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Soft Sell

...with Uche Aghulor

“By the
Time I’m
Done, It’ll Be
#20bn”

— DAVIDO

Reveals Details of His

**MEGA
MANSION
UNDER
CONSTRUCTION
IN LAGOS**



Afrobeat superstar Davido has revealed the staggering scale and projected value of his ongoing luxury home project at Eko Atlantic City, Lagos, saying the property could be worth about N20 billion when completed.

Speaking about the project, the singer disclosed that the mansion is being built with extensive luxury features, including 15 bedrooms, two music studios and a 20-car garage.

Davido also revealed that the property will rise several floors above its current structure, describing the building as one of his biggest personal investments.

He credited his brother-in-law, Yomi, with inspiring the project and overseeing much of the construction.

“My brother-in-law, Yomi, my sister’s husband. He’s the one that’s actually building everything. He gave me the inspiration,” Davido said.

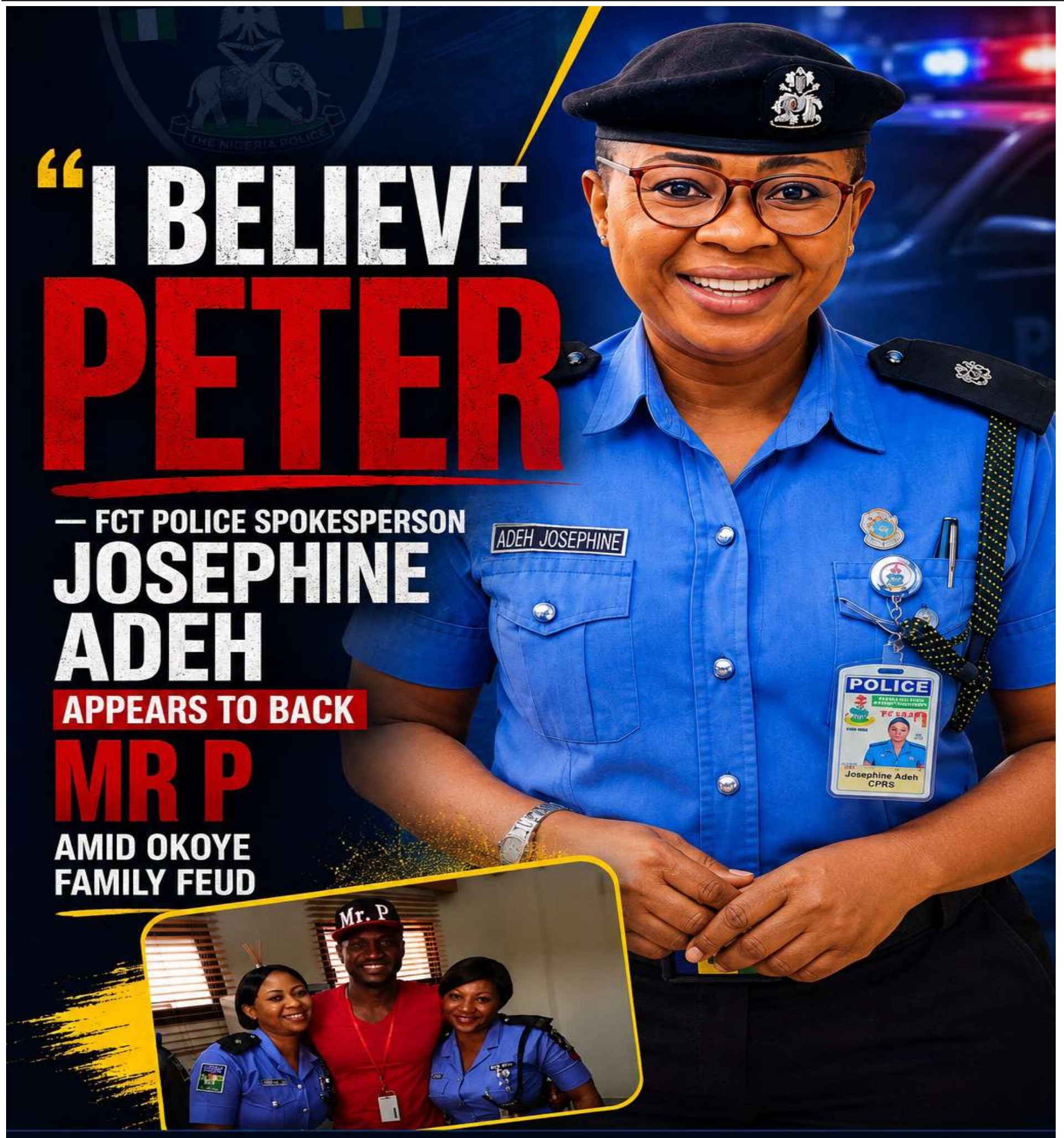
The singer explained that his journey to acquiring the property began with a plot of land he purchased in Banana Island for just over N1 billion.

According to him, he later sold the Banana Island property for about N2 billion after learning about the Eko Atlantic development and subsequently acquired his current land for more than N2 billion.

Davido claimed that the value of the land has since risen significantly, estimating that it is now worth around N7 billion.

He expects the structure to be completed within the next year, saying the building should be substantially up by December and that he hopes to move in by the same period next year.

With its massive scale, private entertainment facilities and premium Lagos location, Davido’s latest property project is shaping up to be another major addition to his already extravagant lifestyle.



The ongoing feud within the Okoye family has taken another interesting turn after the spokesperson of the Federal Capital Territory Police Command, SP Josephine Adeh, appeared to publicly express support for Peter Okoye, popularly known as Mr P.

Adeh shared a throwback photograph of herself with the singer on Facebook on Tuesday, August 4, 2026, recalling that they first met about a decade ago at the Nigeria Police Force Headquarters in Abuja.

Alongside the photograph, she wrote, “How time flies. Ten years ago (2016), I met my all-time fav Mr Psquare at the NPF Force Headquarters Abuja #IbelievePeter.”

The post comes amid Peter’s increasingly public dispute with his twin brother, Paul Okoye, and their elder brother, Jude Okoye, over the management, ownership and alleged handling of assets associated with the former music duo, P-Square.

Adeh’s use of the hashtag “I Believe Peter” has since attracted attention online,

with some social media users interpreting it as an indication of where her sympathies lie in the increasingly bitter family dispute.

The Okoye brothers’ feud has continued to generate controversy, with Peter and Jude presenting conflicting accounts over the group’s finances, royalties and business dealings.

As the dispute continues to unfold publicly, Adeh’s seemingly supportive message has added another unexpected voice to the conversation.

NOLLYWOOD MOURNS

— TOPE OSOBA —
AS ACTRESS DIES
AFTER LONG BATTLE
WITH **BREAST CANCER**



Nollywood actress Tope Osoba has died after a long battle with breast cancer, leaving fans, colleagues and loved ones mourning the loss of an actress who had publicly fought to overcome the disease.

Osoba had opened up about her health struggles in 2025, revealing that her journey began after she discovered a lump in her breast during a routine self-examination at the age of 39.

Her initial attempt to seek medical attention reportedly did not raise alarm. According to Osoba, a doctor at a private hospital initially attributed the lump to her being of childbearing age, noting that she had neither conceived nor breastfed.

Still concerned, the actress continued monitoring the lump and eventually noticed that it had grown.

Further medical examinations confirmed that she had cancer.

Speaking to BBC News Yoruba at the time, Osoba described receiving the diagnosis as one of the worst moments of her life, saying she immediately feared losing her breast and even her life.

A subsequent CT scan, however, offered some relief as doctors found that the cancer had not spread significantly. She was told she would not need a mastectomy or chemotherapy and would instead undergo radiation treatment.

The financial burden of treatment soon became another challenge.

Osoba appealed to colleagues and members of the public for assistance, with actress Foluke Daramola helping to raise awareness and funds for her treatment.

