

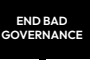


NIGERIAN CIVIL SOCIETY CALLS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AMID #ENDBADGOVERNANCE PROTESTS

On Sunday, August 4, 2024 President Bola Ahmed Tinubu addressed the nation for the first time amidst the ongoing nationwide #EndBadGovernance peaceful protests. Unfortunately, the President's address failed to address the core demands of the Nigerian people. It is crucial for the government to remember that **"Sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria, from whom the government, through this Constitution, derives all its powers and authority,"** as stated in Section 14(2) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), which also provides that: **"the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government"**: and. Engagement with citizens based on their articulated needs and demands is imperative if the government is to fulfill one of its most basic functions - ensuring their welfare.

While the President acknowledged some concerns through increased investment in agriculture and student loan disbursements, the following key demands, which require systemic changes, were ignored:

1. Constitutional & Judicial Reforms
2. Electoral Reforms
3. Establishment of a Living Wage
4. Human Capital Development
5. Protection for Farms & Farmers
6. Prohibitive Cost of Living, making life intolerable



IMMEDIATE DEMANDS FROM CITIZENS

1 HUNGER

Citizens called for measures to reduce the cost of food through strategies such as food importation, subsidized credits, and improvements in logistics and storage. In response, the President states that the Government has

ASSESSMENT

- Partial response.
- The immediate interventions need clarification as there is no indication when the impact of these measures will be seen.
- Funds released to states: Specific purposes and amounts per state are unclear.
- No monitoring or transparency and accountability mechanisms have been indicated for these measures.

PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE

- Provided incentives to farmers to increase food production at affordable prices.
- Released over N570 billion to the 36 states to expand livelihood support.
- Distributed fertilizers and targeted the cultivation of more than 10 million hectares of land for food production with federal incentives and land donated by states.
- Ordered mechanized farming equipment from the US, Belarus, and Brazil, which is currently on its way.

2 COST OF LIVING

Immediate measures to address the rising cost of living included significant reductions in fuel prices, electricity tariffs, and import taxes. The President's response included

PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE

- Removal of tariffs and import duties on rice, wheat, maize, and sorghum for the next six months.

ASSESSMENT

- Partial response.

3 INSECURITY

Citizens demanded a comprehensive plan to address insecurity, including halting the diversion of security resources, prosecuting instigators and criminals, and resettling Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE

- Silence

4 CORRUPTION / GOVERNMENT WASTE / COST OF GOVERNANCE / BLOATED NASS

Immediate demands included a 50% reduction in the running costs of the executive and National Assembly, implementation of the Oronsaye Report, and removal of specific budget projects.

PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE

- Silence

5 ENDSARS

Release ALL #EndSARS protesters; obey ECOWAS judgment; make public the #EndSARS Judicial Panel Reports and implement recommendations, including payment of compensations

PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE

- Silence

As concerned civil society organizations helping to articulate the valid and most amplified points in this conversation about our national development which have been made on all sides from well meaning Nigerians, we call on our government to take immediate action to end the insecurity, hunger, and corruption that continue to plague our nation. By cutting down the size and costs of governance and implementing the Oronsaye Report, more resources can and should be directed toward addressing the pressing needs of citizens. The Federal Government and National Assembly must ensure that the federal budget is focused on more essential projects.

The rising cost of living has become a significant challenge for many Nigerians. Clarity around the short, medium and long term steps being taken to address insecurity which also affects food production, fuel price hike, electricity tariffs, and import taxes, would greatly ease the burden on our citizens.

We reject the calls for unconstitutional change of government, this has no place in our democracy. There are also reports of the bank accounts of some protesters and critics of government policies being blocked while some journalists covering the protests are being brutalized, harassed and intimidated, which are gravely concerning. It is important that all voices are heard and respected. We urge the government to move forward with its stated commitment to engage with its citizens and take meaningful action to address these pressing issues.



SIGNED:

- Accountability Lab Nigeria
- BudgIT Foundation
- Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID)
- Dataphyte Foundation
- Digicivic initiative
- Enough is Enough (EiE) Nigeria
- #FixPolitics
- Global Rights
- Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA)
- Hope Behind Bars Africa
- International Press Center
- Media Rights Agenda (MRA)
- Paradigm initiative
- Public and Private Development Centre (PPDC)
- Sesor Empowerment Foundation
- TechHer
- Women Advocate Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC)
- Yiaga Africa