

## ActionAid Nigeria decries NASS' approval of Rivers State emergency rule

ActionAid Nigeria (AAN) has expressed deep concerns over the alarming disregard for constitutional processes in approving the state of emergency in Rivers State. It said in a statement that the decision by the two chambers, the Senate and House of Representatives, to endorse President Bola Tinubu's proclamation without a transparent and verifiable two-thirds majority vote raised serious questions about the integrity of Nigeria's democratic institutions and the respect for the rule of law. The statement read: "While the 1999 Constitution grants the President the authority to declare a state of emergency, it explicitly requires approval by a two-thirds majority of both legislative chambers. Relying on a voice vote instead of an official count makes verifying compliance with this constitutional requirement impossible, which amounts to a blatant disregard for due process and a serious breach of Nigeria's democratic principles. However, while permissible for routine legislative matters, a voice vote is wholly inappropriate for decisions requiring a strict supermajority. "The deliberate choice by the Senate and the House of Representatives to bypass a transparent vote count smacks of executive overreach and legislative complicity. "This reckless act not only erodes public confidence in Nigeria's democracy but also sets a dangerous precedent that public officeholders could exploit in the future and will potentially threaten the very fabric of our constitutional order. If this decision is allowed to stand, what stops a future legislature from using a voice vote to remove a sitting president or to circumvent other constitutional safeguards? "As the final custodian of justice, the judiciary must assert its independence and call both the executive and legislative arms of government to order. Failing to do so would signal an endorsement of lawlessness and further embolden those who seek to undermine Nigeria's constitutional democracy." ActionAid Nigeria's Country Director, Andrew Mamedu noted that: "AAN's position is premised on the fundamental need to uphold democratic principles and ensure that governance is conducted within the confines of the law. "The rule of law is the bedrock of any democracy, and its continuous erosion will have dire consequences for Nigeria's future. We therefore demand that the National Assembly provides verifiable evidence that they met the two-thirds majority required for the approval. Beyond this, those directly affected, such as state officials, political stakeholders, and governance watchdogs, must take immediate steps to seek redress in court and the judiciary must also act decisively to prevent this blatant subversion of constitutional order. "Now is the time for civil society, legal experts, and concerned Nigerians to raise their voices against this dangerous precedent. Democracy cannot survive when laws are ignored at the convenience of those in power. Nigerians deserves a government that operates within the bounds of the Constitution, not one that manipulates it at will."

## National Assembly's Voice Vote On Rivers, A Scam – Prof Utomi Insists

*...Says, Senators, Reps killed democracy*

The statesman said there was no basis for declaring an emergency in Rivers State and that it was deliberately contrived for selfish purposes. Professor Pat Utomi, A professor of political economics and founder of the Centre for Values in Leadership, has said that the State of Emergency declared in Rivers State and the suspension of Governor Siminalayi Fubara, his deputy, Mrs Ngozi Odu, and members of the State Assembly by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu was deliberately contrived for selfish purposes. This was as he said that the National Assembly has become consistent in insulting the Nigerian people, stressing that we do not have a democracy anymore. Utomi said; "The question is how we proceed from here recognizing that we don't have a democracy. I cried for our beloved country. How could they do this to us after all these years? "Most of these characters were hiding when people like us put our lives on the line for this democracy and now they shrivel it, they make it a joke for a mess of pottage. What a tragedy for a country! What a tragedy!" he said. He pointedly said that democracy was murdered in Nigeria by members of the National Assembly that used voice vote to arrive at two-thirds majority votes.

Professor Utomi, who stated these when he featured on Channels Television, said that he does not feel comfortable to publicly say that he comes from a country that is a democracy. In his words; "Nigeria is not a democracy. Even the manner of the declaration of a State of Emergency in Rivers State was so disdainful of the sensitivity of the Nigerian people.

