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# 2023 Elections: How INEC Is Systematically Disenfranchising Persons with Special Needs in Niger

By Hamza Ibrahim Abaga

In Niger State, the commission had assured PWDs and those at the old Government Orphanage Home, F-layout Area including other similar places of voter registration, but findings revealed otherwise.

“Maybe the government did not consider us human,” Usman Mohammed, Chairman of the Spinal Cord Injuries Association of Nigeria (SCIAN), Niger State Chapter, told *WikkiTimes*.

Mohammed said the only time INEC officials visited the PWDs home in F-layout for registration was on Saturday, June 26, 2022 after several appeals with the commission through the intervention of one Mallam Awwal, PWDs desk officer at the state INEC office.

Mohammed noted that the INEC officials arrived at about 6 pm after several hours of waiting, and registered only four new voters.

“The INEC official arrived around 6 pm and registered four of our members and a few other persons who were there to change their polling units. It seems the machine was programmed because a few minutes after the arrival of the registration officer, the machine went off and that’s how she left,” Mohammed said.

Fifty-two years old Yusuf Nadabo, also a physically challenged person and a resident of F-layout, a community populated by disabled persons, said, on different occasions, they have been told to assemble their colleagues for voter registration but INEC officials failed to turn up.

Expressing his dissatisfaction, Nadabo who is an indigene of Borno State, said he was tired of the registration process after several abortive efforts to get registered.

## PROHIBITION ACT AGAINST PWDs

In 2019, Nigeria’s President, Muhammadu Buhari signed into law the Discriminations Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act. The law provides for the full integration of PWDs into society and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disabilities.

Despite the act, PWDs’ needs still suffer national priority, let alone at the subnational levels. As a result, PWDs are invariably subjected to discrimination not only during the electoral process but virtually at facets of society.

Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) clearly states the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life without discrimination and on an equal basis with others, and it calls upon state parties to guarantee those rights. This is a vital aspect of combating exclusion and inequality.

## INEC’s FAILURE TO MAKE PROVISION FOR PWDs DURING POLLS

Although the commission’s Chairman, Professor Mahmood Yakubu said a large chunk of the estimated 19 million Nigerians with disability were registered voters, this is not the reality for PWDs in Niger State, *WikkiTimes* can report.

According to INEC, Niger is one of the north-central states with the highest number of newly registered voters — over 1.7 million.

Earlier in 2022, a new Electoral Act signed into law by President Muhammadu Buhari, introduced provisions for persons with special needs during elections, including the provision of suitable means of communication such as braille, large embossed print, electronic devices, sign language interpretation, offsite voting in appropriate cases and those to assist the disabled to vote.

Despite the existence of this law, there were no such provisions for PWDs in Niger State in the just-concluded local council (LG) polls.

Ahmed Mohammed of Limawa B ward in Chanchaga local council said even though the just concluded local government election was a mere consensus among the aspirants, he didn’t see any form of provision for PWDs as promised by INEC.

“I was present in my polling in the just concluded LG election but didn’t see any materials which INEC promised to make available to aid the participation of PWDs. Though we didn’t vote because it was later a consensus between the aspirants,” Mohammed told *WikkiTimes*.

Hearing-impaired Aliyu Abubakar, a resident of Suleja local council said he encountered numerous challenges before he could be registered for his PVC. However, he couldn’t participate in the LG polls because there were no provisions to aid his participation.

“Lack of an observer and agent to help persons with disabilities during the voter’s card registration and election was my problem,” Abubakar lamented, advising INEC to take serious matters of PWDs.

A physically disabled resident of Jere Ward in Paikoro local council, Suleiman Tijjani, told *WikkiTimes* he participated in last month’s LG polls and didn’t see any form of aid promised by the INEC to aid the participation of PWDs.

“In Sabo 06 polling unit where I cast my vote for the just concluded LG election, even though I didn’t see any blind person or PWDs aside myself, I couldn’t spot any representative of INEC who would assist PWDs, especially the visually impaired,” Tijjani explained.

While urging the electoral umpire, INEC and other concerned authorities to ensure the inclusiveness and participation of PWDs and other vulnerable persons. Lack of assistance and proper provision for PWDs has contributed significantly to the lack of their participation in the polls, Tijjani believes.

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## After WikkiTimes' Story, Sidelined Bauchi Community Gets Dispensary

By Usman Babaji

Barely a month after WikkiTimes exposed the dire health conditions in Gwallagan Mayaka, a suburb of Bauchi State, the state government has built a dispensary for the locals.

WikkiTimes had reported that the community which is four kilometres away from the state government house harbours about 20,000 locals who were denied access to public healthcare services. The locals had over the years depended on a volunteer who operated a rented shop.

This Bauchi Community Is 4km Away From Government House, but Thousands of Locals Access Healthcare in a Rented Shop Managed by Volunteer

It was reported that a Primary Healthcare Centre (PHC) was established in the community about seven years ago, but it continued to degenerate from its own structure to a shop rented by locals.

Initially, the facility was relocated to another place after the community members could not renew its rent. A contingent of community members under the aegis of the Village Development Committee (VDC) rented another apartment afterwards, but the cash-strapped facility later found its way to a shop.

During WikkiTimes' visit to the area on February 6, the newly constructed dispensary was completed with the exception of toilets which are under construction. However, the community expressed their joy over the dispensary constructed by the government.

The Community Head, (Wakilin Sarkin Gwallaga) Aliyu Umar thanked Governor Bala Mohammed for a swift action to consider their plights. He also extolled the ministry of local government affairs under Abdurrazak Nuhu Zaki.

"We thank the governor and the commissioner in the state ministry for local governments for the gesture," he said.



He explained that with their numerous livelihood challenges, the gesture has fortified their hope that other pressing issues bedeviling the community would be addressed as well. "We know our dreaded road will be next – they will construct it by God's grace," the smiling village head said.

WikkiTimes also revealed how the road linking the community to other communities including the seat of power, exposed the locals to socioeconomic hardships for several years.

