



FG mourns Niger tanker explosion's victims **PAGE 2**

How I lost \$10,000 after rejecting rituals to become governor - Diri **PAGE 8**



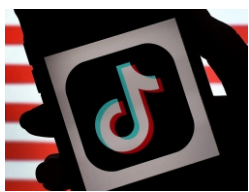
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HISTORIC GAZA CEASEFIRE: Three released Israeli hostages return home **Pg 20**



GRUESOME! Man, daughter beheaded over land dispute in Delta **PAGE 11**



TikTok goes offline in U.S., 170m Americans in anguish **PAGE 24**



Gunmen shoot cleric dead inside Ogun church **PAGE 11**

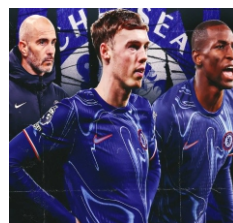
WORLD **PAGE 25**

Colombian drug gang violence kills 60 people



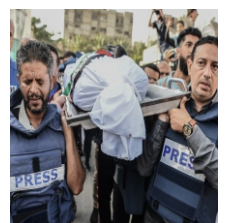
SPORTS

Why is Chelsea's season falling apart?! **PAGE 26**



Record number of journalists killed in Gaza war

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What the Israel-Hamas ceasefire means for the world

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FG mourns Niger tanker explosion's victims

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Federal Government has conveyed its sympathies to the government and people of Niger State following the petrol tanker explosion at Dikko Junction in Gurara Local Government Area on Saturday.

The Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, Prof. Nantewe Yilwatda, described the incident in a statement released on Sunday as tragic, noting that it claimed many lives and caused extensive property damage.

The statement was issued in Abuja by Rhoda Iliya, the ministry's Information Officer.

NEW DAILY PRIME reports that the death toll from the petrol tanker explosion has risen to 86, with 55 others injured and taken to hospital.

The Minister, expressing concern over the rising frequency of tanker explosions in the country, warned motorists against reckless driving that could endanger innocent lives.

Yilwatda urged them to strictly adhere to road traffic regulations



at all times.

"I am deeply saddened by the frequent occurrence of tanker explosions in the country, which always leads to loss of lives, injuries, and property damage," Yilwatda said.

"I share in the pain of the community who lost their loved ones in this devastating incident."

He also offered his condolences to the families of the victims and wished a speedy recovery to the injured.

The minister commended the swift response of Governor Umaru Bago of Niger State and his team, particularly the State Emergency Management

Agency, the Fire Service, and the Federal Road Safety Corps.

He also thanked the Nigeria Police Force and other concerned Nigerians who assisted in evacuating the victims from the scene.

According to the Director-General of NSEMA, Mr Abdullahi Baba-Arah, the incident resulted in 86 fatalities, with 80 individuals buried in a mass grave and the rest handed over to their families for burial.

The number of injured persons has risen to 55, with one fatality recorded at the healthcare facility in Dikko.

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

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PRODUCT COLOUR

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SIZE	TOTAL RATE
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9X5	225,738.00
9X4	193,500.00
9X3	166,223.50
8X6	225,368.50
8X3	106,934.50
7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
6X3	82,750.00
6X2	52,499.50
5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
5X3	66,875.00
5X2	42,916.50
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PRESS RELEASE (4X4)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
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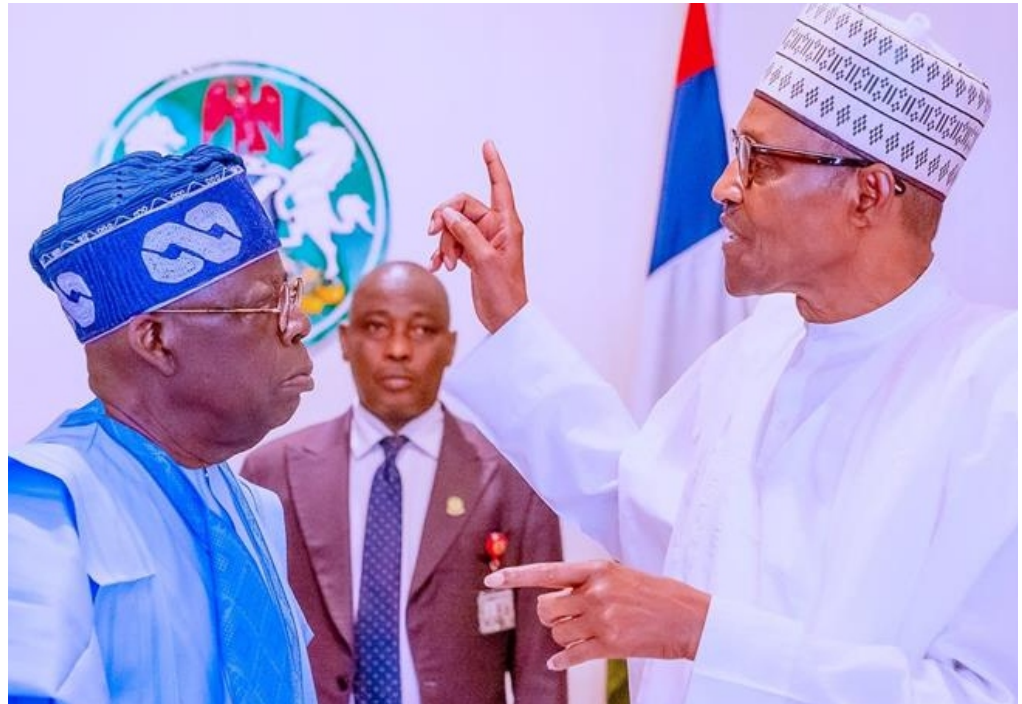
Presidency denies Tinubu coerced Nigerians in Paris arbitration

By Friday Omosola

The Presidency has debunked allegations circulating on social media that President Bola Tinubu coerced prominent Nigerians to participate in an arbitration proceeding in Paris involving the Nigerian government.

In a statement issued by Bayo Onanuga, the Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, the Presidency described the reports as “fake news” and clarified that the ongoing arbitration process is confidential and should not have been publicised.

“The attention of the Presidency has been drawn to some fake news on social media about an arbitration proceeding in Paris to which the Nigerian Government is



a party.

“The private proceeding, which should not have been reported in the media, is entirely confidential until the international arbitrators decide,” the statement read.

While maintaining the confidentiality of the case, the

Presidency categorically denied claims that President Tinubu forced individuals to testify on behalf of or against Nigeria.

Instead, it praised the patriotism of those involved in defending the country’s interests.

The Presidency appreciated those assisting in the arbitration, reiterating President Tinubu’s appreciation for their commitment to Nigeria.

This clarification comes amid heightened public interest in Nigeria’s international arbitration cases, with many speculating on the government’s strategies for resolving disputes on the global stage.



Shettima heads for World Economic Forum meeting in Switzerland

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has departed Abuja to represent Nigeria at the 2025 Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) scheduled to hold in Davos, Switzerland.

In a statement released on Sunday, Shettima's spokesperson, Stanley Nkwocha, announced that the Vice President would join world leaders, top business executives, and representatives of development partners to discuss the state of the global economy and explore strategies to improve its conditions.

While in Davos, the Vice President is set to hold bilateral meetings with other global leaders and participate in workshops and forums scheduled for the annual gathering.

One of the key events on Shettima's agenda is a workshop titled "Roadmap to Co-create Investment Opportunities for Africa's Frontier Markets," organised by the African Development Bank in collaboration with the World Economic Forum.

The workshop, which will take place at the Congress Centre in Jakobshorn, aims to boost capital flow into Africa's frontier markets and scale solutions that promote a prosperous, inclusive, and resilient continent.

High on the agenda is the announcement of the Humanitarian and Resilience Investing (HRI) Roadmap for Africa.



This initiative, in partnership with the African Development Bank, seeks to foster collaborations between public and private sector leaders interested in mobilizing investments in Africa's frontier markets.

Additionally, the Vice President is expected to attend a dinner for heads of state, government officials, and international organizations.

The dinner, which will also host the 2025 Crystal Awardees, the International Business Council, and Strategic Partners, is slated to take place at Kurpark Village, Eiger.

Shettima will also co-chair a forum titled "Turning Digital Trade into a Catalyst for Growth in Africa," scheduled to hold at the Pische Congress Centre.

The forum will serve as a platform for insightful discussions on digital trade and the critical role of the private sector in advancing the

implementation of the AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol, adopted by AU heads of state and government in January 2024.

As a panelist, the Vice President will participate in a stakeholder dialogue titled "Global Risks 2025," which will delve into the findings of the Global Risks Report.

The report highlights the increasingly volatile global landscape, shaped by escalating geopolitical, technological, and environmental challenges. This event will take place at the Aspen 2 Congress Centre in Davos.

Shettima will be accompanied by top government officials, including the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Jumoke Oduwole, and the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission, Aisha Rimi.

He is expected to return to Abuja upon the completion of his engagements in Davos.

Niger tanker explosion: Peter Obi seeks stricter safety measures as 86 bodies buried

By Dave Oludare Oso

Former governor of Anambra State and presidential candidate of the Labour Party in the last election, Peter Obi has called for implementation of measures that would end the recurring tanker explosion on the country.

Obi made the call in a statement on Sunday while reacting to the recent tragic incident along Dikko-Maje Road in the Suleja Local Government Area of Niger State, where several lives were lost on Saturday.

NEW DAILY PRIME earlier reported that over 80 people were feared dead in an explosion which occurred along Dikko-Maje Road in the Suleja Local Government Area of Niger State on Saturday, January 18, 2025.

In a fresh update, the death toll rose to 86 and over 50 residents who sustained varying degrees of burns and were rushed to different hospitals for treatment.

Speaking on Sunday, Abdullahi Baba Arah, Director General of the Niger State Emergency Management Agency (NSEMA), revealed that 80 victims were buried in a mass grave located at the Dikko Primary Health Care premises, while five bodies were claimed by relatives for private burial.

One victim succumbed to injuries at the healthcare centre.