"You will recall many years ago when there were questions of whether or not the third term thing was going to happen, people wanted to see who voted one way or the other in a matter of profound national importance, to do what the lawmakers did, was an insult to the Nigerian people. "Yeah, I've heard the senate president call for a voice vote before and everybody said nay and he said the ayes have it. I have it on video; I've seen it before. So, the whole thing is a scam on the Nigerian people. "Very sadly, I watched the Nigerian political class demolish Nigerian institutions. It may give them warm moments and 'personal victory' but it destroys the future of their children and I hope they know that our institutions have been destroyed. "They have destroyed the judiciary, and the National Assembly does not constitute another realm that has oversight or checks or balances to the other; it is just a complete joke. The world laughs at us and it is a tragedy that we are where we are. "What is the problem in River State that warrants a state of emergency? Tell me what it is. When pipelines were blown like popcorn in River State, was there a state of emergency? Why did he (Tinubu) not declare a state of emergency in Lagos State when the Assembly was tossing back and forth? Why Rivers? "There is something about fairness, equity, and

pure decency and I don't see it here. I think that is a shame that they want to rubbish the democracy that we all fought so hard for, but you know karma, it comes back to haunt everybody. "Unfortunately, we're going to stay in poverty for a long time because of the conduct of these kinds of people in public life.

"Look, let's be fair, this is supposed to be a case of two fighting, who are these two fighting? Let us name them and over what are they fighting and why do a whole people have to bear the brunt of these outsized egos damaging the peace of all? For whatever it is, they claim they are fighting which is not in our constitution? "We don't know anything about fathers or godfathers in our constitution and one man cannot sit in judgment in his court where he is an active partisan and make these kinds of choices and the Nigerian people just sit and watch. That is a tragedy for our country. "I've said before that there was a time when Nigeria went into a recession because pipelines were going off like Christmas crackers and we didn't see a state of emergency declared. Why now? It doesn't make sense to me. "You can go around the world fooling yourself saying you're attracting investment and with just a simple decision, they made Nigeria unattractive for investments. "Everybody who is a serious investor picks it off, serious instability, they have declared martial law in a part of the country, in fact, the part of the country that is most critical for their revenue flows. "I don't know how we carry on this kind of masochistic behaviour, load the machine, go shoot ourselves in the foot because of our egos, because we cannot control ourselves as politicians. "Two fighting," as they say, and one person takes sides with the other. "It's just a shame that the Nigerian people have inherited this kind of political class and we are not going anywhere as a country until we get rid of this political class, I assure you," Utomi said.

He said that Nigeria is irresponsible, adding that it formed the reason why its economy is not growing and people are suffering, dying of hunger, saying that there is poverty in the land. Utomi said; "Instead of focusing on how we can create a developmental state that cares about the people, people go to the National Assembly, and rubbish their country and make it a place that is not attractive for investment. There will be judgment, I assure you, there will be judgment," he stressed.

## CBN REPORT confirms inflation crisis as insecurity, infrastructure deficits continue to plague economy

A report by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has placed the blame for Nigeria's ongoing inflation crisis on insecurity and infrastructural deficits. The report, which is part of Nigeria's periodic economic update from the apex bank, was released in the Q4 2024 economic report. "Inflation remained elevated in Q4 2024, as both food and non-food components of the CPI basket increased," the report noted. "Headline inflation rose to 34.80% year-on-year, up from 32.70% in the preceding

quarter, driven by higher energy costs and exchange rate pass-through. Other contributing factors included hoarding, insecurity, and infrastructural challenges," the report stated. The report further highlighted: "Inflation remained broadly distributed across the components of the CPI basket during the review period, with analytical evidence indicating an increase in its pervasiveness. Specifically, 74.62% of items in the CPI basket exceeded the historical average of 14.60% (2010-2023), compared to 70.14% in the preceding quarter." However, the report stated that Nigeria's inflation is expected to moderate starting in 2025.