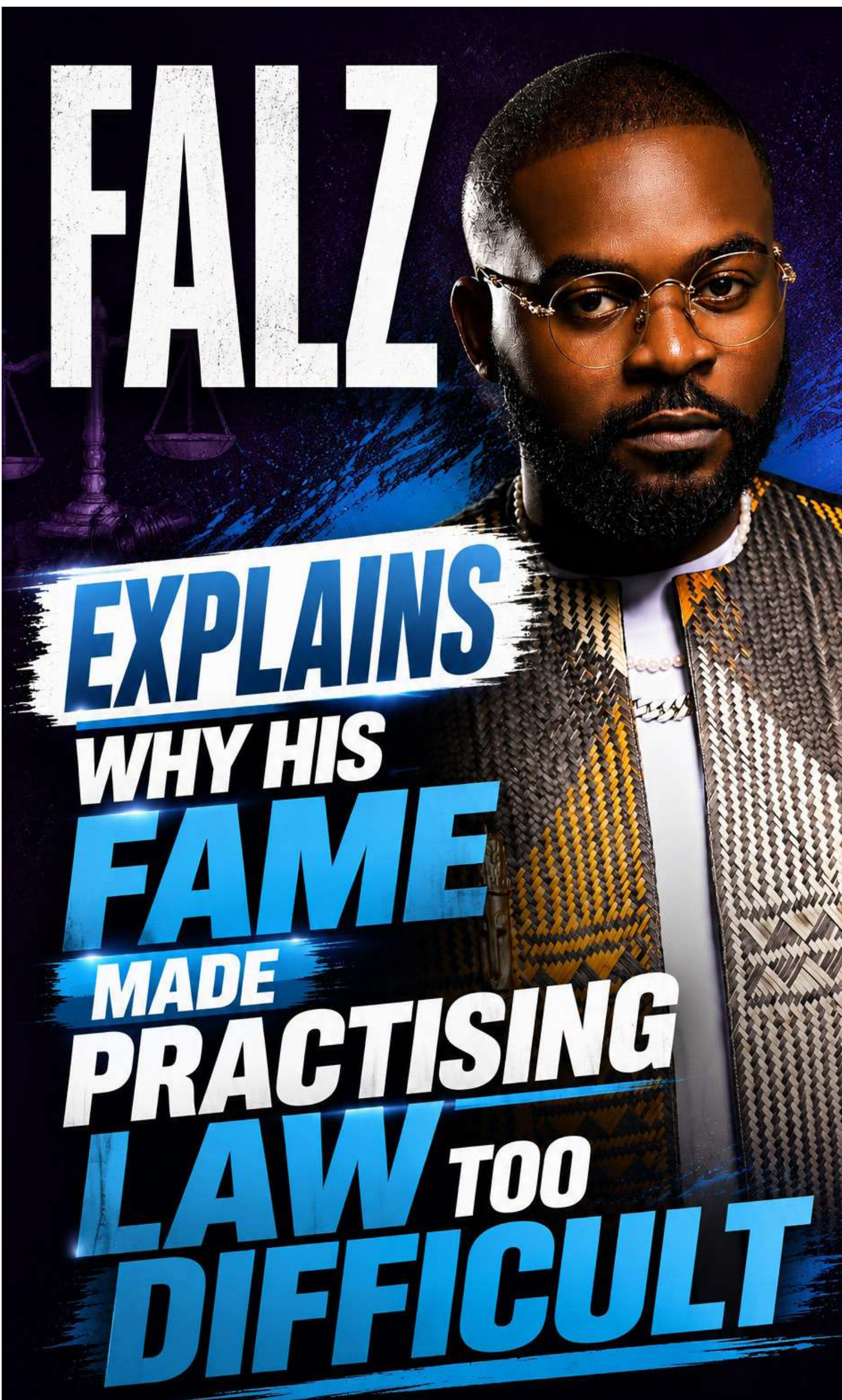
After learning that many people

did not recognise Osoba, Daramola reportedly encouraged her to make a public appeal herself. The actress subsequently shared her story publicly, and the campaign received enough support for her to complete her treatment.

Osoba was later placed on a five-year medication plan, during which doctors advised her against becoming pregnant.

Despite successfully completing treatment and fighting hard for her recovery, news of her death has now left many Nigerians heartbroken.

Her passing has sparked an emotional wave of tributes online, with fans and colleagues remembering a woman who had openly documented one of the most difficult battles of her life and had given many hope through her determination to survive.



Nigerian rapper and actor Folarin Falana, popularly known as Falz, has opened up about why he stepped away from active legal practice as his music career continued to gain prominence.

Falz, who was called to the Nigerian Bar in 2012 after studying law at the University of Reading in the United Kingdom and attending the Nigerian Law School in Abuja, said balancing both careers became increasingly difficult as his fame grew.

Speaking during a recent episode of the Behind The Story podcast, the 35 year old entertainer explained that although it was possible to pursue law and music simultaneously, maintaining an active legal practice while managing a successful entertainment career became challenging.

He recalled an experience in court that made him more conscious of the growing attention surrounding his public identity.

"There was a day in court when I announced my appearance, and the judge asked, 'Are you not the one doing something on the side?'" Falz recounted.

According to the rapper, some members of the legal profession already knew him as the son of renowned human rights lawyer Femi Falana, while his growing success in music was also making him increasingly recognisable.

Falz said he eventually realised that his rising profile could become a distraction during court proceedings and potentially make clients question whether he could give their cases the attention they required.

"Imagine becoming even more famous and showing up in court. It could create distractions and make some clients feel I would be too occupied with music and other engagements," he explained.

The rapper said his visibility had simply become too difficult to separate from his legal career.

"It would have been difficult because my face is already out there," he added.

Falz began gaining widespread attention in the music industry in 2011 with the release of his debut single, Wahz Up Guy, and eventually established himself as one of Nigeria's prominent entertainers.

When a Government Declares War on the Truth

By Peter Obi

President Donald Trump of America recently described Nigeria as “a now disgraced country.” The painful reality is that Nigeria’s challenges continue to deepen. Each passing day reveals deeper signs of decline, especially when a government becomes increasingly intolerant of truth and hostile to those who speak about the suffering of the people.

The Catholic Church has never functioned as an opposition party in Nigeria. Across military regimes and successive democratic administrations, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) has maintained a principled voice on national issues and the nation’s conscience, commending governments when they deserved commendation and speaking the truth whenever national conscience demanded it. Its interventions are driven by a moral obligation, rooted in Christian social teaching, to defend truth, justice, and the common good.

The same applies to Nigeria’s major religious organisations. Bodies such as Jama’atu Nasril Islam (JNI), the Supreme Council for Shari’ah in Nigeria (SCSN), the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), and the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) have repeatedly raised concerns over economic hardship, inflation, and insecurity. Living among the people, religious leaders often encounter the suffering of citizens firsthand. They speak because they witness families struggling with rising food prices, unemployment, and the fear created by kidnappings and insecurity.

As leaders, we should be gracious enough to listen to people and organisations that speak the truth to us and genuinely criticise us when things are not going in the right direction. As Governor, I had the opportunity of working with a very strong Council of Traditional Rulers, led by the Obi of Onitsha, and religious bodies that consistently criticised me and offered suggestions. This contributed greatly to our success in Anambra State, especially in critical areas like education and health.

Against this background, the attacks on the CBCN, and especially on His Eminence, John Cardinal Onaiyekan, are deeply troubling. Even in 1998, when Pope John Paul II visited Nigeria and told General Abacha some hard truths, including about the incarceration of Chief Moshood Abiola, nobody vilified him.

During the inauguration of Pope Leo XIV in Rome, to demonstrate his purported commitment to and respect for the Catholic Church, President Bola Tinubu arrived in Rome days before the event, ahead of most other visiting dignitaries, including Catholics such as the U.S. Vice President, JD Vance. He participated in the liturgy, queued with other world leaders to greet the Holy Father, and displayed deep respect for the moral authority of the Church. Back in Nigeria, however, that posture has now changed completely.

What is playing out today also reveals how political leaders sometimes exploit religion



Peter Obi

and ethnicity to divide the people. Even when it was obvious that the CBCN was speaking on issues affecting Nigerians across religious and ethnic boundaries, aides to the President immediately reduced it to a “religious affair.” The question is: are insecurity, poverty, inflation, unemployment, and hardship problems exclusive to a particular faith? Do these challenges recognise religious or tribal boundaries?

The bishops merely expressed what millions of Nigerians experience daily: insecurity has worsened, poverty is deepening, inflation is crippling families, businesses are struggling, and hope is fading. These are realities echoed by religious leaders across the country, to whom successive governments gave thanks and promised to look into their observations.

Rather than address these concerns or explain the measures in place to ameliorate them, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu’s aides and supporters responded with vicious attacks, particularly against Cardinal John Onaiyekan, with little regard for his age, stature, and

accomplishments.

Here is a man who had the best Higher School Certificate result in the old Northern Region in 1962 and who rose through the ranks of the Catholic Church to become a Cardinal, a position that places him among those eligible to be considered for the papacy. Yet he is no ordinary cleric. He is one of Africa’s most respected churchmen, known for decades of service to peace, dialogue, scholarship, and national unity. Resorting to personal attacks against him weakens public discourse and reveals an unhealthy intolerance of criticism in today’s Nigerian political space.

Throughout history, religious leaders have challenged political authorities. Biblical prophets confronted kings, and modern faith communities continue to hold governments accountable. Nigeria has a similar tradition. The Catholic Church criticised military governments and successive civilian administrations, including those of Obasanjo, Yar’Adua, Jonathan, and Buhari. Muslim organisations have done likewise. Governments respectfully disagreed at times, but they generally recognised the right and responsibility of religious bodies to speak. Why, then, does the truth provoke such anger today?

The problem often begins when leaders surround themselves with voices that tell them only what they want to hear. Napoleon Bonaparte was reputed to have preferred hearing bad news because problems were where leadership was required. During my tenure as Governor of Anambra State, I maintained a similar philosophy. I expected cabinet members to bring me problems, not compliments, because only honest feedback could lead to solutions.

Good governance depends on truth. When governments punish truth-tellers and reward sycophants with appointments, honest advisers withdraw, sycophancy thrives, and leaders become disconnected from reality. This is our situation today.

The CBCN did not insult the President and can never do so, given the calibre of the people who make up the Conference, some of the finest among Nigerians. It gave voice to the suffering of Nigerians. The proper

response was to thoughtfully address the issues raised, not attack those who raised them. When respected figures like Cardinal Onaiyekan are vilified for speaking the truth, the message sent to citizens is that silence is safer than honesty. No democracy can flourish under such a culture.

Religious leaders should continue to speak because silence in the face of suffering would betray their moral responsibility. The greatest service those around President Tinubu can render him is an honest appraisal of the situation. A leader who hears only praise will never fully understand the pain of his people or find the clarity needed to correct what is wrong.

A New Nigeria is POSSible.
-PO



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Nigerian Tactical Forces Stage Biggest Rescue in Nation's History

■ Sweep 308 hostages from kidnappers' forest fortress as Tinubu orders stronger early warning systems

By Abu Adamu

Nigeria's security forces have recorded what is believed to be the single largest hostage rescue operation in the country's history after a coordinated tactical offensive freed 308 abducted citizens from kidnappers' camps deep inside the Kainji Lake National Park forest.