The community is geographically part of the Bauchi metropolis, but socially isolated, Umar had said, urging the state government to execute more developmental projects in the community for economic and social benefits.

He also pleaded with the state government to deploy healthcare staff to the community to handle their decade-long sufferings, adding that Gwallagan Mayaka is the food basket of Bauchi town.

"We produce a lot of food for the town. Just go to the road and see how farm produces is transported to the town but the road is the problem," said Umar. "I know he can't solve all the problems overnight, but we can't conceal our miserable situations too. We thank him so much, and remain grateful for the gesture."

## UNICEF Decries Dearth of Experienced Teachers in Adamawa, Borno, Yobe

By Usman Babaji

Phuong T. Nguyen, Chief of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for Maiduguri Field Office has lamented the shortage of qualified teachers managing schools in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states.

She noted that only 29 per cent of schools in the states have teachers with minimum and required qualifications to teach. Speaking during a media dialogue to amplify the achievements of global partnership for education accelerated funding in Maiduguri, Nguyen said the devastating impact of poverty, insecurity and the COVID-19 pandemic further deteriorated access to quality education in the Northeast region.

She said average pupil-teacher ratio in the region is 124:1 where about half of all the schools need rehabilitation. "Only 47% of schools in Borno State have furniture with lower proportions in Yobe (32%) and Adamawa (26%)," she said.

The UN officer added that only 30% of schools in Adamawa have adequate learning material for pupils with lower proportions of 26% and 25% in Borno and Yobe respectively.

She further explained that about 1.9 million boys, girls and youth affected by the conflict in the region have no access to basic quality education. Nguyen said UNICEF is partnering with the federal government through the Ministry of Education, the National Teachers' Institute (NTI) and the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) to support over 18, 000 unqualified teachers working in the region in addressing the challenges.



## Adamawa, Taraba, Others Get New Commissioners of Police

Adebola Hamzat and Suleiman Yusuf have been announced as the new Commissioners of Police for Adamawa and Taraba states.

Olumuyiwa Adejobi, Force Public Relations Officer (FPRO) disclosed this in a press statement, noting that the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Usman Alkali Baba, has also ordered the posting and redeployment of Deputy Inspectors-General of Police (DIGs).

Other police sheriffs redeployed, according to Adejobi are CP Emeka Frank Mba, for Ogun State, CP Idowu Owohunwa Lagos State while CP Faleye E.S. Olaleye was posted to Ebonyi State.

CP Matthew Akinyosola for AIG Police Mobile, CP Jonathan Towuru for AIG Zone 6 Calabar, CP Sylvester A. Alabi for AIG Zone 2 Lagos, CP Akande Sikiru Kayode for AIG Zone 11 Osogbo and CP Abimbola Adebola Shokoya for AIG Zone 17 Akure.

Adejobi added that DIG Danmallam Mohammed had been redeployed to the Department of Finance and Administration.

“The IGP, as noted in the statement, charged the newly posted officers to hit the ground running to ensure the mission, vision, and policy statements of his administration are effectively complied with in the areas of crime-fighting, public cooperation, and safety.

Adejobi said the IGP also called for support and cooperation from members of the public to enable the newly posted senior officers to perform optimally on their mandate, noting that the postings were with immediate effect.

## Bauchi Emir Warns Presidential, Gubernatorial Candidates Over Hate Speech

By Usman Babaji



Ahead of the general election, Dr. Rilwanu Suleiman Adamu, the Emir of Bauchi has warned political aspirants at all levels to avoid hate speeches and political violence.

Rilwanu made this plea on Tuesday when Atiku Abubakar, presidential flagbearer of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) visited his palace before he proceeded to a campaign venue at Sir Tafawa Balewa stadium.

The monarch urged aspirants to ensure peaceful polls in the coming election. WikkiTimes gathered that Atiku had visited the palace for the monarch's divine blessings.

Similarly, Niger State Commissioner of Police, Ogundele J. Ayodeji, warned political parties, candidates and their followers against unguarded speech that could breach public peace ahead of the polls.

The police stated this yesterday in Minna, the capital of Niger State when political parties signed a peace accord for the general election.

“Peace cannot be achieved without collaboration and synergy with other relevant political stakeholders, hence the reason for the invitation to sign the peace accord among all the political parties and their candidates,” he said.

## Kano Hisbah Nabs Teacher for Defiling, Impregnating Student

By Idris Kamal Ibrahim

The Kano State Hisbah Commission has arrested an Islamic school teacher who is accused of sexually assaulting a student at his late father's school.

The Commander of the commission, Sheikh Muhammad Harun Ibn Sina, said the accused teacher was nabbed following reliable information, adding that investigation is still ongoing. He noted that operatives of the commission have also travelled to the school to obtain more information about the matter.

Aminiya, the Daily Trust Hausa version reported that the teacher impregnated one of the students.

The Islamic school is prominent in Nassarawa area in Kano and it is owned by a late prominent cleric who was devoted to Islamic propagation in the state.

After his demise, the school is now run by his family members including the accused biological son.

Sources revealed that the teacher is also conspiring with the impregnated student whom he later married, to bring more students to their matrimonial home to defile them as well.



## Fuel Stations Not Accepting Transfer, POS Transactions Risk Sanction

By Usman Babaji



### After WikkiTimes' Story, Sidelined Bauchi Community Gets Dispensary

Fuel stations across the country that refused to accept Point of Sale (POS) or bank transfer transactions amid cash scarcity would be sanctioned, according to Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA).

Kimchi Apollo, the agency's General Manager, Corporate Communications and Stakeholders Management disclosed this yesterday in Abuja.

"It has come to the attention of the NMDPRA that some retail outlets are not accepting the use of POS machines at their fuelling stations due to the recent cash crunch brought about by the new Naira design," he said. "The authority frowns at this recent behaviour which is causing untold hardship for Nigerians at a time when all hands should be on deck to assist the government in the transition to the new Naira."

