

Nigeria Sitting On Keg of Gunpowder... Sultan of Sokoto

The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Abubakar Sa'ad, has raised the alarm about the situation in the country, saying "Nigeria is in danger" and that "things are not okay." The prominent traditional ruler said, particularly in the North, opportunities are disappearing fast and the country itself is gradually grinding to a halt. He spoke at the sixth executive meeting of the Northern Traditional Rulers Council. "We must find jobs for our teeming youths that are sitting idle and I have said it so many times, we are sitting on a keg of gunpowder, having teeming youths millions of them, without jobs, without food, we are looking for trouble," he said. He lamented that the two monsters confronting the nation at the moment are poverty and insecurity which if not tackled urgently, could spell doom for Nigeria.

On insecurity and poverty in the North, the monarch said the traditional leaders, being closest to the people, have had the onerous task of calming down nerves, assuring the people that things would be okay. He said, "We have entered into a new cycle of leadership, some new Governors have come on board, while some are having their second term and still we are faced with these insecurity issues. "To make matters worse, we are faced with rising levels of poverty of most of our people; lack of normal sources of livelihood by the common man to have even a good meal a day. "But, I believe talking about insecurity and the rising level of poverty are two issues that we cannot fold our arms and think everything is okay. "I have said it so many times and at so many fora that, things are not okay in Nigeria and of course, things are not okay in the North. "What are the real issues bringing about poverty and rising cases of insecurity? I don't think it is the issue of new government." The Sultan's comments came amidst growing concerns over the health of the Nigerian economy. There have been pockets of protests in different parts of the country with the central concern being the state of the economy, hunger and insecurity.

Declare state of emergency on security, NBA urges Tinubu

The Nigerian Bar Association, (NBA) has called on President Bola Tinubu to declare a state of emergency on the insecurity bedeviling several parts of the country. The NBA president, Mr Yakubu Maikyau, SAN, made the call in Abuja at a news briefing on the state of the nation. "It is high time the Federal Government declared a state of emergency in the area of security and I urge Mr President not to waste time and spare no effort in this regard," he said. According to Maikyau, Nigerians required a well thought-out, informed, all-inclusive and purposeful intervention, with as much necessary information made available to the public. He said the NBA was concerned that some Nigerians had lost, and many more were fast losing confidence in the ability of the Federal Government to deal with the security situation in the country. "All forms of criminal activities across the nation, howsoever described, by criminal elements by whatever name called, are completely inexcusable and unacceptable. "The entire country is under siege by terrorists, bandits and criminal gangs. It is no longer

easily determinable, if not impossible, which square kilometer of the Nigerian territory is under the authority not control of the Federal Government of Nigeria. "A situation where criminality dots all over the space known as the Nigeria territory, in a manner that diminishes the presence of law enforcement agencies, directly challenges the sovereignty of Nigeria. "This is particularly so when we hear that the said bandits and terrorists are foreign nationals. "If the activities of foreign nationals have been responsible for this high level of insecurity in our nation when the country is not at war, these criminal elements go on to boldly record and send out videos on social media platforms. "They do this boasting about their strongholds with the territory of the Nigerian state and suffer no consequence for so doing then, there is more to it than meets the eye, and Nigerians need to be better informed of the nature of the insecurity they are dealing with." He implored the President to show demonstrable commitment to prioritize the security of lives and property in the country. Maikyau said this should be done in addition to ensuring the right investments in security in line with global trends without compromising Nigeria's sovereignty.

He decried a situation where insecurity has left many Nigerians homeless and businesses destroyed. He said it was pertinent for government to adopt a holistic approach to the issue of security while not overlooking the peculiarities of each region and evolve measures to deal with them accordingly. " In this wise, the government must neither be scared nor ashamed to make the right investments in security, in line with global trends, without compromising our sovereignty." Maikyau also decried what he described as the dwindling of the economy as well as the nation's currency. "The Nigerian economy is dwindling, the value of the naira has been bastardised, prices of foodstuff have skyrocketed, and everything negative seems to be on the rise. "The insecurity has equally impacted negatively on food sufficiency and food security as a nation," he said. He said it was worrying that farmers were no longer able to go to their farms due to the activities of bandits and kidnappers. He said the President should address Nigerians on how he intended to revamp the nation's economy in order to reassure the citizens that there was light at the end of the tunnel. He added that it was important for the government to set deadlines for specific fundamental economic steps to be taken towards economic recovery and achievement of some economic policies. "Nigerians need to know, as we all are entitled to, in concrete terms, the plans this administration has for the revamping of our economy." It is the government/citizens' engagement on the strategies for the recovery, reformation, and repositioning of the economy and all other sectors, that will give Nigerians hope to continue to persevere and remain resilient as we have always been. "Not to do so will cause a complete loss of confidence in the ability of this administration to truly deliver on the renewed hope agenda, and would be recorded as a monumental failure on the part of government." On the issue of the Enhanced Trade Investment agreement between Nigeria and the United Kingdom, the NBA president said that the umbrella body of legal practitioners was ready to fight the matter if it was not reviewed "It is indeed unfortunate that this tragic reminder of our colonial past, is being gleefully celebrated at the highest level of government of Nigeria. "What is more disheartening is the fact that a decision of this magnitude that adversely affects the wellbeing and livelihood of millions of Nigerians could be taken without any consultation, especially with the NBA. "We will fight it. We have the responsibility of protecting the legal space. I come from

the village and I know what it means. "Do you want those in the village who are struggling to make a living to still have competitors from the UK to take the little they have?" "I have my suspicions and nobody has allayed my suspicions over the deal. We will seek the judicial interpretation of the propriety of that decision and we are entitled to do that." On the issue of a court judgment which allowed the registration of another legal body like the NBA, Maikyau said that the NBA was ready to challenge the matter up to the Supreme Court. The NBA president also said that he has articulated the above points into a letter to President Tinubu. He said he was hopeful that the letter would be well received and there would be a favourable outcome.

