

INFLATION IN NIGERIA NOW 19.64% HIGHEST SINCE 2005

The consumer price index (CPI), which measures the rate of change in prices of goods and services, rose 19.64 percent in July 2022, up from 18.60 percent in the previous month. This is the highest recorded since September 2005. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) disclosed this on Monday in its consumer price index (CPI) report for July 2022. The figure is also 2.27 percent points higher compared to the rate recorded in July 2021, which was 17.38 percent.

According to the report, increases were recorded in all classifications of individual consumption according to purpose (COICOP) divisions that yielded the headline index. The report said further, "On a month-on-month basis, the Headline inflation rate in July 2022 was 1.817%, which was 0.001% higher than the rate recorded in June 2022 (1.816%)," the report reads. "The percentage change in the average CPI for the twelve months period ending July 2022 over the average of the CPI for the previous twelve months period was 16.75%, showing a 0.46% increase compared to 16.30% recorded in July 2021." The report added that food inflation rose to 22.02 percent in July, when compared to 20.60 percent in June. This rise in the food index was caused by increases in prices of bread and cereals, food products, potatoes, yam and other tubers, meat, fish, oil, and fat.

"On a month-on-month basis, the food inflation rate in July was 2.04%, this was a 0.01% insignificant decline compared to the rate recorded in June 2022 (2.05%)," the report adds. "This decline is attributed to a reduction in the prices of some food items like tubers, maize, garri, and vegetables." In analysing price movements, the report said Akwa Ibom, Ebonyi and Kogi states witnessed the highest prices, while Jigawa, Kano and Borno recorded the slowest rise in inflation. "In July 2022, all items' inflation rate on a year-on-year basis was highest in Akwa Ibom (22.88%), Ebonyi (22.51%), Kogi (22.08%), while Jigawa (16.62%), Kaduna (17.04%) and Borno (18.04%) recorded the slowest rise in headline Year-on-Year inflation," the report said. "However, on a month-on-month basis, July 2022 recorded the highest increases in Adamawa (2.87%), Abuja (2.84%), Oyo (2.77%), while Bauchi (0.82%), Kano (0.83%) and Niger (1.03%) recorded the slowest rise on month-on-month inflation."

AfDB to deliver certified Wheat, seeds to 20m farmers —Adesina

President, African Development Bank (AfDB) Dr Akinwumi Adesina says the bank is set to deliver climate-adapted, certified wheat and other staple

crops seeds to 20 million farmers. Adesina said this in a document titled, "Averting an African Food Crisis: The African Food Production Facility" and obtained on Monday in Abuja. He said the initiative, which was part of activities by the bank would tackle food crisis in African countries including Nigeria. The president said the delivery of seeds and increased access to agricultural fertilisers would be done through the bank's African Emergency Food Production Facility. Adesina said within the next two years, the facility would allow farmers to produce 38 million additional tonnes of food.

He said that part of the plan was a 30 per cent increment in local production worth an estimated 12 billion dollars. He also said that it would facilitate better global investment in Africa's agricultural sector. Adesina said that the facility would also support enhanced governance and policy reforms. "From the onset, the African Development Bank realised the strategic need to tackle the devastating impact of the war on Africa's food security. It is important to prevent unrest and even more human suffering. In May, the bank established a 1.5-billion-dollar African Emergency Food Production Facility. In less than 60 days, it put into action 1.13 billion dollar-worth of programmes under the facility across 24 African countries. Half a dozen more programmes are expected to get underway by September as more governments apply to the facility," he said.

According to him, food aid cannot feed Africa because Africa does not need bowls in hand. "Africa needs seeds in the ground and mechanical harvesters to harvest bountiful food produced locally.

"Africa will feed itself with pride because there is no dignity in begging for food." The president said that the African Emergency Food Production Facility had benefited from stakeholder consultations. He said the price of wheat had soared in Africa by more than 45 per cent since the war in Ukraine began. Adesina also said fertiliser prices had gone up by 300 per cent while the continent faced a fertiliser shortage of two million metric tonnes. Many African countries have already seen price hikes in bread and other food items. If this deficit is not made up, food production in Africa will decline by at least 20 per cent and the continent could lose more than 11 billion dollars in food production value. The bank's 1.5-billion-dollar strategy will lead to the production of 11 million tons of wheat, 18 million tons of maize, six million tons of rice and 2.5 million tons of soybeans. The bank will provide fertiliser to smallholder farmers across Africa over the next four farming seasons.