The mass burial, organized by NSEMA in collaboration with



Gurara local government officials and community volunteers, commenced at 5 p.m. and lasted until midnight.

Arah confirmed that 55 people sustained injuries in the explosion and are currently receiving medical care

The tragic incident occurred when a fuel tanker traveling from Kaduna to Gwagwalada overturned at the junction, spilling its contents.

Despite warnings to keep a safe distance, many residents gathered to scoop fuel from the site.

The tanker exploded, resulting in catastrophic loss of life, severe injuries, and the destruction of property worth millions of naira.

Reacting to the incident, the former Governor of Anambra commiserated with victims families, saying there is a need for a stricter safety measures to address tanker explosion and similar incidents.

He tweeted: “The tragic petrol tanker explosion that occurred along Dikko-Maje Road in the Suleja Local Government Area of Niger State yesterday is truly heartbreaking. Reports indicate that over 70 lives were lost, while more than 50 people were injured in the incident.

“These accidents, which have sadly become increasingly recurrent in recent times, highlight the urgent need for the implementation of stricter safety measures to address the dangers of tanker explosions and similar incidents, which often result in colossal disasters.

“I sincerely commiserate with the families who lost their loved ones in the tragedy. I also extend my condolences to the Government and people of Niger State over this devastating incident. May God grant them, and all of us, the fortitude to bear this loss, eternal rest to the departed, and a swift recovery to the injured.”

Fubara vows to protect PDP's integrity in Rivers

By Friday Omosola

Rivers State Governor Siminalayi Fubara has pledged to uphold the integrity and dominance of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state.

Speaking on Sunday during a courtesy visit by the PDP Youth Leaders Forum to the Government House, Fubara reaffirmed his commitment to strengthening the party and preserving its core values.

The governor highlighted the significance of loyalty, unity, and resilience in sustaining the party's relevance, stating, "We are doing everything possible to keep the true essence of the PDP alive. We are not compromised—we are the authentic PDP, and we will remain steadfast."

Addressing challenges within the party, Fubara acknowledged that some decisions taken in the interest of good governance may have been misinterpreted but emphasized their necessity.

"At times, our loyalty has been questioned, but difficult situations often demand difficult choices. Regardless, our commitment to the PDP remains unwavering. Our goal is to ensure progress and stability within our administration."

Fubara urged collective action to resolve internal party issues and promote national unity, underscoring the importance of preserving Nigeria's stability. "It is imperative to keep this house standing, as without



it, there is nothing left to build upon," he remarked.

The governor commended the PDP Youth Leaders Forum for their dedication and highlighted the vital role of young leaders in revitalizing the party. He assured them of his administration's full support, saying, "Your mission is not easy, but we will stand by you to ensure your success."

Fubara also called on party members to set aside ethnic and religious divisions, urging them to work together for the progress of the PDP and the nation.

In his response, Jamilu Kalshingi, Chairman of the PDP Youth Leaders Forum, lauded Governor Fubara's unwavering dedication to preserving the party's unity and integrity.

He expressed satisfaction with recent court rulings affirming the election of local government chairmen in Rivers State and nullifying the PDP congresses.

"These victories go beyond Rivers State—they are triumphs for Nigeria, for the youths, and for the PDP as a whole," Kalshingi said.

He praised the governor's tireless efforts to protect the party, describing them as selfless and focused on securing a better future for Nigerians.

Kalshingi assured Governor Fubara of the forum's full support in the ongoing push to restore the PDP's strength, commending his exemplary leadership in overcoming political challenges.

The Forum's Secretary, Brown Odey, also praised Fubara's transformative governance, noting its positive impact on Nigerian youths.

He called for equitable operations within the PDP across all states and commended the recognition of Governor Fubara as the leader of the party in Rivers State by the newly constituted Acting Executive Committee.

How I lost \$10,000 after rejecting rituals to become governor – Diri

By Dave Oludare Oso

Governor Douye Diri of Bayelsa State, has disclosed that his unwavering faith in God earned him the title “Miracle Governor,” as he rejected an offer to perform voodoo rituals in his bid to become governor in 2020.

Speaking during the KOLGA (Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area) Annual Day of Thanksgiving in Sampou on Friday, Diri recounted a pivotal moment in 2020 when a senior Nigerian figure advised him to resort to spiritual rituals while challenging the All Progressives Congress (APC) victory at the November 2019 governorship poll, a case pending before the Supreme Court at the time.

The governor revealed that the individual had flown in marabouts from Senegal to Abuja for the rituals. However, Diri declined, citing his absolute trust in God.

He recounted: “When I refused to go through with the rituals, the individual demanded a refund of the money spent on bringing the marabouts to Nigeria. I had to pay him \$10,000 to settle the matter.”

Governor Diri stressed the importance of politicians placing their faith in God rather than in human schemes, saying his victory in the Supreme Court was a testament to divine faithfulness.

He further expressed gratitude for the developments in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area, commending the council for legally institutionalizing the Thanksgiving Day.

His words: “I thank God and also thank Apostle David Zilly Aggrey because he started this event. And because his prayers were heard, God made it possible to bring me in and today, it is by law that



all Kolokuma/Opokuma people can gather to praise God.

“Let me reveal to you why it is important to thank God and have faith in Him. Sometime ago, a senior citizen of this country invited me to Abuja and asked me to perform certain sacrifices but I declined. I told him my faith in God would not allow me to do it. He got angry and told me I would never become governor.

“He told me that he had spent \$10,000 to bring the people for the sacrifice and asked for a refund, which I obliged. When the Supreme Court’s pronouncement came, the man was shocked and could not call me. Sadly, he passed on after some time.

“The story I have narrated was witnessed by my deputy and a friend in Abuja as both of them accompanied me to visit the senior citizen.

“Kolokuma/Opokuma people have every reason to thank God. As a state, we do not want anybody to be harmed in the name of politics because we do not know who God has destined for greatness. So I call on all of us in the political game to be very civil and recognise that there is God who rules in the affairs of man.”

In his welcome address, the chairman of Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area, Tariye Lelei, said people of the area have reason to thank God for the gift of a governor.

He said it was in recognition of the goodness of God in their lives that the local government passed legislation legalising thanksgiving on January 17 annually.

In his sermon, Apostle David Zilly Aggrey said the younger generation might not understand the reason for the thanksgiving as they did not experience the difficulty older ones in the local government faced and said if they do not thank God for what He had done for them, they could be regarded as ingrates.

He said Bayelsa was witnessing tremendous development under Diri and thanked the people of the state for giving him the opportunity to serve a second term.

At the event were the Deputy Governor, Senator Lawrence Ewhrudjako; state lawmakers, Secretary to the State Government, Prof. Nimibofa Ayawei; the Head of Service, Mrs. Biobelemoye Charles-Onyema; Chief of Staff, Government House, Dr. Peter Akpe; his deputy, Irorodamie Komonibo, and members of the state executive council.

Others were a member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Board of Trustees, Chief (Mrs.) Remi Kuku; the state PDP chairman, Solomon Agwana; and members of his exco, local government chairmen, the Ibedaowei of Kolokuma Kingdom, King Onya Mozi Agara, other traditional rulers, KOLGA elders and top government officials.

SERAP urges Trump to facilitate recovery of stolen Nigerian assets

By Friday Omosola

The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has called on U.S. President-elect Donald Trump and his incoming administration to assist Nigeria in recovering proceeds of corruption stashed in the United States by former and current Nigerian public officials and their associates.

In a letter dated January 18, 2025, and signed by its deputy director, Kolawole Oluwadare, SERAP urged Trump to direct the U.S. Department of Justice to initiate civil asset forfeiture proceedings against the stolen funds and ensure their return to Nigeria.

SERAP emphasised that the recovery process must adhere to strict transparency and accountability standards to guarantee that the funds benefit the Nigerian people.

The letter specifically highlighted the recently recovered \$52.88 million in forfeited assets linked to former Petroleum Resources Minister Diezani Alison-Madueke as a small portion of the over \$500 billion reportedly looted from Nigeria and traced to the U.S.

SERAP also urged Trump to publish the names of Nigerian public officials suspected of corruption and depositing stolen funds in U.S. banks.

The organisation called for temporary travel bans on these officials, noting that such measures align with U.S. presidential proclamations and the principles of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), to which both the U.S. and Nigeria are signatories.

According to SERAP, proceeds of



corruption from Nigeria continue to be deposited in U.S. banks or other locations under U.S. jurisdiction.

The organisation noted that corruption remains a significant obstacle to Nigeria's sustainable development, the rule of law, and socio-economic rights.

The letter referenced the massive scale of corruption in Nigeria, citing past reports that Nigerian politicians have stolen over \$400 billion, as alleged by former Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Chairman Nuhu Ribadu.

SERAP also pointed out that systemic corruption in ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) continues to exacerbate poverty in the country.

SERAP reminded the U.S. government of its obligations under the UNCAC, particularly Articles 51 and 43, which mandate the return of stolen assets to their country of origin.

The organisation called on the U.S. to trace, freeze, seize, and repatriate these funds to Nigeria.

The organisation also referred to the U.S. Department of Justice's Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative, which was instrumental in recovering the \$52.88 million linked to Diezani Alison-Madueke.

It urged the U.S. to intensify efforts in identifying and returning more stolen assets.

SERAP stressed the importance of sharing information on stolen assets with Nigerian civil society organizations, as required under Articles 46(4) and 56 of the UNCAC.

It also advocated for stricter accountability measures to ensure that repatriated funds are used exclusively for the welfare of Nigerians.

SERAP urged Trump to address the legal loopholes that allow corrupt Nigerian officials to hide their ill-gotten wealth in the U.S.

"Returning proceeds of corruption to Nigeria is a development imperative," SERAP said. "By doing so, the U.S. would contribute to alleviating poverty in Nigeria and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals."

The request comes amidst renewed focus on asset recovery efforts, following the announcement of the agreement to repatriate the \$52.88 million in forfeited corruption proceeds. SERAP hopes this initiative will mark the beginning of more extensive cooperation between Nigeria and the U.S. in combating corruption and recovering stolen assets.

