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I'm luckiest politician in Nigeria – Wike tells Tinubu

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, on Friday described himself as the “luckiest politician in Nigeria,” citing the unwavering support he receives from political allies across the country.

Wike made the remark during the commissioning of the newly constructed Arterial Road N5 (Obafemi Awolowo Way), stretching from Life Camp Junction to Ring Road III (RR3), an infrastructure project launched to commemorate President Bola Tinubu's second year in office.

Speaking at the event, Wike noted the presence of friends and political associates from Abia, Enugu, Sokoto, and Cross River States, whom he said



consistently show up for events held in Abuja.

“Mr President, let me just say this: I don't think there is any politician who is so lucky like me... from Abia to Enugu, Sokoto and Cross River, name them, they all come,” Wike said.

He went on to thank Rivers people and

other Nigerians who support him, asking them to “take a bow” in front of the President.

President Tinubu was represented at the commissioning by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Senator George Akume.

Kaduna to back APC strongly in 2027, says Speaker Abbas

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas, has pledged that Kaduna State will deliver the highest number of votes for the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the Northern region during the 2027 elections.

Speaking in Kaduna on Thursday, Abbas assured President Bola Tinubu that Kaduna would continue to play a pivotal role in shaping Nigeria's political landscape and development agenda.

Abbas dismissed the influence of former Governor Nasir El-Rufai, who recently joined opposition forces determined to unseat Tinubu in 2027 and had publicly doubted Tinubu's chances.

The Speaker praised Governor Uba Sani and his supporters, vowing their commitment to securing Kaduna's electoral support for the APC.



He stated: “Kaduna State has long been central to Nigeria's political and economic discourse. While APC secured over 30 percent of valid votes in 2023, there is significant room for growth. I assure you that come 2027, Kaduna will produce probably the highest number of votes in Northern Nigeria.”

Abbas further highlighted President Tinubu's efforts in addressing security concerns and advancing infrastructure projects in Kaduna, emphasising that the state has no reason to vote otherwise if the administration's commitment continues.

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7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
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5X5	110,000.00
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8X5	143,500.00
8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
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Tinubu hails Sani's development efforts, confers honour on Dangiwa Umar

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has commended Governor Uba Sani of Kaduna State for his efforts in restoring peace and driving infrastructure development across the state.

Mr Tinubu, during an official visit, pledged continued federal support and announced plans for a light rail project in the state.

The President inaugurated several key projects, including the Institute of Vocational Training and Skills Development in Rigachikun (Igabi Local Government Area), the 300-bed Bola Ahmed Tinubu Specialist Hospital in Millennium City, and a fleet of 100 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses.

Praising the governor's leadership, Mr Tinubu described Mr Sani as 'an agent of change, stability, unity, and progress', adding that his administration had transformed a previously unstable environment into one of peace and harmony.

"You are a good leader. I'm proud to say Kaduna is back again and I am happy to work with you," the President said, highlighting the governor's focus on peacebuilding and reconciliation among the state's diverse ethnic groups.

He also lauded the role of traditional rulers in fostering peace and stability and recalled his own long-standing relationship with the state in politics, business, and democratic advocacy.

During the visit, Mr Tinubu corrected what he called an 'omission' during the recent Democracy Day honours,



conferring the national honour of Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic (CFR) on former Kaduna State governor and pro-democracy activist, Col. Abubakar Dangiwa Umar (rtd).

He also confirmed that Mr Sani had been awarded the Commander of the Order of the Niger (CON).

The President recounted that, prior to Mr Sani's tenure, security challenges made it unsafe to travel to areas like Birnin Gwari without military escort, but the situation had now changed significantly.

"Peace is the hallmark of development. I am proud to say Kaduna is rising again. I am going to work with you in every aspect of your development agenda," he assured.

Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajuddeen Abbas, also commended the President for his support and hailed Governor Sani for completing previously abandoned projects.

In his remarks, Mr Sani expressed

gratitude to the President for backing the state's development plans.

He revealed that ₦100 billion had been included in the 2025 federal budget for the Kaduna Light Rail Transit project.

Reflecting on the security situation inherited in 2023, the governor said Kaduna was once besieged by banditry and mistrust, with highways overrun by criminals.

However, he said his administration refused to surrender and prioritised security as a foundation for progress.

Former Vice President Namadi Sambo praised both Mr Tinubu and Sani for ensuring the completion of the Bola Ahmed Tinubu Specialist Hospital, a project initiated nearly two decades ago but abandoned by previous governments.

Also speaking, retired Gen. Zamani Lekwot described Mr Tinubu as a God-fearing leader for his continued support for the governor's transformative agenda.

Shettima seeks stronger IOM collaboration as Nigeria earns praise for migration, disaster reforms

By Friday Omosola



The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has commended Nigeria's progress in migration governance and disaster preparedness, as Vice President Kashim Shettima called for deeper partnerships to address humanitarian and ecological challenges across the country.

During a courtesy visit to the Presidential Villa on Friday, IOM's Chief of Mission in Nigeria, Sharon Dimanche, praised the government's efforts, particularly the launch of the State Action Plan on Floods and the Framework for Anticipatory Action for Nigeria.

She described Nigeria as 'one Africa wrapped into one country', noting that its diversity presents both challenges and opportunities for tailored interventions.

"We are particularly impressed with the government's commitment. As I take office, one of our key priorities is

to work on sustainable solutions for people affected by crises. We seek your guidance and collaboration for initiatives in youth empowerment, climate resilience, and durable migration solutions," Dimanche said.

Mr Shettima, in response, urged the IOM to scale up support, especially in Nigeria's North Central region.

He stressed the need for practical, inclusive solutions to the interlinked issues of migration, poverty, ecological disruption, and insecurity.

"I have worked with IOM since my days as Governor of Borno State and appreciate your efforts, but we need more pragmatic, all-inclusive solutions.

"There is an incestuous relationship between ecology and economy in sub-Saharan Africa—the challenges of migration are inseparable from climate-induced effects," Mr Shettima said.

He highlighted how poverty, illiteracy, and environmental degradation were fuelling displacement and insecurity across the North-East, North-West, and North-Central regions.

Quoting Martin Luther King Jr., he added: "We must either learn to live together as brothers, or we are going to die together as fools. We are one people with a common destiny, united by our common challenges."

Mr Shettima also appealed for IOM's support in land reclamation and gender empowerment initiatives, especially in areas affected by deforestation and forced displacement.

Dimanche reaffirmed IOM's commitment to working with Nigeria on data provision, shelter support, and community resilience, stating that the agency is ready to collaborate closely with the government to mobilise resources for lasting impact.

Atiku, El-Rufai, others seek INEC nod for new party

By Damilola Olufemi



A coalition of prominent political figures, including former Vice President Atiku Abubakar and ex-Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai, has taken a major step toward creating a new political party, formally requesting registration from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

In a letter dated June 19 and acknowledged by INEC on Friday, the group applied for the registration of a new party named the All Democratic Alliance (ADA). This move ends speculation about whether the coalition would revive an existing political platform or pursue a fresh one entirely.

The initiative is also backed by other political heavyweights such as former Rivers State Governor Rotimi Amaechi and Umar Ardo, a former aide to President Olusegun Obasanjo and convener of the League of Northern Democrats. The group aims to leverage growing public discontent and changing political dynamics to challenge President Bola Tinubu's reelection bid

in 2027.

El-Rufai, others write INEC

INEC had earlier cautioned political actors that no volume of political pressure or public advocacy would override the legal procedures required to register a party, emphasising that the process remains firmly governed by constitutional provisions.

The coalition's application marks a significant shift from mere talks to concrete action. The application letter was signed by the association's Protém National Chairman, Chief Akin A. Rickets, and Protém National Secretary, Abdullahi Elayo.

"We respectfully write to the Independent National Electoral Commission, requesting the registration of our association, the All Democratic Alliance, as a political party," the letter stated.

"This is a sequel to the decision taken by the Nigerian National Coalition Group

to sponsor our association for full registration," it continued. "The name of the party shall be All Democratic Alliance with ADA as our acronym and 'Justice for All' as our slogan."

Along with the letter, the coalition submitted required documents including the ADA's constitution, party manifesto, logo, and the minutes of its formative meetings.

The party's symbol, a maize cob, is meant to reflect values of abundance, resilience, and sustenance. "We have further attached our manifesto encompassing details of our party ideology and our constitution providing the legal framework that defines our identity, structures, and organisation," the letter added.

The application puts INEC under watch as observers await how the commission responds to what could become a major political force in the run-up to the 2027 general elections.

Benue Massacre: Obi faults Tinubu for skipping Yelwata visit over bad roads

By Friday Omosola



Peter Obi, former Anambra State Governor and 2023 Labour Party presidential candidate, has criticised President Bola Tinubu for failing to visit Yelwata in Benue State because of poor road conditions.