SaharaReporters previously reported that Nigeria's headline inflation rate declined to 24.48% in January, according to the latest data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The bureau had also reported that food inflation stood at 26.08% year-on-year. Speaking at a press briefing in Abuja, the Statistician-General of the Federation and CEO of NBS, Adeyemi Adeniran, attributed the decline to the recent rebasing of Nigeria's inflation basket. This move was aimed at aligning the country's inflation measurement with global standards. "The last time Nigeria rebased its inflation calculation was in 2009, meaning that prices of goods from that period were still being used as a reference," Adeniran explained. He added, "This update allows for methodological improvements that enhance accuracy and ensure consistency with international best practices." Although the Nigerian government has reported a drop in inflation figures, Nigerians continue to lament the rising cost of living. Nigerians have also lamented insecurity including attacks on farmers by criminal herders.

## Obasanjo accuses NASS of bribery to ratify Rivers emergency

Former president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, has pointedly accused National Assembly members of taking bribe to ratify the state of emergency imposed on Rivers State by President Bola Tinubu. In a video clip monitored from our office, Obasanjo was heard in a conversation with outspoken House of Representatives member, Ikenga Ugochinyere, who denied reports that federal lawmakers were paid \$200,000 each to support the emergency rule. "Nobody gave anyone \$200,000. That is just what I want to correct." However, the former president hammered persistently that he had authoritative knowledge of the payments. "You can say anything. I heard it from the horse's mouth. You can deny it, that is alright, but I heard it from those who got it and told me that they got it. If you didn't get it, then maybe your case is different. Don't tell me what I know. Most of your members who got it told me that they got it." This allegation came on the heels of an earlier denial by the Chairman of the House Committee on the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Mukhtar Betara, who dispelled claims that cash payments were given to lawmakers to secure their support for the emergency declaration. Earlier



investigative journalist Jaafar Jaafar said on X that Betara clarified the \$5,000 given to each committee member was a “Sallah gesture” and not a bribe. “The chairman of the House Committee on FCT, Mukhtar Betara, has clarified to me that he only shared \$5,000 to each member of his committee as a ‘Sallah Gesture,’ not an inducement to support emergency rule in Rivers State,” Jaafar wrote.

Meanwhile, Obasanjo has expressed strong fear of the imminent death of democracy in Africa because it has become a system of government by a small number of people over a large population, who are deprived of their needs. He made this known at a Colloquium to mark the 60th birthday of former Imo State governor, Emeka Ihedioha in Abuja. The former president stated that democracy, which is expected to deliver services to all the people and not a section, is failing in Africa because it is not African in context and content. According to him, from the Greek model of democracy, where all the citizens participate directly in their affairs, it is now a representative system which has not taken care of everybody. “When we talk of democracy, we should remember that in Africa, before the colonial rule, and the colonial power, we had a form of government which attended to the needs of our people. And whatever you call it, to me it is democracy, because what is democracy about? Democracy is meant to be a system of government that delivers. And delivers to all the people, not just a section of the people. Not just a few. But what do we have today? “Today, we have democracy which is a government of a small number of people by a small number of people over a large number of people, who are deprived of what they need to have in life. Now, that is not democracy that will endure. “So, if you are talking of democracy failing in Africa, democracy in Africa has failed. Why has it failed? Because in context and in content, it's not African. It does not have any aspect of our culture, our way of life, what we stand for, what we believe in. Umbutu, I am because we are.” He added that democracy in the continent today is “I am because I can grab. What sort of democracy brings you and you grab everything and then illegally, corruptly and you say go to Court when you know that even in the Court, you cannot get justice? “So, if democracy is failing, democracy is dying and if we are going to make democracy not to die, we have to look at democracy in the context and in the content of Africa. I hope that we will get to that stage so that democracy which will deliver will be the democracy that we will have

## Nigeria's public debt climbs by 48.58% to N144.67tr

Nigeria's total public debt sharply climbed to N144.67 trillion (approximately \$94.23 billion) as of December 31, 2024, representing a 48.58 per cent increase compared to N97.34 trillion (or \$108.23 billion) recorded at the end of December 2023. This comes as it is projected that the country's debt may cross N157 trillion by December 2025. This is in view of the planned

borrowing of N13 trillion to finance the 2025 budget deficit. The Debt Management Office (DMO) which made this known in its latest report on the country's public debt profile, also stated that a quarter-on-quarter rise of 1.65 per cent from the N142.32 trillion (\$88.89 billion) was recorded at the end of September 2024, spotlighting the continuous increase in the nation's debt burden during the final quarter of the year. The uptick in public debt was primarily caused by significant increases in both external and domestic borrowings. Nigeria's external debt increased by 83.89 per cent from N38.22 trillion (\$42.50 billion) in December 2023 to N70.29 trillion (\$45.78 billion) in December 2024.