EFCC nabs India-bound Nursing student with 76 cocaine pellets

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) have intercepted a 26-year-old nursing student attempting to smuggle 76 wraps of cocaine to India.

The suspect, Esther Onyinyechi Uzodinma, a second-year nursing student at Noida International University in Uttar Pradesh, India, was apprehended just hours before her scheduled flight from Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, Kano, to Delhi.

A statement issued by NDLEA's spokesman, Femi Babafemi on Sunday, said the arrest took place on Thursday, 16th January 2025, following an intelligence-led operation.

He said NDLEA operatives had earlier intercepted 31-year-old Cosmas Okorie along the Okene-Lokoja highway in Kogi State.

Babafemi explained that Okorie was found in possession of an audio speaker concealing 76 pellets of cocaine weighing 1.34 kilograms, which he was transporting to Kano for Esther.

He revealed that acting on this lead, the agency traced the delivery to the Royal Park Hotel in Sabon Gari, Kano, where Esther was awaiting the consignment.

She was arrested at 11:30 p.m. while preparing to ingest the cocaine pellets for her flight the next morning.

According to Babafemi, during her confession, Esther revealed that she had been recruited by a drug cartel in India and had been promised over \$5,000 for successfully delivering the cocaine.

To disguise her true intentions, she had travelled to Nigeria under the pretext of enjoying Christmas and New Year holidays but avoided visiting her family in Imo State.



Instead, she stayed in a hotel in Enugu before being flown to Abuja and Kano to execute the plan.

Meanwhile, the NDLEA's relentless crackdown did not stop with Esther's arrest. In a series of coordinated operations across six states, the agency apprehended 33 suspects and seized large quantities of illicit substances.

In Lagos, operatives uncovered over 2.7 tonnes of cannabis and synthetic drugs in raids conducted in Ojodu-Berger, Igando, Lekki, and Lagos Island. In one high-profile bust, a residence in Lekki yielded 28 kilograms of Canadian Loud, a potent strain of cannabis.

In Kogi, four suspects were arrested along the Okene-Lokoja-Abuja highway with over 38,000 tramadol pills concealed in audio speakers and clothing.

In Kano, another operation led to the seizure of 7.6 kilograms of skunk and 356 bottles of a dangerous psychoactive substance known as "suck and die."

Meanwhile, in Taraba State, NDLEA agents intercepted 25,000 tramadol pills

during a vehicle search along the Wukari-Zaki Ibiyam road.

The Federal Capital Territory also saw significant action, with 13 suspects arrested in locations including Gwarimpa, Lugbe, and Dei-Dei. Recovered items included large quantities of tramadol, codeine-based syrup, methamphetamine, and other illicit substances.

Similar successes were recorded in Kwara, where three suspects were nabbed with 65.5 kilograms of cannabis and 390 Molly tablets.

Chairman and CEO of the NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd), commended the officers for their dedication and urged them to remain vigilant in their efforts to combat drug trafficking.

He emphasised the agency's commitment to curbing both the supply and demand for illicit drugs, describing their work as vital to the future of the nation.

Gunmen shoot cleric dead inside Ogun church

By Helen Okechukwu

Unknown gunmen has reportedly killed a Shepherd-in-charge of a Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), identified as Yomi Adetula, in Idiroko Border town of the Ipokia Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Leadership reported that the cleric was shot dead on Sunday inside Hebrew Celestial Church, located in the Odo Eran area of the Old Garage Road in Idiroko around 11 a.m. during service while preaching.

According to the report, an eyewitness stated that the six assailants held AK-47 rifles, appeared on Celestial Church's garments, and opened fire on the cleric.

Also, they waited to confirm him dead and dismember his body inside the



church before leaving the church.

The reason for this evil act has yet to be identified.

The deceased was a member of Idiroko Unit Commander of the Ogun State Community, Social Orientation and Safety Corps, known as So-SAFE

Corps, established by the state government.

Sources in the community revealed that a few months ago, due to the deceased's encounters with the smuggling cartel in Idiroko Border town, he was transferred to Abuja in December 2024, which led to the church being shut down by suspect smugglers.

The State Commander of So-SAFE Corps, Soji Ganzalo, expressed shock over Adetula's death while confirming the heinous act.

Pledging to provide necessary information that would aid in the arrest of the suspected killers, Ganzalo assured that the corps will continue to fight until justice is served.

GRUESOME! Man, daughter beheaded over land dispute in Delta

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Amai community in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State was thrown into deep grief and fear as a 70-year-old man, Mr Aghanti, and his daughter, 50, Mrs Atagoshi, were reportedly beheaded over a land dispute.

The gruesome incident occurred after the suspect allegedly lured the victims into the bush under the pretext of discussing the land issue.

Their headless bodies were later discovered in the bush.

According to PUNCH, the woman, a secondary school teacher, had earlier purchased a piece of land in the community, which some individuals



subsequently claimed.

Confirming the incident, the Police Public Relations Officer in the state, DSP Bright Edefe, revealed that the assailant invited the victims to the bush, where the heinous crime was committed.

Edefe said, "The suspect called the woman, saying he wanted to discuss the land issue. He then took her and her father into the bush, killed them, and beheaded them.

"On the same day, vigilantes apprehended one Emeke with two human heads. He was mobbed and set ablaze by angry residents. Upon inspection, it was discovered that the human heads belonged to the father and daughter.

"Their headless bodies were found in the bush."

Edefe added that the main suspect is currently on the run, while efforts are ongoing to apprehend him.

Alleged N12.3bn fraud: Oba Otudeko flees Nigeria as EFCC arraignment looms

By Dave Oludare Oso

Oba Otudeko, a former chairman of the First Bank of Nigeria (FBN), has suddenly left Nigeria.

This comes as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) set to arraign him and three others in court on a 13-count charge of alleged fraud.

According to The Cable, security sources said the businessman left the country via one of the land borders.

The sources said he was dropped off at the Nigeria-Benin border on Thursday evening by a family member.

Otudeko's phone number was switched off when contacted, and messages sent to his WhatsApp, however, delivered but there was no response, the reports says.

Also, Obafemi Otudeko, his son, did not respond to calls and messages when contacted for comments on his father's whereabouts and destination.

According to count one of the charges, "Chief Oba Otudeko, Stephen Olabisi Onasanya, Soji Akintayo, and Anchorage Leisure Limited conspired between 2013 and 2014 in Lagos, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, to obtain N12,300,000,000.00 (twelve billion, three hundred million naira only) from First Bank Limited under the false pretence that the money represented credit facilities applied for by V-Tech Dynamic Links Limited and Stallion Nigeria Limited. You committed an offence against Section 8(a) of the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act 2006, which is punishable under Section 1(3)."

According to Count 2, the defendants "obtained the sum of N5.2 billion from First Bank Limited on the pretence that the said sum represented credit facilities applied for by V-Tech Dynamic Links Limited, whose representation you know to be false," on or around November 26, 2013, in Lagos.

According to the third count, the

defendants collected N6.2 billion from First Bank Limited in Lagos between 2013 and 2014 on the false pretext that the money represented credit facilities sought and disbursed to Stallion Nigeria Limited.

According to Count 4, "On or around November 26, 2013, in Lagos, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, you, Chief Oba Otudeko, Stephen Olabisi Onasanya, Soji Akintayo, and Anchorage Leisure Limited conspired to use N6,150,000,000.00 (six billion, one hundred and fifty million naira only),



which you reasonably should have known was part of the proceeds of your illegal activities, specifically: obtaining by false pretence. In doing so, you violated Sections 18(a), 15(2)(d) of the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act, 2011 (as amended), and Section 15(3) of the same Act."

Count 5 charges "Chief Oba Otudeko, Stephen Olabisi Onasanya, Soji Akintayo, and Anchorage Leisure Limited with obtaining N1.5 billion from Honeywell Flour Mills Plc on or around December 11, 2013, in Lagos. You should have known that this amount was a part of the proceeds of your illegal activities, specifically: obtaining by false pretence. As a result, you violated Section 18(c), 15(2)(d) of the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act, 2011 (as amended), and you are subject to penalties under Section 15(3) of the same Act."

Otudeko reacts, says my hands are clean

Meanwhile, Oba Otudeko in a statement on Thursday by Olasumbo Abolaji, general counsel of Honeywell Group, refuted reports stating the EFCC has filed charges against him and three others over alleged fraud.

Otudeko said he has never served in an executive capacity within FBN Holdings and its banking subsidiary, First Bank of Nigeria Limited — hence he had no operational responsibility in the organisation.

The statement read, "As of this moment, he has received no official summons, neither has his legal team received any official invitation from relevant authorities. As he has done in the past, Dr Oba Otudeko is always ready and available to assist any government agency with appropriate oversight in the execution of their duties, with the expectation that these affairs will be conducted with the highest standard of professionalism."

He also called on journalists to verify sensitive information before publication to ensure accuracy and fairness.

"While we respect the role of the press in keeping the public informed, we urge journalists to verify such sensitive information before publication to ensure accuracy and fairness," the statement noted.

"Otudeko stated that at 81, he is now focused on mentoring future business leaders and fostering societal development through enterprise. He categorically ruled out any interest in serving in an executive or non-executive capacity in any organisation beyond his current commitments.

"He is not interested in serving in an executive capacity in any organization in Nigeria or elsewhere, neither is he interested in serving in a non-executive capacity on any board besides those he currently sits on. This includes any possibility of returning to the board of FBN Holdings Plc, which appears to be the focus of the recent unfortunate news barrage," the statement read.

Police arrest husband for pouring hot oil on wife in Ogun

By Helen Okechukwu



With the alarming rate of domestic violence among spouses, the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) of the Owode Egba Division has arrested Sholola Kazeem, the husband of Mutiat, for allegedly pouring hot oil on and stabbing her in the head.

The attack occurred on Saturday at Ring Road, Owode Egba, of Ogun State during a heated disagreement between both spouse.

