

**Ramadan 2026: Muslims observe sacred month with devotion, compassion, Pg. 3 community engagement**

• Religious groups intensify prayers, charity, outreach as faithful embrace renewal

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026

Pg. 8,9,10,11&12

# Celebrating 30 Muslim women of substance (II)

...Excelling in politics, academia, media, leadership, and professions

**Bridging borders: How Nigeria and Türkiye's Ankara meeting could transform trade and Muslim welfare**

Pg. 5



Erdoğan and Tinubu

**Unity in hijab: Nigerian women inspire renewed advocacy at World Hijab Day 2026**

Pg. 6

• Abuja and Lagos events celebrate faith, empowerment, solidarity, and inclusivity



A cross-section of Muslim women and students from various organizations and schools at the World Hijab Day rally in Lagos on February 1

**Muslim News Nigeria confers transformational leadership award on Gov. Babagana Zulum**

Pg. 4

• Award recognises his leadership and impact in Borno State



Gov. Zulum

**Oba Oniru: Faith-driven leadership rooted in community service**

Pg. 14



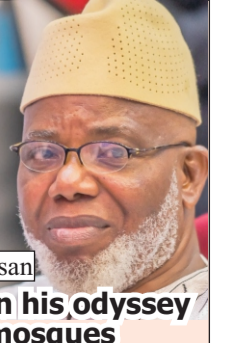
Oniru

**Ibn Battuta's legacy inspires Zikrullah Hassan's journey of faith**

Pg. 13

Hassan

Former NAHCON boss on his odyssey and Islam's three holy mosques



**Nigerian Muslim entertainers embrace spiritual activities during Ramadan 2026**

Pg. 15

# Celebrating 30 Muslim Women of Substance (Part 2) on WHD, IWD 2026

Every year, World Hijab Day on February 1 and International Women's Day on March 8 provide moments of reflection on the dignity, strength and contributions of women across the world. For the Muslim community, these occasions also offer an opportunity to celebrate the remarkable achievements of Muslim women who combine faith with excellence in public life.

The "30 Muslim Women of Substance" initiative by Muslim News Nigeria is therefore more than a list. It is a statement of pride and a reminder that Muslim women, while proudly observing the hijab, continue to shape society through leadership, scholarship, service and professional excellence.

The women highlighted in this year's edition (check page 6 to 11) reflect the diversity and strength of the Muslim Ummah. From governance and public policy to medicine, law, education, media, technology and humanitarian service, they demonstrate that faith and professional success are not contradictory. Rather, they complement each other.

Their stories remind us of an important truth within Islam: the pursuit of knowledge, leadership and service is not restricted by gender. The Qur'an declares: "Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women... Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward" (Qur'an 33:35). This verse establishes that both men and women share equal spiritual responsibility and the opportunity to excel in righteous deeds.

Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim." Scholars have long explained that this obligation includes both men and women. From the earliest days of Islam, women such as Aisha bint Abi Bakr (RA), Fatimah bint

Muhammad (RA), Zainab bint Ali (RA), among others, played central roles as scholars, teachers, and narrators of Hadith, preserving and transmitting Islamic knowledge to generations.

Fatimah al-Fihri, for instance, founded the University of Al Quaraouiyine in 859 CE in Fez, Morocco, one of the oldest existing universities in the world, demonstrating the historical impact of Muslim women in education and intellectual leadership. These women were jurists, educators, philanthropists, and community leaders who shaped the moral, spiritual, and intellectual fabric of



## International Women's Day

the Muslim world.

Interestingly, the women celebrated in this compendium stand firmly within that noble tradition. Whether in hospitals, universities, courtrooms, laboratories, media houses or government offices, they demonstrate that a Muslim woman can pursue worldly success without losing her faith or compromising her modesty.

Their journeys also challenge the persistent stereotypes that portray the hijab as a symbol of limitation. On the contrary, the hijab represents identity, dignity and obedience to Allah, while the intellect, creativity and leadership of Muslim women continue to enrich society.

Nigeria, a nation blessed with

enormous human potential, urgently needs more women at the helm of affairs in various professions and sectors. Islam does not prevent women from contributing meaningfully to society; it only calls for their actions to remain guided by Islamic values of modesty, integrity, and responsibility.

As the Qur'an reminds us: "And say, 'Work, for Allah will see your deeds, and so will His Messenger and the believers'" (Qur'an 9:105). This verse encourages productivity, excellence and accountability, qualities that these Muslim women embody.

Yet while celebrating these achievements, the Muslim community must also recognise that there is still much work to be done. Many talented Muslim girls across Nigeria continue to face barriers to education, mentorship and professional development. The examples set by these 30 women should therefore inspire the next generation to aim higher, pursue knowledge and contribute meaningfully to society.

To the women honoured in this edition, we extend heartfelt congratulations. Your resilience, discipline and faith are not only personal victories but collective triumphs for the Muslim community and for Nigeria as a whole.

May your achievements inspire countless young Muslim girls to dream boldly while remaining firmly grounded in their faith. May your work continue to uplift Nigeria, strengthen the Ummah and demonstrate to the world that Islam encourages excellence, service and integrity.

Indeed, through knowledge, compassion and leadership, these women have proven that one can pursue success in this world while remaining devoted to the values that lead to success in the Hereafter.

Signed: Rasheed Abubakar, Publisher, Muslim News Nigeria

## 7 Reasons Our Name Reflects Our Mission and Purpose

1) Naming Muslim News Nigeria is appropriate because it clearly reflects the mission and focus of the platform. The name openly communicates that the medium is dedicated to reporting stories, perspectives, achievements, and concerns relating to Muslims in Nigeria. This clarity helps audiences understand its purpose and creates a sense of belonging for a community whose narratives are often underrepresented.

2. Importantly, Muslim focused media is not unique to Nigeria. Muslims in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and other parts of the world also have dedicated platforms that document their experiences, celebrate achievements, and address challenges affecting their communities. These outlets operate confidently with Muslim identity in their names because their mission is clear. There is therefore no requirement to adopt a secular label in order to achieve credibility or impact when the objective is community representation and storytelling.

3. Muslim News Nigeria similarly reports Muslim stories irrespective of tribe, school of thought, or organisational affiliation. Its approach to inclusive coverage reflects the core motive for its establishment which is

unity, representation, and balanced engagement within the Muslim community. Over the years, the platform has also contributed to challenging misinformation, exposing falsehoods against Muslims, and highlighting instances of media bias, while maintaining responsible journalism.

4. It is also worth noting that identity driven media exists across cultures and regions. Some newspapers and broadcast platforms are rooted in cultural or regional identity and proudly reflect this in their names. Examples include Arab News and AlArabiya, which promote Arab perspectives through news and analysis. Likewise, Al Jazeera Media Network has retained its Arabic name while growing into a global media brand. Despite perceptions some audiences may hold about the Arabic language, these outlets remain widely watched and respected internationally because content and credibility ultimately matter more than linguistic identity.

5. The experience of such global media reinforces the idea that Muslim News Nigeria does not need to hide its identity for validation. Openness about identity can coexist with professionalism, fairness, and broad societal relevance.

What builds trust is consistency in ethical reporting, inclusiveness, and commitment to truth.

6. With over 120 million Muslims in Nigeria, the potential for impact is enormous. If this community supports Muslim News Nigeria through followership, engagement, sharing of stories, and constructive contributions, the platform will continue to grow in influence and sustainability. Strong audience support naturally attracts brands and institutions seeking credible channels to reach Muslim audiences, creating opportunities for partnerships and long term viability.

7. *Muslim News Nigeria*, with a 24/7 online presence, active social media across all platforms, and a monthly free print and e-paper edition, stands as a confident expression of representation and responsibility. The call is for Muslims to support the platform so that their stories remain visible, their narratives preserved, and their voices amplified with dignity, balance, and authenticity.

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“Whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer—we will surely cause them to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward according to the best of what they used to do.” — Surah An-Nahl (16:97)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever does deeds of righteousness, whether male or female, while being a believer, they will enter Paradise.” — Sahih Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 137

”

## Editorial Policy

**ABOUT US:** Muslim News, a publication of Rawshield PR Media, is a mouthpiece for underreported Muslim achievers and events in Nigeria and across the world, which are never given prominence in the mainstream media.

**OUR MISSION:** To give special media attention and coverage to important people and events in the life of Muslims that do not gain mainstream media attention, and to change the media narrative of blaming Islam and Muslims for offences committed in its lofty name.

**EDITORIAL POLICY:** We shall be fair to all persons, irrespective of their religions and ideologies, as long as that promotes the image of Islam and unites the Muslims. We shall also uphold the ethical standards of journalism.

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# Ramadan 2026: Nigerian Muslims observe sacred month with devotion, compassion, community engagement

Muslim groups intensify prayers, charity, outreach as faithful embrace renewal

ABDULLAH ABDULGANIY

Muslims across Nigeria officially commenced the 2026 fasting season of Ramadan on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, following the national declaration made on Tuesday, February 17 by the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), the umbrella body of Nigerian Muslims.

The President-General of the NSCIA and Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III, who was abroad at the time, was represented in the historic national broadcast by the Shehu of Borno, Alhaji Abubakar Ibn Umar Garbai El-Kanemi. This marked the first time in recent years that another senior traditional ruler delivered the Ramadan declaration on behalf of the Sultan.

Muslim News gathered that Nigeria began fasting alongside Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Egypt on Wednesday, February 18, while Türkiye, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan commenced fasting on Thursday, February 19, based on moon sighting and astronomical calculations.

## Tinubu urges sacrifice and unity at first tafsir

On Wednesday, February 18, Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu attended the first Ramadan Tafsir at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, where he congratulated the Muslim world and called on adherents of Islam to embrace discipline and compassion.

According to a statement from the Presidency, Tinubu urged Nigerians to "embrace the true essence of Islam, deepen our devotion to Almighty Allah, and allow the values of sacrifice, patience, and generosity to guide our national conduct."

He added: "Ramadan teaches us restraint and responsibility. Let us use this sacred period to pray for Nigeria, support one another, and strengthen the bonds that unite us as one people."

## Borno State: Palliatives for 300,000 households

On Thursday, February 19, Borno State Governor Professor Babagana Umara Zulum described Ramadan as a period of spiritual rejuvenation, self-discipline, sacrifice, compassion, and devotion to Almighty Allah.

He noted that fasting is not only about abstaining from food and drink, but also about purifying the heart, strengthening faith, promoting patience, and extending kindness to the less fortunate.

Gov Zulum flagged off the distribution of Ramadan palliatives to 300,000 households across all 27 local government areas of the state, aiming to cushion the economic burden on vulnerable residents during the holy month.

## Jigawa State: Free meal centres for millions

On Friday, February 20,



President Tinubu



Gov. AbdulRazaq



Gov. Zulum



Gov. Namadi



Dr. Hamzat



Prof. Pantami

**From the grand mosques of Abuja, Lagos, and Oyo to neighbourhood mosques across southern communities, Muslims throughout Nigeria observe Ramadan with deep devotion. Fasting, Taraweeh prayers, Tafsir sessions, and communal Iftar blend seamlessly with acts of charity and community outreach, shaping a season defined by faith, reflection, and unity.**

Governor Umar Namadi announced a reduction in official working hours for civil servants and the establishment of 640 free meal centres to provide Iftar meals to 7.9 million beneficiaries during Ramadan.

Governor Namadi, who was named Nigerian Muslim Personality of the Year 2024/25, said civil servants will now work from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm from Monday to Thursday.

Over 264,600 meal packages are expected to be distributed daily, providing more than 23.8 million meals for vulnerable citizens throughout Ramadan.

He also highlighted the importance of ethical and strategic use of digital technologies in advancing youth empowerment and national development during his remarks at the 20th Annual Ramadan Lecture on the same day in Kaduna.

## Kwara State: Joint observance promotes harmony

On Saturday, February 21, Kwara State Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq extended greetings to both Muslims and Christians, emphasizing that the coinciding start of the fasting seasons underscores the

need for harmony, peace, and unity across faiths.

"Fasting opens a unique window for humans to draw closer to the Creator through abstention from sins, intentional giving of alms, and all acts of goodness. It allows one to reflect and redefine their essence before the Almighty," he said.

He prayed that God would accept the devotion of the faithful and urged communities to collaborate with the government to promote the welfare of the people.

