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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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Stakeholders Banter over Nigeria's 2021 Budget Allocation, Inflation on the Rise, Poverty Growths

As deliberations arise over the 2021 budget allocation submitted to the National Assembly last week, stakeholders have expressed remarks on several sections of the proposed budget. The Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, has stated that the federal government will “borrow from domestic and foreign sources, including multilateral and bilateral finance organisations, to finance the 2021 federal budget deficit”. Ahmed made this disclosure while presenting the details of the budget. This is against the backdrop of the statement by President Muhammadu Buhari during the presentation of the 2021 budget where he stated that the country is heading for another recession. Ahmed noted that other sources of funding are proceeds from the privatization of public enterprises. President Buhari had earlier stated that the budget will contribute to the growth and recuperation of the economy. Ahmed highlighted other proposed sectors that would contribute to the growth of the country. Bassey Udo, [Premium Times \(13th October\)](#) explains.

On the same note, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo assured citizens that there is no cause for alarm over the rising debt profile. Osinbajo stated this while briefing journalists on the progress of the Nigeria Economic Sustainability Plan (NESP). He said that the government is utilizing the funds from loans to finance the deficit in the budget. Osinbajo stressed on other areas the federal government has adopted in addressing the issue. Bassey Udo details in [Premium Times \(15th October\)](#).

On another note, the 1.5% allocated to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) / other agencies is evidently 10% lower than the agreed annual percentage by Nigeria and other African countries for agriculture. The proposal if approved by the National Assembly will allocate “N66bn for personnel cost, N3.1bn for overhead and N110.2bn for capital expenditure”. Nigeria alongside other African Union member countries signed the 2003 Maputo Declaration allocating at least 10% of their total annual budget to agricultural in a bid to support food sufficiency. Oge Udegbonam, [Premium Times \(15th October\)](#) reports.

Meanwhile, Nigeria's inflation went up to 13.7% last month, the highest since the March 2018 13.34%. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) disclosed this September Consumer Price Index Report. [Punch News \(15th October\)](#) explains. Also, there are reports that there is an increase in the poverty rate of the country. A report by the Nigeria Employers Consultative Association (NECA), shows that the number of citizens living in extreme poverty stands at 102 million which is about 50% of the Nigerian estimated population. This is coming following the prediction by the World Bank earlier on a rise in poverty level due to the ravaging Covid-19 pandemic. Peter Egwuatu, [Vanguard News \(12th October\)](#) explains.

FG to Consider ASUU Proposed Payroll Platform, Agrees with Labour Union on 3 Months Electricity Subsidy for Consumers

The federal government has disclosed that it might consider the proposed payment platform by the Academic Staff Union Universities (ASUU). ASUU had gone on strike following the introduction of the controversial Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) by the federal government. The Minister of Labour, Chris Ngige, disclosed the new development after a meeting between the ASUU and the Senate. He added that the proposed platform is “worth given thorough assessment test”. Also, the meeting looked at resolving the crisis. [Premium Times \(13th October\)](#) reports. The Chairman of the Senate Committee on Tertiary Education and Tet-Fund, Ahmad Baba Kaita, however stated that the meeting was a first step in addressing the issue. The president of ASUU, Biodun Ogunyemi, reiterated its stance on the issue. John Akubo, [Guardian News \(13th October\)](#) details. The latest meeting between the opposing parties ended however inconclusive. Johnbosco Agbakwuru of [Vanguard News \(15th October\)](#) reports. The federal government had earlier announced that staff not registered under IPPS would not receive salary from November 2020. James Emejo, [This Day News \(11th October\)](#) explains.

Meanwhile, the federal government has extended the suspension of implementing the revised electricity tariff by another week. This is coming following the meeting between the federal government team led by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha, the leadership of the Nigeria Labour Congress

(NLC), and the Trade Union Congress (TUC). Adelani Adepegba, [Punch News \(13th October\)](#) reports. On the same note, the federal government and the organized labour unions have agreed to slash electricity tariff of 10.20 Kilowatts per hour for consumers for the next 3 months and also, distribute 6 million electricity metres to citizens at no cost. Chike Olisah, [Nairametrics \(12th October\)](#) writes.