The unprecedented operation, driven by intelligence and executed by a joint team comprising the National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC), the Armed Forces of Nigeria, the Department of State Services (DSS) and the Nigeria Police Force, rescued 163 victims abducted from Woro Community in Kaiama Local Government Area of Kwara State and

another 145 kidnapped in Niger State.

The massive rescue mission was carried out in the Kainji Lake National Park forest in New Bussa Local Government Area of Niger State, where security operatives stormed the criminals' hideouts and safely extracted all 308 captives.

Describing the operation as the largest same-day rescue ever undertaken by Nigeria's joint security forces, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu hailed the feat as a major victory in the nation's campaign against terrorism, banditry and mass abductions.

"The successful execution of this intelligence-led operation demonstrates the growing efficiency and collaboration among our security services. I commend our gallant

men and women in uniform for their bravery and unwavering commitment to safeguarding Nigerian lives," the President said.

President Tinubu applauded the leadership and personnel of the participating security agencies for their courage, professionalism, and seamless inter-agency coordination, saying the operation reflected the increasing effectiveness of intelligence-led security interventions.

The rescued victims are currently receiving first aid and medical attention at the medical facility in Wawa Cantonment before being handed over to the governments of Kwara and Niger states for rehabilitation, reunification with their families, and other necessary support.

While celebrating the successful rescue, the President directed security agencies to intensify efforts aimed at preventing future mass abductions.

He ordered an immediate strengthening of early warning systems, improved community-based intelligence gathering, and faster emergency response mechanisms to enable security forces to detect and neutralise threats before attacks occur.

President Tinubu reiterated his administration's determination to eradicate security threats across the country, assuring Nigerians that every effort would continue to be deployed to protect lives, secure vulnerable communities, and restore lasting peace nationwide.

EFCC: We Froze Osun Accounts Over N11bn Fraud Probe, Unusual Movement of Funds in 72 Hours

By Yinka Giwa

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on Wednesday broke its silence over the freezing of Osun State Government accounts, declaring that the action was part of an ongoing investigation into the alleged diversion of more than N11 billion in public funds and not a politically motivated move ahead of the August 15 governorship election.

The anti-graft agency said it placed a Post-No-Debit restriction on the state's statutory allocation account after investigators detected what it described as "precipitate and unwarranted" transfers of large sums of money from government accounts into several suspicious corporate accounts.

But the Osun State Government and the opposition African Democratic Congress (ADC) rejected the explanation, accusing the Federal Government of weaponising anti-corruption institutions to cripple the administration of Governor Ademola Adeleke barely 10 days before voters head to the polls.

The EFCC, in a statement by its Head of Media and Publicity, Dele Oyewale, disclosed that it had been investigating the Osun State Government since March 2026 over the alleged fraudulent handling of Ecology Funds, Intervention Funds and allocations from the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) amounting to about N11 billion.

According to the Commission, the Accountant-General of the state and other officials have already been questioned as part of the investigation.

The agency explained that although the probe had been ongoing for months, it only moved to freeze the accounts after

■ State Govt, ADC Accuse FG of Political Intimidation Ahead of Polls

detecting unusual movements of public funds beginning on August 2.

"The Commission noticed huge transfers of funds into different corporate entities and had to swiftly halt the trend by freezing the accounts from which such heavy funds are being moved," the EFCC stated.

It insisted that the decision had nothing to do with the forthcoming governorship election, stressing that its constitutional responsibility was to safeguard public resources.

"The Commission cannot watch idly while a state government's account is being pillaged. While the Commission is fully aware of the impending governorship election in Osun State, it has a responsibility to act in defence of the sanctity of the funds of the state."

The agency further disclosed that several other states are also under financial scrutiny, maintaining that its operations are non-partisan and driven solely by the need to promote accountability in the management of public funds.

"The Osun State Government account was frozen to save public funds from being looted," the statement added.

Earlier on Wednesday, documents obtained by journalists showed that the EFCC had directed First Bank Plc to place a Post-No-Debit restriction on the Osun State Government's statutory allocation account.

In a letter dated August 5, 2026, and signed by Assistant Commander of the EFCC, Adenike Babalola, on behalf of the Director of Investigation, the Commission cited provisions of the EFCC Establishment Act, 2004, and the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022, as the legal basis for the action.

The account, reportedly used for the payment of workers' salaries and other government obligations, was immediately restricted.

Reacting, Osun Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Oluwole Jimi-Bada, described the action as unlawful and vowed to challenge it in court.

He argued that the freezing of the account would cripple government activities and disrupt the delivery of essential public services.

"This step will affect government running, but we will challenge the move and ensure that the agency acts within the ambit of the law," he said.

Commissioner for Finance, Sola Ogungbile, also alleged that police operatives stormed the main branch of First Bank in Osogbo and arrested some officials of the bank during the operation.

Governor Ademola Adeleke had earlier raised the alarm that the EFCC planned to freeze all accounts belonging to the state government and some senior officials in what he described as an attempt to paralyse governance before the election.

The governor, through the Commissioner for Information and Public Enlightenment, Kolapo Alimi, insisted there was no legal justification for the action and described it as "the height of lawlessness."

According to the governor, the move was designed to cripple government operations and undermine the credibility of the forthcoming governorship election.

The controversy drew a sharp reaction from the African Democratic Congress (ADC), which accused the Federal Government of deploying federal institutions to intimidate opposition-controlled states.

In a statement by its National Publicity Secretary, Mallam Bolaji Abdullahi, the party described the freezing of Osun's funds as "political terrorism" and alleged that the Tinubu administration was determined to weaken the Adeleke government before the election.

The ADC argued that the real victims of the action would be ordinary residents of the state whose salaries, healthcare services, education programmes and other grassroots projects depend on uninterrupted access to government funds.

"Political opponents are not enemy combatants. Opposition-controlled states are not occupied territories. Public institutions do not belong to whichever party temporarily controls the Federal Government," Abdullahi said.

The party further accused federal authorities of encouraging what it described as a pattern of political intimidation through the continued occupation of local government councils by APC loyalists, alleged harassment of opposition figures and selective deployment of security agencies.

It warned that using public institutions to settle political scores threatened democratic governance and called for the immediate restoration of statutory allocations to Osun State and an end to what it termed federal interference in the state's political affairs.

The latest confrontation has deepened political tensions in Osun, where the August 15 governorship election is expected to be one of the country's most closely watched off-cycle polls, with both the Federal Government and the opposition trading accusations over the neutrality of security and anti-graft institutions.

Presidency Fires Back at Atiku, Says Tinubu's Reforms Fuelled Record Corporate Profits

The Presidency on Wednesday mounted a robust defence of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic reforms, insisting that the strong half-year financial performance posted by many companies listed on the Nigerian Exchange (NGX) is proof that the administration's policies are yielding tangible results.

The response came after former Vice President Atiku Abubakar dismissed the Federal Government's claims of economic progress, arguing that worsening poverty, factory closures, and declining living standards showed that the administration's "economic prosperity exists only in press statements."

In a statement signed by the Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, the Presidency maintained that the surge in corporate revenues and profits across several sectors was directly linked to reforms introduced since mid-2023.

According to Onanuga, the unification of the foreign exchange market created a transparent, market-driven exchange rate that improved price discovery and enabled companies with significant foreign currency earnings to more accurately report their revenues.

He said export-oriented companies such as Aradel Holdings and Seplat Energy benefited significantly from the policy, alongside the Federal Government's approval of major upstream oil transactions, including Renaissance Africa Energy's acquisition of Shell Petroleum Development Company assets and Seplat Energy's takeover of Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited.

The Presidency argued that the approvals boosted investor confidence, expanded production capacity, and strengthened the long-term growth prospects of indigenous oil companies.

Onanuga also cited the administration's naira-for-crude initiative, saying it had strengthened local refining and helped transform the Dangote Refinery into a net exporter of Premium Motor Spirit (petrol) and aviation fuel.

