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NATIONAL Ambassador

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Abia Govt Dissolves Enyimba Management, Tech Crew

By Chukwuemeka Chijioke

The Abia State Government has dissolved the management structure and technical crew of Enyimba International Football Club of Aba with immediate effect, in a decisive move to address the club's recent poor performances and tackle identified administrative and structural challenges.

The decision, according to the government, is part of a comprehensive restructuring initiative aimed at restoring the former glory of the two-time CAF Champions League winners, strengthening their institutional framework and repositioning the club for sustained success in Nigerian and continental football.

The State Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu, disclosed this in a statement issued on Tuesday, November 17, 2026, and made available on his official Facebook page.

Kanu explained that the government, following a comprehensive review of the club's current state of affairs, had concluded that far-reaching interventions were necessary to address the underlying challenges affecting its performance, administration and overall operations.

Consequently, the Ministry of Sports and Youth Development has been directed to spearhead the restructuring process, conduct a comprehensive assessment of the club's management framework and implement appropriate administrative, technical, operational and institutional reforms.

The reforms, according to the statement, are designed to restore stability, accountability, professionalism in technical personnel, as well as individuals in possession of Enyimba's assets, properties, official documents, equipment and other institutional materials, have been directed to ensure an orderly and formal handover of all such items to the Ministry of Sports and Youth Development.

The ministry is expected to communicate further details regarding the handover arrangements and subsequent administrative procedures.

The government reaffirmed Enyimba's historic position as one of Nigeria's most successful and decorated football clubs, describing its legacy as an important sporting heritage of Abia State that must be protected and sustained.

It stressed that the intervention was not merely an administrative decision but a deliberate effort to safeguard the club's long-term interests, strengthen its institutional capacity and restore the pride, identity and competitive standards associated with the Enyimba brand.

The government also reassured the club's supporters, players, stakeholders and the general public that the restructuring exercise was aimed at building a more professionally managed and competitive football institution capable of reclaiming its place among the leading clubs in Nigeria and Africa.

With the dissolution of the existing management and technical crew, attention is now expected to shift to the next phase of the rebuilding process and the emergence of a new administrative and technical direction for the Aba-based football giants.

The rebuilding of Enyimba begins now.

AFRICANDO 2026

Otti Woos Foreign Investors To Abia

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

▪ **Highlights Business Opportunities**

The Abia State Governor, Alex Otti, has called on American and African investors to explore the state's growing investment opportunities, assuring them of a business environment supported by infrastructure development, improved security, affordable labour and government reforms.

Governor Otti said his administration was repositioning Abia, particularly Aba, the state's commercial hub, as a major manufacturing and investment destination capable of serving local and international markets.

The Governor stated this while declaring open the 27th Annual US-Africa Trade and Investment Conference and Expo, known as Africando 2026, hosted by Abia State.

Governor Otti highlighted his administration's efforts to restore the state's economic infrastructure and attract private sector investment.

He identified manufacturing, real estate, hospitality, agricultural value chains and information and communications technology as sectors with significant investment potential, urging participants to take advantage of the opportunities available across the state's three senatorial districts.

According to the Governor, his administration's investments in infrastructure, security and social services over the last three years were aimed at creating the conditions necessary for businesses to thrive and positioning Abia as an attractive destination for domestic and international investors.

Governor Otti described Aba as a historic industrial and commercial centre, whose economic potential could drive the rejuvenation of the South-East region

He added that the state's infrastructure renewal programme was also

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▪Former Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Azubuike Ihejirika (right), with Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti (left), and other dignitaries at the 27th US-Africa Trade and Investment Conference and Expo, known as Africando 2026, hosted by the Abia State Government, at the International Conference Centre, Umuahia.

Governor Links Abia's Turnaround To Crackdown On Siphoning Of Public Resources

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has attributed the ongoing transformation of the state to his administration's efforts to stop the diversion and misuse of public funds.

Governor Otti stated this recently, during a two-day crusade organised by the Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Movement at Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Aba.

The governor said his administration's decision to stop individuals who previously benefited from the misuse of public resources had attracted criticism, but insisted that the action was necessary to redirect public funds towards development.

He said some people were unhappy because his government had stopped them from having access to public resources for personal benefits.

"Why they are murmuring is that we removed the feeding bottle from their mouths.

"And that feeding bottle was what they used to siphon all our resources. That was why there were no good roads and everywhere was dirty.

"Some people may still be murmuring, but we cannot help them because we have taken away the feeding bottle they used to siphon our resources.

"That is why things are changing in Abia today," he said.

Governor Otti cited improvements in road infrastructure,

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EDITORIAL: AFRICANDO: A New Opportunity For Abian's Economy

NATIONAL Ambassador "Uplift the people, project the nation"

News

IGP Warns Politicians Against Using Youths For Electoral Violence

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Olatunji Disu, has warned politicians against exploiting youths for electoral violence.

The IGP further warned that the Nigeria Police Force is intensifying enforcement, arrests and public enlightenment efforts to prevent political violence ahead of forthcoming elections.

IGP Disu gave the warning during an interview with journalist after a courtesy visit to Abia State Governor, Alex Otti, at Nvosi Isiala Ngwa South LGA.

He said the Nigeria Police Force has already embarked on measures to prevent politicians from exploiting vulnerable youths for electoral purposes.

According to the IGP, the Police do not need to wait for directives from President Bola Tinubu before taking action against political violence.

He stressed that the Nigerian Police Force had continued to discharge its responsibility of maintaining internal security.

"As a responsible unit in charge of internal security, we do not need to wait for the President to give orders for us to know what to do. We have been doing it", he said.

IGP Disu disclosed that several arrests had been made in different parts of the country adding that the police has intensified training and public enlightenment to discourage electoral violence.

According to him, the Police had repeatedly advised parents to caution their children against allowing themselves to be used by politicians to perpetrate violence.

"We have told the people elections will come and go. We have advised parents to talk to their children, not to be used as cannon fodder by politicians, because this election will come, people will vote and the election will go.

"So anybody who loses their child or their children in the election will be the losers", IGP Disu said.

He added that the Police were combining public enlightenment with law enforcement and were recording results from the measures.

Earlier, the IGP, who visited Governor Otti in the company of his wife, Mrs Olufunmilola Disu, disclosed that he was in Abia State to attend the wedding of his Police orderly.

He said the event provided an opportunity to pay a courtesy visit to the Governor and express appreciation for the support his administration has extended to Police officers serving in the state.

The Police boss noted that both the Commissioner of Police and the Assistant Inspector-General had briefed him on the governor's interventions.

IGP Disu assured the Governor that the Force would sustain its commitment to effective policing to enable residents to go about their activities without fear.

In his response, Governor Otti commended the IGP for his professionalism and leadership, describing his appointment as a fitting choice for the leadership of the Nigeria Police Force.

The governor also appreciated IGP Disu for responding promptly whenever the State Government called on the Police for assistance, as well as for the promotion of the State's former Commissioner of Police,Wilfred Afolabi, to the rank of Assistant Inspector-General.

Governor Otti said the former Police Commissioner had demonstrated professionalism and tact in the discharge of his responsibilities during his stay in Abia.

The Governor observed that some of the IGP's close aides were from Abia, describing the development as an example of the national outlook expected of public office holders.

He further commended the IGP for demonstrating that competence and national service should take precedence over ethnic and regional considerations in public appointments.

"We want to thank you and we want to also encourage everyone to emulate you.

"Sometimes when we pay so much attention to locality, tribal sentiments and all those things, we forget that we are one and the same people created by God", the Governor said.

He urged public office holders to promote national unity and competence rather than allow ethnic and regional sentiments to influence their decisions.

Otti Woos Foreign Investors To Abia

Continued from page 1

designed to take advantage of the global drive to diversify manufacturing and production centres.

Governor Otti said his administration established the Greater Aba Development Authority (GADA) to co-ordinate investments in the city's infrastructure and social services.

He noted that several major roads previously left in deplorable conditions had been reconstructed. as part of efforts to complete the restoration of Aba's road network as part of efforts to complete the restoration of Aba's road network.

The governor added that improvements in security, environmental sanitation and urban planning, alongside the development of the Greater Aba Master Plan, were intended to provide a long-term framework for the city's growth over the next 25 years.

On efforts to connect local businesses to international markets, Governor Otti said the state government, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), established the Abia Export Growth Lab to improve the competitiveness of locally manufactured products.

He explained that artisans and business owners in the leather and footwear, garments and textiles, and agro-processing sectors had undergone training in business formalisation, product standardisation, packaging, branding and digital marketing.

He said the initiative was designed to prepare local entrepreneurs to benefit from opportunities under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Otti also highlighted reforms in the state's business environment, including the 30-day Certificate of Occupancy policy, technology-driven recruitment and promotion in the civil service, and efforts to eliminate extortion and multiple taxation.

He said several government service charges had remained at pre-2023 levels, explaining that his administration believed in creating prosperity before increasing the tax burden on residents and businesses.

Governor Otti also identified the Abia Industrial and Innovation Park (AIIP) in Owaza, Ukwa West Local Government Area, as a major investment opportunity capable of accelerating industrial and economic development in the state's southern district.

According to him, the industrial park, covering about 2,000 hectares, is expected to accommodate investments in specialised manufacturing, agricultural processing, residential property and other commercial ventures, with support from the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board.

The governor said the state offered several advantages to investors, including relatively affordable labour, a skilled workforce, improved electricity supply, subject to consistent gas availability, and proximity to seaports.

"Ultimately, doing business in Abia means lower average overhead costs, affordable labour and access to global markets", he said.

He disclosed that arrangements had been made for conference participants to visit different parts of the state to enable them to assess investment opportunities and engage with relevant stakeholders.

Governor Otti said the conference represented an important shift in Africa's development strategy, urging the continent to move away from excessive dependence on foreign aid towards trade, investment and mutually beneficial economic partnerships.

He expressed appreciation to the Foundation for Democracy in Africa, the Foundation for Africa and the Abia Global Chamber of Commerce for bringing the conference to the state, describing the event as an opportunity to strengthen economic relations between Africa and the United States.

He expressed optimism that the conference would translate into meaningful investment partnerships and economic opportunities for Abia residents.

Contributing, the Mayor of Miami-Dade County, United States, Ms Daniella Cava, congratulated Abia State on hosting Africando 2026, describing the gathering as an important platform for strengthening trade, investment and economic cooperation between Africa and the United States.

She said Miami-Dade County had partnered with the Foundation for Democracy in Africa for over two decades to advance US-Africa commercial engagement through the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), adding that the partnership had helped expand trade, investment, direct air connectivity and job creation.

In their goodwill messages, the Chairman of the Abia Global Chamber of Commerce, Mr. John Ogbuka Umekwe, described Africando 2026 as a call to action, urging participants to translate discussions into meaningful partnerships, investment opportunities and job creation.

He said Abia had enormous entrepreneurial potential in manufacturing, agriculture, healthcare, energy, transportation, housing and technology, assuring international investors that the state was open to business and strategic partnerships.

Similarly, the President of the Abia Think Tank Association, Mazi Sam Ohuabunwa, said Abia had the right business environment to attract investment, citing its improving economic climate and commitment to business-friendly policies.

He assured investors of the readiness of the state's private sector to support partnerships that would promote economic growth.

Representing the Democratic Republic of Congo, Dr. Milenge Mweneiwata, called for stronger intra-African trade and investment partnerships, arguing that African countries should look inward for solutions to their economic challenges rather than depend excessively on external arrangements.

Also, the Head of Sub-Office, Lagos, of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Mr Ali Ibrahim Ali, said Africa's economic integration required not only the movement of goods and capital but also the exchange of skills, knowledge, expertise and innovation and stressed that well-managed migration and strategic engagement with diaspora communities could boost productivity, investment and economic development.

The conference was attended by members of the diplomatic community, African and American business leaders, investors, policymakers, development partners, diaspora representatives, government officials, representatives of the 17 local government areas of Abia State, heads of ministries, departments and agencies, manufacturers, agro-allied entrepreneurs, members of chambers of commerce and other stakeholders in the business community.

Governor Links Abia's Turnaround To Crackdown On Siphoning Of Public Resources

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environmental sanitation and drainage systems, particularly in Aba, as evidence of the progress made by his administration.

He recalled that Aba used to experience serious flooding whenever it rained because of blocked drainage channels and poor infrastructure.

However, he said the situation had improved, noting that floodwaters no longer remained for long after heavy rainfall.

"Before now, there were no good roads, everywhere was dirty, the gutters were blocked, and whenever it rained, the entire place became flooded.

"But I am sure that those of you living in Aba can testify that, despite the heavy rains this year, floodwaters no longer remain for long after the rains," he said.

The governor assured residents that his administration would sustain the ongoing development, adding that the achievements recorded in the past three and a half years were only the beginning of the state's recovery.

"What we have done in three and a half years is just the beginning of the rescue. The next four and a half years will be serious consolidation," he declared.

Governor Otti thanked the General Overseer of the church, Pastor Lazarus Mouka, for his visit, prayers and spiritual leadership. He also assured the church of his administration's continued partnership and support.

He explained that his presence at the crusade was not for political campaigning but to fulfil a promise he made to the cleric during a recent meeting in Lagos.

"Why we can't campaign here is that we have all your votes," the governor said.

Earlier, the General Overseer of the Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Movement, urged Christians to demonstrate genuine obedience to God by doing what He commands and avoiding what He forbids.

In his sermon, Pastor Mouka described obedience to God's word as the foundation of a successful Christian life, urging believers to take divine instructions seriously, guard their hearts and practise self-discipline.

He also warned Christians against giving in to temptations that could weaken their faith, calling on them to remain committed to God's commandments.

News

Edubase Secondary School Emerges Champion

By Ekebuisi Precious

Edubase Secondary School Emerges Champion at Inaugural Lexicon Championship in Umuahia.

Edubase Secondary School has emerged winner of the maiden edition of the Lexicon Championship, a spelling bee organised by the Phoenix Impact Network in partnership with the Scholarship Department of the Abia State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education in Umuahia.

