequate Supervision of transborder security.

*Buhari: where are the Lakurawa operating now?*

Bashir: they are operating in Kebbi, you see this forest for Gudu, Tanzaga, Binji, Gwadabawa and Illela. Tangaza and Gudu forests are boarded with Argungu to Kangiwa swamp of Kebbi state. Every criminal activities that happen in the that village Charambe is to hold responsible but he works with Lakurawa, because they support him. They are helping him because they are fighting the government.

Buhari: what did the Solution for this? The government should do needful and discharge their duties, our governments know almost

# 'It's The Greatest Insult I Have Ever Faced'

## – Gov Yusuf Speaks On Rift With Kwankwaso

Kano State Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf has categorically denied allegations of a conflict with his political mentor and the leader of the Kwankwasiyya movement, Senator Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso.

Yusuf also described a political group – “Abba Tsaya da Kafarka” (meaning “Abba, stand on your own”), which was formed to encourage him to make decisions independently of Kwankwaso's input as ‘the greatest insult’ he has ever faced as a governor.

Naijaonpoint understands that the faction formed within the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) recently gained attention, with the group calling Governor Yusuf to distance himself from his political mentor.

The movement's momentum has increased, with members from both the party and other political circles pushing for Yusuf's perceived autonomy.

Addressing the group's stand, Governor Yusuf said: *“This ‘stand on your own’ slogan is the greatest insult I have faced as governor. It implies that I should repay good with bad. What has Kwankwaso done to me to deserve this? All the good we are doing for the people is overlooked, and instead, they promote this divisive rhetoric,”* Yusuf remarked, adding, *“It's as if people do not know what we are doing for them.”*

He made this statement during a press briefing in Kano yesterday, addressing the circulating speculations and rumours of a rift with Kwankwaso.

The governor reaffirmed that his relationship with Kwankwaso remains robust and respectful, as it has been for the last four decades.

Assertions On Yusuf-Kwankwaso Relationship

Naijaonpoint reports that within the Kwankwasiyya movement and the NNPP, there have been claims suggesting that Kwankwaso wields undue influence over Yusuf's administration, with some asserting

that he dictates policy decisions, effectively orchestrating a “third term by proxy.”

Aliyu Sani Madakin-Gini, the House of Representatives member for Dala Federal Constituency, who recently distanced himself from Kwankwaso, alleged that the tensions between Governor Yusuf and Kwankwaso are rooted in disputes over a drug contract and a state-sponsored scholarship program.

Nevertheless, Yusuf dismissed these claims, reiterating his independence while expressing his appreciation and loyalty to Kwankwaso.

The Governor said: *“There is no truth in the rumours of a misunderstanding between us.*

*“In my 40 years of knowing him, tell me, who among politicians has stayed with someone this long and still maintained harmony? When he was governor, I served as his personal assistant, always by his side. In all these years, we have never had a rift. To now suggest that I am somehow chained by Kwankwaso is simply unfair.*

*“Even just two days ago, I visited him and told him about these rumours. I said, ‘I am surprised. Do people expect me to insult the man who stood by me?’ This is someone who has been there for me, and now some want me to go against him. It is simply not in my nature,”* Yusuf asserted, adding that his governorship is not due to any person's influence but the will of God.”

The leadership of the NNPP has recently decided to suspend Abdullahi Baffa Bichi, the Secretary to the State Government, along with Muhammad Diggol, the Commissioner of Transportation. This action was taken due to allegations of disloyalty and suspected participation in the “Abba Tsaya da Kafarka” campaign, which both officials have denied.

Currently, they are under investigation for purportedly supporting the efforts of this faction.

Additionally, two members of the House of Representatives, Aliyu Sani Madakin Gini (Dala) and Alhassan Rurum (Kibiya, Rano, and Bunkure), have publicly distanced themselves from the Kwankwasiyya movement, calling on Yusuf to assert his autonomy.

In light of these departures, Yusuf emphasized the enduring support he has received from Kwankwaso and condemned those who are questioning this alliance.

*“It's as if people do not understand the role Kwankwaso has played. Where were these critics when he was laying the foundation for what we are doing now?”* Yusuf said.

He further addressed the media, expressing frustration at how the allegations have been covered.

*“They said Kwankwaso called me more than 30 times, and I refused to answer. Where did they get this from? And within how many months? Did they pull this information from WhatsApp or some other source?”* Yusuf questioned, adding, *“If not for my respect for journalists, I would have taken the person who wrote that to court. But I know, and Kwankwaso knows, that it's all lies. There is no rift.”*

The Kano State Governor also urged his supporters to refrain from using the divisive slogan, warning that he wants no part in any campaign that undermines his loyalty.

*“As of today, I don't want to hear ‘stand on your own’ in Kano State or anywhere in Nigeria. We were raised to respect elders, not to insult them,”* he said.

### 30 National Assembly Officials, Clerk To Retire As Tinubu Kicks Against Service Extension

At least thirty senior officials are set to retire alongside the Clerk to the National Assembly, Magaji Tambawal, following President Bola Tinubu's rejection of a bill that seeks their service extension.

By parliamentary procedures, Tambawal commenced his pre-retirement leave on November 1, 2024, after delegating his responsibilities to his deputy, Kamouroudeen Ogundele.

Tambawal, who initially assumed the role of acting Clerk to the National Assembly in November 2022 and was subsequently confirmed in March 2023, is scheduled to celebrate his 60th birthday in February 2025.

Naijaonpoint reports that while Tambawal's official retirement is slated for February, he will refrain from participating in any duties or responsibilities from the start of his pre-retirement leave until he formally vacates his position.

An official document seen by journalists indicates that other notable personnel departing include the Clerk to the Senate, Chinedu Akabueze, the Deputy Clerk to the Senate, and the Deputy Clerk of the House of Representatives.

Additionally, the departures will encompass 11 directors, six deputy directors, one assistant director, and two other directors from the National Assembly Service Commission.

## Tinubu Rejects Bill Seeking Parliamentary Staff Tenure Extension

Naijaonpoint reports that this significant turnover follows President Tinubu's refusal to approve a bill to extend parliamentary staff's tenure.

It is worth noting that the proposed legislation sought to raise the retirement age to 65 years or allow for 40 years of service, whereas the current law mandates retirement at 60 years of age or after 35 years of service.

This bill was initially presented during the 7th Assembly but did not pass; it was subsequently reintroduced in the 8th and 9th Assemblies, yet also failed to gain approval.

The bill, which was reintroduced to the 10th Assembly and sponsored by the Deputy Minority Leader of the House, Aliyu Madaki (NNPP, Kano), successfully passed its second reading in the House in October 2023 and was ultimately approved on December 20, 2023.

Initially, the Senate rejected the bill; however, it later reversed its decision and approved it on March 31, 2024, after which it was sent to the President for approval.

In light of the President's refusal to sign the bill, several directors are scheduled to retire between October and December. Reports indicate that a few of them are also expected to retire next year.

*"Most of the staff, both at top level and medium level, got employed by the commission in 1991/1992 when the National Assembly started, hence the reason for the exodus of retirees amongst staffers,"* a source told The PUNCH.

It added: *"Many of them would either clock 60 years between this year and next year or would have spent 35 years working in the Civil Service.*

*"But many of those who are affected are as a result of age. It's the season where a couple of the*

*older staff would clock 60 years."*

Meanwhile, another source told reporters that the retirement would be in batches. He noted that about 20 to 30 would also retire in January 2025.

