

## 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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### **Covid-19: Infection Rate Rises as Minister Reveals Nigeria will Receive Vaccine in January, World Bank Approves \$1.5bn Covid-19 Recovery, Stimulus**

As tension mounts following last's week projection of a second wave, Nigeria has recorded a high rate on its daily infection count with over 900 cases. This was confirmed on website of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). According to the NCDC, this is the highest number of infections recorded in a single-day count since the first case. [The Cable News \(16<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) writes. Following the surge, the Kaduna State Ministry of Education has ordered the closure of all schools within the state. [Ankara, AA News \(16<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) details. The Secretary to the Government of the Federation and chairman of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, Boss Mustapha, announced meanwhile that Nigeria has entered the second wave of the Coronavirus pandemic. Adam Abu-Bashal, [Anadolu Agency \(18<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) writes.

On another note, the Minister of Health, Osagie Ehanire, has revealed ongoing plans by the federal government to procure Covid-19 vaccines in January 2021. Ehanire made the disclosure to pressmen after the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting in Abuja. He stated that Nigeria has signed up with the World Health Organisation (WHO), and Gavi for an advanced market participation in Covax. Ehanire added that various options for the vaccines will be exploited. The federal government had earlier inaugurated an 18-member national Covid-19 task team to ensure vaccine security when it finally gets to the country. Nike Adebawale, [Premium Times \(16<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) explains.

Meanwhile, the World Bank has approved a \$1.5bn package to support a resilient recovery post-Covid-19 in Nigeria. In a statement issued by the World Bank, it notes that recovery stimulus was due to the economic situation in the country and projection of a fall in government revenue. In addition, a new 5-year Country Partnership Framework (CPF) was announced for 2021 to 2024. [Guardian News \(15<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) writes. The World Bank has also estimated that 11 million citizens will fall into poverty as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic by 2020". This was contained in a report by the World Bank under the Nigeria Development Update (NDU). The report analyses the poverty rate in the country as well as the economic situation of the country. Ajala Samuel Akindele, [Premium Times \(16<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) writes.

### **Food Inflation Hits 14.89% as Nigeria Adopts 5-Year Plan to Curb Hunger and Malnutrition, President Buhari Reopens 4 Land Borders**

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), has revealed a hike in food inflation. A report by the NBS, indicates an 18.30% increase in November from 17.38% in October. NBS linked the increase to the rise in the prices of major foods including cereals, potatoes, yam among others. Oluseyi Awojulegbe, [the Cable News \(15<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) details.

On another note, the National Council of Nutrition has approved a 5-year plan to improve the wellbeing of citizens and tackle the challenge of hunger and malnutrition across the country. The plan titled "National Multi-Sectoral Plan of Action for Food and Nutrition (NMPFAN) 2021-2025 was approved by the council headed by Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo. The plan which is to curb the hunger challenges, will also improve the nutritional status in the country. [Premium Times \(15<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) explains.

Meanwhile, President Muhammadu Buhari has approved the opening of Seme, Illela, Maigatari, and Mfun borders. Buhari had ordered the closure of the border for goods in 2019 to prevent smuggling among others. Nicholas Norbrook and Ruth Olurounbi in the [African Report \(16<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) analysed the growing call for the reopening of the borders and the alleged over taxation at the Benin Republic borders. They examined the implication of the closure on the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement (AfCTA). They cited the food inflation as a "good example of the outcome of the border closure". Norbrook and Olurounbi quoted the projection of analyst that the border reopening will improve the trade sector.

Similarly, the World Bank has said that the inflation in the country is as a result of the land border closure, insecurity, among others. This was stated by the World Bank Country Director in Nigeria, Shubham Chaudhuri, at the launch of the latest World Bank Nigeria Development Update. Chaudhuri noted that efforts made to resolve the issue has been thwarted due to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. He raised alarm that Nigeria might plunge further into deeper recession in the next 3 years. [Sahara Reporters, \(12<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) reports.