## Lagos State: Ramadan as a reminder of compassion

On Sunday, February 22, Lagos State Deputy Governor Dr. Kadri Obafemi Hamzat called on Muslims to live out the core teachings of Ramadan, emphasizing fairness, kindness, and respect for all people regardless of gender, ethnicity, or religion.

Speaking at the 7th Annual Ramadan Lecture and Special Prayers in memory of Late Oba Mufutau Olatunji Hamzat in Mushin, he described Ramadan as a reminder that humanity is one body and God empowers everyone to act with compassion.

He stressed that differences in ethnicity or social background should unite rather than divide communities, and highlighted that society can only thrive when individuals reject discrimination and treat one another with fairness and humanity.

## Pantami Foundation spreads relief in Gombe

On Friday, February 27, the Professor Isa Pantami Foundation (PIP Foundation) began distributing approximately 12,000 food packages across all 11 local government areas of Gombe State as part of its annual Ramadan intervention.

Valued at over ₦33.75 million, the packages include rice (50kg, 25kg, and 10kg), millet and maize (over 1,000 bags each), couscous (900 bags), semovita (2,500 bags), macaroni (500 cartons), sugar (over 150 bags), and other essential staples.

The distribution is coordinated by Alhaji Abubakar Ahmad Walama (Sarkin Malaman Gombe), Dr. Abubakar Saidu, and Arch. Dahiru Saidu, alongside Pantami's wife and supported by youth and women groups. A special

segment targets Islamic scholars, coordinated by Dr. Umar Garba Dokaji, recognising their role in spiritual guidance and community development.

Professor Isa Pantami, former Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, has sustained this Ramadan philanthropy in Gombe over the years.

Beneficiaries described the intervention as significant relief amid rising living costs, while offering prayers for Pantami and the Foundation's continued commitment to the welfare of the people.

## Devotion, compassion and unity across mosques in Nigeria

Mosques across Nigeria have witnessed increased attendance during Ramadan, with worshippers participating in Taraweeh prayers, Tafsir Qur'an sessions, and nightly supplications. From the National Mosque in Abuja to Oyo Central Mosque and Lagos Central Mosque, Muslim worshippers are gathering in large numbers, reflecting the deep devotion, compassion, and unity that define the holy month.

At the National Mosque, Abuja, daily Tafsir sessions are held for worshippers. At 10 a.m., Imam Professor Muhammad Kabir leads a Tafsir session in Hausa exclusively for women. Between Zuhr and Asr. There is a thematic Tafsir in English by Prof. Luqman Zakariya on alternating days, and another Tafsir in English by Imam Hárani Eze.

From 5 p.m. to 6 p.m., Imam Professor Ibrahim Maqari conducts daily Tafsir in Hausa. Three imams lead the nightly Taraweeh prayers, and daily Iftar is provided by a philanthropist from Saudi Arabia.

At Oyo Central Mosque, the Chief Imam of the township, Barrister Alhaji Bilaal Oseni Akinola conducts Tafsir after Solahtul Fajr, starting at 11 a.m. and ending at 12 p.m. Taraweeh prayers are observed at 8:10 p.m. and conclude at 8:40 p.m., with the Chief Imam leading an audience of approximately one thousand worshippers.

Lagos Central Mosque under the leadership of Engr. Sulaimon Oluwatoyin Abou-Nolla holds daily Tafsir from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Feeding for fasting Muslims during Iftar is organized in collaboration with different companies providing food. Taraweeh prayers are observed every night, and during the last ten days of Ramadan, Qiyam al-Layl is observed instead of Itikaf.

Lekki Central Mosque offers Tafsir from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday, both in the mosque hall and via Zoom. It's being led by the Chief Imam, Dr. Ridwan Jamiu. During the last ten days of Ramadan, Itikaf sessions are held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., with Fiqh sessions and Tafsir from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Additional Ramadan programs include daily reminders, weekly online Tadabbur sessions, weekly Iftar potlucks on Saturdays, hospital visits, quarterly Da'wah programs organized by Lekki Muslim Ummah, Barakah and Bonds initiatives, and an Eid FunFair the day after Eid.

Facilities for Itikaf participants include twenty-four-hour electricity and security, standby medical personnel, a clean environment with professional cleaners, a serene atmosphere, daily lectures, and Tahajjud prayers.

Continues on pg. 4

# Muslim News Nigeria confers transformational leadership award on Gov. Babagana Umara Zulum

## ● Award recognises his leadership and impact in Borno

**T**he Governor of Borno State, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum, has been named the recipient of the Muslim News Nigeria Transformational Leadership Award 2025 in recognition of his exceptional, people-centred governance and far-reaching impact in public service.

The award is an initiative of *Muslim News Nigeria*, Nigeria's most authoritative Islamic newspaper, established to honour Muslim leaders whose conduct in government and public life brings pride to the Ummah while contributing meaningfully to national development.

In a statement signed by the Publisher, Rasheed Abubakar, on Thursday, the newspaper said Governor Zulum emerged after a sustained editorial assessment of his leadership trajectory since assuming office in 2019.

According to the statement, the Award reflects Professor Zulum's transformational leadership style, defined by courage, accountability, compassion, and uncommon dedication to rebuilding lives and institutions in one of Nigeria's most conflict-affected states.

"This nomination follows our sustained editorial assessment of Your Excellency's leadership since your assumption of office in 2019. *Muslim News Nigeria* has consistently followed and documented your people-centred approach to governance, particularly your hands-on response to security challenges, the resettlement of internally displaced persons, and the rebuilding of

critical infrastructures in communities devastated by terrorism and insurgency," the statement read.

Abubakar noted that Governor Zulum has distinguished himself through frontline leadership, often personally visiting volatile and hard-to-reach communities to assess conditions, supervise projects, and engage directly with residents, security agencies, and traditional institutions. This approach, the organisation said, has helped rebuild public confidence in governance and strengthened cooperation between the government and local communities.

He further highlighted his administration's deliberate shift from long-term displacement to dignity-driven recovery, with

Under his leadership, Borno State also recorded significant progress in education, with the reconstruction and rehabilitation of schools destroyed by insurgency, recruitment of teachers, and renewed emphasis on girl-child education.

Similarly, the government has invested heavily in healthcare, constructing and upgrading hospitals and primary healthcare centres across urban and rural areas to improve access for vulnerable populations.

In the area of infrastructure, Professor Zulum's administration has overseen the reconstruction and rehabilitation of roads, markets, public buildings, and community facilities, restoring economic activities and normal life in post-conflict areas.

While Governor Zulum is a Muslim, the publisher emphasised that his governance cuts across religious, ethnic, and political boundaries, reflecting inclusive



Babagana Zulum celebrates Christmas with frontline soldiers in Malam Fatori, reaffirming commitment to the welfare of troops



Gov. Zulum

thousands of internally displaced persons resettled from camps into rebuilt communities, supported with housing, livelihood tools, food assistance, healthcare access, and educational opportunities.

time Governor Zulum is being honoured by *Muslim News Nigeria*. In 2020, at the second edition of the *Muslim News Awards*

other award recipients. "That recognition was informed by the same conviction we hold today: that Governor Zulum

*From the grand mosques of Abuja, Lagos, and Oyo to neighbourhood mosques across southern communities, Muslims throughout Nigeria observe Ramadan with deep devotion. Fasting, Taraweeh prayers, Tafsiir sessions, and communal Iftar blend seamlessly with acts of charity and community outreach, shaping a season defined by faith, reflection, and unity.*

leadership that prioritises competence, equity, and service to all citizens of Borno State.

He recalled that this is not the first

(#MNAwards), he was named Nigerian Muslim Personality of the Year, a recognition that received wide national media coverage. A special edition of the newspaper was also published to celebrate him and

represents a model of ethical, service-driven leadership worthy of emulation," the Publisher stated.

Following Governor Zulum's re-election for a second

He reminded Muslims that the 2026 Nisab is estimated at twelve point five million naira based on gold and one point seven million naira based on silver, with eligible Muslims required to pay 2.5% of their wealth.

Engr. Olalekan stressed that acts of charity during Ramadan carry multiplied rewards and urged believers to use Zakat and Waqf as instruments of social justice and compassion.

At the NASFAT Islamic Centre in Asese, Ogun State, prominent Islamic scholar and former Lagos State Commissioner,

"Whoever Saves a Life, Saves Humanity."

He condemned the ideology and activities of insurgent groups such as Boko Haram, stating that Islam is rooted in peace, justice, and the sanctity of human life.

Dr AbdulLateef fondly called Hon Iyeye emphasized that forced marriages, kidnappings, and religious coercion are direct violations of Qur'anic teachings and are fundamentally un-Islamic.

He urged religious leaders to intensify public enlightenment efforts, educating communities that terrorism, banditry, and other forms of violence have no place in Islam.

Quoting the Qur'an, the popular scholar reminded worshippers that "whoever kills a soul unjustly has killed all humanity," emphasizing that preserving life is among the highest principles in Islam.

**Ramadan thrives at Ogrute Central Mosque, Enugu**

Muslims in southern Nigeria are not left out of Ramadan's spiritual atmosphere. Across communities, they observe the fast and organise activities that strengthen faith and unity.

In Enugu State, the Ogrute Central Mosque in Enugu Ezike,

Imgb Eze North LGA, stands as a symbol of resilience. Built before the Nigerian Civil War as an Islamic centre of learning, the mosque was destroyed by unknown criminals in 2017 but later rebuilt. Today, it is one of the most prominent mosques in the state.

Jumaah prayers, led by Imam Said Ujah, attract over 300 worshippers, including local Igbo Muslims and Hausa traders.

During Ramadan, tafseer holds at least twice weekly, sometimes three times, following the traditional Orie and Nkwor market days to ensure wider participation. In a unique show of unity, tafseer rotates among mosques in neighbouring villages due to the limited number of scholars, with communities moving together for each session.

Taraweeh begins daily at 8 p.m., while a simple feeding programme after Maghrib provides fruits, akara and pap through donations from philanthropists.

Though i'tikaf is observed on a modest scale due to the small Muslim population and security concerns, the mosque remains a strong beacon of faith, proving that Ramadan flourishes even where Muslims are in the minority.

Cont'd from pg. 3

## Ramadan 2026: Nigerian Muslims ...

Meanwhile, An-Nur Mosque in Wuse 2, Abuja, has been hosting daily Ramadan Tafsiir sessions with former Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Pantami, serving as guest Imam.

On Sunday, March 1, he delivered the twelfth day of Tafsiir, covering Surah An-Nisaa, Chapter 4, Verses 4 and 5. He emphasized the obligations of bridal payment, moderation in marriage expenses, the duties of guardians over orphans' wealth, and the importance of treating others with kindness and justice.

Prof. Pantami concluded by praying that attendees may be among the beneficiaries of the Qur'an's guidance, underscoring the relevance of Qur'anic teachings in contemporary life.

In Kwara State, Muslim scholars convened for the Annual Pre-Ramadan Seminar organized by seven Islamic groups, including The Muslim Congress and Al-Mu'minaat Organisation. The seminar, themed "Ramadan, Self-Purification and Detachment from Vices," aimed to prepare believers spiritually and socially for the fasting period.

Associate Professor Hamza AbdulRaheem of Al-Hikmah University described Ramadan as a sacred season for discipline, patience, and devotion. He cautioned that misuse of social media could undermine the spiritual benefits of fasting, urging Muslims to engage with faith-building content while avoiding immoral platforms.

Engr. Ariyo Bashir Olalekan, State Coordinator of the Zakat and Sadaqah Foundation,



Cross-section of the congregation during the Khutbah at the National Mosque.

highlighted the importance of Zakat and Waqf, particularly during Ramadan.

Dr. Abdulhakeem Abdullateef, addressed scholars, clerics, and public officials on the theme

# Bridging borders: How Nigeria and Türkiye's Ankara meeting could transform trade and Muslim welfare

• Countries sign nine agreements, target 5 billion dollars trade, prioritize Muslim welfare



Tinubu and Erdoğan walk the blue carpet during Ankara state visit.



Erdoğan and Tinubu



Nine agreements signed as Presidents Erdoğan and Tinubu meet in Ankara. / AA, Türkiye

**W**hen President Bola Ahmed Tinubu touched down in Ankara on January 26, 2026, for a two-day state visit, the symbolism went far beyond diplomatic routine. Invited by Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the trip signaled a strategic pivot between Africa's most populous nation and a rising Eurasian power, a partnership anchored in economic ambition, security cooperation, and a shared Muslim heritage capable of influencing welfare initiatives across both societies.