*"The number of people retiring between this year and even till next year is quite huge. This is because many of the civil servants will be clocking 60 years.*

*"Even those who will be stepping into the new shoes have a few months to spend in the offices before they get to retirement age,"* the source stated.

It was reported that, in addition to the senior officials, a considerable portion of the National Assembly's staff is also set to resign, with many others anticipated to retire in the near future.

Furthermore, a senior official who has chosen to remain anonymous expressed concern regarding the departure of staff members from the National Assembly, highlighting the potential impact on legislative memory.

*"There is no lie that a large number of people are retiring this year and next year.*

*"My worry is, do they have manpower on the ground that will fill that void? And if they do, what of the legislative memory? The parliament thrives on the longitude of service years; the experience will always be needed,"* the source noted.

In the meantime, two senior officers observed that the retirement tally stood at scarcely 50 individuals.

A confidential informant possessing exclusive details reported that every member of the National Assembly retiring or anticipated to retire between January and December 2024 was aged 46, significantly lower than the anticipated figure of 80.

The source said, *"80 is far-fetched. Yes, people are retiring and people will still retire. But the total number of people retiring between January and December is 46."*

## Terror In Sokoto: Armed Group 'Lakurawas' Enforces Zakat In Five Local Government Areas

Terror In Sokoto: Armed Group 'Lakurawas' Enforces Zakat In Five Local Government Areas

A new terrorist group, known as "Lakurawas" or "Mujahidin," has gained significant influence across five local government areas in Sokoto State, Nigeria. This group has reportedly begun imposing zakat and other levies on local communities.

Operating in the Tangaza, Gada, Illela, Silame, and Binji LGAs, Lakurawas members travel in groups of 10 to 15 motorcycles, armed and imposing mandatory levies. They communicate in a variety of languages, including Hausa, Fulani, Tuareg, Kanuri, Tuba, and English.

Local reports describe that Lakurawas operatives often arrive in large numbers, assess each community, and leave members behind to collect taxes. The group reportedly compels residents to harvest crops and provide food supplies, confiscating livestock from those who refuse to comply.

Alhaji Isa Salihu Kalenjeni, Chairman of Tangaza LGA, confirmed these actions, stating, "They are not only collecting zakat but are also robbing residents. Recently, they seized a shop owner's car, releasing it only after he paid a sum of N350,000."

Major Gen. Edward Buba, Director of Defence Media Operations, warned that Lakurawas has ties to ISIS in the Sahel region, exploiting Nigeria's porous borders with Niger and Mali. He emphasized that the military is actively tracking and neutralizing the group, urging citizens to report any suspicious activity immediately.

## Army Chief Oluyede Visits Sokoto Amid Emergence Of New Terrorist Group

*The Acting Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Olufemi Oluyede, has arrived in Sokoto for his first operational visit to the 8th Division Area of Responsibility.*

During his visit, Oluyede is expected to meet with the Sultan of Sokoto and engage with other key stakeholders within the division's jurisdiction.

As part of the visit, the Army Chief will address troops participating in Operation Fasan Yamma, the ongoing military operation combating terrorist activities in the northwest region.

Oluyede's arrival in Sokoto comes just three days after the Defence Headquarters confirmed the emergence of a new terror group known as 'Lakurawa,' which has been causing unrest in Sokoto and Kebbi states.

Five local government areas in Sokoto State have been identified as areas affected by the activities of this group.

Defence Media Operations Director, Major General Edward Buba, stated that while the Lakurawa group is contributing to the rising insecurity in

the North-West, the Armed Forces of Nigeria are actively working to contain their threat and ensure stability in the region.

*"Troops are confronted with a new terrorist sect in the North-West. This sect is known as Lakuwaras, the Lakuwaras are affiliated to terrorists in the Sahel particularly from Mali and Niger Republic.*

*"They began incursion into Northern part of Nigeria, mainly Sokoto and Kebbi states, and like I mentioned, they came in from Niger and Mali axis," General Buba said.*

He added that the new terror group emerged from Mali and the Republic of Niger after the coup that led to the breakdown of military cooperation between Nigeria and Niger.

The military also declared nine terrorists wanted for their roles in the security challenges bedeviling the nation.

## My appointment is political, mission is to recapture Kano for APC

### - New Minister

**T**he newly appointed minister of State, Housing and Urban Development, Yusuf Abdullahi Ata, has said his mission is to deliver Kano state to the All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2027.

Ata made this known shortly after his maiden visit to Kano after being sworn into the Federal Executive Council.

Speaking to journalists, he said, "My appointment was mainly for political reason, APC has lost Kano state and now it will take Kano state. The main problem is the Kano Central and I am from there.

*"Even as a minister I will continue to sit in this Ward, we are going to work very*

*hard to see that APC gains control of Kano State by 2027.*

*"My mission like I said is purely political, even that I am posted to the ministry of housing and urban development, I will do my work but I will be coming to Kano state every week so as to work towards gaining control of the state."*

Ata appreciated President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for the appointment, adding that it is not for his own person but for the citizens of Kano and Nigeria as well.

He therefore assured the president that come 2027, Kano is going to be for APC.

*"This is my assurance given to the President," he said.*

# Chief Justice Kekere-Ekun: Few Judges are Tarnishing the Image of Judiciary

**T**he Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun, has acknowledged that few judges were giving the Nigerian judiciary a bad name, insisting that the country's judiciary is blessed with upright and courageous judges. The Emir of Kano, His Royal Majesty Khalifa Muhammad Sanusi II, also asked the Nigerian judges especially justices of the Supreme Court to administer justice with the fear of God, and also remember that they are accountable to God.

This is just as a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Dr Wale Babalakin has lamented what he described as the deterioration of judicial independence in Nigeria occasioned by the increasing influence of state governors and other political figures over judges.

Justice Kekere-Ekun stated this yesterday at a public discourse on 'Ethics, Morality And The Law', organised by the Movement for Islamic Culture and Awareness (MICA) to mark its 30th anniversary and the elevation of Justice Habeeb Adewale Abiru to the Supreme Court.

She maintained that Nigeria was endowed with very hardworking and knowledgeable judges, warning however, that judges should remember that as "individuals we are accountable to ourselves and to God." The CJN added that the perspective of the ordinary citizen, who observed and assessed the extent to which ethics, morality and the law co-existed harmoniously in the society must be taken into consideration.

She added that public acceptance of the law also hinged on its alignment with fundamental principles, the need for clarity, stability and independence of the judiciary, as well as the fair exercise of authority by law enforcement.

According to her, the foundations of justice were influenced by the Abrahamic faith prevalent in the society, adding that both Islam and Christianity preach morality, uprightness, and righteousness. She said: "The role of the legal practitioner within this framework, merits a particular attention. "The lawyer, often seen as both antagonist and protagonist in the pursuit of justice, must navigate a terrain where law, ethics, and morality intersect.

"This dual role requires balancing the scriptures and the law with ethical constitutions, often containing moral and legal questions that may seem at odds. As a minister in the temple of justice, the lawyer's commitment to justice involves upholding legal standards, while advancing principles that follow society's ethical expectations.

"The degree to which this alignment is achieved influences public trust in the judiciary and the law, affirming that our legal system should not only administer justice but also resonate with the community's moral convictions.