"This will be done using its convening influence with major fertiliser manufacturers, loan guarantees and other financial instruments," he said. Adesina further said it would create a platform to advocate critical policy reforms to solve the structural issues that impede farmers from receiving modern inputs. He said it included strengthening national institutions overseeing input markets. According to him, the facility had a structure for working with multilateral development partners. This he said would

ensure rapid alignment and implementation, enhanced reach, and effective impact. The president also said it would increase technical preparedness and responsiveness. He said it included short, medium, and long-term measures to address both the urgent food crisis and long-term sustainability and resilience of Africa's food systems. (NAN)

Nigeria now tops list of World Bank debtors with three others

Rising debt has pushed Nigeria up the World Bank's top 10 International Development Association borrowers' list. The World Bank Fiscal Year 2021 audited financial statements, known as the IDA financial statement, showed that Nigeria was rated fifth on the list with \$11.7bn IDA debt stock as of June 30, 2021. However, the newly released World Bank Fiscal Year 2022 audited financial statements for IDA showed that Nigeria has moved to the fourth position on the list, with \$13bn IDA debt stock as of June 30, 2022. This shows that Nigeria accumulated about \$1.3bn IDA debt within a fiscal year, with the country taking over the fourth top debtor position from Vietnam.

This debt is different from the outstanding loan of \$486m from World Bank's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The top five countries on the list slightly reduced their IDA debt stock except Nigeria. India, which is still the first on the list reduced its IDA debt stock from \$22bn in the previous fiscal year to \$19.7bn, followed by Bangladesh from \$18.1bn to \$18bn. It is followed by Pakistan which cut its debt from \$16.4bn to \$15.8bn, and lastly, Vietnam, which went down the list to fifth position, from \$14.1bn to \$12.9bn. Nigeria has the highest IDA debt in Africa, as the top three IDA borrowers (India, Bangladesh and Pakistan) are from Asia. The World Bank disclosed recently that Nigeria's debt, which may be considered sustainable for now, is vulnerable and costly. The bank said, "Nigeria's debt remains sustainable, albeit vulnerable and costly, especially due to large and growing financing from the Central Bank of Nigeria."

However, the Washington-based global financial institution added that the country's debt was also at risk of becoming unsustainable in the event of macro-fiscal shocks.

The bank further expressed concerns over the nation's cost of debt servicing, which according to it, disrupted public investments and critical service delivery spending. Economists have also raised concerns over the rising debt profile of the Federal Government. The Fiscal Policy Partner and Africa Tax Leader of PwC, Mr Taiwo Oyedele, expressed his agreement with the World Bank on the high cost of debt servicing.

He said, "I agree with the World Bank. Although the debt to GDP ratio is not too high, if you think about the debt service cost to revenue ratio, it is already over 70 per cent. That's when you know it's costly. "Nigeria borrows at

double-digit, and even when we borrow in dollars, the rates are very high and then you devalue the naira and the cost of servicing the debt in naira goes up because it is dollar-dominated debt. "Put all of that together, and you can easily say to yourself that even though our debt to GDP ratio is very low, our cost of borrowing is unsustainable because it is very high, and therefore, make it very costly." A former Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria and former presidential candidate, Kingsley Moghalu, also criticised the increasing borrowing tendency of the government, urging the officials to re-consider other ways of generating revenue for the country. According to Moghalu, it was also not reasonable to borrow for infrastructural development as the government could expand the public-private partnership options for such development.

In a document by the Director General of the Debt Management Office, Patience Oniha, recently obtained by our correspondent, the DMO stated that high debt levels would often lead to high debt services and affect investments in infrastructure. According to the DMO DG, "High debt levels lead to heavy debt service which reduces resources available for investment in infrastructure and key sectors of the economy."

Gen. Irabor advocates collaboration against terrorism in West Africa

Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Lucky Irabor, says there is need for stronger collaboration between West African armed forces to deal with insecurity in the sub-region. Irabor stated this when hosted the Burkinabe Chief of Defence Staff, Senior Col. David Kadre at the Defence Headquarters in Abuja. He congratulated the Burkinabe defence chief, an alumnus of the National Defence College (NDC), Nigeria for his appointment and assured to share experiences on how the two countries had been tackling insecurity. Irabor said that Nigeria was proud to have an alumnus of NDC becoming the defence chief of Burkina Faso, reiterating his commitment to sharing ideas with the visitor.