Outrage as President Buhari Appoints Media Aid as INEC Official, Petitions the Senate to Grant EFCC Power to Freeze Fraudulent Accounts

Following President Muhammadu Buhari's nomination of his Special Assistant on Social Media, Laretta Onochie, as a National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), representing Delta State set for confirmation by the Senate there have been an outrage on the media as citizens have criticized the nomination. A lawyer and the chairman of the Alliance on Surviving COVID-19 and Beyond, Femi Falana, stated that "a card-carrying member of a registered political party was not fit for such a role". Falana mentioned that the nomination did not align with the provisions of the constitution. He listed the provisions of the constitution and urged the council of State and Senate to critically examine the constitution before confirmation. Chike Olisah, [Nairametrics \(13th October\)](#) and [Sahara Reporters \(13th October\)](#) detail. On the same note, the Governor of Sokoto State, Aminu Tambuwal, has asked President Buhari to recall the nomination citing that the "withdrawal is in the best interest of the country's electoral system. Tambuwal stated this at the swearing in of the State INEC at the Sokoto State government house. He noted that Onochie is well known for participating in politics and urged the Senate to reject the nomination. [Channels News \(13th October\)](#) explains. Similarly, ex-Senator Dino Melaye also faulted the nomination and asked President Buhari to revoke it. This was contained in a statement signed by Melaye describing the nomination as "unconstitutional, affront on the patience of Nigerians and an insult to the institution of INEC". He added that the nomination violates the constitution. Emmanuel Adeyemi writes in [Daily Sun News \(14th October\)](#). Also, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) criticized the nomination describing Onochie as a "card carrying member" of the All Progressives Congress (APC). Disclosing

this, the National Publicist of the PDP, Kola Oigbonyan stated that the nomination is an assault on the constitution and the nation's democratic process. He added that President Buhari's choice contradicts his move for credible elections in the country. Tunde Opalana, [Daily Times \(14th October\)](#). Coming to the same conclusion, an editorial by the [Vanguard News \(15th October\)](#) questioned the method of President Buhari's appointments of public officials, and its impact on the nation's interest. According to the editorial, Onochie is "unfit" to occupy office considering her known participation in politics. It concludes by calling for joint efforts in rejecting the nomination as it may have implications for an independent free and fair election.

Meanwhile, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabamila has disclosed that President Buhari has asked that powers be granted to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to freeze accounts "allegedly holding proceeds of crime and go hard on money launderers". This is coming following the approval by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) in September 2020. Chike Olisah, [Naira Metric News \(14th October\)](#) writes. President Buhari also sent an executive bill to the Senate that would guarantee the transparency and accountability in recovered funds by anti-corruption agencies in the country. The Senate President, Ahmed Lawan, stated that the bill is crucial in the fight against corruption, money laundering among others. Sunday Aborisade, [Punch News \(13th October\)](#).

Akeredolu Emerges Winner of the Ondo State Gubernatorial Election, Southeast Seeks Support for Presidential Ticket

Governor Rotimi Akeredolu emerged the winner of the 10 October Ondo gubernatorial election. Announcing the results of the election, INEC disclosed that Akeredolu who ran under the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC) polled a total of 292,830 votes, winning 15 of the 18 local governments of the state while Eyitayo Jegede of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) polled 195,791 and the Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) polled 69,127 votes. Akinola Ajibola writes in [Channels News \(11th October\)](#). The state collation agent of the PDP, Debo Ologunagba, pronounced the success of the APC in the concluded Ondo governorship as one obtained through the "weaponisation of poverty". He alleged that the APC took advantage of the poverty rate in the

state which led to the manipulation of votes as there was “mass indication of vote buying by the APC”. He noted that, the consciousness and the ability of the people to reason positively had been destroyed by targeting the poor with N2000, N3000. Josiah Oluwole, [Premium Times \(11th October\)](#) reports. Also, the National Publicity Secretary, Kola Ologbindiyan has faulted the results by the INEC. He said the PDP will only congratulate Akeredolu after the court has certified the process of his emergence as the winner. This is in response to the statement by the Chairman of the APC National Caretaker Committee (NCC), calling on the PDP to congratulate Akeredolu. Dirisu Yakubu, [Vanguard News \(12th October\)](#) details. Meanwhile, President Muhammadu Buhari has congratulated Akeredolu on his win stating that “one good turn deserves another”. Similarly, the Lagos State Governor and Chairman of the National Campaign Council for the Ondo State election, Sanwo-olu congratulated Akeredolu stating that his win is proof of his administration’s effort. [This Day News \(12th October\)](#) explains.

On another note, the Southeast of Nigeria Presidency Movement (SENPN), is seeking support from the 5 geopolitical zones in its aspiration to produce a president in the upcoming 2023 presidential election. The National Coordinator, Japhet Anyanwu disclosed this at the Anambra State inauguration led by Hon. Obiora Ireanmoko. He reiterated that the SENPN is not a political party but is seeking support from political parties to zone the presidential ticket to the Southeast. [Guardian News \(14th October\)](#) reports.