### **NCC Issues 14-Days Ultimatum to Telecommunication Companies, Subscribers to Link NIN to SIM Registration**

Following last week's directive by the Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC), suspending the registration of SIM cards, the NCC has ordered telecommunication companies to block SIM cards not registered with the National Identity Number (NIN). This development stems from a meeting of key stakeholders in the communications industry as convened by the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Isa Ali Pantami. Mary Ugbodaga, [The Cable News \(15<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) writes.

Disclosing this, the NCC Director of Public Affairs, Ikechukwu Adinde, stated stakeholders in attendance unanimously agreed that "drastic measures have become inevitable to improve the integrity and transparency of the SIM registration process". He said that subscribers are to update their information before December 30, and after the deadline, all SIMs without NINs will be blocked. [Guardian News \(15<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) reports.

Reacting, the House of Representatives has asked the NCC to extend the ultimatum by 10 weeks. This is coming following the motion put forward by the Minority Leader of the House, Ndudi Elumelu. Stressing on the need for the extension, Elumelu stated that 2 weeks is too short for over 200 million citizens to update their information. He added that this could also bring untold hardship on citizens as the Christmas period approaches. Nasir Ayitogo, [Premium Times \(16<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) explains.

### **Tension Heightens as the Call for Zoning of the 2023 Presidential Election Deepens**

Following the growing call for political parties to zone the presidential ticket to the South, several stakeholders have lent their voice to the movement as the struggle for regional dominance heightens. An activist and UK based stalwart of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Emmanuel Ugwuanyi, stated that the "South East people shot themselves on the foot by refusing to join APC in 2015, insisting that it will be difficult to seize the presidential ticket of the party from the North Central in 2023". Ernest Nzor, [Leadership News \(15<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) details.

On the same note, leaders of the South South APC chapter have expressed their commitment towards ensuring that the 2023 ticket is zoned to the region. This was revealed in a meeting attended by several

stakeholders from the region convened by the Caretaker Secretary of the APC, John Akpanudoedehe and a former deputy governor of Edo state, Lucky Imasuen. The leaders called for collaboration as other regions are seeking to acquire the 2023 ticket. He cited the recent defections from members of other political parties to the APC and stressed on the need to cooperate. Omeiza Ajayi writes in [Vanguard News \(16<sup>th</sup> December\)](#). Also Chuks Okocha in [This Day News \(13<sup>th</sup> December\)](#), examined the recent internal restructuring in the APC and the impact on the 2023 elections. Okocha speculates of a brewing crisis within the APC "because of the way things are schemed in the party".

Similarly, Chinedu Asadu in [The Cable News \(12<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) writes of an alleged "fresh crisis is brewing in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)". According to reports coming in, he speculates that the idea of zoning is "tearing the party apart". There are expectations from members of the PDP on the next move of the National Chairman, Uche Secondus led National Working Committee (NWC) who has reiterated that the PDP is not focused on zoning. Reacting, the Governor of Rivers state Nyesom Wike, while criticizing Secondus stated that the "chances of the PDP reclaiming the presidency in 2023 are being threatened under the national working committee he leads". Meanwhile, Secondus gave insight on the recent affairs of the PDP. He made the revelation during a media parley in Abuja. Secondus spoke on the PDP's moves to reposition the party. In regards to zoning, Secondus stated that the PDP is still evaluating its performance in the last election before looking forward. He noted that the ticket is open to all and gave hint of an alleged interest by the former President Goodluck Jonathan in the 2023 election. Secondus disclosed plans to resolve internal party crisis ahead of the general elections. Dirisu Yakubu, [Vanguard News \(14<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) explains

### **Insecurity: Boko-Haram Abducts Hundreds of Students in Katsina State, 340 Students Have Been Released**

As the security situation in the country continues to deteriorate, Boko-Haram has launched another attack on Government Science Secondary School (GSSS), Kankara in Katsina State. This is coming barely 2 weeks after the killing of Rice Farmers on the way to their Rice Fields in Zambamari Local Government Area of Borno State. Gunmen stormed the School, shooting sporadically causing chaos thereby forcing students to run for safety. Follow-up report

on the incident reveals many student missing.