Justice Kekere-Ekun stated: "I will say we take notes of everything that has been said. As the Honourable Attorney General pointed out, and this happens in every sector of our society, it is unfortunate that by and large our judges are knowledgeable, upright, courageous, and hardworking but few ones are giving us a bad name."

In his remarks at the event, the Emir of Kano, Sanusi II, asked Nigerian judges, especially the justices of the Supreme Court, to administer justice with the fear of God.

The Emir, who said his New Year resolution is not to be controversial, however, urged the judges not to allow hatred for people to make them do what is not right.

He said judges should focus more on substantive justice, and not rely on technicalities.

"Do not be an advocate for wrongdoers and do not be an advocate for those who deceive themselves, because Allah does not love sinful wrongdoers.

"When your friends come to you when the government comes to you, and you listen to them and you tilt judgment in their favour. Ask yourself, who will be your advocate before God, on the Day of Judgment?" Sanusi queried.

In his remarks, the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, Prince Lateef Fagbemi (SAN) underscored the importance of fairness and integrity in the Nigerian legal system, urging legal professionals to recommit to ethical values.

"First, you have to be good. On the inside, you have to be good," he said. "You have to be able to improve our personnel, our sister, our brother, our colleague," he added.

Speaking on the theme "Ethics, Morality, and the Law – Christian Perspective," the Very Reverend Professor Konyinsola Ajayi (SAN) condemned what he termed "lawlessness in the law" and urged Nigeria's legal professionals to reflect on the role of ethics and morality within the judiciary.

Ajayi cited specific cases as examples of the judicial system's failure, including the controversy surrounding the Emir of Kano, which he described as "an emanation of lawlessness."

He questioned whether the rule of law truly underpins current judicial practices, adding that the decisions of the courts often confuse the public rather than provide clarity.

He said: "The law today is providing the greatest uncertainty you can think about. The Nigerian judiciary was one of the best in the world. Australia, New Zealand, and the Commonwealth referenced Nigerian court decisions," he said.



The senior lawyer said today's legal system suffered from an erosion of this reputation due to inconsistent judgments and a perceived lack of accountability among judges. Addressing the religious implications of the judiciary's role, Ajayi appealed to the moral and ethical responsibilities that judges bear. "God is the author of morality and ethics. He created the law and requires it to be underpinned by these things."

Ajayi called for all Nigerians, particularly those in positions of power, to examine their actions within the broader ethical framework of their faiths.

*"Justice is the foundation of society, and we must be careful to ensure that it does not become what will bring the house down,"* he concluded.

Earlier, speaking on the theme: "Ethics, Morality, and the Law - Role of Legal Practitioner," a former Governor of Lagos State, Babatunde Fashola (SAN) said the greatest tool that humans invented was the law, adding that law separated humans from animals.

Also speaking, Babalakin (SAN) decried the deterioration of judicial independence in Nigeria. He condemned what he described as a "systemic collapse" of the nation's judicial system, calling for urgent reform to restore its independence and integrity.

He noted that the declining autonomy of the judiciary was due to the increasing influence of state governors and political figures over judges.

He said: "The problem of the legal system is systemic. "We are trying to treat the consequences, not the causes of the problem."

He argued that the decline in the judiciary began in the mid-1970s, when "most eminent judges were arbitrarily retired without trial, without questioning, marking a turning point for the nation's judicial standards."

Reflecting on the past, Babalakin recalled the reverence once held for judges.

He recounted how Mobolaji Johnson, the former military governor of Lagos State, had reportedly invited the esteemed Justice JIC Taylor to a state

function.

According to him, Taylor declined, "prioritising his judicial duties over the governor's invitation. That was the end of the story."

"There is no system that can have the judicial officers under a strong influence of the executive that can do well," he said.

He condemned the practice where some governors referred to judges as 'my judges', adding that in those days, no governor would have had the audacity to refer to a judge as 'my judge'.

Babalakin further highlighted the financial challenges faced by judges, particularly in state courts.

Criticising what he called a "culture of mediocrity" that infiltrated Nigeria's legal practice, Babalakin called on legal professionals to "reposition and rebuild" the profession from foundational levels, including law school and the bar.

He urged the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) to step up and reclaim its historic role as a moral and legal force.

## Mass burial for 15 Kebbi residents killed by new terror group, Lakurawa

**F**ifteen victims of a tragic attack by a new terror group, Lakurawa on Mera village, in Augie Local Government Area of Kebbi State, North-West Nigeria have been given mass burial.

The funeral prayer was attended by Deputy Governor, Umar Tafida, Commissioner of Police who led other security chiefs, and Emir of Argungu HRH Isma'ila Mera.

Tafida offered condolences and support to the bereaved families saying that the State Governor stands with them and will work closely with security agencies to prevent further incidents.

The Emir of Argungu on his part urged unity and resilience. He called on security agencies to intensify efforts to ensure community safety.

The funeral prayer included prayers for peace and for the repose of the souls of the departed, with a commitment to strengthen regional security and stability.

The government further reassured citizens of ongoing efforts to protect lives and prevent future tragedies.

# National Assembly Divided Over President Tinubu's Tax Reform Bills

Members of the National Assembly are currently split over the contentious Tax Reform Bills introduced by the administration of President [Bola Tinubu](#).

On September 3, President Tinubu transmitted four tax reform bills to the National Assembly for consideration.

The proposed reforms are based on recommendations from the Presidential Committee on Fiscal and Tax Reforms, chaired by Taiwo Oyedele, which aimed to review existing tax laws.

The four bills include the Nigeria Tax Bill 2024, which seeks to provide a comprehensive fiscal framework for taxation in the country, and the Tax Administration Bill, designed to create a clear legal framework for all taxes and reduce disputes.

The Nigeria Revenue Service Establishment Bill proposes repealing the Federal Inland Revenue Service Act and establishing the Nigeria Revenue Service.

The Joint Revenue Board Establishment Bill aims to create a tax tribunal and a tax ombudsman.

Central to the debate is the proposed shift to a derivation-based model for distributing Value Added Tax (VAT). This model would allocate tax revenue to states based on where goods and services are consumed, rather than where companies have their headquarters. The proposal has met with significant resistance.

The 19 northern governors and traditional rulers rejected the bills, citing concerns that the derivation-based VAT distribution model does not align with the interests of northern states and other subnational entities.

The Northern Governors' Forum made it clear that the bills would be detrimental to the region's economic standing.

Adding to the controversy, the National Economic Council, led by Vice-President Kashim Shettima, recommended that the bills be withdrawn to allow for broader consultations and consensus building.

Although the bills are yet to be presented for a second reading where their principles will be debated, lawmakers have voiced differing opinions.

Senator Ali Ndume (APC, Borno South) recently openly opposed the bills in a television interview and pledged to rally other northern lawmakers to resist their passage.

Speaking with Sunday PUNCH, Senator Ogoshi Onawo of Nasarawa South Senatorial District kicked against the bills, saying it was unfair for the government to continue imposing taxes on Nigerians who were battling economic hardship.

He berated the Tinubu-led administration for being insensitive to the plights of Nigerians, insisting that the tax reforms would worsen the hardship in the country.

Onawo called on Tinubu to heed the advice of NEC and either withdraw the bills or rework them to capture the recommendations of Nigerians.