At around 12:30 pm a

member of the community reported the matter to the police for quick intervention.

Read Also: Jealous husband stabs Bishop to death in Osun

It was gathered that Mrs. Mutiat, the victim, was rushed to Ore Ofé Hospital for medical care while police secured the crime scene for evidence collection.

The police spokesperson, CSP Omolola Odutola, confirmed that the accused has been arrested and acknowledged that the

investigation is ongoing.

“The Divisional Police Officer in Owode Egba Division promptly intervened in a case of gender-based violence and assault against a housewife, leading to the arrest of her husband for inflicting various injuries on her.”

Odutola stated that the matter will be treated as soon as possible, as further details will be disclosed

How Lagos's nightlife lost its famous energy

By Aanu Adeoye

Nigerian president's economic shock therapy has gutted the middle class and the megacity's festive party scene.

"Detty December" is almost upon Lagos, but you would not know it from the atmosphere in bars and clubs throughout Nigeria's largest city.

Lagos's world-famous nightlife reaches its raucous peak during the month, when festive abandon by locals coincides with an influx of foreign currency-carrying diasporans. "Detty" is a light-hearted alternative for "dirty" in Nigerian Pidgin.

But the worst cost of living crisis in a generation, a product of radical economic reforms introduced by President Bola Tinubu, has gutted the west African country's middle class — and sapped the energy from Lagos's party spots.

The crowd was thin on a recent "Taco Tuesday" at Bature Brewery, a cavernous open-air pub usually packed with professionals enjoying a cold drink after work in the sweltering megacity. A floor manager wistfully admitted to a drop-off in both visitor numbers and bill amounts as guests curb spending.

Fintech operations manager Queen, 32, who declined to give her surname, said her days of impromptu splurges were gone. "You can't even come out to have a drink," she said. "Have you seen the cost of transport?"

Reviewing Bature's drinks menu — bottled water costs N1,000 (\$0.60) while the most expensive cocktail costs N10,000 (\$6.20) — she debated the best value cocktail with her friend



before settling on a N8,000 mojito. The minimum wage in Nigeria is N70,000 a month.

"I plan every outing these days," Queen said. "I need to have an idea of the prices because I don't want any surprises."

Across Lagos — an economic hub of 20mn people that is home to Afrobeats music and an often ostentatious party scene — bars, restaurants and clubs are feeling the pinch. And proprietors and punters are clear about the culprit.

Since his election last year, Tinubu has embarked on a radical project of economic shock therapy, introducing dramatic reforms that he has said are designed to end the dysfunction that has long plagued Nigeria. The country of 220mn has fallen from being Africa's largest economy to its fourth.

Tinubu ended fuel subsidies, which for decades allowed Nigerians to pay some of the cheapest petrol prices in the world. The subsidies cull turbocharged inflation, which hit a nearly three-decade annual high of just under 34 per cent in October. The naira has also suffered, losing more

than 70 per cent of its value against the US dollar following two devaluations.

These measures have plunged many into poverty, but also destroyed the purchasing power of Nigeria's professionals, its cohort of tech workers, business executives and engineers who were supposed to be the country's growth engine. They were also the ones paying for the imported wine and lamb chops offered at swanky haunts in Lagos.

The half-empty bars and restaurants are a far cry from the infectious energy that made Lagosian nightlife famous. The city gave rise to pioneering musicians, such as Fela Kuti in the 1970s, before Afrobeats superstars such as Davido and Burna Boy exploded on to the global scene.

The chorus of "Lagos Party", a 2009 R&B track by singer-turned-politician Banky W, captures the city's self-confidence and swagger, boasting: "Ain't no party like a Lagos party."

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on next page**

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But these days those who can still afford to attend nightspots are less than enthusiastic about paying for the dull atmosphere they often encounter.

Babajide Duroshola, a tech executive who took colleagues visiting from overseas out in Lagos recently, said they went to a popular nightclub and found it so empty they decided to go elsewhere.

“The manager ran after us to ask why we were leaving,” said Duroshola. “This was a place you had to call them before going previously . . . it’s only the strongest that go out now.”

Nahi Halabi, an entrepreneur who runs several high-end restaurants in Lagos’s business district of Victoria Island, said companies were caught between boosting prices in response to inflation and the weakening currency while still keeping meals affordable enough to attract customers.

He added that his restaurants faced three cost issues: paying for imported inventory, such as tomatoes and Australian steak, invoiced in dollars with a slumping currency; increased energy costs in a country with unreliable electricity; and raising salaries as inflation saps staff morale.

Halabi said there had been a clear change in consumer behaviour among his regulars, from customers opting for a glass of wine instead of their usual bottle to those ordering chicken instead of steak — a whole roast chicken for up to three people costs N59,200 while a rib-eye steak costs N96,000.

“People no longer have money to go out for lunch or dinner the way they

used to,” Halabi said over coffee at one of his venues, the brasserie Slow. “And we can’t just increase our prices . . . We’re playing catch-up.”

Not being able to dine out or party is a problem many Lagosians would be happy to have. “Tinubunomics”, as it has been dubbed, has left many Nigerians so poor that they struggle to eat three meals a day. Almost two-thirds of households report being unable to eat “healthy, nutritious or preferred foods” in the past month, according to a report by the statistics agency — up nearly 80 per cent compared with five years ago.

Tinubu has said his reforms will encourage investment and ultimately deliver economic growth. Fuel subsidies had risen above \$10bn annually, higher than the budgets for health and education.

Dumebi Oluwole, senior economist at Lagos-based data firm Stears, said the reforms were the “foundation” for rebooting the economy but more work was still required. “Long-term success is dependent on government spending priorities . . . Fiscal authorities now need to do the right thing.”

For now, the hospitality industry is still hoping that “Detty December” will change their fortunes. But even a turnaround in festive spending will only offer short-term respite as budget-conscious locals make up a large chunk of their clientele and they are turning to pocket-friendly alternatives such as house parties and raves.

For some, overhauling Lagos’s overpriced nightlife is not necessarily seen as a bad thing. Demilade Akingbe, who runs social club My Friend’s House, which puts on activities such as monthly pop-up supper clubs, said the astronomical price rises at restaurants made it inevitable that people would look elsewhere for fun.

Picking an item at random during a discussion at Ziya café, Akingbe noted that the price of a halloumi pesto sandwich had jumped 200 per cent in two years to N21,000.

“I don’t think we’re losing fun,” Akingbe said. “I think fun is changing and the exchange rate is speeding it up.”



One millionaire leaves Britain every 45 minutes under Labour

By Noah Eastwood

One millionaire left Britain every 45 minutes in the year Labour came to power, figures suggest.

The UK lost 10,800 millionaires to overseas countries last year, more than double the number in 2023, according to new data.

The wealth exodus equates to 30 millionaires leaving a day – approximately one every three quarters of an hour.

It comes as Labour plans to abolish centuries-old tax laws that allow foreign investors to reside in Britain while sheltering offshore wealth from domestic taxes.

Jason Hollands, managing director of financial advisers Evelyn Partners, said the crackdown made Britain appear “hostile to wealthy people”.

“The signal it sends to people [is] that the country has a hostile attitude to wealthy people who will bring money into the UK. These people are highly portable and with a lot of digital businesses you can now work in lots of locations and you don’t necessarily have to be present in this jurisdiction,” he said.

The number of high net-worth individuals – with liquid assets of more than \$1m (£821,153) – leaving the country rose by 157pc in 2024, according to figures compiled by analytics firm, New World Wealth for advisors Henley & Partners.

They showed more than 10,000 millionaires left last year, a significant rise on the previous year’s figures of just 4,300.

It came in the year a snap election was called by Rishi Sunak that saw Labour come to power with a landslide victory.

No other country except for China saw greater capital flight than the UK between January 2024 and December of 2024, according to the figures.

Italy – which unveiled an attractive flat tax



rate for non-doms in 2017 – was one of the most popular destinations for those leaving, along with Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, the United States and Singapore.

New World Wealth said that 78 centi-millionaires, someone who has assets of 100 million, and 12 billionaires left the country last year.

Prominent high net-worth people to have announced their departure from Britain recently include Pimlico Plumbers founder, Charlie Mullins, and Christian Angermayer, the German technology entrepreneur, who left Britain last year for Switzerland.

Labour plans to scale back tax rules that allow wealthy individuals to reside in the UK without being liable for taxes on income and gains earned abroad.

Figures published by His Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) from 2023 show that there were 74,000 non-doms in the UK, with 37,800 of them having lived in the UK for at least seven years, and paid a £30,000 annual fee to shelter overseas wealth from domestic taxes.

In April, a new regime – originally designed by former chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, and kept by the Labour government – will come into effect.

The new scheme only gives new non-doms coming to Britain four years in which their foreign wealth is not subject to

domestic taxes. After the period elapses, they will be expected to pay the same tax as an ordinary British taxpayer.

Existing non-doms will be given a two-year transition period to the new scheme. Foreign earnings will also face the threat of inheritance tax.

The tax raid is projected to generate £2.5bn a year for the next five years, according to figures from the Office for Budget Responsibility.

Research by the Adam Smith Institute claimed in October that plans to abolish the non-dom tax status would wipe out 23,000 jobs over the next six years through lost investment and consumption.

This would cost the UK economy £600m per year in lost GDP by 2030 and £1.3bn a year by 2035 – a cumulative loss of £6.52bn over the next decade – it was estimated.

David Hawkins, of Foreign Investors for Britain, a group representing non-doms, told The Times the Government’s policy is “a monumental act of national self-harm”.

He said: “It appears that decisions have been made not based on the evidence but based on ideology. It’s a real worry because more and more people are leaving. And it’s businesses, jobs, investment, spending into the economy and tax take and philanthropy that are hit.”

A government spokesman said: “We are committed to tax reforms that are progressive and underpinned by fairness. It is right that those who can afford to, contribute their fair share to fix the foundations to provide stability and fund public services to drive growth.

“The OBR expects the non-dom reforms to raise £33.8 billion over the next five years to help fund the investment projects needed to deliver on the Plan for Change and improve living standards across the country.”

