

Listen to the Cry of Nigerians, stop beating them with 'Koboko', Sultan pleads with FG, Governors.

The Sultan of Sokoto, Alh. Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar III, has called on the President Bola Tinubu-led federal government, all the 36 State governors, and other political leaders in the country to listen to the cries of Nigerians. Sultan specifically said instead of beating Nigerians with “koboko” when they air their views or cry about the situation in the country, they should be looked at with empathy and reassured that things would be fine. Alh. Muhammadu, who spoke in Abuja, during NASFAT History Book Launching to mark 30th anniversary of the organization, also called on the leaders to make justice a priority rather than entrenching injustice. Daily Trust reports that Sultan's remark came on the heels of growing standard of living in the country, with many Nigerians decrying current inflation of basic needs occasioned by subsidy removal, floating of Naira, among other policies. Speaking at the event, the prominent religious leader bemoaned lack of quality education among youths in the country, while calling on Nigerians to always pray for their leaders instead of cursing them. “I call on our leaders to look at all of us with that sympathy of father and child. Whatever problems you are having, whatever cries you are hearing, don't carry koboko and wipe people. Carry some soft hands and touch somebody and say look, things will be okay,” he said. He also stressed that Nigeria cannot endure injustice if it is to survive, and that leaders at all levels must prioritize justice and fairness in all their dealings, while urging Nigerians to turn to God. Sultan added, “Justice is the foundation of any society. As Sheikh Abdulrauf said, a nation can endure with unbelief, but it cannot endure with injustice. So let's face justice in whatever we do. “Our leaders, our followers, all need to be just in whatever we do. And I believe, conscience is an open wound, only truth can heal it. Conscience is an open wound, only truth can heal it. “Let's tell ourselves the whole truth in whatever we do, how we do things. And let's believe in almighty Allah as the owner of heaven and earth, as owner of everything and all of us, who brought us into this world to worship him. “So, keep on doing the good work, and leave the rest to almighty Allah to bless all of us, as Muslims, as non-Muslims in this great country. Let's pray for our leaders' every time. “From Mr. President, to all the governors, to all the local men chairman, to all our leaders at all levels. We need to pray for our leaders to do right, to do just. If you pray for your leader, he does good things, you enjoy. “If you are lying to his whims and caprices, he does bad things, you will suffer. So let's all just pray for our leaders. I want to say this, every time I have an opportunity like this, I want to say please pray for our leaders, for good health, for direction, and for that steadfastness of knowing that you as a leader, you will account for whatever you

have done on earth to the almighty Allah. “People say yes, times are tough, yes. But when times are tough, tough people overcome such tough times. Let's believe whatever almighty Allah bless on us is his own will, his own wish, and we will overcome this. “And I believe 100% almighty Allah will bring ease to all of us in this great country and beyond. Let's go back to him and him alone. Only him can give. Only him takes.”

Earlier in his welcome address, the President of NASFAT, Alh. Ayodeji Abdulrauf, commended Sultan, and the Comptroller-General of Nigerians Customs Services, Adewale Adeniyi, for taking time, out of their busy schedule to attend the programme in person. Alh. Abdulrauf said the book was more than just pages bound together, adding that it was a living testimony to the vision, sacrifice, resilience, and unwavering faith of those who laid the foundation of NASFAT 30 years ago (5th March, 1995). He added, “It is a written reflection of our journey from humble prayer group meetings in Lagos, to a global faith-based organization impacting lives across continents. “NASFAT symbolizes positive impact of a faith-based organization helping the society in promoting social welfare, education, healthcare, and moral. This book is a valuable resource for understanding of our past and a tool for inspiring future generations. “As we celebrate our 30th Anniversary this year, this publication is a gift to posterity. It tells our story with candour and clarity how young Muslim professionals, inspired by the need for spiritual connection and community building, came together to create a movement that would redefine Islamic propagation in Nigeria and beyond with over 360 locations across the globe.”