President Tinubu departed Türkiye on January 28 after a packed schedule of ceremonial engagements, bilateral meetings, business interactions, and strategic discussions that signalled a renewed partnership between both nations.

## Ceremonial reception and guard of honour

The visit began with an elaborate reception ceremony hosted by President Erdoğan at the Presidential Complex in Ankara. President Tinubu was welcomed with full state honours, including a guard of honour mounted by Turkish military units in colourful regalia. A defining moment of the ceremony was the resounding 21 gun salutes fired in honour of the Nigerian leader. The ceremonial artillery echoed across the complex as military bands played national anthems of both countries, symbolising mutual respect and diplomatic warmth.

This reception mirrored the honour previously accorded to former Nigerian leader Muhammadu Buhari, who also received a guard of honour and ceremonial gun salutes during his several official visits to Türkiye, an

indication of the consistency of high level respect between the two nations.

High level talks and strategic dialogue

Following the ceremony, *Muslim News* gathered that Presidents Tinubu and Erdoğan held closed door talks before leading

flows.

## Security cooperation and Tinubu's message

Security cooperation formed a central pillar of the Ankara meeting. President Tinubu emphasised Nigeria's commitment to regional peace while welcoming

Nigeria Türkiye business forum where investors explored opportunities in construction, agriculture, manufacturing, energy, and aviation. Nigerian officials also engaged Turkish defence and technology firms, seeking partnerships that could support Nigeria's industrialisation and

***Nigeria is a strategically important country with which we are in close cooperation within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the D-8 on many issues concerning the Islamic world, especially Palestine. — President Erdoğan***

expanded bilateral discussions involving ministers and senior officials from defence, trade, energy, education, communication, and foreign affairs sectors.

The discussions covered trade expansion, infrastructure development, defence cooperation, energy collaboration, and education partnerships. Both leaders also exchanged views on regional security challenges, particularly instability in the Sahel and humanitarian concerns affecting vulnerable populations across Africa and the Middle East.

Nine agreements were signed across key sectors, while both leaders announced an ambitious plan to raise bilateral trade to five billion dollars. A Joint Economy and Trade Committee was also activated to coordinate implementation of the agreements and facilitate investment

Türkiye's readiness to deepen defence collaboration.

In his official statement after the meeting, President Tinubu noted: "We also spoke frankly about security. Nigeria will continue to play its role in peace and stability in Africa. Türkiye's experience and readiness to cooperate in military training, intelligence sharing, and counter terrorism efforts strengthen our collective resolve against agents of destabilisation in the Sahel and beyond."

The statement reinforced expectations of increased military training, intelligence exchange, and defence technology collaboration between both countries.

## Business diplomacy and other engagements

Beyond state talks, President Tinubu participated in a

security modernisation.

The Nigerian delegation held meetings with members of the Turkish African business community and visited cultural and institutional sites that showcased Türkiye's technological advancement and humanitarian diplomacy footprint.

## Muslim welfare and Islamic solidarity

A notable dimension of the visit was its emphasis on Muslim welfare and cooperation within global Islamic institutions. President Erdoğan underscored the importance of Nigeria within multilateral Islamic platforms and highlighted shared concerns about Muslim communities worldwide.

On his social media platforms, President Erdoğan wrote: Nigeria is a strategically important country with which we are in close

cooperation within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the D Eight on many issues concerning the Islamic world, especially Palestine.

President Erdoğan's message resonated strongly within Muslim communities in Nigeria, particularly as Türkiye has positioned itself as a voice advocating for oppressed Muslims globally.

## Why Muslim welfare matters in Nigeria

Nigeria is home to one of the largest Muslim populations in Africa, with millions residing in the South West alongside long established northern strongholds. Despite this demographic strength, estimated at about 120 million out of the country's roughly 220-240 million people, Muslim communities in parts of the South West have continued to face persistent challenges. These include marginalisation in public institutions, harassment linked to religious identity, and recurring disputes over the right of female students and professionals to wear the hijab.

Legal battles and social tensions over hijab usage in schools and workplaces have generated debates around religious freedom and inclusivity. These experiences have heightened the significance of international Muslim solidarity and partly explain the resonance of President Erdoğan's compassionate posture toward Muslim communities facing discrimination.

For many observers, cooperation between Nigeria and Türkiye offers opportunities for educational exchange, humanitarian support, and policy dialogue that could strengthen Muslim welfare initiatives in Nigeria.

## Developments after the Ankara meeting

Since the state visit, diplomatic and economic engagements between both countries have continued to evolve. Officials from Nigeria and Türkiye have begun follow up consultations to operationalise the signed agreements, particularly in trade, defence, and technical cooperation.

Discussions are ongoing regarding expanded Turkish investment in Nigerian infrastructure and manufacturing, while defence agencies from both sides are exploring training programmes and procurement frameworks.

Business groups have also intensified contacts, with expectations of joint ventures in construction, agriculture processing, and renewable energy.

The visit has equally reinforced collaboration within Islamic multilateral platforms, with Nigeria and Türkiye coordinating positions on humanitarian issues affecting Muslim communities and advocating diplomatic solutions to conflicts in the Islamic world.

Every February 1, Muslim women across the world reaffirm their decision to wear the hijab as an expression of faith, identity and dignity. What began in 2013 as a modest initiative by Bangladeshi-American activist Nazma Khan has grown into a global movement observed in more than 150 countries.

In Nigeria, the day has evolved beyond symbolism into a sustained advocacy platform. Despite Supreme Court judgments affirming the right of Muslim girls and women to wear the hijab, cases of harassment and discrimination persist in schools, workplaces and public institutions. As a result, World Hijab Day has become a rallying point for rights, inclusion and solidarity.

#### Lagos leads renewed calls for enforcement

In 2026, activities across Lagos, Abuja and other cities were held under the global theme Unity in Hijab and a locally adapted theme, One Sisterhood.

Lagos set the tone with a press conference on January 29 at the Lagos State Secretariat Community Central Mosque, Ikeja.

Speaking for a coalition of Muslim women's organisations, Hajia Mutiat Orolu-Balogun, Executive Director of the Hijab Rights Advocacy Initiative (HRAI) and Convener of the Coalition of Nigerian Muslim Women, said Nigerian Muslim women were joining millions worldwide to reaffirm the hijab as a symbol of faith and unity, not exclusion.

She lamented continued resistance in schools and public offices despite constitutional guarantees.

Ms. Maryam Abdur Rasheed of Pure Heart Islamic Foundation, in her presentation *The Hijab: Faith Not Fashion*, described the hijab as a divine command rooted in the Qur'an and protected under Section 38 of the 1999 Constitution on freedom of religion.

Voices from minority and vulnerable groups were also amplified. Hajia Kudrah Ogunmuyiwa, representing the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN), Lagos State chapter, highlighted the double discrimination often faced by Igbo Muslim women.

Hajia Hussainat Akintola of Al-Mu'minaat Organisation called for inclusive mosques and public facilities for Muslim women with disabilities.

On education, Hajia Rofiat Tijani, Amirah of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN), Lagos Area Unit, condemned forced "tuck-in" rules and threats of suspension in some schools despite judicial rulings.

Speakers also cited

# Nigeria's Muslim women unite as World Hijab Day 2026 strengthens advocacy



A cross-section of Muslim women and students from various organizations and schools at the World Hijab Day rally in Lagos on February 1



Senator Tinubu



Hajia Orolu-Balogun



Bar. Oyefeso

incidents at immigration and driver's licence centres where women are allegedly pressured to expose their ears for biometric capture.

The coalition demanded clear directives from authorities, training for personnel and sanctions against offenders.

#### Thousands march in Lagos for World Hijab Day

The advocacy momentum reached its peak on February 1 when thousands of Muslim women and girls converged in Lagos for the annual World Hijab Day Walk.

The procession began at Allen Roundabout in Ikeja and proceeded to the Alausa Secretariat Central Mosque, covering approximately twelve kilometres in organised batches along the roadside without disrupting traffic.

Participants including professionals, entrepreneurs, secondary and tertiary students, and community leaders chanted nasheeds and carried placards bearing messages such as My Hijab

My Rights, Hijab in Unity, One Sisterhood, and Hijab is My Bae.

The walk conveyed a strong message against harassment and discrimination particularly in government owned schools.

The turnout reflected collaboration among numerous organisations including the Hijab Rights Advocacy Initiative, Nasrullahi Fathi Society, Al-Mu'minaat, Muslim Students Society of Nigeria Lagos State Area Unit, Federation of Muslim Women Associations in Nigeria, The Criterion Lagos District, Muslim Rights Concern, Guild of Muslim Professionals, Muslim Media Practitioners of Nigeria, Women in Dawah, and several others.

The procession culminated in a packed mosque hall with thousands more following proceedings through loudspeakers outside, creating an atmosphere of unity and spiritual reflection.

#### Voices of advocacy and empowerment

Addressing participants,

Among the most inspiring voices was Barrister Kifayah Orolowo, a visually impaired state counsel at the Lagos Ministry of Justice serving at Agege Magistrate Court.

She described the hijab as a spiritual test that strengthened her character and urged women to embrace both physical covering and moral integrity.

Similarly, Anifa Sadu shared her experience navigating academic life with mobility challenges, crediting mentorship from Hajia Lateefah Ibrahim of MSSN for helping her remain steadfast.

#### Unity and sisterhood take centre stage as Abuja hosts World Hijab Day 2026

In Abuja, the Women Development Centre hosted the capital's observance. Organised by the Coalition of Nigerian Muslim Women, activities included a courtesy visit to Media Trust Group, a press briefing and a public lecture.

Leading the delegation, Hajia Muinah Tauheed, Amirah of the Abuja Muslim Forum, emphasised the importance of media partnerships in advancing Muslim women's rights.

Responding, Mr. Hamza Idris, Deputy Editorial Director and Chairman of the Editorial Board of Daily Trust, assured continued support.

The highlight was a lecture titled, "The Hijab: A Sign of Sisterhood and Unity", delivered by Malama Zaynab Jibril, lawyer and human rights advocate.

She described the hijab as a declaration of obedience to Allah and cited Qur'anic verses in Surah Al-Ahzab (33:59) and Surah An-Nur (24:31). She urged women to mentor younger sisters and stand united against discrimination and Islamophobia.

#### First Lady celebrates Muslim women on World Hijab Day

Her Excellency, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, CON, First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, also marked the occasion with a special message.

"On this World Hijab Day 2026, with the theme Unity in Hijab, I celebrate the beauty of choice, faith, and identity of Muslim women," she said.

"The hijab is a symbol of obedience, dignity, strength, and worship for many women, and a reminder that our diversity is a source of unity, not division. As a nation, may we continue to embrace mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and solidarity across all cultures and beliefs. Together, we are stronger. Happy World Hijab Day."

Her message resonated with the broader theme of Abuja's events, which stressed inclusion, sisterhood, and advocacy.

## MSSN Lagos holds Iftar 5,000, charges youths to champion societal change

Youths, particularly Muslims, have been urged to embrace holistic personal development and serve as agents of societal reform, with a call for them to contribute meaningfully to addressing the challenges confronting society.

The Grand Mufti of the Conference of Islamic Organisations (CIO), Sheikh Dhikrullah Shafi'i, gave the charge

while speaking at the Iftar 5,000 organised by the Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria (MSSN) Lagos State Area Unit at the Alausa Secretariat Mosque on Friday, March 6, 2026.

Muslim News gathered that this year's Iftar 5,000, themed "The Role of Muslim Youths in Societal Reformation," is one of the key programmes of the Area Unit during Ramadan, inspired by the spirit of

charity and generosity that characterises the blessed month.

#### Sheikh Shafi'i urges youths to drive change

In his lecture, Sheikh Shafi'i urged Muslim youths to prioritise personal development and contribute meaningfully to rebuilding society, which he describes as being in a troubling state.

According to him, although young people possess enormous potential to transform nations positively, many have become deeply involved in social vices.

The renowned Islamic scholar called on youths to emulate the character and courage of early Muslim figures who played significant roles in spreading Islam.

