

Dear Editor,

What Macron Chose to Do in Nairobi and What We Should Learn from It

When Emmanuel Macron landed in Kenya, he did not reach first for a summit table or a billionaire's boardroom. He put on his running shoes and jogged through the streets of Nairobi with Eliud Kipchoge. That single choice is worth more than a thousand communiqués.

Like Sir Roger Bannister, who broke the sub-four-minute mile in 1954, Kipchoge, the first man to run a sub-two-hour marathon, even if not as an official record, and Sabastian Sawe, whose London record followed in that tradition, will forever be remembered for setting new boundaries that proved the infinite nature of human possibility. Long after today's leaders are forgotten.

Most African leaders, when they travel, compete to be photographed with the powerful. Macron, a sitting President of France, chose to be seen with the excellent. Not a strongman or a tycoon, but a marathoner. A man who became a global icon through discipline, humility, and relentless self-mastery. That is not a small thing. What a leader chooses to honour tells you everything about what that society will eventually become. The photographs also say something about Nairobi. A foreign Head of State jogged openly through its streets. That means the city is safe enough, organized enough, and human enough for that morning to happen. Civilization is not measured only by airports and towers. It is measured by whether ordinary people can walk, jog, and breathe freely in their cities. Sidewalks, public spaces, parks and livability matter.

I am a runner. I know the commitment, dedication and discipline required to maintain a running habit while in public office. I know what a shared morning run does in building a community of shared interest.

During the run, titles, positions and artificially constructed social standing fall away. What remains is just two people, breathing hard, moving forward, to the rhythm of their footfalls. At that moment, like on our deathbed, all paraphernalia dissolve and our common humanity becomes the tie that binds. That is the Africa we must build. Cities designed for people. Leaders who celebrate competence over connection. Societies that practice the elitism of ability, not the elitism of access. Kipchoge used that run to speak about the next generation of African athletes. Our leaders need to reconnect to the streets, feel the pulse of the people and share in both our aspirations and our anxieties. This was not just a run. It was a civilizational signal. A signal Africa should take seriously.

Osita Chidoka

Dear Editor

The Country cannot afford another round of borrowing

Nigerians have flooded the World Bank's social media channels with furious comments and pleas to reject a proposed \$1.25 billion loan to the Tinubu administration. The outpouring, visible in screenshots of comment threads paired with President Tinubu's portrait, reflects deepening frustration as the country grapples with soaring debt, collapsing purchasing power, and the absence of tangible infrastructure gains from earlier borrowings. The facility, titled Nigeria Actions for Investment and Jobs Acceleration, is the second-largest World Bank loan under Tinubu after a \$1.5 billion package approved in 2024. It is



scheduled for board review on June 26, 2026, and is framed by Abuja as a catalyst for reforms across electricity, agriculture, trade, and job creation. Proponents inside the government argue the funds are essential to unlock private-sector investment and break a decade-long stagnation. Yet the message from ordinary Nigerians is clear. The country cannot afford another round of borrowing. Public debt has swollen to more than ₦160 trillion, roughly \$120 billion at current rates, while Nigeria already owes the World Bank \$19.89 billion. Every new loan, citizens argue, deepens a repayment burden that crowds out spending on health, education, and basic services. Inflation, which hovers just above 28 percent, has eroded wages, while electricity blackouts and failed road projects

remain daily realities in cities and villages alike. The loan's intended sectors, electricity, agriculture, trade, and jobs, are exactly the areas where citizens say past loans have failed to deliver. Power plants built with earlier financing still trip frequently. Farms promised fertilizer and credit remain under-funded. Trade corridors meant to connect ports to markets sit blocked by poor roads and customs bottlenecks. Social media posts repeat the same refrain. We have borrowed enough. Show us the roads, the lights, the jobs, not just spreadsheets. Direct voices from the comment threads capture this mood. One user wrote, "We are not against development. We are against borrowing to pay old debt while schools lack teachers and hospitals lack drugs." Another added, "Every dollar borrowed today is a naira taken from a mother buying medicine for her child tomorrow." A third, a small-scale farmer in Kano, posted, "This loan will not bring rain to our fields, only more interest to pay." These remarks echo a wider narrative across Nigeria's cities and rural hamlets. Distrust in how borrowed funds are allocated and suspicion that elite interests, rather than public need, shape loan terms. Civil society groups have amplified the social media wave, organizing petitions and live-streamed briefings to pressure both the World Bank and Abuja. Their brief context is simple. Nigeria's debt trajectory is unsustainable, and without structural reform before new money arrives, the next loan will merely extend a cycle of crisis. Reactions on and off social media have been swift. Young professionals in Lagos describe the loan as a gamble with our futures. Traders in Port Harcourt call it a tax on survival. Even some economists, speaking anonymously for fear of government reprisal, acknowledge that the country's fiscal space is too thin to absorb another \$1.25 billion without deep, visible austerity and transparency measures. For now, the debate is locked at the World Bank's board table, with the June 26 vote looming. Nigerians' digital protest, raw, personal, and unfiltered, has become more than noise. It is a demand for accountability. They are no longer asking whether the loan can be funded. They are demanding proof that the money, when finally spent, will land where it hurts least. In people's lives, not balance sheets.

Dear Editor

The ship of the nation is about to wreck.....

This was a prophecy of the late sage, chief Obafemi Okikiola Awolowo a renowned journalist, founder of TRIBUNE group of Newspapers, a lawyer per excellence. A mystic and a prophet.

In 1886, before his demise in 1987, he told Nigerians and entire world that the Nigeria nation is edging towards a cacophony and disastrous end. Nobody seems to listen.

They called him a prophet of doom. So, here we are.... The American government in recent rimes, declared Nigerian nation as a failed state...It was also stated by American government in a recent past, that Nigeria nation will cease to exist.... Events unfolding currently are significant indices to the prophecy of a late sage, philosopher and nationalist of high repute.

Will Nigeria survive this turbulent periods of political and economic crises?

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