*"I think the timing of the bills is not right because of the economic hardship being experienced by all Nigerian citizens. The bill is just to impose more hardship on Nigerians. Generally, all over the world, when tax is imposed on an economy, it is the consumers that bear the brunt.*

*"Tax generally is a good thing if the government is responsive enough to the yearnings of the people. There is no point for me paying tax when the roads are bad, and there are no basic social amenities, and if the government is not responsive enough to provide those things that I'm supposed to enjoy and I'm paying tax on, I think it is unfair for the government to be taxing people left, right and centre.*

*"Every Nigerian is paying multiple taxes now on so many things, if those multiple taxes can be streamlined and made affordable for Nigerians to live a comfortable life, I don't think tax is a bad idea, but when the government is collecting*

*tax and the people are not seeing the effect of the tax, then I think it needs a rethink,"* the lawmaker said.

A senator from the North-Central, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the bills were still under consideration, but assured that Nigerians would have a say in their outcome.

The lawmaker said, *"We will do justice to the bills; we will allow Nigerians to have a say and take part in the process and a true reflection on of our constituents that will prevail."*

However, lawmakers from the South-West dismissed fears over possible marginalisation of any region in the implementation of a new tax regime.

Defending the bills, a House of Representative member from the Ikorodu Federal Constituency, Lagos State, Babajimi Benson, said a rejig of tax management strategies had become imperative because the old models did not yield much in recent years.

He said the bills reflected a pragmatic approach by the Tinubu government to address longstanding challenges in the tax administration.

According to him, not all the governors are opposed to the bills, adding that some merely asked for clarifications in the proposals by the President.

He pledged the readiness of the Green Chamber to thoroughly scrutinise the bills before passage.

*"This reform is designed to transform our tax system, providing exemptions to the most vulnerable businesses and individuals, eliminating the burden of multiple taxation, and enhancing the effective mobilisation and management of the nation's revenue.*

*"Regarding the derivation policy, which mandates that a portion of revenue generated within a state is returned to that state, I believe that no state will be disadvantaged. Significant revenue streams come from various states across the federation, including*

Kano, Kaduna, Rivers, and Lagos.

“To ensure fairness, the proposed five per cent set aside by the Federal Government could be used as an equalisation transfer to prevent any state from receiving less revenue than it would have under the current distribution formula”, Benson said.

In his contribution, a federal lawmaker from Osun State, Oluwole Oke, said controversies trailing the bills were not unexpected, adding that the National Assembly would do

its part and subject them to public inputs.

He reminded those opposing the bills not to forget that *“tax bills/laws usually stem from tax design which is based on the peculiarities of a society and several other factors.”*

*“A bill is like raw gold at the goldsmith workshop. The governors are bound to have their opinions and positions perhaps based on well-researched positions.”*

*“We will all meet at the public hearing and in the committee of the whole vis-a-vis voting and fortunately, it's my area of specialisation,”* he said.

When Sunday Punch reached out to Oyedele and asked if there were plans to engage Nigerians and the governors on the bills, he said, *“Yes, we plan for further engagements and some are ongoing.”*

Meanwhile, debate on the bills is expected to dominate proceedings in both chambers of the National Assembly when it resumes from its one-week oversight recess on November 19.

## 24 Hours after DQ Announced Emergence of New Terror Group, Bandits Kill 15 in Kebbi

**F**ifteen people have been brutally murdered by rampaging bandits who invaded Mera community in the Augie Local Government Area of Kebbi State, leaving their usual trademark-sorrow, tears and blood.

The latest attack, according to the authorities, was one of the tragic security breach in the state in recent time.

The Deputy Governor of the state, Mallam Abubakar Umar Tafida, confirmed this when he paid a condolence visit to bereaved families in the community.

He reassured citizens of the state government's commitment to preventing further attacks by improving security in the state and bringing the perpetrators to justice.

Tafida emphasised that the government pledged the government's commitment to continued collaboration with all security agencies in the state as part of the wider efforts to guarantee the safety and well-being of citizens.

The Emir of Argungu, Alhaji Samaila Mera, expressed profound sorrow over the brutal attack, urging unity and resilience among the people.

The 15 victims have been laid to rest in a funeral attended by the Deputy Governor, the Commissioner of Police, and the Emir.

The Mera tragic killings came hot on the heels of recent attacks across the country, especially the North, due to insecurity.

On Friday, a day after the Defence Headquarters announced the emergence of a new terror group in the North West, called the *Lukarawas*, two security officials comprising a member of the Katsina State Community Watch Corps, and a vigilante member, were reported killed during an encounter with armed bandits terrorising Jibia Local Government Area of the state.

Five persons also sustained gunshot injuries during the attack.

The hoodlums were said to have launched the attacks at about 21.15 hrs (9:15 pm), on Ka'ida, Unguwar One Boy, and Danmarke quarters, all in Jibia Township, Jibia LGA, Katsina State.

Confirming the incident via a press statement issued on Friday, the spokesman of the State Police Command, Abubakar Sadiq, an Assistant Superintendent of Police, ASP, said the injured were receiving treatment at a local hospital.

Sadiq further revealed that the Command, in collaboration with the military, members of the state community watch corps, and vigilantes, successfully foiled the attacks. The swift response of the joint security team, the spokesman

revealed, was led by the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Jibia Local Government Area. He added that the team engaged the bandits in fierce gun duel that lasted over an hour.

And according to Sadiq, *“The superior firepower and tactical advantage of the joint security team eventually forced the bandits to retreat with unspecified number of casualties, as the operation resulted in the successful rescue of sixteen (16) victims trapped by the bandits.”*

*“Further development will be communicated in due course, please.”*

Only last Thursday, the Defence Headquarters announced the emergence of a new terror group, the *Lukarawas*, that has been terrorizing residents of rural communities in the North West.

The terror group emerged after the military coup, in neighbouring Niger Republic, that sacked President Mohamed Bazoum and installed a junta.

As a consequence of the coup, ECOWAS, led by Nigeria, imposed sanctions on Niger Republic, an action that did not sit well with leaders of the junta. Though the sanctions were later lifted, Niger pulled out of ECOWAS and halted military partnerships with Nigeria, including its membership of the Multi-National Joint Task Force that involves Chad and Benin Republic.

## Coalition Lauds Gov Radda for Recruiting 550 Community Watch Corps Operatives

The Katsina State chapter of the Coalition of Northern Groups (CNG) has commended the state Governor, Dikko Umaru Radda, for recruiting and training additional 550 personnel into the Katsina Community Watch Corps (KCWC).

Radda had recently recruited, trained and graduated another batch of 550 personnel into the state-owned security outfit to support conventional security agencies in combating security challenges in the state.

The coalition in a statement made available to THISDAY last Sunday by its Coordinator, Abdullahi Kabir, said the recruitment of the personnel further underscores Governor Radda's unwavering commitment in addressing security challenges in the state.

The group said the community-driven and participatory security initiative would tackle the recent resurgence of banditry in some parts of Katsina State, and enhance the security and stability of the state.

It added that the recruitment drive further highlights the importance of community-led security efforts in the state aimed at empowering citizens to work alongside state authorities in safeguarding their neighbourhoods.

The coalition implored the newly recruited 550-member community watch corps to discharge their responsibilities with integrity and commitment devoid of partiality and anchored on principles of fairness, justice and professionalism.