The consensus on a strong dollar may be too complacent

By By Duncan Weldon

One common thread running through the 2025 year ahead outlooks from banks and asset managers was a near-consensus view that the dollar would strengthen further in the coming 12 months. Like much else in the incoming Trump administration's agenda, the talk around the value of the greenback has been at times contradictory.

Donald Trump himself, together with many of his key trade policy advisers, has long argued that a strong dollar has made American exports pricey, encouraged imports and cost American manufacturing jobs. Others appointed to key jobs, though, such as Scott Bessent, nominated for the post of Treasury Secretary, have publicly taken a more traditional stance and supported a strong dollar.

Whatever the new administration might desire, the markets seem reasonably certain that the result will be a stronger dollar rather than a weaker one. The dollar has risen by around 8 per cent since late September when investors began to price in a rising likelihood of a Trump victory in November. A stronger dollar has been a key component of the Trump trade which gripped Wall Street last year. Broadly put, the Trump trade is an assumption that the new president will follow through on all the aspects of his agenda which markets approve of, while being restrained by his wider party from anything they are less keen on.

Tax cuts and deregulation will boost profits and equity market returns while the resulting higher deficits will be bad, but not disastrous, for US Treasuries. Markets expect the yield on American government bonds to rise relative to a no-Trump counterfactual but implicitly



assume that the rise will not be enough to rattle the stock market. A rising interest rate differential with other advanced economies though will, by the logic of the Trump trade, be enough to push the dollar higher. The threat of higher tariffs, which would result in fewer dollars leaving America, has added to the dollar's lustre since November.

The consensus view, then, is that the dollar will remain strong even if the new president occasionally takes to social media to loudly groan about it. There are, though, at least three reasons to worry that this consensus is complacent.

Tariffs are the first. Economic theory suggests that in the short-run new tariffs can indeed lead to a strengthening currency. The currency of the trading partner subject to new restrictions often depreciates to offset, at least partially, the value of the tariffs. This was broadly the case with China's renminbi in 2018-19. But in the longer run tariffs are associated with fewer imports and exports and an overall weaker economy. That weakness eventually leads to lower interest rates and hence a weaker currency. Tariffs might give the dollar a short-term fillip but weaken it in the medium to longer run.

Secondly, it is worth taking seriously the

notion that when Trump says he wants a weaker dollar, he actually means it. The threat of much higher tariffs on America's major trading partners could well prove to be merely the opening gambit in an attempt to corral those trading partners into some form of multilateral agreement to lower the dollar's value. There can be little doubt that the author of *The Art of The Deal* would not delight in hosting a summit at Mar-a-Lago to preside over negotiations. Of course, the mechanics of such a deal would prove tricky. The Plaza Accord of 1985, at which the finance ministers of the US, the UK, West Germany, France and Japan met to discuss international exchange rates, is sometimes held up as a model. But the world economy is a very different place nowadays. The five participants 40 years ago represented around 45 per cent of global GDP, at purchasing power parity, between them compared with more like 25 per cent today.

The other major threat to the dollar's value can be found outside the traditional realm of economic policy. Work by the economists Barry Eichengreen, Arnaud Mehl and Livia Chitu in 2017 examined the geopolitical underpinnings of international currency values. In general, countries hold a greater share of their reserves in the currency of a country providing them with a security guarantee. By this argument the US's provision of security to its allies helps to hold up the value of the dollar and keeps US borrowing costs lower than they would otherwise be. If those security guarantees start to be unwound, then the dollar's share in international reserves could begin to fall, providing a further headwind. The dollar has had a strong run since September.

Yinka Quadri: Leave your ego at home to succeed in Nollywood

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Veteran Nollywood actor Yinka Quadri has offered insightful advice to aspiring actors aiming to excel in the competitive industry.

Speaking in a recent interview, he stressed the importance of patience and humility. Quadri urged new talents to let go of their egos if they want to learn, grow, and succeed.

“My advice to aspiring actors is to be patient and stay calm,” he said. “Anyone with an ego should leave it at home to truly learn, grow, and succeed in this industry.” His words highlight the need for an open and teachable mindset in Nollywood’s demanding environment.

Commending young filmmakers for cultural preservation

Quadri also praised the younger generation of actors and filmmakers for their efforts in promoting Yoruba culture through their storytelling. He acknowledged their contributions as a vital step toward preserving cultural heritage.

He referenced a Yoruba proverb to emphasize the importance of involving young people in cultural practices. “A tradition that does not include the younger ones is not sustainable,” he stated. He expressed pride in their achievements, noting that they have exceeded the expectations of their predecessors.



“Thank God that even in our lifetime, our younger ones are elevating our culture,” Quadri said. “In fact, they are taking it beyond the level we took it. You know the prayer we always say is that our children will be greater than us. We are very happy with what is happening.”

Encouraging commitment to cultural storytelling

Quadri urged young talents to remain focused on portraying African culture in their works. He believes their dedication has already attracted global attention, especially in Nollywood’s Yoruba sector.

“I will advise young actors not to relent,” he said. “The world is seeing that Nollywood, especially the Yoruba sector, is elevating our culture.” Quadri acknowledged their commitment to learning and improving, expressing confidence that they will continue to elevate

Yoruba culture further.

A blueprint for aspiring actors

Quadri’s advice underscores the importance of patience, humility, and cultural pride for anyone pursuing a career in Nollywood. By urging young actors to prioritize learning and the representation of African heritage, he offers a roadmap to success in the industry.

His encouragement of younger talents also highlights the unity between generations in sustaining cultural traditions. As Nollywood continues to grow on a global scale, Quadri’s words remind aspiring filmmakers of their responsibility to balance creativity with cultural values.

By following this guidance, the next generation of actors and filmmakers can build on the industry’s rich legacy while ensuring it remains relevant and impactful for years to come.

Producer claims discovering Mercy Chinwo, denies \$345,000 theft

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Eeze Conceptz founder Ezekiel Onyedikachukwu denies gospel singer Mercy Chinwo's allegations, calling them false and baseless.

Onyedikachukwu's lawyer, Mr. Maxwell Opara, made this statement in Abuja on Saturday, sharing the details with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

Lawyer dismisses claims

Opara explained that Mercy Chinwo's accusations, including claims of financial mismanagement and contract breaches, were misleading.

He alleged that Chinwo violated a five-year record label and management contract she signed with Eeze Conceptz Limited in 2017.

The lawyer clarified that Onyedikachukwu was never Chinwo's manager but her producer.

"Mr. Onyedikachukwu discovered Mercy Chinwo's talent in 2017," Opara said. "He nurtured her, produced her music, and played a significant role in establishing her as a notable figure in the gospel music industry."

Opara strongly denied accusations that Onyedikachukwu diverted \$345,000 in royalties. "The allegations of fund diversion are completely false," he said. "Both Chinwo and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) are well aware of how to contact Mr. Onyedikachukwu if needed."

EFCC involvement raises questions

The EFCC had earlier secured an arrest warrant for Onyedikachukwu based on allegations made by Chinwo.

Justice Alexander Owoeye of the Federal High Court in Lagos granted the order following a motion by EFCC lawyer Bilikisu Buhari.

The commission claims



Onyedikachukwu misappropriated royalties from Chinwo's digital platforms and events.

In response, Opara criticized the EFCC's actions, highlighting inconsistencies in their approach. He revealed that Onyedikachukwu had been detained by the EFCC in Ilorin from April 16 to April 25, 2024, during which his bank accounts were audited. "The audit found no evidence of wrongdoing," Opara said.

Despite this, the EFCC reportedly claimed Onyedikachukwu could not be located, leading to the controversial arrest warrant. "It is shocking that the EFCC continues to allege his inaccessibility after previously detaining and auditing him," Opara stated.

Legal steps to address the issue

Opara disclosed that a fundamental rights enforcement suit was filed on July 17, 2024, at the Federal High Court in Lagos. This lawsuit aims to prevent further harassment, arrest, or detention of Onyedikachukwu.

He accused Chinwo of orchestrating a smear campaign against Eeze Conceptz Limited and its founder. "The public should disregard any false publications or campaigns initiated by Mercy Chinwo," Opara urged.

The lawyer also elaborated on the terms of Chinwo's contract with the label. According to him, the agreement

included provisions for catalog ownership and revenue sharing from music projects financed and promoted by Eeze Conceptz Limited. However, he alleged that Chinwo breached the contract.

Onyedikachukwu's detention and court proceedings

Opara criticized the EFCC for obtaining an ex-parte arrest warrant under questionable circumstances. "These schemes aim to tarnish the reputation of Eeze Conceptz Limited and its founder," he said.

Justice Owoeye has adjourned the case until January 24, 2025, for Onyedikachukwu's arraignment.

A call for justice

The lawyer expressed confidence that the court would rule in favor of his client. "We are committed to presenting the truth in court," Opara said. "We believe justice will prevail once the evidence is examined."

He reassured the public of his client's integrity and urged them to await the court's findings. "This is not just about defending Mr. Onyedikachukwu but also about protecting the credibility of the gospel music industry," Opara concluded.

As the legal battle unfolds, both parties await their day in court to address these serious allegations.

HISTORIC GAZA CEASEFIRE: Three released Israeli hostages return home

By Dave Oludare Oso

After a delay, the ceasefire in Gaza began at 10:15 am on Sunday. Three women, Emily Damari, Romi Gonen and Doron Steinbrecher, were the first hostages released as part of the ceasefire agreement, and were handed over via a Red Cross convoy.

The three Israeli women hostages held by Hamas have now been handed over to Israeli authorities and are back inside Israel.

After a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip came into effect on Sunday, January 19, the Israeli army confirmed that a Red Cross convoy sent to Gaza had brought the first Israeli hostages liberated as part of the agreement back into Israeli territory.

Earlier in the day, Israel and Qatar had said the truce with Hamas began in Gaza at 10:15 am (9:15 GMT), nearly three hours after initially scheduled, following a last-minute delay on the orders of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The announcement from Netanyahu's office came after Hamas named the three female hostages it plans to release.

