

Nigeria Press Review

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Welcome to Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Nigeria Weekly Press Review

The weekly press review seeks to explore and keep you informed on selected issues relating to politics, business and economy, insecurity, infrastructure and development, health related issues, new trends and matters bothering on COVID-19 and the situation in Nigeria.

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Nigeria Enters Second Recession within Five Years, Stakeholders Chant Path to Recovery

Nigeria's economy has gone into recession for the second time within five years. The economy has been marred by several factors arising from the devastating effect of the Covid-19 restrictions on the economy, and the plunge in oil prices. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), disclosed that the GDP contracted by 3.62% in third quarter of 2020. Speaking on the recovery process, the Director General of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI), Muda Yusuf called for an expansion of the scope of market expression in the allocation mechanism. The Deputy National President, Trade Union Congress (TUC), Chika Onuegbu, while stating that the country's economy may not recover until 2021, charged the federal government to adopt measures that would recuperate the economy. Taofik Salako et al. [The Nation News \(23rd November\)](#) explain. [Aljazeera News \(21st November\)](#) details that oil productions dropped by 13.89% in the third quarter while non-oil sectors declined by 2.5% in the 3 months to September. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has forecast a 5.4% decline in the Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Several stakeholders had predicted a fall in the economy. The Head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Amine Mati, had predicted that the "economy would contract by almost 3.5% in 2020" a while ago. PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), cited major impact from the Covid-19 pandemic on various sector of the dwindling economy. In addition, the IMF advised for the unification of the exchange rate for Investors and Exporters' (I&E) Forex Window and also for the proposal of a supplementary budget that will support the recovery of the economy. Analysts said that getting the economy and businesses working in the face of recession will require government's collaboration with private sector operators and providing stimulus packages for businesses across all sectors of the economy. Collin Nweeze, [The Nation News \(23rd November\)](#) reports. Still on experts' opinion, it is projected that there will be a hike in food prices and a slump in the capital market. Experts from different sectors of the economy gave measures that would facilitate the revival of the economy. Some advised that the government should reduce the cost of governance and encourage production. John Alechenu et al, [Punch News \(23rd November\)](#) write.

Meanwhile, Laolu Akande, Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity to Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo has stated that the economy is on its path to recovery. This is contrary to the predictions from experts and the recession report released by NBS. Comparing the GDP decline in the 2nd and 3rd quarter, he said that the figures depict a path to recovery. He added that the proposed Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP) would further contribute to the recovery process. Kayode Oyero, [Punch News \(23rd November\)](#) reports. Similarly, the Minister for Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, has stated that the federal government is working on measures for the country to exit recession by the first quarter of 2021. Chike Olisah, [Nairametrics News \(22nd November\)](#) writes.

FG Moves to Reopen Land Border Following Agitations from Stakeholders, Smuggling Continues

The Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, has revealed that the country's land border would be reopened soon. Ahmed stated this during an interview with state house correspondents. She added that the presidential committee charged with the responsibility on issues of land border has recommended the reopening of the border. Olalekan Adetayo, [Punch News \(25th November\)](#) explains. This is coming following the growing call from stakeholders on reopening the land borders. The Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) cited that the federal government was making an economic error by prolonging the closure of the country's land border. The President of the ACCI, Adetokunbo Kayode, stressed on the need to open the borders considering the impact it would have on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement. Okechukwu Nnodim, [Punch News \(25th November\)](#) writes. The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) also faulted the border closure. The President of MAN, Ede Dafinone, said that manufacturers who export to "neighbouring African countries have lost confidence in the government as the border closure has discouraged long-term investments and affected the economy". Dafinone added that most manufacturers closed down their export segment due to the land border closure. Olalekan Adetayo et al report in [Punch News \(26th November\)](#). Similarly, the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) spoke of the

devastating effect of the border closure on businesses and companies. The Director-General of the LCCI, Muda Yusuf stated that the “economies of border communities have been paralysed with consequences for unemployment and poverty”. Also, South-West leaders in a meeting with a presidential delegation led by the Chief of Staff, Ibrahim Gambari, highlighted the importance of reopening the border. The stakeholders decried that the land border closure has caused economic difficulties. However, the Nigeria Custom Service (NCS) described the border closure as “a blessing to the country, claiming huge success from the border closure, raising daily revenue from N7bn from N4.5bn”. Bolaji Ogundele et al, [The Nation News \(26th November\)](#) write.