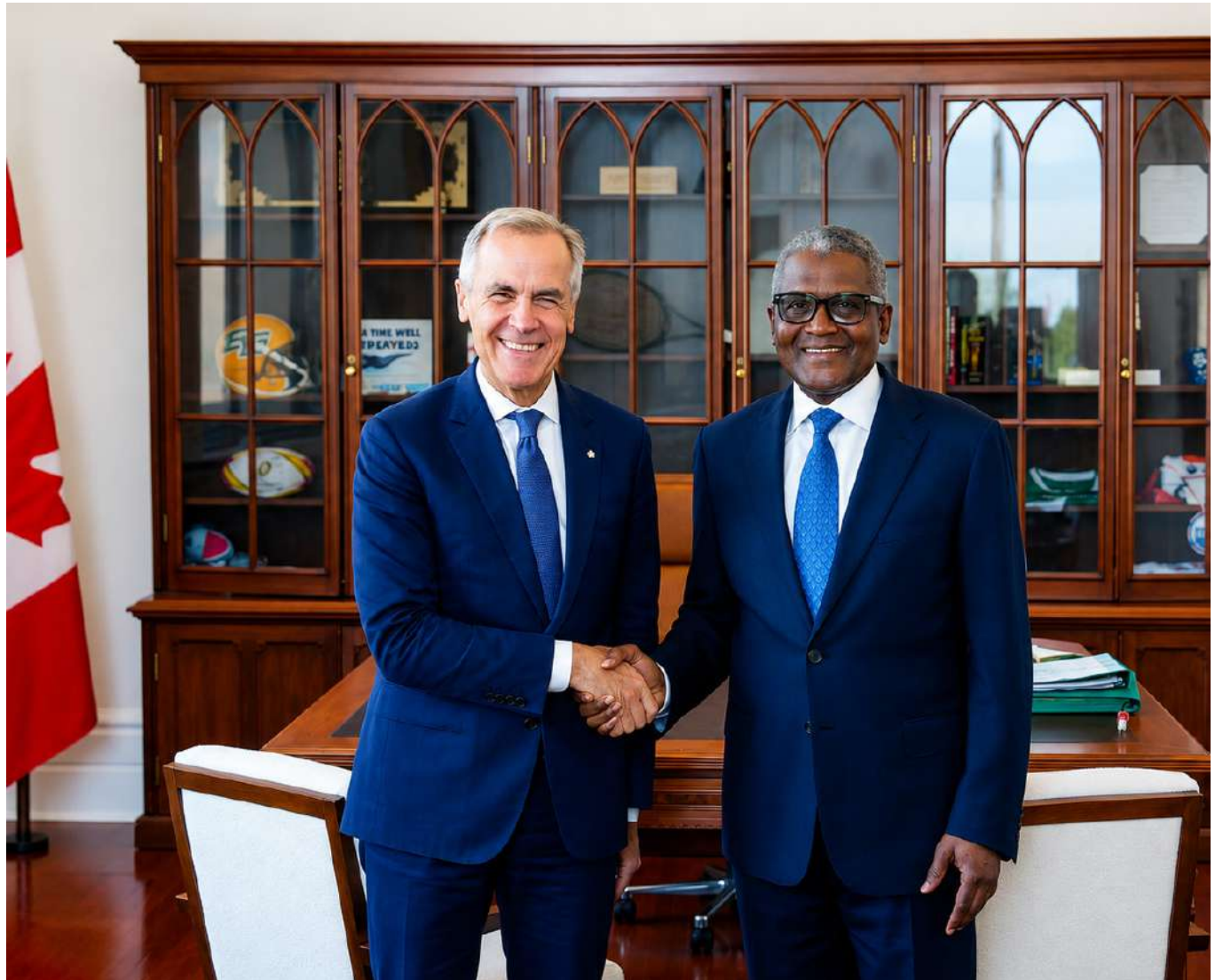
Manufacturing firms, including Dangote Cement, BUA Cement, and HBM (formerly Lafarge Africa), were also said to have benefited from improved access to foreign exchange, enabling better production planning, more efficient procurement of imported inputs, and stronger profitability.

The statement further credited the removal of petrol subsidy, banking sector recapitalisation, tighter monetary policy, and ongoing tax reforms with improving fiscal stability, boosting investor confidence, and creating a more predictable environment for long-term investments.

According to the Presidency, the combined impact of the reforms has enhanced market efficiency, strengthened financial transparency, and improved capital allocation for export-oriented and capital-intensive businesses.

"Rather than reflecting isolated firm-level developments, these results illustrate how comprehensive structural reforms can translate into measurable improvements in corporate financial performance through stronger market fundamentals and a more predictable business environment," Onanuga said.

The Presidency's response followed Atiku's criticism that despite official claims of macroeconomic progress, millions of Nigerians continued to grapple with soaring living costs, rising poverty and industrial decline, citing the closure or distress of hundreds of manufacturing firms as evidence that the reforms had yet to improve the lives of ordinary citizens.



President and Group Chief Executive Officer of Dangote Industries Limited, Aliko Dangote, met with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney as part of engagements under the #DangoteVision2030 initiative.

Dangote Eyes Canada in \$100bn Global Expansion Push, Holds High-Level Talks With PM Carney

By Emmanuel Olugua

Africa's richest businessman and President of Dangote Industries Limited, Aliko Dangote, has taken his ambitious \$100 billion global expansion strategy to Canada, holding high-level talks with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on investment opportunities, trade, clean energy, and industrial cooperation.

The meeting, held in Ottawa as part of the Dangote Vision 2030 initiative, marked a significant step in the conglomerate's drive to expand its global footprint while strengthening economic ties between Canada and Africa.

Dangote and Prime Minister Carney explored opportunities to deepen bilateral investment partnerships, with discussions focusing on Canada-Africa trade, clean energy, agricultural technology, and industrial development.

The talks also examined how the Dangote Group and other African

investors could play a greater role in Canada's economy, while advancing Canada's Africa Strategy through increased two-way investment and commercial cooperation.

The engagement builds on an existing relationship forged through the World Bank's Private Sector Investment Lab, where both leaders have collaborated on initiatives aimed at boosting private sector-led economic growth.

Dangote said stronger partnerships between African and Canadian businesses would unlock fresh opportunities for investment, innovation, and sustainable economic development across both regions.

"Strategic partnerships between Africa and Canada have immense potential to drive sustainable growth and create value for both regions. There is a strong case for increasing investment, fostering innovation, and building mutually beneficial commercial relationships," he said.

During the visit, Dangote also

met with Ahmed Hussien, Member of Parliament and Chairman of Canada's Foreign Affairs Committee, where discussions centred on expanding trade, attracting long-term investments, and strengthening strategic economic cooperation between Canada and African nations.

The series of high-level engagements underscores Dangote Industries' growing global ambitions as it pursues its Vision 2030 agenda, a sweeping \$100 billion expansion programme designed to accelerate industrialisation, promote sustainable development, and position the company among the world's leading manufacturing and investment groups.

The Ottawa meetings also signal increasing momentum in Canada-Africa economic relations, with both sides expressing commitment to building stronger commercial partnerships capable of driving inclusive growth, job creation, and long-term prosperity.

2027: Accord Party Presidential Candidate Steps Down, Endorses Tinubu

The presidential candidate of the Accord Party, Prof. Christopher Imumolen, has withdrawn from the 2027 presidential race to endorse the re-election bid of President Bola Tinubu.

Imumolen, a factional National Chairman of the party, made this known in a statement on Wednesday in Abuja, noting that his decision followed extensive consultations with the party's leadership.

He described his withdrawal as a patriotic sacrifice aimed at prioritising national unity, stability, and continuous development over personal political ambition.

"Following my emergence as the presidential candidate of the Accord Party during the duly conducted presidential primaries, I, in consultation with the leadership of the party, made the patriotic decision to withdraw from the presidential race and fully support the re-election of President Tinubu in the 2027 presidential election.

"This decision was not borne out of personal interest, but from a deep conviction that the unity, stability, and continued progress of Nigeria must take precedence over personal political ambition," he said.

Highlighting 10 reasons for endorsing Tinubu's re-election, Imumolen noted that the President's reform agenda closely aligns with his manifesto, particularly in economic transformation, education, youth empowerment, entrepreneurship, industrialisation, and national development.

"His resilience and ability to navigate Nigeria's complex political and economic landscape demonstrate uncommon courage, determination, and strategic leadership worthy of emulation.

"In Nigeria's democratic history, President Tinubu has consistently displayed

extraordinary political wisdom, foresight, and nation-building capacity that have produced transformational leaders across the country.

"His commitment to sustaining progressive governance through purposeful leadership, institutional reforms, and continuity provides confidence in Nigeria's long-term growth and stability," he added.

He said Tinubu had also shown a remarkable ability to identify capable individuals, build consensus, promote national unity, and make difficult decisions in the best interest of

the nation.

Imumolen expressed belief that the President is uniquely positioned to provide a seamless transition between the founding generation of Nigeria's democratic leadership and the emerging generation of transformational leaders.

He added that in spite of current economic challenges, he remained convinced that Tinubu's policy direction, fiscal discipline, and decisive leadership would reposition Nigeria's economy for sustainable prosperity.

"His willingness to engage and collaborate with progressive-

minded Nigerians across political parties reflects true statesmanship and a genuine commitment to national development above partisan interests.

"My aspiration has always been to serve Nigeria and not merely to occupy public office.

"Whenever the national interest is better served through unity and strategic collaboration, I will always choose Nigeria above personal political ambition."

He said that at this critical stage of the nation's development, continuity in governance, policy consistency, political stability, and sustained

reforms were essential for attracting investment.

He said it was also necessary for creating jobs, strengthening institutions, and building a prosperous Nigeria for future generations.

"Today, I therefore declare my total support for the re-election of President Tinubu in the 2027 presidential election.

"I equally call on members of the Accord Party, my supporters across Nigeria, the youth, professionals, and all patriotic Nigerians to join hands in supporting this national project," Imumolen said.



L-R: Secretary-General, Conference of Speakers and Presidents of African Legislatures, Dr Dapo Oyewole, Executive Secretary, National Assembly Library Trust Fund, Hon. Henry Nwawuba, and National President, National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), Comrade Akinteye Afeez, during the national unveiling of the LEAD Fellowship at the National Assembly, yesterday in Abuja.

INEC Publication Error Does Not Change Our Candidate – NDC

The Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) has insisted that an error in the Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) publication of candidates' particulars does not affect its choice of candidate for the Edo South Senatorial District.

In a statement issued on Wednesday by the party's Director of New Media and Strategic Communication, Agada Abuh Theophilus, the NDC said Mrs Epelle-Asemota Bridgitte

Osayuki remains its officially sponsored candidate for the senatorial election.

The party explained that although INEC correctly published Mrs Epelle-Asemota's name and personal details, the commission mistakenly attached another aspirant's photograph and credentials.

