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**Nigeria Office**



# 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.

#### Content

Covid-19: Nigeria to Receive Vaccines from AU, Others, Buhari Restates Compliances with Protocols, FG Mulls Shutdown Flight from UAE, Netherlands, Declares Kogi High Risk State

Buhari Writes NASS over the Appointment of Service Chiefs, Analysts Examine the Adoption of Federal Character in the Appointment, Buhari Extends IGP Adamu's Appointment, Nominates Former Service Chiefs as Ambassadors

Stakeholders Task NASS on Legislative Agenda, PIB, Electoral Act, Others

APC Debunks Rumoured Plans to Field Jonathan for 2023 as the Call for Zoning Deepens, Buni and Akande Bicker over APC's Membership Registration and Revalidation

Insecurity: Mounting Tension as the Call for the Ban on Cattle Movement Heightens, Gbajabiamila, Akeredolu, Proffer Solution towards Tackling Insecurity, Russian PMC Wagner to be deployed in the Northeast

### **Covid-19: Nigeria to Receive Vaccines from AU, Others, Buhari Restates Compliances with Protocols, FG Mulls Shutdown Flight from UAE, Netherlands, Declares Kogi High Risk State**

The federal government has stated that Nigeria would receive 16m doses of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccines and another 40m doses of the vaccines. It is expected that the vaccines will replace the initial 100,000 doses of the Pfizer and BioNTech approved vaccines expected in the country. This was disclosed by the Executive Director of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), Faisal Shuaib, during the Presidential Task Force (PTF) briefing. Shuaib said that the initial planned 100,000 doses would not be enough. Also present was the Minister of Health, Osagie Enahire. He reiterated plans to roll out vaccines this February. Nike Adebowale, [Premium Times \(1<sup>st</sup> February\)](#) and [SABC News \(2<sup>nd</sup> February\)](#) report.

On the same note, the Governor of Ekiti State and Chairman of Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), Kayode Fayemi, revealed that about 80 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines would soon be made available for the vaccination of 40% of the country's population. Fayemi made the disclosure while delivering a paper at the Chatham House Africa Programme. Fayemi mentioned that about another 60m doses of the vaccines will arrive in 2022. He added that efforts are being made in order to curb the effect of the virus in the country. [Premium Times \(2<sup>nd</sup> February\)](#) reports.

On the British variant, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), has stated that it has detected another 6 cases of the B.1.1.7 variant. This was disclosed by the Director-General of the NCDC, Chikwe Ihekweazu. Ihekweazu added that about 75 health workers were infected in the past one week. He spoke of plans for more protection for health workers following the surge in recorded cases among Covid-19. Williams Ukpe, [Nai-rametrics \(2<sup>nd</sup> February\)](#) and [VOA News \(2<sup>nd</sup> February\)](#) explain.

Meanwhile, health workers in Niger State have jointly agreed to shutdown isolation centres due to alleged unpaid Covid-19 allowances and 30% June 2020 balance cut by the federal government. Following the meeting by health professionals in the state, it was agreed that the shutdown would begin from 4 February. [Leadership News \(31<sup>st</sup> February\)](#) explains.

In developing news, President Muhammed Buhari has raised alarm over reports of non-compliance with the executive order on Covid-19 rules in the country. President Buhari warned that failure to comply would imply a fresh lockdown. He made the disclosure through his spokesperson, Garba Shehu. He charged officials and leaders to continue to sensitize citizens on the importance of adhering to the rules. Wale Odunsi, [Daily Post \(31<sup>st</sup> January\)](#) reports.

On another note, the director-general of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), has expressed concern over the "extra requirement following the new pre-boarding COVID test requirement placed on Nigerian travelers by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Netherlands,". He explained that the "countries and airlines cannot determine for Nigeria who to approve or how these tests will be done". He hinted shutdown of flights and added, that the PTF will decide on the next line of action. [The Cable News \(1<sup>st</sup> February\)](#) writes.

In new reports, the federal government has declared Kogi State Covid-19 high risk state "because of its failure to acknowledge the existence of the disease, report tests or build isolation centres". The PTF warned citizens against travelling to Kogi State. In addition, the National Incident Manager, Mukhtar Muhammad, mentioned other states that have failed to accurately report tests. [Sahara Reporters \(1<sup>st</sup> February\)](#) details.