"A short while ago, accompanied by (Israeli military and security agency) forces, the released hostages crossed the border into Israeli territory. The released hostages are currently on their way to an initial reception point in southern Israel, where they will undergo an initial medical assessment," the military said in a statement.

Military spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said in a televised statement that the hostages were "in our hands and on their way home."



"Our hearts are now with all the hostages still being held in inhuman conditions, and we are awaiting their return," he added.

Moreover, a senior Hamas official told Agence France-Presse (AFP) that the Palestinian militant group had handed over three Israeli women hostages to the Red Cross, as agreed with Israel.

"The three women hostages were officially handed over to the Red Cross at al-Saraya Square in the al-Rimal neighbourhood in western Gaza City," the official said. "This occurred after a member of the Red Cross team met with them and ensured their well-being."

Israeli media are reporting that the army has asked the mothers of the three hostages to come to a meeting point at a base next to the Gaza border.

In a statement reacting to the three hostages' return, Netanyahu said they had endured a horrific ordeal. "I know, we all know, they have been through hell. They are emerging from darkness into light, from bondage to freedom," Netanyahu said during a phone call with an Israeli official who was briefing him on the release of the three female hostages.

Ceasefire delays

On Sunday morning, a statement from Netanyahu's office, issued less than an hour before the truce had been set to start at 8:30 am (6:30 am GMT), said he had "instructed the (Israeli army) that the ceasefire (...) will not begin until Israel has received the list" of hostages to be freed. During the delay, Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli strikes killed eight people.

The ceasefire is set to pause the fighting after 15 months of war and see the release of dozens of hostages held by the militants in the Gaza Strip and hundreds of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. Israel's Cabinet approved the deal early on Saturday.

Brokered by mediators the United States, Qatar and Egypt in months of indirect talks between the warring sides, the ceasefire is the second truce achieved in the devastating conflict.

US President Joe Biden, whose administration has been heavily involved in the mediation efforts, welcomed the ceasefire taking hold, saying that "after so much pain, death and loss of life, today the guns in Gaza have gone silent."

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UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the truce, saying on X “it is imperative that this ceasefire removes the significant security and political obstacles to delivering aid.”

Pope Francis called, on Sunday, for the ceasefire in Gaza to be “immediately” respected as he thanked the mediators and urged a boost in humanitarian aid as well as the return of hostages. “I hope (...) it will be respected immediately by the parties,” Francis said at the end of the Angelus prayer, adding that he expressed “gratitude to the mediators” of the deal.

Doron Steinbrecher, 31, British-Israeli Emily Damari, 28, and 24-



year-old Romi Gonen, had been held by Hamas for the last 15 months.

Our beloved Dodo has finally returned to our arms’ – Steinbrecher family

We’re now hearing from the family of 31-year-old veterinary nurse, Doron Steinbrecher, who was released from 15 months of captivity in Gaza earlier today.

“After an unbearable 471 days, our beloved Dodo has finally returned to our arms,” the family say in a statement released by the Hostages and Missing Families Forum Headquarters.

“We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supported and accompanied us along this

journey.”

“Our heroic Dodo, who survived 471 days in Hamas captivity, begins her rehabilitation journey today,” they add.

“We will continue to stand with all the families and do everything in our power until all of their loved ones return home.”

Released hostages heading for hospital treatment, says Israel

The Israeli military has just said the three released hostages – Emily Damari, Doron Steinbrecher, and Romi Gonen – are now travelling to an Israeli hospital in a helicopter for treatment.

The women are travelling with their mothers, and will be reunited with other family members at the hospital.

The treatment was a planned part of their release from 15 months being held hostage in Gaza.

ALL ABOUT THE RELEASE DEAL IN 1 MINUTE

*Three Israeli women hostages held by Hamas have now been handed over to Israeli authorities and are back inside Israel.

*Doron Steinbrecher, 31, Emily Damari, 28, and Romi Gonen, 24,



have been brought to a facility for an initial medical check-up.

*The transfer took place in western Gaza City between Red Cross workers and Hamas earlier this afternoon – it was a chaotic scene.

*The Israeli government has welcomed the news, saying the “families have been informed by the relevant authorities that they have joined our forces”

*Friends and family members watching the hostages dramatic return reacted by chanting their names and cheering

*Simultaneously, several Red Cross coaches have begun entering the prison grounds in the occupied West Bank to pick up Palestinian prisoners – it’s expected that 90 prisoners will be freed from prisons there today, in exchange for the three Israeli hostages.



What the Israel-Hamas ceasefire means for the world

By Gideon Rachman

It is not yet clear that the Gaza ceasefire will even come into force. But, if the war is indeed ending, what has it meant for the world?

For Israel, the impact seems double-edged. The country's leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, can argue that he has turned a national tragedy into a strategic victory. Hamas has been devastated, if not entirely destroyed. Hizbollah, the Lebanese militant group that was the most heavily armed and threatening part of Iran's "axis of resistance", has also been debilitated. Iran and Israel have exchanged direct fire. But most of Iran's missiles failed to get through the defences of Israel and its allies — and the Islamic republic looks in a weaker position than for many decades.

On the strategic level, Israel is emerging from this conflict as the superpower of the Middle East — with its military deterrence fully restored and its enemies in disarray. But set against that, Israel has suffered enormous reputational damage. Some 46,000 people are believed to have been killed during Israel's offensive and Gaza lies in ruins. Netanyahu has been indicted by the International Criminal Court on war crimes charges — which places him in the same legal bracket as Vladimir Putin. Like the Russian leader, Netanyahu will now find it much harder to travel internationally.

Israel's popularity has plummeted in international opinion polls. Young people — even in the US — are now much more hostile to the country. A Pew survey in April concluded that: "Younger Americans are more likely to sympathise with the Palestinian people than the Israeli people." A third of adults under 30 said their sympathies lay either entirely or mostly with the Palestinian people, compared with 14 per cent siding with Israel.

The Israelis can hope that opinions will soften over time — particularly if peace is restored. Netanyahu and his allies also believe that friends in the White House



will matter much more than enemies on American campuses.

But Trump's friendship may not be unconditional. There is a palpable shock on the Israeli far right that the incoming US administration has put its weight behind a ceasefire and hostage-release deal that was negotiated by the Biden White House. Hopes in Israel that Trump would give it a completely free hand to deal with the Palestinians, as it sees fit, have taken a knock.

Trump's decision to press hard for peace now may reflect two main factors. The first is his desire to take credit for a deal and hostage releases. The second is that — while Israel enjoys ardent support on the Republican right — it is not the only important country in the region. During his first presidency, Trump's first trip overseas was to Saudi Arabia.

The incoming Trump administration is now likely to push for the normalisation of relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia — which was also a major goal of the Biden administration. Potentially, this offers a scintilla of hope to the Palestinians, since it is widely believed that the Saudi price for normalisation would be tangible progress towards a Palestinian state. However, that might well be a price that the Israelis are unwilling to pay, which could mean that the Saudi-Israeli deal remains a mirage.

The war in Gaza has also had a global, as well as a regional significance. One of the reasons that the US and its western allies have been reluctant to put too much pressure on Israel is their belief that Iran is a common enemy. Over the past year, western officials have spoken increasingly frequently about their belief that they are now waging a global struggle against a loose "axis of adversaries" made up of Russia, China, Iran and North Korea.

By weakening Iran, Israel has also weakened that axis. The fall of the Assad regime in Syria was, in large part, a knock-on effect of Israel's devastating assault on Hizbollah, which was a key ally of Bashar al-Assad.

The collapse of Assad's power was, in turn, a significant blow for both Iran and Russia, which had intervened militarily on his behalf. Russia was using Syria as a base for power projection and now has to step back. Paradoxically, Israel itself has had a much more cautious response to the fall of Assad than many in the west, fearing that jihadist forces will move into the power vacuum in Syria.

A final casualty of the Gaza war has been the "international rules-based order" promoted by the Biden administration. Sympathy and support for Israel after the October 7 attacks led the US to tolerate frequent violations of international humanitarian law during Israel's onslaught on Gaza. Putting the rules-based order back together again could be just as hard as the physical reconstruction of Gaza.

Record number of journalists killed in Gaza war

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Since Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, destruction and devastation in Gaza have been widespread.

So far, 45,000 people have been killed in this conflict, including more than 300 aid workers and more than 1,000 medical professionals, according to tallies by the United Nations, (UN).

It has also been especially deadly for the people documenting it.

At least 160 journalists, translators, fixers, and others who help with news gathering have been killed, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists.

It has been the deadliest period for reporters since the organization began keeping track in 1992, and the vast majority of those killed have been Palestinian.

“It’s been journalists and even their families,” said former American diplomat Hala Rharrit. “And it has appeared to practically be systematic targeting of journalists to silence the truth that’s been coming out.”

Rharrit spent nearly two decades at the State Department with postings in Asia, Africa and the Middle East before quitting last spring in protest over America’s role in the war in Gaza.

Before resigning, she was stationed in Dubai where part of her job was to communicate U.S. policy to the Arab press and monitor media reports about the war. She told 60 Minutes she included deaths of journalists in reports she sent to senior leadership in Washington.

She told 60 Minutes that, a few



months after the conflict began, she proposed a statement to come out from the White House against the deaths of journalists.

“I was told, ‘No, we can’t do that. It’s too controversial.’ I said, ‘What’s controversial? Calling for the protection of journalists? This is an American value,’” Rharrit recalled.

In December 2023, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller wrote a statement on X saying in part, “We stand unequivocally for the protection of journalists and a free and independent press.”

Five months later, President Joe Biden released his own statement, saying that in Gaza, “far too many journalists, the vast majority of them Palestinian, have been killed.”

The statement went on to call for “the protection of journalists everywhere, including during military operations.”

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) have denied the charges that Israel has singled out reporters, telling 60 Minutes in a statement: “The IDF directs its strikes only towards

military targets and military operatives, and does not target civilian objects and civilians, including media organizations and journalists as such.”

