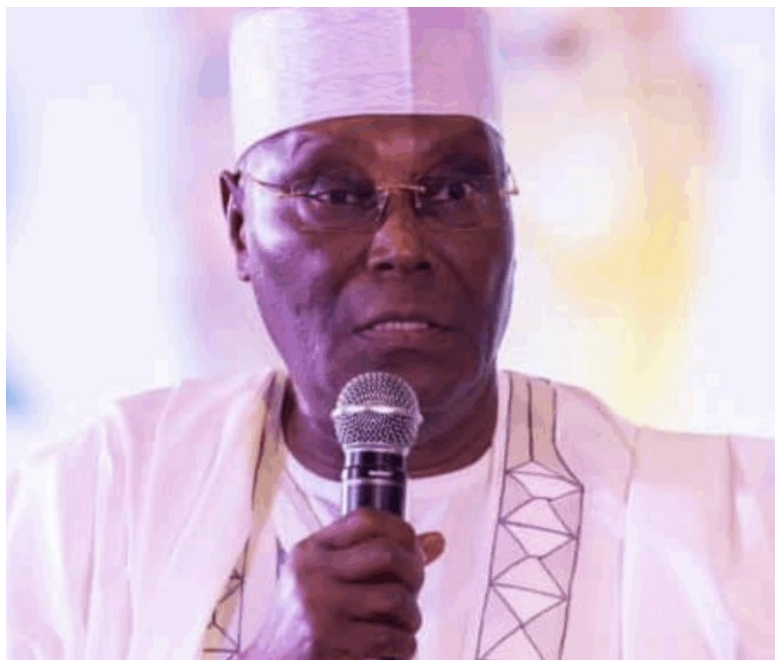


Atiku Lambasts Tinubu for spending N17.5Trn on Pipeline Security

By Victory Oghene

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar has lambasted the Tinubu's administration for allowing the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) to squander ₦17.5 trillion on questionable pipeline security in 12 months. Atiku disclosed this in a statement issued by the Atiku Media Office. He stated that the homogeneous pipeline security expenditure is "more than 12 years of fuel subsidy". According to Atiku, "The report that the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) spent a humongous ₦17.5 trillion in just 12 months on "securing fuel pipelines and others' stands as one of the most brazen financial scandals in our nation's history." Atiku recalls that "Nigeria spent roughly ₦18 trillion on fuel subsidy over a period of twelve years — a national programme that directly cushioned millions of Nigerians, stabilized the transport sector, and helped keep food prices manageable. Atiku added that the revelation "stands as one of the most brazen financial scandals in our nation's



history."

He compared the alleged spending to Nigeria's fuel subsidy expenditure over more than a decade, saying, "For clarity, Nigeria spent roughly ₦18 trillion on fuel subsidy over a period of 12 years, a national programme that directly cushioned millions of Nigerians, stabilized the transport sector, and helped keep food prices manageable." It argued that the Tinubu government had channeled almost the same amount in a single year into opaque security contracts. "Yet, under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the country has now expended nearly the

same amount in a single year on same subsidy and opaque pipeline security contracts awarded to private firms tied to associates and cronies of the President. "Indeed, the action of the President is akin to robbing Peter (Nigerians) to pay Paul (cronies). This is not governance. This is grand larceny dressed as public expenditure," the statement said. Atiku also questioned the administration's justification for subsidy removal, stating, "Nigerians were told to tighten their belts, endure hardship, and 'make sacrifices.' "However, the same administration has now channeled ₦17.5 trillion, an amount that could transform Nigeria's power sector, rebuild our refineries, or fund universal healthcare, into opaque security contracts whose beneficiaries are conveniently linked to those in power." On reported spending under categories labelled by government, it noted, "According to the records provided by the NNPCL, this same administration has spent N7.13tn on what it calls 'energy-security cost to keep petrol prices stable'; another N8.67tn on what it calls 'under-recovery. "These two balablu nomenclatures:

energy-cost and under-recovery are a new coinage of the Tinubu administration to deceive Nigerians on the government's fraudulent claim that it was no longer paying subsidies on petroleum products." It further listed issues requiring public scrutiny, asking, "Who are the companies paid under these contracts? What specifically justifies a 38.7 percent rise in the amount of energy-cost from N6.25tn in 2024 to N8.67tn in 2025?"

"Why is pipeline security now more expensive than a decade-long subsidy that served over 200 million Nigerians? Where are the audit reports, parliamentary oversight findings, and cost-validation documents?" Atiku also argued that no administration that presides over this level of fiscal recklessness has the moral authority to demand sacrifice from its people. Atiku demanded an immediate forensic audit and full disclosure of all companies involved, saying the government must "publish the full list of companies awarded these contracts; disclose the scope, deliverables, and duration of each contract; subject the entire ₦17.5

trillion expenditure to an independent forensic audit; halt further disbursement until accountability is established; [and] explain to Nigerians how this expenditure aligns with national priorities at a time of unprecedented economic strangulation." Atiku also described the alleged spending as a severe moral breach, saying, "This ₦17.5 trillion pipeline-security expenditure is not merely a financial anomaly, it is a moral indictment on the Tinubu administration and a clarion call for full accountability."

Media Stakeholders Raise Alarm Over Threat to Journalism

Concerned with the deepening threats facing professional Journalism in Nigeria, former President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Chris Isiguzo has warned that unchecked misinformation, unregulated online content, and lack of legislative protection for journalists could further endanger the country's democracy. Speaking at the NUJ FCT 2025 Capacity Building Programme for Information and media Officers in Keffi, Isiguzo said the proliferation of digital tools and the rapid expansion of social media have created an environment where non-professionals now dominate the information landscape, often with damaging consequences. "We are able to attack it

legislation that protects the practice of journalism in Nigeria," he said. "If the oxygen is plugged out and democracy begins to inhale what it should not inhale carbon dioxide then that is toxic for the body, toxic for democracy and toxic for good governance." According to him, journalists in Nigeria shoulder the constitutional responsibility of ensuring accountability but continue to work under fear of harassment, arrest, intimidation, or even incarceration. "These journalists are living in fear of the unknown, fear of how to feed the family, fear to protect the family," he said. "The only thing that can protect them is the piece of legislation." In her keynote speech, Chairman of the NUJ-FCT Council, Comrade



headlong, then we are going to be in trouble," he said. "The tools we have now are available to our young stars and they can do anything with it. The professionals must have to invade—be it social media or whatever name you call it to be able to displace the people that are having free movement. Social media influencers, content creators, they are churning out all sorts, and the professionals must be there to control." Isiguzo warned that the "fifth law of misinformation" is now causing chaos and mayhem, worsened by the activities of citizen journalists who operate without gatekeeping or ethical checks. "Whatever you turn out must accommodate the fundamentals, so whoever is reading what you are publishing will say this is a professional doing the job," he said. He further lamented that Nigeria still lacks a legal framework protecting journalists, unlike countries such as Ghana, Malawi and the United States where media freedoms are constitutionally enshrined. "There's no piece of

Grace Ike, said the capacity-building programme represents a bold and strategic commitment to strengthening professionalism in Nigeria's communication landscape. She said the theme of the programme "Enhancing Image Making, Public Relations, Social Media Management, and Media Visibility in the Public Sector"—is timely, given the speed at which information now spreads and the growing influence of digital platforms. "We live in an age where information travels faster than policy, where perception often precedes reality, and where a single headline, a single tweet, or a single video clip can redefine the reputation of an institution," Ike said. She noted that the role of information officers has evolved beyond issuing statements to include strategy, crisis management, content creation, digital engagement, and safeguarding institutional reputation.