Consortium set to construct 60 billion dollars' worth 4,000km high Speed Rail in Nigeria

The Federal Government, De-Sadal Nigeria Limited, and China Liancai Petroleum Investment Holdings Limited are set to commence the construction of a \$60 bn gas and 4,000-kilometre high-speed rail project in Nigeria. This was disclosed when the consortium presented proof of funds to the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Senator George Akume, alongside the Ministers of Transportation, Sa'idu Alkali and State for Petroleum Resources (Gas), Ekperikpe Ekpo, among others, in Abuja. Chief Executive Officer of De-Sadal Nigeria Limited, Samuel Uko, who spoke on behalf of the consortium, said the first phase of the project would cover four major cities in Nigeria, which are Lagos, Abuja, Kano, and Port Harcourt. “Today, with our partners, I have just presented the official approval form for the project. The fund is coming from the Asian Development Investment Bank. And it is to cover the first phase of the project that cuts across four major cities in Nigeria. “The rail line is from Lagos to

Abuja, to Kano, and from Abuja to Port Harcourt. So this is a very great work that the government have done. The federal government of Nigeria, through the ICRC, approved the outline business case. And the next step now was for us to submit the approval form to the government, which we have just done. So I believe in the shortest possible time, Nigeria will start enjoying a high-speed rail in Nigeria.” While speaking on the amount involved, he said a total of \$60bn had been approved for the project. “Today, \$60 billion approval fund has just been submitted to the government through our financial and technical partners. The first phase of the project is \$55 billion. So the fund is ready, and the country is ready to move forward with this project,” he added. On the timeline for the completion of the project when started, Uko said, “Well, the 1,600 kilometres that covers the four major cities of the country will take us 36 months to build. But we won't wait until the 36th month. For instance, from Lagos to Lokoja, we will cut across about six states. But when we get to the second, third state, the people from the first two states will start enjoying the speed train. He explained that the project would also involve gas development to meet the power needs of the rail network. “The raw material for power is gas. So we have to develop the gas aspect to be able to access more gas to power the high-speed rail project,” he said. Speaking, the SGF said the submitted proof of funds would undergo scrutiny. “We want to establish the real amount of money that is available. We don't doubt them, but that is the normal procedure that the government takes when huge sums of money are involved in such transactions. “This is a country that is business friendly especially under the administration of President Bola Tinubu,” he stated. Minister of Transportation, Sa'idu Alkali, said the project aligns with the ministry's mandate to provide safe, secure, and affordable transportation. He said, “We have submitted the outline business case to ICRC. They have approved it. This is a step towards preparing the full business case to be submitted to ICRC before we take it to the Federal Executive Council,” he said. Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Gas), Ekperekpe Ekpo, assured investors of adequate gas supply. “It has been proven that we have 210 trillion cubic feet of gas that need to be tapped. In the deep sea, we have over 600 trillion cubic feet. So I can assure the investors they will not be lacking in terms of gas,” he said.

Nigerian Politicians now steal in advance by declaring properties they are yet to acquire before assuming office -EFCC BOSS

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has stated that politicians have devised a new means to perpetuate corruption and evade anti-graft agencies by declaring assets they are yet to acquire

before assuming office. Speaking during the launch of Virtual Tool on the Code of Conduct for Public Officers in Abuja, the Chairman of the EFCC, Ola Olukoyede, said this is a case of anticipatory looting of government funds by government appointees. The event was organized by the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) and Technical Unit on Governance and Anti-Corruption Reforms (TUGAR). Olukoyede said during investigation, it was observed the person of interest used a different house number when filing his declaration form which was not the same with the real one with the view of building while in office. “There was an investigation we carried out, and we discovered something not too strange, but proves the ingenuity and the criminally smart way that some of our politically exposed persons carried out some of the nefarious activities we investigated them for. “There was a matter we investigated. I told my guys, just get the CCB form and look at it. There's something I'm not comfortable with in this report. So they got the CCB form. We looked at it. We discovered one of the very big properties valued well over N3bn the person declared in the CCB form. We saw that the address that was in the CCB form was different from the one that the person put down, from the particular address where that particular property was located. So I felt something was amiss.” “So, we decided to dig further, carried out more interrogation, and we discovered that actually the person declared the property where the property was not in existence. After the person won an election, I won't mention, but you should be able to decipher, before he was sworn in, he got the asset declaration form and put a particular number: No 39, so and so Street, a big mansion owned by him, bequeathed to him by whatever. And by the time we investigated, we discovered the asset was on number 44. “He declared 39, but the asset is actually the buildings on number 44. So while we were asking questions, eventually we discovered what we call anticipatory declaration of assets. And that is the smart way that some of these leaders have resorted to now. “Now, they declare what they intend to acquire by the time they are in the office before they are sworn in to the office. It is terrible. We saw that and we felt, no, this is pretty bad.