Held at the Ministry's Conference Hall, State Secretariat, the event attracted students, educators, parents and government representatives.

Speaking at the event, the Founder of Phoenix Impact Network, Mr. Ifada Bobby Olumense, said the initiative was conceived out of his passion for young people and their future.

He disclosed that the NGO was established in March 2025 and that about 36 public and private schools were invited to participate, with each presenting two representatives.

Five schools qualified for the final stage, where Edubase Secondary School clinched the top position with 45 marks, while Dozens College Umuahia, finished second with 40 marks.

Expressing satisfaction with the outcome of the maiden edition, Olumense appreciated his team and sponsors for their contributions. He, however, acknowledged the challenges of sourcing financial support and expressed hope for increased sponsorship in subsequent editions.

He also disclosed his ambition to expand the Lexicon Championship into a global event.

Declaring the event open, the Head of the Scholarship Department, Mrs Moses Ihuoma, commended the organisers, noting that the initiative promoted knowledge, confidence, discipline and excellence among students.

She emphasised that the exercise went beyond spelling, particularly with its focus on health and medical knowledge, which she described as essential to everyday life. She encouraged participants to remain confident and focused, stressing that learning was as important as winning.

In his vote of thanks, Vice President External, Nigerian Medical Student Association(NIMSA), Mr Enukora Lucky, appreciated the Phoenix Impact Network and the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education for their roles in making the event possible.

He encouraged students not to feel discouraged by the outcome, assuring them that participation was already an achievement. He described them as future leaders and urged them to remain committed to their aspirations.

The maiden edition of the Lexicon Championship marks a step towards creating more opportunities for academic engagement among students, with the organisers expressing optimism about expanding the competition in subsequent editions.



Commissioner for Basic and Secondary Education, Elder Goodluck Ubochi)

Otti, Ajaero, Others Pay Tributes To NLC Scribe, Ugboaja

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Otti, President of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Comrade Joe Ajaero, and other labour leaders, have paid glowing tributes to the late NLC Secretary-General, Comrade Emmanuel Okechukwu Ugboaja, describing his death as a major loss to the labour movement and the country.

The tributes were made recently, at a night of tributes organised by the Abia State Government in honour of the late labour leader at the International Conference Centre, Umuahia.

Governor Otti, who described Ugboaja's death at the age of 60 as painful, said his contributions to organised labour and society would remain an enduring legacy.

He noted that Ugboaja's emergence as NLC Secretary-General was a significant milestone for Abia, pointing out that he was the first and only indigene of the state to occupy the position among the five individuals who had served in that capacity.

"Out of the five Secretaries-General of the Nigeria Labour Congress, Comrade Emmanuel Ugboaja was the only one from Abia State.

"He was the first NLC Secretary-General from our state, and that is a significant achievement", the Governor said.

The governor observed that the true measure of a person's life was not necessarily the number of years lived but the quality of their contributions and the legacy they left behind.



Governor Alex Otti.

Governor Otti who expressed confidence that the deceased had fulfilled his earthly assignment, urged the bereaved family to draw comfort from the Christian hope of resurrection rather than grieve without hope.

"From everything we have heard about him today, we have no doubt that Comrade Emmanuel Ugboaja finished his race here on earth. There are no mistakes with God.

"We urge the family not to mourn like those without hope. Our prayer is that on the resurrection morning, when the trumpet shall sound, Comrade Emmanuel Ugboaja will be among those who rise to eternal life".

The governor prayed for the peaceful repose of the deceased and safe journeys for those who attended the event.

In his tribute, NLC President, Comrade Joe Ajaero, described Ugboaja as a committed labour leader and a worthy son of the labour movement.

Ajaero, who recalled that their relationship dated back to 1993, said the deceased was a man of conviction who consistently championed workers' interests and contributed significantly to the growth of organised labour.

He called for the preservation of Ugboaja's memory and legacy, noting that his death was a sobering reminder of the transient nature of human life.

Also paying tributes, the TUC Secretary, Festus Osifu; Abia State NLC Chairman, Comrade Okoro Ogbonaya; and other labour stakeholders, described the deceased as humble, remarkable, eloquent and a blessing to humanity, the Nkpa community and Abia State.

They said his death was a devastating loss to the labour movement and prayed God to grant his family the strength to bear the loss.

Speaking on behalf of the family, the deceased's brother, Mr Patrick Ugboaja, described him as a national and international figure who remained deeply connected to his roots.

He said the late labour leader was also a farmer, a devoted family man and a friendly personality who related warmly with people without discrimination.

Ugboaja expressed appreciation to Governor Otti, the Abia State Government and others who stood by the family during their period of grief.

Also, the deceased's son, Emmanuel Ugboaja Jnr, described his father as a disciplined man who understood the importance of balancing professional commitments with recreation.

He said his father's emphasis on discipline, focus, hard work and determination had left enduring lessons for him and his younger siblings, while recalling his generosity and commitment to helping others.

Earlier, in a sermon taken from Hebrews 11:5 and tittled, "Before the Translation: What Will Be Your Testimony?", Very Rev. Emmanuel Chukwuma, challenged the congregation to live meaningful lives and leave positive testimonies before their departure from the earth.

The cleric also commended Governor Otti for his developmental efforts in Abia and expressed optimism about the governor's re-election.

The night of tributes attracted labour leaders from within and outside Nigeria, government officials, family members, friends and associates of the deceased.

Ogbonnaya Onu Poly Rector Awards Disabled Student Full Scholarship

From Uzoigwe Grace, Aba.

The Rector of Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic (OOPOLY), Aba, Dr. Christopher Okoro Kalu, has awarded a full scholarship to a physically challenged student of the institution, Michael Emmanuel, covering his education through to the completion of his Higher National Diploma (HND) programme.

The scholarship was announced during a visit to the Rector by Emmanuel and a businessman, Nwaguma Chikwado, who donated a brand-new wheelchair to the student.

Emmanuel, an ND I student in the Department of Public Administration, has paralysis affecting both legs. The wheelchair donation is expected to improve his mobility and make movement within the institution easier.

Chikwado, who operates a business centre within the Polytechnic and also heads Vasco Communication, said the donation was intended to support the student's mobility and educational pursuits.

Receiving the donor and the beneficiary, the Rector commended Chikwado for his compassion and generosity, describing the gesture as an expression of Christian love and concern for the welfare of others.

Okoro said the act of kindness reflected the teachings of Jesus Christ and aligned with the people-centred development agenda of the Abia State Government under the ruler ship of Governor Alex Chioma Otti, OFR.

He assured Emmanuel that the institution would take responsibility for his tuition fees until he completes his HND programme, thereby relieving him of the financial burden associated with his education.

The rector also prayed for God's continued blessings upon the donor and encouraged the student to remain focused, committed and diligent in his academic pursuits.

In his response, Chikwado expressed gratitude to God for making the occasion possible and appreciated the rector for the scholarship award.

He also thanked the donor of the wheelchair, noting that the equipment would significantly ease Emmanuel's movement compared with his previous situation.

The gesture highlights the importance of collaboration between educational institutions and individuals in promoting inclusive education, supporting students with disabilities and ensuring that physical challenges do not become barriers to academic advancement.

NATIONAL Ambassador "Uplift the people, project the nation"

News



Cross-section of political stakeholders from Bayelsa West Senatorial District during a meeting of political leaders in the district recently.

2027: Ukwa West LP Deputy Chairman Pledges To Deliver 1,000 Votes For Party Candidates

By Okechukwu Ubani

The Deputy Chairman of Ukwa West Local Government Area of Abia State.

Hon. Joel UdoNwankwo, has pledged to mobilise and deliver 1,000 votes for Labour Party candidates contesting various elective positions in the 2027 general elections.

Nwankwo made the pledge during a stakeholders' engagement and executive meeting hosted at his residence, where he received Labour Party stakeholders and executives from Umuiku-Isi Asa.

The meeting provided an opportunity for party leaders and stakeholders to discuss party unity, grassroots mobilisation, strengthening the party's structure and the way forward for the Labour Party in Ukwa West.

Speaking during the meeting, Nwankwo assured the party leaders of his commitment to mobilising support for Labour Party candidates contesting the governorship, senate, House of Representatives and State House of Assembly elections.

He also promised to extend the mobilisation exercise beyond his immediate community of Umuiku-Isi Asa to Asa North and other communities across Ukwa West Local Government Area.

The deputy chairman said the commitment was part of efforts to strengthen the party at the grassroots and encourage greater participation among members and supporters.

The stakeholders also emphasised the need for unity, co-operation and proper co-ordination among party executives and members to build a stronger political structure across the local government area.

The meeting ended with renewed calls for commitment, teamwork and sustained grassroots engagement as the Labour Party prepares for the 2027 general elections.

Bayelsa West Stakeholders Reaffirm Rotation Agreement

From Owunna Goodness, Bayelsa

Political stakeholders in Bayelsa West Senatorial District, have reaffirmed their commitment to the existing power-sharing arrangement between Sagbama and Ekeremor Local Government Areas, which provides for Ekeremor to produce the next senator representing the district.

Under the arrangement, Ekeremor is expected to produce the next senator, while Sagbama retains the House of Representatives seat.

The position was made known during a meeting of political leaders and stakeholders from the senatorial district held on Sunday,November 15th, in Yenagoa. Participants stressed the need to respect the existing understanding to promote fairness, political balance and unity between the two local government areas.

Speaking at the meeting, Bayelsa State Deputy Governor, Dr. Peter Akpe, called on political leaders and members to put their differences aside, reconcile aggrieved members and strengthen grassroots participation ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Akpe urged candidates who emerged from their respective party primaries to reach out to those who were not successful, saying that the period of disagreements over the primaries should give way to reconciliation and cooperation.

He noted that political unity and collective commitment were necessary for the candidates to achieve their objectives in the forthcoming elections.

He also advised political leaders to take the initiative in settling disagreements rather than waiting for aggrieved members to make the first move.

The deputy governor further called for respect for party leadership and discipline, noting that unnecessary divisions could affect the political interests of the district.

Also speaking, the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Oil), Senator Heineken Lokpobiri, urged political leaders in Bayelsa West to respect the existing senatorial rotation arrangement between Sagbama and Ekeremor.

Lokpobiri recalled that he stepped aside from seeking a third term in the Senate in 2015 following an understanding aimed at giving both local government areas equal opportunities to represent the district.

He said the arrangement was also maintained in 2023 when some political stakeholders supported the re-election of Senator Seriake Dickson in the interest of political unity.

The minister expressed concern over attempts to disregard the agreement, arguing that political understandings reached for the benefit of the district should be respected.

He described Sagbama and Ekeremor as closely connected communities, adding that cooperation between them would promote peace and political stability across the senatorial district.

In his contribution, Hon. Fyneman Wilson, appealed to political leaders and stakeholders to uphold the existing agreement, stressing that allowing Ekeremor to produce the next senator would demonstrate fairness and strengthen relationships between the two local government areas.

Responding on behalf of the candidates, the senatorial candidate, Chief Fidelis Agbiki, thanked Governor Douye Diri, Deputy Governor Akpe, Senator Lokpobiri and other political leaders for their contributions to the political process.

He assured stakeholders of the candidates' willingness to work with other political leaders and members to achieve their objectives in the 2027 elections.

Those who attended the meeting included former Deputy Governor and Deputy Director-General of the State Presidential Campaign Council, Chief Peremobowei Ebebi; Deputy Speaker of the Bayelsa State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Michael Ogbere; and Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Niger Delta River Basin Development Authority, Prince Ebitimi Amgbare.

Others were the Governor's Special Adviser on Political Matters, High Chief Collins Cocodia; former Secretary to the State Government, Ambassador Felix Oboro; Mr Japan Udoji; Senatorial Vice Chairman, Akwakwa B. Akwakwa; and Bayelsa representative on the Niger Delta Development Commission, Denyabofa Dimaro.

Also present were former Speaker of the Bayelsa State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Boyelayefa Debekeme; Comrade Felix Odubo; Chief Fedude Zimughan; Chief Kemi Prefa; Acting Chairman of Sagbama Local Government Area, Mrs Diepriye Yankee-Robbinson; Mrs Rose Itoko-Amadi; Hon. Emomotimi Fanama; and Dr.Ayakeme Whisky, among others.

Themeeting highlighted the importance of political dialogue, fairness and cooperation in sustaining the existing rotation arrangement and determining the future representation of Bayelsa West Senatorial District.

Editorial

AFRICANDO: A New Opportunity For Abian's Economy

The ongoing AFRICANDO World Trade Expo in Abia State presents an opportunity to grow the state's economy, attract investors, create jobs and promote locally made products. It also provides an opportunity for Governor Alex Otti's administration to advance its economic development plans, popularly known as Ottinomics.

The Expo goes beyond exhibitions and business meetings. It offers local businesses a platform to connect with foreign investors, explore new markets and expand their operations. Abia must take advantage of this opportunity to attract investments that will benefit its people.

Aba, in particular, stands to benefit from the event. The city is known for producing shoes, bags, clothes, leather products and other goods. However, many local manufacturers still face challenges such as inadequate funding, outdated equipment and limited access to international markets. Connecting them with foreign buyers and investors could help expand production and improve their competitiveness.

The proposed African Trade Development Centre and other trade-support programmes are also important. If properly established and managed, they could help local manufacturers improve their production processes, meet international standards and export their products.

The state government must also prepare local businesses to benefit from trade opportunities under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). This requires improved product quality, proper packaging, certification and access to export markets.

Beyond manufacturing, AFRICANDO could attract investments into agriculture, healthcare, energy, transportation, tourism and technology. These sectors have the potential to create employment and strengthen Abia's economy.

The Otti administration must sustain its reforms and ensure that agreements reached during the Expo lead to actual investments and business opportunities.

The benefits must also extend beyond Aba and Umuahia. Farmers, small business owners and young entrepreneurs across the state's three senatorial zones should have opportunities to participate in and benefit from the economic activities generated by the Expo.

The forthcoming Third Aba International Trade Fair, scheduled for November 27 to December 6, 2026, should also build on the opportunities created by AFRICANDO. Both events should form part of a broader strategy to promote local industries, attract investors and strengthen Abia's position as a business and manufacturing centre.