In addition, Apollo ordered fuel stations and other retail outlets not to add extra charges to the cashless transaction. According to him, authority and security agencies would be at retail outlets to enforce compliance with the directive, warning that defaulters would be sanctioned.

He reiterated the commitment of the agency towards ensuring quality services in the sale and distribution of petroleum products in the country.

## Bauchi Gov Decries Citizens' Sufferings Amid Scarcity of New Naira Notes

By Usman Babaji

Senator Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed, the Governor of Bauchi State has decried untold hardships of his subjects as a result of the scarcity of naira notes crippling businesses across the country.

He urged the federal government and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to provide measures that would reduce the sufferings faced by citizens in getting the new notes.

"Have compassion for the poor, have compassion for the community," the governor stated on his Facebook handle on Thursday.

"With this, I am calling on the federal government and the central bank of Nigeria to provide ways to facilitate the provision of funds to banks and the community to enable them to carry on with their day-to-day operations," he added.

Bala also urged the security agencies to monitor bank officials and POS operators who hoard and sell the new notes, thereby exacerbating people's suffering.

"We call on the security agencies to monitor and punish bank officials and POS operators who hide new currency notes or sell them because this violates the provisions of the constitution and infringes the social laws," said Bala.

WikkiTimes had reported that residents of Bauchi suffered untold hardships in getting the new notes from their various banks.

In October last year, CBN revealed its plan to redesign the N200, N500 and N1,000 notes, adding that the old ones would not be accepted as legal tender after the expiration of the dateline. However, the apex bank extended the deadline by 10 more days.

Last week, the CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele, at a meeting with an ad-hoc committee on the review of the apex bank cashless policy and currency swap reiterates that the old series of the notes will lose legal tender status after February 10, 2023.

On Thursday CBN insisted that it is committed to ensuring that the new notes reach the hands of Nigerians as soon as possible. In collaboration with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practice Commission (ICPC), CBN has been carrying out Banks' Branch Spot-Checks on ATMs to tackle violations of the processes.



## Return Old Notes into Circulation, Print Sufficient New Ones to Tackle Scarcity — Tilde Begs Buhari

By Usman Babaji

Dr Aliyu Usman Tilde, the erstwhile commissioner for Education in Bauchi State, has pleaded with President Muhammadu Buhari to direct Central Bank of Nigeria CBN to bridge the gap in cash supply by returning old naira notes into circulation to normalise supply and frustrate its hoarding by bank managers.

Tilde stated this on his Facebook handle following the suspension of the February 10 deadline by supreme court on the use of old notes on Wednesday.

WikkiTimes had earlier reported that the apex court restrained the federal government from banning the use of the old naira notes from February 10, following an ex parte application brought by governors of Kaduna, Kogi and Zamfara states.

Young Bauchi-born Tech Enthusiast, Tilde Develops iOS App

He said the court ruling is not enough to ease the hardship experienced by Nigerians as virtually all the old notes are in the CBN's custody, stressing that additional measures become necessary and should be immediate.

The former commissioner suggested that Buhari should direct CBN to also print sufficient new notes as the N300 billion new notes printed are not enough.

“Print sufficient new notes. As seen now, even without hoarding and diversion, the volume of cash used in essential, non-formal transactions was underestimated,” he wrote. “Clearly, the N300bn new notes printed are not enough. With more printed and circulated over time the old ones can be withdrawn gradually and painlessly.”

Tilde also called on the president to direct for upgrading of internet banking platforms to become very effective, lamenting that it is clear that commercial banks and the CBN have not developed their software on internet banking platforms to the levels of containing the millions of transactions that the cashless policy portends daily.

He added: “CBN should push for sufficient upgrading of the facilities immediately. This will greatly reduce the pressure of cash, allowing Nigerians to adapt to cashless transactions easily and shortly.

Few Days After Tilde's Resignation, Bauchi Ministry of Education Hasn't Updated Its Website

“Rural LGAs that do not have sufficient banking facilities should be given consideration different from urban areas. Though cash makes their people vulnerable to kidnapping and robbery, a way out for their banking requirements must be invented and implemented well through until they catch up with the urban areas.

“Shift deadline indefinitely. Time creates pressure. Pressure creates panic. Panic creates chaos. Suspend the idea of any deadline now until the above three conditions are met. Then a reasonable deadline can be set without any pressure, panic or chaos.”

He, however, extolled President Buhari for introducing the cashless policy, stating it will become a reality within a short time if the right steps are taken.

Tilde resigned from his position in the Bauchi State Executive Council under the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) on December 5, 2022. Shortly after relinquishing the seat, he stated reasons why he would vote for the All Progressive Congress (APC) presidential candidate, Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

## Thugs Disrupt PDP Meeting in Gombe, Injure 5

By Hafsa Mohammed Ibrahim



Yet-to-be-identified thugs on Saturday evening, besieged the meeting premises of the Peoples Democratic Party in Gombe State, injuring five stalwarts and vandalising other valuables at the residence of Salisu Abdulaziz who hosted the meeting.

WikkiTimes gathered that Abdulaziz otherwise known as Mr B, had invited women and youths to his Jekadafari residence in Gombe for a meeting before they were waylaid.

Addressing newsmen on Monday, Abdulaziz said the thugs attacked women, youths and men attending the meeting.

“They vandalised my house, broke my gate and all electrical bulbs, as well as my windows. We were lucky that the police were quick to intervene and calm the situation,” he said.

Mahid Mu'azu Abubakar, spokesman for Gombe Police Command confirmed the incident, saying at least five people were injured. According to him, the injured people had been evacuated to the hospital. But the police were yet to arrest anyone in connection to the invasion, he said, adding the command is still investigating the matter.



# How Boko Haram Spared Borno Famous Female Journalist, Hauwa For A Kind Husband

By Hafsa Mohammad Ibrahim



Boko Haram insurgents shied away from maiming Hauwa Bata, a renowned Peace fm Maiduguri News Manager and an On-Air Personality 16 years ago after her husband offered them a helping hand when they disguised themselves to be Almajiris.