“Unfortunately, for him, he was so devilishly smart that he had already registered the property that he did own at the time he declared it in the land registry. He designed the mansion that he wanted to build there. So in other words, before he was sworn in, he had started thinking about the money to steal and what to do with the money. “So, he designed the mansion that he actually wants to acquire by the time he gets to the office. So we felt this is a bit odd and we should begin to look into this.” He urged the CCB to be watchful of such declarations by politicians. Earlier, the Head of Service of the Federation, Didi Esther Walson-Jack, said the tool was launched to promote ethical standards in the civil service and curb corruption.

Nigeria's Government, Politics taken over by 'Criminals, Touts' – Says Femi Falana

...Bemoans mis-governance, needless spending by public office holders

Maverick human rights and Constitutional lawyer, Mr. Femi Falana, SAN, has declared that Nigeria's politics has fallen into the hands of "criminals and touts" who are indifferent to the country's economic prosperity and the welfare of the people. This was as he castigated Nigeria's political leaders over their 'misgovernance, reckless and needless spending' without consideration for the people they claim to be serving. Falana, who stated these as a panelist at the 2025 National Conference of Egbe Amofin Oodua, held in Abeokuta, pointedly said that the criminals and touts in government are now less concerned about investing in the economic prosperity of the country and the well-being of the citizens. Speaking on the theme of the conference; "Regional Justice, Security and Sustainable Development", Falana while comparing today's political leadership with that of the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Falana noted the clear departure from intellectual and people-driven politics to an era dominated by "criminals and touts."

He specifically castigated the various Southwest governors, whom he accused of presiding over bad governance, infrastructural collapse, and failure to address widespread poverty. In the words of Falana; "During the days of late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, politics was in the hands of the intellectuals. But today, politics is in the hands of criminals and touts who are less concerned about investing in the economic prosperity of the country and the well-being of the citizens "The governor of Oyo State, who comes to work from his house, now wants to rehabilitate the Government House with N63bn — an amount that is enough to provide good roads and electricity for the state. "The Lagos State Government spent ₦45 billion on utility vehicles during the first term of the House of Assembly and a planned additional ₦20 billion for the same purpose. "We are always quick to shout about the misappropriation and reckless spending of public funds in Abuja, but in Lagos... the people are wallowing in poverty," he said. Citing the example of the recent flood crisis in Ikorodu, Lagos, which left several communities submerged, Falana noted the absence of government intervention, stressing that in saner climes, relief would have been provided by helicopters and emergency agencies. Falana particularly decried what he described as "the sorry state of education" in the Southwest geopolitical zone, emphasizing that no state is currently up to date in accessing the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) funds — despite Nigeria having over 18.3 million out-of-school children, including a significant number from the Southwest. He further said;

"Our education is in bad shape. Today, the roads in the Southwest are terrible. Infrastructural, we are not there. Unfortunately, when they want to flag off roads that they will not even complete, you will see them making so much noise, doing ceremony. There is need for a rethink".