Importantly, the success of AFRICANDO should not be measured by the number of dignitaries, speeches or exhibitions. It should be measured by the businesses that secure foreign partners, investments attracted, jobs created and locally made products that gain access to international markets.

For Governor Otti, the event provides an opportunity to demonstrate how Ottinomics can translate into practical economic benefits for ordinary Abians. Economic reforms should go beyond government policies and announcements. They must lead to stronger businesses, better incomes, more jobs and improved living conditions.

Abia has hardworking entrepreneurs, skilled workers and a strong history of local manufacturing. What the state needs is sustained investment, proper planning and effective implementation of its economic policies.

AFRICANDO is therefore an opportunity that should not end with the closing of the Expo. The real work begins when business discussions produce investments, agreements lead to projects and promises translate into results.

The state government must ensure that the international attention Abia is receiving leads to lasting business relationships, new investments and employment opportunities.

Ultimately, the true success of AFRICANDO will not be determined by how grandly Abia hosts the world, but by the lasting economic benefits the event delivers to the state and its people.

Ultimately, its success will strengthen Ottinomics and contribute to a more prosperous and economically vibrant Abia State.

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Rising Cooking Gas Prices: A Call For Urgent Government Intervention

Dear Editor,

I wish to use your widely read newspaper to draw the attention of the government and the general public to the continuous increase in the price of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), popularly known as cooking gas. The rising cost has become a major concern for many Nigerian families, who are finding it increasingly difficult to afford this important household need.

Since the beginning of 2026, the price of cooking gas has continued to increase, putting more pressure on household budgets. In January 2026, refilling a 12.5kg gas cylinder cost about □13,550, while the price per kilogram ranged from □1,000 to □1,200. However, as of November 2026, the same 12.5kg cylinder now costs between □19,500 and □25,000, while the price per kilogram has risen to between □1,600 and □2,400, depending on the location.

This increase is a serious burden on families, especially low-income earners who are already struggling with the high cost of food, transportation, electricity and other basic needs. Cooking gas, which should be an affordable means of preparing food, is gradually becoming too expensive for ordinary Nigerians.

It is particularly worrying that Nigeria, despite having large natural gas reserves, continues to experience high and unstable cooking gas prices. Although suppliers and dealers point to foreign exchange rates, transportation costs, supply challenges and other market conditions as reasons for the increase, ordinary citizens continue to bear the greatest burden.

One major consequence of the situation is that many families are gradually returning to the use of firewood and charcoal because they can no longer afford cooking gas. This development is dangerous to human health because smoke from firewood and charcoal can cause breathing problems and other illnesses. It also contributes to deforestation and environmental pollution.

In view of this situation, I wish to appeal to the Executive Governor of Abia State, His Excellency, Dr. Alex Otti, to look into the rising cost of cooking gas and consider possible ways of reducing the burden on residents of the state. The state government can explore measures to support affordable access to cooking gas and engage relevant stakeholders to find lasting solutions.

I also call on the Federal Government, state governments, the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), and local gas producers to take urgent steps to address the problem. There is a need to encourage local production and supply, improve distribution, monitor the activities of gas dealers and ensure that consumers are not made to pay unreasonable prices.

The government should also work towards reducing the challenges affecting the supply and distribution of cooking gas across the country. Nigeria should be able to make better use of its natural gas resources to meet the needs of its people.

Affordable cooking gas is not a luxury but an important part of everyday life. Every family deserves access to a safe and clean source of energy for preparing meals. The government should not allow the situation to get worse before taking action.

I therefore urge the relevant authorities to treat this matter as urgent and take practical steps to make cooking gas more affordable and accessible to Nigerians.

Eze Chidera Franklin
ABSU

NATIONAL Ambassador "Uplift the people, project the nation"



Abuja Digest

with Sophina Ovuike

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FCTA Defends Reduction Of UniAbuja And Allocation

The Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA), has defended the reduction of the University of Abuja's land allocation from 11,824.04 hectares to 4,685 hectares, dismissing protests by the institution's Joint Action Committee (JAC) and insisting that FCT Minister, NyesomWike, only implemented a decision approved by the previous administration.

The FCTA maintained that the minister did not arbitrarily reduce the university's landholding but acted on the recommendations of a joint committee established in 2016 to review the institution's land allocation and address related issues.

Senior Special Assistant to the FCT Minister on Public Communications and Social Media, LereOlayinka, stated this in a statement on Monday, describing the protest as misplaced.

According to him, the committee, comprising officials of the FCTA and the University of Abuja, recommended that the institution should retain only 100 hectares in accordance with the National Universities Commission (NUC) guideline.

Olayinka disclosed that the committee was inaugurated on November 10, 2016, by the then FCT Minister to examine the university's land size, encroachment by indigenous settlers, illegal development around its Gwagwalada Mini Campus and the issuance of land titles for its two campuses.

He explained that five of the committee's 12 members represented the university, identifying them as Prof. OtakiAlanana, Prof. A. Mallam, Mohamed Kassim, A.E. Ripite and Sadiq O. Shuaibu.

The presidential aide said the committee subsequently concluded that the university's original allocation of more than 11,000 hectares was far beyond the recommended land size for a university.

He added that the report was approved by the immediate past FCT Minister, Mohammed Musa Bello, under whose administration the recommendation for a 100-hectare allocation was endorsed.

Olayinka, however, argued that Wike had been more generous to the institution by approving 4,519.80 hectares, significantly exceeding the committee's recommendation.

He said the approved land could accommodate more than 80,000 buildings, using a standard plot size of 500 square metres.

The FCTA spokesperson also alleged that the university had allocated portions of its land to individuals and corporate organisations, including the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), which he claimed received 100 hectares without FCTA approval.

Questioning the justification for the protest, Olayinka challenged the university community to explain why an institution that had existed for 38 years had not fully developed its original land allocation.

He also questioned the involvement of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), Students' Union Government and alumni in the dispute.

According to him, the university's representatives were part of the committee that recommended the reduction of the original allocation.

Olayinka further argued that the reduction of undeveloped land would have no adverse effect on workers' salaries or students' academic activities.

He maintained that the matter was essentially a land-allocation dispute between the government and the university, urging the unions to disclose what he described as their real interests in the controversy.

The FCTA's defence comes amid protests by the university community over the reduction of its landholding, with the administration insisting that the institution still retains substantially more land than the 100 hectares recommended by the joint committee

Nigeria Secures Fresh Four Year Term On ITU Council

Nigeria has secured re-electzion to the 48-member Council of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for the 2027–2030 term, reinforcing its position in global telecommunications governance and strengthening Africa's representation in international digital policy decisions.

The re-election took place during the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26) in Doha, Qatar, where member states elected representatives to the Council, the governing body responsible for overseeing the Union's strategic direction and activities between plenipotentiary conferences.

In a statement confirming the development, Director of Public Affairs of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), NnennaUkoha, said Nigeria's renewed mandate would enable the country to continue advancing its national digital development priorities while promoting Africa's broader interests in the global telecommunications sector.

The ITU Council plays a significant role in shaping international telecommunications policies, overseeing the implementation of the organisation's strategic and financial plans, and guiding decisions on global connectivity, spectrum management, satellite communications, emerging technologies and digital inclusion.

The NCC attributed Nigeria's successful re-election to the commitment and diplomatic efforts of the Federal Government, particularly the leadership of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

The Commission also commended the Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, Dr. BosunTijani, who led Nigeria's delegation to the conference, for his strategic leadership, diplomatic engagements and advocacy that contributed to securing international support for the country's candidature.

It equally acknowledged the contributions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, whose ministry facilitated diplomatic engagements and mobilised support from international partners.



President Bola Tinubu

Other officials recognised for their contributions included Nigeria's Ambassador to Qatar, Ambassador Mahmoud Yakubu, and the Head of Nigeria's Permanent Mission to the United Nations Office in Geneva, Ambassador Innocent Iwejuo.

The Nigerian delegation also comprised the Executive Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the NCC, Dr. Aminu Maida; the Executive Commissioner, Technical Services, Abraham Oshadami; and representatives of relevant government ministries and agencies.

These included the Ministries of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, and Aviation, as well as the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA), Nigerian Communications Satellite Limited (NigComSat), National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA), Defence Space Administration (DSA) and National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

Nigeria's latest electoral victory builds on its growing leadership role within the ITU. Notably, Dr. Tijani was elected Vice-Chair of the ITU Council in 2025, becoming the first Nigerian to occupy a Council leadership position in nearly five decades.

He subsequently chaired the Council's 2026 session in Geneva from April 28 to May 8, where he presided over key deliberations on emerging technologies, stakeholder engagement, sustainable funding and institutional reforms.

He also served as Co-Chair of the ITU International Advisory Body for Submarine Cable Resilience, contributing to recommendations aimed at improving the protection, deployment and repair of critical subsea telecommunications infrastructure.

According to the NCC, these leadership positions demonstrated Nigeria's capacity to contribute to international telecommunications policy development, build consensus among member states and support the evolution of the global digital ecosystem.

With its renewed four-year mandate, Nigeria is expected to intensify advocacy for expanded broadband connectivity, improved access to digital infrastructure, efficient spectrum management, cybersecurity cooperation, innovation, technology transfer and capacity development.

The Commission noted that continued membership of the Council would provide Nigeria with an important platform to attract investment, deepen international partnerships and ensure that its digital development priorities receive attention in global decision-making.

It further stressed the importance of Nigeria's re-election to Africa, describing the development as an opportunity to strengthen the continent's collective voice in international telecommunications governance.

Nigeria, it said, would work closely with other African member states to address connectivity challenges, promote inclusive digital development and ensure that the interests of developing countries remain central to the ITU's policies and programmes.

The NCC expressed appreciation to member states, African partners and the wider international telecommunications community for their confidence and support, while congratulating the newly elected ITU Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, Directors of the three Bureaux and other Council members.

The Commission reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to contributing meaningfully to decisions shaping the future of global telecommunications and ensuring that the benefits of digital advancement translate into greater opportunities for Nigerians, Africans and the wider developing world.

NYSC Announces Dec 17 For 2026 Batch 'A' Stream 1 Passing Out Ceremony

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) has announced Thursday, December 17, 2026, as the date for the nationwide winding-up and passing-out ceremony for members of the 2026 Batch 'A' Stream I.

The NYSC Management disclosed this in a statement, informing stakeholders and Nigerians at large of the scheduled ceremony.

According to the announcement, Certificates of National Service will be issued to deserving corps members during a low-key ceremony across the country.

The management commended the corps members for their determination, commitment and zeal in serving their fatherland, particularly their contributions to national development through Community Development Service (CDS).

It also expressed appreciation for their service and dedication throughout their national service year.

Opinion

Paying More, Living Less

Nigeria's power sector, subsidy removal and the shrinking household

By **Dr. Patrick Egbe Ukah, MNIM, JP**
Development Economist and Deputy Director, National Universities Commission, Abuja

Nigerians were promised that the pain of reform would buy them a better life. Three years on, many households are paying reform prices for pre-reform services. Unless the savings from subsidy removal reach the meter and the market, reform will lose the public it needs

CONSIDER a civil servant in Abuja, a trader in Aba, or a lecturer in Abakaliki. Each month begins with the same arithmetic. Recharge the prepaid meter, buy fuel for the generator when the grid fails, pay transport fares that rose with the pump price, and then see what is left for food, school fees and medicine. The answer, for millions of families, is: not enough.

This is the human ledger behind two of the boldest economic decisions in Nigeria's recent history: the removal of the petrol subsidy in May 2023 and the move toward cost-reflective electricity tariffs from April 2024. Both were defensible in principle. The question this article asks is simpler and more urgent. Has the sacrifice demanded of ordinary Nigerians been matched by the services and relief they were promised?

HOW WE GOT HERE

The reform story has three chapters, and each one raised the cost of living before it raised the quality of service.

Chapter one: petrol. On 29 May 2023, the new administration declared that "subsidy is gone." The pump price, roughly ₦185 per litre before then, has never returned to that level. In May 2026 the National Bureau of Statistics recorded an average pump price of ₦1,596 per litre. By September 2026 the national average was about ₦1,268, while the Dangote refinery's gantry price had climbed four times in under a month to ₦1,350. Petrol is now priced by the market, and the market follows crude oil and the exchange rate.

Chapter two: the naira. The unification of exchange-rate windows removed an implicit subsidy on foreign exchange. It ended arbitrage, but it also transmitted every dollar movement into the price of food, drugs, books and spare parts.

Chapter three: electricity. In April 2024, the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) raised the Band A tariff, for customers promised at least 20 hours of supply daily, from about ₦68 to ₦225 per kilowatt-hour. Bands B to E remained between ₦40 and ₦63 per kWh. The logic was that Band A would pay a cost-reflective price while government continued to cover the gap for others.



WHAT THE NUMBERS SAY

The macroeconomy is stabilising, but the household is not. That gap is the central fact of Nigeria's reform era.

Headline inflation has fallen sharply. The NBS put it at 15.39 per cent in August 2026, down from 23.14 per cent a year earlier. Yet food inflation still stood at 19.57 per cent. Falling inflation means prices are rising more slowly. It does not mean prices have come down, and the earlier increases remain locked into every market basket.

Poverty tells the harder story. The World Bank's April 2026 Nigeria Development Update reports that the poverty rate rose from 56 per cent in 2023 to 61 per cent in 2024 and 63 per cent in 2025, about 140 million people. The Bank expects only a gradual decline from 2026.

Electricity, meanwhile, remains subsidised on a large scale. An analysis by ZKJ Energy estimates the total electricity subsidy at ₦1.93 trillion in 2025, with government covering ₦358.32 billion of generation costs in the first quarter of 2026 alone. Bands B and C absorbed about 70 per cent of that support. In other words, electricity subsidy was never truly removed. It was reorganised, and Band A customers became the cost-reflective test case.a

For most households the true price of power is higher than any tariff. Wherever the grid fails, the family generator takes over, and it runs on petrol that now costs about seven times its pre-reform price. Subsidy removal on petrol has therefore made unreliable electricity far more expensive, even for customers whose tariff never moved.