Hauwa had no idea of what transpired between her husband and the insurgents. At that time, she preoccupied herself with her journalism career.

Trusting the safety protocols she deployed in other to stay safe, she believed that no one can identify her face, a mirror image that the insurgents proved to be deceptively wrong.

Her Press Diary reports that at a point during the height of the Boko Haram insurgency in Maiduguri, there exists mistrust among the military, the insurgents and the media.

It was not a funny epoch for media professionals in the field in Borno. "The press was in the middle of it all," Hauwa recalled.

The growing mistrust contributed to the feeling of insecurity among journalists covering the insurgency at that time and they felt threatened.

"It became a problem for our safety, family and places of work," she said.

One day after Hauwa was invited to cover a parade of suspected insurgents at the Maiduguri Police Command, an unknown person placed a call to her line warning her not to ever show her face to cover anything that has to do with Boko Haram.

Hauwa added, "A journalist has no hiding place. I used to brag that people in town could not place a name to my face because I work in a radio station and so people only know my voice but I was shocked to hear someone and call me and say we saw you on TV. When next you go, stop showing your face."

"Your husband was a good man. We were once at your gate we begged for money and he gave us. We are leaving you because of your husband."

"I said no more going out for coverages. It is enough that they know my face, they know my children, they know my husband and they know my house."

However, after the phone conversation, Hauwa increasingly became unsafe. She relocated to a different area within the Maiduguri metropolis. Sought a transfer out of Borno State entirely but could not leave after getting approval for the transfer.

Hauwa was brave enough to assume a new journalism perspective that encouraged her to stay back and fight and build a legacy as a fearless, female journalist.



# North East, West Have Highest Number of People Who Justify Wife Beating

*By Yakubu Mohammed*

Among the six geo-political zones in Nigeria, North East and North West have the highest number of people who justified wife-beating, according to data obtained from StatiSense, a data-tech company with expertise in analysis, infographics and training among others.

Presumably, the data interpreted that the northeastern and western states top the list in various categories of why husbands beat their wives.

The data sourced from the 2018 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) further stated reasons why husbands beat their wives. They include food burning, neglecting children, arguments and non-consent. It also showed the percentages of men and women who justified wife battering.

## NEGLECTING CHILDREN

Some men beat their wives for neglecting their children, the data revealed, showing the percentage of women and men who justified this.

In North East, 32.3% of women supported wife battering as a punishment for neglecting children. This is way up higher than 21.1% of men who shared held a similar perception.

In North West, 31.4% of women justified wife battering for neglecting children. They were backed by 14.9% of the opposite gender.

While North Central and South East have fewer men [5% and 6.1%] who supported such punishment for the offence, their women outnumbered them with 24% and 13.4% accordingly.

In South-South, there was a slight margin between men and women who justified wife battering for neglecting children. While 10.9% of men supported this, they were seconded by 11.6% of women.

In South West, 7.4% and 4.7% of men and women nodded to wife-beating for this particular offence.

## GOING OUT WITHOUT HUSBANDS' PERMISSION

North East and North West, again top list of geo-political zones with the highest number of people who justified wife beating for going out without their husbands' consent.

A large chunk of women (34.8%) in North East believed husbands could beat their wives who go out without prior consent. However, they share similar beliefs with 19.2% of men in the geo-political zone.

Women in North West still maintained their position just like their counterparts in North East. Approximately, 35% of them voted in favour of wife battering for the above offence. They held the same perception as 16.2% of men in Northwestern states.

In North Central, 21.5% of women outshined 5% of men in justifying wife beating in a case a woman goes out without her husband's permission.

Twelve per cent of women in the South East shared similar views as their contemporaries in other regions. Their men (7.3%) agreed with them. In South-South, women (10.1%) and men (13.1%), held the same beliefs.

A slight margin was be

between men (5.1%) and women (4.6%) in South West.

## WOMEN WHO BURN FOOD

An estimated percentage of 18 men in North East would support wife-beating in a situation where food got burnt. Similarly, 23.7% of women agreed with them.

North West, again, maintained its second position in this category with 24.7% of women and 11.1% of men, supporting wife battering.

Men in North Central and South West portrayed civility with 2.1% and 2% in South West against 14.4% and 2.2% of women who justified wife battering for burnt food. In South South, 3.4% of men and women agreed that husbands can beat their wives for burning food. However, 5.9% of women and 2.8% of men held the same beliefs in South East.

## ARGUING WITH HUSBANDS

A joint percentage of 53.5 men and women in North East argued that husbands can beat their wives who argue with them. The statistics reduced in North West, where 43.7% voted for the same motion. Jointly, the statistics declined in North Central (29.9%), South East (21.8%), South-South (22.4%) and 9% in South West.

## THE WAY OUT

The Executive Director of Alheri Community Development and Support Initiative (Alheri-CDSI), a civil society organisation in North East, Dr Hamid Adamu Mohammad, said the issue of wife battering is rooted in cultural and religious beliefs. Level of education also contributes, he opined.

According to him, some people misunderstood the position of Islam that husband could beat their wives if they go wrong. "But marriage is not like that in Islam. Though authority belongs to husbands in marriage, Islam restricts misusing the authority," he said.

Dr Hamid urged non-governmental organisations to get scholars who understand religion and family building for effective awareness against wife battering.

"Husbands are to treat their wives well," he said, adding they should pamper and cajole them. "These are the kinds of things religious leaders should emphasise in marital relationship, rather than emphasising that husbands could beat their wives."

He added: "If they say you have the right to beat your wife, what type of beating? There was no time the prophet battered his wives. He said you should protect them as your dignity and value them previously."

In close, Dr Hamid noted that there is a need for town hall meetings and awareness against wife battering.