Mr Obi who described this as an unacceptable excuse in a statement posted on his X page on Friday stressed that true leadership demands sacrifice, presence, and the willingness to offer solutions during difficult times—not excuses.

“One of the consistent principles of leadership is the willingness to make ultimate sacrifices and take risks. A true leader does not make excuses or complain; he shows up, sacrifices, and provides solutions, especially in difficult times,” Mr Obi stated.

The 63-year-old argued that although he would not encourage Mr Tinubu to endanger himself but him claiming bad roads as the reason for not

reaching Yelwata was unjustifiable.

This he said particularly as Mr Tinubu had already arrived in Benue State.

“This visit happened days after the massacre, with enough time to plan appropriately,” he said, referring to the recent attack in Yelwata that left several people dead.

Mr Obi questioned why the federal and state governments, which are responsible for road maintenance, had failed to address the infrastructural decay that supposedly hindered the visit.

“If the Commander-in-Chief cannot reach a part of his own country due to bad roads, what hope is there for the ordinary Nigerian who plies those same routes every day?” he asked.

He added that even if the roads were truly impassable, a claim he contested since presidential aides

managed to access the area, alternative transport options such as helicopters could have been used.

“Are we saying a nation that boasts of a presidential air fleet could not airlift the President to Yelwata to condole with grieving citizens?”

Mr Obi emphasised that the people of Benue needed empathy, not explanations.

“The roads may be bad, but what is worse is the institutional neglect that brought us to this point,” he said.

He stated that the vision of a new Nigeria would not be realised through excuses but through courage, sacrifice, and accountable leadership.

“A New Nigeria cannot—and will not—be built on excuses. It will be built on the sacrifices, courage, and responsibility of true leaders,” Mr Obi declared.

Nigeria to host 4th AU MSME Forum

By Friday Omosola



Delegates from over 50 African countries are expected to gather in Abuja from June 23 to Friday, June 27, 2025, for the 4th African Union (AU) Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Forum.

The forum focus on improving access to affordable financing, promoting digital transformation, and enhancing market access for small businesses.

The forum, hosted by the African Union Commission in partnership with the Nigerian government, aims to foster strategic partnerships and exchange ideas on intra-African trade and the development of small businesses across the continent.

At a press conference held on Friday at the Presidential Villa in Abuja, Ibrahim Hadejia, Deputy Chief of Staff to the President (Office of the Vice President), said the principal objective is to empower MSMEs and strengthen policy frameworks for their development.

“The goal is to develop intra-African value chains and strengthen policies that

will enable MSMEs to thrive across the continent,” he said, while calling on Nigerian stakeholders to leverage the forum to build networks for investment and market expansion.

Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, described the event as a sign that Nigeria is ‘rising again’ and open for global business.

He stated that President Bola Tinubu’s approval to host the forum reflects the administration’s commitment to repositioning the country economically.

Minister of Culture, Tourism and Creative Economy, Hannatu Musawa, noted that the event will positively impact Nigeria’s tourism and creative sectors, aligning with her ministry’s ‘Destination Nigeria’ initiative aimed at rebranding the country.

Temitola Adekunle-Johnson, Special Adviser to the President on Job Creation and MSMEs and Secretary of the Organising Committee, announced that the forum will include high-level presentations, panel discussions, a tech showcase, product exhibitions, and networking opportunities. A highlight of

the event will be the MSME Awards, where outstanding entrepreneurs will receive cash prizes, houses, and stores.

He emphasised that the forum aligns with the Renewed Hope Agenda of Mr Tinubu’s administration, recognising MSMEs as a critical driver of economic growth, job creation, and poverty alleviation.

Chief Executives of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), Nigeria Export-Import Bank (NEXIM), and the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) also pledged their agencies’ support for the successful hosting of the forum.

The opening ceremony will take place at the State House Banquet Hall on June 23.

Technical meetings and product exhibitions will follow from June 24 to 26 at the Abuja Continental Hotel, while the grand finale and MSME Awards will return to the State House Banquet Hall on June 27.

2027: APC says Tinubu's running mate will be chosen after convention

By Friday Omosola



The All Progressives Congress (APC) has said that while President Bola Tinubu enjoys strong backing from party leaders to contest the 2027 presidential election, the matter of selecting his running mate remains undecided.

Speaking on Channels Television's The Morning Brief on Friday, the APC National Secretary, Ajibola Basiru, clarified that the choice of vice-presidential candidate will not be addressed until the party holds its national convention—typically scheduled around a year before the general elections.

Mr Basiru, a former Senate spokesperson, stated that Mr Tinubu received broad support from APC stakeholders during a recent national summit at the Presidential Villa, which cited the president's performance as justification for his re-election bid.

"The president's endorsement came from a wide array of party leaders who are impressed with his record," Mr Basiru said.

"However, discussions around a running mate have not yet begun, and no decision

has been made that would affect the position of the current vice president."

Tensions flared on 15 June 2025, during an APC stakeholders' summit in Gombe State for members from the North-East geopolitical zone.

Chaos erupted when the party's North-East Vice Chairman, Mustapha Salihu, declared Mr Tinubu as the sole candidate without mentioning Vice President Kashim Shettima—a move that drew backlash from some party members demanding his inclusion in the endorsement.

Mr Basiru, who attended the Gombe summit, dismissed the incident as a typical outcome of democratic disagreement.

"There was no crisis. After the summit, we even had a reception at the Government House," he said.

"Some attendees believed endorsing the president alone was enough, while others felt that, given the summit's location in the North-East, the vice president, who hails from the region—should also have been recognised."

He added that under APC procedures, only the presidential candidate emerges at the national convention, with the selection of a running mate finalised thereafter.

"As far as the party is concerned, we haven't issued any official position on the North-East political dynamics," he noted.

In the 2023 elections, Mr Tinubu ran alongside Mr Shettima, the former governor of Borno State.

Their joint ticket secured victory, and both were inaugurated on 29 May 2023.

More recently, on 22 May 2025, 22 APC governors declared their support for Mr Tinubu's second-term bid.

However, their statement, like others, made no mention of the current vice president.

Senator Ali Ndume of Borno South publicly distanced himself from the endorsement, cautioning that a similar scenario played out in 2015 when former President Goodluck Jonathan received backing from 22 PDP governors but still lost to Muhammadu Buhari of the APC.

INEC working with APC to block new parties, PDP chieftain claims

By Damilola Olufemi



A prominent member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Ibrahim Kalgo, has accused the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of deliberately stalling efforts by a coalition of political groups aiming to register new parties ahead of the 2027 elections.

Speaking on Channels Television's The Morning Brief on Friday, Kalgo alleged that the electoral body was acting in concert with the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) to suppress political alternatives and maintain the current political order.

"I think INEC is being biased and also afraid because the coalition is here to defeat APC come 2027 election," he said, claiming that over 70 applications for party registration had been submitted but ignored by the commission.

"INEC working with APC govt"

Kalgo questioned the electoral body's neutrality, stating, "It is like INEC is working hand in hand with the APC government. These are political parties or groups trying to create a platform for Nigerians to vote for a new face and a new choice of their own choice."

He challenged the commission's failure to process any of the applications, asking, "Are you saying all the 70 applicants have filed wrong applications or not come with complete requirements for them to be created as a new party?"

Citing provisions of the electoral guidelines, Kalgo argued that if the commission does not formally respond to a party registration application within 90 days, the party should be considered registered by default. "When you send a request to INEC to a new party, if INEC acknowledges within 90 days, you are assumed to be registered automatically," he

explained.

Kalgo insisted the reluctance to register new parties is politically motivated, blaming it on fear within the ruling party. "What are they afraid of? Is it the coalition? Nigerians are tired. They want a new government," he said.

He also delivered a scathing critique of President Bola Tinubu's administration, describing it as a failure. "The APC government has failed Nigeria woefully, and they are doing nothing about it. This is two years down, and nothing to show on the ground. What are we seeing? Suffering. People are dying daily. Unemployment," Kalgo said.

Reaffirming the coalition's determination, he concluded, "We, the coalition, are pushing to see that INEC accepts this request, registers us as a new party, so come 2027 we can give Nigerians the real dividend of the government they are looking for."

Lagos govt targets lower housing costs with new LASRERA initiative

By Friday Omosola



In a move aimed at curbing the high cost of housing transactions and restoring order in the real estate sector, the Lagos State Real Estate Regulatory Authority (LASRERA) has entered into a strategic partnership with chairmen of the 57 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs) across the state.

The initiative seeks to regulate and reduce agency and legal fees charged by real estate practitioners, in a bid to ease the financial burden on residents and promote transparency in property dealings.