"No doubt the West African sub-region is experiencing the menace of terrorism and insurgency and we understand that to address this scourge, there has to be collaboration of all countries within the sub-region. "That is why I am delighted to receive you and to also let you know that we shall share our experiences. "We will indeed take action that will ensure that we redress all issues together and ensure that we stamp out every form of terrorism within our sub-region," he said.

Earlier, Kadre said he was in Nigeria to attend the graduation of the Course 30 of NDC Nigeria and used the opportunity to visit Irabor to tap from his wealth of experience. Kadre said he also visited to seek advice on his

new appointment and to also present the security situation in the West African sub-region. He reiterated the need for deeper collaboration between Nigerian and Burkinabe armed forces to address the challenges of terrorism and insurgency. “I came also regarding terrorism and insurgency in our countries so as to seek your advice and experience since Nigeria is engaged in fighting this scourge,” he said.

Nigerian Robotics Engineer Develops CET Drone to Detect Kidnappers, Terrorists' Hideouts

A Nigerian Robotic Engineer, Dr. Olusola Ayoola has developed Carbon Emission Tracker (CET) Drone for aerial surveillance in detecting hideouts of criminals within caves and forest areas. Dr. Ayoola is the founder of Robotic and Artificial Intelligence Nigeria (RAIN), an indigenous AI firm based in Ibadan, Oyo State. In an interview with TechDigest.ng, Ayoola revealed that criminal elements hiding in caves and forested areas cannot escape the innovative capability of drone surveillance offered by the Carbon Emission Tracker Drone (CETD).

He explained that the CEDT also utilizes the geo-spatial intelligence technology capable of scanning entire expanse of forests, game reserves and other uninhabited spaces thereby making it difficult for criminals to escape detection. “We discovered the Carbon Emission Detection Based Aerial Surveillance which allows for a drone to sniff out hideouts through the carbon their activities emit. As long as human life exists in a forested location, there must be carbon emission, be it under a cave, under a canopy or inside a bunker. “This novel solution comes with a barrage of many other possibilities and insight into how we can bring back security to our dear Nation and other nations in Africa. We cannot overemphasize the role of geospatial intelligence. So, wherever government cannot be physically present, government's intelligence must always be. “With this new technology, we can quickly scan the entirety of our forests and games reserves to generate a real map of which spots of these hitherto assumed uninhabited forests have suddenly spiked up in human activities. “If this is an indication of a criminal enclave rapidly developing across the country, then it helps us nip the growth in the bud before it becomes another combative force”, he said.

Ayoola appealed for assistance from the federal government to enable RAIN expand its research and development initiatives and develop other transformative digital innovations so as to uplift Nigeria's technological capabilities. He added that his firm is home to talented young innovators who are dedicated to searching for digital technology-powered solutions to diverse economic and social problems. “I will need the federal government to weigh in on the capability of RAIN, I mean Robotics

and Artificial Intelligence Nigeria. We need to expand physically, financially and technically. We do not have all the resources which our counterparts in the USA and China have. “If the government decide to fund RAIN directly, Nigeria can overtake many countries in these areas. Sometimes all you need is willing followership, for good leaders to thrive. At RAIN we have the best crop of youths who have dedicated themselves and their talents to finding solutions to National problems”, Ayoola added.

Other digital technology inventions by Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Nigeria (RAIN) include solutions for management of the energy sector, a modular road traffic light system, an artificial vision for the blind, personal security wireless perimeter fencing for private homes and for saving soldiers from ambush. A first-class graduate of Electrical and Electronic Engineering from the University of Ibadan, and obtained in a Distinction in Masters Degree and doctorate degree in Robotics for Extreme Environments in the University of Manchester UK. He had worked with a Robotics Firm to address some of the UK's Nuclear Decommissioning challenges before returning to Nigeria.

Buhari Government Cannot be the Accuser, Prosecutor and Judge Against the Media

The International Press Centre (IPC), Lagos Nigeria is worried by the recent utterances by the Federal Government of Nigeria threatening to sanction the BBC and Trust television for airing documentaries that allegedly glorified and fueled terrorism and banditry in Nigeria.

