

You can't tax hunger"

NOM urges Tinubu to suspend new tax law

The National Opposition Movement (NOM) has called on President Bola Tinubu to immediately suspend the implementation of the new tax law, describing it as “an assault on the livelihood of ordinary Nigerians” rather than genuine tax reform. The group argued that the tax plan was punitive, exploitative, and ill-timed, considering the country's current economic struggles. Nigeria is facing a multidimensional crisis, with rising poverty, homelessness, and food scarcity. Many citizens struggle to afford basic necessities like food, transportation, and electricity. The NOM said that introducing an aggressive tax regime at this time would further strain households and small businesses. The opposition group criticized the Tinubu administration for lack of transparency and accountability, citing the Federal Inland Revenue Service's (FIRS) secretive agreement with a French agency on tax administration. They demanded that the government prioritize taxing luxury consumption, excess profits, monopolies, and corruption rather than burdening low-income earners. The NOM demanded immediate Suspension of the tax plan's take-off date; nationwide consultations with labour, civil society, SMEs, professionals, and state governments; social protection guarantees tied to any tax reform; fair taxation focusing on taxing luxury, excess profits, monopolies, and

corruption, not poverty; and taxpayer rights by establishing strong legal safeguards to protect taxpayer rights. If the government forces the tax plan without consultation, the NOM warned that it would be fully responsible for the social and economic consequences. Below is the text of the press conference by the National Opposition Movement (NOM), at the Shehu Yar'Adua Centre, Abuja on Wednesday, November 17, 2025.



We called this press conference today because Nigeria is at a threshold of multidimensional failure. It is unsafe to travel across Nigerian cities. Poverty is worsening, and homelessness and starvation are realities that Nigerians face. At no time in the history of the country has life been so short, so brutish and so miserable for citizens. Global economic index rates Nigeria as the country with the lowest quality of life, lower than our poor neighbors like Benin, Togo and Niger. The tragedy is that the Federal Government is compounding this multidimensional failure by focusing on its political interests and not the security and welfare of the Nigerian people. As Nigeria drifts into multidimensional failure, many patriotic citizens are worried that the imminent collapse of Nigerian democracy through the comprehensive incompetence and corruption of the Tinubu administration would gravely

Nigerian Labour Congress and the Trade Union Congress to challenge the massive impoverishment of Nigerians through Tinubu's self-serving economic policies.

We associate with the NLC and the TUC in their heroic efforts in the tradition of organized labour in Nigeria to fight for dignity and freedom of the working people. The situation in Nigeria today is terrible. Many Nigerians can barely afford food, transport, security, or pay their electricity bills and rents. It is sad that at a time like this that the Tinubu administration is preparing to roll out the most punitive and exploitative tax regime in the history of Nigeria. Even the colonial authority in its viciousness did not contemplate taxing poor Nigerians the way Tinubu plans at the beginning of the years. The viciousness of this administration shows that Nigeria would be hit with these



compromise the security and human development crises in West Africa. These patriotic citizens are now coming together under the umbrella of the Nigeria Opposition Movement, to keep vigil on the developments around security and prosperity of the Nigerian people under the mismanagement of the Tinubu administration and to raise our voices as sentinels of national liberation and transformation. We are worried the several failures of the Tinubu administration has not elicited the right kind of response from the Nigerian political class. But we are elated to note that on the 14th of December we woke up to the gratifying news of a statement from a select group of leaders who chose to identify with the people by speaking out against Tyranny. We deeply commend their courage and commitment to the cause of the voiceless downtrodden. Posterity will forever acknowledge their act of selflessness and patriotism. We also note with approval the efforts by the organized Labour through the

exploitative and inhuman tax regimes in January when they do not have the fiscal space for such sacrifices. This exploitative tax regime points to the thoughtlessness of the Tinubu administration and its unyielding commitment to cater to the financial interests of the oligarchs to the detriment of the ordinary Nigerians who he continues to punish with all manners of taxes and raising prices. Let us be clear, what President Tinubu is rolling out in January is not a tax reform; it is an assault on the livelihood of ordinary Nigerians who he has not hidden his contempt for and whose prosperity is not part of the agenda of his government. According to the new tax law, all adults of taxable age, whether employed or not, must file a tax return between January 1 and 31st March 2026 after which sanction for non-filing will begin to apply. For owners of companies, you must file for all your employees even if they are paid below the taxable bracket. Remember, you cannot make the filling if you do not have

a Tax Identification Number. This is so mindless. In a country where over 70 million are unemployed, where people do not have good access to internet services and where the level of service delivery from state institutions are poor or almost non-existent, President Tinubu has set up an exploitative racket against innocent Nigerians. This reads like a strategy from the infamous Lagos governance. Small and medium businesses are struggling to survive under a bad policy environment. Yet, Tinubu continues to pile pressure on them and does not provide any serious business support. By the new tax plan, Nigerians earning less than minimum wage will be heavily taxed. The government has removed all subsidies and exposed low wage earners and the unemployed to high tariffs. Still, the government intends to overtax them, creating damaging human development and truncating any prospect of serious and sustained economic growth.