KEY INDICATORS: BEFORE AND AFTER THE REFORMS

Petrol pump price (₦/litre)about 185 (May 2023)1,268 national average (Sep 2026)**Band A tariff (₦/kWh)**about 68 (Mar 2024)225 (2026)**Poverty rate (% of population)**56 (2023)63 (2025)**Headline inflation (%)**22.41 (May 2023)15.39 (Aug 2026)*Sources: NBS, NERC, World Bank.*

WHY THE PAIN HAS NOT YET PRODUCED THE GAIN

Economic theory is clear that subsidies distort prices, reward the wealthy who consume most, and starve investment. My own doctoral research on energy productivity and growth in West Africa points the same way: energy that is cheap on paper but scarce in practice holds back output. The problem is not the principle of reform. It is the sequencing, and the failure to convert savings into visible services.

First, price moved before performance. Customers were asked to pay a cost-reflective tariff before the distribution companies (DisCos) could guarantee the supply that justifies it. Complaints of customers billed at Band A while receiving far fewer than 20 hours remain common. A premium price for an unreliable service breeds distrust, and distrust breeds non-payment.

Second, the value chain leaks. Power is lost through weak transmission lines, ageing transformers, estimated billing and outright theft. Millions of customers remain unmetered. Each naira that escapes collection at the distribution end becomes a debt to generation companies and gas suppliers, and eventually a new burden on the treasury.

Third, a two-tier system of light. Band A feeders, a minority of the network, now receive priority supply because they pay more. The many households in Bands B to E, who are on average poorer, face longer outages and fall back on generators. The result is what some commentators now call "electricity elitism" — a public good drifting into a private luxury.

"The measure of success will not be the inflation rate announced in Abuja, but whether the trader in Aba can switch off her generator and still keep her lights on."

Fourth, the savings are not felt. Government has saved trillions of naira from the petrol subsidy, and revenues to all three tiers of government have risen. Yet citizens struggle to point to the schools, clinics, roads or power plants that those savings built. Without that link, reform looks less like an investment and more like a transfer from households to the state.

Fifth, social protection is too thin. The World Bank notes that the National Social Registry covers about 86 million people, but transfers need consistent domestic financing to work at scale. Cash support has been too small, too slow and too uncertain to cushion the shock.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

Reform can still win public trust, but only if the next phase is about delivery rather than pricing. Six measures would make the difference.

1. **Tie every tariff to verified supply.** Publish feeder-level supply hours online, monthly, and refund customers automatically when a Band A feeder falls below 20 hours. Price should follow performance, not precede it.
2. **Meter every customer within a fixed deadline.** Estimated billing should end by a published date, with penalties on DisCos that miss it. Metering is the cheapest anti-corruption tool in the power sector.
3. **Ring-fence and publish subsidy savings.** A share of petrol-subsidy savings should go into a visible fund for transmission upgrades, embedded generation and solar mini-grids, with quarterly public reports on what was built and where.
4. **Target the remaining electricity subsidy at people, not feeders.** Support should move from broad tariff bands to poor households identified through the National Social Registry, while large commercial users pay cost-reflective rates.
5. **Scale up cash transfers and protect real wages.** Transfers must be regular, digital and large enough to matter. Minimum-wage reviews should be indexed to the cost of energy and food, not set once and left to erode.
6. **Power public institutions with renewables.** Universities, hospitals and government offices spend heavily on diesel and grid bills. Campus solar and storage would cut public costs and free grid capacity for homes. Nigerian universities, with their engineering faculties, can lead this as living laboratories.

CONCLUSION: A SOCIAL CONTRACT FOR LIGHT

Subsidy removal was a decision about prices. Living standards depend on something larger: whether citizens believe the sacrifice is shared and the returns are real. A family that pays more for fuel, more for power and more for food deserves, in return, a meter that reads honestly, a feeder that delivers the hours it charges for, and visible evidence that public savings became public goods.

Nigeria does not need to reverse its reforms. It needs to complete them. The measure of success will not be the inflation rate announced in Abuja, but whether the trader in Aba can switch off her generator and still keep her lights on. Until then, Nigerians will keep paying more and living less.

■Paying More, Living Less Dr. Patrick Egbe Ukah Page ***Dr. Patrick EgbeUkah, MNIM, JP,*** *is a Deputy Director at the National Universities Commission, Abuja, and holds a PhD in Development Economics, with research on energy productivity and economic growth in West Africa. The views expressed here are his own and do not represent those of the Commission. He can be reached at peukah@nuc.edu.ng.*

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Religion

BEYOND WORSHIP: HOW BIG CHURCHES DRIVE REAL ESTATE GROWTH IN NIGERIA

By Okechukwu Ubani

When people talk about the growth of real estate in Nigeria, their attention often goes to government projects, new roads, industrial centres, universities and commercial developments.

However, one important factor that deserves more attention is the role of large churches in transforming communities, attracting businesses and increasing demand for land and houses.

Across Nigeria, some of the biggest churches have established their worship centres in areas that were once largely undeveloped. Over the years, these locations have attracted thousands of worshippers, encouraged population growth and created opportunities for businesses and property investors. In some cases, the areas surrounding these churches have developed into busy communities with residential buildings, hotels, schools, shopping centres and other facilities.

One of the most notable examples is the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG). In 1985, the church moved its camp to the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, an area that was largely undeveloped at the time. Today, that location is known as Redemption City and has become one of Nigeria's major religious destinations.

The annual Holy Ghost Congress, monthly programmes and other church activities attract thousands of people from different parts of Nigeria and other countries. This regular movement of people has supported the growth of businesses and residential developments around the area. Hotels, shops, restaurants, transport services and other businesses have found opportunities in serving worshippers and visitors. The growing demand for accommodation and commercial spaces has also made the area attractive to property developers and investors.

Another important example is Living Faith Church Worldwide, popularly known as Winners Chapel. Its headquarters, Canaanland, is located in Ota, Ogun State. What was once largely forested land became the location of a major religious and educational centre.

Today, Canaanland is home to the church's headquarters, Covenant University, Faith Academy and other important facilities. The area attracts students, staff, worshippers, visitors and business operators. These activities have contributed to the development of the surrounding communities, creating demand for houses, shops, hotels and other services.

> **When a location begins to attract more people and businesses, demand for land, houses, shops and office spaces may increase.**

The influence of large churches on community development can also be seen in the activities of other ministries, including Streams of Joy International and Koinonia, salvation ministry, who recently dedicated Their 120000 hand of God auditorium.Their major worship centres and special programmes attract people from different parts of the country. As these ministries continue to grow, they create opportunities for businesses and service providers around their locations.

The important point is that a major church does more than provide a place for people to worship. It can become a centre that attracts people regularly and encourages economic activities in its host community.

Consider what happens whenever thousands of people travel to a particular location for Sunday services, conferences, conventions, retreats and special programmes. Some come from neighbouring towns, while others travel from distant states. They need transportation, food, accommodation and other basic services. Some eventually decide to relocate closer to their churches, while others establish businesses to serve the growing number of visitors.

Gradually, the population increases , commercial activities expand and demand for residential and business properties grows. Landlords may find more tenants, shop owners may attract more customers, and property developers may begin to consider the area for new projects.

One major benefit of this development is the possibility of increased property values. When a location begins to attract more people and businesses, demand for land, houses, shops and office spaces may increase. As demand grows, property owners may benefit from higher rental income and improved land values.

Infrastructure development may also follow. Roads may be improved, electricity supply may receive more attention, and private investors may provide facilities such as schools, hospitals, hotels and shopping centres. Although these developments do not happen automatically, the growing population can encourage both government and private investors to pay more attention to the area.

This is what is often described as a destination economy. It happens when a particular institution or major attraction brings people to a location and creates business opportunities for those living and operating around it.

Churches can play an important role in this process. While people may visit primarily for spiritual reasons, their presence also supports transport operators, food vendors, hotel owners, landlords, shop owners and other service providers.

For people interested in real estate investment, this is an important factor to consider when studying emerging locations.

Many investors concentrate on government projects, road construction and the presence of industries when deciding where to buy land or develop properties. These are important considerations, but investors should also pay attention to institutions that attract large numbers of people to a particular area.

Such institutions may include universities, major hospitals, airports, industrial centres, government establishments and large churches.

A university, for instance, can attract students, lecturers, workers and business owners. A major hospital can attract medical professionals, patients and visitors. In the same way, a large church can attract worshippers, visitors and people who want to live closer to its activities.

Family Matters

The Gen Z Are Not The Problem: Parents Must Take Responsibility For Raising Responsible Children

By Ifeanyichukwu Faith

The growing debate about the behaviour of Generation Z has continued to attract public attention. Many people are quick to blame young people for what they see as a decline in discipline, responsibility and respect for societal values. However, while young people must take responsibility for their actions, parents also have an important role to play in shaping their children's behaviour and attitude towards life.

The truth is that education alone does not make a person responsible. Good character is developed through proper training, discipline, experience and the values children learn while growing up. Unfortunately, the habit of overprotecting and pampering children by some parents is raising concerns about how prepared young people are to face the challenges of adulthood.

A recent incident at an NYSC orientation camp, which has been trending online, provides a good example of this problem.

According to reports, camp officials carried out an inspection of the hostels and discovered that some were not properly maintained. As a result, corps members were asked to prepare cleaning schedules to ensure that their hostels remained clean and orderly. They initially complied with the instruction.

However, shortly after the cleaning schedules were released, some corps members reportedly began to complain. Some contacted their parents to protest against being assigned to sweep their hostels. Surprisingly, some claimed that they had never swept a floor in their entire lives.

What was even more disturbing was the reaction of some parents. Instead of encouraging their children to accept the responsibility and learn from the experience, some reportedly supported their complaints. They argued that sweeping was not their children's responsibility and that they would rather pay cleaners or porters to do the work.

Interestingly, one parent, who is reportedly the wife of an Army General, showed a different attitude. Rather than complain, she reportedly asked that her daughter be given a larger portion of the hostel to sweep so that she could learn and develop basic life skills.

Her response offers an important lesson to parents who believe that providing their children with financial comfort means they should not take part in ordinary household activities.

The question every parent should ask is this: Beyond the certificates and academic qualifications our children acquire, how prepared are they to handle the simple responsibilities and challenges of everyday life?

Some male corps members were also reportedly unhappy with the cleaning exercise. They argued that domestic duties were not meant for men. This shows another problem in our society: the belief that household chores are meant only for women.

Parenting goes beyond providing food, clothes, shelter, school fees and other material needs. It also involves preparing children to become independent, disciplined, hardworking and responsible adults.

Unfortunately, some parents have mistaken excessive pampering for love. In their effort to give their children a comfortable life, they protect them from almost every responsibility, including simple household chores.

There is nothing wrong with employing domestic workers if a family can afford it. However, children should not grow up believing that certain jobs are beneath them or that their parents' wealth means they do not have to contribute to keeping their surroundings clean.

A child who cannot perform simple household duties may find it difficult to cope when such assistance is not available.

More importantly, household responsibilities should not be based on gender. Both boys and girls should learn how to sweep, cook, wash clothes, clean their surroundings and perform other basic household duties.

There is no reason to raise girls to believe that household responsibilities belong only to them while boys grow up thinking that such duties are beneath their dignity.

In the same way, girls should not be raised only to prepare for marriage and motherhood, while boys should not be taught that their only responsibility is to provide money.

Both boys and girls need practical life skills, good character, discipline, self-reliance and the ability to contribute positively to their families and society.

As parents and guardians, we need to rethink how we raise our children, regardless of their gender, family background or social status.

Here are some important lessons parents should learn:

1. **Allow Children to Participate in Household Duties**

Allowing children to take part in household activities helps them develop discipline, independence and a sense of responsibility.

2. **Stop Excessive Pampering**

Providing children with a comfortable life does not mean doing everything for them. Parents must understand that overprotection can prevent children from developing the confidence and practical skills they need to succeed in life.

Features

A Nation of Lamenters

By Dakuku Peterside

A government can survive the anger of its people if that anger never acquires organisation. This is the uncomfortable possibility Nigeria must confront as 2027 approaches. We know how to describe our distress. At kitchen tables, in markets and across social media, the complaints converge: the cost of living, insecure livelihoods, fear on the roads, disappointment with public institutions. Yet agreement about what hurts has not become agreement about what we will demand, whom we will trust or how we will hold power accountable. Our grievances meet more readily than our efforts.

Lamentation has its uses. It bears witness, punctures official complacency and reminds people that their suffering is shared. But testimony alone cannot repair the conditions it exposes. When every scandal produces another burst of outrage without sustained scrutiny, those responsible learn something dangerous: they need only outlast the noise. A public that remembers its pain but forgets its demands makes accountability easier to evade.

This is not an indictment of citizens for failures imposed upon them. Leaders control public resources, appoint officials and exercise powers ordinary Nigerians do not possess. They bear the principal responsibility for the consequences. Electoral manipulation, poverty, intimidation and institutional weakness are real constraints, not excuses invented by an unwilling electorate. Any argument about citizenship that ignores these realities becomes a sermon delivered from safety. The question is how citizens can retain agency within unequal conditions and organise to change them.

Shared suffering does not automatically produce shared political purpose. People can agree that hunger is intolerable while disagreeing about its causes and remedies. Ethnicity, religion, partisan attachment and dependence on political patrons shape those disagreements. Disagreement itself is not a democratic failure. The failure comes when loyalties make evidence irrelevant: when conduct we condemn in an opponent becomes defensible in an ally. We do not need identical political preferences. We need standards that survive a change of names, parties and beneficiaries.