The statement read: *“The Coalition of Northern Groups (CNG) Katsina State chapter has commended the efforts of Governor Dikko Umar Radda, for his steadfast commitment to enhancing the*

*security and stability of Katsina State.*

*“The successful passing out parade of the second intake of this programme is a highly commendable initiative, especially in the wake of recent security challenges in areas like Jibia. This proactive measure demonstrates the governor's dedication to protecting our communities and securing the well-being of all citizens.”*

The group, however, urged residents of the state to support members of the community watch corps to succeed in their primary assignment of protecting lives and property of the citizens by providing intelligence information on activities of criminal elements.

While noting that the support of citizens was indispensable in achieving lasting peace and security in Katsina State, the coalition reiterated its readiness in supporting the local security outfit in tackling security challenges bedevilling the state.

## Even as the Presidency denies fowl play in the Port Harcourt Refinery, NNPC Workers Reveal How Company Deceived Nigerians With Port Harcourt Refinery Functionality

Some workers of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC) have stirred up a hornet's nest over the claim by the company that it has officially commenced operations and refining of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) from the hitherto moribund Port Harcourt Refinery.

The staff revealed that contrary to the claim by NNPC that it has started trucking out petrol from the Port Harcourt Refinery, the refinery has not started refining fuel, not to talk of trucking and dispensing same to members of the public.

The sources disclosed that NNPC, in order to make Nigerians believe its alleged lie, bought “Cracked C5

petroleum resins” and blended it with other products including Naphtha to sell to the Nigerian public as though the refinery processed it.

According to the sources, the plant is functioning but it is the old one of 60,000bpd capacity of which cannot presently refine PMS, except diesel.

Sources added that the part of the refinery that produces PMS is yet to start.

Maintaining that the announcement made by NNPC is false, the sources further said that NNPC purchased the cracked 5 modified petroleum resins from an Indorama Eleme Petrochemicals Limited (IEPL) based in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

It could be recalled that the NNPC had on Tuesday in a statement, backed by some videos of the company's branded trucks, had announced that the Port Harcourt Refinery had become operational and that it had started trucking out PMS from the refinery.

The CEO of NNPC, Mele Kyari had described the refinery as a significant milestone in Nigeria, saying the nation need not to be oil dependent again.

Kyari also claimed that trucks began loading petroleum products which include PMS, Automotive Gas Oil (AGO) or diesel and Household Kerosene (HHK) or Kerosene, while other product slates will be dispatched as well.

# PH Refineries: Still, not so much to cheer

By Taiwo Adisa

(Published in the Sunday Tribune, December 1, 2024).

Members of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Limited (NNPCL) management team were in celebrations on Tuesday as the company announced the restart of the 60,000 barrels capacity Port Harcourt Refinery, which had been moribund in the last two decades. I must confess that I was one of the skeptics all the while. I was convinced that nothing good would come from the dead Nigerian refineries, Port Harcourt, Warri, and Kaduna, owing to past experiences.

Recall that the Turn Around Maintenance executed on those refineries started from the era of the goggled General Sani Abacha in the late 1990s. It continued all through Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo, Umaru Yar'Adua, Goodluck Jonathan, Muhammadu Buhari, and now, Bola Ahmed Tinubu. At a point, we were told that the country has spent \$20 billion trying to revive the four dead refineries, the exact amount Aliko Dangote spent to bring alive the giant refinery in Lekki, Lagos.

So, as I watched the clips of NNPCL's officials celebrating the return of Port Harcourt Refinery, I was enveloped in skepticism. Once bitten, they say, twice shy. In this case, the promises made to bring back the refineries over the years are more than basketful. And you will agree with me that the doubts I had were not unfounded.

I was part of a Senate Committee team that embarked on a series of oversight functions on the Port Harcourt Refineries between 2012 and 2013. After hours of tours around gigantic edifices, including entering into some restricted segments, the committee would retire to the boardroom and get treated to several slide shows of the journey so far and the preferred destination. In one of those briefings, I

could recall the head of the refineries at the time giving very firm assurances that the refineries were on their way back, latest by November 2014. He said that everything that needed to be procured had been done and paid for. He said that the government, in its determination to resurrect the dead was ensuring that money would not be the stumbling block and that it was either the equipment that needed replacement was already being produced or in some cases, were already being shipped to Nigeria. The government had made all the payments, he said, adding that nothing was going to hinder the delivery of the refineries.

Alas! 2014 came and gone. We entered 2015, and there came the Change in government. The stories around the refineries also kept changing alongside the slogan of the Buhari government, and in line with that rigmarole, nothing concrete happened in the eight years of Pa Buhari. But that did not mean that funding of the TAMs stopped. The government kept pumping money into the same project we were told was nearing completion in 2013 and you would marvel, at what had happened to the strict assurances given by the managers of Port Harcourt Refineries at the time. But then, if you recall that this is Nigeria and that stories about the government's service delivery can change colours as fast as the chameleon, you wouldn't have too much heartache. So the feeling was, let's wait and see as we heard of the smiles on the lips of the NNPC lords last Tuesday.

Even when the corporation reaffirmed late on Tuesday that it had indeed started producing at the 60,000-capacity refinery in Port Harcourt, something still kept ringing in my ear, let's wait and see. That same night, Sahara Reporters came up with a story

that nearly deflated the NNPC's balloon. It claimed that the company merely bought items from a nearby supplier and blended the same into what it claimed to have been refined at the old refinery. Not a few of those who were already wearing their dancing shoes got the shock that night. What could be amiss? The shock waves also pulled the management of the NNPC from its usual taciturnity on critical matters as its spokesman had to come up with some clarifications.

The company's spokesman, Olufemi Shoneye, said the story by the online newspaper was informed by ignorance, adding that the refining process for petrol was complex. In an interview published by Nigerian Tribune on Friday, Shoneye further clarified and urged Nigerians not to be swayed by individuals whom he said are misusing technical terms "they don't fully understand to spread misinformation or hinder progress."

According to him, "Refining and blending are interconnected processes crucial for crude oil processing and optimizing refinery yields, especially when producing Premium Motor Spirit (PMS). PMS is not a single product but a carefully crafted blend of various refinery outputs, including naphtha, reformate, pentane-plus hydrocarbons, and other middle distillates, designed to enhance value and meet consumer needs. Blending operations are standard in refineries worldwide, with the process and ratios varying based on factors like crude oil type, refinery configuration, and specific fuel requirements (such as octane rating or sulfur content)."

Notwithstanding the explanations by the NNPC, there remain some unanswered questions that continue to make the celebrations tentative. One of

the issues is the implication of the NNPC refining on the local market and then why the price from the company is higher than that of Dangote. Petrol dealers said during the week that NNPC was selling higher than Dangote by N75 per litre. That should be strange. Recall that on Friday, Dangote Refinery announced it was ready to sell petrol at N970 per litre to anyone willing to buy from two million litres upwards. PETROAN claimed NNPC was offering a litre at N1,030. The week before, Dangote had announced a N20 naira per litre reduction on petrol. So, as far as Dangote is concerned, Nigerians know where he stands with prices. Curiously, the NNPC came up with a blank cheque. Though it announced that the old PH Refinery could attend to some 200 trucks and that some tankers had already started loading fuel, no one was sure at what price. And there was

no clear confirmation any such number of trucks were loaded. How would the tankers load fuel at an unknown price and who would they dispense the same to? We are also left in the dark as to how much NNPC was going to get the crude. Is it the same price as Dangote or lower? Same as the international price? Those are details the NNPC needs to provide. The questions are against the backdrop of the operational procedures, which ensured that the NNPC enjoyed a special government allocation of 445,000 barrels per day for domestic consumption. All the questions again dovetail into the whole fuel subsidy gamut, and the voodoo the Nigerian citizens have been victims of all the while.

