

FG has turned Nigerians into beggars through palliative...Afe babalola

FOUNDER of Afe Babalola University Ado-Ekiti, ABUAD, Aare Afe Babalola, yesterday, took a swipe at the Federal Government over the distribution of palliatives, describing it as an attempt to turn Nigerians to beggars and leading them to poverty. He also threw his weight behind the Patriots' call for a new constitution. Babalola made this known when the Prestige Sisters League came on a thank-you visit to him at the ABUAD campus. Speaking on the recent protest across the country, he said that those protesting against hunger do so because everyone knows there is hunger in the country. He said: "Those who are complaining about hunger are doing so sincerely. They are hungry. A hungry man can go to any length to show his anger. We do not need anybody to tell us about hunger in the country. The protest was genuine and the government should listen to them."

"The duty of government is the welfare of the people. The problem we have now is that people cannot move freely. They have abandoned the farms. People are being killed in their farms and everybody wants to stay where they are safe. It is because the government has failed in this regard that we have hunger. "It is wrong for the government to be sharing garri, beans and rice as palliatives. They are turning the people into beggars. The government that is giving the people rice and beans is leading us to poverty. The government is discouraging people from working, whereas, the government must provide the people enabling environment for people to work and feed themselves. "On the Patriots' call for a new constitution, he said Nigeria does not have to go through any constitutional conference but the parliament should reenact the 1963 constitution. Babalola said: "I read the publication of the Patriots visiting President Tinubu and I am in full agreement with them. We need a new constitution. But I do not agree that we should go through any constitutional conference. "Recently, you are aware that President Bola Tinubu asked us to go back to the old National Anthem; there was no conference for it before it was passed by the National Assembly and assented by the President. The 1963 constitution was the one made by all of us. By the same token, the parliament should bring back the 1963 and reenact it."

Nigeria spent 127 billion on salaries and allowances

Nigeria's refinery woes persist, with the country's facilities struggling to function optimally. A SaharaReporters investigation reveals that despite their inability to refine crude oil or generate revenue, these companies have spent billions on employee compensation. An analysis of the Nigeria National Petroleum Company's

audited financial statements shows that the Kaduna, Port Harcourt, and Warri refinery companies collectively expended N127.326 billion on salaries, wages, and employee benefits between 2020 and 2021. The amount was allocated for salaries and wages in September 2020, despite the fact that all four of Nigeria's refineries had been shut down; sparking questions about how such a significant wage bill was incurred when the refineries were non-operational. Furthermore, in June 2022, the NNPC Chief Executive Officer confirmed that none of Nigeria's refineries were functioning, raising additional concerns about the justification for such high personnel costs.

An examination of financial reports reveals that the Port Harcourt Refinery Company incurred significant expenses on salaries, wages, and employee benefits, totaling N22.547 billion in 2020 and N32.023 billion in 2021. Similarly, the Warri Refinery Company spent N12 billion in 2020 and N14 billion in 2021 on personnel costs. The Kaduna Refinery Company also reported substantial expenses, with N26 billion in 2020 and N20 billion in 2021. Furthermore, the Kaduna Refinery Company provided loans to its employees totaling N2.2 billion between 2020 and 2021, with N1.180 billion recorded in 2020 and N991 million in 2021. Despite repeated promises from the Nigerian government to revitalise the country's refineries, these plans have yet to come to fruition. The latest example is the delayed revival of the Port Harcourt refinery, which has been postponed for a record sixth time, further extending the waiting and fear that it may be another mirage.

Nigeria's inflation rate drops to 33.4%

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has announced that Nigeria's inflation rate decreased to 33.40 per cent in July 2024, 2024. Nigeria's inflation rate reduced from 34.19 per cent recorded in June 2024. The NBS disclosed this via its Consumer Price Index (CPI) report for July 2024 released on August 15, 2024. This marks the first decline in the headline inflation rate since December 2022, when it last dropped to 21.34 per cent. According to the NBS, the inflation rate decreased by 0.8 per cent in July 2024. It said the headline inflation rate in July showed 0.3 per cent points lower than the rate recorded in June 2024. It stated: "On a year-on-year basis, the headline inflation rate was 9.32 per cent points higher compared to the rate recorded in July 2023, which was 24.08 per cent. "This shows that the headline inflation rate (year-on-year basis) increased in July 2024 compared to the same month in the preceding year (i.e., July 2023). "Furthermore, on a month-on-month basis, the headline inflation rate in July 2024 was 2.28 per cent, which was 0.03 per cent lower than the rate recorded in June 2024 (2.31 per cent). "This means that in July 2024, the rate of increase in the average price level was lower than the rate of increase in the average price level in June 2024."