MSSN leaders highlighted purpose of programme



Sheikh Shafi'i

BY RASHEED ABUBAKAR

# Amb. Mehmet Poroy steps up diplomacy as Türkiye deepens engagement with Nigeria

The Republic of Türkiye has strengthened its diplomatic presence in Nigeria following the appointment of Ambassador Mehmet Poroy, who assumed duty in Abuja in May 2025 and has since pursued an active schedule of engagements aimed at consolidating bilateral relations between both countries.

Amb. Poroy succeeded Hidayet Bayraktar, whose tenure from 2021 to 2025 was widely credited with expanding cooperation in trade, education, humanitarian assistance, and defence collaboration.

*Muslim News* gathered that the transition reflects continuity in Ankara's Africa policy while opening a fresh phase of engagement with Africa's largest economy.

## Before formal accreditation: Early consultations and groundwork

Even before his official accreditation, Amb. Poroy began preliminary engagements with Nigerian officials and stakeholders shortly after arriving in Abuja in May 2025. These early interactions were largely introductory but substantive, focusing on identifying priority areas for cooperation and sustaining the momentum built by his predecessor.

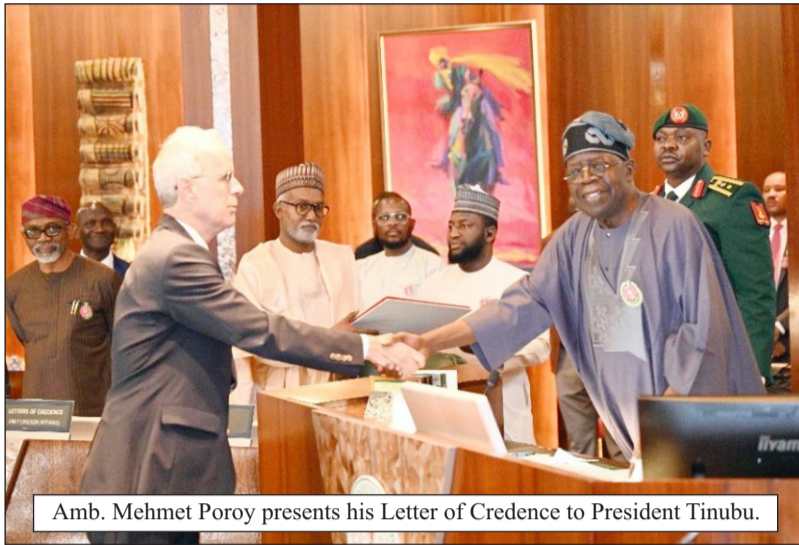
In addition, Amb. Poroy held talks with Ambassador Dunoma Umar Ahmed, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as part of efforts to strengthen institutional coordination and diplomatic communication between Abuja and Ankara.

## December 4, 2025: Presentation of credentials

The envoy's diplomatic mission formally gathered momentum on December 4, 2025, when he presented his Letter of Credence to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the State House in Abuja. The ceremony marked his official accreditation and signalled the readiness of both nations to deepen cooperation across strategic sectors including defence, trade, education, and cultural exchange.

## After accreditation: Flurry of high level engagements

Following his formal



Amb. Mehmet Poroy presents his Letter of Credence to President Tinubu.

recognition, Amb. Poroy intensified consultations across Nigeria's security architecture. He visited the Honourable Minister of Defence, Christopher Musa.

Discussions focused on strengthening military cooperation, defence industry collaboration, and capacity development in response to evolving security challenges.

Among the notable engagements was a courtesy visit to the Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Dr Jumoke Oduwole.

Deliberations focused on bolstering bilateral trade and investment, alongside advancing collaboration in halal accreditation and standardisation, an area seen as key to increasing Nigeria's role in the global halal economy.

The ambassador also met with the Honourable Minister of State for Defence, Dr Bello Matawalle, where both sides reaffirmed the strong defence cooperation between Nigeria and Türkiye and explored opportunities for further collaboration in capacity building and security partnership.

## Foreign policy coordination

At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Amb. Poroy met with the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Amb. Yusuf Maitama Tuggar. Talks centred on implementing agreements reached

during recent presidential engagements between Nigeria and Türkiye as well as expanding diplomatic and economic cooperation.

## Trade, migration, and governance

Economic diplomacy remained central to the ambassador's engagements. In addition to his earlier meeting with the trade ministry, he visited the Honourable Minister of Interior, Dr Olubunmi Tunji Ojo, where discussions explored trade facilitation, migration management, and security cooperation.

## Social development and education

The envoy's outreach also extended to human development sectors. He visited the Honourable Minister of Women Affairs, Hajjiya Imaan Sulaiman Ibrahim, where discussions highlighted collaboration on women empowerment and social protection initiatives.

Similarly, his meeting with the Honourable Minister of State for Education, Professor Suwaiba Said Ahmad, explored educational exchange programmes, scholarship opportunities, and institutional partnerships between Nigerian and Turkish academic institutions.

## Parliamentary and diaspora engagement



with Gen. Christopher Musa.

Beyond the executive arm, Amb. Poroy hosted Senator Abubakar Sani Bello, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, at the Turkish Embassy in Abuja, underscoring the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in sustaining bilateral agreements.

Ambassador Mehmet Poroy met with Senator Abubakar Sani Bello, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs.

He also paid a visit to Hon Abike Dabiri Erewa, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission, where discussions focused on diaspora engagement and the welfare of Nigerians residing in Türkiye.

## Strengthening a strategic partnership

Findings by *Muslim News* indicate that Amb. Poroy's intensive engagements underscore Türkiye's strategic interest in Nigeria as a regional economic and political leader in Africa.

His diplomatic outreach has covered security cooperation, trade expansion, educational exchange, migration management, and social development, reflecting a multidimensional approach to bilateral relations.

With trade relations growing and defence collaboration expanding, the ambassador's early months in Nigeria suggest a

deliberate effort to translate diplomatic goodwill into tangible outcomes.

His continued engagements across ministries, legislative institutions, and development agencies point to a mission focused on implementation of agreements and exploration of new opportunities for cooperation.

## Seasoned diplomat with global experience

Born on January eleven, 1967, Ambassador Poroy is a career diplomat with over three decades of service. He graduated from Ankara University Faculty of Political Sciences in 1990 with a degree in International Relations and joined the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs the same year.

His career has included roles as Head of the Maritime Department, Consul General in Brussels, and Deputy Director General of Maritime, Aviation and Borders.

He served as Ambassador to Algeria from September 2015 to December 2019 and later worked as an adviser to the Turkish Group of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Fluent in English and French, he brings extensive experience in multilateral diplomacy and strategic policy coordination.

His Excellency Mr. Yousef bin Mohammed AlBalawi has officially assumed his role as Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The ambassador began his mission with a commitment to strengthening bilateral relations, focusing on trade, education, religious cooperation, and mutual development.

He succeeded Ambassador Faisal bin Ebraheem Alghamdi, who served from at least 2021 until late 2024, facilitating Hajj operations for Nigerian pilgrims, promoting trade exceeding \$600 million, and expanding educational scholarships for Nigerian students.

On February 17, Ambassador AlBalawi presented a copy of his letters of credence to His Excellency Ambassador Wahab Akande, Chief of Protocol at the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Abuja.

The Chief of Protocol welcomed him and wished him success in his official duties. The

appointment was publicly announced on the Embassy's verified X handle the same day.

Since assuming his post, Ambassador AlBalawi has actively engaged with key Nigerian officials. He received the Governor of Niger State, Mohammed Umaru Bago, in his office to review economic opportunities in the state for investment and export to Saudi Arabia, particularly in agriculture.

In celebration of Ramadan, the ambassador, alongside Embassy staff, hosted the annual Ramadan Iftar reception attended by the Minister of Information and National Orientation, the Minister of Labour, senior government officials, and ambassadors of Arab and Islamic countries accredited to Nigeria.

Ambassador AlBalawi has also undertaken a series of introductory visits to prominent Nigerian leaders. He met with Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun, to explore ways to enhance cooperation in judiciary and legal affairs.

He further met with

# Amb. Mohammed AlBalawi assumes role as Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Nigeria

## Commences diplomatic activities, meets key Nigerian officials

National Security Adviser Mr. Nuhu Ribadu to discuss strengthening bilateral ties in various sectors for the benefit of both nations.

Additionally, the ambassador welcomed Mr. Ismail Abba Yusuf, the recently appointed Chairman of the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON), congratulated and wished him success in his role.

He also hosted a Ramadan Iftar specifically for Arab ambassadors accredited to

Nigeria, reinforcing diplomatic and cultural bonds.

Since February 17, Ambassador AlBalawi's

engagements reflect a proactive approach to deepening Saudi-Nigerian relations across diplomacy, commerce, education, and cultural exchange.

Since February 17, Ambassador AlBalawi's



HE Amb. AlBalawi presenting credentials to HE Amb. Akande



HE Hajiya Nana  
Kashim Shettima

### 1 The Compassionate Architect: Hajiya Nana Kashim Shettima

Nigeria's Second Lady, Hajiya Nana Kashim Shettima, is a Muslim woman of substance dedicated to humanitarian causes. She previously served as First Lady of Borno State, building a legacy of compassion through her SWOT Foundation. She continues to support national initiatives alongside her husband, Senator Kashim Shettima, balancing faith with service to the vulnerable.

In February 2026, she represented the First Lady at the 30th General Assembly of the Organization of African First Ladies for Development in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, advocating for women, girls, and Africa's health security.

Through the Renewed Hope Initiative of First Lady Oluremi Tinubu, she leads programmes in healthcare, education, and economic empowerment. She has commissioned maternal health facilities, distributed sanitary products and grants to women, and provides monthly food support to vulnerable communities.

# Muslim News Muslim Women

## ...Excelling in politics, a

The women are grouped across professions to reflect inclusivity and excellence. They include community leaders shaping society; students and graduates who earned top honors and dedication, and resilience inspire change, empower communities, and elevate the Ummah.

### 2 Dr. Falmata Zulum: Faith, Leadership, and Lasting Impact in Borno

Her Excellency, Dr. Falmata Babagana Umara Zulum, First Lady of Borno State, combines academic excellence with faith-driven service. A PhD holder and vocal advocate for women's welfare, she has transformed the office of the First Lady into a center for social support and empowerment. She is a strong partner to her husband, His Excellency, Governor Babagana Umara Zulum, showing that modesty and leadership go hand in hand.

Her initiatives focus on education, health, and community empowerment. She launched the Renewed Hope elderly support scheme, flagged off empowerment programmes for World Disability Day, promoted exclusive breastfeeding, and supported immunization campaigns. She has distributed exercise books to students and is building schools for women and nomadic communities.



HE Dr. Falmata Zulum

### 4 Engr. Noimot Salako-Oyedele: Faith and Leadership in Ogun State

This Muslimah of substance cannot be pushed aside in her professional life or in politics. Serving her second term as Deputy Governor of Ogun State, Engr. (Mrs.) Noimot Salako-Oyedele oversees major infrastructure projects and social programmes while maintaining her professional Muslim identity, modestly adorned in hijab. She brings over 30 years of engineering expertise to public service and serves as a model for Nigerian women, showing that faith and excellence go hand in hand.

In February 2026, she visited the scene of a fatal tanker accident at the Ota Toll Gate axis, directed authorities to clear illegal encroachments, and led a delegation to Kano State to console families of young athletes who died in a road accident.

She participated in commissioning key roads in Abeokuta and represented the Governor in honoring Nigeria's best teacher for 2025. She also attended the final rites of Mama Lucia Onabanjo, widow of Ogun State's first civilian governor.



Engr. (Mrs.) Noimot  
Salako-Oyedele



HE Hajiya Hadiza  
Umar Namadi

### 3 Hajiya Hadiza Umar Namadi: Faith driven compassion shaping lives in Jigawa

In Jigawa State, Her Excellency, Hajiya Hadiza Umar Namadi, First Lady of Jigawa State, blends governance with faith based humanitarian outreach rooted in compassion for the vulnerable. Modestly adorned in hijab, she was honoured as one of the distinguished guests of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques during Hajj 2024 in recognition of her exemplary programmes. She is also widely regarded as a strong pillar of support to her husband, His Excellency, Governor Umar Namadi, who recently emerged Nigerian Muslim Personality of the Year 2024/2025.