During a meeting with the council chairmen, the Lagos State Commissioner for Housing, Akinderu Fatai, said the collaboration was aimed at curbing excessive fees charged by some property agents and restoring sanity to the built environment.

“The aim of the collaboration is not

only to reduce the exorbitant fees being charged by some property agents, but to bring sanity to the built sector and make life easier for the average Lagosian. Housing is a basic necessity, and we are committed to ensuring it is accessible and affordable,” he said.

Also speaking at the meeting, the Special Adviser to the Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu on Housing, Barakat Odunuga-Bakare, stressed that agency fees must range between zero and 10 per cent, describing anything above that as ‘unacceptable and exploitative.’

She reiterated the state government’s commitment to introducing monthly rent payments, saying, “The Lagos State Government’s ultimate goal is to achieve monthly payment of house rent, and we are working tirelessly toward this reality.”

Ms Odunuga-Bakare urged residents to only deal with agents and developers registered with

LASRERA.

“We want members of the public to understand that doing business with unregistered agents poses serious risks. LASRERA exists to protect both tenants and landlords, and we will not relent in our effort to restore sanity to the built sector,” she said.

She encouraged members of the public to visit the LASRERA website to verify the registration status of property agents and to report any cases of non-compliance.

According to her, the partnership with LGA and LCDA chairmen marks a significant step in expanding LASRERA’s regulatory presence at the grassroots, where most property transactions occur.

“It also underscores the state government’s commitment to promoting fair and affordable housing across all communities”, she noted.

Lagos govt targets lower housing costs with new LASRERA initiative

By Friday Omosola



The Eko Mi Eko E magazine held its annual Eko Best 11 awards on June 19 2025, honouring 11 outstanding individuals and organisations that have made significant contributions to the development of Lagos State.

In his welcome address, the Publisher of Eko Mi Eko E, Bestman Jumbo-Nze, stated, "It is with great pleasure that I welcome you, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, to this year's Eko Mi Awards that we have tagged Eko Best 11, to celebrate 11 individuals who have been outstanding in every sense of the word in their contribution to the development of our great state. This year's edition is taking this theme because, like you have the best players representing a football team in its lineup of its first eleven, we have carefully and thoughtfully selected these ambassadors of Lagos, who represent the Lagos slogan, Centre of Excellence."

Jumbo-Nze believed that the celebration of outstanding individuals in "our society will serve as a catalyst and a good example for others, especially our youths to aspire to role models like these individuals that are today's Eko Best 11."

The Editor-in-Chief of Eko Mi Eko E, Victor Ganzallo, in his speech, praised the awardees for their dedication and hard work. "Tonight, we celebrate the remarkable achievements of some Lagosians, whose dedication and hard work have made a profound difference," Ganzallo said.

Ganzallo further stated, "Our magazine, Eko Mi Eko E will continue to uphold our mantra, which is to practice developmental journalism, be the voice of our people, help the government to serve our people better, highlight and celebrate anyone, regardless of their background, ethnicity or political leaning who is contributing to the development of our great state."

Full list of the Eko Best 11 awardees:

1. Hon Commissioner for Environment – Tokunbo Wahab
2. Arch Gbolahan Owodunni Oki
3. Mrs Folashade Okoya
4. Lagos Commissioner of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Toke Benson Awoyinka
5. Hon. James Abiodun Faleke

6. Transport Commissioner, Hon. Oluwaseun Osiyemi

7. Engr. Tokunbo Ajanaku

8. Hon. David Oluwasegun Odunmbaku

9. Oba Saheed Ademola Elegushi

10. Mr. Shuaheeb Olabode Agoro

11. Lagos Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu

Other awardees:

Bottled Water of the Year – Sparkle Bottling Company

Radio station of the Year – Mainland 98.3FM

Award of commitment in promoting Lagos in diaspora – G'men of Manchester

Making Lagos traffic safer and efficient – Mr. Bakare Olalekan Oki

Regulatory agencies of the Year – Lagos State Signage and Advertising Agency (LASAA)

Osun LG: Oluwole Oke urges Adeleke to honour court ruling

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Member representing Obokun/Oriade Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives, Hon. Oluwole Oke, has issued a public appeal to Governor Ademola Adeleke of Osun State, urging him to cease what he described as political blackmail against President Bola Tinubu, former Governor Adegboyega Oyetola, the Attorney General of the Federation Lateef Fagbemi, and the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria.

In a strongly worded statement on Wednesday, Hon. Oke who recently distanced himself from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) accused the Adeleke-led administration of deliberately disregarding a valid Court of Appeal judgement that reinstated elected All Progressives Congress (APC) local government officials.

He contended that this refusal has led to undue hardship for civil servants and disrupted the local government structure in the state.

"I spoke to you and advised you on what to do on the Court of Appeal judgment reinstating elected APC council chairmen, vice chairmen, and councillors, but you ignored me," Oke said, alleging that the governor had been misled by his legal team.

"Only an illiterate lawyer will advise you contrary to what the Court of Appeal ruled—that PDP/OSSIEC approached a wrong court," he added.

Oke argued that the opportunity for the state government to appeal or seek a stay of execution has elapsed, insisting that the APC would not support any further legal action at this stage.

He urged Adeleke to direct local government staff under the National Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) to resume cooperation with the reinstated APC officials until their terms conclude.

He further suggested that the Osun



State Independent Electoral Commission (OSSIEC) should either conduct fresh elections within 180 days or compensate the affected APC officials for the remainder of their three-year tenures.

In a reconciliatory tone, Oke acknowledged the plight of PDP chairmanship aspirants who suffered financial losses due to the aborted elections.

"Some borrowed owo isobo, sold their properties and are now suffering hopelessly," he lamented, proposing that they be integrated into government as Special Assistants or Senior Special Assistants.

Meanwhile, the Osun State House of Assembly has cautioned against any attempt to divert local government funds into private accounts, following reports that the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) may be finalising such plans. Speaker Adewale Egbedun warned that any unauthorised disbursement would violate due process and trigger grave consequences.

The Assembly affirmed that only designated civil servants namely, the Directors of Finance and Administration are authorised to manage council funds. Legislators also

raised concerns about individuals allegedly storming local council offices armed, in a bid to create chaos.

Referencing Section 7(1) of the 1999 Constitution, lawmakers reiterated that only the House of Assembly has the authority to legislate for the peace and order of the state, and that the October 2022 local government elections previously declared null and void by a Federal High Court in Osogbo remain unlawful, despite the recent Appeal Court ruling.

Adding to the controversy, the APC in Osun State, through its Director of Media and Information, Kola Olabisi, condemned the PDP caucus in the House of Representatives for what it described as interference in local government matters. Olabisi reaffirmed the supremacy of the 10 February 2025 Appeal Court decision, calling it binding and irrevocable.

He also challenged the PDP caucus to account for constituency funds before involving themselves in the allocation of council resources.

As tensions escalate between both parties, the fate of Osun's local government administration remains in limbo, pending further legal and political resolution.

Osun LG: Oluwole Oke urges Adeleke to honour court ruling

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Veteran Nollywood actor and producer, Yemi Ayebo, popularly known as Yemi My Lover, has called out Nigerian music star Olamide for allegedly ignoring his calls despite using his name in a song.

The actor accused during a recent video interview that circulated on social media. He expressed disappointment that the singer and other entertainers have used his name in their songs and comedy skits without offering him any form of appreciation or compensation.

No payment, no recognition from Olamide

Yemi was asked whether artists and content creators who use the phrase Yemi My Lover have ever paid him or acknowledged him for popularising the name. He responded with a firm “no,” adding that he has never received any financial reward or even a word of thanks from anyone.

He particularly mentioned the YBNL boss, who was the first major artist to use his name in a song. According to Yemi, he was excited when he heard Olamide mention his name, but that joy quickly turned to disappointment when the artist stopped responding to him.

Efforts to reach Olamide failed

Yemi explained that he made several efforts to reach out to the ‘Durosoke’ singer through various channels, including fellow entertainer and Fuji legend, Pasuma.

“I was so happy when Olamide used my name in his song,” Yemi said. “My name is blessed by God. That’s why musicians like Davido and Olamide, and even skit makers, keep using it.”

He continued, “Pasuma once asked me, ‘Yemo, did Olamide settle you for using your name in his music?’ I told him no. I’ve never met Olamide in person, and we’ve never spoken before. We didn’t even have each other’s phone numbers.”



According to Yemi, Pasuma took it upon himself to contact the YBNL boss after their conversation.

“Right there, Pasuma picked up his phone and called Olamide. He told him that I came to complain. Olamide asked Pasuma to hand the phone over to me. That was the first time I ever spoke with him,” Yemi said.