The NBS further disclosed that the food inflation rate in July dropped to 39.53 per cent, compared to 40.87 per cent in June. The NBS said on a year-on-year basis, the July figure was 12.55 per cent points higher compared to the 26.98 per cent inflation rate recorded in July 2023. The bureau revealed that the rise in food inflation on a year-on-year basis was caused by increases in prices of items, including Semovita, Yam Flour (Prepacked), Wheat Flour (Prepacked), Groundnut Oil, Palm Oil, Milo, Bournvita, and Ovaltine, among others. "On a month-on-month basis, the food inflation rate in July 2024 was 2.47 per cent which shows a 0.08 per cent decrease compared to the rate recorded in June 2024 (2.55 per cent)," it said.

Many in government should currently be behind bars – Obasanjo

Former President, Olusegun Obasanjo has said that many leaders across Nigeria and other African nations deserve incarceration or even the death penalty. Speaking recently while hosting six federal lawmakers at the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library in Abeokuta, Obasanjo said; "Our main problem is ourselves. Whether we adopt a single six-year term or two four-year terms, if we persist with the same mentality and approach, nothing will change," Obasanjo said to the lawmakers who had co-sponsored bills advocating for the six-year term and regional rotation of Nigeria's presidency. "The real issue is we. Yes, the system needs rethinking, but the character of people in government must change. With all due respect, many in government should currently be behind bars or on the gallows." Further discussing African politics, Obasanjo emphasized the need for a re-evaluation of liberal democracy to ensure broader inclusion. "For me, it is not just about the system; we may need to rethink our liberal democracy. In Africa, we often speak of a loyal opposition, but what actually happens is that a consensus is reached, leaving no room for genuine opposition; everyone aligns and moves together." he said

In many African languages, the term for opposition translates to 'enemies.' What do you do with loyal enemies? Once you assume power, you claim everything, leaving the opposition in obscurity. This approach is counterproductive. We need to unite to advance society." he added

N700bn paid as bribes in 87m cases in Nigeria in 2023 – ICPC

Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission, ICPC, has disclosed that Nigeria recorded the payment of N700billion in 87 million cases of bribery in 2023. ICPC Chairman, Musa Aliyu, made this revelation at an event organised by Ahmadu Bello University's Faculty of Law. Aliyu, who is a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), added that within the same period, the country's rural areas experienced higher

frequencies of bribery than urban areas. He described corruption as the most significant impediment to Nigeria's development, adding that it erodes trust in public institutions, undermines the rule of law, and stifles economic growth. The ICPC boss noted that corruption is both a legal and social issue which requires a comprehensive approach. Aliyu cited a recent Nigeria Bureau of Statistics survey which ranked corruption fourth among the country's most pressing problems in 2023 after cost of living, insecurity and unemployment.

While expressing optimism in spite of the challenges, he said, "We are making progress. The rate of citizens reporting bribe payments to official authorities increased from 3.6% in 2019 to 8.6% in 2023. This shows growing awareness and willingness to fight corruption. This is a testament to the growing awareness and willingness of Nigerians to fight corruption. "Corruption undermines these rights, breeding inequality and oppression. The ICPC is committed to upholding human rights and promoting social justice by combating corruption and ensuring access to essential services." Aliyu who also cited a 2018 World Bank survey, noted that sexual harassment is a significant issue in tertiary institutions, with approximately 70% of female graduates reporting experiences of harassment." The anti-graft Agency's boss stressed that abuse of office also remained a form of corrupt practice common in many sectors of the Nigerian public service, adding that sexual harassment is a significant issue in Nigerian tertiary institutions, with studies indicating a high prevalence among female students. He said that according to the 2018 World Bank survey, approximately 70 per cent of female graduates from these institutions reported experiencing sexual harassment by classmates or instructors. The ICPC boss described human rights and social justice as the cornerstones of a fair society, ensuring dignity, freedom, and equal opportunities for all. Aliyu, who also spoke on digital transformation and cyber security, noted that the judiciary needs continuous education and training to effectively adjudicate cyber-related cases such as online fraud, sexual extortion, cyber squatting, and unlawful interception of communications.