Insecurity: IGP Dissolves SARS and Gives List for Reform, Citizens Kick, insist on Street Protest, New Police Act Unconstitutional, Buratai to Extend “Operation Fireball”

The uprising over the activities of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) has gained media attention in both local and foreign media as citizens have sustained the street protest demanding for an executive order from President Buhari despite the announcement of the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mohammed Adamu dissolving the unit. Shola Lawal and Adenike Olanrewaju, [New York Times \(12th October\)](#), and [BBC News \(11th October\)](#) write. The protesters argued that the idea of disbanding the unit has featured in the past years meanwhile activities of the SARS offic-

ers still continued. Following demands of protesters, Adamu had rolled out 5 points on the dissolution of the unit. He ordered that officers of the SARS report back to the headquarters for psychological and mental evaluation. Disclosing this, the spokesperson of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), Frank Mba also revealed that a “new unit called the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team, will replace the disbanded SARS”. David O. Royale of [Vanguard News \(11th October\)](#) and [Channels News \(13th October\)](#) detail.

On the same note, Amnesty International (AI), berated the disband by the IGP stating that it “falls short of demands for accountability and justice for abuses committed by the unit and the police in general”. The Director of AI, Osai Ojigho, asked for access to SARS and other police detention centers. Wale Odunsi, [Daily Post \(11th October\)](#) reports. However, President Buhari has expressed his commitment in addressing the issue and stated that erring officers who are found guilty will be brought to justice. Adedayo Akinwale, [This Day News \(12th October\)](#) reports

Protesters however are still persistent as they have continued with the street protests at various locations across the country. Goddy Ofulue, [Guardian News \(13th October\)](#) writes. Reports coming in show citizens stranded due to obstruction at several places preventing movement causing a major gridlock and several casualties in clashes of opposing parties or with the police have been reported. Bidemi Akanbi, [Premium Times \(10th October\)](#), Orji Sunday and Stephanie Busaride, [CNN News \(13th October\)](#) detail. The protesters, who are largely comprised of the youths, have also made their 5 points demand refusing the new SWAT unit. A communique signed by IGP Adamu and the Executive Secretary of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Tony Ojukwu, addressed the various demands by the protesters. They agreed to set up an investigative panel among others. The government finally has agreed to the 5 points demand by the protester. See full details by Terhemba Daka, [Guardian News \(13th October\)](#) reports.

There are also reports that armed thugs attacked protesters in Abuja. It was reported that the thugs chased protesters and vandalized vehicles major disruption to the protest. Nsikak Nseyen, [Daily Post \(14th October\)](#) writes. Also, there were speculations that the federal government might shut down the internet. A viral video of a Police-

man shooting a man, caused an uproar in the social media and several individuals have lent their voices to the movement. [Guardian News \(14th October\)](#) explains. Also the Nigerian Army has stated that it is ready to “fully support the authority in whatever capacity to maintain law and order and deal with any situation decisively”. This was disclosed via a statement by the Nigerian Army spokesperson, Sagir Musa, reiterated the Nigerian Army’s commitment to democracy, peace and the protection of lives. Adejumo Kabir, [Premium Times \(15th October\)](#) details.

As the unrest in the nation continues to rise, the Coalition of Northern Groups (CNG) have revealed plans to embark on a street protest over the deteriorating security situation in the north. According to the spokesman of the CNG, Ibrahim Suleiman, the protest seeks to draw the attention of President Buhari and the 19 states northern governors to the situation. Suleiman also made remarks about the ongoing SARS protest among others. Luminous Jannamike, [Vanguard News \(15th October\)](#) detail.

On another note, the Court of Appeal has “declared as unconstitutional and void, the Police Act 2020, enacted in September this year as it affects

the constitutional mandate of the Police Service Commission”. The court decreed not only that the Act was in conflict with the provisions of the 1999 constitution but also annulled the recruitment of 10,000 constables by the Police. Adelani Adepegba, [Punch News \(14th October\)](#) reports.

Meanwhile, President Buhari has passed a “vote of confidence” on the ability of the Nigerian Army to protect citizens against all forms of criminality and insurgency. He stated this at the “Combined Passing Out Parade of the Cadets of 67 Regular Course and Short Service Course 46 (Army) at the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA)”. President Buhari while calling for unity assured citizens of the federal government’s support towards tackling insecurity in the country. Johnbosco Agbakwuru reports in [Vanguard News \(10th October\)](#). Moreover, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Tukur Buratai, has disclosed that the Nigerian Army will be launching another operation towards the fight against insurgency. Buratai who stated this in the Combined Conference of COAS, said that “operation fireball” would be extended to terrorist hideouts in Sambisa Forest, Mandara Mountains and the Lake Chad region. Njadvara Musa, [Guardian News \(11th October\)](#) details.

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