[Aljazeera News \(12<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) writes.

Condemning the attack, President Muhammadu Buhari charged security agencies to reinforce their efforts in rescuing the students. He expressed sympathy to the families of the kidnapped students and those injured. President Buhari also asked for an audit of the student population. Also, the Governor of Katsina State, Aminu Masari, expressed his sympathy and called for calm reassuring citizens of the government's commitment in rescuing the students. Masari also ordered the closure of all GSSS IN Katsina State. [CGTN, \(14<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) reports.

Confirming the number of missing students, Masari has disclosed a total of 333 students missing. He stated this during a presidential delegation visit led by Minister of Defence, Salihi Magashi, at the Katsina Government House. Masari said that the total number of students in the school is 839. Meanwhile, Magashi called for the swift rescue of the students. Abubakar Ahmadu Maishanu, [Premium Times, \(13<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) explains.

On the same note, Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for the attack. The attack which was initially speculated to have been carried out by bandits has been verified by the leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau, to have been orchestrated by them. [Guardian News \(15<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) reports. Speaking on this, Nnamdi Obasi of the International Crisis Group (ICG) warned of grave consequences if Boko Haram expand their reach to the North West. He drew attention to the implications of the abduction to the ongoing investigation by the ICG against terrorists and the government following Amnesty International's report of crimes against humanity. Sam Olukoya and Carley Petesch, [AP News \(16<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) details.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF) has criticized the attack describing it as "unfortunate, regrettable and intolerable". In a statement signed by the Director of Press, Simon Macham, the Chairman of the Forum and Governor of Plateau State, Simon Lalong, expressed support towards the Katsina State government and the security agencies as they tackle the issue. Seriki Adinoyi, [This Day News \(13<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) explains.

Still on the Katsina State incident, the abductors have reached out to parents to start making arrangements for ransom for the speedy release of students. The spokesperson of the federal government, Abdul labaran, who made the disclosure to a journalist, added that the abductors warned security operatives to stop the surveillance of their hideouts to guarantee the safety of the students. Taiwo Adebulu, [The Cable News \(14<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) writes.

In new reports, the abducted 340 school students have been released. This was confirmed by the Katsina State Governor, Aminu Masari. Masari stated this in a television interview. He said the students were released after negotiations with the abductors. Danjuma Michael et al, [Guardian News \(18<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) explains.

Prior, the Department of State Services (DSS) has asked citizens to stop faulting security agencies for the growing insecurity situation in the country. The Director-General of the agency, Yusuf Bichi, made the disclosure at the Security and Emergency Awards (SEMA 2020). Represented by the service spokesman, Peter Afunanya, Bichi stressed on the need for collaboration in order to build a country that is devoid of any insecurity. Also, the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Isa Ali Pantami, represented by Emeka Okoye, Direct Information and Communication Technology, revealed the federal government was reviewing the Cyber-crime Act, "to meet the emerging security challenges of the nation such as terrorism and cyberspace criminality". [Sahara Reporters, \(14<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) reports.

Similarly, the Minister of Science and Technology, Ogbonnaya Onu, has disclosed plans by the federal government to "deploy appropriate technologies to help surmount the security challenges confronting Nigeria". He stated this at the presentation of grants for journals and publications to the Nigerian Academies of Science, Engineering, Social Sciences, Letters and Education at the ministry's headquarters, Abuja. Onu said that the ministry, through the National Space Research Development Agency, was working to use space technology in intelligence gathering and other sensitive aspects of national security. Okechukwu Nnodim, [Punch News \(14<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) details.

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