Her humanitarian interventions, which continue to expand, focus on empowering women, supporting orphans, and advancing education at the grassroots. She champions mosque construction in nomadic communities to combine learning with spiritual guidance, alongside building Islamiyyah schools for women and the girl child despite limited government support.



Prof. Suwaibah  
Said Ahmad

### 5 Prof. Suwaibah Said Ahmad: Leading Nigeria's Educational Reforms

Prof. Suwaibah Said Ahmad, Minister of State for Education, has climbed the academic ladder at Bayero University Kano to become a leading figure in Science Education. Her career shows that a Muslimah can lead national intellectual reform while remaining deeply rooted in her faith.

She is actively driving reforms in teacher welfare, healthcare education, and gender inclusiveness. She has endorsed the "Let There Be Teachers" Conference, which convenes thousands of teachers, and supports the National Teachers' Pledge to improve professional standards.

She also advocates for women's representation in governance and the Reserved Seats for Women Bill, attending events such as the International Women's Day celebration organized by the Nigerian



•Prof. Lateefat  
Durosinmi

### 10 Prof. Lateefat Durosinmi: The Chemistry of Leadership

Prof. Lateefat Durosinmi was among the early Muslim women in Nigeria to reach the rank of Professor. She has long championed the education and empowerment of Muslim women, especially in the South-West. As former Dean of Student Affairs at Obafemi Awolowo University, she guided students through a challenging campus environment and served as National President of the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria.

She founded the Lateefah Moyosore Durosinmi Foundation, which provides scholarships to students and grants to women entrepreneurs, including support for students with disabilities at Lagos State University.

She remains active in the Muslim Ummah of South-West Nigeria, mentoring the next generation of Muslim women leaders. Prof. Durosinmi demonstrates how a Muslim woman can excel in science, leadership, and community service while remaining deeply rooted in her faith.



Prof. Olayinka  
Ramota Karim

### 11 Prof. Olayinka Ramota Karim

Prof. Olayinka Ramota Karim is the first female Vice-Chancellor of Nasrul-Lahi-I-Fatma University, who have risen to lead a university in leadership.

Since March 2023, she has organized academic events, and promoted support for Islamic Faith-Based Universities through her resources.

Prof. Karim exemplifies excellence in scholarship, and community impact in her hand.

# Muslims in Nigeria Celebrates 30 Years of Women of Substance, Part 2

## Academics, media, leadership and professions

include professors and PhD holders leading in education, medicine, and communication; accomplished lawyers, corporate leaders, and public servants breaking barriers; policymakers and women of determination achieving remarkable milestones despite challenges. Each of these Muslim women of substance exemplifies how faith, through service, scholarship, and leadership. RASHEED ABUBAKAR and SUMAYYAH ADELOPO write in this compendium, bringing these inspiring stories to life.

### 6 Hon. Rukayat Shittu: The Voice of Youth in Kwara State

At 26, Hon. Rukayat Shittu became Nigeria's youngest lawmaker, representing Owode/Onire in Kwara State. A journalist and former student leader, she demonstrates that Muslim women can lead and make a difference while remaining true to their faith. Her work in the Assembly includes sponsoring bills on power sector reform and girl-child education.

She chairs the House Committee on Youth, Sports, and Information, overseeing the Ministerial Budget Defence to ensure transparency and alignment with state development goals. She has sponsored key legislation, including the Kwara State Electric Power Sector Bill and the Unexplained Wealth Bill, aimed at improving infrastructure and public sector transparency.

In her constituency, she launched a "3-in-1 Empowerment Programme", distributing grants to business owners, solar street lights for safety, and textbooks to schools. She also facilitated the construction of four major roads and actively participates in party initiatives to strengthen local governance.



Hon. Rukayat Shittu

### 8 Prof. Saudat Salah Abdulbaqi: The Voice of the Airwaves

Prof. Saudat Salah Abdulbaqi, Professor of Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin, is one of the few Muslim women in hijab to rise to professorial rank in her field. A former Head of Department and now Dean, she has trained thousands of journalists while showing that professional excellence and religious devotion can go hand in hand.

She is a Fellow and National Council member of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR). She recently announced that the 2026 Nigeria Public Relations Week will be held in Kaduna and addressed findings from NIPR's Reputation Index, urging Nigerians to avoid narratives that harm the country's image.

In administration, she leads the Faculty of Communication and Information Sciences, oversees five departments, engages alumni to improve student readiness, and continues research in Development Communication, Public Relations, and Health Communication.

Prof. Abdulbaqi exemplifies how a Muslim woman in hijab can excel in communication, leadership, and national service while staying true to her faith.



Prof. Saudat Salah Abdulbaqi

### 7 Prof. Fatimah Abdulkareem: Medicine and Leadership

Prof. Fatimah Abdulkareem, Professor of Anatomical Pathology at UNILAG and LUTH, is a leading specialist in cancer pathology with over 25 years of experience. She serves as the 2nd National Ameerah of The Criterion, combining medical excellence with faith-driven leadership.

She is the Pioneer Dean of the Faculty of Basic Clinical Sciences at UNILAG and Director of the Medical Education Development Unit, overseeing student orientation programs and faculty development. She leads international research on breast and colorectal cancers in collaboration with institutions such as Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and Northwestern University, while providing consultant services at LUTH.

She is the Founder of the FAJIM Medical Foundation, supporting underserved Nigerians and providing scholarships to medical students. Prof. Abdulkareem also serves on the Central Coordinating Committee of the Muslim Ummah of South West Nigeria and is a prominent leader within The Criterion.



Prof. Fatimah Abdulkareem

### 9 Prof. Khadijah Idowu: The Guardian of the Ledger

Prof. Khadijah Idowu, Head of Accounting at Lagos State University, is an expert in Public Sector Accounting and forensic audit. She ensures transparency and integrity in public finance and demonstrates how a disciplined Muslim woman can lead in governance and education.

She advocates financial independence and has spoken at events like the Global Impact Professionals Convention. She has also participated in religious and academic programs, including GMP and Al-Mu'minaat conferences, educating and sensitizing attendees on ethics, leadership, and financial literacy.

Prof. Idowu is Vice President of the Muslim Lecturers Association and recently chaired its 2025 National Research Conference. She champions women's empowerment through her foundation, supports research on government financing and forensic accounting, and serves as an examiner for ICAN and NOUN. She exemplifies how faith, expertise, and leadership can create lasting impact in education, governance, and society.



Prof. Khadijah Idowu

### Ramota Karim: Pioneering Muslim Woman Leader

Ramota Karim, Professor of Food Science and Technology, is Vice-Chancellor of Fountain University, Osogbo, owned by the Muslim Society (NASFAT). She is among the few Muslim women in Nigeria, combining academic excellence with faith-driven leadership.

She has strengthened the university's facilities, hosted major sports and student development. She also chairs the Consortium of Muslim Universities in Nigeria and advocates for the protection of university students.

Her leadership shows how a Muslim woman in hijab can excel in leadership, education, and public service, proving that faith and professional achievement go hand in hand.



Dr. Salma Anas Ibrahim

### 12 Dr. Salma Anas Ibrahim: Leading Health with Faith

Dr. Salma Anas Ibrahim, Special Adviser to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Health, has over 30 years of experience in public health, including serving as Commissioner of Health in Borno State during regional crises. She balances high-level international roles with WHO and UNFPA while maintaining her identity as a covered Muslim woman, showing that faith can guide leadership.

She has represented Nigeria at global forums such as the Africa Nordic Health Summit in Sweden and the International Conference on Family Planning in Colombia. Domestically, she advocates for stronger health financing, expanded insurance coverage, and programs to prevent non-communicable diseases. She conducts inspections of primary healthcare centers and oversees initiatives to improve maternal, child, and adolescent health.

As Chair of the Presidential Advisory Sub-Committee on Health, she leads efforts to revamp the State House Medical Center and implement the Nigeria Health Sector Renewal Investment Initiative. Dr. Anas Ibrahim exemplifies how faith, expertise, and public service can transform healthcare in Nigeria.

**13 Bldr. Abdul Hamid Jelilat Oyinlade: Builder, Leader, and Mentor Empowering Women**

A woman of grace, competence, and unwavering faith, Bldr. Abdul Hamid Jelilat Oyinlade is a respected professional and faith based leader whose impact spans the building industry and Muslim women development.

She currently serves as the National Amirah of Al Mu'minaat, the Believing Muslim Women Organisation, where she offers spiritual guidance, mentorship, and strategic leadership to women nationwide.

In the public sector, she has held notable responsibilities in the building profession and now leads as National Chairman of the Association of Builders in Public Service, promoting professional standards, collaboration, and ethical practice. Beyond her offices, she is widely regarded as a mentor to many women, both Muslims and non Muslims, nurturing leadership, personal growth, and community service.

Her journey reflects years of dedicated service, combining professional excellence with faith driven advocacy, while inspiring younger generations through mentorship, capacity building, and commitment to societal development.



•Bldr. Abdul Hamid Jelilat Oyinlade

**16 Hajiya Khadijah Sanusi Monguno: Communicating Hope and Development in the North East & Beyond**

Hajiya Khadijah Sanusi Monguno represents a generation of purposeful Northern Nigerian women shaping narratives around recovery, development, and strategic communications. Calm yet resolute, she blends professionalism with compassion, reflecting the quiet influence of women who guide how stories of resilience and progress are told.

Prior to her current role, she headed communications for the World Bank-supported Multi-Sectoral Crisis Recovery Project (MCRP), where she led strategic messaging around large-scale recovery interventions across conflict-affected communities. In that capacity, she strengthened stakeholder engagement, enhanced project visibility, and ensured that development outcomes were communicated with transparency and impact.

She now serves as Head and Technical Assistant on Strategic Communications to the Managing Director of the North East Development Commission (NEDC), supporting public understanding of rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts across



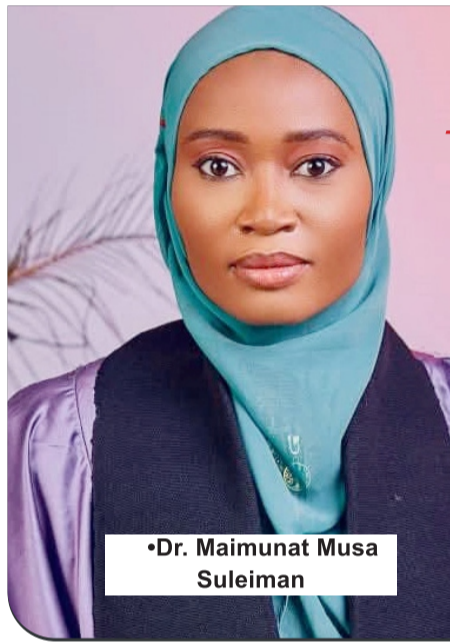
•Hajiya Khadijah Sanusi Monguno

the insurgency-affected region. Her role centers on presenting development initiatives with clarity, empathy, and credibility.

Through media engagement, project visibility, and stakeholder communication, Monguno amplifies interventions spanning infrastructure, humanitarian support, and community empowerment in Borno State and Yobe State.

Beyond her official duties, Hajiya Khadijah is a founding member of IUmmah, a values-driven initiative focused on community cohesion, humanitarian outreach, and faith-inspired social impact. The platform promotes unity, social responsibility, and grassroots development through welfare support, educational initiatives, and collaborative service projects.

She is also an active member of the Muslimah Global Foundation (MGF), an organisation committed to empowering women, children and families through education, mentorship, humanitarian services, and advocacy. The foundation's work spans skills development, spiritual growth programmes, and structured community support systems aimed at strengthening women, children and youth.



•Dr. Maimunat Musa Suleiman

**14 Dr. Maimunat Musa Suleiman: The Academic Trailblazer**

Dr. Maimunat Musa Suleiman of Ankpa, Kogi State, graduated in 2025 from Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, as the Overall Best Student, earning top honors in Surgery, Pediatrics, Community Medicine, Pathology, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Medical Microbiology, and Clinical Sciences. She was also recognized as the best female medical student. Her graduation charted major awards, marking her as a standout achiever among her peers.

Standing proudly in her hijab, Dr. Suleiman exemplifies how religious faith and academic excellence can coexist. She is featured under our Students and Graduates category of Muslim Women of Substance, inspiring young women across Nigeria to pursue education at the highest level while remaining true to their faith and

**15 Dr. Khadija Muhammad Garba: Pioneer, Scholar, and Role Model**

Dr. Khadija Muhammad Garba is a trailblazing medical doctor from Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi. She graduated in 2025 as one of the first students of the MBBS program and emerged as the top-performing student in her class. She is a hijabite and proudly recognized in our Students and Graduates category of Muslim Women of Substance.