The sharp rise according to the report was due to new external borrowings and the impact of naira depreciation, which raised the naira equivalent of dollar-denominated debt. The DMO said domestic debt also rose by 25.77 per cent from N59.12 trillion (\$65.73 billion) at the end of December 2023 to N74.38 trillion (\$48.44 billion) in December 2024. The Federal Government's domestic debt component grew significantly from N53.26 trillion to N70.41 trillion, reflecting a 32.19 per cent increase.

## Bokkos bleeds while Nigeria watches. Outrage as over 60 killed in Plateau massacre

The death toll in Bokkos Local Government Area of Plateau State has risen to over 60 following coordinated attacks by suspected Fulani militias between April 2 and 3, 2025. The violence, which swept through Mangor Tamiso, Daffo, Manguna, Hurti, Tadaï, and Ruwi communities, has left a trail of blood, ashes, and heartbreak, sparking national outrage and calls for urgent government action. In a fiery statement titled “Bokkos Bleeds While Nigeria Watches”, the Movement for the Emancipation of Nigeria (MEN) condemned what it described as “systematic, coordinated, and genocidal” acts of terror. The group accused the Nigerian government and security agencies of criminal silence and failure to protect innocent citizens, calling the attacks nothing short of ethnic cleansing. “How many more mass graves must be dug before Nigeria acts?” the group demanded, as it decried the erasure of indigenous Christian communities under the pretense of farmer-herder clashes. Among the dead are women, children, and the elderly—people who stood no chance against heavily armed invaders who struck under the cover of night, torching homes and desecrating farmlands. Survivors describe a scene of unimaginable horror: crying children, burning homes, and bodies left unburied. MEN is calling for immediate recognition of the militias as terrorist organizations, the establishment of a tribunal to probe the killings, and the deployment of a well-equipped permanent security task force to the area. They also called for the eviction of foreign land-grabbers believed to be behind the violence. In the face of state inaction, the group issued a grave warning: “If the state fails, the people must not fail themselves.” Civil society,

religious leaders, and youth movements have also been urged to rise, speak, and act, with MEN emphasizing that silence in the face of such atrocities amounts to complicity. While groups like the Butura Development Association have been commended for showing solidarity, the larger Nigerian society and international community have been called upon to document, condemn, and help stop what MEN refers to as “a slow-burning genocide.” With entire communities now displaced and traumatized, the question remains: Will Boko Haram be another forgotten tragedy—or the turning point Nigeria can no longer ignore?

## Gov Muftwang Cries Out! Bandits Occupy 64 Plateau Communities

**L**ess than 48 hours after Governor Babagana Umara Zulum of Borno State an alarm raised about losing grounds to Boko Haram attacks, his Plateau State counterpart, Governor Caleb Muftwang has also come out with another scary story. According to Governor Muftwang, Plateau is currently facing a high wave of insecurity, with bandits unfortunately taking over 64 communities in the State. The Governor, who made the disturbing confession during an interview on Channels Television's Politics Today, blamed unnamed terrorist groups for wreaking havoc in Plateau State.

This is as he further alleged that the attacks were being sponsored by yet-to-be-identified individuals within and outside the State. He said; “I can tell you in all honesty that I cannot find any explanation other than genocide sponsored by terrorists. “The question is, who are the persons behind the organizers of this terrorism? This is what the security agencies must help us to unravel. “We must come to the point where we know the sponsors because it is not just the work of ordinary people. This is being sponsored from somewhere. “These communities that have been recently attacked were part of the communities that were attacked in 2023 but they survived it and rebuilt themselves.