Protests: Tinubu's govt has adopted propaganda as state policy – Atiku

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, has accused President Bola Tinubu's government of adopting propaganda as a state policy. A statement issued by the Media Aide to the PDP presidential candidate in the 2023 election, Paul Ibe stated inter alia: "In the afternoon of Wednesday and on Day 7 of the #EndBadGovernanceInNigeria protest, the official X handle (formerly known as Twitter) of President Bola Tinubu posted a video clip of the President making an appeal to Nigerians to relax the protest and give his administration more time. "The video went viral on the

social media and it was adjudged to have shown more empathy for the concerns of protesting Nigerians, unlike the shambolic speech by the President on Sunday that will forever be remembered in ignominy. "Curiously, much later in the evening of the same day, presidential spokesman, Bayo Onanuga, made a post on his X handle telling the country that the video clip that was posted on the President's handle, "is not a new video. It's a clip from a broadcast he made last year." What a wawu! "The scenario says a lot about the character of the Tinubu presidency, the proficiency of his media managers, and the attitude that the p r e s i d e n c y a c c o r d s t h e c u r r e n t #EndBadGovernanceInNigeria protest. "For a start, what the Tinubu presidency did with the old video is to pull the wool over the eyes of Nigerians, with a view to distract them. It's a mannerism that is symptomatic of this presidency. "This president and his media managers are a class act in propaganda. "It is indeed shameless that in a time where misinformation and disinformation is being blamed for public outrage in many parts of the world, the Nigerian government is caught red-handed in the act, adopting it as a state policy. "The flip flopping episode that played out in the management of the President's social media handle typifies the Tinubu administration's policy flip flops, and trial-and-error policies. It is for this very reason that the country has been on a tight noose since the beginning of the administration. "Obviously, the president's media team knew they did a poor job in the Sunday broadcast by the president and in trying to make amends, came out to do what they know how to do best: deploy propaganda. "This type of dysfunctional narrative is why Nigerians have lost confidence in the Tinubu administration. It is obvious even to the blind and the deaf that this government is deficient in credibility. "As a matter of urgency, the Nigerian people deserve an unreserved apology from the Tinubu presidency for leading them into a tailspin of misinformation and disinformation and the attendant consequence of bad governance."

Protest: Government's priority should be to eradicate poverty

ActionAid Nigeria has said the priority of government should be to take suffering far away from citizens, insisting that government's policies should tend toward eradicating poverty. The nongovernmental organisation (NGO) lamented that the rate of injustice and poverty in Nigeria was an eyesore, noting that the interplay of these factors had fractured the nation along ethnic diversity with dire consequences of civil unrest, leading to many of social upheavals the citizens are facing today. In an effort to put this issue in perspectives, ActionAid Nigeria has launched its new 10-year Country Strategy Paper (CSP), entitled "Citizens' Action to End Poverty and Injustice 2024-2034." Speaking at the event, the Country Director of ActionAid, Andrew Mamedu highlighted the role government needs to play in making sure that citizens enjoy equal right. He said, "The CSP builds on our

many years of work in Nigeria. It is founded on the lessons learnt in implementing previous CSPs and programming in Nigeria. Each of these strategies reflected the context with an appropriate response within the period it operated. Our first two strategies focused on the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty and our analysis of the roles of stakeholders, including citizens and Government in responding to poverty". He added: @Our third strategy, Take Action: End Poverty recognised the role of business in influencing and/or deepening poverty. Hence, we prioritised pushing for progressive taxation to support the government's drive to generate resources to fund social sectors among other actions. In the last CSP, Social Justice to End Poverty, we took our first step in working more with allies and social movements to advance social justice and poverty eradication. We have learnt that poverty is multifaceted and cannot be compartmentalized and requires a more nuanced approach. "In this CSP, we are deepening our engagement and focusing on responding to multidimensional poverty, seeing how poverty and injustice are weaponised against the poor and e x c l u d e d . As a learning organisation, we strongly believe that the current Nigerian context would require us to innovate through a social movement mindset in acting to address the multidimensional poverty that we face as a country. " Founding Executive Director, African Centre for Leadership, Strategy & Development (Centre LSD), Abuja, Dr. Otiye Igbuzor, in his keynote address said: "The country is facing huge political, economic and social challenges. Scholars have identified the challenges to include among other things poor leadership; bad followership; poor strategy for development; lack of capable and effective state and bureaucracy; lack of focus on sectors that will improve the condition of living of citizens such as education, health, agriculture and the building of infrastructure; corruption; undeveloped, irresponsible and parasitic private sector; weak civil society; emasculated labour and student movement and poor execution of policies and programmes." He noted that: "In spite of these challenges, the ruling elite have continued with business-as-usual mode. The Federal Government in 2023 inaugurated the largest cabinet in Nigeria's history. They used N21 billion to renovate the Vice-President's house. The length of convoy, lifestyle and public posturing of the ruling elite does not reflect the reality of majority of N i g e r i a n s . "Only a few days ago, there was a national protest against bad governance. Despite the best efforts of progressive forces in Nigeria, poverty and injustice remains a huge challenge. This is why there is the need to revisit the path to poverty eradication and social justice." The Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Abubakar Atiku Bagudu said in his speech that,"In our Constitution fundamental objectives and

Directive Principles of state which contain the economic, political and social objective, stated in our Constitution are responsibility of government and that makes our ministry the agency that is responsible for advising how those fundamental objectives can be achieved and to mobilize other stakeholders and groups. Poverty, regrettably, is still a major factor.