The most disabling expression of resignation is the declaration that votes will never count. Such distrust must be taken seriously. People who have experienced electoral misconduct cannot be talked into confidence through patriotic exhortation. Electoral institutions must earn trust through their conduct; security agencies must protect participation; parties must organise competently and defend credible competition. The citizen cannot be asked to compensate indefinitely for institutions that fail to perform their duties. FollowPolitics

Yet distrust and surrender are different decisions. Withdrawal does not punish a political system that benefits from public disengagement. It can leave the field to those best equipped to dominate it. Participation offers no guarantee of victory or fairness, but absence forfeits opportunities to influence outcomes, document failures and build pressure for reform. The practical response to a vulnerable election is organised scrutiny: informed voters, trained party agents, lawful observation and credible documentation. None makes manipulation impossible. Together, they can make it harder to conceal and easier to contest.

Faith presents another question, and it deserves care. Nigerians do not need to choose between religious conviction and civic responsibility. Faith can sustain courage where institutions inspire fear; religious communities can nurture solidarity, defend dignity and challenge injustice. The problem begins when spiritual reassurance becomes an instruction to stop asking earthly questions. "Leave our leaders to God" may express trust in ultimate justice. Used to silence scrutiny, it grants public officials an exemption their offices do not confer.

A governor must explain expenditure. A legislator must account for representation. A president must defend policies and their consequences. These obligations do not disappear because an officeholder shares our religion or receives a religious endorsement. Prayer can accompany a demand for answers. It cannot answer a budget question, investigate a failed contract or relieve an official of responsibility. The civic test of religious leadership is whether it helps people examine power with moral clarity, including when the powerful are friends, patrons or members of the congregation.

Money complicates the argument further. Consider a struggling citizen who accepts N5,000 to attend a political rally. It is easy to condemn the transaction from a position of comfort. Hunger shortens the distance between an immediate need and a difficult choice. Attendance also tells us little about how that person will eventually vote. The more consequential question concerns those who turn deprivation into a political resource: who benefits when access to basic relief depends on loyalty rather than entitlement?

A crowd assembled through inducements cannot establish that a programme has earned public confidence. Nor does temporary assistance discharge a politician's obligations to the public. But shaming the recipient leaves the machinery of dependence intact. Challenging it requires scrutiny of political financing, credible alternatives to patronage and civic organisations that people can join without purchasing access. Economic insecurity limits political freedom; any serious programme of democratic renewal must address that relationship rather than lecture its victims.

Our political memory also needs organisation.

Our political memory also needs organisation. A promise remembered only when it is broken again is a weak instrument of accountability. Communities can keep a simple record: what was promised, by whom, when, and what followed. A proposed health centre should generate questions about its budget, completion, staffing and services, not merely photographs of a foundation stone. Citizens need to distinguish an announcement from an allocation, an allocation from expenditure, and expenditure from something that improves lives.

This work need not wait for a national movement or a charismatic organiser. A residents' association can follow one drainage project. A professional body can scrutinise one policy affecting its members and the public. Journalists can return to an abandoned promise after its news value has faded. Civic groups can translate public documents into language communities can use. These efforts gain strength when they share evidence and persist. Their value lies in making evasion more difficult, one specific question at a time.

Such participation carries costs. People may face threats, lose income or lack access to information. Not everyone can protest openly, and nobody should be casually instructed to risk their livelihood or safety. Collective organisation matters partly because it can distribute burdens that would overwhelm an individual. Protecting civic space is therefore a responsibility of institutions and political leaders, as well as a demand citizens must sustain. Democracy cannot depend on exceptional personal bravery to exercise ordinary rights.

Citizens must also examine the exceptions they make for themselves. We weaken the case against nepotism when we celebrate it as opportunity for our relatives. We weaken electoral standards when misconduct becomes acceptable because our preferred candidate benefits. This does not make a private inconsistency equivalent to abusing state power. It does reveal how public wrongdoing acquires social protection. A standard becomes credible when we apply it where doing so costs us something.

As 2027 approaches, scrutiny should become more specific. What problem does a candidate propose to solve? What will the remedy cost, where will the money come from, and what trade-offs follow? What does the candidate's record establish? How will citizens recognise progress or failure? Opposition parties must offer more than fluent descriptions of suffering. Incumbents must submit results to examination. Neither the promise of change nor the defence of continuity should excuse an absence of evidence.

The election itself will settle less than campaign rhetoric suggests. No victory can instantly repair weakened institutions or resolve every policy conflict. The habits established before polling day must therefore survive it. Supporters should remain able to question those they helped elect. Defeated parties should retain the discipline to scrutinise government and improve their alternatives. Citizens should resist the idea that casting a ballot exhausts their role, or that celebrating a winner requires surrendering independent judgement.

Nigeria's predicament is not that its people have complained too loudly. Too much of that complaint has been denied a durable political form. Leadership failure must remain at the centre of the reckoning, but it cannot become the reason citizens abandon every means of demanding better. We are entitled to mourn what bad government has taken from us. We must also decide what we will organise to recover. The next question after "Nigeria is suffering" should be specific: what will we demand, from whom, and how will we keep asking until we get an answer?

Dr Dakuku Peterside is a management and leadership turnaround expert.

Photos Speak



Inspector-General of Police, Mr Olatunji Rilwan Disu (left), seated with Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Otti, during the IGP's courtesy visit to the Governor at his office.



R-L wife of Abia Gov, Mrs Priscilla Otti, Gov Alex Otti of Abia State, Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Mr. Olatunji Rilwan Disu and his Wife, during the IGP's courtesy visit to Abia Governor in his Nvosi office.



Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Mr. Olatunji Rilwan Disu (5th L), Gov Alex Otti of Abia (6th L), Wife of Abia Gov, Mrs Priscilla Otti (6th R), Chief of Staff to the Governor, Pastor Caleb Ajagba, Abia Comm for Information, Prince Okey Kalu, his Arts, Culture and Creative Economy Colleague, Dr. Mathew Ekwuribe and others, during the IGP's courtesy visit to Abia Governor in his Nvosi office.



(L-R) Maryam Sanusi, Vice Chairman, National Planning Committee, WPRF 2026; Dr. Ike Neliaku, NIPR President; Information Minister, Mohammed Idris; and Prof. Justin Green, President and CEO of the Global Alliance for Public Relations, at the opening of the WPRF Experience Nigeria Zone, recently.



Prince Victor Agu and his family cutting the cake, during the 70th birthday celebration for Prince Victor Nduka Agu and 65th birthday for his Wife, Mrs Eberechukwu Agu and their 40th marriage anniversary at Ameke Ngwo, Udi LGA, Enugu State



Some of the Ngwo people that attended the event, during the 70th birthday celebration for Prince Victor Nduka Agu and 65th birthday for his Wife, Mrs Eberechukwu Agu and their 40th marriage anniversary at Ameke Ngwo, Udi LGA, Enugu State.



Ngwo Uno Youths led by Hon Henry Awo, during the 70th birthday celebration for Prince Victor Nduka Agu and 65th birthday for his Wife, Mrs Eberechukwu Agu and their 40th marriage anniversary at Ameke Ngwo, Udi LGA, Enugu State



R-L: Hon Richard Agu, Commissioner for Transport, Enugu State, Rt Hon Uche Ugwu, Speaker Enugu State House of Assembly, Iyke Chime and others, during the 70th birthday, 65 birthday celebration of Prince Victor Nduka and his Wife, Mrs Eberechukwu Agu and their 40th marriage anniversary at Ameke Ngwo, Udi LGA, Enugu State.

Photos by: Chukwu Chidiebere and James N

Photos Speak



Former Nigerian Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo (right), seated with Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, at the International Conference Centre, Umuahia, during the Nigerian Bar Association's Annual Conference.



Former Nigerian Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo (SAN), 3rd left, and Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, 2nd left, with other dignitaries at the International Conference Centre, Umuahia, during the recent Annual Conference of the Nigerian Bar Association.



State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, 2nd left, with other guests during the commissioning of OXVERA Hotel, a privately owned hospitality facility located in Umuahia, the Abia State capital.



Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, in a cheerful handshake with the Senior Pastor and Founder of The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries during the two-day crusade organised by the ministry at Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Aba, recently.



Governor Alex Otti (2nd left) with Pastor David Ogbueli (2nd right), Senior Pastor and Founder of Dominion City Ministry, during the South-East Conference of Dominion City Global held in Aba, Abia State, recently.



Governor Alex Otti (3rd left) seated alongside other dignitaries during the South-East Conference of Dominion City Global, held in Aba, Abia State, recently.





Participants and delegates from various sectors of the economy at the 27th US-Africa Trade and Investment Conference and Expo, popularly known as Africando 2026, hosted by the Abia State Government recently. The conference brought together business leaders, investors, government officials and other stakeholders to explore investment opportunities, strengthen trade relations and promote economic cooperation between the United States and African countries.

Photos by: Chukwu Chidiebere



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News

RHI Gives Food Items To 500 Vulnerable Households In Akwa Ibom State

From Lovina Emole, Uyo

A total number of 5 0 0 0 vulnerable households in Akwa Ibom State have received several good items from Nigeria's First Lady, Sen. Oluremi Tinubu, through her Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI) Social Investment Programme.

The First Lady represented by the wife of the Vice President, Hajia Nana Shettima, described the intervention as part of sustained efforts to provide nutritional relief and strengthen the welfare of disadvantaged Nigerians.

She stated that the Food Outreach Scheme, launched in March 2024 under the social investment component of the Renewed Hope Initiative was designed to provide direct food assistance to vulnerable populations across the country.

The First Lady disclosed that the programme, supported by philanthropic partners committed to supplying two truckloads of food items monthly, has so far covered 33 states, including Akwa Ibom.

She said the initiative was intended to complement Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda by ensuring that Nigerians, irrespective of their social or economic circumstances, receive the support required to live with dignity.

The First Lady acknowledged the Abdul Samad Rabiu Africa Initiative, ASR Africa, for providing the consignment to Akwa Ibom.

She appreciated other partners, including a donor who preferred anonymity, for sustaining the humanitarian intervention.

In his remarks, Gov. Umo Eno of Akwa Ibom said the intervention was a practical demonstration of compassion and responsible governance.

Represented by the Deputy Governor, Sen. Akon Eyakenyi, Eno acknowledged the First Lady's sustained humanitarian efforts in the social investment programme.

He said the intervention complemented the humanitarian vision of the late First Lady of Akwa Ibom State, Patience Eno, Golden Initiative For All (GIFA).

Earlier, the Akwa Ibom Co-ordinator of the Renewed Hope Initiative, Mrs Helen Eno-Obareki, said the food outreach was a demonstration of empathy and shared responsibility towards improving the living conditions of vulnerable families.

Eno-Obareki said that the intervention would reach 500 households across the state.

She commended the wife of the president for extending the humanitarian initiatives programmes to Akwa Ibom.

The Co-ordinator said that since 2024, the initiative had given financial assistance to 750 elderly citizens, business grants to 1,000 petty traders, support for 20 women farmers and empowerment grants to 750 persons with disabilities.

She added that 500 women had benefited from business recapitalisation grants under the RHI-Tony Elumelu Foundation Women Economic Empowerment Programme.

"Two hundred women and young people had equally benefited from agricultural training and starter packs, among other interventions," she said.

Eno-Obareki said the intervention reinforced the commitment of both the Federal and Akwa Ibom State Governments to placing the welfare of families at the centre of governance.

Ukwa East Labour Party Leaders Pledge Support For Otti's Second Term In Office

By Okechukwu Ubani

Leaders and members of the Labour Party in Ukwa East Local Government Area of Abia State have expressed full support for Governor Alex Otti's second-term ambition in 2027.

They made the decision during a meeting held at Camp Acho, Azumini Ndoki, the residence of the Ambassador Okey Emuchay.

The meeting brought together party leaders, stakeholders and members from all the political wards in Ukwa East to show their support for Governor Otti and other Labour Party candidates ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Speaking at the meeting, Ambassador Emuchay thanked Governor Otti for the work he has done in Abia State, especially in road construction, infrastructure and other areas of development. He also praised the Governor for the projects already completed and those still going on across the state.

He thanked party members for their support and belief in the Governor, urging them to remain united and work together for the success of the party in 2027.

Emuchay also encouraged members to visit different communities in Ukwa East and tell the people about the Governor's achievements in order to gain more support and votes for him and other Labour Party candidates.

He then moved a motion for members to pass a vote of confidence on Governor Otti. The motion was seconded by Prof. O.J. Kamalu and received the full support of members present.

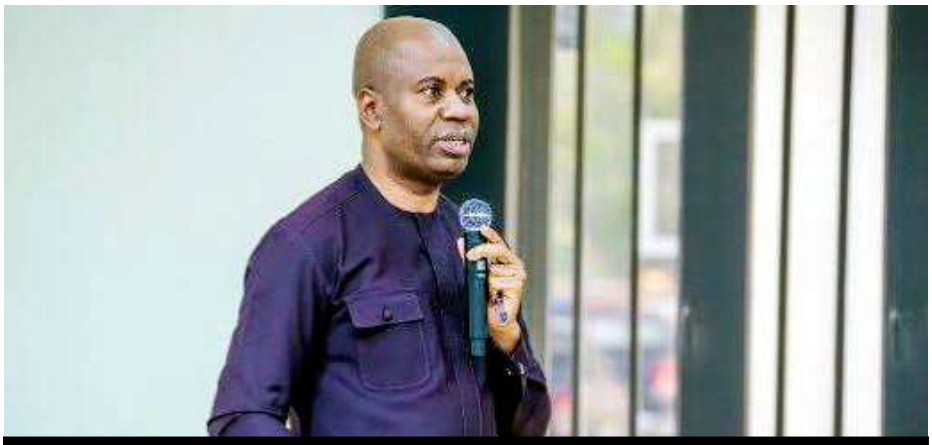
Also speaking, the Mayor of Ukwa East LGA, Hon. Chibunna Akara, assured the Governor that he and the Labour Party in the local government were ready to work for his re-election in 2027.

Akara urged party members to work closely with their leaders at the local government and state levels to ensure the Governor's victory. He described Governor Otti as a blessing to the people of Abia State and expressed confidence in his leadership.

Other party leaders and stakeholders also praised the governor for his work and openly promised to support his second-term bid. They asked Ambassador Emuchay to inform the governor that the people of Ukwa East were ready to support him in the 2027 election.