Israel’s military went on to contend that “terror operatives” in Gaza have doubled as journalists and might therefore become “legitimate military targets,” including some who work for Al Jazeera. The Qatari network has strongly denied this allegation.

Israel has prevented international media from entering and working independently in Gaza since the start of the war.

As a result, Palestinian journalists left to cover the ongoing conflict have had to work while dealing with its effects, including hunger, displacement, and the constant threat of injury or death from ongoing airstrikes.

Without a ceasefire, those who are reporting on the ground continue to do so at a great risk. Just Friday, Reuters reports a Palestinian journalist was shot and killed by Israeli forces while covering a scene at a refugee camp in Gaza.

Donald Trump pledges wave of executive orders on first day of new Presidency

By Agency Reporter

Hours before his inauguration as the 47th President of the United States, Donald Trump addressed thousands of enthusiastic supporters at a "Make America Great Again Victory Rally" in Washington, D.C., pledging a swift and decisive start to his second term.

In a fiery speech, Trump previewed his agenda for the next four years, promising to act with "historic speed and strength" to address the nation's challenges. The Republican leader outlined his intention to sign a series of executive orders immediately after taking the oath of office, reversing policies implemented during the Biden administration and introducing new initiatives across multiple sectors.

Radical Orders Repealed

Trump assured supporters that the actions would target what he described as the "radical and foolish executive orders"



signed by his predecessor, Joe Biden. "You're going to have a lot of fun watching television tomorrow," Trump said. "Every radical and foolish executive order of the Biden administration will be repealed within hours."

Unveiling Key Initiatives

Launch deportation operations to curb illegal immigration.
Roll back environmental regulations, which Trump claimed hinder economic growth.

Promote artificial intelligence advancements to secure America's global tech leadership.

Form the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to streamline federal operations.

Declassify records related to presidential assassinations, a move aimed at increasing transparency.

Direct the military to implement the Iron Dome missile defense system, bolstering national security.

Eliminate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies from military training programs.

More Than 200 Actions Expected

Media reports suggest that Trump may issue more than 200 executive actions on his first day in office. However, not all will carry the weight of formal executive orders. Political analysts note that executive orders are legally binding and recognized by the courts, while executive actions, often considered a policy "wish list," lack the same enforceability and are not subject to legal review.

TikTok goes offline in U.S., 170m Americans in anguish

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

As the law banning TikTok in the United States (U.S.) came into force on Sunday, the app has suspended its operations throughout the country.

President John Biden signed the bill into law in April 2024.

According to global reports, the popular app has over 170 million monthly American users.

The law bans new downloads from Apple's App Store and the Google Play app store, and also makes it "unlawful" to update the app.

This means existing users could keep the app on their phones, but it would never update.



TikTok is owned by Beijing-based ByteDance.

The law banning TikTok requires ByteDance to divest its U.S. operations to remain operating in States.

The chief concern U.S. lawmakers say they have with TikTok is that it could

double as a spyware app for the Chinese communist government, which the owners have repeatedly denied.

TikTok, according to Chinese Law, is required to share user data if asked to do so.

However, respite may yet come the way of the app as President-elect Donald Trump, who takes office in a few hours, said he might give the app a 90-day grace to find a solution to the problem.

Meanwhile, 170 million Americans have been warned by medical professionals, to be wary of health problems they may suffer as a result of withdrawing from the attachment and/or addiction to the popular app.

Colombian drug gang violence kills 60 people

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The death toll from attacks by a rebel group in Colombia's Catatumbo region has risen to 60, the country's human rights office has said.

Rival factions have been vying for control of the cocaine trade in the region – which sits near the border with Venezuela – for years.

The Ombudsman's Office said the latest violence involved the National Liberation Army (ELN) – the largest armed group still active in Colombia – and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which signed a peace treaty with the state in 2016.

The attacks broke an uneasy truce between the guerrilla groups, which had been in peace negotiations with the government.

The Ombudsman's Office, a government agency that oversees the protection of citizens' human and civil rights, previously reported that 40 had died in the violence.

It said that many people, including community leaders and their families, were facing a "special risk" of being kidnapped or killed at the hands of the ELN. It noted that 20 people had recently been kidnapped, half of whom were women.

The office said that among those killed were seven peace treaty signatories and Carmelo Guerrero, the leader of the Association for Peasant Unity in Catatumbo (Asuncat), a local advocacy group.



Asuncat wrote on social media on Friday that Roger Quintero and Freiman Velasquez, members of its board of directors, had not been seen since the previous day, and that it suspected armed groups had taken them.

"In some communities in the region, food shortages are beginning to be reported, affecting local communities," the Ombudsman's Office wrote in a statement on Saturday, adding that thousands of people are believed to have been displaced by the violence.

"Elderly people, children, adolescents, pregnant women and people with disabilities are suffering the consequences of these events."

"Catatumbo is once again stained with blood," the Association of Mothers of Catatumbo for Peace wrote on Friday.

"The bullets exchanged not only hurt those who hold the weapons, but also tear apart the dreams of our

communities, break up families and sow terror in the hearts of our children."

The Ombudsman's Office appeared to lay the blame for the latest violence on the ELN, which had been in peace talks with the Colombian government until they were suspended on Friday due to the violence in Catatumbo.

President Gustavo Petro – who since his election in 2022 has sought to end violence between armed groups in the country – accused the ELN of "war crimes" and said the group "shows no willingness to make peace."

The ELN accused Farc of having initiated the conflict by killing civilians in a statement on Saturday, according to Reuters news agency. Farc has not publicly responded to the allegation.

On Saturday, the Colombian army announced it was sending additional troops to the region in an effort to restore peace.

Why is Chelsea's season falling apart?! By Dave Oludare Oso

The Blues are in the midst of a five-game winless run in the Premier League, and now face a fight to secure a top-four finish once again

One month ago, Chelsea were but a couple of points adrift of Premier League leaders Liverpool. There was talk of the Blues making a surprise run for the title, a far cry from pre-season predictions suggesting they would be fortunate to even qualify for Europe again.

The noises out of Stamford Bridge were defiant. Head coach Enzo Maresca and many, many members of his first-team squad made sure to let the world know Chelsea definitely were not in a title race. Actions speak louder than words though, and following a run of five league games without a win – draws with Everton, Crystal Palace and Bournemouth to go with losses to Fulham and Ipswich – they have been proven correct. This won't be their year after all.

When Chelsea had ascended to second in the standings, it didn't feel fluke. They were there on merit following some impressive performances through the autumn, and though they didn't beat either of the experienced and genuine title contenders in Liverpool and Arsenal, they still went toe-to-toe with the pair of them.

With Manchester City, Manchester United and Tottenham floundering, Chelsea looked near-certainties to reach the Champions League, but now face a battle to finish in the top four. Their season is unravelling as quickly as it showed promise.

Warning signs from the start

Chelsea knew what they were getting into when they hired a relative rookie head coach in Maresca – a fabulous tactical mind nurtured by Pep Guardiola with strong potential as a top-level manager, but someone who would need time to iron out his own kinks, let alone those of his



young squad. The decision to hand him a five-year contract – with the option for a further 12 months, because why the hell not at this point – was recognition this was a long-term commitment after Mauricio Pochettino's sole season of building foundations and trimming an infamously bloated squad.

Maresca had managed just one complete season at senior level prior to his move to west London, guiding title-favourites Leicester to first place in the 2023-24 Championship. That's pretty much the most he could have achieved at the King Power Stadium, but there were red flags flown regardless. The Foxes sprinted to 13 wins from their opening 14 games and were well on pace to break the division's points record, only to slump throughout the winter and open up the title race to Ipswich and Leeds.

The Italian was accused of being one-dimensional in his philosophy, and he frequently clashed with supporters over his patient style of football. Even though this didn't really matter come the end of the season, it was probably as far away from rosy as it ought to have been for the Championship's most-expensive squad.

Defensive instability

Maresca inherited a Chelsea team which

shipped goals at an alarming rate last season (63 in 38 Premier League games, to be precise), but with one crucial difference – they had lost their only senior leader in Thiago Silva. The veteran Brazilian was on the decline, yet still proved a powerful voice in the dressing room and on the pitch. What was left for Maresca was an assortment of good-not-great options.

Take Levi Colwill, for example. He's only 21 and a full England international, another shining success of the Cobham academy system and someone who should be at Stamford Bridge for another decade. At this point, he's only a decent defender, but one tasked with leading in central areas. Colwill forged a fine partnership with Wesley Fofana, but the Frenchman now faces months of the sidelines with another major injury. Even Fofana comes back, he sadly can't be considered a reliable member of the first XI, such is his history on the treatment table.

In his place has stepped summer signing Tosin Adarabioyo, who at 27 has taken on Silva's role in the make-up of the squad and dressing room. The problem with that is he is nowhere near as good or experienced as his accomplished predecessor.

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Behind an ever-changing defence is Robert Sanchez, a goalkeeper who was quickly dropped by Pochettino last term yet has managed to claw his way back into the fold, with Filip Jorgensen unable to displace him since arriving from Villarreal. To add further sting, Chelsea's BlueCo owners let the standout Premier League goalkeeper this season, Matz Sels of Nottingham Forest, walk away from sister club Strasbourg after six years with the French club to a divisional rival.

A solid defence needs both quality and cohesion. Ultimately, Chelsea do not have enough of either to sustain a title push.

Squad harmony at risk

Having successfully and simply navigated the first phase of this season's Conference League, Maresca was hailed for effectively dividing his huge squad into two teams; one for competing in the Premier League, and one for their European exploits.

There was always a danger of this coming back to bite them though, and it will not be a sustainable plan for the rest of the season. It's already been reported the likes of Christopher Nkunku, Joao Felix and Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall aren't too pleased with being stuck in the 'B' side and starting only intermittently against far lesser opposition.