### **Buhari Writes NASS over the Appointment of Service Chiefs, Analysts Examine the Adoption of Federal Character in the Appointment, Buhari Extends IGP Adamu's Appointment, Nominates Former Service Chiefs as Ambassadors**

Following concerns raised last week by the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Media and Public Affairs, Ajibola Basiru, over the non-screening of the service chiefs by the Senate despite clear provisions as documented in the Armed Forces Act, President Buhari has written to the National Assembly, seeking confirmation of the recently appointed service chiefs. Contained in a statement signed by the Special Adviser to the President on National Assembly Matters (Senate), Babajide Omoworare, the confirmation is in accordance with the provisions of Section 18 (1) of the

Armed Forces Act Cap. A.20 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria. See more details by Nasir Ayitogo, [Premium Times \(29<sup>th</sup> January\)](#).

Meanwhile, John Campbell in the [Council on Foreign Relations \(2<sup>nd</sup> February\)](#) examined the appointment of the service chiefs amid the escalating security situation in the country. Campbell cited mounting criticisms from citizens over the alleged failure of President Buhari to address the security challenges. He gave brief analysis of the religious and ethnic background of the chiefs citing fair “balance” in regards to ethnic and religious identities as provided by the “federal character”.

On the same note, Anthony S. Aladekomo of [The Nation News \(3<sup>rd</sup> February\)](#) further elaborates on the federal character. He questioned the public announcement by the Special Adviser to the President, Femi Adesina, on Channels Televisions, who stated that the appointment was not subject to the federal character. He stressed on the importance of the federal character for any nation especially in the appointment of heads of security offices.

On another note, the Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed, has described the growing call for the probe of the immediate past service chiefs as “unpatriotic”. Mohammed made the call during a radio programme “Politics Nationwide”. The growing call is due to deteriorating security situation in the country. Mohammed highlighted the security situation before the coming of present administration and criticized individuals calling for the probe stating that they “don’t have the competence to talk on military structure and formations whether in the north-east or in any other part of the country. Vicent Ikuomola, [The Nation News \(2<sup>nd</sup> February\)](#) reports.

Meanwhile, President Buhari has nominated the ex-service chiefs as non-career ambassadors. In accordance with the constitution, President Buhari submitted their name to the Senate for confirmation. [Premium Times \(4<sup>th</sup> February\)](#) reports.

In developing news, it is believed that the incumbent IGP, Mohammed Adamu, was expected to leave office on Monday, having attained the statutory retirement age. No date has been fixed for the appointment of a new IGP as meeting between the police council and the president is yet

to hold. Adelani Adepegba, [Punch News \(2<sup>nd</sup> February\)](#) details. However, President Buhari has extended the tenure of Adamu. Nasir Ayitogo, [Premium Times \(4<sup>th</sup> February\)](#) explains.

### **Stakeholders Task NASS on Legislative Agenda, PIB, Electoral Act, Others**

Following the announcement reviewing the resumption date for the commencement of plenary sittings in the National Assembly (NASS), from 26 January to 9 February 2 weeks ago, several stakeholders have charged NASS on legislative agenda ahead of their resumption.

On the controversial Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB), oil communities in Gbaramatu and Egbema Kingdoms, Delta State, have faulted the recommended governance model under the PIB emphasizing that the power given to oil companies would create anxiety in the region. In a memorandum to the Joint Committee on Petroleum Downstream Sector, Petroleum Upstream and Gas on PIB 2020, the Chairman, Jude Ukori, of the Egbema and Gbaramatu Communities Development Foundation, (EGCDF), drew attention to various sections of the bill, describing it as “undemocratic” giving too much powers to the companies in the “host” communities. Emma Amaize, [Vanguard News \(1<sup>st</sup> February\)](#) details.

On another note, the Chairman, Senate Committee on Independent National Electoral Committee (INEC), Kabiru Gaya, has restated the NASS commitment towards reviewing the Electoral Act. Gaya made the disclosure on a forum of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja. He stressed that NASS will reinforce their efforts to ensure a speedy passage of the bill by the first quarter of 2021. [Guardian News \(2<sup>nd</sup> February\)](#) writes.

On the same note, the Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike has stressed on the importance of transparency in elections. He stated that “the amendment of the Electoral Act by the National Assembly would be a mere charade if card readers would not be used to determine the validity of every vote cast”. He alleged that the process of amending the Electoral Act has been politicized. Ann Godwin, Ann Godwin, [Guardian News \(2<sup>nd</sup> February\)](#) writes.

Meanwhile, a former lawmaker, Muhammad Junaid, has advised NASS to pass a law to “stop

the nepotism and disrespect for public opinion of Nigerians following President Muhammadu Buhari's nomination of the former service chiefs for ambassadorial appointments". Citing the United States as a country where the law is operational, Junaid added that a stay of seven years political appointment for any uniformed person should be made compulsory. Bashir Bello, [Vanguard News \(4<sup>th</sup> February\)](#) explains.

