

Dear Editor,

This cycle of deceit and hypocrisy should stop

As I drove to work this morning, I found the roads dry and empty with few vehicles on the roads, I asked a man I offered a lift why the traffic is that low on a Monday morning, he said people have run out of money as they can no longer fuel their cars, that the economy has many most Nigerians broke, I was sad to see the harsh reality of the economic situation on our streets, I therefore wonder why Tinubu could not at least fix one of our main problems, over my car radio the news was about the numbers of people kidnapped, killed and all of that terrible news, if Tinubu could not solve any of our problems, why did he choose to compound them? most Nigerian homes can't feed, afford medical care, and other basic needs of life, staple food like garri and yam are now beyond the reach of an average Nigerian, just because of insecurity which we all expected Tinubu to at least be able to fix, instead he is busy hiking cost of electricity, petrol and other stuff, while buying brand new jets, and limousine for himself, how will the ordinary man survive, where do we go from here? The lie is now out in the open. The minimum that the Tinubu administration can do is stopping the continuing cycle of deceit and hypocrisy on the fuel subsidy issue. The deceit should stop. We are in the era of transparency and accountability. The word of the government should be its bond. A government can admit that it made a mistake and it has found cause to change its mind. There is nothing wrong in that. It is not enough for President Tinubu to issue an order to NNPC directing it to use royalties and dividends due to the Federal Government to manage fuel prices. What is the exact amount that we are talking about? What are the details? For how long? If there has been a change of policy, President Tinubu should be courageous enough to come before Nigerians and use the same energy and enthusiasm with which he pronounced "fuel subsidy is gone" to APOLOGISE to Nigerians, tell them a mistake has been made, and explain how his administration hopes to resolve the problem. The reason there has been so much turmoil in town is because the people feel betrayed. President Tinubu needs to rebuild public confidence in his administration. He can start by making the government less ostentatious. He wants the people to make sacrifices. The process must begin with him. He needs to reinvent politics. He must lead by example. The nation needs to know the truth. It is normal to make mistakes. It is nobler to admit one's errors and seek to make corrections. In the face of the fuel scarcity in the land, Nigerians are asking: what is happening to the refineries in Port Harcourt, Warri and Kaduna? It does not require divine intelligence to get the refineries working, but what we are confronted with is an endless circus of lies. We are told again and again that the refineries will be completed, but we might as well be waiting for Godot. In August 2023, we were confidently informed that Nigeria would restart its four refineries by the end of 2024, so said Heineken Lokpobiri, the Minister of State for Petroleum. We heard the same thing in 2022. Lokpobiri repeated the lie. The Nigerian government should stop telling



lies! It is irritating. Where is the Warri refinery that was supposed to start operation in the first quarter of 2024? Where is the Port Harcourt refinery that was "technically completed" in December 2023? Dates are set. Deadlines are not met. And we, the people, are supposed to understand that we live in a country where promises are not meant to be kept and leaders can do as they wish, without any explanation.? No. No. No. It is offensive that Nigeria is so blessed with oil and gas resources and all we talk about is crude oil theft, militancy in the Niger Delta and the country's failure to meet production quota. To all intents and purposes, Nigeria is still dependent on oil resources despite argumentations that the country needs to diversify its economy, and invest more in the non-oil sector.

There is the unresolved matter of the Dangote Refinery. This was a project that we all prayed for and hoped for to meet local demands for petroleum products and generate competition and investment. In typical Nigeria fashion, a \$20 billion worth of investment and the prospect of a pathway to economic regeneration has been reduced to petty stories about Dangote's personality and identity, with such questions as why would he, a Kano man, set up such a big project in Yorubaland? Or why would anyone allow an extension of Dangote's monopoly? How much did he contribute to Tinubu's election campaign in 2023? As if that should matter? Somehow, the excitement over the proposed 650,000 barrels of petroleum products per day has been abbreviated by typical Nigerian stories. Some kill joys have even tried to demarket the Dangote project. And then there are others who are saying that Mele Kyari is the problem. Twice on television, I have said clearly that Engr. Kyari is not the problem. In terms of record, he has done much better than his own predecessors. His spokespersons have given us much information about his efforts. I do not intend to be their megaphone, only to add that it is far too simplistic for Nigerians to seek a fall guy for the same problems that could have been easily addressed through long-term visioning. Nigeria waits for you. While you are busy doing your own thing, trying to make an impact, Nigerians have a good habit of waiting till you get to a significant moment and they would pounce on you, to destroy your dream. We must all be careful not to turn this country into a hostile environment for talent, creativity and good citizenship. Tinubu has a duty not only to fix the loopholes, but also to embark on an urgent national project of moral regeneration. There is too much toxicity in this land. I end this piece knowing that the fuel queues are still out there. NNPC has given the excuse of distribution challenges and weather conditions, but can they tell us another story please? Even in countries with the most extreme weather conditions, they have fuel at their filling stations. And how about distribution challenges? A government that is determined to help and serve the people will find the political will to address those challenges whatever their colour or shape. There is no limit to how far a government can go to deceive the people, but there is certainly a limit to the people's anger and frustration. President Tinubu should know this.