

ATHENA PERSPECTIVES

Fresh and Deep Dimension to the News

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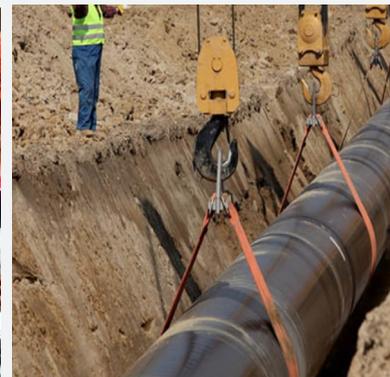
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1.1 Restoring Order and Addressing Corruption: Missed Opportunities in the Tinubu Administration.

The debut of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu as the President of Nigeria amidst other cardinal point had its focus majorly to fight corruption and restore law and order in the nation. His prior decisions, like suspending the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, were initially applauded as signs of a meticulous approach to nabbing official misconduct. However, as recent developments have shown, there have been multiple missed opportunities to demonstrate a sustained commitment to these principles. President Tinubu, during his inaugural speech to Nigerians as the 16th President of Nigeria Pointed out that good governance, respect for the constitution and the rule of law are among the critical issues that would occupy his attention. He said,

“Nigeria will be impartially governed according to the Constitution and rule of law. We shall defend the nation from terror and all forms of criminality that threaten the peace and stability of our country and our sub-region. Our government will continue to take proactive steps such as championing a credit culture to discourage corruption while strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the various anti-corruption agencies.”

The aforementioned excerpts from his inaugural speech display his commitment to fighting corruption and promoting good governance.

The deficiency of decisive action on several fronts has raised reservations about the government’s dedication to combating corruption and upholding the rule of law. To reinvigorate public confidence, the administration must address these fallibilities and take intentional steps towards improvement.

Lack of Subsequent Action Regarding the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs’ Suspension

At the onset of President Tinubu’s administration, the suspension of the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs was taken as an intentional move spotlighting a commitment to fighting corruption at the highest levels. However, months have passed without any further action or report on the allegations against the minister. This lack of follow-through has undermined the initial praise and raised doubts about the administration’s resolve in addressing official corruption. Without transparent updates or consequences, the suspension appears more symbolic than substantive, and the perception of a genuine anti-corruption agenda is fading.

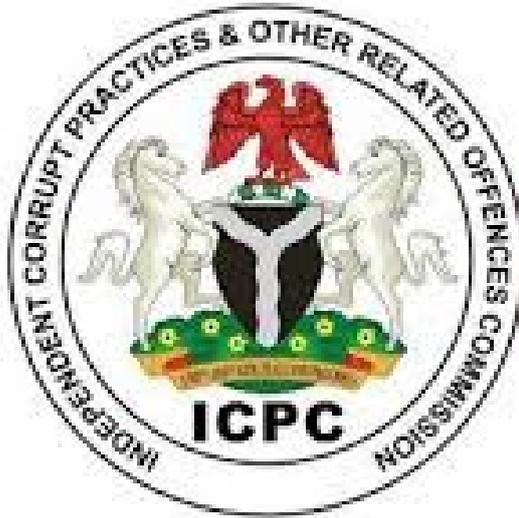


Amendments to the Police Act and the Extension of the Inspector General’s Tenure

The government’s decision to amend the Police Act to permit the current Inspector General to remain in office has raised concerns regarding compliance with established rules and regulations. While continuity in leadership can sometimes be beneficial, it must not come at the expense of institutional integrity. Changing established laws for individual convenience sends a troubling message that rules can be bent to suit personal or political interests, eroding respect for the rule of law. This amendment modifies Section 18 of the Police Act 2020, which traditionally mandated retirement at age 60 or after 35 years of service. The new provision enables an IGP to remain in office beyond these limits. It is pertinent to outline here that the Inspector General of Police reached the mandatory retirement age of 60 on September 4, 2024.

Handling of Corruption Allegations against the Former Governor of Kogi State

The government’s response to corruption charges against Yahaya Bello, the former Governor of Kogi State, is another missed opportunity to demonstrate a firm stance against graft. Despite facing allegations of money laundering and fraud amounting to N80.2 billion, Bello has remained elusive, evading law enforcement for several months.



The administration's inability to arrest and arraign him, despite a court order, suggests a lack of political will to enforce the law uniformly, particularly when it comes to influential figures. The case represents a crucial moment where the government could have set a precedent by holding a high-profile individual accountable, yet this opportunity has not been seized.

The Administration's Inconsistent Approach to Governance

President Tinubu's strong criticism of past governments and his history of resisting federal dominance and supporting pro-democracy movements positioned him as a champion of civil society and good governance. However, his actions since becoming president appear inconsistent with this profile. The administration's reluctance to take decisive action on key corruption cases and its perceived tolerance of political misconduct has created a gap between the president's past as an opposition figure and his current approach to governance. For many, this shift has raised questions about whether the administration's stated commitments are being matched by real action.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REBUILDING TRUST AND STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE.

1. Provide Updates and Follow-Through on High-Profile Corruption Cases: The government should release regular updates on the status of investigations and actions taken against suspended or accused officials, such as the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs. Transparent communication will demonstrate that anti-corruption efforts are genuine and ongoing.
2. Enforce Court Orders and Hold High-Profile Figures Accountable: The administration must ensure that all individuals, regardless of status, comply with the law. This includes arresting and prosecuting Yahaya Bello as per the court's directive. Failing to do so weakens the rule of law and signals that some are above accountability.