Six months of silence

During their short phone conversation, Yemi said Olamide instructed him to get his number from Pasuma and call him directly later.

“I collected his number and started calling him,” Yemi revealed. “But for six months, Olamide didn’t pick up my calls. I also sent him messages. Still, no reply. I was disappointed.”

Despite the disappointment, Yemi admitted that the repeated use of his name in songs and online content has helped boost his popularity over the years.

Name recognition but no benefit

The actor pointed out that while he appreciates the recognition his name has received in Nigerian pop culture, he feels overlooked and undervalued.

“It’s not just about the money,” he said. “A simple call or message to say thank you would have meant a lot. Respect matters.”

A cultural Icon

Yemi Ayebo rose to fame in the early 2000s through his self-produced movie Yemi My Lover, which uniquely combined music and romance. The movie gained massive popularity, especially in the South-West region of Nigeria, and the name “Yemi My Lover” became a cultural catchphrase.

In recent years, that name has resurfaced in music lyrics and social media content, often without context or credit to the man who made it famous.

Final words

Yemi says he holds no grudges but hopes artists and entertainers can show more respect and appreciation to those who came before them.

“I’ve been in the industry for years,” he said. “I paved the way in my little way. All I ask is recognition and respect.”

So far, Olamide has not responded publicly to the claims.

‘Why Nigerian actors struggle in Hollywood’, Stella Damasus

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Veteran Nollywood actress Stella Damasus has opened up about the persistent challenges Nigerian actors face when trying to break into Hollywood.

In a recent interview with Arrow House, the movie star shared her experience and shed light on the cultural and industry barriers that have kept many Nigerian talents from securing roles in the global film industry.

Stella Damasus highlights issues Damasus pointed out that one of the main issues lies in Hollywood’s rigid and stereotypical perception of African identity.

According to her, casting directors in the United States tend to expect African characters to look and sound a certain way—expectations that often exclude Nigerians.

“Hollywood has a specific stereotype of what an African should look like and sound like,” she said. “They believe that Africans must have a particular accent, usually an East African one. They also expect us to be as dark-skinned as someone like Lupita Nyong’o.”

This mindset, she explained, leaves Nigerian actors struggling to fit into roles written from a narrow and generalised view of Africa—one that often fails to reflect the continent’s diversity.

Accent requirements shut out Nigerians

Damasus recalled being told directly that her natural Nigerian accent did not fit Hollywood’s definition of “African.” She said filmmakers wanted a specific sound and tone that didn’t match how West Africans, including Nigerians and Ghanaians, speak.

“Hollywood insists on a certain kind of accent,” she noted. “They expect Africans to speak with an accent that may only be native to one or two East African countries. But that’s not how we sound in Nigeria.”

She expressed frustration at how Nigerian actors are pressured to adopt foreign accents to land roles, which ultimately erases their true identity. “We are different



people with different accents, and that should be seen as a strength, not a barrier,” she added.

Dark skin and misrepresentation

According to Damasus, skin tone is another critical factor that affects casting decisions. She shared how some filmmakers have told her outright that she does not fit their idea of what an African should look like.

“They told me, ‘You are not dark enough. You are not white enough to be mixed race. You don’t look like what we expect an African to look like,’” she revealed. “It’s either you’re very dark like Lupita, or you’re biracial. I didn’t fit anywhere.”

She also mentioned that her skin tone, combined with her accent, made it difficult for casting directors to categorise her. As a result, she was often overlooked for roles meant to represent African characters.

Nigerians abroad get more opportunities

Damasus went on to explain that most of the Nigerian actors who have managed to land significant roles in Hollywood were raised abroad. This, she said, gave them accents that were more familiar or acceptable to American filmmakers.

“Many of the Nigerians making waves in Hollywood today grew up in England or America,” she said. “They speak differently, and that gives them an edge.”

However, she argued that this should not be the only route to success. Damasus believes Nigerian actors who were raised and trained at home have the talent and potential to excel globally, but are unfairly sidelined due to stereotypes.

Africa is not a monolith

In a passionate part of her interview, the actress challenged the notion that there is a single African identity. She stressed that Africa is a continent with more than 50 countries, each with its own unique culture, language, and accent.

“Africa is full of different countries, and within each country are various dialects and ways of speaking,” she said. “So when Hollywood says I don’t sound African, I ask them—what kind of African are you talking about?”

Call for change

Stella Damasus concluded by calling on Hollywood to broaden its understanding of African identity and to embrace the diversity that actors from across the continent bring. She urged casting directors and filmmakers to recognise the depth of talent in Nigeria and to move beyond outdated stereotypes.

“It’s time for Hollywood to evolve and reflect the real Africa,” she said. “We have stories to tell, and we deserve to be heard and seen for who we truly are.”

Benue killings: VeryDarkMan reacts to Kiddwaya's donation appeal, warns NGOs

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Popular social commentator and activist, VeryDarkMan, has strongly criticized billionaire heir and reality TV star, Kiddwaya, over his recent call for public donations to assist victims of the deadly attack in Yelwata, Benue State.

Kiddwaya, who is known for showcasing his luxurious lifestyle on social media, sparked controversy after posting a message on X (formerly Twitter), urging Nigerians to contribute funds for the affected community.

The post quickly drew backlash from many users who questioned his sincerity. Following the negative reactions, Kiddwaya deleted the post.

VeryDarkMan fires back

Reacting in a video posted on X, VeryDarkMan described Kiddwaya's appeal as both ironic and insensitive. He questioned why someone who regularly boasts about his wealth would suddenly seek help from everyday Nigerians to solve a crisis.

"The first thing you did was write a quick post and then drop an account number," VeryDarkMan said. "How do you know what the people in Benue need when you haven't even gone there? You're just in your comfort zone, posting nonsense and asking for money."

He went further, "I'm glad Nigerians called you out to the point that you had to delete the post. That pleased me. You're always showing off your wealth, acting like you're better than everyone else, and now you're asking people for money? That doesn't add up."

Activist calls for real solutions, not publicity stunts

VeryDarkMan didn't stop at Kiddwaya. He also issued a stern warning to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that may try to exploit the situation in Benue for personal or financial gain.

He emphasised that the main issue in



the region is not hunger, but insecurity. According to him, simply distributing food items will not address the root of the problem.

"To every NGO out there thinking about cashing in on this tragedy, let me be clear: the people of Benue are not starving," he said. "You go collect money from the government, say you want to give relief, then you show up with rice, beans, and garri. That's not what they need. The real problem is safety. They are under threat, not hungry."

Suggests armed vigilante groups as a better response

Instead of food donations, VeryDarkMan suggested a more direct and lasting solution. He called on community leaders in the affected areas to form vigilante groups that could defend their people against attacks. He proposed that such groups seek official permission to bear arms from the Inspector General of Police.

"If local leaders in Benue can come together, set up a proper vigilante group, and write to the IGP requesting approval for weapons, then we will support," he said. "If that happens, I'll

personally post my NGO's account number and ask every Nigerian to donate, even if it's just 5 naira each. At least that would go to real protection."

"Everyone must play a role", Final call to action

The activist stressed that this is not the time for silence or half-measures. He urged both individuals and organisations to rise above words and take meaningful actions.

"This is not the time to talk and go quiet. We are beyond that now. Everyone has a role to play in solving this crisis," he said.

VeryDarkMan's comments have added a new layer to the public conversation surrounding aid and accountability in times of national tragedy. While some support his bold stance, others believe public figures like Kiddwaya should not be discouraged from rallying support regardless of their background.

Still, the message from the activist is clear: If you have the means, lead by example, not by asking others to do what you can afford to do yourself.

American singer Chris Brown pleads not guilty in UK assault case

By New Daily Prime



American R&B singer Chris Brown on Friday pleaded not guilty in a UK court to a charge stemming from an alleged London nightclub brawl in 2023.

Brown, 36, wearing a dark suit and tie as well as glasses, stood in the dock in London as the charge was put to him, replying: "Not guilty, ma'am."

The singer, who is on £5 million (\$6.7 million) bail, waved to people in the public gallery as he left, following his plea to allegedly attempting to cause grievous bodily harm with intent.

A five to seven-day long trial was scheduled to start on October 26, 2026.

The singer was held in custody for a nearly a week in May after he was arrested in the northwestern city of Manchester. He was later released on bail.

Under the terms of his bail, he will forfeit the £5 million guarantee if he fails to return for court proceedings.

He was also given the go-ahead to continue his scheduled international tour which began on June 8 in Amsterdam.

The star, who had a troubled relationship with Barbadian singer Rihanna, is on the UK leg of his tour, with his next date in London on Saturday.

Brown is charged with attempting to cause grievous bodily harm with intent in relation to an assault in which the victim was allegedly struck several times with a bottle before being pursued, punched and kicked.