In a report published by Premium Times July 28, 2022, the Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed said, “the federal government is aware of the 'unprofessional documentary' by the BBC Africa Eye, where interviews were granted to bandit warlords and terror gangs, thereby allegedly promoting terror in the country”. The Minister also condemned Trust TV, owned by Media Trust Ltd, for using its platform to grant an interview to a bandit, Shehu Rekeb, thereby allegedly promoting the activities of terrorists. While it is appropriate for the government to complain against any news report it finds offensive it is preposterous and indefensible that the same government will hastily conclude that “appropriate sanctions would be meted out to both platforms”.

According to the Executive Director of IPC, Mr. Lanre Arogundade, it is trite law that Mr. Lai Mohammed, who is also a Lawyer, cannot be the accuser, prosecutor and judge in the matter at hand. Rather than proclaim the media houses guilty, the minimum standard of expectation is that the federal government would develop a petition and dispatch same either to the concerned media or to appropriate regulatory bodies for intervention and wait for them to act. Mr. Arogundade said that the threat by the

federal government to sanction BBC and Trust TV could be interpreted as an attempt to stifle information flow in the country.

“This threat is an attempt among several others by the government to suppress information flow from the media. Sanctioning media organisations for granting interviews to bandit warlords on issues that have to do with the security challenges facing the country is also a subtle attempt at suppressing the rights to information”, he added. “While we are all affected by the spate of insecurity in the country, credible information is equally key towards getting to the root cause of the worrisome development. However, what this threat aims to achieve is to make the media a one-faced channel of information where it is only permitted to give perspectives from government sources; this is inconsistent with journalistic practice of engaging in balanced coverage and providing balanced information to citizens,” Mr Arogundade stated further.

IPC noted that the fundamental rights of freedom of expression by citizens and media freedom should be guaranteed and respected and the government should not dictate how the media should present its report to the public.

233 LGAs, 32 states prone to flooding – NEMA

Mr Mustapha Ahmed, Director-General, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), says it has identified 233 local government areas, in 32 states and FCT that have been predicted to experience flooding in 2022. He said this at a National Consultative Workshop on 2022 Flood Preparedness, Mitigation and Response, organised by the agency, in Abuja. He said that the workshop was one of the steps outlined by the agency to bring stakeholders together. He said it was to collectively prepare and provide strategies to strengthen flood risk mitigation and effective response. “This followed the 2022 Seasonal Climate Prediction released by Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) and the Annual Flood Outlook released by Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA).” Efforts must be made to mitigate and respond effectively to flooding. “We have sent advisory letters and maps showing predicted flood risk areas in various states to the respective state governments. “We have also produced risk maps for vulnerable local government areas as forecasted by NIHSA's Annual Flood Outlook,” he said. He added that state emergency management agencies as well as local emergency management committees must be proactive. He said this would ensure effective and efficient flood preparedness, mitigation and response. On her part, Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, Hajia Sadiya Farouq, called on relevant stakeholders to take proactive measures in addressing flood and its associated impacts. Farouq, who was represented by Deputy Director, Disaster Management, at the ministry, Dr Abubakar Suleiman,

added that adequate information must be sent out to the public for effective preparation. “Intensification of public enlightenment campaigns, targeting vulnerable communities to undertake mitigation actions and prepare for evacuation to safe ground. “Identification of high grounds for possible internally displaced persons' camps, to shelter evacuated communities. “De-silting river channels and canals and removal of all refuse, weeds, water hyacinths and floats from water channel, drainage and on all avenues for river run offs so as to allow free flow of flood waters,” she said.

UNICEF enrolled 964,325 out of school children in Sokoto, Zamfara in 10 years – Official

United Nations Children and Education Fund (UNICEF) has facilitated the enrolment of 964,325 out of school children from 2012 till date in Sokoto and Zamfara states. UNICEF's Chief Field Officer in Sokoto, Dr Maryam Darwesh-Said, said this at a three-day Media Dialogue on Girls' Education Project (GEP3), in Sokoto. Darwesh-Said said that the figure represented 44 per cent in Sokoto and 62 per cent in Zamfara, based on progressive annual school census data. She said that during the period, the capacities of no fewer than 11,593 teachers were enhanced, out of whom 486 were females in the two states.