"The mix-up was an embarrassing error caused by some persons within INEC. We properly submitted Mrs Epelle-

Asemota's name, passport photograph and credentials to the commission in line with the Constitution and the Electoral Act," the party said.

"By the Constitution and the Electoral Act, no one can be a candidate of a political party unless sponsored by that party. Sponsorship is effected through the formal submission of the candidate's name to the INEC. In this case, that process was duly followed," the statement said.

The party clarified that, under the law, Mrs Epelle-Asemota Bridgitte Osayuki remains its duly recognised candidate for the Edo South Senatorial District.

The party said it had attached evidence showing the successful upload of her details and stressed that publishing candidates' particulars is solely the responsibility of INEC. It also called on the commission to explain how the error occurred.

The NDC also condemned

what it described as an organised campaign to question Mrs Epelle-Asemota's candidacy on ethnic grounds.

According to the party, she is a Nigerian citizen of Benin ancestry who has lived and worked in Benin throughout her life.

While acknowledging that other aspirants were disappointed with the outcome of the primaries, the party urged them not to take actions that could weaken the party.

Nigeria Hit Six Past Egypt to Reach WAFCON Quarterfinals



Nigeria booked their place in the quarterfinals of the 2026 TotalEnergies CAF Women's Africa Cup of Nations after a commanding 6-2 victory over Egypt in their final Group C match at the Rabat Olympic Stadium on Wednesday night.

The Super Falcons went into the match knowing they could not afford another slip after their shock opening defeat by Malawi and narrow win over Zambia.

They responded with their most ruthless attacking performance of the tournament, scoring three times in each half to secure qualification alongside Malawi.

Asisat Oshoala opened the scoring from the penalty spot in the 21st minute before Gift Monday doubled Nigeria's lead in first-half stoppage time after being set up by Rinsola Babajide.

Nadine Ghazi pulled one back for Egypt with a penalty deep into first-half added time, but Nigeria took control after the break through Uchenna Kanu, Christy Ucheibe, Rasheedat Ajibade and Joy Omewa.

Ghazi scored Egypt's second in the 84th minute, but it was not enough to stop the Cleopatras from ending the group

stage without a point.

Nigeria began the final group match under unusual pressure.

The defending champions had lost 3-2 to Malawi in their opener before recovering with a 1-0 win over Zambia, meaning victory over Egypt was essential to protect their place in the competition.

Oshoala, who had scored the winner against Zambia, again gave Nigeria the breakthrough.

The forward converted from the penalty spot in the 21st minute to settle the Super Falcons and put them on course for the result they needed.

Egypt, who had lost their first two matches, tried to stay in the contest, but Nigeria's attacking quality began to show before halftime.

In the second minute of first-half added time, Babajide created the opening for Monday, who finished to make it 2-0.

Egypt were handed a route back into the match when Ghazi scored from the penalty spot in the 10th minute of stoppage time, reducing the deficit to 2-1 at the break.

Nigeria wasted little time reasserting their authority after the restart.

Babajide was again involved in the 57th minute, providing her second assist

of the match for Kanu, who made it 3-1.

That goal gave Nigeria breathing space and forced Egypt to chase the game.

The Super Falcons continued to push forward and found a fourth in the 81st minute when Ucheibe converted another penalty.

Egypt responded three minutes later when Ghazi scored her second goal of the night, this time after being assisted by Yasmin Hassanin.

But any hope of a late Egyptian recovery quickly disappeared.

Nigeria added further gloss to the scoreline in stoppage time.

Ajibade scored from the penalty spot in the first minute of added time to make it 5-2, before turning provider eight minutes later.

Her pass set up Omewa, who scored Nigeria's sixth goal in the ninth minute of stoppage time.

It was a powerful finish to a match that Nigeria had to win, and it ensured the Super Falcons avoided the embarrassment of a group-stage exit.

After starting the tournament with a damaging defeat, Justine Madugu's side have now responded with back-to-back victories.

Barcelona Renew Interest in Osimhen Signing

Catalan giants Barcelona have renewed their interest in signing Victor Osimhen.

The club's Sporting director, Deco, is now pushing the Barcelona interest for Osimhen, according to Fichajes.

Barcelona have been locked in a tug-of-war with fellow La Liga club Atletico Madrid for Argentina World Cup star Julian Alvarez.

Earlier this year, Osimhen was proposed to Barcelona by some agents as Alvarez has remained the Spanish giants' priority signing following the departure of Robert Lewandowski.

Premier League clubs Tottenham Hotspur and Chelsea are also reported to be interested in the Galatasaray super striker.



● Osimhen

Ahmed Musa Joins Kano Pillars for 2026-27 Preparations

Kano Pillars forward, Ahmed Musa, has joined the team in preparations for the 2026-27 Nigeria Premier Football League, NPFL, season.

Musa took part in the team's training session at the Sani Abacha Stadium, Kano.

The session was supervised by the club's technical adviser, Daniel Ogunmodede.

It would be recalled that

Musa was relieved of his duty as the general manager of the club at the end of the 2025-26 season.

Musa played a role in the Sai Masu Gida's escape from relegation last season.

He registered six goals for Kano Pillars in the campaign.

Musa's return to the squad is expected to lift the team's spirit ahead of the new season.



● Musa

Atilola, 12-year-old Wild Card Wins Zenith Bank Next Gen Masters



● Atilola

Nigeria's emerging tennis sensation, Mofi Atilola, who got a wild card, defeated Goodnews Aina of the LEKMAK Tennis Academy in the finals of the Zenith Bank Next Generation Masters tournament to claim the top prize.

Atilola won 9-8 in the pro-set contest and in the 10-point tie-breaker that decided the match. Mofi, who will be 13 next month, showed a big heart, nimble feet and hands and led 9-2 with seven match points to spare.

The tournament was hosted by the Mainland Tennis Club at the National Stadium, Surulere.

Godwin Kienka, Director of the International Tennis Academy, Organiser of the Masters, said:

"To put her entire performance in context, her opponent Aina beat the then National No.1 seed, Khadijat Mohammed, to reach the semifinal of the senior CBN Championships last year and two months ago paired Success Ogunjobi to win the Women's doubles title of a senior national

championship. In the semifinals, Atilola beat Favour James from the GEUF Academy in Uyo, who was a finalist in the Women's doubles with Ito Bassey. This was not a junior tournament!"

Adding, "It was a pleasant surprise. We had given her a wild card, aware of her potential, and she came straight from a 14 & under ITF tournament in Zimbabwe, where she placed second and shocked everyone. I have never seen spectators so engaged at a tournament final in a long time."

The boys' final, which followed, became a footnote as spectators were still discussing what some of them called a miracle.

However, Seyi Ogunskin from the LEKMAK Academy won the boys' title by beating Joshua Maxwell from the Port Harcourt Club 9-4.

The tournament, which isolates the most promising juniors to take over from the senior champions, has produced all the senior champions at the Senior National level, men and women, in the last five years.

UEFA Announces Two Champions League Rule Changes Ahead of New Season

UEFA has announced two Champions League rule changes ahead of the new league phase campaign.

According to Mundo Deportivo, the European governing body has told all associations and clubs about two significant tweaks to the Champions League, the Europa League and the Conference League for the new season.

Firstly, the yellow card threshold has been raised, meaning a player will now need four yellow cards rather than three to pick up the first one-match ban.

Secondly, UEFA have removed its long-standing regulation that stops stadium clocks from moving beyond 45 and 90 minutes.

Meanwhile, the Champions League play-off draw was conducted earlier this week and will commence later this month.

There was drama in the scramble for

positions behind Kerr in heat 1 as Oliver Hoare of Australia, the Birmingham 2022 gold medalist in the 1500m, was tripped and fell.

"I wanted to get near Josh, because it was slow enough where it was going to be a wind up," Hoare said.

"I had no one in front of me and then 'bang' I hit the ground. I got up and tried to keep competing, but at that point the race is kind of gone.

"I'm representing my country. So when I get up, I'm going to keep running and keep racing. It's tough, it's racing. We learn, we grow, we move on."

Thankfully for the Australian, he was later reinstated and will contest Saturday's supercharged One Mile final.

"I haven't raced here since 2012 and it's still got the same essence of Scotstoun but absolutely amplified," Wightman said.



Salah Given Hero's Welcome Before Trabzonspor Move

Turkish club Trabzonspor are set to confirm the signing of Mohamed Salah as the Egypt captain was mobbed by fans on his arrival in Turkey.

Hundreds of fans gathered outside Ataturk Airport in Istanbul on Wednesday as Salah emerged wearing Trabzonspor colours before engaging with the excited crowd.

The 34-year-old forward left Liverpool at the end of last season after nine years on Merseyside, scoring 257 goals.

It is unclear what Salah will earn at Trabzonspor, but as he is a free agent, the Super Lig club will have been able to commit more of their budget towards Salah's wages.

Salah, who has scored 50 Champions League goals, will

play European football with Trabzonspor next season after they finished third, eight points behind champions Galatasaray.

If they fail to progress to the league phase of the Europa League via the play-offs, they will drop down to the Conference League.

Salah became Liverpool's highest earner in their history when he signed a reported £400,000-a-week contract in April 2025.

Nicknamed the Black Sea Storm, Trabzonspor have won seven league titles, six of which came between 1976 and 1984.

In 2022, they claimed their most recent league success, ending a 38-year wait.

Based in the north-eastern city of Trabzon, they are one of

only six teams to have won the Turkish Super Lig.