This government continues to ask Nigerians to give more and more while it allows those in public office to take more and more. Tinubu has brought Nigerians to their knees. But Tinubu will not relent till he brings Nigerians to the grave. We will not allow suffering Nigerians to be brought to the grave. We, as the Nigerian Opposition Movement have decided to stand up in support of those opposition politicians who issued the letter a few days ago and the NLC and TUC to say enough is enough. This tax plan must not take off now. Its implementation must be suspended immediately. This is not tax reform. This tax is a weapon fashioned against the economic wellbeing and social security of suffering and poor Nigerian citizens. This government is asking Nigerians who have already been brought down on their knees by the weight of poverty and squalor and have nothing left to give, to give more. No. You cannot tax hunger. You cannot tax poverty. And you cannot tax people into prosperity. Since he came to office, the President has shown where his heart is. It is not with the Nigerian people. It is with the few oligarchs who are attached to his economic and political interest. The bad policies of the administration are intentionally so because President Tinubu is not committed to the prosperity of ordinary citizens. He is committed to getting and keeping political power as a tool of creating wealth for himself and his family and friends. This is bad for Nigeria. As leaders of conscience, we cannot justify Tinubu's exploitative taxes against the poor in Nigeria because there is no evidence of prudence or due process in this administration. For the past 2 years and more, we have witnessed the most expansive state capture in Nigerian history. The nation's revenue agencies like the NNPC and FIRS are reeking with grand corruption.

The Tinubu administration does not recognize transparency and accountability. It continues to conduct its business in secrecy as if the Nigerian federation has become Tinubu family incorporated. For instance, why would the FIRS enter an MOU with a French agency regarding management of the Nigerian tax regime and

refuse to publicly disclose the contents of the MOU, especially in the circumstances where Tinubu has made France his second home and business center? Does public interest not dictate that FIRS publishes the MOU since Nigerians are worried at the prospect of the business deal with France compromising Nigeria's strategic national interests. Since Tinubu came to power, it has been one allegation and report of one high-level grand corruption or another, starting with the mind-boggling corruption of the former Minister of Humanitarian Services whose corruption cases have been swept under the carpet. For the first time in history, a leading Nigerian private sector businessman is openly accusing Tinubu's top regulator of brazen corruption. This has never been seen or heard in Nigeria. President Tinubu's idea of public leadership has no place for social contract, no place for due process or protection of national norms and institutional standards. Recently, Professor Wole Soyinka, a staunch supporter of Tinubu administration, was forced to voice out great distress at the privatization of the Nigerian state by the Tinubu administration. He said Seyi Tinubu, the President's son who has no public office, has sufficient military and police escort to overrun Benin. That is typical Bola Ahmed Tinubu as Nigerian president: do not care about what Nigerians feel or think, he just keeps it in the family. It is about me and my family. To hell with Nigerians. Therefore, in the context of President Tinubu's administration war against Nigerians, we do not believe the new taxes would serve any public good. From the experience of the past, Tinubu's higher taxes will translate into better hospitals, schools, security, or jobs. Nigerians are being asked to pay more — without being promised anything in return. This tax drive is not different from the reckless removal of fuel subsidy where the resultant gains which are unaccounted for, rather than being injected into the productive economy for the benefits of the citizens, is being deployed to fund the flamboyance of a bloated government, cronies and families. The opaque outsourcing through an MOU with a French concern is a disturbing indicator that no accountability is intended. Tinubu is not focused on governance. He is focused on brazen exploitation.

We reject this tax because the timing is cruel, and the logic is irrational. Fuel subsidy removal, naira collapse, food inflation, and rising electricity tariffs have already pushed households and small businesses to the edge. Introducing an aggressive tax regime now, not only shows but indeed confirms the widely held belief of a government dangerously out of touch with reality. As an oligarch and authoritarian, Tinubu by this tax plan concentrates enormous powers in the hands of revenue authorities in a country with weak safeguards. Account access (already being enforced), penalties, and automated enforcement without strong oversight invite abuse. When citizens fear the taxman more than they trust the government, something is fundamentally wrong.