Northern Lawmakers Divided Over Tinubu's 2027 Re-election Bid-

Former federal lawmakers from northern Nigeria are divided over President Bola Tinubu's 2027 re-election bid, following an endorsement by the Northern Caucus Forum of the 9th National Assembly. The caucus, in a communiqué at the end of a dialogue session, convened by the Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila, threw its weight behind Tinubu's re-election bid, describing him as a national leader with a demonstrated commitment to equitable development across all regions of Nigeria. Our reporter gathered that the dialogue session was part of the ongoing nationwide consultations by the forum aimed at promoting the second-term bid of President Tinubu, whose first tenure comes to an end on May 29, 2027. During the meeting, Gbajabiamila, a former Speaker of the House of Representatives, urged the forum to queue behind Tinubu's administration and second-term ambition, stressing that the former Lagos State governor remained the best choice to steer the country on the path of peace and prosperity. "President Tinubu is not just a southern leader, he is a national leader who has carried every region along. From critical infrastructure to policy reforms, the North is benefiting from a government that believes in equity and shared prosperity," Gbajabiamila said. Expressing their endorsement of a southern Presidency and Tinubu's second-term bid, the caucus in a communiqué, signed by the Coordinator of the Forum, Rufai Chanchangi, a member of the 8th House of Representatives, praised Tinubu's performance and called for political stability through continuity. "We believe in equity, fairness, and political stability. It is in the best interest of the North and of Nigeria as a whole that the South completes its turn in the power rotation. We, therefore, endorse the continuation of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's leadership beyond 2027," the communiqué stated. In his contribution, the Chairman of the National Forum of Former Legislators, Nnanna Igbokwe, commended the Northern Caucus for what he described as a bold and patriotic stand.

"This resolution by the Northern Caucus is a significant statement of statesmanship. It shows leadership that transcends personal or regional interest. I am confident that more zones will follow this example in the spirit of unity and continuity," Igbokwe said.

However, the endorsement has been rejected by another

group of former northern ex-legislators, who described the meeting and its outcome as politically motivated and unrepresentative of the region's true sentiment. In a statement titled "We Can't All Be Commodified," the opposing ex-lawmakers, under the aegis of Concerned Former Members of the House of Representatives, Northern Nigeria, said the meeting was a staged political show with no mandate to speak for all northern ex-lawmakers. The statement was jointly signed by Zakari Mohammed, Aminu Shagari, Tom Zakari, and Mohammed Musa Soba. Confirming the statement to Sunday PUNCH on Saturday, Mohammed said the Chanchangi group was deceived into endorsing Tinubu for a second term. "We categorically state that this group does not speak for all former northern legislators, and the positions outlined in their communiqué are neither representative nor reflective of the current sentiments across northern Nigeria. At best, this forum is a political front posing as a neutral body, and should have boldly declared themselves supporters of Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, the Chief of Staff to President Bola Tinubu. "While they indulge in coordinated praise and political posturing, the true state of northern Nigeria is one of pain, poverty, and peril. Under the current administration, poverty has intensified, leaving millions of northern families in worsening economic hardship," the statement read. The group also criticized Tinubu administration's handling of insecurity, poverty, and youth unemployment in the region, listing states like Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina, Borno, and Benue as hotspots of continued violence and neglect.

"While they indulge in coordinated praise and political posturing, the true state of northern Nigeria is one of pain, poverty, and peril," the rebuttal stated, describing the endorsement as a "hatchet job" aimed at securing patronage at the expense of the region's suffering. They further rejected any leadership claims by Chanchangi, labelling his actions self-serving and lacking legitimacy. "We wish to clearly disassociate ourselves from Hon. Rufai Chanchangi and his co-travellers who signed the communiqué in question. They are not our spokesmen, and do not have the moral or constitutional mandate to speak on behalf of all former northern legislators. If the charade they staged in Kaduna—under the guise of a foundation associated with the revered late Sardauna of Sokoto—is their basis for legitimacy, then let it be known that such fraudulent appropriation of legacy and symbolism will never stand. "This communiqué is nothing but a classic hatchet job, a desperate effort by a few to sanitise the failings of the present administration for personal favours, while the broader northern population bleeds silently. "Let it be known: we will not be co-opted into political theatre while our people suffer. We refuse to endorse a failing system that continues to deepen the wounds of the North and the nation as a whole. "The North deserves honesty, development, and bold leadership—not choreographed communiqués masking hunger and insecurity," the statement added. The split in the ranks of the northern ex-lawmakers comes days after northern leaders gathered in

Kaduna recently to assess the performance of President Tinubu's administration two years after assuming office. The meeting, held at the Arewa House, had the theme: "Assessing electoral promises: fostering government-citizens' engagement for national unity." The meeting, which drew participants from across the 19 northern states and the Federal Capital Territory, laid bare deep divisions within the region over claims of marginalization and the performance of the Federal Government. While some stakeholders lauded Tinubu's developmental strides and appointments in the North, others voiced strong concerns over what they described as growing neglect, insecurity, and economic exclusion under his watch.