The UNICEF chief field officer said that 1,280 Integrated Qur'anic School (IQS) facilitators were trained in the two states, out of whom 92 were females. He said that the project was targeted at supporting efficient and effective governance, where no fewer than 13,094 school management committee members underwent relevant capacity trainings in both states. Darwesh-Said said that the project ensured three outputs comprising increased enrolment and retention of girls in basic education, improved capacity of teachers to deliver effective learning for girls and improved governance to strengthen girls' education. “In recognition of the benefits from GEP, a sustainability strategy document was developed by the states.

“I urge the states to ensure full implementation of the sustainability plan by incorporating it into their budget to capture required funding contributions for UNICEF supported interventions to facilitate strategic sustainability,” she said. Darwesh-Said said that only continuity could ensure that those young girls and boys who had been provided with the opportunity of enjoying their rights to education continue to thrive and learn to become responsible citizens. She reinstated UNICEF's commitment to continue providing technical support to the implementation agencies in the states toward a common vision of ensuring that all school girls and boys were in school and learning.

Schools closure insensitive to children's future says CSO

The Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA) has expressed displeasure at the closure of unity schools across the country. The National Moderator of CSACEFA, Mr Sale Abdullahi said this in a statement made available to the media in Abuja. Abdullahi said that Nigerian children had witnessed horrific moments in the heat of attacks on learning facilities across the country arising from the activities of bandits. "The past weeks have witnessed waves of school closures across the country, both secondary and tertiary. "Bandits have made good their threats of holding the nation to ransom as they continue with their nefarious acts unchallenged. "Since the Chibok incident in 2014, where over 276 students were abducted in the North East region, the crisis has fast spread to the North West and North Central regions through countless other attacks on soft targets," he said. Abdullahi said that the bandits were demanding huge ransoms and in some cases killing the innocent victims who should be in the safe custody of their guardians or parents with government making promises of securing their release albeit to no effect. "According to United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF), as of today, over 11,536 schools are closed with over 1,500 pupils abducted. This is reprehensible and a brutal violation of the rights of the Nigerian child to education. "We are also worried that this learning crisis will affect the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as there is steady decline in enrollment and retention," he said. He urged the government to remember its social contract with Nigerian parents and students as its cardinal points of their campaign. Abdullahi also urged that concerted efforts in securing the release in the shortest time possible of those children in captivity be made. He said that if nothing was done to address the menace, Nigeria would in the near future lose credibility in the comity of nations because the certificates produced would be contested knowing the plethora of interruptions in the school calendar within the period.

According to him, the consequences of the closure of schools, postponing examinations and sense of insecurity have psychological effects with lasting effects.

Abdullahi however, called on the government to bring the perpetrators to book.

Osinbajo challenges security agencies on national security, defence strategy

Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo has challenged Course 30 participants of the National Defence College (NDC) to be relentlessly innovative in developing national security and defence strategy to address security challenges. Osinbajo made the call at the college's 30th Year Anniversary and Course 30 Graduation Dinner and Award in Abuja. He was represented by the Special Adviser to the President on Economic Matters,

Amb. Adeyemi Dipeolu. The vice-president noted that security was an entire societal responsibility that could only be achieved in unison with a diverse range of state and civil society actors. He urged the military and other security agencies to recognise the regional, continental and international ramifications of the threats facing nations in developing security and defence strategies.

"You must embrace smart ways of managing society in a pervasively digital universe as contemporary technologies have introduced new levels of complexity to an already challenging security environment. "Technological revolution in the present era also avails you of a broad range of tools with which you can protect our vital interests and safeguard our people. "You must be relentlessly innovative in exploiting these options. "Overall you must be sensitive to the needs and demands of the people who are the primary reference of national security as the spear and shield of our nation," he said.

Osinbajo observed that the world had moved from the erstwhile exclusive approach to security management wherein the military and security agencies were thought to be the exclusive custodians of security. He said the whole of society approach to security management had become the primary governing principle of national security governance, noting that the approach was the theme for Course 30. The vice-president also urged international participants to be proud alumni of the college and to maintain the bonds they had made and continue to support Nigeria's efforts at maintaining peace and security.