# Northeast Labour Party's Leaders Dump Obi-Datti For Atiku-Okowa

By Idris Kanmal Ibrahim

Ahead of the February Presidential election in Nigeria, the North East Presidential Campaign Council (PCC) of the Labour Party (LP) has diverted their support to Atiku Abubakar instead of the party's presidential candidate, Peter Obi.

Announcing the decision during a press Conference held at Khairan Guest House in Bauchi on Tuesday, the Spokesperson of the Party's Presidential Campaign Council, North East, Muhammad Pantami, declared that over 40 million voters in the North East sub-region will vote for Alhaji Atiku Abubakar of the PDP in the 2023 general elections.

To him, based on their observations, the action of the leaders of the party has rendered the support groups and the Presidential Campaign Council of the party in the North East worthless most especially during presidential Campaign rallies despite having a huge number of party members of about 4 million voters.

Muhammad Pantami further explained that they have not been carried along during campaign rallies in almost all the states of the North East which include Taraba, Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe and Borno.

"And from all indications the story will not change in Yobe State tomorrow 1st February 2023", he said.

Pantami who lamented that the Labour Party has been bedevilled by a lack of internal democracy, Tribalism and Godfatherism, alleged that his members have not been getting complete information about the internal functioning of the party.

He said power inside the party is concentrated among the leaders, such that, not all members are able to influence decisions.

Pantami further alleged that the Northern block is not been involved in the process of decision-making in the party.

"We only see politicking activities going or asked to do something without adequate time and other resources to prepare effectively, unlike the southerners", he said.

The Spokesperson of the North East Labour Party Presidential campaign council also revealed that lack of federal character is the order of the day in the party such that loyalty towards leaders becomes more important than loyalty to the party principles, policies, and patriotism.

Muhammad Pantami stated that the mainstream politicking decision of the party and the presidential campaign council (PCC) is tilted toward Southerners in the party, thereby sidelining Northerners.

"We the northerners, constitute about 65% of the voting in the presidential elections, our members are totally not satisfied with this the situation", he said.

Pantami went further to note that "despite the fact that the North has a greater percentage of voters, this problem of sidelining persists, the current situation calls for an action".

According to him, loyalty to a few individuals that influence major decisions becomes more important than loyalty to the party constitution and patriotism which has made it impossible for many hardworking stakeholders to be engaged properly in the politicking of the party.

He added that the acute lack of proper engagement of stakeholders, leaders and PCC Presidential campaign council members from the North is one of the major issues that made it necessary for them to find an alternative platform for their political engagement.

Pantami noted that leadership actions and actions in the Labour Party have not bonded leaders and followers together in a mutual and continuing pursuit of a higher purpose, which he said has highly reduced the possibility of the success of the party in the coming presidential polls.

"Based on the aforementioned issues raised, we the leaders, stakeholders and about 4 million registered voters in the six states of Taraba, Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Borno, and Yobe resolved firmly to resign our membership from the labour party and defect to the People's Democratic Party", he declared.

"We also resolved to declare our full support to Alhaji Atiku Abubakar of the PDP", he concluded.



*Continued from page 2*

## **PWDs ACCUSED NIGER GOVT OF NEGLECT**

“We are not the government’s priority, but I want to let them know that there is ability in disability,” Ahmed Mohammed, another physically challenged Niger resident. “ They do not care about our fundamental human rights.”

WikkiTimes understands there are a number of things that can be done to add value to PWDs’ lives, but it takes a government committed to the needs and plights of vulnerable persons to achieve them.

Mohammed noted that there are loopholes and a lack of proper arrangement in the process of voters’ card registration. “As such the Government must do the needful to protect the rights of PWDs and every other Nigerian,” he said.

## **EXPERT’S VIEWS**

According to Victor Ebiloma, a lawyer and disability rights advocate, the challenges encountered by PWDs in the electioneering process are numerous and it can only be corrected with support from political parties, security personnel, Emergency Management Bodies (EMBs) including the ordinary citizens in society.

Ebilema told WikkiTimes that the challenges include poor implementation of government policies and plans including deficiency in the country’s electoral commission’s infrastructure, which has caused a huge setback for the whole system.

“Many persons with disabilities do not know their rights. And you cannot blame them. Over the years, our political antecedents, our political process and our parties have been very exclusive. If persons without disabilities in Nigeria have an apathetic attitude towards elections, you can imagine what it is for PWDs,” Ebilema said.

## **FEDERAL AND STATE INEC REACT**

When contacted, Arthur Adzape, the head, Voter Education & Publicity (INEC office), Minna, claimed the commission did not neglect people with special needs in the Niger State. He added that a registration officer was earlier sent to the government’s old people’s home in F-layout and other locations within the state capital to address their needs.

“WikkiTimes’ allegation or how will I call it — that PWDs in the state were neglected is not true, because I personally fueled INEC’s Hilux car to the Registration Officers (RO) of Chanchaga LGA to carry out the excise in those places,” Adzape claimed.

Contrarily, INEC Public Relations Officer (PRO) in the state, Usman Abubakar Kuta told WikkiTimes that the ROs team was at the F-layout but there was a misunderstanding between PWDs and the RO which lead to the humiliation of the lady in charge to vow not to return to the area.

But PWDs denied humiliating workers of the commission. Instead, it was an INEC staff (a lady) who was sent to register them (PWDs) that accused a grown-up man of manipulating his age. The matter, according to PWDs who spoke to this paper was resolved, but the INEC staff left [in anger] and vowed never to return.

As for the provision for persons with disabilities, Usman Aliyu, spokesman for Niger State Independent Electoral Commission (NSIEC), said the State has yet to implement it. Hopefully, the commission will take note of it when the elections are held in 2023, he noted.

“Both the state and federal government has provision for PWDs in their electoral guidelines and as such will take cognisance of the rule so it could be implemented in the next year’s general election,” Aliyu said. “But as for now, it is not implemented yet.”