Those who attended the meeting included Hon. Lewis Obianyi, Hon. Prince Okey Kanu, Hon. Paul Taribo, Chief Monday Okpoko, Adinigwe Nwoko, Hon. Tony Nwamuo, Hon. Elvis Wabara, Prof. O.J. Kamalu, Hon. Mrs. Matilda Anyamele, Mr. Chidiebere Nwagbara and Mr. Ngozi Onwuchey.

Other Labour Party members, community leaders and representatives of different support groups also attended the meeting.



Abia State Head of Service, Benson Ojeikere,

Abia Head Of Service Urges Senior Officers To Train Future Leaders

By Ndubueze Ngozi

The Abia State Head of Service, Benson Ojeikere, has called on senior officers in the state public service to train and support their junior colleagues to prepare them for future leadership positions.

Ojeikere gave the advice during a mentorship session on Providing Leadership and Building the Capacity to Lead as a Leader in Umuahia. He said the future of the public service depended on the ability of current leaders to prepare others to take over from them.

He stressed that good leadership must be built on good character, ability and discipline, adding that senior officers should not focus only on their personal growth but also help their subordinates develop the skills and knowledge needed to perform well.

The Head of Service urged supervisors and heads of departments to lead by example through their behaviour, commitment to work and dedication to serving the people.

He also encouraged civil servants to learn from experienced officers and take responsibility for their duties. According to him, occupying a leadership position is not enough; officers must show that they have the ability and willingness to lead.

Ojeikere further advised senior officers to give their subordinates challenging assignments and allow them to handle important responsibilities under proper guidance. He explained that giving junior officers such opportunities would help them gain experience, build confidence and prepare for higher positions.

He urged civil servants to take their duties seriously, carry out proper research and ensure that they produce quality results at all times.

The Head of Service also reminded officers to familiarise themselves with the Public Service Rules, regulations and other guidelines guiding their work. He called for discipline, order and proper conduct in the state public service.

He described trustworthiness and reliability as important qualities of good leaders, urging officers to remain committed and dependable in the discharge of their duties.

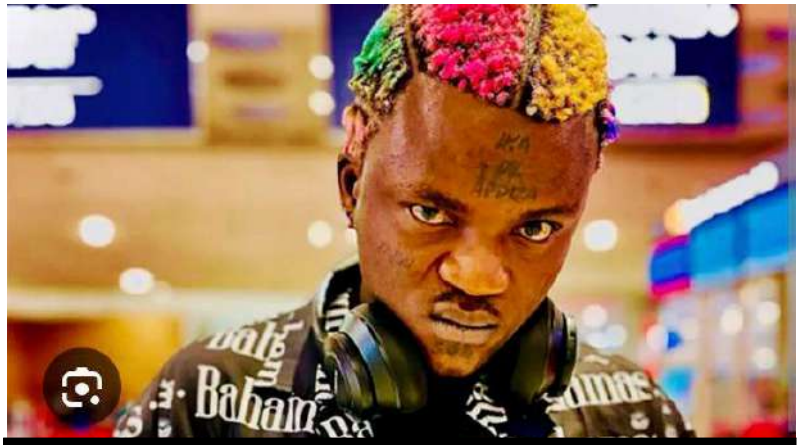
Ojeikere expressed confidence that regular mentoring and training of younger officers would help produce capable future leaders and improve the quality of service delivery in Abia State.

NATIONAL Ambassador "Uplift the people, project the nation"

Entertainment

Portable Questions Olamide's Support, Praises Davido

Nigerian singer, Habeeb Okikiola, popularly known as Portable, has criticised rapper and YBNL boss, Olamide, over what he described as a lack of personal support during one of his music video shoots.



Habeeb Okikiola, popularly known as Portable,

Portable made the remarks in a video circulating on social media, where he recalled how Olamide helped him gain popularity through their hit song, Zazu.

However, he expressed disappointment that Olamide did not attend the music video shoot in person but instead sent a recorded video message. He questioned why the rapper could not show up physically to support him.

Portable also wondered why Olamide had not invited him to perform at any of his shows despite their past relationship. He noted that both of them are from Ogun State and that their collaboration on Zazu helped introduce him to a wider audience, including international music fans.

While expressing his displeasure with Olamide, Portable praised fellow singer Davido for showing him support. He claimed that Davido was proud of his achievements and described him as one of the best among other artistes.

Portable further disclosed that the police had advised him to stay away from trouble and concentrate on building his music career.

His latest comments have added to the ongoing public discussions about his relationship with Olamide and other Nigerian music stars.

Beyoncé Becomes First Artist to Reach 100 Grammy Nominations

American singer and actress Beyoncé Giselle Knowles-Carter has made history as the first artist to receive 100 nominations in the history of the Grammy Awards.



American singer and actress Beyoncé Giselle Knowles-Carter

The music star achieved the milestone following the announcement of nominees for the 69th edition of the prestigious awards. She received a nomination in the Best R&B Solo Performance category for her 2026 single, Morning Dew (Donk).

Beyoncé, who has won 35 Grammy Awards, will compete for the category alongside Nigerian singers Tems, Kehlani, Victoria Monét and Jill Scott.

The latest nomination further strengthens her position as the most-nominated and most-awarded artist in Grammy history.

Her husband, American rapper Jay-Z, is the second-most nominated artist, with 90 Grammy nominations.

The 69th Grammy Awards ceremony is scheduled to hold on Sunday, February 7, 2027, in the United States.

Focus

2027 And The Leadership Question.

By Reuben Abati

I appeal to each one of you to remember that political participation places obligations on those who organize others. Keep your engagements peaceful, and your message issue-based… reject violence, threats, intimidation, misinformation, and every form of electoral conduct". These were the wise, fitting and relevant words by Vice President Kashim Shettima in the month of September 2026 while formally inaugurating the National Working Committee of Transporters for Tinubu/Shettima 2027. He could well have been talking to all supporters of the Tinubu/Shettima ticket and everyone else involved in the struggle for political office in the 2027 elections under whatever party platform. His admonition was also on all fours with the objectives of the National Peace Committee, which on August 18, 2026 got political parties, their chairpersons and presidential candidates to sign an accord to act after the fashion of gentlemen and respect the same principles outlined and reiterated by Vice President Shettima in September. In recent instalments in this column, (Oct. 27, Nov. 3, 2026), we have given a sketch of the resort to violence, threats, and intimidation by Nigeria's combative political elite, noting the danger that this poses to the integrity and credibility of the 2027 general elections with corresponding impact on voter turn-out and post-election legitimacy questions that may arise. The additional note is the pervasive reign of abuse, competitive rhetoric, character defamation, absolute lack of respect for the other or political ethos which would appear to have overtaken the Nigerian landscape, 59 days to the first election, the Presidential and National Assembly elections having been scheduled for January 16, 2027. The closer we get to the elections, the more febrile the rhetoric. Political rhetoric is part of the condiments of electioneering or political campaigns, edifying when it is constructive, but lamentable when it collapses to the level of a street-fight with all decorum thrown to the winds. It then becomes difficult to know exactly what the politician is selling to the public, noise or reason, propaganda or issues, as in that mix, every participant tries to outdo the other. It is most unfortunate that this is where we are at the moment in Nigeria and even Vice President Kashim Shettima who has asked for an issue-based campaign, has found himself also descending into the arena of vitriol, a variant of "bolekaja politics" which was more or less elevated to the status of statecraft during the Obasanjo years. Politicalcampaign strategy

The Presidential candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), Waziri Adamawa, Atiku Abubakar is a denizen of those old-time battlefields, and it should not be surprising that he was the first to set the stage for the current rise of combative politics. In August 2026, he fired up the space by dismissing Tinubu's decision to remove fuel subsidy as a wrong-headed policy which has impoverished Nigerians, and were he to win the Presidency, fuel subsidy would be restored. He pooh-poohed Tinubunomics as a system of "fiscal sedation and rascality." The Tinubu Presidency did not waste time in firing back, dismissing Atiku's statements as "a demonstration of serious ignorance on governance and economy." Atiku's hitman, Phrank Shaibu, also fired back with his acidic pen. What could have been a robust debate of Tinubunomics, for the benefit of the public, and a necessary review of the administration's reforms soon became a shouting match. In subsequent interventions, Waziri Atiku Abubakar began to refer to the President at every turn not as Tinubu or President Tinubu, but simply Bola. He affected a tone of familiarity, that was entirely dismissive, to convey the impression that he does not recognize Tinubu as President. When the commentariat observed that this was disrespectful to the office of the President, Atiku's aides smeared pepper on an open wound by insisting that "the President's name is Bola", and those who found that offensive were guilty of illiteracy. Even in the United States, those who try to get familiar with President Trump, either call him Mr. President or The Donald, as he was known in "The Apprentice", a 2004 television series on NBC. The attack on President Tinubu by the Atiku camp and the ADC was sustained. In African communities, respect matters a lot to the people, and certain positions attract specific levels of reverence which must be openly demonstrated. Besides, African leaders are monarchs of some sort, they relate with others as the overall boss, the ruler, not as equals. Each time Atiku refers to the President as "Bola", he breaks the code. The Bolanization of President Tinubu has since placed the Tinubu team on a war-path with the Atiku camp. In October, Rotimi Amaechi, Vice Presidential candidate of the ADC following in his Principal's footsteps, declared in Edo State that "only a mad man will vote Tinubu in 2027" He added: "If Edo people vote for Tinubu, that means Edo people are mad. If you are not mad, Tinubu should not win here." Leadershipdevelopment resources

In this war of words, there has been quite a competition, as to who can outsmart the other. Senator Adams Oshiomhole, one of the key campaigners of APC extraction has been very vocal. He has described Peter Obi, the NDC Presidential candidate as "a trader" whose business is "to export jobs, and import unemployment to the country", a shop-owner who wants to run Nigeria, and yet he could not fix Anambra state for eight years when he was Governor. He calls Rotimi Amaechi a "serial loser," "failure", "shallow and unreliable". As he puts it: "Amaechi has been a serial loser, very, very stubborn. He was a Governor who came into office without winning an election…Amaechi is a failure. He cannot benefit from other people's abuse and pass it off as his own achievement…. hungry, ruthless individuals, shallow, unreliable". Amaechi has since asked Senator Oshiomhole to make his educational certificates available for public scrutiny, and that he, Amaechi led the team that kicked away Oshiomhole when he was Chairman of the APC and he was still a member of the ruling party. Oshiomhole could not have spared Atiku Abubakar, the ADC Presidential candidate who has become a thorn in the flesh of the APC and President Tinubu, and who despite a Justice Peter Lifu judgement nullifying his emergence as the ADC flagbearer, has continued to insist that he remains a candidate, and that no one can stop him from that happening. Oshiomhole says "Atiku is a serial loser. He has been felled four times and he is completely broken with internal pollical bleeding." Chieftains of the two leading political parties have been the most vociferous in the combat of verbal assault in the 2027 electoral process, but other presidential candidates and their agents have been no less aggressive. Omoyele Sowore, leader of the African Action Congress (AAC), insists he is determined to take back Nigeria from the ruling class.

When he and his supporters were attacked recently in Ado Ekiti, on October 30, Sowore protested that "It was not just a random attack. Tinubu's aide and inlaw were involved in my attack in Ekiti." He has also refused to back down on his various characterizations of the President "as a criminal" , a matter that is in court and only just yesterday, his lawyers got Justice Mohammed Garba Umar, presiding judge in Sowore's defamation case, to subpoena Tinubu's election documents in 1999 and 2023, and for INEC to make same available to the Federal High Court in Abuja. The matter has been adjourned to November 11, 2026 for further proceedings. Adewole Adebayo, Presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) has dismissed President Tinubu in these words: "Tinubu is not a mistake, he is a punishment." He adds: "Tinubu is not just breaking the pot. He wants to break the pot, cart the piece s away and set the entire kitchen on fire." He also says: "Tinubu should wear a mask of shame". Seyi Makinde, Governor of Oyo State, Presidential candidate of the Allied People's Movement (APM), a former Tinubu supporter turned adversary, has joined the anti-Tinubu group by dismissing the APC campaign team as a "Necbuchadnezzar Coalition of discredited and failed politicians." He says what he calls "Tigunomics" is nothing else but voodoo. He tells Tinubu "win fair and square if you can.". There are other players also in this game of competitive rhetoric: There is former Governor, Senator, and Minister of Works, Dave Umahi who has rechristened himself "Lion of the South East, a fanatical Tinubu supporter, who tells us that "Peter Obi can never be South East's best". However, Mr. Peter Obi, candidate of the NDC has said publicly that he will never abuse President Tinubu or any other political office holder, but he has been consistent in tearing into the Tinubu's administration's policies. His slogan is that a New Nigeria is POssible. According to him: "I cannot abuse any governor. I cannot abuse anybody in government. I don't need to abuse people in the Federal Government. I've never abused anybody. Who has seen me calling Tinubu's name? Never! I will never do that. He's the President of the country, he has all my respect… But I can argue on other issues, whether you're doing well, or you're not doing the right thing. That is allowed."

Peter Obi is probably an exception to what has become the norm in Nigeria's political discourse: the on-going competition to be the man with the most memorable attacks on the opponent. The prize for that at the moment should go to the Vice President, Senator Kashim Shettima, who is standing out as the man with the bon mot, and the most entertaining put-downs in the political arena today. In the lead up to the 2023 election, he had advised former Vice President Yemi Osinbajo to consider selling popcorn and ice cream because "nice men do not make good leaders." He has overreached his own accomplishments in political rhetoric this time around and his main target is Peter Obi, the NDC Presidential candidate. Obi may be modest and less contrarian but he is backed by an army of irreverent, abusive foot-soldiers on social media and in the streets who make it impossible for even those who respect him to overlook his shortcomings. He receives much collateral damage as a result. At the inauguration of the APC Presidential campaign Council in Abuja in October, VP Shettima dismissed Peter Obi, "my very good friend" as "a master of bogus statistics and incoherent economic prescriptions". He further said: "He seems convinced that a size 36 shirt tailored for Bangladesh will somehow fit Nigeria's size 52 frame." And that for claiming he won the 2023 Presidential election without evidence, "this is called delusion of grandeur." Three days ago, at the APC Rally in Akwa Ibom, VP Shettima accused Peter Obi of squandering away his "political goodwill" with falsehoods and statistics." In Port Harcourt on Saturday, November 7, Shettima dismissed Obi again as "having philosophised himself into political irrelevance", with Obi's reputation as Governor of Anambra State or Chairman of a Bank for being "at best mediocre." The Vice President also didn't leave out the flagbearer of the ADC, Atiku Abubakar whom he previously referred to as a "sanitary inspector",, "Dubagari", also a Kachalla and now, he says Atiku is "intellectually malnourished,", receiving poor economic advice from "voodoo economists." He had previously called Atiku a serial presidential election loser, comparing him to Kenyan politician, the late Raila Odinga. Shettima has also reminded Atiku Abubakar that the Presidency of Nigeria is not "a retirement benefit!"