As much as the NNPC, the president, and leaders of the All Progressives

Congress (APC) would want to thumb their chests and announce themselves as the savior of the Nigerian nation on account of the revival of one of the four dead refineries, there are still questions to be answered. So they should not be surprised to see the cautious enthusiasm on the faces of their countrymen. And now that the NNPC and President Tinubu have done the unthinkable, they need to go the whole hog. Control of the production process of any product should give leverage on price determination and that should bring something positive to the men, women, and children on the street. Even if all four refineries in Port Harcourt, Warri, and Kaduna start operations tomorrow and petroleum products still hover above the N1,000 per litre range, the lips would at best only wear wry smiles.

## French Military Barracks in the North of Nigeria?

*Abubakar Mu'azu, Unimaid*

I saw a post by a Facebook friend stating that France is going to build the biggest barracks in Africa for French troops in the northern parts of Nigeria. The source of the story is Damagaram Post, an online publication in Zinder, Republic of Niger.

Apart from this highlight, there are no additional details to the story. Given the reputation of Damagaram Post, it will be foolish to treat this news as a rumour. The Republic of Niger, after the coup that toppled Mohammed Bazoum, decided to expel the French and American military that had set up separate bases in their country.

Both France and America started looking for alternative locations for their military bases in Africa. It was reported, following a press statement by highly respected scholars and activists from Nigeria, that the French were making a deal with the Nigerian government to relocate their base to Nigeria. The Americans were reportedly thinking of doing the same.

The scholars had raised concerns about the implications of establishing foreign military bases on Nigerian soil. Although the Nigerian government chose to deny that such an imperialist and neo-colonial project was not true, the posting by the Damagaram Post resurrects this officially denied plan.

The idea of having French military bases in Africa has nothing to do with the preservation, protection and promotion of the interest or security of the people and the countries that they are based. In reality, these are control forces to guarantee and sustain the exploitation of the countries that they ruled under direct colonial subjugation.

The Americans established a drone military base in the Republic of Niger under the pretext of "helping the countries in the Sahel to fight terrorists". Despite the presence of the American military base, terrorists operating under I SWAP and Jama'atul Ahlus Sunnah Liddawa'ati wal Jihad,

better known as Boko Haram, were able to wrought attacks across Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria and Niger. It was strange that Nigeria did not object to the Republic of Niger then against having an American military base. From the experiences of Nigeria, the Americans refrained from helping the Nigerian military from acquiring weapons, with Nigerian hard earned money. Boko Haram must have been grateful to the Americans for that decision.

Regarding France, there were reports of French nationals caught in Nigeria and Cameroon working with the terrorists. The usual response that followed, in the character of international politics, was to simply deny it. The victims of the activities of Boko Haram across the three states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe were being made not to believe the practical evidence of foreign nationals involvement. There were also helicopter sightings allegedly dropping arms and ammunition for the insurgents that were also denied.

The point is France remains a strong suspect nation in the terrorists' activities in Nigeria. This suspicion is rooted in the historical antecedents of France against a United Nigeria. Its role in opposing the establishment of ECOWAS. It has sabotaged the plan by ECOWAS to have a common currency, the Eco. It is in line with its imperialistic designs to keep siphoning wealth from its forcefully acquired colonies through the Franc arrangement. It is sad that after the Republic of Niger pushed France out, it was able to convince ECOWAS to threaten war against the Republic of Niger in the name of restoration of democracy. Fortunately, the people in the northern parts of Nigeria recognising the irresponsibility of such an adventure opposed it. This is because it was going to be a battle between Nigeria and Niger, in the name of ECOWAS. Although no

senseless war of Africans against Africans was fought, France has succeeded in undermining the unity of ECOWAS with the Republics of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger opting out.

It does seem Nigeria is increasingly becoming a ready and willing lackey of the interests of America and lately but strangely that of France. It is a disturbing development, a tragedy for the whole of Africa and a subversion against the people. There is the need for the people in the northern parts of Nigeria, particularly, to oppose any plan to allow France to build a military base in any of their states. It is a dangerous adventure. Given the history of Western military bases, it will make the people of Nigeria second class citizens, open to further imperialists' exploitation and perpetuation of poverty. This

is what France has continued to do in the countries that it colonised across Africa.

Nigeria, especially the northern parts where France is likely to want to build its biggest military barracks in Africa, must be opposed. The Governor's and members of the National Assembly must send a clear message that their territory cannot be used to further France's exploitation schemes.

No part of Nigeria should allow this colonisation, neo-colonial, project should be allowed to happen.

## Exposed: How Herdsmen Brought Deadly Lakurawa Terror Group to Sokoto

Details have emerged on how the Lakurawa terror group settled in Sokoto with help from local herdsmen seeking protection from bandits.

Last week, the Nigerian Army warned about this new threat, explaining that the group has roots stretching back to 2018.

According to a source, the group first appeared in the Gongono Forest in Tangaza Local Government Area in 2018. They were reportedly brought in by herdsmen who wanted defense against repeated attacks on their cattle by local bandits.

On December 16, 2018, a resident received a call from Ibrahim Bello, then the Director of the Department of State Services (DSS) in Sokoto.

Bello informed him about a group of armed militants occupying the forest, who were receiving support from the local governor, Aminu Tambuwal, to help security forces drive them out.

The group, allegedly from Algeria and Mali, established a community following strict Islamic rules, banning smoking, drinking, and other non-conforming behaviours. They enforced tax payments on herdsmen with large cattle populations, as mandated by Islamic teachings.

Reports indicate that their base in the dense Gongono Forest gives the group access to key routes between Nigeria and Niger, which may help them stay hidden and operate in secrecy.

The group's violent tactics were first witnessed in their attack on Balle District's traditional leader, whom they

killed after a dispute with his son. This marked the beginning of a series of attacks and strict controls on local villages.

In a recent motion, National Assembly member Sani Yakubu urged the government to increase security in the area. He warned that Lakurawa fighters, joined by other bandits, were making life impossible for farmers and villagers. He requested the military to send more troops to secure the forests.

Maj-Gen Edward Buba, spokesperson for the Defense Headquarters, confirmed last week that the military has located the group's hideouts in Sokoto and Kebbi.

"Now that we know where they are, we are already going after them, and we will take them out," he said, promising action against the group, which is suspected to have links to ISIS.

## Governor Idris Dispatches Delegation to NSA, CDS for Support - As Lakurawa Bandits Moves To Kebbi.

**K**ebbi State Governor, Comrade Nasir Idris has sent a high-powered delegation to the National Security Adviser (NSA) Mallam Nuhu Ribadu and the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Christopher Musa to request for immediate support following the attacks on Mera village in the state which resulted to the killing of 15 innocent villagers.