"I have no doubt that you have come to fully appreciate this activity and security management in furtherance of the whole of society doctrine. "It is clear that you must also embrace the role that women play in contemporary security management and give meaning to it in your future engagements. "In this regard, I am glad that this institution has consistently given female participants equal opportunity to participate in this highly rewarding strategic leadership training. "Our defence cooperation with friendly nations in Africa and the world has been mutually beneficial. "I specially recognise all the foreign dignitaries and international participants here and convey our appreciation for your association with Nigeria and the NDC," he said.

"Insecurity is a lucrative business, everyone, even government benefits from it", says bandit leader

Abu Sanni, a self-confessed bandit kingpin, has said that insecurity has become a business everyone benefits from. Sanni, who says he helped mastermind the abduction of students of Government Girls Secondary School Jangebe, Zamfara, was

interviewed by BBC Africa Eye in a forest in Zamfara. The documentary entitled: “The Bandit warlords of Zamfara,” was aired on July 25. Yusuf Anka, a journalist, went into remote bandit enclaves in the state to speak with the bandits. Sanni told the journalist that the schoolgirls kidnapped on February 27, 2021, were taken by his gang as revenge against the government for sending the military after them. He said his gang demanded N300 million from the government for the release of the schoolgirls but N60 million was paid. “When the rainy season ended, they sent the military after us. We decided to show the government they should not interfere in our problems. We went to Jangebe and took the students. We wanted to get the government angry,” he said. “We demanded N300 million but after negotiations, N60 million was paid for their release.” Sanni said insecurity has become a lucrative business, adding that everyone, including the government, is benefitting from the violent attacks. He said: “Because it has become a business. Everyone wants money. That is why things are deteriorating, from the top to the bottom. “They say when there is insecurity, the government gets money. Everyone is benefitting. We also get money. Though for our money, blood is spilled so it continues.” (BBC Africa Eye)

FG faults IPPIS, GIFMIS, TSA, sets up committee for review

The Nigerian government has admitted it did not follow established standards in the deployment of the Integrated Payroll and Personal Information System (IPPIS), Treasury Single Account (TSA) and the Government Integrated Financial Management System (GIFMIS). Minister of Communication and Digital Economy Isa Pantami, disclosed this recently in Abuja, said the systems failed to comply with section A of the (NITDA) Act 2006. IPPIS, GIFMIS and TSA were deployed in 2006, 2012 and 2015 respectively.” These three systems were not subjected to government certification and IT project clearance as encouraged by law and many other government policies,” Pantami noted.

The Minister then inaugurated a presidential steering committee that would review the systems, identify vulnerabilities which have been exploited to divert public funds and advise government. “This committee will serve as a presidential committee with the mandate of ensuring the review of the strengths of these systems and the challenges or weaknesses. “The committee is to advise the president on how to improve the systems particularly if there are leakages that are being exploited by evil people.

“We must identify where the challenges are if any, and see how these systems can be enhanced technically; so that we will be able to consolidate the gains achieved so far and also improve on them to achieve many more successes,” he said.

It would be recalled that two weeks ago, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), uncovered fresh facts on how the suspended Accountant-General of the Federation Ahmed Idris, compromised these systems to steal N109 billion belonging to the government. Spokesperson of the EFCC Wilson Uwujaren, said Wilson Idris allegedly used the funds in constructing properties like the Gezawa Exchange Limited, Gezawa Integrated Farms, and Kano City Mall. Members of the committee include the EFCC, NITDA, Galaxy Backbone, Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning and Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF). Others are: The Office of the Auditor-General of the Federation, National Salaries, Wages and Income Commission, Bureau of Public Service and Reforms (BPSR) and the Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy.

The Court of appeal has overruled the payment of Pension, Gratuity or Severance Allowance to political office holders

The Court of Appeal has faulted the payment of either severance allowance, pension or gratuity to political office holders and political appointees, insisting that the practice was morally wrong.

A three-man panel of the court, held that it as unjustifiable in the face of the nation's socio-economic reality for some few politicians, who hold office for not more than eight-year, to allocate huge public funds to themselves in the name of pension and severance package while civil servants, who committed most of their active years to the service of the nation are denied their retirement benefits.

The Court of Appeal, Abuja said this in a judgment on an appeal marked: CA/A/810/2017 filed by the Governor of Kogi State and three others. The Court of Appeal, in its lead judgment by Justice Emmanuel Agim, said it was wicked and morally wrong for political office holders and political appointees, who helped themselves to public funds while in office, to claim entitlement to pension and severance allowances.