***This publication is produced with support from the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ) under the Collaborative Media Engagement for Development Inclusivity and Accountability Project (CMEDIA) funded by the MacArthur Foundation***



# How Kano Fraudsters Pirated Vision FM Staff ID Cards to Scam Plaza Owner

By Yakubu Mohammed

The duo of Mujahid Kabir and Abba Imam who claimed to be journalists were arrested after initiating a fake bank transfer of N33,000 to buy a bag of rice at a plaza in Sharada Quarters, Kano State.

According to a police report, the suspects confessed to having stolen two identity cards from Vision FM in Kano and made fake copies carrying their names and photographs. They would later proceed to Sharada Quarters where they made the fake transfer.

Abdullahi Haruna Kiyawa, spokesman for Kano Police Command told journalists that the suspects were arrested on February 2, following a tip-off by the owner of the plaza.

“On 2nd February 2023 at about 1700hrs, a report was received from the Manager of a Plaza at Sharada Quarters, Kano Municipal LGA, Kano State that, two people went to their Plaza, purchased a bag of rice at N33,000 and generated a fake bank transfer alert to them.

“On receipt of the report, the Commissioner of Police, Kano State Command CP Mamman Dauda, psc(+) raised and instructed a team of detectives led by SP Abdulrahim Adamu, Divisional Police Officer, Sharada Division to arrest the culprits.

“The team immediately proceeded to the scene and arrested the two suspects while trying to escape, one Mujahid Kabir, ‘m’, 30 Years old, of Ahmadu Bello Way and Abba Imam, ‘m’, 30 years old, of Zoo Road Kano. On spot search, the suspects were found in possession of Vision FM Personnel Identity Cards.

Kano Hisbah Backs Woman Who Married Daughter’s Boy Friend

“On preliminary investigation, the suspects confessed to having gone to Vision FM Radio station Kano, stole two personnel Identity Cards and made fake copies bearing their names and photographs. They further confessed to having gone to the said plaza at Sharada Quarters, bought a bag of rice and made a fake transaction with the cashier.”

The Commissioner of Police directed the case to be transferred to the Command’s Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for discreet investigation. Suspects will be charged to court upon completion of the investigation,” Kiyawa stated, adding the commissioner of police advised residents to be wary of such scenarios.

## ICPC Arrests Sterling Bank’s Senior Staff for ‘Hoarding’ N258m New Notes

Operatives of Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) have arrested the regional and service managers of Sterling Bank, Abuja, for allegedly hoarding a sum of N258 million. The anti-corruption commission said the discovery followed one of its operations at ensuring that commercial banks and other interest groups do not flout directives by Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). “When the ICPC monitoring team visited the bank and discovered the stashed new Naira notes in the bank’s vault it was informed that the cash was the remnant of what the CBN had given the bank for onward distribution to its branches,” the agency tweeted, explaining that the team found out that only N5 million each were distributed to their various branches. The commission noted that the arrested senior staff were later granted administrative bail while investigation continues. Similarly, ICPC said it also arrested the Head of Operations, Keystone Bank, Mararaba in Nasarawa State for frustrating customers who wanted to get the new notes. It said its team while on routine operation, found out that the Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) at the branch were not dispensing to its customers, while other bank customers were accessing only N1,000. “It was only after the arrest was made and clarification received from CBN that the position of the officers of the Bank was not correct, that the ATMs started dispensing Five Thousand Naira to non-customers and Ten Thousand Naira to its customers,” it added.



# ICIR Calls Journalists to Apply for OCR Project

By Babaji Usman

The International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) is calling for applications from suitable and qualified journalists for the second phase of its Open Contract Reporting Project (OCR) in 2023.

In a press statement issued by the newsroom, the OCR is an accountability reporting project which seeks to promote fiscal transparency and accountability in the budget and procurement processes in Nigeria.

In the last five years, the centre has worked to build the capacity for journalists to effectively investigate and report on budget and procurement issues, thus strengthening open contracting processes and engendering effective service delivery for the welfare of the citizens, particularly at the sub-regional level.

The statement added that the OCR is a three-year project funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation under its “On-Nigeria Anti-corruption” programme and would last until 2024.

The application, according to the statement is for journalists in media houses at state and local government levels across print, electronic and digital media in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria.

“The project will build capacity and provide mentoring and financial support for selected journalists to work with the ICIR to undertake investigative and data-driven reports on budget and procurement issues. The ICIR would work with selected journalists for the remainder of the project,” the statement read in part.

Based on the application criteria, journalists with a minimum of three years experience in print, electronic and online media from across the six geopolitical zones can apply and would be expected to report on open contract issues in their respective states. “Freelancers with a track record of accountability reporting are also welcome,” the statement added.

It explained that intending journalists must provide proof of prior critical reporting in the last 12 months and proceed to the online application through this [link](#).

# How Bauchi Commercial Banks Hoard New Naira Notes As Customers Queue Endlessly to Access Cash

By Idris Kanmal Ibrahim

Commercial banks in Bauchi State are stockpiling new naira notes in their vaults as customers look for supplies, WikkiTimes can reports.

The banks are seen defying the guidelines of the Central Bank of Nigeria, mandating them to work 24/7 and make new notes available to customers.

WikkiTimes reports that the CBN guidelines instructed all commercial banks to work 24/7 in order to mop up old naira notes and make the redesigned currency available to Nigerians.

A CBN task force led by Dr. Jibrin Abdulkadir in a special operation to monitor the banks found most of the culpable.

INVESTIGATION: First City Monument Bank extorts money from Bauchi Workers undergoing BVN verification

The task force also noted with dismay that the banks have refused to issue new naira notes collected from the apex bank, noting that it was a clear case of sabotage.

At First Bank PLC, for instance, the task force found bank employees keeping money in the vault while their customers were struggling to withdraw money for hours. WikkiTimes witnessed CBN officials forcing First Bank employees to deposit naira notes at ATMs before customers began withdrawing.

After Emptying Gombe Man’s FCMB Account, Fraudster Takes Additional Loan

The First bank employees claimed the money they received from CBN was distributed to other branches in the state, but findings suggest they lied.

