

## 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 the overall situation in Nigeria.

### Content

ECOWAS Rejects Niger-Coupists' 3-year Transition Plan, African Union Suspends Niger from Activities, Backs ECOWAS, Islamic Clerics Again Sent to Niger after Briefing President Tinubu on First Visit, Nigeria's Vice President Addresses World Leaders at BRICS Summit

Survey Reveals Drop in Nigeria's Unemployment Rate, Press Attacks Reach All-Time High, Foreign Reserve Falls to USD 3.7 Billion, Oil Production Drops by 15,5% in one Month

Insecurity: Nigeria Ranks 144 in Global Peace Index, 100 Dead in Boko Haram, ISWAP Clash, Nigerian Army Foils Attack on Base by Indigenous People of Biafra

### **ECOWAS Rejects Niger Coupists' 3-year Transition Plan, African Union Suspends Niger from Activities, Backs ECOWAS, Islamic Clerics Again Sent to Niger after Briefing President Tinubu on First Visit, Nigeria's Vice President Addresses World Leaders at BRICS Summit**

Officials of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have rejected the three-year transition plan proposed by Niger Republic's military junta at a meeting in Niamey. An ECOWAS official stated that this turn of events has set the ground for a military operation. Meanwhile, thousands of Nigeriens took to the streets declaring support for the military junta. Their demonstration came against the backdrop of ECOWAS' insistence on showing military force to rout out coupists should diplomacy fail to restore ousted president Mohamed Bazoum to power. While there are suspicions of division within the camp of the coupists, they continue to maintain a united front. The coup leader general Abdourahamane Tchiani, has warned that the military and people of Niger would defend the country should ECOWAS go ahead with its invasion plan. [Vanguard News \(August 21<sup>st</sup>\)](#) reports.

The African Union (AU) has joined the international community in imposing more pressure on the military junta in Niger Republic as the continental body announced the suspension of the country over the military coup that ousted president Mohammed Bazoum. In a communiqué, the AU affirmed its support for the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to restore democracy in the country. The AU urged all member states of the AU and the international community, including bilateral and multilateral partners, to reject this unconstitutional change of government and to refrain from any action likely to grant legitimacy to the junta. Jonathan Nda-Isaiah and Innocent Odoh, [The Leadership News \(August 23<sup>rd</sup>\)](#) report.

President Bola Tinubu had last week sent a delegation of Islamic clerics to Niger to seek a diplomatic resolution of the political crisis that followed the July 26 coup d'etat in the country. As chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) he now approved a new trip after a meeting with the clerics led by Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi. The clerics briefed the president on the outcome of their recent visit to Niger where they had a dialogue with the junta. The Islamic clerics are trying to avert any armed conflict in Niger. [Sahara Reporters News \(August 24<sup>th</sup>\)](#) reports.

Vice president Kashim Shettima has addressed the BRICS summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. He stated that the present administration is examining "the variables and evaluating the scope and level of regional and global cooperation to pursue in order to establish Nigeria as the desired friend and partner". According to a statement, Shettima at the summit was speaking to an audience that included the presidents of China, India, Brazil, South Africa and Russia's foreign minister. The vice president assured that Nigeria was committed to shaping and fortifying the global framework and governance concerning all major international issues. While emphasizing partnership as a major key to addressing current global challenges, he stated that the new government sought formidable global partnerships through harnessing the agricultural potential of nations as well as renewable energy to revolutionize Africa, fostering technology, innovation and job prospects for holistic and equitable progress, collaborative efforts on climate change and nature-centered approaches to development. Others include strengthening vibrant private sector participation in global south, nurturing youth employment and skill building as a deterrent against terrorism, organized crime and related challenges and promoting proactive involvement of business leadership through an improved landscape for trade and economic exchange. Leon Usigbe, [Nigerian Tribune News \(August 25<sup>th</sup>\)](#) reports.

### **Survey Reveals Drop in Nigeria's Unemployment Rate, Press Attacks Reach All-Time High, Foreign Reserve Falls to USD 3.7 Billion, Oil Production Drops by 15,5% in one Month**

A survey by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has revealed that Nigeria's unemployment rate dropped to 4.1% in the first quarter of 2023. The unemployment rate stood at 33.3% in the last report of the NBS released as of the fourth quarter of 2022. The last survey was conducted using the 13th International Conference of Labor Statisticians (ICLS) method for the first time. The method has been adopted by 26 countries in Africa so far. The NBS survey was conducted in collaboration with the World Bank and the International Labor Organization (ILO). Faruk Shuaibu, [Daily Trust News \(August 24<sup>th</sup>\)](#) reports.

