

# NURTW: Tokyo seeks N200m from police for defamation

**Olalekan Adetayo,  
Ibadan**

A factional leader of the proscribed Oyo State Council of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, Alhaji Lateef Akinsola (a.k.a. Tokyo), has dragged the state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Baba Bolanta, to court for alleged defamation of character.

Akinsola is demanding

N200m damages from the police boss for linking him to the recent violence unleashed on the state by some persons suspected to be members of the union.

Tokyo, who had been declared wanted by the state police command alongside another factional leader, Mr. Mukaila Lamidi (a.k.a. Auxilliary), made known his latest step in a statement made available to journalists

in Ibadan, the state capital, on Wednesday.

He said he took objection to Bolanta's decision to paste his (Akinsola's) photographs in strategic places in the metropolis, claiming that he was being wanted over the violence.

He said the action was illegal, saying that the police boss was looking the other way while the real culprits were going round town with

weapons.

He said, "Bolanta has no moral justification to declare me wanted. His action is illegal as I am not a criminal. I did not commit any crime. I am suing Bolanta for defamation of my character to the tune of N200m.

"Bolanta should stop spoiling my good name by his sponsored publications. Has Bolanta ever seen me leading any thug to kill anybody at

motor parks?"

Meanwhile, former Governor Adebayo Alao-Akala has accused Governor Abiola Ajimobi of political vendetta.

In a statement by his spokesman, Mr. Dotun Oyelade, on Wednesday, the former governor said the judicial commission of enquiry set up by the state government to probe the NURTW crisis was aimed at indicting him and the police.

He said, "The statement credited to the panel's chairman that it would step on big toes is an unguided pre-emptory statement that suggests that the assignment of the panel is a 'wuruwuru to the answer' arrangement."

But Ajimobi, in a statement

by his Senior Special Adviser on Public Communication, Dr. Festus Adedayo, said Oyelade and his principal were apparently being haunted by the ghost of their days in office and were afraid that judgment day had come.

"Specifically, to douse their apprehension, the commission will not be the voodoo type that was the pastime of the Alao-Akala years. It will conduct a scientific public sitting by receiving testimonies of the years of the locusts where people were cut down in their prime, in the name of politics. To pre-empt the commission's report as Alao-Akala is doing is cowardly," he said.

## Bayelsa monarch scolds ministries on ICT

**Mike Odiegwu, Yenagwa**

THE Paramount Ruler of Akassa Kingdom of Bayelsa State, King Edward-Inatim, has criticised some ministries and other government agencies over their repeated failures to update information about their activities on their various websites.

The monarch, the Amadabo of Kongho, said it was unfortunate that many government bodies had refused to embrace the true meanings of information technology.

The traditional ruler who spoke to our correspondent in Yenagwa, particularly faulted the Ministries of Urban and Regional Planning on what he described as "its archaic method of information dissemination."

He said, "Our people

have refused to move with modern trends as far as exploring internet to enhance efficiency in service delivery is concerned. The development has led to haphazard planning of most cities in Nigeria."

He recalled that he had once donated a set of computers to the ministry in the state but that the equipment was not put to use.

He argued that recorded visual and still pictures of landscaping can be easily posted for prospective land buyers, planners and civil engineers involved in the building industry.

Edward-Inatim noted that the inability of ministries and government agencies to embrace ICT had slowed down research and development in the country.



•L-R: Chairman, University Press Plc, Dr. Lekan Are; renown novelist, Prof. John Pepe Clark; and Managing Director, UP Plc, Mr. Samuel Kolawole, at the firms's Authors' Forum, in Ibadan ...on Wednesday. Photo: Olalekan Adetayo.

## Atuche loses bid to get charges quashed

**Ade Adesomoju**

LAGOS High Court on Wednesday turned down the prayer of former Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Bank PHB Plc, Mr. Francis Atuche, to quash the fresh charges the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission had preferred against him.

The trial judge, Justice Lateefat Okunnu, in her ruling on Atuche's application, said it lacked merit and subsequently dismissed it.

Atuche was on June 8 re-arraigned alongside his wife, Elizabeth, and former Financial Officer of the bank, Mr. Ugo Nwanyanwu, on a 27-count charge of theft. The fresh charge was initially preferred against Elizabeth alone before the EFCC amended the charge to bring in Atuche and Nwanyanwu.

The former bank chief, in his application, filed by his counsel, Mr. Rickey Tarfa (SAN), had asked the court to quash the charges, claiming that the EFCC's re-arraignment was "tainted by bias and intended to embarrass, annoy" and deny him of fair hearing of defending himself in other charges.