The delegation led by the Minister of Budget and Economic Planning Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu included Senator Bala ibn Na'Allah, the National Organising Secretary of the All progressive (APC) Alhaji Suleiman Muhammad Argungu and Barrister Nasiru Ibrahim Junju.

Comrade Nasir kauran Gwandu said

the request was necessary considering the large number of the heavily armed bandits moving into the state from the neighbouring Sokoto state.

In a Press release, signed by the Special Adviser on Communication and Strategy, the Governor expressed fears that unless the joint teams of the army, police and other security agencies already overstretched are given immediate support, the northern part of Kebbi State, particularly Argungu emirate will soon be taken over by the strage terrorist.

Governor Idris assured that the state government is prepared to provide whatever is required to save the lives and properties of the citizens of the state.

The Governor has already released the sum of N50m for the families of the deceased and other victims of the attacks.

Similarly, Senator Atiku Abubakar Bagudu has given N30m to the families of the victims, in addition to the N50m released by Comrade Nasir Idris.

Senator Atiku Bagudu's led delegation has already delivered the Governor's request with assurance of immediate action by the security agencies.

Last Friday, the Lakurawa bandits in thousands attacked Mera village of Augie Local government area, sharing boundaries with Tangaza and Silame local government areas of Sokoto State.

## Depositor BEWARE as CBN Liquidates 20 Banks

**T**he Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) says it paid N1.39 billion to 36,163 depositors of 110 closed microfinance banks and three primary mortgage banks.

He said this followed the recent revocation of some MFBs and PMBs licences by the Central Bank of, revealing that the payments of the statutory insured sums are still ongoing.

The NDIC boss explained that depositors with funds exceeding the insured limit would receive liquidation dividends after recovering debts and selling the closed banks' physical assets.

NDIC managing director Bello Hasdisclosed this at the corporation's 'Special Day' at the 2023 Lagos International Trade Fair on Thursday in Lagos.

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Mr Hassaid the corporation promptly commenced the liquidation of these banks and began disbursing insured sums to depositors within a record time of three days of the banks' closure.

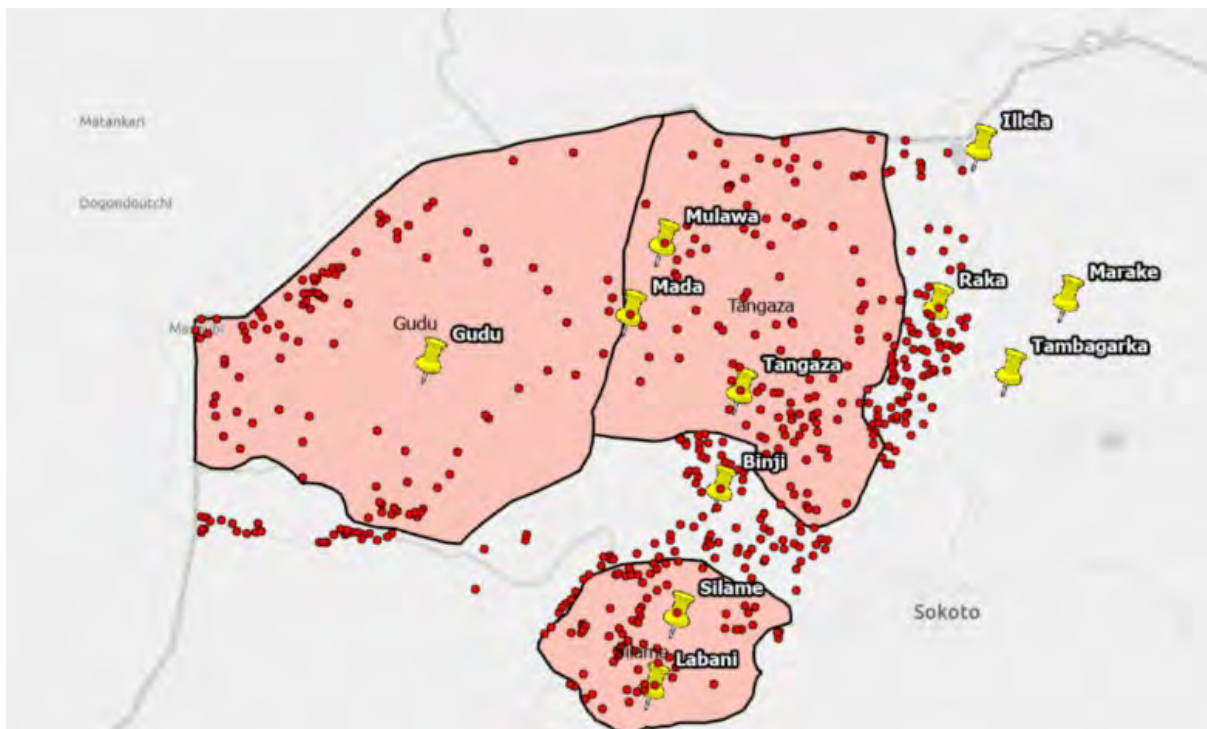
"In another development, the corporation is currently in the process of verifying and paying liquidation dividends to depositors and stakeholders of 20 banks in liquidation, including Allied Bank, Peak Merchant Bank, Commerce Bank, Continental Merchant Bank, Financial Merchant Bank, Fortune Bank, Gulf Bank, Hallmark Bank, Icon Merchant Bank, Liberty Bank, Merchant Bank, North South Bank, Premier Commercial Bank, Prime Merchant Bank, Progress Bank, and Merchant Bank," he said.

Mr Hasurged the public, especially traders and businesspeople, to keep their funds in licensed banks, advising them to avoid patronising wonder banks and Ponzi schemes.

"The NDIC, in its efforts to boost depositors' confidence in the financial landscape, has continued to address genuine cases of infractions and complaints in relation to their respective insured institutions," said Mr Has. *"In this regard, the corporation operates a 24-hour toll-free Helpdesk line (080063424357) and an email ([email protected]) for depositors to put forward their inquiries on the benefits and operations of Deposit Insurance Scheme in."*



## **Mapping the Dangerous Enclaves of Lakurawa Terrorists in North West Nigeria**



*Hundreds of communities are vulnerable to attacks and unholy control by the menacing Lakurawa terrorists operating in Sokoto, North West Nigeria. Mansir Muhammad/HumAngle.*

*A terrorist group has gained notoriety on the shores of Sokoto state after several years of covert infiltration and recruitment. Spreading cancerously to other states in the northwestern region, they have taken control of some fragile communities in the state, violating human rights and imposing corrosive doctrines on citizens.*

**A**uthorities in Sokoto called them a new terrorist group, even though they had existed for more than six years. When they infiltrated the state, helpless and unsuspecting villagers saw them as angels sent down to wipe out rural terrorists. On Nov. 6, the Sokoto government officially [announced](#) the existence of the Lakurawa terrorist group, raising an alarm over its deadly tendencies in parts of the state.

The defence headquarters would later [confirm](#) the state report, declaring the Lakurawa terrorist leaders wanted. The news made disturbing waves on social media, with concerned Nigerians worried about the safety of civilians. Sadly, a few days after these announcements, the terrorists struck in neighbouring Kebbi state, [killing](#) 15 people and displacing several others.