In 2023, Nigeria has recorded the highest number of press attacks since 1987. This is according to data from the Press Attack Tracker. In the first quarter of 2023, it tracked and verified 45 attacks

on journalists and media organisations. According to Stephanie Douglas, deputy manager of the Media Freedom Project at the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID), these attacks undermine press freedom and demonstrate impunity. She called for the initiation of change through the amendment of restrictive laws and regulations that hinder media freedom. In addition, Douglas emphasized the importance and necessity of establishing an independent commission to prevent governmental interference and allow journalists and media organizations to operate without constraints. Benedicta Akpede, [Premium Times News \(August 21<sup>st</sup>\)](#) reports.

Global financial firm JP Morgan says Nigeria's net foreign exchange (forex) reserve fell to USD 3.7 billion as of 2022, contrary to USD 36.61 billion the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) posted on August 17 on its website. This was contained in the bank's latest report on Nigeria. JP Morgan noted that the lower-than-reported forex reserve was the result of larger currency swaps and borrowings against the forex reserve. According to JP Morgan, the assumptions followed an addition of USD 5 billion in International Monetary Fund Special Drawing Rights (SDR) to external reserves, amounting to 37.8 billion. The firm, however, seems to believe the CBN can still withstand the pressure accompanying the low forex reserve as the rates will continue to rise due to profits from swap arrangements between the CBN and commercial banks. [Sahara Reporters News \(August 22<sup>nd</sup>\)](#) reports.

The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) has revealed that the country's drilling output dropped to 1,081,396 barrels per day (bpd) in July 2023. This data shows a 15.5% decrease compared to 1,248,960 bpd produced in June 2023. Earlier this month, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) said Nigeria's oil production decline made the West African country the third largest producer in Africa. On August 16, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Limited (NNPC) secured a USD 3 billion emergency crude repayment loan from the African Export Import Bank. The NNPC said the crude-for-cash funding would sustain the Naira and stabilize the foreign exchange market which

has witnessed significant volatility in recent weeks. Busola Aro, [The Cable News \(August 22<sup>nd</sup>\)](#) reports.

### **Insecurity: Nigeria Ranks 144 in Global Peace Index, 100 Dead in Boko Haram and ISWAP Clash, Nigerian Army Foils Attack on Base by Indigenous People of Biafra**

Nigeria has been ranked 144th in the 2023 Global Peace Index published by the Institute for Economics and Peace. The 2023 study measures a country's level of negative peace using three domains of peacefulness: ongoing domestic and international conflict, societal safety and security as well as militarization. While Iceland came first as the most peaceful country in the world, Mauritius is ranked first in Africa, followed by Botswana and Sierra Leone. Nigeria ranks 37 out of 44 countries in Africa. Israel Arogbonlo, [Nigerian Tribune \(August 24<sup>th</sup>\)](#) reports.

An infighting that broke out between Boko Haram and the Islamic State of West African Provinces (ISWAP) fighters in Borno state, has allegedly led to the death of more than 100 terrorists on the two sides. It is gathered that the fighting broke out between a faction of Boko Haram and ISWAP over a control dispute around the Lake Chad basin. The ISWAP faction was trying to retaliate against the abduction of 60 of its fighters and 3 commanders by Boko Haram. Sources confirmed that the battle is still ongoing. Alabira Nabordo, [Premium Times News \(August 20<sup>th</sup>\)](#) reports.

The Nigerian Army has reportedly foiled an attack on a military base in Imo state by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) fighters. The Army said the IPOB fighters who attempted the attack on the base were met with stiff resistance by the personnel on the ground. In a statement, the Army said that in the fierce gun battle that ensued on August 20, the troops killed one of the fighters and arrested two. In another operation, troops, acting on intelligence gathered ambushed insurgents who were on a mission to attack a village in Zamfara state. In a fierce fight with the insurgents, troops eliminated two of the criminals and recovered rifles as well as four motorcycles. [Vanguard News \(August 24<sup>th</sup>\)](#) reports.



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