When the task force visited one of their branches in the Central Market in the Bauchi metropolis, many people were seen standing in line, mostly in vain because the bank’s ATMs would not dispense cash.

“To our greatest dismay, there is no single official of the first bank on the ground despite the very clear instructions that all banks must work 24/7 in a week. Many people are queuing up and most of the ATMs are not dispensing cash. Before now, we were at FCMB, again a lot of citizens were in the queue and the machines are not dispensing”, Jibrin Abdulkadir the CBN team lead noted with regret.

**Continue reading [here](#)**

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## Petrol Tanker Smashes Student's Head on Niger Highway

By Umar Yunusa

Tragedy struck in Mokwa community of Niger State when a petrol-laden tanker killed a yet-to-be-identified student of College of Education (COE), Minna.

The student, according to sources was schooling at the college's satellite campus in Mokwa local council. He was said to be returning home on a motorcycle with his colleague after writing their examination last Tuesday. However, the other person cheated death, sources said.

The Sector Commander for Niger State Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Kumar Tsukwam confirmed the incident to WikkiTimes, saying the student's head was smashed and his intestines busted out.

"From the eye witness, the victim was coming from Government Teachers college (GTC) Mokwa, which is along the main road where the crash occurred after writing his NCE exams," the sector commander told WikkiTimes. "The victim, riding a bike was trying to overtake a tanker, getting to the side of the trailer, he saw an oncoming vehicle and trying to dodge and mistakenly fell inside the back tyre of the trailer."

"The family of the deceased was at the crash scene and they insisted the body should be released to them," he continued, adding that men of the Nigeria police force were at the scene for an investigation.

An eyewitness told our reporter the incident happened last Tuesday around 5 pm. "It happened exactly opposite the Coca-Cola office near where Alhaji Nuru is selling cars," he said.

"The victim was trying to speed into the highway after dodging a car," he corroborated the sector commander. "After dodging the car, they were unable to control the bike again. And the trailer driver was unable to control the trailer too. That was how the deceased was crushed to death by the tanker."

He claimed that the deceased was a student of COE's branch in Mokwa.



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“The Commissioner of Police directed the case to be transferred to the Command’s Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for discreet investigation. Suspects will be charged to court upon completion of the investigation,” Kiyawa stated, adding the commissioner of police advised residents to be wary of such scenarios.

## How Fulanis Were Evicted from Taraba Communities, Become Refugees in Nasarawa

By Yawale Adamu

Scores of Fulanis from Gayam and Jatau communities under Gashaka and Bali local councils of Taraba State have fled their homes as a result of unchecked incursion by local vigilantes whom they believe were being sponsored by the state government.

Over 100 of the pastoralists were spotted at Mararaba motor park in Nasarawa State, near the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), according to Daily Trust. They told the medium they were victims of repeated onslaught by the vigilantes who evicted them after an unofficial quit notice.

“We thought it was a joke as our village head did not notify us of anything. We thought that nothing would happen to us,” said Usman Dan Usman, one of the evicted victims. “But suddenly, we saw them and they followed us to our houses, killing and confiscating our cattle and chickens.”

Usman alleged that the vigilantes killed children and elderly persons even as their offence remains unknown.

### A MISSING BROTHER

Umar Babuga, another victim, explained that he was with his brother when the vigilantes attacked them on a field and seized their cattle numbering about 200. Babuga further stated that he has been searching for his elder brother whom he believes might have been killed.

“That morning, we took our livestock to drink water when the vigilantes came on motorcycles and some on foot, shooting towards our direction,” he recalled. “They confiscated our cattle. We fled, but our elder brother could not run. They took everything and him as well. While we were running, we heard gunshots and presumed they may have killed him. We searched for him but couldn’t find him. There was no trace of his remains.”

The Taraba State Police Command claimed it was not aware of the incident. Usman Abdullahi, spokesman for the command said: “The command is not aware that some Fulani residents have been attacked and chased out of their houses and forced to relocate to the FCT.”

Although not everyone who fled the community were victims of the attacks, some took to their heels for fear of being attacked.

“We fled because of horrific news from neighbouring communities, such as Jatau in Bali Local Government Area,” said Umaru Abubakar, a resident of Gayam who revealed that the killings started in Jatau where cattle were rsusled and a number of houses were razed.

However, the Taraba State government refuted claims that the Fulanis were attacked by vigilantes. Lois Emmanuel, commissioner for information and orientation in the state, claimed that assailants from neighbouring Cameroon attacked several communities in the area threatening lives and property.

His words: “Naturally, this development has attracted resistance from locals. It is, therefore, not an inter-ethnic or intra-ethnic rivalry or clashes as some people portray it. “It is for this reason that the involvement of vigilantes is under the strict supervision of security agencies. They are not allowed to operate alone so that they will not take laws into their hands.”



# FG Bows to Supreme Court's Ruling on Deadline for Old Notes

By Usman Babaji



He added: "What we have at hand is a situation where the central bank was not joined as a party and if the central bank as an institution was not joined as a party, the position of the law is clear that the original jurisdiction of the supreme court cannot be properly invoked. So we have given considerations to diverse issues, inclusive of the issue of jurisdiction, and come Wednesday we will argue the case from that perspective, among others."

## Ex-police Officer, 2 Others Killed in Plateau

By Usman Babaji



Maham Maram, a former police officer and two other persons were murdered on Sunday after gun-wielding men invaded Maiyanga community in Bokkos Local Government Area of Plateau State.

The Sunday night attack also got two other people injured, according to Punch. Bulus Sule, a resident of the community stated that the injured persons had been taken to the hospital for treatment.

Plateau Pastor Set Ablaze Colleagues' Cars, Bicycle  
"It was last (Sunday) night that the gunmen came and attacked the people in Maiyanga community," said Sule, adding they killed three persons and two others sustained injuries.

Security agents arrived at the community hours after the terrorists had wreaked havoc, according to another resident identified as Ilya.