3. Investigate Allegations of Misconduct in Rivers State: Allegations involving law enforcement officers and election materials must be independently investigated, and appropriate actions should be taken against those found guilty. This will help to restore trust in Nigeria's electoral and legal processes.
4. Respect Established Rules and Institutional Processes: Amending the Police Act to extend the tenure of a specific official sets a dangerous precedent. The administration should adhere to existing regulations and prioritize institutional integrity over individual considerations.
5. Reaffirm the Independence of Law Enforcement Agencies: The government should take concrete steps to reform the police force and anti-corruption agencies to ensure they operate independently of political influence. This would involve clear guidelines to prevent the use of these agencies as tools for partisan purposes.
6. Strengthen Public Confidence Through Proactive Governance: To quell growing unease, the administration should focus on proactive measures that address citizens' concerns about security, law enforcement impartiality, and anti-corruption efforts. Demonstrating a consistent and fair application of the law will be crucial in rebuilding public trust.

CONCLUSION

The Tinubu administration has been presented with several opportunities to demonstrate a commitment to restoring order and combating corruption, yet these have not been utilized. The failure to act decisively on high-profile cases, investigate allegations of misconduct, and respect institutional rules risks undermining the government's credibility and contributing to a growing sense of lawlessness.

To change this trajectory, the administration must take bold steps to reinforce the rule of law and prove its commitment to fighting corruption without fear or favor.

By addressing these issues head-on and implementing the above recommendations, the government can rebuild public trust and lay a foundation for sustainable governance. The time to act is now, and the path forward requires a firm commitment to justice, transparency, and accountability

AUTHORS

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Links for Further Reading:

- » <https://www.efcc.gov.ng/efcc/news-and-information/news-release/10321-tinubu-seeks-stronger-anti-corruption-structures-and-regime-in-west-africa-to-tackle-graft>
- » <https://dailytrust.com/tinubu-orders-crackdown-on-cyber-criminals-says-nigeria-not-a-haven-for-illicit-wealth/>
- » <https://www.theafricareport.com/312153/nigeria-can-efcc-anti-graft-agency-continue-its-run-under-tinubu/>
- » <https://www.cddwestafrica.org/blog/reinvigorating-the-fight-against-corruption-a-roadmap-for-the-tinubu-administration/>
- » <https://www.peoplesdailyng.com/why-tinubu-should-strengthen-the-fight-against-corruption/>



2. Issues in the News:

Top four stories on our thematic areas in Nigeria

Politics: The All Progressives Congress (APC) has won all 23 chairmanship seats in Saturday's local council election in Kaduna State. The party also won the councillorship seats in the 255 wards in the state

For more details: <https://www.ripplesnigeria.com/apc-sweeps-kaduna-local-council-election/?amp>

Transport: The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Kaduna State Sector Command's operatives on a rescue mission have recovered N8.6 million at the scene of an

accident on Monday. The Sector Commander, Mr Kabir Nadabo, confirmed the accident to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Tuesday in Kaduna.

For more details: <https://newsdiaryonline.com/frsc-recovers-n8-6m-at-road-crash-scene-in-kaduna/>

Security: Shehu Sani wants security forces probed over alleged arms supply to terrorists

For more details: <https://guardian.ng/news/shehu-sani-wants-security-forces-probed-over-alleged-arms-supply-to-terrorists/>



Health: The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention has recorded a total of 14,237 cases of cholera across 35 states and the Federal Capital Territory, spanning 339 local government areas as of October 13, 2024.

For more details: <https://punchng.com/ncdc-records-14237-cholera-cases-378-deaths/>

Education:

The Dean, Pan-Atlantic University, Dr Sola Oni, encouraged Nigerians studying abroad or considering international education to utilise their experiences for the benefit of the nation. This call to action came during SI Global Nigeria’s inaugural conference, titled, “Innovating Education for the Future,” which brought together policymakers, educators, parents, and students to discuss the current state of education in Nigeria and its prospects.

For more details: <https://punchng.com/educationists-advise-international-students-on-nation-building/>



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3. Regional Updates

Top stories from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger (BCCN)...

Cameroon bans media from talking about President Biya’s health:

Cameroon has banned the media from discussing the health of 91-year-old President Paul Biya, who has not been seen in public since early September. Interior Minister Paul Atanga Nji this week imposed the ban, stating



in a letter dated October 9 that “debate in the media” on the president’s health was “strictly prohibited”, and ordering that “monitoring cells” charged with tracking online content be set up.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/10/11/cameroon-bans-media-from-talking-about-missing-presidents-health>

Coup attempt foiled in Benin:

Benin Republic prosecutors say they have foiled a suspected coup attempt which was scheduled to take place. Elonm Metonou, a special prosecutor at Benin’s court



for financial crimes and terrorism, said Oswald Homeky, a former sports minister, was caught Tuesday night handing over six bags of cash to Djimon Tevoedjre, commander of the republican guard and head of President Patrice Talon’s security.

<https://www.thecable.ng/benin-republic-foils-coup-attempt-arrests-commander-ex-minister/>



Benin:

Diplomatic tensions with Niger continue due to a dispute over oil exports through the Niger-Benin pipeline. In addition, Benin has reportedly blocked river crossings between the two countries, further escalating the situation.

<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2024/06/27/niger-attack-kills-21-highlights-post-coup-security-troubles>

Disclaimer:

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