He helped Liverpool to win two Premier League titles, the Champions League, the Club World Cup, UEFA Super Cup, FA Cup and two EFL Cups.

During his time in England, the Egyptian won the Premier League Golden Boot on four occasions and was named the Professional Footballers' Association player of the year three times - in 2018, 2022 and 2025.

But despite scoring 29 goals and making 18 assists in Liverpool's 2024-25 title-winning season, Salah's minutes diminished the following campaign after a falling out with former Reds head coach Arne Slot.



Hull Sign Goalkeeper Tzolakis from Olympiacos for Club Record Fee

Newly promoted Hull City have signed Greece goalkeeper Konstantinos Tzolakis from Olympiacos for a club record fee.

The 23-year-old joins the Tigers on a five-year contract.

Although neither side has confirmed the fee, it is thought to be around £20m plus add-ons.

Hull's previous transfer record has stood since 2016 when they paid £13m for Tottenham midfielder Ryan Mason.

Tzolakis has spent his entire senior career with Olympiacos, making 131 appearances and winning eight trophies, including four Greek Super League titles and the 2023-24 UEFA Conference League, since his debut in 2020.

The month after helping Olympiacos to European

success, he made his international debut against Malta and has gone on to earn nine caps.

"I am ready for a new chapter in my career," Tzolakis said.

"With Olympiacos, I had a successful career with a Conference League title, a championship and a cup, European games and Champions League.

"Hull City is something different because we are playing in the Premier League. We have to fight against the top players, so it's a challenge for me.

"I feel ready. I will give everything I have every single day in training to help our team to achieve its goals. I'm excited to be in England. I wanted to come to Hull City because the Premier League is the top stage."



Alcaraz Out of Cincinnati Open with Lingering Wrist Injury

Carlos Alcaraz has withdrawn from the Cincinnati Open as he continues to recover from a wrist injury.

The world number two has not played since he pulled out of the Barcelona Open in April, missing Wimbledon and the chance to defend his French Open title.

After winning the event in 2025, Spain's Alcaraz was due to return at the Cincinnati Open as part of preparations for his defence of the US Open, which begins on 30 August.

Instead, the organisers of the Ohio event - which starts on 11 August - said that "an ongoing wrist injury" will prevent the 23-year-old from taking part.

"We know Carlos is doing



everything he can to get back to playing tournaments as soon as possible," said tournament director Bob Moran.

"We wish him the best with his recovery and look forward to welcoming him back to Cincinnati in the future."

Foreign Investors Storm Delta, Eye Multi-Billion-Dollar Deals in Agriculture, Energy

Delta State's campaign to attract foreign investment gained significant momentum on Wednesday as investors from Brazil, Malaysia, and the United States signalled their readiness to commit funds to the state's agriculture, energy, and industrial sectors after inspecting major investment projects across the state.

The prospective investors, who attended the Delta State Economic and Investment Summit, toured the Kwale Special Economic Zone, including the Kwale Gas Gathering Hub and Phoenix Company, before visiting Skyward Resources Group in Oleh and Uzezi Farms in Oyede.

Leader of the Brazilian agribusiness delegation, Roberto Fonseca, described the Kwale Special

Economic Zone as a world-class initiative capable of attracting global capital and accelerating Nigeria's industrialisation.

He revealed that the Brazilian group was considering investments in gas-fired power generation and a cassava processing plant through a joint venture arrangement, saying the location offered immense strategic advantages.

"We have been studying the Kwale Special Economic Zone with great interest because we believe it is a very wise decision by the Delta State Government. We are planning investments in natural gas power generation and cassava processing, and I believe the Brazilian flag will soon stand alongside the Nigerian flag here in a fruitful partnership,"

Fonseca said.

He also praised the facilities at Skyward Resources Group and Uzezi Farms, saying Brazil was prepared to partner with Nigeria in ranching, beef processing, technology transfer, and modern agricultural practices to strengthen food security.

Malaysia's High Commissioner to Nigeria, Aiyub Omar, said his country was exploring investment opportunities in Delta's oil palm sector, disclosing that discussions had already begun with Governor Sheriff Oborevwori on possible collaboration.

He noted that members of the Malaysian delegation included leading agribusiness firms with extensive experience in large-scale oil palm plantation management.

Founder of Agrinexus, Dr.

Shermal Perera, said his organisation had already commenced partnerships with businesses in Delta State and brought an American investor to explore new opportunities.

According to him, Agrinexus is the technical partner to JB Farms and is also supporting DELCOM on a proposed smallholder oil palm development programme.

Leading the inspection tour, Delta State Deputy Governor, Sir Monday Onyeme, said the state deliberately took investors beyond conference presentations to demonstrate that Delta already possesses thriving private sector enterprises capable of supporting global partnerships.

"What we are looking for is partnership, technology, and expertise. We want investors to see

that Delta means business. We have indigenous entrepreneurs who are here to stay and are ready to partner with investors from across the world. We want you to have confidence that your investments will be safe in Delta State," Onyeme said.

Managing Director of Skyward Resources Group, Chief Eta Enahoro, disclosed that his company had already benefited from Brazilian technical expertise in developing its greenhouse facilities, poultry operations, and feed mill.

He said the farm currently operates 42 greenhouse units and a poultry facility with a capacity of more than 30,000 birds, while inviting foreign investors to partner with the company in expanding its operations.



From left: Gov. Uba Sani of Kaduna State, Minister of Works, David Umahi, Minister of Environment, Balarabe Abbas-Lawal, and Minister of State for Works, Bello Muhammad-Goronyo, during the groundbreaking ceremony for the reconstruction of the newly approved Mando-Birnin Gwari Road in Kaduna State.

FG Injects 60.82MW Into National Grid with Renewable Energy Projects

The federal government has commenced the rollout of renewable energy projects expected to inject more than 60.82 megawatts (MW) of electricity into Nigeria's power system.

The target marks one of the country's most significant recent efforts to expand electricity access through decentralised generation.

The milestone was achieved on Wednesday after the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) performed the groundbreaking for a 13.92-megawatt-peak (MWp) interconnected hybrid solar project in Yobe State, bringing the cumulative capacity of its recent mini-grid projects nationwide to 60.82MW.

The latest project follows the commencement of 46.9MW of renewable energy infrastructure across five states, comprising a 20MW mini-grid in Egume, Kogi State; an 11.9MWp project in Ogu-Bolo, Rivers State; a 10MW installation

in Kofare, Adamawa State; a 3.5MW mini-grid in Ambursa, Kebbi State; and a 1.5MW project in Pankshin, Plateau State.

The World Bank-supported Yobe project will deliver 13.92MWp of interconnected hybrid solar power across key commercial and residential locations in the state, supported by 40 distribution transformers to improve electricity supply, support businesses, and stimulate economic activity.

The project consists of a 3.20MWp solar installation in Nguru, another 3.20MWp facility at Yarimaram in Potiskum, a 2.98MWp system in Gashua, a 2.78MWp project at Rugan Fulani in Potiskum, and a 1.76MWp installation serving the Waziri Ibrahim Estate in Damaturu.

Speaking during the groundbreaking ceremony, Yobe State Governor Mai Mala Buni described the project as a major boost to the state's economic development, saying it aligns

with his administration's drive to build resilient infrastructure capable of supporting industrial growth and agricultural productivity.

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Rural Electrification Agency, Dr Abba Abubakar Aliyu, said the interconnected hybrid mini-grids were designed to integrate seamlessly with existing electricity distribution networks while expanding access to underserved communities.

"We are not merely connecting communities to electricity. We are connecting them to opportunity. We are creating an environment where businesses can grow, young people can innovate, farmers can process more of what they produce, healthcare facilities can provide better services, and local economies can flourish," Aliyu said.

He disclosed that the agency's expansion

programme extends beyond the current 60.82MW of projects already flagged off nationwide.

According to him, the REA has 14 additional renewable energy projects in the pipeline for Yobe State, with a combined generation capacity of 15.3MWp.

The projects, which stem from a strategic roundtable held in June 2025, are expected to provide about 23,870 new electricity connections to communities, including Jawur Katamma, the Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, and Dibbwol.

The latest investments underscore the Federal Government's growing reliance on decentralised renewable energy systems to bridge Nigeria's electricity access gap, particularly in rural and underserved communities where grid extension has remained slow and costly.

WAEC Releases 2026 Results; 1.2m Candidates Pass English, Maths

The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) on Wednesday released the results of the 2026 Computer-Based WASSCE for School Candidates, with 1,200,514 candidates representing 61.54% obtaining credits and above in a minimum of five subjects, including English Language and Mathematics.

Announcing the results in Lagos, Head of WAEC Nigeria National Office, Dr Amos Josiah Dangut, said this represents a 1.42% decrease compared to 2025.

A total of 1,959,668 candidates from 24,207 schools enrolled for the examination across Nigeria, Benin Republic, Cote d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea.

Of the 1,950,726 candidates that

sat for the examination, 1,200,514 candidates—61.54%—obtained credits and above in five subjects, including English and Maths, while 1,687,378 candidates—86.50%—obtained credits and above in a minimum of five subjects with or without English and Maths.

A breakdown by gender shows that 1.2m candidates who passed English and Maths: 558,883—28.65% were male, and 641,631—32.89% were female.

Overall, 953,459 males—48.88% and 997,267 females—51.12% sat the exam.

Dr Dangut said 1,834,695 candidates, representing 94.05%, have had their results fully processed and released. Results of 116,031 candidates, representing 5.95%, are still being

processed.