ActionAid Nigeria calls on FG to intensify measures to reduce the cost of governance

ActionAid Nigeria has asked the Federal Government to mandate all tiers of government, including the National Assembly and all Ministries, to promote the use of virtual meetings and technology solutions for official engagements in order to reduce the cost of governance. The non-governmental organisation (NGO) in a speech by its Country Director, Andrew Mamedu while commending President Bola Tinubu for recent reduction of traveling allowance to top government officials, said the President should go further to reduce cost of governance in the country. He said: "President Bola Tinubu's recent approval of significant cost-cutting measures, particularly the reduction of official entourage on local and international travels is a commendable commitment to fiscal responsibility and aligns with the need for prudent management of public resources. Merely reducing expenses on travel is insufficient to bring about the meaningful changes that Nigerians aspire for."

He noted that: "There are additional measures that can enhance transparency, efficiency, and accountability in the management of public funds, with the most crucial being the adoption of digital technology. The federal government is encouraged to mandate all tiers of government, including the National Assembly and Ministries, to promote the use of virtual meetings and technology solutions for official engagements, reducing the necessity for physical travel. "In the spirit of cutting costs, President Tinubu should consider implementing an independent audit of government spending to identify areas of potential waste and inefficiency, ensuring a thorough and transparent review." The Country Director of ActionAid Nigeria also advised ministries, departments, and agencies to explore partnerships with reputable organisations for knowledge sharing and capacity development on effective cost-cutting strategies and to foster public participation in decision-making processes related to government spending, ensuring that citizens have a say in resource allocation. He said: "ActionAid Nigeria joins her voice with Nigerians to stress that it is imperative to have a well-rounded approach in cutting cost of governance. While reductions in official entourage and travel expenses are a step in the right direction, it is paramount to tackle other egregious areas of government expenditure. "We demand an unambiguous stance on issues such as exorbitant senators' salaries, the extravagant frequency of changing cars and houses, and excessive sitting allowances amongst others. We reiterate that

this paradigm shift should not be confined to the federal level alone; the President must diligently ensure that it extends to both the Legislative and Judicial arms of the Government ensuring that they meticulously review their expenditures so that the cost cutting measures permeate every echelon of leadership. A forceful and transparent cost-cutting strategy across all facets of governance is the resolute expectation of the Nigerian populace, reflecting a true commitment to fiscal responsibility."

ICPC, CCB partner against public sector corruption

Dr Musa Aliyu (SAN) Chairman, Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has initiated a collaboration with the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB). The initiative was aimed at strengthening ties and aligning efforts to rid the country of corruption in the public sector. The ICPC spokesperson, Mrs Azuka Ogugua said this in a statement in Abuja. Ogugua said the collaboration was agreed on when the ICPC Chairman, in company of the commission's management team, paid a courtesy visit to the Acting Chairman of CCB, Mr Aliyu Kankia in Abuja. The ICPC boss, however, said the visit was borne out of the desire of the commission under his leadership, to work with relevant stakeholders to achieve giant strides in the Federal Government's Renewed Hope Agenda of fighting corruption. Aliyu stressed that President Bola Tinubu has an honest commitment to the fight against corruption and that this could be achieved through collaboration and partnership with the CCB. This, he described as the most powerful and important anti-corruption agency in Nigeria recognised and mentioned in the 1999 Constitution (as amended). "The collaboration is in furtherance to consolidating and improving on an existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two agencies. "There are many things that both agencies can do together to move this country forward. "I know that there is an existing MoU between us, and we want to improve on it and harness resources within our reach to work efficiently for the common good and benefit of our nation. " Whenever you need anything from us, please do not hesitate to reach out to us while we will also do so from our end," he said.

In his remarks, the acting chairman of CCB, stated that the visit was a step in the right direction as the fight against the menace of corruption required cooperation and understanding as displayed by the ICPC chairman and his team. "The visit signifies friendship, understanding and cooperation to come together for a common goal in the fight against corruption. "CCB is the creation of the constitution that speaks on giving and taking, conflict of Interest, asset declaration and assets verification," Kankia said. He expressed readiness of the bureau to continue to forward relevant cases to ICPC as it had always done based on findings in carrying out their assignment on assets evaluation and assessments of public servants. "You can rely on us. We have the tools that will help your work as we have always done, we will share relevant information with you to help your work. "CCB also categorises offences and forwards to appropriate anti-corruption agencies," he said. Kankia called on ICPC to work with the bureau in the aspects of trainings especially on investigation, as that would equally help them