Alabo Alfred, spokesman for Plateau Police Command confirmed the attack, claiming there are plans to arrest the assailants.

His words: "There was an attack on the village last night and from the report I received, three people were killed while two others were injured and are responding to treatment.

For 2 Consecutive Times, Plateau Pastor Feigns Abduction, Pockets N600,000 Ransom From Congregants  
"Our men have been sent to the village with assistance from soldiers and they are combing everywhere in the bush searching for those who carried out the attack.

"We will make sure that we get the people responsible for the killing. All we want from the public is timely information so that we can take action immediately in this kind of situation."

Abubakar Malami, the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice said the federal government will obey the supreme court's ex parte order to halt the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)'s deadline for old notes.

The country's apex court had ruled that CBN temporarily suspended its deadline for high denomination naira notes that were redesigned last year. Three states — Kaduna, Kogi and Zamfara — under the control of All Progressives Congress (APC) had approached the supreme court to stop CBN from implementing the deadline earlier slated for February 10.

Malami had reportedly filed an objection against the ruling, insisting that the supreme court has no jurisdiction over the case. During an interview with AriseTV on Thursday, Malami noted that the government is hoping that the ex parte decision, which is set to expire on February 15, 2023, will be overturned.

He noted that the court lacked jurisdiction to hear the case in the first place and that the CBN, a key player in the dispute, was not named as a defendant.

On the other hand, Malami stated that the government will bow to the court's ruling. This, according to him, was motivated by respect for the rule of law.

"The order was granted by the Supreme Court and the order incidentally lapses on Wednesday, which is the day of the hearing, with that position in mind we have taken steps to file an objection challenging the jurisdiction of the court to entertain the matter. Jurisdiction because when you talk of monetary policy, regardless of the characters they take, the Central Bank is an indispensable and necessary party for that matter," he said.



## The CBN Board of Directors And Not the President Is Responsible for The CBN Policies Under the Law

By S. G. Idrees

The recent debacle since the public announcement by the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Mr Godwin Emefiele on the 26th of October 2022, on the Naira Redesign and the probable CBN Cashless Policy for the Federal Republic of Nigeria is an issue that is baking for a lot of questions on the need to clear the air as to whose responsibility is to design policies, approved any policy and implement those policies for the Central Bank of Nigeria?

To answer this very potent question, recourse must be paid to the provisions of the Central Bank of Nigeria Act 2007, which seems to have vested that in the hands of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank, going by the provision of section 6 of the CBN Act, where it reads thus:

“(1) There shall be for the Bank a Board of Directors (in this Act referred to as “the Board”) which shall be responsible for the policy and general administration of the affairs and business of the Bank.

(2) the Board shall consist of –

(a) a Governor who shall be the Chairman;

(b) four (4) Deputy Governors;

(c) the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Finance;

(d) five (5) Directors; and

(e) Accountant-General of the Federation.

(3) The Board shall be responsible for –

(a) the consideration and approval of the annual budget of the Bank;

(b) the approval of the audited and management accounts and the consideration of the management letter from the external auditors.

(c) the formulation and implementation of exchange rate policy;

(d) making recommendations to the President for the appointment of auditors in accordance with section 49 of this Act, the provision of the necessary facilities and the rates of remuneration;

(e) the establishment and closing of branches and currency centres; and.

(f) carrying out of such other activities as are necessary and expedient for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the Bank.

(4) The Board shall approve the detailed responsibilities of each of the Deputy Governors on the recommendation of the Governor.

(5) Without prejudice to Sub-section (4) of this section, the Board may, on the recommendation of the Governor, assign or re-assign the Deputy Governors, from time

to time, as may be expedient for the performance of the Bank’s functions under or pursuant to this Act.”

Furthermore, section 2 of the Central Bank of Nigeria Act 2007 provides for the functions of the Central Bank, where it provides thus:

“The principal objects of the Bank shall be to –

(a) ensure monetary and price stability;

(b) issue legal tender currency in Nigeria;

(c) maintain external reserves to safeguard the international value of the legal tender currency;

(d) promote a sound financial system in Nigeria;

and

(e) Act as banker and provide economic and financial advice to the

Federal Government.”



As if to leave no one in doubt section 1 of the Central Bank of Nigeria Act, ensure the independence of the Bank, where it reads:

“(1) There is established for Nigeria a body known as the Central Bank of Nigeria (hereinafter in this Act referred to as “the Bank”).

(2) The Bank shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal and may sue and be sued in its corporate name.

(3) In order to facilitate the achievement of its mandate under this Act and the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act, and in line with the objective of promoting stability and continuity in economic management, the Bank shall be an independent body in the discharge of its functions.

(4) Subject to the limitations in this Act, the Bank may acquire, hold and dispose of movable and immovable property for the purpose of its functions.”

That considering the burning issue of the more, the Naira Redesign, sections 17, 18, 19 and 20 of the Central Bank of Nigeria Act 2007 is very instructive, where the sections provide as follows:

“17. The Bank shall have the sole right of issuing currency notes and coins throughout Nigeria and neither the Federal Government nor any State Government, Local Government, other person or authority shall issue currency notes, bank notes or coins or any documents or tokens payable to the bearer on demand being document or token which are likely to pass as legal tender.

The Bank shall –

(a) arrange for the printing of currency notes and the minting of coins;

(b) issue, re-issue and exchange currency notes and coins at the Bank’s offices and at such agencies as it may, from time to time, establish or appoint;

(c) arrange for the safe custody of un-issued stocks of currency notes and for the preparation, safe custody and destruction of plates and paper for the printing of currency notes and disc for the minting of coins; and

(d) arrange for the destruction of currency notes and coins withdrawn from circulation under the provisions of section 20 (3) of this Act or otherwise found by the Bank to be unfit for use.

(1) The currency notes and coins issued by the Bank shall be –

(a) in such denominations of the Naira or fractions thereof as shall be approved by the President on the recommendation of the Board; and

Continue reading here