> **The curious thing is that President Tinubu himself seems to have joined this strategy of insults to overwhelm the opposition.**

The curious thing is that President Tinubu himself seems to have joined this strategy of insults to overwhelm the opposition. In his campaign rallies in Uyo and Port Harcourt, the President descended into the arena as he dismissed both Atiku Abubakar and Peter Obi in very uncomplimentary terms. He more or less called Atiku a thief. He dismissed Obi as incompetent. And he concluded by saying both men do not have enough ability to lead Nigeria. "They lack the leadership, character and traits." He quipped, referring to Obi: "He ran away from erosion in Anambra, and he now wants to be President? President of where?" Nigerians tend to remember the tirades of the season trying to figure out which is more entertaining or more memorable. But this campaign should not be all about rhetoric. In the face of the expletives and strong personal exchanges, the key issues about the future of Nigeria and how best to move the country forward are swept under the carpet. An election campaign should not be a circus. It should be an opportunity for reasoned engagement which empower the people to make an informed choice in a credible and fair process. Nigerian politicians should learn from the recent American midterm elections. President Trump was very good at abusing his party's opponents or those he disliked -in Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, California, Georgia. When it came to the vote, Americans voted on the issues and gave control of Congress to the Democrats, including Rep Ilhan Omar who won in Minnesota's 5th Congressional District and Abdul el-Sayed, the Senator-elect from Michigan. Nigeria's 2027 election process raises many questions of leadership, the quality and non-quality. Nigerians should not get carried away with the drama of politics, because when the drama is over, what remains will be the realities of our lives.

NATIONAL Ambassador "Uplift the people, project the nation"

News

'Businesses In Aba Deserve More Reliable Electricity Supply'

From Uzoigwe Grace, Aba

Businesses in Aba, Abia State, deserve a more reliable electricity supply to sustain their operations, protect investments and contribute meaningfully to economic growth.

The persistent power outages experienced in parts of the commercial city have continued to place considerable pressure on business owners, manufacturers, traders and other entrepreneurs who depend on electricity for their daily activities.

For a city widely recognised for its commercial activities, industrial production and entrepreneurial spirit, reliable electricity is not a luxury but an essential requirement for economic survival.

Many business operators are reportedly losing productive hours, spending substantial amounts on petrol and diesel to power generators, and facing increased operating costs. These additional expenses inevitably affect production, pricing, business expansion and the ability of entrepreneurs to remain competitive.

Small-scale businesses, which often operate on limited capital, are particularly vulnerable.

Barbers, hairdressers, welders, tailors, refrigeration operators, food vendors and manufacturers are among those whose daily activities depend heavily on a steady electricity supply.

While challenges associated with electricity distribution may sometimes arise from technical faults, maintenance requirements and other operational difficulties, consumers deserve timely information, effective communication and prompt responses to service disruptions.

Aba Power Limited, as the electricity distribution company serving the area, must continue to demonstrate its commitment to improved service delivery by addressing recurring outages, strengthening its distribution infrastructure and ensuring that customers receive value for the services they pay for.

Equally important is the need for transparent communication. Customers should be adequately informed about the causes of prolonged outages, expected restoration periods and measures being taken to prevent repeated disruptions.

Electricity providers must recognise that behind every prolonged outage are businesses struggling to meet financial obligations, workers whose livelihoods are affected and families depending on the survival of those businesses.

The economic development of Aba cannot be separated from the availability of reliable electricity. Improved power supply will support industrial growth, encourage investment, create employment opportunities and strengthen the city's position as one of Nigeria's important commercial centres.

The call is therefore clear: Aba businesses deserve better.

Aba Power Limited must intensify efforts to improve electricity supply, listen to customers' concerns and demonstrate greater accountability in its service delivery.

The people of Aba are not asking for special treatment; they are asking for reliable electricity and the quality of service necessary to keep their businesses running.

A thriving Aba requires reliable power. The time to act is now.

Nigeria's World Public Relations Forum Hosting Signals Global Recognition - *Idris*

From Sophina Ovuike and ChukwuemekaEgejuru, Abuja

Nigeria's hosting of the 2026 World Public Relations Forum (WPRF) reflects the country's growing international profile, professional capacity and contribution to global communication, the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, has said.

Idris disclosed this recently at Transcorp Hilton Hotel Abuja while speaking at the opening ceremony of the global forum, noting that Nigeria's selection as host demonstrated increasing international confidence in its public relations and communication industry.

He disclosed that Nigeria was the first country in West Africa and the second in Africa to host the prestigious gathering.

"By choosing Nigeria to host the 2026 World Public Relations Forum, the global public relations community has recognised our growing international profile, professional capacity and contribution to global communication," he said.

The minister, who welcomed participants on behalf of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, commended the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management, led by its President and Chief Executive Officer, Professor Justin Green, for selecting Nigeria.



The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris

He also praised the President of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Dr Ike Neliaku, and his team for securing the hosting rights and coordinating the event.

Speaking on the theme, "Responsible Communication: The zVoice of the World," Idris said the subject was timely, given the growing challenges posed by artificial intelligence, misinformation, disinformation and digital manipulation.

He stressed that responsible communication remained critical to protecting public trust, strengthening democratic institutions and ensuring citizens' access to credible information.

According to him, democracy flourishes when citizens can freely express their opinions, question authority, access information and participate meaningfully in public discourse.

Idris reaffirmed the Federal Government's commitment to press freedom, citing the constitutional protection of freedom of expression and the media's responsibility to hold government accountable.

He, however, urged journalists and other communication professionals to maintain accuracy, fairness and ethical standards.

The minister also highlighted the government's support for the establishment of the UNESCO Category 2 International Media and Information Literacy Institute (IMILI) in Abuja, describing it as an important step towards strengthening media and information literacy.

He further drew attention to Nigeria's cultural diversity, creative industries, entrepreneurial capacity, natural resources and human capital, noting that the country's music, films, literature, cuisine and business activities continue to attract global interest.

Idris urged delegates to take advantage of the forum to exchange knowledge, build lasting partnerships and promote higher professional standards in public relations and communication management.

The 2026 World Public Relations Forum has attracted communication and public relations professionals from different countries to deliberate on responsible communication, public trust and the role of the profession in addressing emerging global challenges.

Eno Unveils Arise Agenda 2.0, Outlines Development Plans For AkwaIbom

From Lovina Emole

AkwaIbom State Governor, Pastor UmoEno, has unveiled his administration's development plans for 2027 to 2031 under the ARISE Agenda 2.0, with a focus on infrastructure, security, education, healthcare, tourism and economic growth.

Eno presented the new development agenda recently during the inauguration of the 2027 campaign council at the Banquet Hall of Arise Palm Resort, Uyo, AkwaIbom State.

Speaking at the event, the governor identified the proposed Uyo City Centre Project as one of the major infrastructure projects of his administration.

The project, located around the junction of Wellington Bassey Way, Oron Road, Aka Road and IkotEkpene Road, is designed to improve traffic flow and create a modern business and recreational centre.z

According to the governor, the project will feature a two-level roundabout, an elevated flyover, a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) bus terminal and separate parking areas for taxis and minibuses.

It will also include Ibom Plaza, a proposed City Tower and Ibom Mall, alongside commercial, recreational and public spaces expected to attract investors, encourage business activities and create employment opportunities.

Eno explained that the proposed City Tower was inspired by the AkwaIbom State Coat of Arms. He said its design would reflect the state's oil and gas heritage, cultural identity and coastal resources.

Reviewing his first term in office, the governor promised to build on the achievements recorded so far and introduce more programmes to improve the lives of the people.

On security, he announced plans to introduce a statewide surveillance system using security cameras, scanners and other modern technology across the 31 local government areas of the state.

Under the ARISE Agenda 2.0, the administration also plans to invest more in technical and vocational education, digital skills, entrepreneurship and innovation.

The governor said his government would strengthen the link between education and employment to create more opportunities for young people.

He further expressed his commitment to developing Destination AkwaIbom as a major tourism and hospitality centre, attracting visitors and investors to the state.

In the health sector, Eno said his administration would work towards making AkwaIbom a regional healthcare centre through improved specialist medical services, better healthcare financing, modern technology and investment in medical facilities.

Also speaking, President of the Senate, Senator GodswillObotAkpabio, expressed confidence in Governor Eno's leadership

ABIA STATE GOVERNMENT

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP & INVESTMENT PROMOTIONS OFFICE (PPP & IP OFFICE)

INVITATION FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

AND REQUEST FOR PREQUALIFICATION FOR THE DESIGN, BUILD, OPERATE AND TRANSFER (DBOT) OF THE

OHIYA TRUCK TRANSIT PARK, UMUAHIA

Reference: PPPIPO/TTP/OHY/2026/EOI-001

1. BACKGROUND

The Abia State Government, through the Public Private Partnership & Investment Promotions Office (the "Authority"), invites Expressions of Interest ("EOIs") from qualified Developers, Operators, Investors and Consortia for the development of a Truck Transit Park at Ohiya Umuahia via Public-Private Partnership - Design, Build, Operate and Transfer (DBOT).

2. THE PROJECT

- A site of approximately seven (7) hectares at Ohiya, Umuahia, along Port Harcourt – Umuahia - Enugu Expressway.
- Secure truck and light-vehicle parking, a safe Expressway interface, drivers' welfare, servicing, security, utility and administrative facilities, and ancillary commercial services, delivered in phases starting with an early, safely operable truck-parking component ("Phase 1A").
- Privately financed and operated for a period to be agreed, then transferred to the State. Revenue will come from user charges and ancillary services. The State provides the site's right of use; no State funding will be deployed and no financial, revenue or debt guarantees will be issued.

3. A TWO-STAGE PROCESS

- **Stage 1 (this Invitation):** Applicants are prequalified on the criteria below.
- **Stage 2:** Only prequalified Applicants receive the Request for Proposals (RFP), with forms, detailed criteria and site information, free of charge; attend a mandatory site inspection; and submit technical and financial proposals within two weeks.

4. WHO MAY APPLY

Interested and qualified companies or consortia, Nigerian or foreign (a selected foreign entity must incorporate a Nigerian SPV). Consortia combining developers, operators, financiers and Nigerian contractors are encouraged. No preference is attached to prior engagement with the State or to any earlier concept for the site.

5. MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Consortium members may meet the financial and experience requirements in aggregate; the Lead Member must meet at least 50% of each financial threshold.

- **Legal, Corporate and Statutory:** Corporate Profile, Certificate of Incorporation and CAC status report (or foreign equivalent); Tax Clearance Certificate; Three (3) Year Audited Accounts, PENCOM compliance (foreign members: home-country equivalent).
- **Good Standing:** not insolvent or debarred; no material litigation in the last five years disclosed.
- **Financial Standing:** Average annual turnover of at least ₦5 billion in the past 3 years and positive net worth.
- **Access to Finance:** A financier's letter of support for at least ₦5 billion, dated within 60 days of the deadline, or proof of funds.
- **Experience:** At least two projects completed in the last seven (7) years in transport, logistics, parking or comparable infrastructure, each of not less than ₦5 billion, at least one operated by the Applicant or delivered as a PPP/Concession.
- **Integrity:** Beneficial-ownership disclosure and a signed integrity and conflict-of-interest declaration.

6. PREQUALIFICATION

EOIs that meet every mandatory requirement will be assessed against the criteria below:

S/N	Criteria	What Is Assessed
1.	**Relevant Experience**	Comparable projects; Operations; PPP experience
2.	**Financial Capacity**	Turnover; Financial capacity and financing evidence
3.	**Technical and Management Capability**	Corporate experience, Profiles of key personnel; Consortium structure (If applicable)
4.	**Understanding and Implementation approach**	Project understanding; Phase 1A; local content

Please note that only prequalified Applicants will be invited for Stage 2. Claims not supported by documents will not be discounted, and the Authority will verify any information submitted.

7. KEY DATES

Activity	Date (* indicative)
Publication of this Invitation	Tuesday, November 17, 2026
EOI Submission Deadline	**Monday, November 23, 2026, 5:00 p.m.**
Prequalification results; RFP issued*	Friday, November 27, 2026
Stage 2 Proposals Due*	Friday, December 11, 2026
Preferred Partner announced*	Friday, December 18, 2026

8. WHAT TO SUBMIT

- **Cover Letter:** (one EOI per Applicant, in English) signed by an authorised officer, naming a contact person and any consortium members and their roles.
- **Mandatory Documents:** for each requirement in Section 5, and any consortium agreement or MoU.
- **Experience Schedule:** (client, value, dates, role, scope) with completion certificates or references.
- **Key Personnel:** CVs of the Project Director, Lead Civil Engineer, Transport Planner, Operations Manager and Finance Lead.
- **Capability Statement:** of not more than ten pages covering the team's technical and management capability, understanding of the Project and approach to early operations (Phase 1A).

9. SUBMISSION

EOIs must be submitted by email only to **info.pppipo@abiastate.gov.ng**, not later than **5:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 23, 2026**, with the subject "EOI – Ohiya Truck Transit Park – [Applicant name]", as PDF attachments of not more than 20 MB per email (a numbered series of emails is acceptable). Please note:

- The time of receipt on the Authority's email server is conclusive; late EOIs will not be considered.
- No clarification process is provided; further information will be issued to prequalified Applicants with the RFP.