A total of 1,213 candidates with special needs registered. This includes 137 visually challenged, 491 with impaired hearing, 55 spastic-cum-mentally challenged, and 41 physically challenged.

Meanwhile, WAEC withheld the results of 167,486 candidates, representing 8.59%, over examination malpractice. This is 1.11% lower than the 9.7% recorded in 2025.

"The increasing use of cell phones in the examination hall, in spite of the existing ban, and organised cheating in some schools, are other nagging issues," Dr Dangut said.

He added that some supervisors and invigilators caught aiding malpractice have been apprehended and would face sanctions

through the State Ministries of Education.

Dr Dangut, who said this was his third and last briefing as Head of WAEC Nigeria, noted that 2026 was the second time the Council conducted CB-WASSCE for school candidates.

Other innovations include the Digital Examiner Mark System, DEMS, for faster processing, serialisation of question papers to fight malpractice, and a new portal where candidates can directly generate e-PINs to check results.

The examination was conducted from April 24 to June 19, 2026 and marked by 102,708 examiners across 88 marking venues.

Results of candidates sponsored by states indebted to WAEC will not be released until payment is made.



Executive Secretary, Pension Transitional Arrangement Directorate (PTAD), Tolulope Odunaiya (R), welcomes Executive Chairman, Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS), Zacch Adedeji, during the chairman's visit to the PTAD office in Abuja.

Northern Leaders Seek United Action to Tackle Insecurity at Peace Summit

Stakeholders from across Northern Nigeria on Wednesday called for stronger unity, collaboration and collective action to address the persistent security challenges confronting the region.

The call was made at the Northern Peace Summit organised by the Arewa Cohesion for Peace, Unity and Development Initiative (ACI) in Kaduna.

The summit brought together traditional rulers, religious leaders, government officials, heads of security agencies, civil society organisations, development partners, youth and women groups, academics and policy experts.

Speaking at the opening of the summit, the Convener of the coalition, Dr Abdullahi Idris, said the gathering was convened to develop practical solutions to insecurity and strengthen cooperation among stakeholders.

According to him, the summit, with the theme "Unity, Cooperation and Collective

Action Against Insecurity," seeks to chart a new course for lasting peace and development in Northern Nigeria.

He said the region had continued to suffer the devastating effects of insurgency, banditry, kidnapping and other violent crimes, which had disrupted livelihoods, weakened communities and hindered socio-economic development.

"The time has come for Northern Nigeria to rise above political, ethnic and religious differences and work together for the common good.

"We can no longer afford the luxury of blame or silence. Our collective resolve must be stronger than the challenges confronting us," he said.

The convener said the summit would focus on developing strategies to improve dialogue between communities and government, address the root causes of insecurity, tackle corruption and strengthen community-based

peacebuilding initiatives.

He stressed the need to rebuild trust among citizens and institutions through effective coordination, intelligence sharing and grassroots vigilance.

He also urged traditional rulers and religious leaders to play more active roles in promoting reconciliation, tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

Describing young people and women as critical stakeholders in peacebuilding, the convener said they must be actively involved in designing and implementing sustainable security solutions.

He added that the summit would move beyond discussions to produce a regional peace and security framework with clear recommendations for implementation.

According to him, the coalition also plans to institutionalise quarterly peace dialogues and establish a network of community peace and youth ambassadors to sustain engagement

and monitor progress.

He expressed optimism that the initiative would help transform the narrative of Northern Nigeria from one associated with insecurity to one driven by resilience, peace and inclusive development.

The convener urged participants to contribute meaningfully to the deliberations, saying the success of the summit would depend on collective commitment to implementing its resolutions.

The summit featured participation by prominent traditional rulers, religious leaders, senior government officials, security chiefs, civil society organisations, development partners and experts in peace, security and public policy.

Participants are expected to adopt a communiqué containing recommendations aimed at strengthening regional collaboration, enhancing community security and promoting sustainable peace across Northern Nigeria.

Soludo Hails Retiring AIG Orutugu as Nigeria's Security Hero, Says He Is A Gift To The Nation

Anambra State Governor, Professor Chukwuma Charles Soludo, has showered glowing tributes on retiring Assistant Inspector-General of Police, Ikioye Orutugu, describing him as "a gift to Nigeria" whose exemplary leadership helped restore security and stability in the state.

Governor Soludo made the remarks during a special valedictory session of the Anambra State Executive Council at the Lighthouse in Awka, where the state formally honoured the senior police officer for his outstanding service.

Describing the occasion as unprecedented, the governor said it was the first time a retiring security chief had been accorded such recognition by the full State Executive Council,

underscoring Orutugu's exceptional contributions to peace and public safety.

"He is retired but not tired," Soludo declared, praising the police chief's professionalism, discipline, and ability to work seamlessly with other security agencies in tackling insecurity.

Addressing Orutugu's family and members of his royal delegation from Bayelsa State, the governor said, "You all gave Nigeria the gift of Ikioye."

Soludo credited the retiring officer with playing a pivotal role in strengthening Anambra's security architecture through effective collaboration with sister security agencies and community stakeholders.

Several top government officials and security chiefs also paid tribute to

Orutugu during the ceremony.

Among them were the Secretary to the State Government, Mrs. Chiamaka Nnake; the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Tochukwu Nweke; the State Director of the Department of State Services, Chuks Anukposi; and the Traditional Ruler of Uke, Igwe Charles Agbala.

The Attorney-General recalled that Orutugu assumed office at a time Anambra faced serious security challenges but said coordinated efforts by security agencies significantly improved the situation.

"He fought with us and we won the battle," Nweke said.

Responding, the retiring AIG expressed gratitude to God, Governor

Soludo, the Inspector-General of Police, fellow security agencies, traditional rulers, and the people of Anambra for their support throughout his tenure.

He said the command confronted enormous security challenges when he took office but achieved remarkable successes through teamwork, resulting in improved public safety and increased confidence in law enforcement.

"Anambra is truly the Light of the Nation, and I am honoured to have served in this state," Orutugu said.

He urged the state government to sustain the gains recorded in the security sector while encouraging police officers to remain professional, disciplined, and committed to effective policing in the service of the nation.



L-R: Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya of Gombe State with General Officer Commanding (GOC), 3 Division, Nigerian Army, Major General WM Dangana, during a courtesy visit by the new GOC to the Government House in Gombe, yesterday.

.Police Arrest Robbery Suspect, Launches Manhunt to Accomplices in Delta

The Police Command in Delta has arrested a member of a three-man robbery syndicate and recovered firearms from him in the state.

The command's Spokesman, SP Bright Edafe, disclosed this on Wednesday in Warri.

Edafe said the suspect was apprehended on Tuesday by the operatives of the Ebrumede Police Division in Uvwie Local Government Area of the

state.

He said that the police team was conducting an intensive stop-and-search operation on Garki-Uri Road, Effurun, when it intercepted three suspected armed robbers.

Edafe said that two of the suspects escaped on a motorcycle during interrogation, adding that the police

had launched a coordinated manhunt to

apprehend the fleeing suspects.

The police spokesman said that the suspects' bag was subjected to a thorough search by the police team, which led to the recovery of some exhibits.

Edafe said: "Exhibits recovered from the suspects include two locally made double-barrel guns, 11 live cartridges, one expended cartridge, one axe, and two Android phones.

"Others are two power banks, two wristwatches, one lighter and one camouflage military polo".

He said that the preliminary investigation revealed that the suspects were transporting the exhibits to their hideout on Sapele Road.

He said that the arrested suspect was currently in police custody, while efforts were on course to arrest other members of the criminal gang.



US And Iran Having 'Very Good Discussions', Trump Says

U.S. President Donald Trump said his administration had "very good discussions" with Iran during all-day negotiations on Tuesday, fuelling expectations of an imminent end to the five-month conflict.

Oil prices fell, and stocks jumped in Asian trade on Wednesday after Wall Street hit record highs on hopes that a deal could soon be reached to restore traffic through the blockaded

Strait of Hormuz.

"They had an all-day negotiation," Trump told Fox News' "@ Night" show. The Strait of Hormuz is going to be open very soon," Trump added. "If they back out again, they are going to get hit really hard."

Trump has often threatened massive strikes if Tehran did not reach an agreement and then cited progress in talks that have so far failed to end hostilities.

Axios, citing two regional

sources and a U.S. official, reported the U.S. and Iran are closing in on an interim agreement to reopen the strait with the agreement of Oman, which controls part of the waterway. The report said Washington was aiming for an announcement on Wednesday.

However, Iranian state media, citing an informed source, said an agreement with Oman on the strait, which normally carries about a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments,

will be delayed "as long as the United States continues to threaten Iran."

Trump has yet to achieve the objectives he set out at the start of the war: dismantling Iran's nuclear programme, curbing its ability to attack regional rivals and creating conditions for Iranians to overthrow their clerical rulers.

Iran has halted most traffic through Hormuz while Washington maintains a blockade of Iran-related shipping and

ports.

Qatar had earlier said mediators were making progress in efforts to end the conflict, even after Tehran denied that talks were underway.

Trump and Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani discussed efforts to narrow differences between Washington and Tehran and improve the prospects for a lasting settlement during a phone call on Tuesday, Qatar's Emiri office said.

EU to Use €1.4 Billion from Interest on Frozen Russian Assets to Help Ukraine

The European Union will use €1.4 billion (\$1.6 billion) taken from interest generated by frozen Russian assets to help Ukraine, the European Commission said on Wednesday.

The money, transferred to the bloc on

August 3, came from interest on cash balances, part of Russian central bank assets frozen by the EU in the wake of Moscow's invasion, the Commission added.