The alleged incident took place at a nightclub in Hanover Square in London on February 19, 2023 while Brown was touring in the UK.

Grammy winner

Police detained him in the early hours of May 13 at a five-star hotel in Manchester after he reportedly flew in by private jet.

Other bail terms include that he should surrender his passport if he is not travelling.

He is also required to live at a specific address known to the court and is not permitted to visit the nightclub where the alleged assault took place or contact the alleged victim, Abraham Diah.

He appeared in the dock with co-defendant Omololu Akinlolu, a US national, with whom he is jointly charged.

Akinlolu also entered a not guilty plea to the same charge of attempting to cause grievous bodily harm with intent.

Both men are also jointly charged with assault occasioning actual bodily harm.

They will enter pleas to that charge on July 11, the court was told.

Brown also faces a third charge of having an offensive weapon, a bottle, in public.

The Grammy-winning singer is known for mid-2000s hits such as "Kiss, Kiss".

He rose from a local church choir in Virginia to sudden fame with his rich R&B voice and later rap, but his reputation has been tarnished by the allegations of abuse.

He also is also scheduled to perform in France, Portugal and the US later in the year, before the tour wraps up in Memphis in mid-October.

Streaming platform Deezer adds AI song tags in fight against fraud

By New Daily Prime



French streaming service Deezer is now alerting users when they come across music identified as completely generated by artificial intelligence, the company told AFP on Friday in what it called a global first.

The announcement by chief executive Alexis Lanternier follows repeated statements from the platform that a torrent of AI-generated tracks is being uploaded daily — a challenge Deezer shares with other streaming services including Swedish heavyweight Spotify.

Deezer said in January that it was receiving uploads of 10,000 AI tracks a day, doubling to over 20,000 in an April statement — or around 18 percent of all music added to the platform.

The company “wants to make sure that royalties supposed to go to

artists aren’t being taken away” by tracks generated from a brief text prompt typed into a music generator like Suno or Udio, Lanternier said.

AI tracks are not being removed from Deezer’s library, but instead are demonetised to avoid unfairly reducing human musicians’ royalties.

Albums containing tracks suspected of being created in this way are now flagged with a notice reading “content generated by AI”, a move Deezer says is a global first for a streaming service.

Lanternier said Deezer’s home-grown detection tool was able to spot markers of AI provenance with 98 percent accuracy.

“An audio signal is an extremely complex bundle of information. When AI algorithms generate a new song, there are little sounds that only they make which give them away...

that we’re able to spot,” he said.

“It’s not audible to the human ear, but it’s visible in the audio signal.”

With 9.7 million subscribers worldwide, most of them in France, Deezer is a relative minnow compared to Spotify, which has 268 million.

The Swedish firm in January signed a deal supposed to better remunerate artists and other rights holders with the world’s biggest label, Universal Music Group.

But Spotify has not taken the same path as Deezer of demonetising AI content.

It has pointed to the lack of a clear definition for completely AI-generated audio, as well as any legal framework setting it apart from human-created works.

Assisted dying set to become law in England, Wales after MPs vote

By Fatimah Idera

Assisted dying is on track to be legalised in England and Wales after MPs voted in favour of the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill in what has been described as the most consequential parliamentary decision of the current session.

In a closely contested vote on Friday, the House of Commons approved the legislation by 314 votes to 291 a narrow majority of 23 paving the way for adults with a terminal illness and less than six months to live to seek medical assistance to end their lives.

The Bill, led by Labour MP Kim Leadbeater, represents a significant shift in end-of-life care policy and could see assisted dying available to eligible patients by 2029. However, questions remain over whether the service will be delivered through the NHS or a new, separate system.

Leadbeater hailed the result as a step toward a more compassionate system:

“This legislation corrects the profound injustices of the status quo and offers a safe and dignified choice to those facing unbearable suffering at the end of life.”

Despite its passage, the Bill remains highly controversial and has faced opposition from the Royal Colleges of Physicians, Psychiatrists, and Pathologists, as well as cross-party MPs concerned about its ethical and practical implications.

Critics argue that the Bill lacks sufficient safeguards to protect vulnerable individuals and could erode trust in medical professionals. Others expressed concern about the fragile state of the UK’s palliative care services, warning that inadequate support might pressure patients into choosing assisted death.

Diane Abbott, the veteran Labour MP, voiced strong opposition, calling the Bill “literally a matter of life and death” and warning that it could have grave unintended consequences:

“What could be more unjust than to lose your life to appallingly drafted legislation?”



In contrast, Conservative MP Kit Malthouse defended the Bill, saying it gave a voice to the terminally ill who are begging us for mercy.

“We honour life by giving it meaning and power. And the one thing that dying people ask for in their final moments is control.”

Sir James Cleverly, another prominent opponent, warned of a fundamental shift in the doctor-patient relationship:

“This introduces a permanent question mark in the minds of seriously ill patients — a fear about what their doctors truly expect of them.”

Former minister Tom Tugendhat echoed these concerns, urging MPs to consider the long-term consequences of their decision.

“When the first 18 or 19-year-old applies for an assisted death, it will be on our consciences. This decision fundamentally alters the relationship between the individual and the state in a way that cannot be undone.”

Under the new law, patients seeking an assisted death must receive approval from two doctors and a specially appointed panel comprising a psychiatrist, a social worker, and a legal expert. This model replaces an earlier proposal requiring High Court sign-off, which was dropped after concerns during the Bill’s Second

Reading last November.

Professional bodies involved in end-of-life care have warned that the health system may not yet be equipped to implement the new law. Sir James cited their concerns, noting potential shortages in staffing and resources:

“When the people responsible for delivering this say they are not ready, we should listen.”

There were also concerns raised about the lack of representation from disabled communities during the Bill’s drafting. Labour MP Vicky Foxcroft criticised the absence of disabled voices in the debate, calling it astonishing.

Yet support for the Bill extended beyond Parliament. Dr Peter Prinsley, reflecting on his decades in medicine, said his views had changed with time:

“As a young doctor, I found these measures unconscionable. But now I’m convinced this is a necessary and humane change. We are not choosing between life and death, but between death and death and there must be dignity in that choice.”

With the Commons vote now secured, the legislation will move to the House of Lords for further scrutiny. If passed there, assisted dying will become legal in England and Wales for the first time marking a historic turning point in UK medical and ethical law.

Pope Leo XIV warns of AI risks to young brains

By New Daily Prime



Pope Leo XIV warned on Friday of the potential consequences of artificial intelligence (AI) on the intellectual development of young people, saying it could damage their grip on reality.

Since his election as head of the Catholic Church on May 8, the pope — a mathematics graduate — has repeatedly warned of the risks associated with AI but this is the first time he has spoken out exclusively on the subject.

“All of us... are concerned for children and young people, and the possible consequences of the use of AI on their intellectual and neurological development,” the American pope warned in a written message to participants at the second Rome Conference on AI.

“No generation has ever had such

quick access to the amount of information now available through AI.

“But again, access to data — however extensive — must not be confused with intelligence,” Leo told business leaders, policymakers and researchers attending the annual conference.

While welcoming the use of AI in “enhancing research in healthcare and scientific discovery”, the pope said it “raises troubling questions on its possible repercussions” on humanity’s “distinctive ability to grasp and process reality”.

Pope Leo himself has been the target of deep fake videos and audio messages published on social media in recent weeks.

An AFP investigation earlier this month identified dozens of YouTube

and TikTok pages broadcasting AI-generated messages masquerading as genuine comments from the pope in English or Spanish.

A survey from the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism this week found significant numbers of young people in particular were using chatbots to get headlines and updates.

The Catholic Church has attempted to influence ethical thinking surrounding the use of new technologies in recent years under Leo’s predecessor Francis.

In 2020, the Vatican initiated the Rome Call for AI Ethics — signed by Microsoft, IBM, the United Nations, Italy and a host of universities — urging transparency and respect for privacy.

Israel-Iran conflict: Trump weighs, holds off decision for two weeks

By Damilola Olufemi

U.S. President Donald Trump says he will decide within two weeks whether Washington will be involved in the Israel-Iran conflict, backing Israel's military campaign against Iran, citing a "substantial" possibility that diplomatic talks could still take place.

Amid mounting pressure over his administration's response to the escalating conflict, Trump's decision to delay any immediate action opens a potential window for negotiations with Tehran.

"Based on the fact that there's a substantial chance of negotiations that may or may not take place with Iran soon, I will make my decision whether or not to go within the next two weeks," Trump said in a message delivered Thursday by White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt.

Speaking to reporters, Leavitt acknowledged the public debate surrounding possible U.S. intervention and defended the president's timeline, stating that Trump is not stalling but rather giving diplomacy a chance. "If there's a chance for diplomacy, the president's always going to grab it, but he's not afraid to use strength as well," she said.