Reacting to the reopening of the land border, farmers in the country have faulted the move by the federal government to reopen the land borders. The farmers noted that the prices of food items will increase due to exports to neighboring countries. Supporting, the Minister of Agriculture, Mohammad Sabo Nanono stated that reopening the border will not be on the interest of farmers. Muideen Olaniyi et al, [All Africa News \(26th November\)](#) detail.

Meanwhile, despite the land border closure, investigations into activities at the border by [Guardian News \(27th November\)](#) disclose an alleged smuggling of food items and automobile into the country. Guardian indicated that “tonnes of foreign rice flooded Nigerian markets, after the #EndSARS unrest tended to relax border security”. Guardian also noted that the fall in the price of foreign rice in the market is due to the smuggling activities. Interviews conducted at strategic border locations indicated ongoing illicit activities. Smugglers have taken to bush paths and unapproved routes with motorbikes moving across the borders to the Republic of Benin. Guardian News also cited less policing at the border as most security officers were not at their duty post. According to the report, touts were seen manning the border and charging a rate of about N100 to N200 before letting people cross. The National Public Relations Officer of the NCS, Joseph Attah, told the Guardian that the porosity of the border posed security challenges for officers as smugglers monitor their movement to evade arrest.

Northern Elders, Rep, Join the Call for Zoning, PDP Begins Search for Secondus Successor

A socio-cultural group called the Coalition of Northern Elders for Peace and Development (CNEPD), has joined the call for political parties to zone the 2023 Presidential ticket to the South-East. The northern group who pledged their support to the call stated that the move was “borne out of the need for all component parts of the country to be fairly and equitably treated in the nation’s political affairs”. This was contained in a statement by the National Coordinator, Zana Goni and the National Women Leader, Hajia Mario Bichi. CNEPD charged the All Progressives Congress (APC), the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), and other zones to support the call. CNEPD noted the Igbos have been marginalized and zoning the ticket will help “maintain the culture of rotational presidency between the North and South, which they said has helped to douse the political tension in Nigeria”. Joseph Erunke, [Vanguard News \(22nd November\)](#) writes.

On the same note, a member of the House of Representatives, Kingsely Uju-Chima, representing Ohaji/Egbema, Oguta, and Oru West Federal Constituency, has asked South-East politicians to join the APC. Uju-Chima who stated that he defected from the Action Alliance (AA) party, to the APC to protect the interest of his people added that the APC is more incline to guarantee the Igbos a place in national power sharing. He opined that the APC is “repositioning to make sure that 2023 is all-encompassing in terms of power-sharing for all regions” and asked all politicians to take advantage of the opportunity and join the power play at the centre. He commended the Ebonyi State Governor, David Umahi, for his decision to defect from the PDP to the APC. [Vanguard News \(22nd November\)](#) explains.

Still on zoning, Governor Umahi gave more insight on his defection from the PDP to the APC in an interview with journalists. A reporter present during the interview, Edward Nnachi of [Punch News \(22nd November\)](#) details Umahi’s opinion. Umahi stated that it is mischievous to say he quit the PDP because he wasn’t given the 2023 presidential ticket. Umahi reiterated that his decision to leave is based on the injustice meted by the PDP to the South-East. Umahi spoke on the PDP’s stance on zoning.

However, there are speculations of an alleged agreement on zoning in the APC, contrary to the

stance of the APC that it is not concerned about zoning the 2023 Presidential ticket. The Minister of Works and Housing, Babatunde Fashola, in an interview, disclosed that there has been a long standing gentleman agreement on zoning in the APC. Several stakeholders also confirmed this. This contradicts the statement by the Director-General of the APC Progressives Governor Forum, Salihu Lukman, that the presidential ticket is open to all members to compete for the presidential 2023 election. John Alechenu et al, [Punch News \(25th November\)](#) detail.