He added that the re-arraignment constituted an abuse of court process and forum shopping.

Atuche had alleged that the fresh charges preferred against him by the EFCC were the same with the ones for which he was already standing trial before Justice Adeniyi Onigbanjo and the ones before the Federal High Court, Lagos.

But Justice Okunnu, in her ruling, said she could not find similarity in the charges before her and the ones before the FHC.

She said the charges before the FHC bordered on granting of loans and other

practices against accepted banking procedures, while the ones before her and that of Justice Onigbanjo were on theft.

Atuche had also claimed to have been denied equality of arms by the manner the EFCC had used the media against him and that EFCC's proof of evidence did not establish any prima facie case against him.

Justice Okunnu dismissed the grounds, that the accused person did not place evidence before her on his claim to inequality of arms and that

it was premature to raise the issue of proof of evidence before the substantive suit.

In dismissing the application, Justice Okunnu said, "The notice of preliminary objection accordingly stands dismissed."

After Atuche's application was dismissed, EFCC's counsel, Mr. Sebastine Hon (SAN), withdrew the notice of preliminary objection earlier filed by the prosecution against his application for bail.

## FG gets \$225m to fight HIV/AIDS

**Olamilekan Lartey, Abuja**

THE Federal Government said on Wednesday that it had obtained a World Bank credit of \$225m (about N3.4bn) to reduce the risk of HIV infections in the country.

Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Senator Pius Anyim, said as part of the efforts to sustain the fight against HIV/AIDS, the FG would use the credit to increase access to counselling as well as utilisation of testing, care and support services.

Anyim said the government's objective was to curb the incidence of HIV/AIDS by reducing mother-to-child transmission and targeting the most-at-risk persons that were responsible

for new infections.

The SGF spoke during the inauguration of the Federal Government and World Bank-assisted Second HIV/AIDS Programme Development Project.

Represented by the Permanent Secretary, General Services in the office of the SGF, Mr. Femi Olayisade, Anyim said the government would continue to strengthen its anti-retroviral programme to ensure that infected people did get adequate treatment and care, particularly the provision of food and social support.

He said the government would work with the National Assembly to ensure that an anti-discrimination bill was passed into law.

"The government will ensure that the level of social stigma attached to persons living with the virus or affected by the virus is reduced through sensitisation of our communities as well as enactment of appropriate laws and policies," Anyim said.

He commended the World Bank and other development partners for the generous and invaluable assistance to the country.

Anyim urged all stakeholders in the fight against HIV/AIDS to work together through effective coordination to avoid duplication and wastage of resources that could truncate the objective of reducing the incidence of HIV in the country.

## Briefly

### Lightning kills motorcyclist

TRAGEDY struck in Bida, Niger State, on Wednesday, when lightning killed a 28-year-old commercial motorcyclist, Malam Madiu Baba-Kpatagi, on the Bida-Mokwa Road.

The News Agency of Nigeria reports that Baba-Kpatagi had gone to a filling station at about 1pm to fuel his motorcycle as the clouds were gathering.

On leaving the station, he parked under a nearby mango tree to count his earnings.

### 'Pastor' dupes constable

THE police, on Wednesday, in Lagos charged a suspected fake pastor before a Somolu Magistrates' Court for allegedly duping a police constable.

The accused, Sunday Ajayi, 33, is facing a two-count charge of conspiracy to steal and stealing to which he pleaded not guilty.

The prosecutor, Adegoke Akinlebi, said Ajayi and others now at large conspired and duped a Police Constable, Peter Baba, on June 6, about 12pm at Kusa St., Bariga,

when the gathering cloud turned into a downpour accompanied by lightning and thunder.

Eyewitnesses told NAN that the deceased collapsed after he was hit by lightning and died on the spot.

NAN further reports that on getting the report, the Etsu Nupe, Alhaji Yahaya Abubakar, released the palace ambulance to convey the corpse of the victim to his village, Kpatagi, in the Gbako Local Government Area.

Lagos.

He said the accused in pretence obtained the sum of N70,000 from Baba so as to engage in financial breakthrough prayers for him.

The offence, according to Akinlebi, contravened Sections 514 and 419 of the Criminal Code, Laws of Lagos State.

The Senior Magistrate, Mrs. Bola Osunsanmi, admitted the accused to bail in the sum of N50,000 with two sureties in like sum.