On another note, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), has written to the Senate President, Ahmad Lawan, and the Speaker of House of Representatives Femi Gbajabiamila, seeking the probe of N4.4bn missing NASS funds. In a letter by the Deputy Director Kolawole Oluwadare, SERAP stressed on the irregularities in the financial documents of NASS as reported by the Auditor General of the Federation (AGF). [Vanguard News \(31<sup>st</sup> January\)](#) details.

### **APC Debunks Rumoured Plans to Field Jonathan for 2023 as the Call for Zoning Deepens, Buni and Akande Bicker over APC's Membership Registration and Revalidation**

Following growing concerns over the nature of the relationship between ex-President Goodluck Jonathan and the All Progressives Congress (APC), APC has debunked the rumored plans to field Jonathan in 2023 as a candidate for the presidential election. In a statement by the Governor of Yobe State, Mai Mala Buni, who is also the Chairman, APC Caretaker and Extra-Ordinary Convention Planning Committee, Buni through Mamman Mohammed, his Director-General, Press and Media Affairs, said that the APC is focused on resolving disputes among members and also, its registration exercise. Buni criticized the speculation which stems from public presence in the past weeks as contained in the media and reiterated that the "idea is not on the table of the APC". Saxeone Akhaine, [Guardian News \(3<sup>rd</sup> February\)](#) explains. Also, the former governor of Jigawa State, Sule Lamido has described governors of the APC seeking Jonathan's re-election in 2023 as "hypocrites". This is coming just as Buni and some APC governors paid a visit to Jonathan. Lamido stressed on the need to have a president that will represent the country without bias to religion or ethnicity. Dyepkazah Shibayan, [The Cable News \(3<sup>rd</sup> February\)](#) explains.

On another note, the former governor of Kano State and Chairman of the Senate Committee on

INEC, Kabiru Gaya, has explained why the Southern region should produce the president in 2023. Gaya cited equity and fairness as a reason. He is of the opinion that the presidency should be rotational in order to boost citizen's confidence in the system. Gaya added that the North and Southern region maintains good relationship. He stressed that Nigeria should remain "one indivisible entity". Queen Esther Iroanusi, [Premium Times \(2<sup>nd</sup> February\)](#) reports.

Meanwhile, the Pioneer Interim National Chairman of the APC, Bisi Akande, has berated Buni over the membership registration, describing it as "aberration". Akande made the disclosure during a visit from members of the Niger State Governor, Abubakar Bello-led APC Membership Registration/Revalidation team at his country home in Ila, Orangun, in Osun State. Faulting the entire process, Akande stated that the "population census is repeated within less than a decade and voters are not re-registered at every election". Emmanuel Oladesu, and Toba Adedeji, [The Nations \(4<sup>th</sup> February\)](#) explain.

Responding, Buni stated that the exercise was constitutional and it will give new and old members a sense of belonging. This was contained in a statement issued by his Director-General, Press and Media Affairs, Mamman Mohammed. Buni added that the exercise would enable the APC update its database as no update had been done since 2014. Adedayo Adewale, [This Day News \(4<sup>th</sup> February\)](#) reports.

Still on the registration exercise, there are reports of violence between members of two opposing factions of the Kwara State APC division. Reports indicate that the violence is as a result of an ongoing disagreement between Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq and a group of party leaders led by the Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed. Alfred Olufemi, [Premium Times \(3<sup>rd</sup> February\)](#) details.

In developing news, the Federal High Court in Abuja has adjourned the hearing of the suit filed by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) against the former speaker of the House of Representatives and current member, Yakubu Dogara. The PDP is asking the court to declare Dogara's seat in the House vacant following his defection from the PDP to the APC. PDP expressed concerns that Dogara having been elected into House under the platform of the PDP, is still occupying the seat in the House. They are asking the court to direct

the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC), to declare the seat vacant and conduct a bye-election as provided by section 8(1)(g) of the 1999 Constitution. Ikechukwu Nnochiri, [Vanguard News \(4<sup>th</sup> February\)](#) details.

### **Insecurity: Mounting Tension as the Call for the Ban on Cattle Movement Heightens, Gbajabiamila, Akeredolu, Proffer Solution towards Tackling Insecurity, Russian PMC Wagner to be deployed in the Northeast**

There is mounting tension as citizens have continue to lend their voice towards the call for the ban on cattle movement in the country. The Governor of Kano State, Ganduje Abdullahi has joined the call, urging the federal government to pass a law on the cattle movement ban in order to address the reoccurring clashes between Farmers and Herders in the country. Ganduje made the disclosure during an interview with journalists in Katsina State. He opined that the ban would help to control the conflicts. Johnbosco Agabkwuru, [Vanguard News \(31<sup>st</sup> January\)](#) writes.