“The Ruwi community that was first attacked lost about 17 people in 2023 but they bounced back to show you the resilience of the people. “If these attacks have been going on for close to 10 years, it tells you that there is a deliberate, conscious attempt to clean out populations and to reopen.

“As I am talking to you, there are not less than 64 communities that have been taken over by bandits on the Plateau between Bokokos, Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Governments. They have been taken over, renamed and people are living there conveniently on lands they pushed people away to occupy. “I am sure that in the coming days, the security agencies will work together, not at cross purposes but in unison, to be able to bring out the requisite intelligence that will help us to put this matter behind us.” About a week ago, Governor Muftwang said the crisis rocking the state was beyond farmer-herder clashes, adding; “I must say that the aim of the enemy is to throw the State into gloom and mourning but we will rise above their intent and not give them what they want. “For those

who think that the current situation is a farmer-herder issue, let me disabuse your mind from that perception; it is a product of organized crime by malicious elements who do not want peace to reign in the state. “I want to assure the good people of Plateau that God will give us victory over these miscreants and their end has come”.

## Nigerian Youths Need Capital Not 10,000 Naira Freebies – AFDB Boss, Akinwumi Adesina

**T**he President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Akinwumi Adesina, says Africa's youth bulge is a demographic asset that has to become an economic asset through rigorous investment in human capital development and financing. The former Nigerian agriculture minister said youths in Nigeria and other 51 countries in Africa don't need freebies under the guise of empowerment schemes but capital to fund their ideas and translate same into enduring wealth. “In the case of young people and the japa syndrome, it's a big loss for us,” Adesina said during an exclusive interview aired on Channels Television's Sunrise Daily.

“Young people don't need freebies; they don't need people saying: ‘I just want to give you an empowerment programme’. “They have skills, they have knowledge, they have entrepreneurship capacity, they want to turn their ideas into great businesses. “What young people need is not those empowerment programmes; they need capital, they need you to put your money at risk on their behalf,” he added. The economist lamented the migration phenomenon known as 'Japa' in Nigeria, saying that it is a big loss for Nigeria and the African continent. “We have over 465 million young people between the ages of 15 and 35,” he said, warning that Africa should not turn what should be its demographic asset into “somebody else's problem” due to the inability to believe in young people and invest in their ideas for continental prosperity. “I do not believe that the future of our young people lies in Europe; it doesn't lie in America, it doesn't lie in Canada, Japan or China; it should lie in Africa growing well, growing robustly and able to create quality jobs for our young people,” he said.

Adesina said Africa's youth population was not a problem for the continent because India and China's population has not been a problem for them. “It is what you do with your population; how you skill them up.” The AfDB boss said if young people in Africa are skilled with good jobs and social protection, these would turn to prosperity for the continent because the demography has high purchasing power. He said in a world of rising tariffs, it is important for Africa to build consumption as part of its gross domestic product (GDP). The AfDB boss said the financial system in Africa was not designed to support young people on the continent. “The whole of the (banking) system is not designed for young people. The commercial banking system and the financial system failed young people in Africa. “We have over 465 million young people between the ages of 15 and 35. Where is the financial market for

them? Why is it suddenly a surprise to us that they are leaving? It's because you are not putting anything down for them. "We must recognize that the young people are our biggest asset; the demographic asset has to become an economic asset and to do that, you have to put down capital."

Adesina said to support young people in Africa, the AfDB created the Youth Entrepreneurship Development Bank to support their business plans and to address institutional failure around financing. He said the AfDB just approved \$100m to set up the Nigerian Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Bank to "mobilize \$2bn of investment for more than 38,000 businesses of young people in Africa". "You cannot turn your demographic asset into somebody else's problem. We have to put our money behind our young people to create opportunities for them. "They don't need N5,000, N10,000. You want to create youth-based wealth. If you don't, who are the people who will pay the taxes in the future? Where are you going to get the capital mobilisation in the future? You have to therefore invest in the same demographic so you can reap in the future," he submitted.