Admitted in 2016 to study Biochemistry, she later joined ATBU's new medical program.

Many classmates struggled or withdrew, but her dedication, resilience, and faith helped her excel in a highly competitive environment. At her 2025 convocation, she received nine major awards, including Overall Best Graduating Student, Provost's Award for All-Round Excellence, Best Female Graduating Student, and top honors in Pre-Clinicals, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pathology, and Haematology and Blood Transfusion.

In a male-dominated field, Dr. Khadija's success as a Muslim woman in hijab inspires young girls, showing that faith and academic excellence can go together. Her work in Bauchi clinics provides comfort and representation to patients. She continues to build a legacy of courage, intellect, and service while mentoring the next generation and contributing to her community's health and wellbeing.



Dr. Khadija Muhammad Garba

**17 Ms. Aminat Yusuf: The Legal Trailblazer**

Ms. Aminat Yusuf made history at Lagos State University in 2025 by graduating with a perfect five-point-zero Cumulative Grade Point Average in Law. She earned the nickname "Protectionist" as a nod to her exceptional achievement, while acknowledging that only Allah is truly the perfectionist. Her success shows that a hijab-wearing woman can excel in one of the most demanding academic fields.

Since graduating, she has been working as an Associate at Olaniwun Ajayi Legal Practitioners, gaining experience in dispute resolution and project finance. In late 2025, she became a Rhodes Scholar, one of the most prestigious global academic honors, and she will start her two-year postgraduate program at the University of Oxford in September 2026.

Ms. Aminat also mentors aspiring lawyers through her planned YouTube channel, "Learning Law with Aminat," and was granted an automatic employment offer from the Edo State Government in recognition of her achievements. She continues to inspire young Muslim women, showing that academic excellence, professional success, and faith can thrive together.



•Ms. Aminat Yusuf

**18 Ms. Umamah Tajudeen: The Strategic Leader and Student Scholar**

A brilliant Muslimah and student scholar in the Muslim Women of Substance category, Umamah Abike Tajudeen graduated with First Class Honours and emerged as the Best Graduating Student of the Department of Insurance at the University of Lagos for the 2024/2025 academic session, earning an outstanding CGPA of 4.90/5.00. Her success reflects discipline, resilience, and strong leadership potential, celebrated by her supportive parents and family.

Currently, Umamah is focused on professional advancement and industry impact. She is one exam away from becoming a Chartered Insurer with the Chartered Insurance Institute of Nigeria and is promoting HustleGuard, a micro insurance solution she co-developed to expand coverage for tricycle operators and underserved communities.

Passionate about ethical finance and financial inclusion, she also engages in public speaking and mentorship, sharing her story of perseverance, including writing UTME three times before gaining admission, to inspire other students.



•Ms. Umamah Tajudeen



•Hajia Azeekat Muse-Sadiq

**19 Hajia Azeekat Muse-Sadiq: The Corporate Powerhouse**

In the demanding world of Big Law, Hajia Azeekat Muse Sadiq stands out as a Partner whose career reflects excellence, leadership, and unwavering commitment to faith and professionalism. Recognised globally, she was named a Leading Individual for 2025 by Legal 500 EMEA in Banking and Capital Markets as well as Corporate and M and A, while also retaining her Market Leader ranking in IFLR1000 2024.

Beyond transactions, she contributes to capacity building as an ISO 9001 Lead Auditor trainer at Mspace Global, and plays a regulatory role as Chairperson of the Rules Review Committee of the Capital Markets Solicitors Association.

A respected public speaker, she featured at the Trendsetters Teens and Twenties Convention in Lagos and the 2nd IBA African Competition Law Conference in 2025, while currently expanding her expertise in sustainable finance through an ESG Certification Programme with The BoardRoom Africa, further strengthening her influence in governance and corporate innovation.



Hajia Nafisa Abugu

**20 Hajia Nefisa Umeka Abugu: Advocate of Faith and Integrity**

Hajia Nefisa Umeka Abugu is a Nigerian public servant from Enugu State. She graduated from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka with a Bachelor of Science in Economics in 2021. She served as Ameerah of the Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria at UNN and led the Enugu Ezike Muslim Sisters' Association, supporting young Igbo Muslim women in faith, growth, and unity.

In 2019, she represented MSSN UNN at the Islamic Vacation Course in Kano, earning recognition as



• Hajia Fatima Rilwan Ododo

**21 Hajia Fatima Rilwan Ododo: The Tech Visionary**  
Hajia Fatima Rilwan Ododo, an Igbo Muslim from Enugu State, has overcome marginalisation to excel academically. She earned the Yar'Adua Foundation Scholarship at age eight, won the Cowbell Mathematics Competition in Adamawa State, and graduated secondary school as overall best student and second best NECO candidate.

At the American University of Nigeria, she combined scholarship with leadership and community service, graduating in 2020 as Overall Best Student and Valedictorian with a Bachelor's in Computer Science and a minor in Mathematics. After working briefly with the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation, she earned a fully funded PhD in Computer Science at Montana State University, specializing in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.

Hajia Fatima now operates at the forefront of technology, ensuring African voices and Muslim women are represented in AI systems, while her research, grants, and honors position her as a pioneering leader in ethical and inclusive innovation.

**24 Hajiya Maryam Hassan Bukar (Alhanislam): Inspiring Through Poetry and Peace**

Hajiya Maryam Hassan Bukar, widely known as Alhanislam, is another fantastic Muslim woman of substance whose creativity and advocacy continue to make women proud. Through spoken word poetry, she has built a strong platform that promotes healing, resilience, and hope among communities affected by conflict, particularly in Northern Nigeria.

Her journey has taken her from community stages in Borno State to global platforms including the United Nations, where she serves as the first Global Advocate for Peace under the Peace and Security pillar. With powerful storytelling and performances, she champions youth empowerment, gender inclusion, and peace building while proudly reflecting her Muslim identity.

In 2026, she gained further global recognition as one of the peace representatives at the opening ceremony of the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics, while continuing her poetry performances and youth mentorship efforts. Deeply grounded in faith, family values, and cultural identity, Alhanislam's journey remains a powerful testament to purpose driven creativity and meaningful impact.



• Hajiya Maryam Hassan Bukar (Alhanislam)

**22 Ms. Zahra Ahmed Ajetunmobi (Zahralicious): The Young SDG Advocate**

Ms. Zahra Ahmed Ajetunmobi, known as Zahralicious, is a 14-year-old Nigerian SDG advocate, author, and public speaker based in Dubai. She first gained recognition in the Muslim community after speaking about Islam and Salah with Nollywood actress Iyabo Ojo and has since inspired youth globally.

In 2025, she became the first Global Youth Ambassador for Pavegen, represented young people at the 80th United Nations General Assembly, and received the Future Sustainability Leader Award.

Ms. Zahra recently published her book, *The Journey So Far*, and manages the Zahralicious Book Club, now with participants from 47 countries, promoting literature, sustainability, and personal development. She is also recognized for digital learning initiatives through Fiqra Academy.

She continues to inspire leadership through TEDxZaria 2026 and has created a parental community on Zahralicious.com. Her story reflects faith, intellect, and leadership, making her a rising voice for youth and global impact.



• Ms. Zahra Ahmed Ajetunmobi (Zahralicious)



• Ms. Anifat Sadu

**25 Ms. Anifat Sadu: Muslim Woman of Resilience and Global Disability Advocate**

Ms. Anifat Sadu is a remarkable Muslim woman who has turned the challenges of living with Cerebral Palsy and OCD into a platform for empowerment and advocacy. As a hijabi speaker and author, she inspires audiences worldwide, showing that faith, determination, and purpose can overcome any barrier.

She has spoken on international stages including BBC and TEDx, promoting disability inclusion, mental health, and equity. As a Disability Inclusion Facilitator with JONAPWD and the Mastercard Foundation, she works to expand opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Ms. Anifat is the best-selling author of *Through the Layers: A Journey with Two Disorders* and has received the Inclusive Africa Icon Award and the 25 Under 25 Future Forward Female Award. She earned a Bachelor's in Microbiology at 19, a Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology, and an Associate Degree in Islamic Psychology, and she is currently pursuing a Master's in Psychology at the University of Lagos.

She continues to advocate for mental health, disability inclusion, and youth empowerment, reshaping narratives and inspiring meaningful change.



• Hajiya Madina Dahiru Maishanu

**23 Hajiya Madina Dahiru Maishanu: Fearless Journalist with Faith and Poise**

Hajiya Madina Dahiru Maishanu stands out as one of Northern Nigeria's most fearless and compelling media voices, a journalist whose calm confidence, sharp intellect, and ethical depth continue to redefine broadcast journalism for a new generation. A proud Muslim woman who adorns her hijab with dignity, she reflects her faith while navigating demanding professional spaces, demonstrating that excellence, integrity, and modesty can coexist at the highest level of public engagement.

A Senior Journalist with BBC News Hausa and contributor to BBC Focus on Africa, she is widely recognised for tackling critical issues from social development to security and governance across Northern Nigeria. Her widely discussed interview with Senator Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, former Governor of Kano State, showcased her firm and professional questioning style. She also engaged General Christopher Musa, Nigeria's Chief of Defence Staff, among others on pressing security concerns, reinforcing her reputation for courageous and substantive journalism.

Beyond interviews, she hosts Mahangar Zamani, a youth centred programme exploring social change and innovation among young Nigerians. Her impact has earned her notable recognition, including the The Future Awards Africa Prize for Journalism in 2025, affirming her status as a leading and inspiring figure in African media.



• Princess Jemlat Omolola MKO Abiola-Oyekunle

**26 Princess Jemlat Omolola MKO Abiola-Oyekunle: Media Leader and Humanitarian**

Princess Jemlat Omolola MKO Abiola-Oyekunle is a distinguished Muslim woman whose work spans media production, philanthropy, and community leadership. As a TV Producer, she uses media to drive positive narratives and advocate for social change, inspiring women across communities.

She is the Executive Director of the MyWidowsMite Foundation, supporting widows and orphans with resources and sustainable programs. An active member of the Nasrul-Lahi-li-Fatih Society of Nigeria (NASFAT), she serves as Zonal Women Affairs Secretary for NASFAT USA Zone 1 and as an Executive of the NASFAT America Women Charity Group, promoting spiritual growth and charitable outreach.

A member of the iconic MKO Abiola family, Princess Jemlat continues a legacy of service, combining faith-based leadership with global humanitarian impact.

**20 (cont'd)** an outstanding Igbo Muslim woman for her faith and positive representation. Her experiences have been featured in national media, highlighting resilience and inclusion.

Hajia Nefisa now serves as Assistant Superintendent at the ICPC, focusing on integrity education, public sensitisation, and ethical leadership, while mentoring young Muslim women. She continues to empower women through faith, service, and character, promoting a just and inclusive society.

**27 Dr. Afusat Adesina: The Clinical Visionary**

In a world where precision saves lives, Dr. Afusat Adesina stands out as a force of quiet authority and unwavering faith. A senior pharmacy specialist, she has transformed medication safety in Nigeria, ensuring that every prescription and treatment reaches patients with accuracy and care.

In 2022, she became the only hijab-wearing Muslim woman inducted as a Fellow of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria, joining 112 new fellows recognized for excellence. She is also a Fellow of the West African Postgraduate College of Pharmacy, cementing her reputation as a leading clinical pharmacist.

Beyond her professional achievements, Dr. Adesina mentors younger practitioners, leads hospital committees, and simplifies complex medical data for patient care. She balances a demanding career with her family life, proving that a woman can be both a devoted mother and a respected clinical authority.



•Dr. Afusat Adesina

**28 Hajiya Maryam Lemu: Muslim Woman of Substance Strengthening Families**

Hajiya Maryam Lemu, one of the scions of the late Sheikh Ahmed Lemu and Hajiya Aisha Lemu, is a distinguished Muslim woman dedicated to strengthening marriages and shaping homes. Proudly adorning her hijab, she uses faith and practical guidance to restore relationships and teach love and understanding.