Still, she emphasised the urgency of the situation, warning that Iran could assemble a nuclear weapon within weeks. "Iran has all that it needs to achieve a nuclear weapon. All they need is a decision from the supreme leader to do that, and it would take a couple of weeks to complete the production of that weapon," she added.

Iran, however, maintains that its nuclear ambitions are purely peaceful and has repeatedly denied pursuing nuclear arms.

Trump also claimed Iran had reached out in hopes of sending officials to the White House to negotiate a potential resolution. However, Iranian officials



have publicly denied making such a request.

While there has been some level of backchannel "correspondence" between Washington and Tehran since Israel launched airstrikes on Iran last week, Leavitt noted there are currently no plans for Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, to attend a diplomatic meeting involving European representatives and Iran's foreign minister in Geneva.

Inside the White House, Trump has met with his top national security team daily in the Situation Room and is expected to continue high-level discussions until he departs for the NATO summit in the Netherlands on Monday.

The president's self-imposed two-week deadline follows a period of intense speculation about whether he would back Israel's military operations. He recently described Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as an "easy target," signalling a more confrontational tone even as he keeps the door open for talks.

Israel-Iran: Trump withdrew US from 2015 Iran nuclear deal
During his first term, Trump withdrew the United States from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal; however, in recent weeks, he has floated the idea of

pursuing a new agreement. Nevertheless, he has voiced support for Israeli strikes on Iran's nuclear infrastructure and senior military leadership.

One complicating factor is that the U.S. is currently the only nation equipped with advanced "bunker buster" bombs capable of targeting fortified Iranian nuclear sites like the Fordo enrichment facility. "We have capabilities that no other country on this planet possesses," Leavitt stressed.

While the White House maintains it is weighing all options, key voices within Trump's political base have expressed firm opposition to military involvement. Prominent figures in the "Make America Great Again" movement, such as former White House adviser Steve Bannon and media personality Tucker Carlson, have warned against U.S. strikes.

Even so, Leavitt urged Americans to have confidence in Trump's judgment. "Trust in President Trump. President Trump has incredible instincts," she said, highlighting his longstanding opposition to entangling U.S. forces in Middle Eastern conflicts — a stance that helped secure his 2016 and 2024 electoral victories.

SNP minister quits party as internal opposition to leader intensifies

By Fatimah Idera



Scottish First Minister John Swinney has suffered a significant political setback after veteran SNP politician Fergus Ewing announced he is leaving the party and will run as an independent in the next Holyrood election.

Ewing, 67, who has represented the Inverness and Nairn constituency since the Scottish Parliament was re-established in 1999, declared on Friday that he could no longer support the party he has belonged to for over 50 years. His resignation comes amid growing dissent within the SNP over the party's direction under Mr Swinney's leadership.

In a statement, Ewing accused the SNP of having "deserted many of the people whose causes we used to champion" and warned that the party had lost its moral and political compass. His departure follows the SNP's humiliating defeat in the Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse by-election, where Scottish Labour seized the seat and Reform UK secured third place. The result has reportedly intensified internal pressure on Swinney, with talk of a potential leadership challenge at the SNP's conference in October.

Opposition figures quickly seized on Ewing's resignation. Edward Mountain, Conservative MSP for the Highlands and Islands, said: "It speaks volumes about John Swinney and the SNP's appalling failures in government that even nationalist royalty is prepared to twist the knife in this way."

Ewing, a longstanding critic of the party's stance on gender recognition reform, net zero policies, and schemes such as the deposit return initiative and marine protected areas, said his decision was motivated by a desire to put his constituents and Scotland first. "I love the people of Inverness and Nairn, and the people of Scotland, more than I love my party," he said.

"Holyrood is more fractious and tribal than ever. Too much power rests unchecked in the hands of party leaders, who favour loyalists over those willing to stand up for their communities."

He further accused the SNP of losing its way and said that devolution was "letting Scotland's people down."

Ewing's departure is not only symbolic,

but deeply personal for the SNP. He is the son of the late Winnie Ewing, whose landmark 1967 by-election win in Hamilton marked the SNP's entry into mainstream Scottish politics. His sister, Annabelle Ewing, remains an SNP MSP for Cowdenbeath.

Having held ministerial roles under both Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon, Ewing hinted as far back as March that he might run as an independent. At the time, John Swinney who had only just become First Minister praised him as a faithful servant of his constituents and a valued contributor to Scottish politics.

In his parting remarks, Ewing reflected on his family's political legacy and the unfulfilled promise of devolution: "When my mother reconvened our Parliament in 1999, people held high expectations. Holyrood has come of age, it's time for it to grow up."

Ewing's exit underscores growing unrest within the SNP ranks and raises the prospect of further fractures ahead of a crucial general election and the next Holyrood vote.

Foreign office launches evacuation of stranded Britons from Israel

By Fatimah Idera



British nationals stranded in Israel will be evacuated on government-organised charter flights once the country's airspace reopens, the Foreign Office has confirmed.

The decision marks a reversal of the UK's earlier position, with Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) officials previously indicating that chartered flights would not be offered.

On Friday, however, Foreign Secretary David Lammy announced that the UK is now coordinating with Israeli authorities to facilitate evacuation flights from Tel Aviv, depending on demand from British citizens.

Thousands of UK nationals are believed to be in Israel, though many are permanent residents or have opted to remain despite the worsening security situation. Israel's airspace has been closed for a week following Iranian missile strikes launched in retaliation for Israeli air raids ordered by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The closure has left tens of thousands of tourists, including British nationals, stranded with no commercial flights available.

In a statement, Mr Lammy said: "As part of our efforts to support British nationals in the Middle East, the Government is working with the Israeli authorities to provide charter flights from Tel Aviv airport when airspace reopens, based on levels of demand. British nationals should register their presence in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories to be contacted with further guidance."

He also noted that land routes out of Israel remain open, and UK officials are on the ground assisting those who have crossed into neighbouring countries, including Jordan and Egypt. Assistance may include transport to regional airports for onward travel, depending on demand.

The FCDO has advised all British nationals in the region to register on an online portal to help officials estimate numbers and coordinate assistance. Embassy staff families in Tel Aviv have already been evacuated due to security concerns, following Iranian strikes that resulted in civilian casualties.

Government-chartered evacuations are rare, especially when commercial air travel is expected to resume shortly. However, the anticipated rush for seats once flights restart has prompted the UK

to step in with direct assistance.

The decision comes amid rising diplomatic tension. Israel is reportedly eager to avoid the impression that it is unsafe for foreign visitors, particularly from allied nations. Nevertheless, the UK updated its travel advice on Sunday, warning against all travel to Israel due to the risk of further escalation.

Mr Lammy is attending a meeting in Geneva with EU foreign ministers to discuss the conflict. He travelled there from Washington, where he met U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio. The UK is urging calm and a diplomatic resolution, with Lammy reportedly advising against U.S. military intervention.

Donald Trump, who is considering joining the conflict, has delayed a decision on a potential U.S. airstrike on an Iranian nuclear facility. The UK believes this delay offers a short window to pursue de-escalation and avoid further destabilisation of the region.

The UK continues to call for restraint from all sides, with Lammy urging cool heads to prevail.

Hong Kong teachers warned to avoid U.S. Independence Day events

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Teachers across Hong Kong have reportedly been warned to avoid participating in U.S. Independence Day celebrations, amid growing concerns about breaching China's sweeping national security laws. Educators say the warning stems from fears that attending such events could be interpreted as unpatriotic or even unlawful.

A text message allegedly sent by the principal of a local school and shared on Edu Lancet, a Facebook page run by former Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority official, Hans Yeung, stated that the Education Bureau's regional office had advised caution over July 4th activities organised by the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong. Staff were told not to attend and to discourage students from participating to avoid potential violations of national security regulations.

An additional email, also published on Edu Lancet and independently verified by The Guardian, instructed teachers who receive invitations from foreign embassies or embassy-funded groups to seek approval from school principals before attending, citing national security protocols.

The Education Bureau did not confirm or deny the authenticity of the messages when contacted, but issued a statement reinforcing its commitment to national security. "Schools have the responsibility to play a good gatekeeper role and to enhance the sensitivity of teachers and students to national security," the bureau stated. It also pointed to "clear guidelines" requiring schools to establish mechanisms to implement national security education and enforcement within their communities.

The bureau did not clarify which



specific laws would be breached by attending Fourth of July events, nor whether the restrictions extended to other foreign holidays or events.

The warnings are the latest in a series of sweeping reforms to Hong Kong's education system, which has come under tighter scrutiny since the Chinese government imposed the controversial National Security Law in 2020. Following the 2019 pro-democracy protests, then Chief Executive Carrie Lam accused the education system of fomenting unrest, prompting an overhaul of school curricula to emphasise patriotism and political loyalty.