For over six years, the criminal organisation operated in an immersive fashion in different areas of Sokoto state, including Tangaza, Gudu, and Binji. They played on the emotion of a people desperate for protection against roving terrorists. Just when the people thought they had found new saviours, the Lakurawa introduced their radical ideologies and activities, putting civilians in a more difficult situation. Now, they do worse than the existing rural criminals, killing unarmed villagers, attacking

security agents, taxing farmers, herders and traders and imposing radical Islamist rules.

In a region already plagued by many terror groups, the foreign-linked Lakurawas appear to be greater threats to ordinary people. Locals say they fear a resurgence of a group similar to the deadly Boko Haram. The Arewa Consultative Forum, a group of concerned citizens from Northern Nigeria, have shown concern about the group, asking authorities to uproot them lest they pose more threats to human existence in the region.

*“Lakurawa, at this early stage of its emergence, must not be tolerated or allowed to entrench itself in our communities through benign neglect or kid-glove treatment, as was the case with Boko Haram insurgency, farmer-herder clashes, and banditry in the northeast, north-central, and northwest regions, respectively,”* the group said in a statement. *“This is the moment for our security agencies to act swiftly and decisively, using all available human and material resources without hesitation. We must leave no one in doubt about the*

*national resolve to deal decisively with any threat to Nigeria's peace and stability.”*

For what it is worth, concerned citizens have asked several questions about the geography of the Lakurawa and the danger the people caught up in their enclaves face. HumAngle has answered some of these questions using geographical information systems (GIS), on-the-ground reporting, and human intelligence from the affected areas.

HumAngle had previously [reported](#) the infiltration of terrorists from the neighbouring Niger Republic in the northwestern region of Nigeria and how it has compounded existing violence. We also [analysed](#) the underestimation of the Lakurawa terrorists, who had infiltrated Nigeria through the Niger Republic only to become a thorn in the flesh of authorities.

Where are the most vulnerable communities, towns, and states, and how have they suffered terrorism in the past? How have the porous transborder infrastructures aided the inflow of these terrorists into Nigeria?

## The geography of the Lakurawa terrorists

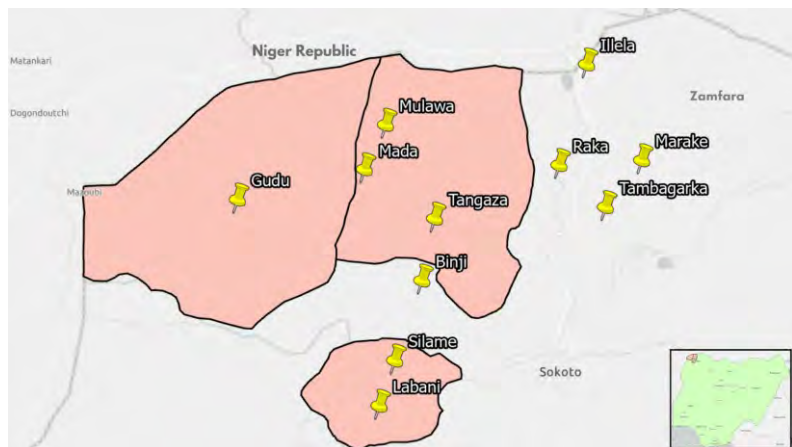
The Lakurawa criminal gang has been active in at least nine areas across three local governments —Tangaza, Gudu, and Silame — in Sokoto state, as well as in Marake and Illela localities near Zamfara. These towns are situated in the porous borders of Sokoto state, enabling armed groups to cross freely between Nigeria and Niger Republic. Once over the border, they establish camps in the region's expansive bushland. Although the areas are within the Sudan savannah, they contain dense forests and ungoverned spaces that provide cover and concealment to the terrorists in the region. A similar situation occurred in Sambisa, a forest area connecting multiple communities in Borno state.

From a geographical perspective, however, these three local governments have always been vulnerable to transnational criminals, making it unsurprising that they are affected. Historically, similar ungovernable areas in this region have been targeted by terror groups. This is why the Lakurawa were initially enlisted to guard communities but have since adopted methods and goals similar to the enemies they once opposed.

In such cross-border insurgencies, affected localities are typically positioned along indistinct frontiers across states. In this case, Gudu is only three kilometres from the national boundary, and Tangaza is eight kilometres away.



The three affected local government areas in Nigeria are close to the Niger Republic, where an internal political crisis has led to the dysfunction of border patrols on both sides. Visualisation by Mansir Muhammad/HumAngle.



The towns and districts above communities have reported sightings, attacks and activities.



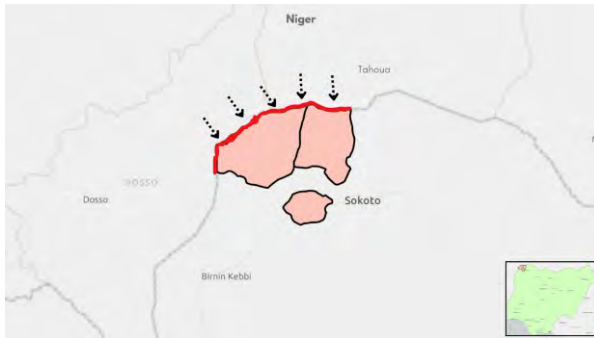
At least three locations in the bushes were reported to be their campgrounds in Tangaza — as seen above.

Although Silame is over 50 kilometres from the border, its proximity to Tangaza and Gudu has led to spillover impacts. As the Lakurawa terrorists settle further into these areas, their presence has gradually extended into neighbouring

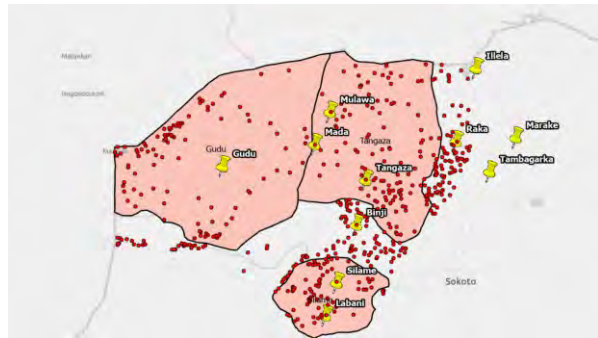
Zamfara state.

This development signals a growing reach for the Lakurawa group, pushing the crisis into additional communities. An extensive satellite investigation by HumAngle shows that as

## Mapping the Dangerous Enclaves of Lakurawa Terrorists



Close to the border, the terrorists move into Nigeria through the porous border areas. From there, they settle, understand the terrain and enter ungoverned forest areas where they camp to traverse local communities.



The communities dotted in red above fall within the range of the terrorists' control and potential influence. About 500 of these villages are populated, while some are isolated rural communities; being domiciled in the environs also means they can plan their actions to involve more high-profile areas.



The illustration above gives more perspective on the location of the area in which they are active in relation to Nigeria.

many as 500 locations, including villages, farming hamlets, and isolated settlements close to these affected areas, may experience direct attacks from the group in the coming weeks, months, or even years — depending on the group's growth trajectory.

However, our geospatial

analysis reveals a dire security situation about the conflict in this region, with at least 33 attacks across 14 locations this year alone. Most of these violent incidents were perpetrated by unaffiliated armed groups or local militias.

However, the recent emergence of Lakurawa, a

named group, signals a potentially more organised and structured threat. This development hints at a shift towards a more sophisticated and coordinated extremist presence, which, if not checked, may grow to tow the lines of established groups like Boko Haram and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).



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