10. IMPORTANT NOTICE

This Invitation is not an offer and creates no obligation on Abia State Government. Prequalification confers only the right to receive the RFP. Applicants bear their own costs. Any attempt to influence the process outside the official channel leads to disqualification. The Authority may amend or cancel this procurement before award; indicative dates may change by notice to Applicants.

Signed: Director General/CEO, PPP & IP Office, Abia State

NATIONAL Ambassador "Uplift the people, project the nation"

Sporting Ambassador



ANOTHER SCAPEGOAT OR SAVIOUR?

Pochettino Takes Charge of Manchester United

By Joseph Jacob

Argentine tactician Mauricio Pochettino has taken charge of Manchester United after signing a two-and-a-half-year contract that will keep him at Old Trafford for the next two and half season, if he lasts that long. United reportedly paid United States' football authorities a $10 million buyout fee to secure Pochettino's services.

For fans who have long been calling for the dismissal of Michael Carrick, Pochettino's appointment may come as a relief. Manchester United have endured their worst start to a Premier League season, collecting just eight points from their opening 10 matches and languishing in 18th position on the league table.

Ironically, however, these are largely the same fans who had insisted that Carrick was the right man for the job after he rescued the Red Devils last season as interim manager, recording 12 wins, three draws and just two defeats to secure qualification for the UEFA Champions League.

Pochettino is undoubtedly qualified for the task ahead. The Argentine has accumulated considerable Premier League experience, having spent several years managing some of England's biggest clubs.

He took charge of Southampton midway through the 2012/13 season and guided the Saints to a 14th-place finish. In his first full season, he helped them achieve an impressive eighth-place finish, establishing himself as one of the league's promising young managers.

Between 2014 and 2019, Pochettino managed Tottenham Hotspur, where he enjoyed some of the finest moments of his managerial career. Under his leadership, Spurs finished second in the 2016/17 Premier League season and emerged as genuine title contenders. He also guided the North London club to the UEFA Champions League final in 2019. However, a poor run of results in the 2019/20 campaign led to his dismissal when Tottenham were sitting 14th in the table.


Mauricio Pochettino

In the 2023/24 season, Pochettino took charge of Chelsea and guided the Blues to a sixth-place finish, securing European qualification.

His managerial credentials are therefore hardly in doubt. The bigger question, however, is whether he will become Manchester United's saviour or simply another scapegoat who will eventually take the blame for deeper problems beyond his control.


United captain, Bruno Fernandes

Since the departure of legendary manager Sir Alex Ferguson, Manchester United have struggled to regain the stability, consistency and success expected of a club of their stature. Managers have come and gone, each arriving with promises of a new beginning, only to leave under pressure. This has led many discerning football followers to question whether the club's problems are really down to managerial incompetence or whether there are more fundamental issues within its structure.

David Moyes was the first manager entrusted with the responsibility of succeeding Ferguson. He oversaw 51 matches, winning 27 and drawing nine, and also secured the Community Shield. Despite this, he was dismissed before the end of the season. Former United midfielder Ryan Giggs took charge of the remaining four matches, recording two wins, one draw and one defeat.

Louis van Gaal subsequently took over in July 2014 and remained in charge until May 2016. The Dutchman won approximately 52 per cent of his matches and delivered the FA Cup, but his tenure ended with his dismissal.

Jose Mourinho succeeded him and, so far, remains the club's most successful manager in the post-Ferguson era in terms of trophies won. The self-proclaimed 'Special One' delivered three major honours: the UEFA Europa League, the League Cup and the Community Shield. He oversaw 144 matches, winning 84, before his departure.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer initially arrived as an interim manager and performed impressively enough to earn a permanent appointment. However, his fortunes eventually declined, and he was dismissed in November 2021 after taking charge of 168 matches and recording 91 victories.

Michael Carrick also had a brief spell as caretaker manager, overseeing three matches between November and December, during which he recorded two wins and one draw.

Ralf Rangnick subsequently took over on an interim basis but struggled to turn things around. He managed 29 matches, winning just 11, before leaving the club.

Erik ten Hag arrived in May 2022 and oversaw 128 matches, recording 70 wins, 23 draws and 35 defeats. He won both the FA Cup and the League Cup during his time at Old Trafford but was eventually dismissed in October 2024. Former striker Ruud van Nistelrooy stepped in as caretaker manager, taking charge of four matches and recording three wins and one draw.

Ruben Amorim was appointed in November 2024. He managed 63 matches, winning 24, drawing 18 and losing 21, before his dismissal in January 2026. Darren Fletcher subsequently took charge of two matches as interim manager, recording one draw and one defeat, before Michael Carrick was handed the reins.

The revolving door of managers at Old Trafford raises an important question: how many more coaches must Manchester United hire and fire before the club confronts the deeper issues affecting its performance?

Pochettino should not be expected to perform instant magic. Rebuilding a struggling team requires patience, stability and a clear long-term vision. The club's hierarchy must give him sufficient time to introduce his football philosophy, establish his preferred playing style and restore confidence among the players.

More importantly, the management must be prepared to support him in the transfer market, particularly during the January window, by making strategic signings that address the team's weaknesses and enable United to compete with their rivals.

Ultimately, Pochettino has a huge responsibility to restore Manchester United's lost glory. But the responsibility does not rest on his shoulders alone. The club's management must also demonstrate the commitment, consistency and strategic direction required to rebuild a fallen giant.

The Argentine must turn the fortunes of the Red Devils as quickly as possible. Otherwise, if results fail to improve, he could become the next manager to pay the price for Manchester United's seemingly endless crisis.

Will Pochettino be the saviour Old Trafford desperately needs, or just another name on the club's growing list of managerial casualties?

NATIONAL Ambassador "Uplift the people, project the nation"

Sporting Ambassador



Abia Set to Host 3rd Secondary School Games

Stories by Joseph Jacob

All is now set for the third edition of the Abia State Secondary School Games, as the state intensifies efforts to discover and nurture young sporting talents through grassroots sports development.

The cheering news was disclosed by the Commissioner for Youth and Sports Development, Sir Nwaobilor Ananaba, during a press conference heralding activities lined up for the forthcoming competition.

According to the Commissioner, the games will feature 37 sports, including athletics, chess, cricket, football, hockey, judo, para-athletics, squash and swimming, among others.

He explained that the competition was designed primarily to promote grassroots sports development, identify promising young athletes and provide them with a platform to develop their sporting potential.

The impact of the initiative is already evident in Abia's improving performance at the National Youth Games. Since its introduction in 2024, the Abia State Secondary School Games has produced more than 70 young talents who have strengthened the state's representation at national competitions.

Before the commencement of the state secondary school games, Abia finished 23rd at the preceding edition of the National Youth Games. However, following the inaugural edition of the competition, the state made a remarkable leap to 10th position before improving further to sixth place in the 2025 edition.

In another significant achievement, two athletes discovered through the competition are currently in Botswana representing Nigeria, further underscoring the importance of the initiative in developing athletes capable of competing at the international level.

More than 1,300 students are expected to participate in the third edition, which is scheduled to commence on December 15. Although the competition will take place across multiple venues, the Umuahia Township Stadium will serve as the major venue.

To ensure the credibility and integrity of the competition, the Commissioner disclosed that the screening committee would enforce strict eligibility requirements, ensuring that only students currently enrolled in secondary schools participate.

Furthermore, students who have featured in previous editions will not be eligible for this year's competition. The policy, he explained, is intended to create opportunities for fresh talents to emerge and give more students the chance to showcase their abilities.

Present at the press conference were the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, Pastor Jane Maxwell Igwe; Abia State Director of Sports, Comrade George Obioma; Special Assistant to the Governor on Sports Development, Hon. Raymond Ukwa; and other top sports administrators.



Honourable Commissioner for Sports and Youth Development, Sir Nwaobilor Ananaba, (2nd right) Special Adviser to the Governor on Sports Development Hon. Raymond Ukwa, Director of Sports, Comrade George Obioma (2nd left) and the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Sports and Youth Development, Pastor Jane Maxwell Igwe,

Sports Pix









Pictures from the Abia State National Judo Championship and Tertiary Institution Games









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Discourse

With Chukwuemeka Egejuru

Young Nigerian Girls: False Promises, Dark Destinations

A seemingly ordinary encounter with two young Nigerian women in Abuja has raised fresh concerns about deceptive recruitment networks allegedly targeting vulnerable girls with promises of lucrative employment abroad, only to expose them to human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

The encounter involved two young women whose identities are being withheld for their protection. One spoke fluent Igbo, while the other communicated fluently in Ibibio. Both reportedly took off from a Southeast state.

My attention was drawn to their conversation as they made enquiries about certain requirements being communicated to them by a facilitator in Zaria, Kaduna State.

Curious about their mission, I engaged them in a conversation. Further enquiries revealed that they had travelled from southeast Nigeria to Abuja and were preparing to proceed to Zaria, where, according to their account, they would join other young women before being conveyed to Libya for what they had been promised were lucrative employment opportunities.

Another passer-by joined our conversation, which further exposed the disturbing circumstances surrounding their proposed journey.

Their account raised fundamental questions. Who were their prospective employers? What kind of jobs awaited them? Were there genuine employment contracts, verified travel arrangements and legal documentation? I told them in a plain language that this could be another format of luring them into an age-long skin trade.

More importantly, why were they depending on an unidentified facilitator to coordinate such a sensitive overseas journey?

Although their identities and further particulars are being withheld, the encounter raises a troubling possibility: are trafficking networks adopting new domestic transit arrangements to move unsuspecting young Nigerian women towards established international exploitation routes?

Human trafficking is not new in Nigeria, but its recruitment and transportation methods continue to evolve.

For decades, Edo State, particularly Benin City, has featured prominently in investigations into the trafficking of Nigerian women and girls to Europe and other destinations.

Many victims are initially approached with promises of employment in hotels, restaurants, beauty salons, domestic services and other seemingly legitimate occupations.

Some are offered attractive salaries, accommodation, transportation and financial assistance. Others are promised that their sponsors will pay their travel expenses, which they can repay after securing employment abroad.

However, behind such attractive offers may lie carefully organised systems of deception, debt bondage, forced labour and sexual exploitation.

Research by the European Union Agency for Asylum, published in January 2026, explains how trafficking networks exploit personal relationships, community connections and seemingly credible migration agents to recruit victims. Some victims even perceive their recruiters as benefactors rather than criminals.

The report also highlights the involvement of intermediaries coordinating recruitment, transportation and eventual exploitation.



President Bola Tinubu

Every young woman deceived into trafficking is a potential professional, entrepreneur, community leader and contributor to national development whose aspirations may be destroyed or indefinitely disrupted.

The Abuja encounter therefore raises questions about whether similar methods may be operating through additional transit locations, including Zaria, Kaduna and Kano. These particular allegations require independent investigation and should not be mistaken for established findings against any individual or community.

The mention of Benin City is particularly significant because of its documented history in human trafficking.

Research by Chatham House in 2024, titled Tracing the Continuum of Violence Between Nigeria and Libya, examined how economic vulnerability in Edo State intersects with dangerous migration routes through Niger and Libya.

The research documented the violence and exploitation encountered by Nigerian women, including captivity, forced labour and sexual exploitation.

Libya has become particularly notorious for the abuse of vulnerable migrants. Women who embark on journeys believing they are heading towards better employment opportunities have sometimes ended up in detention, prostitution, domestic servitude and other forms of exploitation.

The problem is not restricted to Libya. Nigerian trafficking victims have also been identified in Italy, Spain, France, the United Kingdom and other European countries, as well as parts of the Middle East and West Africa.

The United States Department of State's 2026 Trafficking in Persons Report also identifies fraudulent overseas employment recruitment and social media as important tools used by traffickers to identify and lure potential victims.

One of the most disturbing aspects of human trafficking is how it converts the legitimate aspirations of young people into instruments of criminal exploitation.

A young woman who leaves home hoping to become financially independent may eventually lose control over her movement, personal freedom and access to assistance.

In June 2026, BusinessDay reported the experience of a Nigerian woman trafficked to Libya at the age of 17 after being promised employment and a better life.

Instead of the anticipated opportunity, she was confronted with domestic servitude or prostitution. Her sponsor demanded repayment of travel expenses, restricted her freedom and threatened her when she attempted to return home.

She was eventually evacuated through the assistance of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Human Rights Watch has similarly documented cases of Nigerian girls deceived with promises of domestic employment in Libya, only to be subjected to prostitution, violence and exploitative debt arrangements.

These experiences demonstrate that what begins as a voluntary search for better opportunities can degenerate into captivity and modern-day slavery.

Beyond the physical and psychological injuries suffered by survivors, human trafficking represents a serious threat to Nigeria's human capital and future development.

Every young woman deceived into trafficking is a potential professional, entrepreneur, community leader and contributor to national development whose aspirations may be destroyed or indefinitely disrupted.

The consequences extend to families and entire communities. Parents who invest their limited resources in their children's education may lose them to criminal networks. Younger siblings may be deprived of support, while survivors returning home often struggle with trauma, stigma, unemployment and reintegration challenges.

There is also the possibility of young women disappearing into foreign countries without trace, leaving their families in prolonged uncertainty.

It is important to emphasise that a victim's willingness to travel does not amount to consent to exploitation, forced prostitution, slavery or confinement.

The circumstances surrounding the two young women encountered in Abuja should serve as a basis for urgent investigation and preventive action.

If facilitators are indeed coordinating the movement of unsuspecting girls through northern Nigerian cities before connecting them to overseas recruiters, authorities must identify those involved and establish the true nature of the arrangements.

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) must take particular interest in the information and investigate any identifiable leads.

The Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Police Force and relevant intelligence agencies should strengthen surveillance and intelligence-sharing around suspicious recruitment and transportation arrangements.

Governments of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Edo, Delta, Imo, Kaduna and Kano states among others must also intensify public enlightenment and cooperate in identifying possible trafficking networks.

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