Ikechuckwu Amaechi in [Vanguard News \(26th November\)](#) examines the proposed zoning for the 2023 presidential election and the growing speculation of which political party intends to adopt the process. He highlighted Fashola's opinion of an alleged "zoning agreement" in the APC. He also mentioned the opinion of an APC chieftain who confirmed the zoning agreement. He examined Fashola's intent for the disclosure and the possibility of growing ambitions in the APC that may have led to the revelation. Amaechi analysed the expectation for an Igbo president and expressed that a Igbo president will not make a difference in the country. He instead called for the restructuring of the country in terms of a true federation before 2023. Similarly, the Governor of Kaduna State, Nasir El-Rufai has pointed out that the proposed zoning process for political parties will not solve the economic challenges of the country. Kunle Sanni, [Premium Times \(25th November\)](#) reports.

In new reports, some governors, ex-governors and influential leaders of the PDP have commenced the search for the successor of Uche Secondus, the Chairman of the PDP. There are speculations that the move to swiftly find a replacement is due to alleged pressure from the APC for them to defect and the speculation that the PDP is weak. These governors and leader are bidding time over the expected leadership change before making up their minds on what steps to take. However, Secondus has reiterated the achievement of the party in the last 3 years. Yussuf Alli, [The Nation News \(23rd November\)](#) reports. The PDP has also named former Senate President Bukola Saraki, as the chairman of its national reconciliation committee. The PDP National Chairperson, Uche Secondus, represented by the Deputy National Chairperson North, Suleiman Nazif, inaugurated the committee. Alfred Olufemi, [Premium Times \(24th November\)](#) explains.

#EndSARS: UK Parliament Move to Sanction Nigeria Officials for Human Rights Violation, CNN Release Second Report of the Lekki Toll Gate Incident

The United Kingdom (UK) parliament has considered the petition by groups and individuals asking the parliament to apply sanctions against the Nigerian Government and officials for alleged human rights violations during the #EndSARS protest and Lekki shooting incident. The parliament is asking the British government to look at the possibility of imposing sanctions against individuals and entities that violated human rights. Chike Olisah, [Nairametrics \(22nd November\)](#), Samson Tormade, [Pulse News \(24th November\)](#) and Queen Esther Iroanusi [Premium Times \(24th November\)](#) report.

Supporting the move for sanctions, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has lauded the decision by the UK parliament. The National Publicity Secretary of the PDP, Kola Ologbondiyan, asked the British Government to "extend the proposed sanctions to include the freezing of assets and funds belonging to such officials and their families in the United Kingdom". The PDP also called on other countries to adopt the same sanction for erring officers found guilty of human rights violations and crime against humanity. Chuks Okocha, [This Day News \(26th November\)](#) writes.

There is also concern in the UK over the UK funding given to Nigeria and used in training security personnels of the country. The Labour Party asked the UK government to consider suspending the funding of Nigeria's police and to clarify on the funding provided for the SARS police unite. The UK Minister for Africa, James Duddridge, stated that the SARS unit received "strategic assistance" and training in a programme that ran from 2016 to March 2020. There are also concerns if the UK government was aware of the excesses of SARS unit and still funded it. The UK Foreign Office has stated that the UK government has been working with the Nigeria government to reform the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). Emmanuel Akinwotu, [The Guardian, \(24th November\)](#) reports.

Speaking on the UK sanctions, the Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Geoffrey Onyeama, told state house correspondents at the end of the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting, presided over by President Muhammadu Buhari, in Abuja,

that the “essence of the initiative was for the federal government to present its own side of the story”. Onyeama stated that the UK parliament does not have the power to impose sanction. He added that the federal government has briefed the British government on its account of the incident. Omololu Ogunmade, [This Day News \(26th November\)](#) details.

Meanwhile, despite the sanction threat from the Minister of Information, Lai Mohammed, CNN has released another report that gives more insight into the Lekki Toll Gate incident. CNN revealed more video footage of the incident questioning the statements of government and army officials. [CNN \(24th November\)](#) and Eniola Akinkuotu, [Punch News \(24th November\)](#) explain. Mohammed said that the report did not meet journalistic standard and did not follow the core principle of journalism which is “balance and fairness”. He further cited that CNN did not contact the federal government to hear their view but relied on unverified footage. Muhammadu also faulted DJ Switch’s account of the incident, a witness for CNN. He described her account of the event as “ever changing”, citing irregularities in the number of casualties reported by her. [Vanguard News \(24th November\)](#) details.