She leads the Maryam Lemu Marriage Academy, offering certified premarital masterclasses and hosting programs like the "Guiding Light Iftar" for young women. She also conducts webinars with her husband, Sa'id Takuma, on building lasting marriages.

Professionally, she serves as Head of Administration and Resource Management at New Horizons College, Minna, founded by her parents, and contributes to the Islamic Education Trust (IET) through her consultancy, ProStart Consultants.

Hajiya Maryam has received global recognition, including opening the UN General Assembly in 2025 and serving as an Olympic flag bearer for Nigeria at the 2026 Winter Olympics, reflecting her faith, commitment, and impact on society.



•Hajiya Maryam Lemu



•DS Nafisat Olakunle Balogun

**29 DS Nafisat Olakunle Balogun: Trailblazing Muslim Woman in the Nigerian Customs Service**

Deputy Superintendent Nafisat Olanike Balogun Ajoke is a distinguished Muslim woman whose career has become a beacon of resilience and progress for women in uniform across Africa. Proudly serving in the Nigeria Customs Service, she recently made history as the first female pilot in the service's 130-year history, a milestone that has inspired countless young girls to pursue careers in security and aviation.

Her journey began in 2002 as a Customs Assistant in the Airwing unit, where she also served as cabin crew. Through dedication, perseverance, and institutional support, she earned sponsorship to train at the Flying Academy in Miami, Florida, where she completed her pilot training. In December 2024, she officially earned her wings, cementing her place in history as the first woman to serve in the aviation division of the NCS.

As of 2026, Nafisat continues to use her platform to mentor and inspire, encouraging young girls to believe in their potential and pursue their dreams regardless of societal barriers. She emphasizes that "a child of nobody can be somebody," embodying the values of faith, determination, and service. Her story is a testament to breaking barriers, showing that with perseverance, vision, and faith, even the sky is not the limit.



•Dr. Amina Ajibola Salihu

**30 Dr. Amina Ajibola Salihu: Champion of Women's Empowerment and Social Development**

Dr. Amina Ajibola Salihu, PhD, FcMGr, ChMC, mni, is a distinguished Nigerian Muslim woman of substance dedicated to women's empowerment, social development, and inclusive governance. She has spent decades designing and leading programmes that foster gender equity, social inclusion, and community transformation across Nigeria and Africa.

Her pioneering work includes leadership roles at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Oyster Consulting, and the Habiba Dangana Institute for Foundation Work. She has initiated and managed high-impact projects such as Abuja @ 30, the FCT Town Hall Meetings, Project Nurture, and the Nigerian Women's Trust Fund, creating sustainable opportunities for women and youth.

Dr. Salihu combines policy expertise with practical solutions, advancing maternal health, agro-enterprise, civic engagement, and capacity building. Through mentoring, training, and moderation at national and international forums, she continues to shape leaders, influence policy, and transform communities while grounding her work in faith and service.

**Hajj 2026: NAHCON sets up security committee to safeguard Nigerian pilgrims**



Amb. Yusuf

**The newly appointed Chairman/CEO of the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria**

(NAHCON), Ambassador Ismaila Abba Yusuf, has inaugurated a 17-member Central Security Committee (CSC) and reaffirmed the commission's commitment to improving service delivery for Nigerian pilgrims ahead of the 2026 Hajj.

The Central Security Committee was inaugurated in Abuja and is mandated to ensure the security, safety and well-being of Nigerian pilgrims during both the onshore and offshore phases of the 2026 Hajj operations.

While inaugurating the committee, Ambassador Yusuf urged members to implement proactive and preventive strategies, including robust monitoring of

departure centres to screen out undesirable persons and prevent drug-related or human trafficking activities.

He advised the committee to remain vigilant and operate with the highest sense of duty and integrity, while ensuring that pilgrims receive the best value for their money.

The NAHCON chairman also directed the committee to work closely with security and intelligence agencies on matters with national security implications in order to safeguard pilgrims and protect Nigeria's reputation abroad.

**Strengthens coordination with service provider**

Meanwhile, Ambassador

Yusuf has also intensified efforts to streamline operational processes by aligning its activities with its Saudi-based service provider, Mashariq Aldhahabiya, to prevent challenges experienced during the forthcoming Hajj exercise.

Ambassador Yusuf made this known during a strategic meeting with officials of Mashariq Aldhahabiya, led by its Board Chairman, Mr. Mohammed Amin Hassan Andangiri, in Abuja. The company oversees services provided to Nigerian pilgrims under the government quota in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The NAHCON chairman said lessons had been learned from challenges recorded during the previous exercise, particularly

issues such as data mismatch between flight manifests, contract numbers and accommodation allocations, which disrupted the smooth processing of pilgrims.

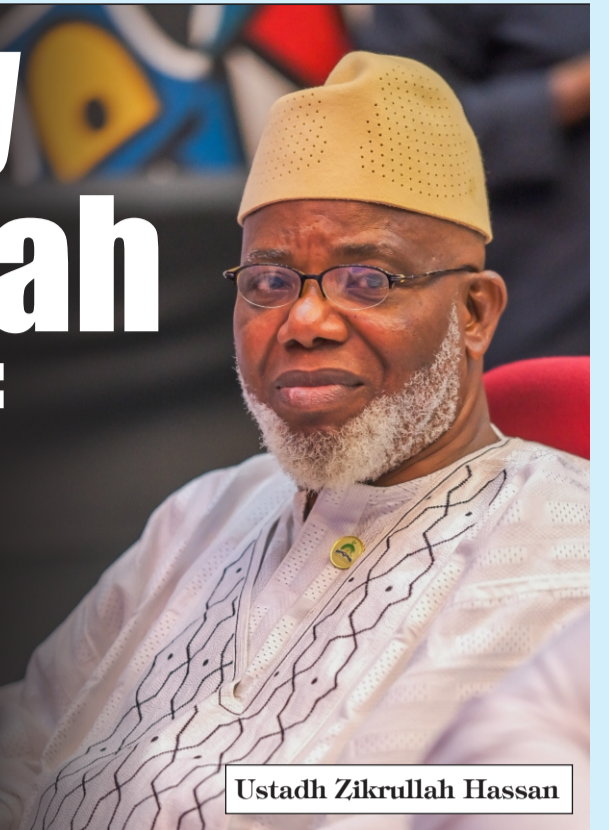
Both parties agreed to prioritise strict visa processing timelines, accurate data uploads and proper verification of accommodation contracts before pilgrims depart Nigeria.

NAHCON will also intensify compliance checks at departure centres to ensure that flight manifests and building allocations correspond with approved records.

In addition, the meeting agreed to establish a joint Situation Room to provide real-time updates and swiftly address operational issues during the pilgrimage.

# Ibn Battuta's legacy resonates in Zikrullah Hassan's journey of faith and discovery

• **Ex- NAHCON boss shares his odyssey, spiritual significance of Islam's three sacred mosques**



Ustadh Zikrullah Hassan



Hagia Sophia



Córdoba



Masjid-al-Nabwi



Mount Sinai

**A**t the Ramadan lecture organised by The Companion, an association of Muslim men in business and the professions, former Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON), Ustadh Zikrullah Kunle Hassan, delivered more than a religious talk.

Held on Sunday, March 1, at the group's Central Mosque in Ikorodu, Lagos, Ustadh Hassan offered a sweeping reflection on faith, history, civilisation and the transformative power of travel.

Drawing inspiration from the legendary 14th-century Moroccan explorer Ibn Battuta, the former NAHCON Chairman traced journeys across Africa, Asia and Europe, linking them to the prophetic tradition of visiting the three sacred mosques of Islam.

## The three sacred mosques

Ustadh Hassan, a lawyer by training, opened his presentation with Surah Imran (Qur'an 3:96-97), where Almighty Allah describes the Ka'bah in Makkah as the first house established for the worship of mankind.

"The first House of Allah is the Kaaba in Makkah," he said, explaining that it is located within Masjid al-Haram, the largest mosque in the world. Islamic tradition holds that the sacred site was first established by Prophet Adam and later rebuilt by Prophet Ibrahim and his son, Prophet Ismail. Aside from Masjid al-Haram, he noted that Al-Masjid an-Nabawi in Madinah and Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem are the other two sanctuaries the Prophet Muhammad specifically encouraged Muslims to visit for worship.

Quoting from Sahih al-Bukhari, widely regarded as the most authentic collection of hadith, he reminded the audience: "Do not set out on a journey except for three mosques: Al-Masjid al-Haram, my mosque, and Al-Masjid al-Aqsa."

According to him, these mosques possess unique spiritual merits. Prayer in Masjid al-Haram carries a reward multiplied one hundred thousand times, while prayer in Al-Masjid an-Nabawi is rewarded one thousand times. Prayer at Al-Aqsa Mosque also receives multiplied rewards according to Islamic tradition.

"These are divine distinctions," he said. "That is why visiting them, at least once in a lifetime, is worth every sacrifice."

He acknowledged the financial realities of the pilgrimage, noting that performing Hajj from Nigeria today could cost about N9.3 million, but emphasised that the spiritual rewards far outweigh the cost.

## Inspired by Ibn Battuta

Ustadh Hassan's fascination with travel began during his student years while studying history at the Ordinary and Advanced Level stages. It was then he encountered the remarkable story of Ibn Battuta, the fourteenth-century Muslim scholar and explorer born in Tangier, Morocco, in 1304.

The account of Ibn Battuta's journeys across Africa, the Middle East, Asia and parts of Europe ignited in him a desire to understand the world through the lens of faith, scholarship and civilisation.

At age 21, Ibn Battuta left home intending to perform Hajj. The journey to Makkah took nearly two years. What began as a pilgrimage eventually became a 29-year odyssey across nearly forty modern countries. When he returned home, many had already presumed him dead.

His famous travelogue, Rihla (My Journey), remains one of the most detailed records of the medieval world.

Ustadh Hassan noted that Ibn Battuta's accounts also helped preserve the legacy of Mansa Musa, the famed Malian emperor whose

wealth and influence reverberated across continents.

"That story changed me," Hassan said. "It expanded my thinking."

## Tears in Córdoba

His quest for history and faith also took him to Spain, drawn by the legacy of Córdoba, once a major centre of Islamic civilisation in al-Andalus. For nearly six centuries, Islam flourished in parts of present-day Spain, shaping architecture, scholarship and governance.

In Córdoba, he visited the famous Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba, originally constructed in 748 AD as a grand mosque. After the fall of Muslim rule in 1236, it was converted into a cathedral.

Standing inside the structure, he encountered a striking blend of Islamic and Christian architecture. The iconic arches of the original mosque remain, yet cathedral structures have been built within it.

"The day I visited, I wept after stepping out," he recalled. "The gigantic structure of the mosque is still there, but seeing what it has become left me deeply emotional."

He said he left Spain reflecting on the rise and fall of civilisations and the fragile nature of power and history.

## Türkiye: From sadness to joy

From Spain, his journey continued to Türkiye, where the sorrow he felt in Córdoba gradually gave way to renewed joy.

In Istanbul, he prayed at the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, widely known as the Blue Mosque, built in the early seventeenth century.

He also visited Hagia Sophia, a structure that has experienced dramatic historical transformations. Originally built as a church during the Byzantine era, it was converted into a mosque after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople when the city became Istanbul.

In the twentieth century it

was turned into a museum, before being reconverted into a mosque in 2020 by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

"I have visited Türkiye two or three times," he said. "The first time Hagia Sophia was a museum, but on my next visit it had become a mosque again. Seeing it always brings me joy and balances the sorrow I felt in Spain."

During one of those visits, he prayed Zuhr at the Blue Mosque and later observed Asr at Hagia Sophia, noting that the two historic mosques stand only a few minutes apart.

## Reflections from Egypt

Ustadh Hassan also travelled to Cairo, Egypt, where he attended madrasa classes and visited several historic mosques.

Among them was the renowned Al-Azhar Mosque, established in 970 CE during the Fatimid era. For over a thousand years it has served as one of the world's most influential centres of Islamic scholarship.

He also visited the Al-Hussein Mosque, traditionally believed to house the head of Imam Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad. The mosque symbolises sacrifice, resilience and devotion.

Beyond Cairo, he travelled to Mount Sinai, about ten hours away by road. The mountain occupies a special place in Islamic history as the location where Allah spoke to Prophet Musa and where he stayed for forty nights, as referenced in Surah Al-A'raf verse 143.