The Thursday meeting was believed to be another strategy by the Presidency to neutralize the perceived resentment of many northerners against Tinubu and wither the strength of opposition in the region. A section of the northern leaders, including former Kano and Jigawa State governors, Rabiu Kwankwaso and Sule Lamido, respectively, believed that the North had received less attention from Tinubu's administration. Kwankwaso, a few days ago at a stakeholders' dialogue on the 2025 constitutional amendment in Kano, accused Tinubu's administration of favouring the South at the expense of the North — an allegation the Presidency swiftly countered.

It is also on record that the newly formed African Democratic Congress-led coalition of opposition leaders is populated with northern political bigwigs, including former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, ex-Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Babachir Lawal, and former Kaduna State governor, Nasir El-Rufai.

Appeal court rules FRSC lacks power to seize drivers' license, vehicles

The court of appeal in Owerri, Imo state, has ruled that the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) lacks the power to seize a driver's license, vehicle or any related documents without a valid court order. A three-member panel of the appellate court gave the judgement while ruling on appeal number CA/OW/199/2022 filed by the FRSC, the corps marshal, and an officer identified by uniform number COSS 35. The appeal was against the judgement of the Abia state high court, which held that the seizure of a citizen's vehicle and driver's license by FRSC officials was unlawful and a breach of fundamental rights. The suit was instituted by Emmanuel Ugochukwu, a medical doctor, who said he was accosted by FRSC officers in Umuahia, Abia state, during the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020. Ugochukwu said he was driving on Bende Road on a Saturday designated for essential workers by then governor, Okezie Ikpeazu. He told the court that although his vehicle and documents were in order, the officials asked him for a bribe. After he declined, citing a lack of cash, the officers accused him of traffic

offences, ransacked his car, and seized his driver's license. "From a casual 'find me something', I had suddenly become a traffic offender," Ugochukwu said. "They came up with a cooked-up charge — 'worn-out tyre or no spare tyre.' It was laughable." On March 15, 2022, A.I. Nwabuogu, judge of the Abia state high court, ruled in Ugochukwu's favour and awarded ₦30 million in damages for the violation of his rights. The FRSC appealed the decision, but in its judgment delivered on June 27, the appeal court affirmed the lower court's verdict, holding that the agency acted unlawfully. However, the appellate court panel comprising Wambai Amina, Abubakar Lawal, and Ntong Ntong reduced the compensation from ₦30 million to ₦10 million. "Issues 1 and 2 having been resolved against the appellants, the decision of the lower court adjudging the appellants as having violated the fundamental human rights of the respondent is affirmed," the court held. "The sum of ₦30,000,000 awarded as general and exemplary damages is reduced to ₦10,000,000 only." In January, a federal high court in Lagos restrained the FRSC from impounding vehicles with faded number plates. In the judgement, Akintayo Aluko, the presiding judge, also restricted the FRSC from imposing fines or punishing drivers for driving with a faded number plate.

House of Reps indicts 31 MDAs, orders recovery of over ₦103bn, \$950,000

The House of Representatives has indicted 31 federal Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) over financial infractions involving more than ₦103.8 billion and \$950,912, calling on anti-corruption agencies to ensure full recovery of the misappropriated funds. This development followed a motion presented by Rep. Bamidele Salam, based on the findings of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), which reviewed the Auditor-General's annual reports for the 2019 and 2020 fiscal years. The reports exposed widespread violations, including unauthorized expenditures, unremitted revenues, procurement breaches, and weak internal controls in several government agencies. The House adopted the committee's recommendations, directing the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) to take immediate steps to recover the funds and ensure accountability. The investigations revealed that various MDAs engaged in unauthorized spending, failed to remit taxes and internally generated revenue, and mismanaged public resources. Some agencies were found to have issued questionable contracts, violated procurement laws, and failed to comply with financial regulations. Others retained official vehicles unlawfully, spent without appropriate approvals, or disbursed funds without documentation. In addition to calling for recovery of the funds, the House emphasized the need for institutional reforms to strengthen financial discipline in the public sector. Lawmakers urged that agency heads be empowered to appoint external auditors in the absence of governing boards, recommending a review of existing financial regulations or issuance of a directive by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF). Presiding