Since then, national security teachings have been woven into subjects ranging from English and mathematics to physical education. Several books, including a children's picture book about sheep published by the city's physiotherapists' union, have been banned for allegedly endangering state security. Authors of such materials have also faced prosecution.

Educators say the atmosphere within schools has become increasingly stifling, with many reporting a need to

self-censor out of fear of being accused of subversion. As of the 2023-24 academic year, all new teachers in public schools and kindergartens must pass an exam on Hong Kong's Basic Law and the National Security Law.

Education minister calls on teachers to be vigilant

Education Minister Christine Choi has repeatedly warned against "soft resistance" in schools, recently calling on teachers to be vigilant against "hostile forces" infiltrating extracurricular spaces and book fairs.

The U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong has not yet commented on the reported warnings. Meanwhile, Edu Lancet's founder, Hans Yeung, now residing in the UK, has faced previous criticism from Hong Kong's Security Secretary Chris Tang, who accused him of "incitement" from abroad.

The developments reflect an ongoing trend of political control and surveillance creeping further into Hong Kong's classrooms, with national security now a primary pillar of education in the territory.

UN report records surge in violence against children in conflict zones

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



A record number of children were subjected to violence in armed conflict zones in 2024, according to a harrowing new report by the United Nations. The annual Children and Armed Conflict report, presented to the UN Security Council, revealed a 25% rise in grave violations against children, with 22,495 affected by killings, injuries, recruitment, or the denial of humanitarian aid.

The total number of verified violations, including some committed in earlier years but only confirmed in 2024, reached a staggering 41,370, the highest since the UN began documenting such incidents in 1996.

“This must serve as a wake-up call. We are at the point of no return,” said Virginia Gamba, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. “Instead of recognising the special protection afforded to children, governments and armed groups around the world blatantly ignore international law.”

Among the most alarming statistics were a 44% rise in attacks on schools and a 35% increase in incidents of sexual

violence against children. The number of children subjected to multiple violations also surged from 2,684 in 2023 to 3,137 last year, with many facing abductions, recruitment, and sexual abuse simultaneously.

Gaza was singled out in the report as one of the worst-affected areas, with 4,856 verified violations, primarily carried out by Israeli security forces. These included killings, injuries, and the denial of medical permits. The report also confirmed that 22 Palestinian boys had been used as human shields in Gaza, and five in the occupied West Bank.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Somalia, Nigeria and Haiti also saw sharp rises in violence against children. Of more than 4,000 verified cases in the DRC, over half involved the recruitment of children by armed groups. Nigeria recorded 419 cases of sexual violence, while DRC reported 358, Somalia 267, and Haiti, which accounted for over a quarter of all such incidents, saw 406 cases of rape and 160 involving gang rape.

UN expresses concern over rise in gang rape

The report expressed concern over the “dramatic” rise in gang rape and the abduction of girls for sexual slavery, noting that sexual violence was increasingly being used as a deliberate weapon of war.

“This level of violence against children cannot be allowed to become normalised,” said Helen Pattinson, CEO of War Child UK. “To accept it is to dismantle our collective humanity. Governments must act now to end this grief, trauma, and loss.”

Inger Ashing, CEO of Save the Children International, echoed those sentiments. “Sexual violence must be treated with the same gravity as guns and bombs,” she said. “This brutality, particularly when inflicted upon children, is one of the most deplorable aspects of modern conflict.”

As the number of violations continues to climb, humanitarian organisations are urging governments and international bodies to take urgent action to protect children and hold perpetrators accountable.

Trump orders mass layoffs at Voice of America, other US-funded media

By New Daily Prime



President Donald Trump's administration on Friday ordered mass layoffs at Voice of America and other government-funded media, moving ahead with gutting the outlets despite legal disputes and criticism that US adversaries will benefit.

Kari Lake, a fervent Trump supporter named to a senior role at the US Agency for Global Media, said the notices were a "long-overdue effort to dismantle a bloated, unaccountable bureaucracy".

Lake said in a statement that she would work with the State Department and Congress to "make sure the telling of America's story is modernised, effective and aligned with America's foreign policy".

Trump issued an order in March that froze Voice of America (VOA) for the first time since it was founded in 1942.

Termination notices were sent to 639 employees on Friday, after previous offers of voluntary departures and dismissals of contractors.

Some 1,400 positions have been eliminated, with only 250 remaining,

Lake said.

Voice of America layoffs included journalists from its Persian service who had briefly been brought back to work after Israel attacked Iran a week ago.

Employees have filed a lawsuit challenging Lake's actions, which come even though Congress had already appropriated funding.

The mass firing decision "spells the death of 83 years of independent journalism that upholds the US ideals of democracy and freedom around the world," the three plaintiffs wrote in a statement.

"Moscow, Beijing, Tehran and extremist groups are flooding the information space with anti-American propaganda. Do not cede this ground by silencing America's voice," said the three complainants, Patsy Widakuswara, Jessica Jerreat and Kate Neeper.

Senator Jeanne Shaheen, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said that the "decimation of US broadcasting leaves authoritarian propaganda unchecked by US backed independent media and is a

perversion of the law and congressional intent."

"It is a dark day for the truth," she wrote on X.

Trump frequently attacks media outlets and has scoffed at the so-called editorial firewall at VOA which prevents the government from intervening in its coverage, something he at times has considered too critical of his administration.

One outlet preserved by the mass cuts has been Radio Marti, which broadcasts into Cuba and enjoys support from anti-communist Cuban-American Republican lawmakers.

Other outlets funded by the US government have included Radio Free Asia, which was set up to provide news to Asian countries without a free press and is now operating in a limited capacity.

Radio Free Europe, formed with a similar mission for Soviet bloc nations during the Cold War, has survived thanks to support from the Czech government.

Charges dropped against England goalkeeper Keating

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

In a significant development just weeks before the UEFA Women's Euro 2025 kicks off, England and Manchester City goalkeeper Khiara Keating has had criminal charges against her formally dropped, bringing an end to a legal ordeal that lasted nearly a year.

The 20-year-old had been facing charges related to the possession of nitrous oxide—commonly known as “laughing gas”—which was officially classified as a Class C drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act in November 2023. Keating, who had consistently maintained her innocence, expressed relief and gratitude after the Crown Prosecution Service decided to discontinue the case.

“I’m relieved the charges have been dropped. As I’ve always said, I did nothing wrong,” Keating told BBC Sport in an exclusive statement. “It’s been a difficult time, but I’ve always known the truth. Now I’m just looking forward to focusing fully on the Euros and spending time with my family.”

The Case

Keating was initially charged on 18 June 2024 following an investigation by Greater Manchester Police. She appeared in court a month later, in July, alongside her mother Nicola Keating, 48, who also faced the same charge. Both pleaded not guilty and were granted unconditional bail.

The case was brought under the revised laws concerning nitrous oxide, which now criminalize possession when it is intended for inhalation to achieve a psychoactive effect. Despite its new classification, the substance remains legal for specific uses such as in culinary practices and medical procedures, including pain relief during childbirth.

On Thursday, Greater Manchester Police confirmed that the case had been dropped, citing insufficient evidence to proceed with a trial. The decision comes as a major boost for Keating, who can now fully concentrate on her footballing commitments with both club and country.

Rising Star

Keating has not yet featured for England at senior level but is one of the three goalkeepers named in Sarina Wiegman’s 23-player squad for Euro 2025. Her inclusion speaks to the high regard in which she is held by the national team’s coaching staff, particularly after a



standout season with Manchester City.

Last year, Keating made headlines when she became the youngest ever recipient of the Women’s Super League Golden Glove, keeping nine clean sheets in 22 appearances. Her performances helped City mount a serious challenge for the league title and established her as one of the most promising goalkeepers in European football.

Now with the legal proceedings behind her, Keating is expected to serve as either a backup or rotational option in goal during the Euros, learning from more experienced goalkeepers while also preparing for a long-term role with the Lionesses.

Reactions and Looking Ahead

Support has poured in for Keating from teammates, fans, and pundits alike. Manchester City Women issued a brief statement, saying, “We are pleased that the matter concerning Khiara has been resolved. Khiara has our full support as she continues her preparations for the European Championships.”

Football analysts have also pointed out that this episode could serve as a powerful personal experience for the young keeper, helping her develop the mental resilience necessary to thrive at the top level.

England will begin their Euro 2025 campaign next month, with high expectations following their triumph at the 2022 edition and a runners-up finish at the 2023 World Cup. While Keating may not be the starting goalkeeper, her presence in the squad adds depth and quality in a critical position.