For whatever reason, Maresca still doesn't trust most of this changed team in Premier League action. He has faced criticism for continually waiting until the very latter stages of games to turn to his bench and allowing his starting line up to become leggy, in turn giving the opposition a physical advantage in second halves. This vicious cycle is a major part of their recent downfall. Too long does Maresca wait to freshen things up, too late it is to stem the tide.

Transfer chaos is back

Winning cures everything in football, and in the case of Chelsea, their first half to the season went some way to changing the narrative on their often scattergun transfer plans. Maresca building two teams parallel to each other added further gloss to the blueprint.

Their rut is not down to this approach, but it is providing an uncomfortable backdrop all the same. Nkunku, whose time at the club has been hampered by various injuries and a lack of consistent chances, is widely reported to be considering a move to Bayern Munich, and Chelsea won't stand in his way if their fair market valuation is met. That they have even set an asking price and broadcasted it to the world screams of impatience over one of the squad's most gifted and talented players.

Meanwhile, Trevoh Chalobah – who was essentially exiled from first-team training over the summer – has been recalled from his season-long loan at Crystal Palace to provide further depth in defence, with Eagles boss Oliver Glasner bemoaning of how uncertain the situation was over the last week. For all of Chelsea's directors, scouts and complexity in their recruitment setup, there still feels an amateurishness about their business. With results toiling, they need more stability and reassurance rather than a return to their unpredictable default.

Young and naive

The simplest answer behind Chelsea's malaise is they are still a youthful team with a relatively youthful manager guiding them. They are far from the finished product and will undoubtedly need to take some bruising in order to grow.

Even their best players are victim to this. Palmer, now one of the Premier League's leading names and best players, keeps conjuring magic again and again and again, though is equally guilty of drifting through games when under the cosh. His partnership with Jackson – they've combined for a league-high 12 goals since the start of 2023-24 – is on track to become one of the most fruitful in Premier League history, let alone the modern day, but even that still requires some fine-tuning. The Senegal striker's wastefulness has crept back into his game following a hot start to the season, and his inability to score at crucial junctures is usually what prevents his side from building unassailable leads.

There is a need for some of these players to mature quicker than expected. South American duo Moises Caicedo and Enzo Fernandez have been handed the captain's armband in the absence of the perennially-

injured Reece James, and the aforementioned Colwill is having to step up into a role years beyond his actual experience. Marc Cucurella being among the most successful and dominant voices in the squad speaks some volumes even in spite of his admirable redemption arc.

Maresca claimed his side were unable to beat Bournemouth on Tuesday because their heads dropped after conceding a penalty at the start of the second half, which wasn't the first time they have responded poorly to setback. That's the sort of emotional immaturity that's nearly certain to creep in with a team constructed in this adolescent fashion, though the head coach could also do a better job of adapting his game plan to deal with this appropriately, rather than watch as his team sink and struggle.

As with Maresca himself, the Chelsea faithful have to accept that this is who their current heroes are. They can be a special team one day, but need to go through a few more trials and tribulations before they're the real deal.

Race is on

A surge in form from the teams beneath them has come at the worst possible time for Chelsea, who head into the weekend sat in fifth place, a point adrift of Newcastle and only two ahead of crisis club Manchester City. Surprise package Nottingham Forest are showing few signs of slowing down, to complicate matters further.

Chelsea have avoided PSR sanctions from the Premier League on this occasion, though they would be far more comfortable in that regard if they had the lavish finances of Champions League football to fall back on. Given BlueCo have already spent in surplus of £1bn since taking the reins in 2022, the public inquiry will only open again if another season goes by without qualifying for Europe's elite club competition.

The club have put this pressure upon themselves, and now it's up to Maresca and his charges to live up to the billing. They all knew of these consequences when they signed up for this project, and now they are staring in the face of scrutiny. Everyone in that dressing room needs to grow up at a quicker rate to avoid the backlash.

Brighton humiliate shambolic Manchester United at Old Trafford

By Dave Oludare Oso

Old Trafford, an hitherto dreaded place for visiting teams, is steadily becoming a slaughter ground for hapless Amorim's boys

It was another nightmarish showing for Manchester United at Old Trafford as Brighton delivered a crushing 3-1 defeat on Sunday, exposing the Red Devils' mounting Premier League troubles.

United's misery began early when Yankuba Minteh opened the scoring for Brighton in the fifth minute. Capitalising on a precision pass from Kaoru Mitoma, Minteh slotted the ball neatly past Andre Onana to stun the home crowd.

Though United's talisman, Bruno Fernandes, restored parity from the penalty spot in the 23rd minute, the team struggled to assert dominance.

The glimmers of hope were extinguished in the second half, with Brighton ruthlessly exploiting United's defensive frailties.



Joao Pedro reclaimed the lead for Brighton in the 53rd minute, seizing on a rebound and calmly dispatching it into the net.

The nail in United's coffin came in the 76th minute when Georginio Rutter pounced on a calamitous error by Onana, leaving the goalkeeper helpless as Brighton extended their lead.

The hosts floundered in their attempts to respond, squandering crucial chances. Alejandro Garnacho, introduced as a substitute, sent a shot skyward from a prime position, epitomising United's lacklustre display.

Meanwhile, Harry Maguire's

frustrations boiled over, earning him a yellow card in the closing minutes as Brighton outclassed United in every department.

Brighton's disciplined approach stifled United's attack, and their well-orchestrated substitutions ensured a commanding finish to the game.

The Seagulls soared with clinical precision, leaving United reeling from yet another setback in their faltering season.

For manager Ruben Amorim, the loss raises serious questions about the team's strategy and discipline, as Old Trafford bore witness to boos and disappointment from the home faithful.

City thrash Ipswich Town: Are Man City back to their best form?

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Manchester City manager, Pep Guardiola experienced the worst form of his managerial career towards the end of 2024 football season.

The decorated coach would often look agitated and stressed, especially on days when other teams are defeating his glorious City side.

However, Manchester City on Sunday thrashed Ipswich Town 6-0 and Guardiola alongside his team seems to be back to their best form.

"We are back to doing things that define this team for the last 10 years," Guardiola told Sky Sports afterwards.

"I'm really pleased for the players, they deserve it. They suffer a lot in this time, but we recovered some identities we lost in this path."

Just one league win in nine games during November and December was hugely damaging to City's hopes of a fifth successive title as they are now 12 points behind leaders Liverpool, who also have a game in hand.

Top four is far more realistic and the goal rush at Ipswich helped them overtake Newcastle in fourth and six points shy of second-placed Arsenal and Nottingham Forest.

Guardiola, though, was just happy to see signs of his old team as they took total control against Town.



"[It was] much better," he added. "Maybe not our best, but closer."

"The players realised where we were, our standards lacked because it's not just winning titles, it is the joy to do your best."

"It doesn't matter if you're a big actor in London or a little theatre in Sheffield - it doesn't matter."

"I think the players proved many things and hopefully it can be the beginning of recognising ourselves of who we were."

It is not yet over for City

This was the biggest Premier League win this season, with City opening up Ipswich time and again with crisp passing and movement that was pivotal to their past successes, but sorely missing during their bad spell.

When dominant, City would score for fun and that free-scoring form also appears to have returned with 14 goals in their last four games.

This result was also their joint-biggest away win in Premier League history, matching the 6-0 defeat of Watford in the 2017.

The top four will definitely qualify for the Champions League next season but that could increase to five depending on English clubs' success in this year's competition.

What information do we collect from this quiz?

It would take an incredible run of form from City, though, and a real dip in results from leaders Liverpool for them to win a fifth consecutive title.

But until it is mathematically impossible, you can never truly rule them out. In 2018-19 they trailed Liverpool by 10 points by the New Year, but then won 18 of their next 19 games to win the title by a point.

The biggest points deficit that a team has overcome is 13 - achieved by Arsenal in 1997-98.

Man United 1-3 Brighton: Maybe the worst team in Man Utd history - Amorim admits

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Manchester United head coach Ruben Amorim has described his team as "maybe the worst" in the 147-year history of the club.

The 39-year-old admitted the poor form of his team after a 3-1 loss to Brighton.

The defeat by Brighton was the fourth loss in their past five home Premier League games.

They have collected 11 points in 11 league games since Amorim replaced Erik ten Hag in November.

United are 13th in the table - 10 points clear of the relegation zone but seven behind 10th-placed Fulham.

"In [the past] 10 games in Premier League, we won two," said Amorim. "Imagine what this is for a fan of Manchester United. Imagine what this is for me.

"We are getting a new coach who is losing more than the last coach. I have full knowledge of that.

"We are the worst team maybe in the history of Manchester United. I know you [media] want headlines but I am saying that because we have to acknowledge that and to change that. Here you go: your headlines."

United did equalise after conceding an early goal against Brighton.

However, rather than Bruno



Fernandes' penalty becoming a springboard for a better display, they were badly outplayed.

Kaoru Mitoma put the visitors back in front before a horrendous mistake from goalkeeper Andre Onana gifted Georginio Rutter Brighton's third.

Is this Man Utd's worst team in history?

When you look at the stats, Amorim was slightly exaggerating when he called his team "maybe the worst" in the club's history. But not by a lot.

At this stage of the season, only 13 United teams have had a lower points tally in the history of the club - the last time being in 1986-87.

Here are some other stats that show how badly they are performing:

This was United's sixth home Premier League defeat of the season, their most from their opening 12 home matches of a league season since 1893-94.

They have conceded the first goal

in each of their past five Premier League games at Old Trafford - their joint-longest such run in the competition, also doing so five times in a row from August to October 2023.

United have lost 10 of their 22 Premier League games this season - the earliest into a league campaign that they have hit double figures for defeats since 1989-90 under Alex Ferguson.

United have been relegated five times - most recently in 1974. It still seems unlikely that will happen this term, though Amorim did say last month it was a "possibility".

Former Everton midfielder Leon Osman told BBC Match of the Day: "It was a really bold statement from Ruben Amorim. Their starting XI cost £391m, their five summer signings cost £182m.

"I would not enjoy being called out like this. No one wants to be known as the worst team to ever play for the club. He's probably honest and on the mark."