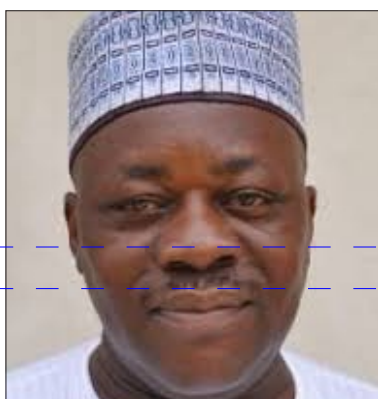


# The Brutality of Bandit Terrorism

*By Jibrin Ibrahim*

This week is yet another terrible one marked by the circulation of a video showing the blood-soaked image of the kidnapped Emir of Sabon Birni in Sokoto State, Isa Bawa, begging for his rescue. The message from the bandit terrorists was clear, they will continue to kidnap torture and kill as they please because the Nigerian State cannot or maybe, will not stop them. The most chilling part of the message is that no one is safe; they can pick any one they want. To prove their point, they killed him and insisted on a ransom as a precondition to release his son. We have all been living in terror for a long time given our knowledge that no one will rescue us when the bandit terrorists pick us up. It is little comfort that our president will always say he will deal with them but do nothing. Sigh. Meanwhile, his people at Sabon Birni yesterday performed a funeral prayer, known as Salat al-Gha'ib, for the murdered emir. The prayer is usually performed in absentia for a Muslim who died where there are no Muslims to pray for them. The prayer was performed after a report that the emir had been killed and buried by his abductors in the bush. The state government has neither confirmed nor denied the report that the emir was killed Wednesday afternoon by the bandits. As Premium Times reported, the state's commissioner for information, Sambo Danchadi, did not respond to multiple phone calls and text messages on Wednesday and Thursday morning for comment on the incident. No statement was issued by government. The police spokesperson in the state, Ahmad Rufa'i, said he was yet to be briefed on the incident and declined further comments. As there is no State to protect us, I guess we will have to continue to suffer as it pleases those terrifying us while those who run our governments will continue to enjoy our resources until the bandits catch up with them. Meanwhile, the bandits continue to commit atrocities all over the country with concentrated actions in Zamfara, Katsina, Niger and Kaduna States.

I worry for this country because for years we have had successive leaderships that have basically abdicated their responsibility to govern and work for the security and welfare of citizens. When the governing class has utter disregard for the people, their brutality to the people is deeper than that of the bandit terrorists we are all complaining about. The Tinubu Administration is clearly worse than the bad Buhari Administration. It is difficult to disagree with the candidate of



the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) in the last election and former vice president of Nigeria, Atiku Abubakar when he said this week that the future of Nigerians is being mortgaged by President Bola Tinubu, his family, and associates. Atiku compares Mr Tinubu's integration of his business interests into Lagos's public enterprises to his efforts at the federal level:

"Just as Alpha Beta, Primero, and others act as Tinubu's proxies in Lagos, managing critical sectors and generating revenue for

him and his family, he has begun to replicate this at the federal level," he said. He expressed astonishment at the operations of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd) and how the government-owned oil company had put its retail arm under the control of OVH, a company in which Oando, led by Wale Tinubu, a relative of the president, owns 49 per cent. As more reports appear, it is clear that this is just the tip of the iceberg as the President and his families are laser focused on privatizing Nigeria's assets. His friends need to draw his attention to the dangers of this pathway at a difficult moment when the majority of Nigerians are hungry and angry at the misery that has befallen them due to bad governance. Commenting on the recent revelation that the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway project is under litigation, Atiku explained that the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), a global network of investigative journalists, reported that the coastal highway project has been taken to court and revealed a close relationship between Tinubu's son, Seyi, and Gilbert Chagoury, who was awarded the contract without competitive bidding. The welfare and security of the population, and not one family, should be the primary focus of government.

There is a deep belief within Nigeria's political class that the acquisition of massive fortunes is a guarantee of remaining in power because everybody is supposed to have a price at which they could be bought. What is not known is that the proceeds of corruption reach only a tiny fraction of Nigerians and that most people are in deep penury and misery. The masses cannot be bought because the political class has never sought to reach them and because the majority is not in the circuit, they have nothing to lose if they revolt. I believe this element of political risk should be a major consideration for Nigeria's political class.