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global markets with the Morning Bid U.S. newsletter. Sign up here.

"Russia must pay for the destruction it has caused. And we are using the proceeds from the immobilised Russian assets to make sure it does," European

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in the statement.

"We are making a further €1.4 billion of them available to Ukraine. This will support Ukraine's continued resistance against Russia's illegal war," she added.

**WHEN A
GOVERNMENT
DECLARES
WAR
ON THE TRUTH PG 6**



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**FALZ
EXPLAINS
WHY HIS
FAME MADE
PRACTISING
LAW TOO DIFFICULT PG 5**

Osun Polls as Tinubu's Litmus Test

OPINION

BY

OLUSEGUN ADENIYI

In the build-up to 2003 when the then incumbent Governor Olusegun Osoba was seeking re-election on the platform of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) and then incumbent President Olusegun Obasanjo was also seeking re-election on the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) platform, the political slogan in Ogun State was 'Segun L'oke, Segun Ni'sale'. The idea was for voters in the state to adopt a 'bipartisan' approach in exercising their franchise. Since the parties were arranged on the ballot paper in alphabetical order, voters were enjoined to 'look up' by voting AD during the governorship election and 'look down' (for PDP) while casting their ballot in the presidency. For the locals, the slogan was also translated as retaining one Segun at the top (in Abuja) and another Segun at home (in Abeokuta). As it would happen, it was only the Segun in Abuja who prevailed while the Segun in Abeokuta lost out. And the latter has always blamed the former for what he considered an act of betrayal.

While I do not want to dabble into the brouhaha between the two respected Egba Octogenarians, it is evident that political deals are always fraught with risks. It is indeed instructive that of all the five AD Governors in the Southwest at the time, the only one who won re-election was a certain Bola Tinubu in Lagos State whose own slogan was 'Jeun Soke'. Crudely translated, it means only voters who 'look up' for the AD (without 'looking down' for any other party) were guaranteed reward. I recall that episode against the background of the upcoming Osun State gubernatorial election that is already throwing up a lot of controversy.

Apparently believing the mantra that one good turn deserves another, Governor Ademola Adeleke has publicly endorsed Tinubu for a second term ahead of his own re-election next week. "Our own son, father and leader", according to Adeleke, deserves the support of Osun electorate, despite knowing fully well that the president will not be on the ballot until next year. "I am the governor of the ancestral birthplace of Mr. President. How can I have my own in the saddle and think twice before embracing him? I need no persuasion to act as I have declared repeatedly, our endorsement of Mr President."

That open declaration of support means nothing to some APC supremos who seem to be going for broke and I fear they may have sold a self-serving idea to the president that the ruling party needs Osun for his re-election next year. "We must win Osun and nothing will stop us," the APC National Chairman, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, boasted last week at the inauguration of the 276-member campaign council headed by Governor Hope Uzodimma of Imo State. "These are political heavyweights; it is like a trailer facing a Keke (bicycle). I do not know how the political party standing against us in Osun can withstand the strength of these people who are going there to mobilise and win the election," Yilwatda declared rather exuberantly, before stating the reason for his seeming desperation. "This is the last election that will hold before the general election. This will be a litmus test. This will be our practising ground. This will be our rehearsal of the machinery we're going to prepare for 2027."

It is remarkable that just a few weeks ago in

June, Yilwatda's Special Adviser on Media and Strategy, Abimbola Tooki published what he said was his assessment of the chances of his party in the gubernatorial elections in Ekiti and Osun States. He predicted that APC would win Ekiti easily (as it turned out to be); but Osun would prove difficult for the party. Writing on how he visited Osun State and the journalist in him could not resist conducting an informal field assessment, Tooki wrote, "...rather than relying solely on elite political conversations, I sought the opinions of ordinary voters whose ballots ultimately determine electoral outcomes. Over (a) few days, I boarded more than 20 commercial motorcycles and engaged the riders in conversations about the coming election." Then Tooki delivered his bombshell: "The responses were striking. Approximately 16 of them openly declared their intention to vote for Governor Ademola Adeleke." If Yilwatda's own spokesman could make such an open deduction that the incumbent will most likely win—and he also explained his reasons—where then is the party's confidence coming from?

There is even a larger issue here. The Osun State gubernatorial election, according to Yilwatda, will be a "rehearsal of the machinery we're going to prepare for 2027." That phrase raises an important question. A rehearsal is a practice session for a larger performance. So, what exactly is being rehearsed in Osun State? The answer matters to every Nigerian who cares about the future of our democracy. It should matter especially to Tinubu whose administration will ultimately be judged by the standard under which these elections are conducted. While the president has a right to support his party's gubernatorial candidate in Osun State, he has even a bigger responsibility for law and order in the country.

For months, the Osun Commissioner of Police, Mr Ibrahim Gotan, has been at the centre of accusations from opposition parties and civil society groups who see him more as an APC enforcer than a man whose primary duty is to ensure law and order in the state. And yesterday, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) entered the fray by placing a 'Post-No-Debit' on the Osun State Government Statutory Allocation account. "We are supposed to be in a democracy, where the rule of law must always prevail," Adeleke said in a statement that questions both the legality and timing of the EFCC action. "We will not accept a situation where federal agencies trample on the constitutional rights

of subnational governments." But the EFCC explained last night that the action was part of its preventive mandate, and taken in public interest, to halt recent suspicious "transfers of funds into different corporate entities."

Meanwhile, following growing public pressure, the Inspector-General of Police, Olatunji Disu has deployed a new officer, Samuel Erale Etaifo, to superintend the election security for the Osun polls. That is a concession of sorts and an admission of a lack of trust in Gotan's neutrality. But read the fine print: the same police statement announcing Etaifo's deployment also noted that Gotan "will remain the substantive head" of the Osun Command, receiving "administrative and operational support" from the new arrival. For those who had called for Gotan's redeployment, this arrangement is unlikely to resolve the underlying concerns. Where confidence in institutional neutrality has already been weakened, partial administrative adjustments rarely provide sufficient reassurance.

But we must also be fair to Gotan. For more than two decades, Osun State gubernatorial elections have become the stage on which Nigeria's electoral institutions are usually tested. That the pattern keeps recurring at every election cycle in the same state suggests the problem is not just about one troublesome police commissioner. Nigerians with long memories will recall the electoral tribunal battles of 2007 and 2014, as well as the dramatic collation disputes of 2018 between former Governor Adegboyega Oyetola (the current Minister for Blue Economy) and Adeleke on which I wrote Osun and the 3,498 'Super Delegates' – THISDAYLIVE. And then we had another protracted contest between Oyetola and Adeleke in 2022 in which the latter prevailed. What is remarkable in all these elections is that the current president was a bit part actor in the drama—first, as National Leader of the Action Congress (AC) and later, that of the APC.

It is noteworthy that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) appears to have done its own homework ahead of the Osun gubernatorial polls. The Resident Electoral Commissioner, Mrs Oluwatoyin Babalola, has spent recent weeks running radio jingles and partnering with civil society groups, traditional rulers and transport unions for a credible election next week Saturday. But all of that work comes to nothing if voters conclude, rightly or wrongly,

that the police personnel standing at their polling units answer to a political party rather than to the law.

This then brings me back to Yilwatda's words. The APC national chairman is entitled to want his party's gubernatorial candidate, Mr Bola Oyebamiji, to win in Osun. And there is nothing improper in the APC deploying governors, ministers, National Assembly leadership and the full weight of its national structure behind Oyebamiji. But the ruling party should also understand the implications of getting this "rehearsal" wrong. In his Democracy Day broadcast in June, speaking directly on Ekiti and Osun, the president urged INEC, security agencies and all parties to keep the elections "peaceful and credible." Those were his own words. The question Osun now puts to him, with barely nine days to go, is whether his party intends to be held to that declaration.

I do not believe Tinubu is trying to manipulate Osun State gubernatorial election in his party's favour and it would be unfair to suggest that. And to be honest, the president doesn't have much riding on this election, as it would most likely have no bearing on how Osun people vote next year. But there is an old saying that the morning shows the day. The Osun election at the tail end of the current season of off-cycle governorship polls, and the very start of serious positioning for 2027, is that morning. Since his own party's national chairman has publicly framed what happens next week Saturday as an important precursor to 2027, that inevitably places additional responsibility on the president to ensure that the election is beyond reproach.

What the president must understand is that if this election ends up with allegations of intimidation and lingering doubts about institutional neutrality, it will inevitably influence public expectations of what lies ahead. Yet it doesn't have to go that way. The next few days can still be deployed to reinforce the political neutrality of security agencies, strengthen public confidence in presidential leadership and demonstrate that electoral competition will be governed by the rule of law and public decency. Doing so will go beyond improving the credibility of one governorship election. It will establish the democratic precedent upon which the legitimacy of the 2027 general election will ultimately rest.

Ever since the Presidential Foreign Investment Promotion Council (PFIPC) scandal involving Mr Adeniyi Adeyemi broke, there have been a focus on the annual budget of the federal government, especially given the N1.3 billion allocated to an agency that has been declared as fake. While Nigerians are being regaled with sordid tales from the House of Representatives ad hoc committee probe, many people have called for a reform of the budgeting process. I won't hold my breath on that. I am almost certain that at the end of the day, nothing will be done because too many people in both the executive and legislature benefit from the current opaque budgeting regime. I made that clear in my column of 13 October 2022, titled, 'When Budget Becomes Racket'. Below are a few excerpts from the piece.

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