Responding, the Senate has criticized the call by Ganduje describing it as unconstitutional. According to the Chairman, Senate Committee on Media and Public Affairs, Ajibola Basiru, the law if enacted will contradict the “part of the constitution which stipulates that Nigerians, irrespective of state of birth or nativity had right to freedom of movement”. It is expected that the National Assembly will review the 1999 Federal Constitution in June following growing expectations from citizens. However, the House of Representatives has revealed that it is studying Ganduje’s proposal, weighing the merits and demerits amid the security situation in the country and the impact of the proposal on citizens without violating the constitution. Also, the PDPs Caucus of the Senate has backed Ganduje on the ban. Henry Umoru and Levinus Nwabughio, [Vanguard News \(2<sup>nd</sup> February\)](#) and [Vanguard News \(3<sup>rd</sup> February\)](#) explain.

Reacting, the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) has agreed that the era of open grazing in the country is coming to an end. The Secretary-General of MACBAN, Baba Usman, called on the federal government to develop a settlement model as the population of humans and cattle are increasing against fixed lands. [Sahara Reporters \(1<sup>st</sup> February\)](#) explains.

Similarly, the Supreme Council for Sharia Court, has asked the South-West governors to consider creating ranches before banning open grazing. The Vice President of the group, Sheikh Abdur’rasheed Hadiyatullahi, stressed that implementing the ban without establishing ranches would be disastrous. Bola Bamigbola, [Punch News \(29<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) writes.

On the same note, the Muslim Rights Concerns (MURIC) has asked the “federal government to give bailout funds to Herders to buy land in states for ranching so as to address Herder-Farmer conflicts and insecurity”. The Director of MURIC, Ishaq Akintola, explained the essence of the bailout funds and stressed on the importance of the funds to the ongoing Farmers/Herders crisis. Ayodele Oluwafemi, [The Cable News \(3<sup>rd</sup> February\)](#) explains.

Meanwhile, governors of Ondo, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti and Ogun States have expressed commitment towards tackling the security crisis posed by the activities of the Fulani herdsman in the South-West. The governors have maintained their stance stating that any breakdown of law and order will attract consequences. In addition, the governors restated the agreement signed between the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) and MACBAN towards addressing the issue. Contradicting, a Fulani group Gan Allah Fulani Development Association of Nigeria (GAFDAN), noted that not all Fulanis are members of MACBAN. This may have implications as the agreement was not binding on GAFDAN members. Olayinka Olukoya et al, [Tribune News \(30<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) report.

Still on grazing ban, the Governor of Ebonyi State and Chairman South-East Governors’ Forum (SGF), David Umahi, has reiterated the SGF’s position on the issue. The governor announced this during an All Progressives Congress (APC), stakeholders meeting at the Christian Ecumenical Centre, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State. Umahi charged leaders and Stakeholders in the zone to “speak up and desist from playing politics with the security of the zone and nation”. Peter Okutu and Peter Duru, [Vanguard News \(2<sup>nd</sup> February\)](#) write.

On a similar note, the Governor of Ondo State, Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, has urged the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) to intensify their efforts towards improving the security situation at the borders in order to prevent herders from entering the country. Akeredolu stated this during meeting with the NIS Zone ‘F’ Coordinator in

charge of Oyo, Ondo, Osun and Ekiti States command. He raised alarm over the rate at which foreigners are entering the country. Osagie Otobo, [The Nation News \(3<sup>rd</sup> February\)](#) details.

In developing news, the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) drew the attention of the South-East governors to the 1969 statutory law of the federal government which bans all form of open razing. In a signed statement, issued by the IPOB's Media and Publicity Secretary, Emma Powerful, Kanu gave a 14 days ultimatum stating that if no decisive action is taken, the IPOB's Eastern Security Network (ESN), would enforce the 1969 Anti-Grazing law across the region. Reacting, the Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodinma, faulted Kanu stating that he "had no basis to issue ultimatum to the governors". Edward Nnachi, [Punch News \(3<sup>rd</sup> February\)](#) and Clifford Ndujihe, [Vanguard News \(1<sup>st</sup> February\)](#) detail.

Meanwhile, the speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila, has called for dialogue in addressing issues of ethnic links to insecurity. Gbajabiamila made the disclosure to journalist after a meeting with President Buhari. He called for the adoption of dialogue in addressing the rising tension. Haleem Olatunji, [The Cable News \(3<sup>rd</sup> February\)](#) explains.

Meanwhile, sources have revealed that the Russian PMC Wagner will be deployed in the country soon. As part of efforts to tackle the Boko Haram activities, sources close to the federal government revealed that Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Leo Irabor, contacted the Russian PMC Wagner known for its operations in Syria. This will mean "an entirely new phase against the Boko Haram has begun". [Nigerian Observer, \(2<sup>nd</sup> February\)](#) explains.

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