Stop Your Anti-Masses Policy – Afenifere Tells Tinubu

The pan-Yoruba socio-cultural and political group, Afenifere, has knocked President Bola Tinubu for failing to address the real issues of the nationwide #EndBadGovernance and hunger protest. Prince Justice Fakiyesi, the National Publicity Secretary of the Afenifere group loyal to the Acting Leader Chief Ayo Adebajo, told reporters that it is unfortunate President Tinubu remains adamant by sticking to anti-masses policies including the subsidy removal without appropriate template for cushioning its devastating effects. Pointedly criticizing the President's speech as not tackling the evident hunger problem in the country, Prince Fakiyesi said; "We never believed that just calling for dialogue would change anything. He has never changed.

"His neo-liberal economy is the problem – the removal of fuel subsidy and the floating of the naira and he's bent on continuing it and he does not feel any remorse on how he wants to change but really I don't think he will change. "It is unfortunate because we have seen so many countries where these neo-liberal economic policies have not worked. "I think he was pushed to read the speech because it was not a matter of dialogue or him addressing people about the exact policy that brought hunger and since he is not willing to reverse or accept responsibility, because he more or less said it was politically motivated.

"When he started and he said specifically that subsidy is dead, he said you can protest as much as you like. He said that. He knew that his policies were going to bring protest. At his age he knows that there have been all sorts of protests against subsidy removal." Further maintaining that it was disingenuous for President Tinubu to tag the protest as politically motivated, the Afenifere spokesperson questioned; "How could the President make such remarks when he also called for protest under the administration of Goodluck Jonathan because of the same issues being raised by the #EndBadGovernance protesters. "It is the same thing that happened under former President Goodluck Jonathan and he (Tinubu) called for a revolution or protest and when he is facing the same thing and even worse, he is blaming other people. "It is time for him to take responsibility for all his anti-people policies and work hard on addressing the biting hardship and hunger Nigerians are currently facing."

In her reaction, another chieftain of Afenifere and former Deputy Governor of Lagos State, Chief Kofoworola Bucknor Akerele, expressed huge disappointment in the President's nationwide broadcast. According to her, the speech failed woefully in many aspects as it did not address crucial issues of the protest, especially insecurity which has made it difficult for farmers to go to their farms and make food available in abundance to the citizenry.

Thousands of Dollars flow out of Nigeria every hour – INTERPOL

The International Police Organisation (INTERPOL) has revealed that "hundreds of thousands of dollars" are being laundered out of Nigeria every hour, reaching other African countries and locations worldwide. INTERPOL Vice President for Africa, Garba Baba Umar, made this disclosure at the EFCC Academy in Abuja while inaugurating a four-day workshop for Nigerian law enforcement agencies. He emphasized the monstrous scale of money laundering across Africa and the globe, calling for enhanced collaboration among security agencies to combat it. To tackle the scourge of money laundering and illicit financial flows, Umar announced the launch of "Silver Notices Against Money Laundering." This initiative aims to make it significantly more challenging for criminals to launder illicit funds worldwide, especially within Africa. "Evidence has shown that every hour, hundreds of thousands of dollars are flowing out of Nigeria to the region and across the world, laundered before it reaches the pockets of criminals to enjoy the profits of their crimes, while the hardworking and honest Nigerians pay the price of crime," Umar stated. The workshop, themed "Strengthening Capacity and Coordination against Financial Crimes," aims to reassess current strategies and reaffirm the commitment to providing security. Umar stressed the importance of regular training for law enforcement to stay ahead of transnational financial crimes. The Executive Chairman of the EFCC, Ola Olukoyede, represented by Francis Usani, Director of Fraud Risk Assessment and Control, highlighted the necessity of collaboration in fighting corruption. Olukoyede emphasized that the complex nature of global corruption can only be addressed through the collective efforts of all stakeholders. Japanese Ambassador to Nigeria, Kazuyoshi Matsunaga, praised the workshop as a crucial joint initiative between Japan and Nigeria to combat financial crimes. He stressed the importance of international cooperation in addressing financial crimes that transcend borders. The Director-General of the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), Hafsat Bakare, underscored the significance of financial intelligence and analysis techniques in tackling economic crimes. She noted the interconnected nature of the criminal justice system and the threats posed by organized cybercrimes