On another note, the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mohammed Adamu stated the EndSARS protest was allegedly aimed to topple President Muhammadu Buhari from office. Adamu made the disclosure during a meeting at the Rivers State Government House, with South-South leaders and a delegation from the Presidency. This was issued via a statement by the state governor’s media aide, Kelvin Ebiri. Adamu stated that investigations conducted allegedly revealed the protest was funded from within and outside the country. Cletus Ukong, [Premium Times \(24th November\)](#) reports.

Meanwhile, Syanda Obaji in the [African Report \(22nd November\)](#) examined the history of democracy in Nigeria from 1999 to now. Obaji noted disparities in the features of democratic state and the practice in Nigeria. He cited “inequality” as a reoccurring factor that hinders the practice of democracy in the country. He stated that the recent #EndSARS event stirred up the need to analyse the three principles of democracy as a “lens through which to review the state of Nigeria’s democracy”. He gave a brief insight into the #EndSARS event and expressed that the response to

the protest violated the three principles of “access to information, participation in decision making and access to justice”. He said that citizens are often denied the right to participate in the making of decisions that affect them. He added that the protest was “a wake-up call for citizens”. Obaji called for an improved system that is all inclusive. He also asked that the cultural assumption that elders cannot be challenged should be corrected.

Insecurity: Nigeria Retains Position as 3rd Most Terrorized Country in the World, Insecurity: Expert Worries Over Nigeria’s Hold on the North-West, Stakeholders Banter

Nigeria has retained its position as the third most terrorized country in the world. The Global Terrorism Index (GTI), report cited a 25% increase in Boko Haram activities between 2018 and 2019. The report also noted an increase in the number of casualties. The GTI report also mentioned Boko Haram expanding their reach to neighbouring countries and increased activities by Boko Haram factions. Abisola Olasupo, [Guardian News \(26th November\)](#) explains.

Meanwhile, Mark Amaza of [Quartz Africa \(24th November\)](#) reflects on the rising insecurity bedeviling the nation. The Boko-Haram sect has sustained its attacks in the North-East and neighboring countries. Amid the Boko Haram activities, there is an attendant problem of bandits in the North-West. These bandits are known to have carried out attacks on local communities killing many and holding persons for ransom. The North West region is home to different religion and ethnic groups. The breaking point is the struggle for pastoral dominance between the Fulanis and the Hausas which has led to the death of many. This disagreement is still ongoing as there are still reports of Farmers/Herders crisis. The escalating situation has also created opportunities for Jihadist to take advantage. There are reports of Boko Haram factions trying to expand their reach. The federal government has launched military operations and deployed security operatives to deter the bandits. However, the impact has been limited due to an “overstretched military”. details.

In developing news, President Buhari has condemned the death of the Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Nasarawa State, Phil-

lip Sheko, calling for reinforced effort from security agencies to end violence in the country. This was contained in a statement issued by the Senior Special Assistant of the President on Media and Publicity. President Buhari also commended the decision of the Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Adamu, to send reinforcement to the state. On the same note, the Governor of Nasarawa State has said that the perpetrators of the crime will be brought to justice. Adedayo Akinwale et al. [This Day News \(23rd November\)](#) write.

On another note, Christian Lawyers have joined the call for the removal of the service chiefs. The lawyers condemned the security situation in the country and called for the overhaul of the security architecture. This was contained in a communique issued at the virtual president council meeting of the Christian lawyers fellowship of Nigeria (CLASFON). Ibrahim HassanWuyo, [Vanguard News \(27th November\)](#) reports.

In new reports, governors and leaders of the South-South zone has called for the restructuring

of the nation as provided by the principle of federalism, stating that it will “guarantee peace, security and stability in the country”. The Chairman of the South-South Governors Forum and Governor of Delta State, Ifeanyi Okowa made the disclosure during the regional stakeholders meeting with the presidential delegation led by the Chief of Army Staff, Ibrahim Gambari at the Rivers State Government House, Port-Harcourt. In a statement released by the media aide to the Rivers State governor, Kelvin Ebiri, Okonwa called for the devolution of powers to the state. He said that the state would be able to create and manage their own police and security architecture under a federal structure. He stated that the resources of the South-South have been continually used to develop other parts of the country while the demands of the South-South are ignored. He called for the relocation of the headquarters of major oil companies, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation and its subsidiaries from Lagos and Abuja to the South-South. Dennis Naku, [Punch News \(25th November\)](#) details.

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