over the session, Deputy Speaker Rt. Hon. Benjamin Kalu praised the PAC Chairman and members for their diligent and meticulous work. He reiterated the House's resolve to uphold transparency, enforce accountability, and protect public resources from mismanagement and corruption. However, a lot of Nigerians are skeptical about this outburst by the Members of the National Assembly while arguing that the Lawmakers are collaborators in this game. According to a human right lawyer Bar. Esomonu Patrick "These guys only make noise when they are shortchanged and could not get their own share or proceeds of the corruption. Once they are settled they will keep quiet. It is about their personal and not patriotic interest."

NNPC remits N6.96tn to Federation in 5 months, declares N905bn profit for June

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd.) says it has remitted N6.96 trillion to the Federation Account within the first five months of 2025. The NNPC Monthly Report Summary for June, released, revealed that it posted a Profit After Tax (PAT) of N905 billion for June 2025, marking a decline from the N1.054 trillion reported in May. In spite of the drop in monthly profit, it confirmed a total statutory remittance of N6.961 trillion to the federation account from January to May 2025, up from N5.583 trillion recorded between January and April of the same year. It indicated a steady rebound in upstream activities, with daily crude oil and condensate production rising to 1.68 million barrels per day (bpd), the highest since January. It showed that the NNPC's revenue in June stood at N4.571 trillion, down from N6.008 trillion in May, reflecting fluctuations in the global oil market. "Crude oil and condensate production increased slightly, rising from 1.629 million bpd in May to 1.68 million bpd in June. "Natural gas production also rose to 7.581 billion standard cubic feet per day (scf/d) in June, up from 7.352 billion scf/d in May, indicating a steady recovery in output," the report indicated. According to the report, fuel availability improved as well, with petrol availability at NNPC retail stations increasing to 71 per cent in June from 62 per cent in May. It further revealed that the completion of critical gas infrastructure projects showed progress: The Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) pipeline moved to 83 per cent completion from 81 per cent, while the OB3 pipeline remained at 96 per cent completion. "Upstream pipeline availability slightly dipped from 98 per cent in May to 97 per cent in June," it added. The report also highlighted ongoing strategic and technical efforts, including the successful crossing of the AKK River Niger segment, which has significantly de-risked pipeline completion. It disclosed that a technical review of the OB3 River Niger crossing has begun to apply insights gained from AKK's progress. The reviews of the Port Harcourt, Warri, and Kaduna refineries remain ongoing. On its Corporate Social Responsibility activities, it stated that it successfully conducted a Financial Literacy Programme in June for over 67,000 NYSC members across Nigeria, bringing the total trained under the programme to 870,383. It said all production, sales and financial figures were provisional and subject to reconciliation with relevant stakeholders. According to the report, this performance highlights NNPC Ltd.'s continued role as a crucial revenue contributor to the Nigerian government amid fiscal pressures and ongoing economic reforms.