## Identity conflict: Presidency paying lip service to pogrom in Plateau state-HURIWA

HUMAN RIGHTS WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (HURIWA) – has lamented that the current federal government is paying mere lip service to the issue of the persistent killings of plateau state natives because the victims are neither Hausa nor Fulani. HURIWA said that over 300 Plateau state natives had been killed since December 24th 2023 till date by mostly armed Fulani terrorists allegedly paid by herders seeking to take over the lush rich agricultural landed assets of Plateau State natives. The Rights group also condemns the conspiracy of silence of the northern governors and political elites who stoutly protested the lynching to death of 16 suspected kidnappers from Kano mobbed in Uromi, Edo State by a crowd that mistook the 'travelling HAUSA/FULANI hunters' for kidnappers unleashing violence on an industrial scale in Edo State. "The hypocrisy of Northern Muslim political and military elites to the constant killings of mostly Christian natives of Plateau State is deeply troubling just as the normalization of these intermittent killings by the security forces and the political authority in Abuja is highly hypocritical and paints a picture of a government that is on the same page with the armed killers unleashing devastating violence on Plateau State citizens.

"The fact is that even after the Plateau state governor made a categorical statement confirming the serial killings as genocide, every one of the important military and civilian officials and officers in the current administration pretended like the governor was speaking in tongue. If it was the Kano state governor that made assertion that HAUSA/FULANIS of Kano state are victims of genocide, the entirety of the service chiefs and the National Assembly leadership including officials in the presidency

would have adopted immediate and far-reaching mechanisms to get to the roots of the allegation. But because it is the Christian governor of the Christian state in the North that made the assertion, everyone is pretending to be deaf and dumb. This is injustice at a highly sophisticated and industrial scale."

HURIWA in the media statement by the National Coordinator, Comrade Emmanuel Onwubiko, carpeted the key functionaries of the central government for merely paying ordinary lip's service to the blood lettings in plateau state only because the victims are evidently not from the politically connected ethnicity. "We know that these persistent killings, going on in plateau state and exacerbated since the Christmas Eve genocide of 2023, were to happen in Kastina, Kano or Adamawa, either the vice president, Kashim Shettima, or the national security adviser, Nuhu Ribadu would have relocated to the crime scenes to lead the counter attack. But the victims dying in their tens are Christian from minority ethnic communities in the North, they are politically marginalized and even their complaints of genocide is looked upon as the talk of some very few and powerless people who should be overlooked.

HURIWA recalled that the Plateau State Governor, Caleb Muftwang, had decried the attacks in some communities in his state, saying bandits have taken over 64 communities. The governor stated this on Tuesday during an interview on Channels Television's Politics Today. "These communities that have been recently attacked were part of the communities that were attacked in 2023, but they survived it and rebuilt themselves. The Ruwi community that was first attacked lost about 17 people in 2023, but they bounced back to show you the resilience of the people," the governor said. Over fifty persons were killed within a week in attacks over five communities that left over three hundred houses burnt by suspected herdsmen. The Plateau State Government, through the Secretary to the Government Samuel Jatau, also visited some of the affected communities to ascertain the extent of damages and also donate relief materials to affected victims.

Besides, HURIWA lamented that at least 40 people were killed after armed men stormed Zike community in the Kwall district of Bassa Local Government Area, Plateau State, in North-central Nigeria. The brutal assault began shortly after midnight on Monday, 14 April, and lasted nearly two hours, leaving dozens dead, homes in ruins, and survivors in mourning. Joseph Chudu Yonkpa, National Publicity Secretary of the Irigwe Youth Movement (IYM), a local youth organisation, confirmed the incident to HumAngle. He said many of the injured are receiving treatment at the Jos University Teaching Hospital and other nearby medical facilities. IYM said hours before the attack, it had raised the alarm about a potential threat, alerting residents and security operatives stationed there. However, despite the warning, the gunmen were neither intercepted nor confronted during the assault. "The security people only showed up this morning," he added. HURIWA, however, lambasted the central government for not prioritizing the security of the lives and property of the natives of Plateau State since December 2023.