For Keating, the future once again looks promising. With her name cleared, she can now focus on writing the next chapter in what is already becoming a remarkable football career.

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Flamengo stun Chelsea 3-1 in Club World Cup comeback victory

By Gbenga Olaleye



Chelsea surrendered a one-goal lead to suffer a 3-1 defeat against Brazil's Flamengo in their second fixture of the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup on Friday.

The Premier League side, who beat Los Angeles FC 2-0 in their opening match, looked set to secure early qualification for the knockout stage when Pedro Neto opened the scoring in the first half with a clinical finish.

But Flamengo turned the game around after the break. Bruno Henrique equalized before Danilo fired the Brazilian side into the lead.

Chelsea's hopes of a comeback were dealt a further blow when substitute Nicolas Jackson received a straight red card for a reckless tackle just minutes after replacing Liam Delap.

With Chelsea down to 10 men, Wallace Yan sealed the result with a

third goal, condemning the Blues to a disappointing collapse in Philadelphia.

However, Chelsea struck first in the 13th minute after Flamengo fullback Wesley sliced a clearance attempt and lost his footing, gifting the ball to Neto. The Portuguese winger raced unmarked into the box and slotted a composed finish past Agustin Rossi to give Chelsea the lead.

The goal shifted momentum, with Chelsea dominating possession and creating further chances. Malo Gusto and Liam Delap had efforts saved by Rossi. Flamengo also had a great chance, with Enzo Fernandez clearing a Gerson volley off the line just before halftime.

Chelsea also appealed unsuccessfully for a penalty when Fernandez appeared to be held in the box.

Flamengo, however, roared back into contention after the break.

Bruno Henrique, introduced as a substitute, made an immediate impact in the 62nd minute. Gerson's cross found Gonzalo Plata at the far post, whose clever header set up Henrique for a simple tap-in to equalise.

Chelsea's troubles deepened when Jackson, who had just come off the bench, was sent off in the 68th minute for a reckless studs-up challenge on Ayrton Lucas.

Flamengo sealed the victory in the 83rd minute when Yan, another substitute, slotted home a rebound after a surging run from the right by Plata.

Chelsea will now face a must-win final group match to keep their Club World Cup hopes alive.

Liverpool seal £40m deal for Kerkez from Bournemouth

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Liverpool have completed a major defensive reinforcement by agreeing a £40 million deal to sign Milos Kerkez from Bournemouth. The highly-rated Hungarian left-back is set to become the latest addition to Arne Slot's squad as the Reds look to defend their Premier League title and strengthen for an ambitious 2025/26 campaign.

The 21-year-old joins after an impressive season with Bournemouth, where he played every single Premier League match and helped the Cherries achieve a club-record ninth-place finish and 56 points. Kerkez contributed two goals and six assists across the season, attracting attention from Europe's elite before Liverpool won the race for his signature.

Kerkez's arrival also reunites him with Liverpool's sporting director Richard Hughes, who worked with him during his time at Bournemouth. It also adds depth to Liverpool's left flank and raises questions about the futures of current left-backs Andy Robertson and Kostas Tsimikas.

Rising Star with a European Pedigree

Born in Serbia but representing Hungary at the international level, Kerkez began his senior career at Győr before joining Italian giants AC Milan. Although he never made a senior appearance for the Rossoneri, a move to Dutch side AZ Alkmaar in January 2022 gave Kerkez the platform to shine.

In the 2022–23 season, he played 52 times for AZ, scoring five goals and providing seven assists, helping the club to a fourth-place Eredivisie finish and a run to the UEFA Europa Conference League semi-finals. His performances caught the eye of Bournemouth, who signed him in the summer of 2023.

At Vitality Stadium, Kerkez's tenacity, stamina, and creativity stood out, earning him recognition as one of the most complete young full-backs in the Premier League. His defensive work rate and attacking instincts perfectly suit the modern game.



A Slot-Style Full-Back

Kerkez's style of play makes him an ideal fit for Arne Slot's system. While the Dutchman's tactics differ in tempo from Jurgen Klopp's renowned "heavy metal" football, Slot still prioritizes high pressing, structured intensity, and quick ball recoveries—traits Kerkez thrives in.

Statistics back up his credentials. Kerkez made 169 ball recoveries last season—the fifth-highest among all Premier League defenders and more than any current Liverpool full-back. He also recovered the ball 11 times in the attacking third, ranking ninth among defenders.

Offensively, Kerkez created 34 chances from open play, fifth-most for defenders in the league, and delivered 142 crosses. His five assists ranked joint-fourth, and he completed 22 dribbles—more than any Liverpool defender.

Moreover, he completed 476 passes into the final third, showcasing his vision and forward-thinking approach. Slot is expected to use Kerkez in a dynamic role, supporting attacks while maintaining his defensive duties.

What This Means for Liverpool

The Reds are undergoing a mini-rebuild under Slot, and the signing of Kerkez shows the club's intent to blend youth

with high-level performance. He will join fellow Hungarian Dominik Szoboszlai at Anfield, further strengthening the national bond at the club.

Liverpool's recruitment this summer has been aggressive. Alongside Kerkez, the club is nearing a £116 million deal for Bayer Leverkusen playmaker Florian Wirtz and has already signed Jeremie Frimpong for £29.5 million from the same German side.

With speculation surrounding Andy Robertson—who has been linked to Atletico Madrid—Liverpool may be planning for the long term. While they are keen to retain the 31-year-old Scot, back-up defender Kostas Tsimikas may be allowed to leave.

Kerkez's signing could mark a changing of the guard at left-back, with the Hungarian offering both immediate quality and long-term potential.

Conclusion

For Liverpool fans, Kerkez's arrival is another sign of a fresh era under Arne Slot. Young, hungry, and technically gifted, the former Bournemouth man is poised to become a key figure in Liverpool's next generation.

Quincy Promes extradited to Netherlands for Jail term

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Dutch footballer Quincy Promes has been extradited from Dubai to the Netherlands, where he is set to begin serving a combined seven-and-a-half-year prison sentence for drug trafficking and aggravated assault.

The 33-year-old, once a regular in the Netherlands national team, was arrested last week in Dubai following an official extradition request from Dutch authorities. His transfer marks the culmination of a long-running legal process that has plagued the winger's career in recent years.

Promes was sentenced in February 2024 to six years in prison after Dutch prosecutors found him guilty of participating in a major cocaine smuggling operation. The case involved more than 1,350 kilograms of cocaine trafficked from Belgium into the Netherlands in 2020—a haul worth tens of millions of euros on the streets.

In a separate but related legal battle, Promes had also received an 18-month sentence for stabbing his cousin during a family gathering in 2020. Despite being convicted in both cases, he had so far evaded serving any jail time—until now.

From Stardom to Scandal

Quincy Promes is a name familiar to many football fans, including Nigerians who followed his performances during his time at Ajax and Spartak Moscow. Known for his pace and goal-scoring ability, he once looked set for a long and successful international career. He made his senior debut for FC Twente in 2009, before becoming a star in the Russian Premier League with Spartak Moscow.

After a brief stint with Sevilla in Spain's La Liga, Promes returned to Ajax in the Netherlands and was later recalled to Spartak Moscow for a second spell. In 2024, he signed for Dubai United, a move many saw as a



quiet end to a once-promising career. However, his legal troubles continued to follow him.

Promes earned 50 caps for the Netherlands national team, scoring seven goals between 2014 and 2023. His last appearance in the famous Oranje jersey came just two years ago.

Legal Saga

Promes has consistently denied all charges and has filed appeals in both the drug trafficking and assault cases. His lawyers argue that there is insufficient evidence linking him directly to the cocaine shipments, and he has claimed the stabbing incident was misinterpreted and not intentional.

Despite these denials, the Dutch judicial system has remained firm in its rulings. The Public Prosecution Service in the Netherlands issued an international arrest warrant earlier this year, which led to his capture in Dubai.

A spokesperson for the Dutch authorities confirmed: "Mr. Promes has been returned to the Netherlands and is currently in custody. Details of where he will serve his sentence are

still being finalised."

A Cautionary Tale

For many Nigerian football fans and young players dreaming of international success, the fall of Quincy Promes serves as a cautionary tale. Once celebrated for his flair and attacking brilliance, his career is now overshadowed by criminal convictions and missed opportunities.

His story mirrors those of several athletes who, despite reaching the pinnacle of professional sports, become entangled in legal troubles due to choices off the pitch. In Nigeria, where many young talents look to European football as a route out of poverty, Promes' decline is a stark reminder of the importance of discipline and wise decision-making.

As he prepares to begin his sentence, the football world turns its focus away from the pitch and onto a sobering chapter in the life of a former star. What remains unclear is whether Promes will have any chance to rebuild his football career after serving his time—or whether his story ends behind bars.