

ASO ROCK SOLAR ENERGY PROJECT

You Can't Cover Institutionalized, Systemic Failure With 10billion

The Federal Government's decision to install a N10 billion solar power system at the Aso Rock is a clear admission that Nigeria's power sector is in ruins. Worse, it advertises that the leaders are more interested in insulating themselves from the consequences than fixing it. Mustapha Abdullahi, the Director-General of the Energy Commission of Nigeria, justified the move by citing the Villa's unsustainable power bill. In 2024, the Abuja Electricity Distribution Company said the Presidential Villa owed an electricity bill of N923.87 million. The DisCo had issued a 10-day notice to the Villa and 86 MDAs to pay the combined N47.1 billion electricity debt they owe or risk disconnection. In a country where the national grid

of institutionalized failure. This is typical of Nigeria's rapacious ruling class, which also insulates itself from woeful health and education systems that it fails to revamp but would rather choose to escape abroad for such services. The elite hijack police officers while ordinary folk are left defenseless against armed robbers, bandits, and kidnappers.

It is unacceptable that, rather than urgently fixing the power system for all Nigerians, the government is content to abandon the grid while insulating itself from the darkness millions of Nigerians are forced to endure. The N10 billion outlay is enough to power 2,000 large homes and businesses with 5kva solar power systems on average. The grim message the

Federal Government inadvertently sends here is that the privileged few will secure constant, clean energy for themselves, while the majority remain trapped in a system that barely functions. This is energy apartheid in the making. If Aso Rock Villa can find N10 billion to provide itself with stable power, it must find the political will and resources to overhaul the entire electricity sector. Nigeria cannot achieve meaningful economic development, industrialization, or improved living standards while 80 per cent of the population contends with unreliable power.

Official figures suggest that Nigerians spent N16 trillion on fueling and servicing their generators in 2023. That figure could easily be north of N30 trillion now, given that fuel prices have tripled since then. Nigeria, with an installed capacity of 14,000 MW, can only wheel a maximum of 5,000 MW of power for its 237 million people due to its dilapidated grid system and gas shortages. In contrast, South Africa generates 58,095 MW, Egypt (59,063 MW), and Algeria (24,000 MW). A comprehensive revamp of the power sector qualifies as a national emergency. This means

addressing the fraudulent practices of the DisCos and enforcing mass metering, decentralizing the grid, and making huge investments in renewable energy nationwide.

It demands stronger regulation and an urgent review of tariff structures that have made electricity a luxury rather than a basic right of citizens. The minister of power should be held accountable for failure to make progress in power delivery after almost two years in office. Until power is affordable, reliable, and accessible for all Nigerians, the solar panels at the Villa remain a stark reminder of the huge disconnect between the elite and ordinary citizens.

Culled from -Punch

The Presidency's attempt to draw parallels with the solar-power installations at the White House in Washington, D.C., is a desperate gambit to gaslight the public. America's adoption of renewable energy at the highest levels is driven by environmental consciousness, not by the collapse of its energy system. In Nigeria, the move is not motivated by any concern for sustainability, but rather by self-preservation in the face of institutionalized failure.

collapses with alarming regularity and ordinary citizens groan under the burden of exorbitant electricity tariffs, the optics of this decision are damning. It is one thing for the Presidency to embrace renewable energy in line with global trends and save costs; it is another for the seat of government to shield itself from the crisis it was elected to resolve. The Presidency's attempt to draw parallels with the solar-power installations at the White House in Washington, D.C., is a desperate gambit to gaslight the public. America's adoption of renewable energy at the highest levels is driven by environmental consciousness, not by the collapse of its energy system. In Nigeria, the move is not motivated by any concern for sustainability, but rather by self-preservation in the face