Justice Agim said: “I must state here that the claimants' claim for payment of severance allowance, because the tenure of their appointment has come to an end, is as unfounded as is morally wrong”

“As I have held that their letters of appointment did not stipulate their entitlement to such payment. They did not produce any law or any document or instrument that entitles

them to such payment.

“The fact that elected public officeholders and political appointees are paid huge amounts of money as monthly salaries and other forms of allowances, while in office, is common knowledge in Nigeria and is not reasonable to open question”

“It is also common knowledge that many of them after an office tenure of between three to eight years become stupendously wealthy, exhibiting mind-blowing opulence and splendor”

“Yet these office holders insist on being paid severance allowance for holding such offices”

“Meanwhile, career civil servants, who have served this country or their states or Local Governments, all their life, can hardly collect their pensions and gratuity when retired”

“They are now being subjected to contributory pension schemes in which they contribute part of their monthly meagre salaries that are always paid in arrears while in service, to be able to earn pension and gratuity upon retirement” “The political appointees and elected public office holders, who do not work as long and as hard as the career civil servants quickly get paid huge severance allowances upon leaving office in addition to the huge wealth they acquired while holding such offices and without having been subjected to any contributory pension schemes”

“It is not morally right to pay an elected public officer or political appointee pension and gratuity or severance allowance for holding such an office for three to eight years as the case may be”

“It cannot be justified in the context of our present social realities it amounts to gross social injustice

PSNAFSA applauds Military fight against terrorists, calls for Nigerians collaboration

Prayer and Support For Nigerian Armed Forces and other Security Agencies, PSNAFSA, a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), has applauded efforts of the Nigeria Armed Forces, the Nigeria Police Force and other security agencies in the ongoing fight against insurgency and oil theft. It is evident that the balance of terror has dramatically and effectively tilted against terrorists-insurgents, as they are being smoked out from their dens and hideouts in a retaliatory recourse and unconventional tactics by the gallant defense and security forces.

Recent onslaughts on terrorists, bandits and economic vandals in the northern part of the country are glaring proof of the tireless efforts and profound recalibration of

strategy, by the chief of Army staff lieutenant General Farouk Yahaya, and the Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal Oladayo Amao, even in the face of limited logistics. Worthy of mention is the recent capture of six of the perpetrators of the Owo Church Massacre in Ondo State by the Military, and the bombardments of bandits enclaves. PSNAFSA deems it imperative to appeal for collaboration from citizens, communities and organisations across the country, with our armed forces and other security agencies, in the fight against insurgency. This organization believes that when patriotic citizens provide useful information to all security agencies, it will boost intelligence as well as fast track efforts towards ensuring that normalcy returns to all parts of the country.

Convener of PSNAFSA, Mrs Mary Abayomi- Fatile, observes that the evil plot by insurgents and bandits is to instill fear in Nigerians and make abnormality a way of life.

She asserts that the renewed vigor against economic saboteurs under the administration of the Chief of Defense Staff, General Lucky Irabor and the Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Awwal Gambo, has yielded great results.

According to her, “It is gladdening to know that the Nigerian Navy's effort to rid the nation's maritime domain of all sorts of criminality has yielded positive results, as it has successfully foiled oil theft, illegal oil bunkering and pipeline vandalisation among other maritime crimes.

It is also on record that for the first time in 17 years, the Gulf of Guinea and the Nigerian waters recorded the lowest piracy drop, in the first nine months of the year 2021, as disclosed by a report by the International Maritime Bureau.

The Navy's milestone achievement in its anti-piracy drive, resulted in delisting of Nigeria from piracy list by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) “Since then, the navy has never turned back in its resolve to stem the tide of maritime crimes, as it recently recovered petroleum products worth over N25 billion since April 2022.

As partners in progress, PSNAFSA will continue to encourage Nigerians from all walks of life to pray for God's protection on our Armed Forces and other security agencies, until the fight against enemies of the state is totally won.

To achieve an all-inclusive participation, we appeal to both the traditional and new media operators to put the interest of the country first, in their reportage, by propagating a common front of peace and stability geared towards maintaining the successes recorded by our armed forces and other security agencies in the ongoing fight.