Nigeria in bondage, political leaders' sectional, Citizens need rescue -Obasanjo

Nigeria's former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, has described the country as currently being in bondage. Obasanjo, however, predicted that Nigeria would bounce back once the country has a leader that is "a true Nigerian" who does not promote sectional interest. Chief Obasanjo made this known on last month, when the Southern leadership of the opposition New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) paid him a courtesy visit in Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital. The leadership that visited him included Prince Nweze Onu, National Deputy Chairman (South); Prince Ademola Ayoade, National Vice Chairman (South-West); Ambassador Olufemi Ajadi Oguntoyinbo, Ogun State NNPP 2023 gubernatorial candidate; Alhaja Shakirat Arowolo, Ogun State Secretary; Ronnie Dikko-Killa, Lagos State NNPP chairperson; Lady Chinyere Ofokansi, South-East Women Leader; and Mrs. Erelu Tosin, Sole South-West Women Leader. Others were Mrs. Oluwakemi Kayode; Mrs. Dasola Adebayo; Oluyinka Folahan; Comrade Malik Sannie; South-West Youth Leader, Teluwo Kehinde; 2023 Ogun Central Senatorial candidate, Kilamuwaye Badmus; NNPP South-West spokesman, Olagbenro Bababowale; Ibrahim Shuaib, South-West Treasurer; and Ladipo Johnson, National Publicity Secretary. Obasanjo said: "Let's continue watching the situation. We are in bondage and we should pray that God should free us from the bondage." The former President, who said he does not belong to any political party, insisted that Nigeria was his political party and that he was more concerned about improving the present state of the country. He said Nigerians needed to be standing "so that they can have the opportunity to see the challenges better, rather than be on seat, watching what is going on in the country," adding "if you don't stand up, the country may end up in bad hands." He said Nigeria needed to look at the problems of insecurity, bad economy and shun tribalism. He added that the country needed a true Nigerian as President. "What we have been having are sectional leaders like Fulani Nigeria President, Hausa Nigeria President, Yoruba Nigeria President," he said. He added: "Until we have a true 'Nigerian Nigeria leader,' the problems plaguing the country will persist. "We have few true Nigerians as politicians. Most of the politicians are concerned about themselves. "Until we have a true Nigerian leader, our problems will remain unsolved. What we are having now are Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa Nigerian and they are only protecting the interests of their tribes." Obasanjo said Nigeria was the leader of the Black Africa, but added that sadly the country has been a disappointment. "Nigeria, as the leader of the Black African nations, has disappointed Africa and even the world," he noted. The former President said Nigeria had not been playing its leadership role and, thus, had been a disappointment to Africa and the nations of the world. Speaking shortly after the visit, Ambassador Oguntoyinbo said political process was a game of interest and every politician had one motive or the other for joining politics. "It is either you want to develop Nigeria or not. You must have one intention. It is either you want to contribute to the development of our nation or you are not ready. "To say the fact, if we are going to look at the atmosphere of the political system we are in now, you would know that the situation is not good. We need to be open to ourselves."

Senator Dickson slams Nigeria's political class, says threat to democracy

Senator Seriake Dickson, representing Bayelsa West in the National Assembly, has accused the Nigerian political class of committing political suicide by undermining the country's democratic institutions and processes. He spoke on the theme "Safeguarding Nigeria's Democracy Through Unity and Resolve," in Abuja on Monday, at a workshop organised by Nigeria Civil Society's Alliance for Democratic Change, NCSADC. Senator Dickson asserted that the actions of the political class had not only weakened the nation's democratic institutions but also pushed the country further into crisis. "The Nigerian political class has killed this country, and you guys (civil society) should not let it happen. It is killing Nigeria; it is making this country look small," he said. He noted that Nigeria's failed state status was perpetuated by politicians who prioritized personal interests over national development. According to him, these actions of the political class erode trust in democratic institutions, threatening the stability and legitimacy of the system.

Dickson decried the situation when Nigerian politicians frequently decamped from their parties, abandoning the mandates under which they were elected. He said that such actions undermined the democratic process and indicated a lack of faith in the system. He noted that politicians joined the ruling party not because of ideology or policy but to access state resources and manipulate the electoral process. Senator Dickson emphasized that the constitution was clear on the consequences of decamping, adding that politicians often ignored these provisions, highlighting a disregard for the rule of law. The senator also noted that politicians had little respect for the judiciary, often attempting to influence judgements and undermine the impartiality of the courts. He expressed frustration with the subversion of institutions like the judiciary and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), accusing politicians of manipulating them to rig elections and silence opposition. "Our own democracy is the wishes and caprices of the president or a governor." They don't even care how the world looks at Nigeria," he said, lamenting what he described as a deep disregard for constitutionalism and democratic norms." He described the judiciary as "helpless" and often reduced to reading body language" instead of interpreting the law.

According to him, "court rulings have become predictable tools in the hands of those who control power." Senator Dickson also noted that politicians sought to control INEC to compromise election results, undermining the integrity of the electoral process. He added that politicians exploit security agencies to rig elections, intimidate opponents, and silence critics, further eroding trust in democratic institutions. The civil society movement has a critical role to play in holding politicians accountable and promoting democratic values, he said. He opined that strengthening democratic institutions, promoting free and fair elections, and ensuring accountability were essential to Nigeria's democratic development. The workshop brought together civil society leaders, activists, and academics from across the country, all united by a shared concern over Nigeria's shrinking democratic space.