Although many visitors climbed the mountain, he chose not to.

"People were climbing the mountain, but I did not," he said. "The Prophet taught that journeys specifically for worship should only be to three mosques. Mount Sinai is not among them."

His travels also led him to the historic River Nile. Curious about its origins, he learned that it

does not originate in Egypt but flows through several African countries including Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda and Sudan before entering Egypt.

Tracing its path deepened his appreciation of Africa's shared geography and history.

## Journeys beyond the Muslim world

Ustadh Hassan's travels have extended far beyond the familiar landscapes of the Muslim world.

In China, he visited Guangzhou and explored the historic Huaisheng Mosque, traditionally regarded as one of the earliest mosques in the country, dating back to the seventh century and linked to Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas.

"When I applied for a visa, they asked what business I was going for in China," he recalled with a smile. "I told them business is not my line."

In India, he visited the iconic Taj Mahal, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. He also travelled to Bangladeshi Masjid in Nizamuddin, Delhi, the headquarters of the Tablighi Jamaat, describing the centre as striking in its simplicity.

Across Africa, he has travelled extensively through northern and western regions including Cameroon and Senegal. Although he did not visit Kaolack, the spiritual centre associated with Ibrahim Niassa of the Tijaniyyah order, he acknowledged its significance in West African Islamic history.

His journeys have also taken him to several European countries including Belgium, France and Germany, though he noted that such trips did not carry the same meaning as those connected to Islamic history and scholarship.

"I love travelling," he said. "Whenever I arrive in a place, I make sure I find a mosque to pray and learn about its history."



HRM Oba Oniru



Oba Oniru with the congregation during Salat.

**I**n the vibrant cultural mosaic of Lagos State, HRM Oba Abdulwasiu Omogbolahan Lawal CON stands out as a monarch whose leadership is deeply intertwined with spiritual conviction, communal cohesion, and faith-inspired service.

Since becoming the 15th Oniru of Iru Kingdom on 7 June 2020, his reign has combined respect for tradition with purposeful civic engagement and his identity as a Muslim leader has been central to this approach.

#### Faith as Foundation: Muslim Identity and Community Guidance

Although specific scholarly profiles of Oba Oniru's personal religious expressions are limited in formal published biographies, public documentation and social media reflect that his Islamic faith informs his public life and roles within the community.

His engagement in communal worship and mosque activities, as shared on his official communication channels, shows him participating in congregational prayers with his subjects, indicating a leadership style that does not only govern but also practices alongside his people.

This integration of spiritual life with communal representation is characteristic of many Yoruba Muslim leaders, where traditional authority and Islamic faith coalesce to foster moral leadership and social harmony.

#### Instituting Spaces for Worship and Spiritual Growth

One of the most significant expressions of Oba Oniru's commitment to Islam and community welfare was his rebuilding and commissioning of the new Oniru Central Mosque in

## Oba Oniru: Faith-Driven Leadership Rooted in Community Service

Victoria Island in June 2025. The mosque, a 300-capacity edifice, was inaugurated as part of his fifth coronation anniversary celebrations, combining cultural legacy with spiritual investment.

Oba Lawal explicitly framed the mosque expansion as an opportunity for worshippers to draw closer to Allah and encouraged ownership of the space by the Muslim faithful. This is also a feat that is modeled after his Great Grandfather who rebuilt Idoluwo Mosque in Idumota, Isale Eko in 1775. This, showing a family pattern of generational devotion.

This project was not merely symbolic; it fulfilled a practical need for a larger and more accommodating center of worship reflecting the area's rapid growth. Religious leaders, local government officials, and community stakeholders all highlighted the mosque as both a spiritual haven and a unifying landmark.

#### Ramadan Leadership: Communal Unity Through



HRM Oba Oniru

#### Devotion and Service

During the Islamic month of Ramadan, Muslim leaders are often called upon not just to observe the fast but to actively foster unity, charity, and spiritual renewal among their communities. Oba Oniru has been seen attending Ramadan prayers with his subjects, walking among worshippers during

evening or early-morning congregations, a visible affirmation of shared devotion and solidarity in faith.

This form of participatory leadership, where the monarch prays alongside everyday citizens strengthens communal bonds, emphasizes humility, and underscores that spiritual observance is a collective journey. In a time when many Muslims focus on increased acts of charity (sadaqah) and generosity (zakat), such visible participation by a traditional ruler encourages the faithful to practice their religion not just privately but communally.

Ramadan, being a period of introspection, sacrifice, and social support, often sees leaders reaffirm commitments to social welfare. Although specific public data on Oba Oniru's Ramadan outreach programmes (e.g., food distribution or interfaith engagements) are not widely published, his involvement in mosque life and reflected attendance indicates a leadership that values both the ritual and social dimensions of the season. He is also known to host Ramadan lectures every Saturday throughout the Ramadan Season and to share Iftar with all community members

present.

#### Beyond Worship: Faith in Action

Oba Oniru's impact extends beyond mosque walls and Ramadan observances. His reign is marked by inclusive development strategies that resonate with Islamic principles of justice, care for the vulnerable, and communal responsibility. National recognition including a presidential commendation lauds his use of wide-ranging public service experience to uplift his people through education, healthcare, and economic empowerment initiatives.

Additionally, town hall initiatives hosted under his auspices have drawn together traditional leaders, faith representatives, gender advocates, and civic actors to address broader social issues, another dimension of community leadership that reflects the ethical imperatives of Islamic teachings about societal wellbeing and mutual respect.

#### Conclusion: Faith-Rooted Governance

Oba Oniru's leadership exemplifies how traditional authority and Islamic faith can converge to foster unity, spiritual vitality, and community development. Whether building and commissioning mosques that serve as communal spiritual hubs, joining congregational prayers during and beyond Ramadan, or encouraging values-based public engagement, his approach transcends ceremonial symbolism, it models a faith-rooted governance that resonates with Muslims and wider society alike.

In a city as diverse as Lagos, such leadership not only nurtures Muslim spiritual life but contributes to a broader culture of mutual respect and cooperative progress throughout Iru Kingdom and its environs.

### Continues on pg. 13 Ibn Battuta's legacy ...

Quoting the Prophet, he reminded the audience that the whole earth has been made a place of prayer except the graveyard and the toilet.

For him, travel provides perspective.

"When you travel widely, many things people consider important lose their weight," he reflected. "You see how influential figures once shaped history but are no longer relevant."

#### The Hajj that raised eyebrows

One of the most defining moments of Ustadh Hassan's life came in 1987

when he decided to perform Hajj.

At the time he was young, unmarried and without a house of his own. In southwestern Nigeria, Hajj was traditionally seen as a major milestone often undertaken later in life, so his decision surprised many, including his father.

Despite the doubts, he fulfilled the pilgrimage, praying at Masjid al-Haram in Makkah and Masjid an-Nabawi in Madinah.

Over the years, the young pilgrim who once faced scepticism would rise to become Chairman of the Osun State Pilgrims Board and

later Chairman and CEO of the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON), a position he held for nearly four years.

#### The honour of entering the Kaaba

Yet one aspiration remains unfulfilled: entering the Kaaba, an honour occasionally granted to selected dignitaries by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.

When asked whether the Kaaba contains idols, Hassan clarified: "Nothing like that. It is simply an honour for some influential persons to enter and sweep the inside of Allah's house."

He recalled how a friend

once chartered a private plane for them to travel to Makkah with hopes of gaining entry, but access was not granted.

He recalled how a friend once chartered a private plane for them to travel to Makkah with the hope of gaining entry into the Kaaba. The aircraft arrived that day and was scheduled to depart the following day, but due to the short notice they were unable to gain access within the limited time.

His friend later had the opportunity to enter on another occasion.

Ustadh Hassan still hopes that one day he too will have the

privilege.

He also hopes to visit Iraq, where prominent Islamic scholars such as Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal are buried, and to pray at Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem once peace returns to the region.

#### A call to young Nigerians

Ustadh Hassan concluded with a message to young Nigerians: if you have the means, travel.

"Travel reduces your worries and expands your mind," he said. "You see that the world is bigger than your immediate environment."

# Nigerian Muslim entertainers embrace spiritual activities during Ramadan 2026



Adebayo



Adedimeji



Hafsat Idris



Rukky Alim



Sound Sultan

When the crescent moon of Ramadan appears, the rhythm of life changes for millions of Muslims across the world, including Nigeria's vibrant entertainment industry. The bright lights of movie sets dim, the red carpets become quieter, and many actors, musicians and filmmakers turn their attention from scripts and cameras to prayer mats, Qur'an recitation and acts of charity.

For Nigeria's Muslim entertainers, Ramadan is more than a spiritual obligation; it is a deeply personal journey of reflection, generosity and renewal. While they continue to captivate audiences on screen, the holy month offers them an opportunity to reconnect with faith and use their influence to inspire positive change among their fans.

Across Nollywood especially the Yoruba movie industry and their counterpart in Kannywood, celebrities are embracing the sacred season in different ways, attending Ramadan lectures, organising charity programmes, sharing messages of faith online, and even travelling to the holy land for Umrah.

In doing so, they remind millions of followers that beyond the glamour of fame lies a deeper

commitment to faith, community and compassion.

One notable example is popular Nollywood actor Lateef Adedimeji, who organised his annual Ramadan lecture on March 1 at Oshodi-Isolo Local Government Area, Lagos. The event attracted members of the Muslim community, fans and Islamic scholars who gathered to reflect on the spiritual lessons of Ramadan.

Muslim News Entertainment also gathered that the Lisabi actor delivered lectures at several Ramadan programmes, including one organised by an Islamic society where he spoke on the topic: "Who is the Most Powerful Other Than Allah?"

Similarly, renowned Nollywood actor and filmmaker, Hon. Abdul Lateef Femi Adebayo held a special Ramadan lecture in Ilorin, Kwara State, bringing together veteran actors, notable industry personalities, and members of the public.

The event was attended by prominent figures including Yinka Quadri, Lanre Adesina Hassan (Iya Awero), Bolaji Amusan (Mr Latin), Ibrahim Chatta, Muyiwa Ademola, and Ibrahim Itele, among others.

The lecture, themed "Zakat: Building a Cohesive Community, the Role of Ramadan in

Fostering Unity, Neighborliness, and Reducing Social Vices," featured Sheikh Abdullahi Olohukemi Arademi as the guest speaker.

Sheikh Arademi emphasised the importance of Zakat and charitable giving in strengthening social bonds, supporting the underprivileged, and promoting moral values across communities.

Through initiatives like this, the Adebayo family continues to leverage their influence in the entertainment industry to educate, inspire, and foster unity among Muslims, demonstrating that Ramadan is not only a period of personal devotion but also a time for meaningful community service.

## Charity and Community Support

For many entertainers, Ramadan also presents an opportunity to give back to society. Some celebrities organise charity initiatives such as feeding programmes and distribution of food items to help fasting Muslims and vulnerable members of the community.

One of them is Kannywood actress Hafsat Idris, who once again distributed bags of rice to needy residents in her neighbourhood as part of her Ramadan charity

outreach.

Muslim News Entertainment also learned that the Kannywood Crew Renewed Hope Tinubu-Shettima organised a grand Ramadan iftar gathering on March 8, 2026, bringing together members of the film industry alongside invited guests.

The event was led by the Director-General, Usman Usy, alongside other top executives who supported the successful gathering.

A respected figure in the industry, the Sarkin Kannywood and Managing Director of the Nigerian Film Corporation, Ali Nuhu, attended the programme and delivered an inspiring talk addressing key issues concerning the progress and future of the movement.

## Celebrities Performing Umrah

Some entertainers also travelled to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to maximise the spiritual opportunities of the holy month. Among them is Kannywood actress Rukky Alim, who journeyed with her sister to perform Umrah during Ramadan.

Similarly, former Kannywood actress Ummi Rahab also travelled to Saudi Arabia to observe the last ten days of Ramadan and perform Umrah, sharing photos

from the holy land with her followers on social media.

## Remembering Sound Sultan

In Lagos, members of Nigeria's creative industry gathered to honour the late music icon Sound Sultan, whose real name was Olanrewaju Fasasi, during the fifth annual Ramadan lecture held in his memory.

The event, organised under the leadership of Idris Olorunmibe, Chief Executive Officer of Temple Company and Chairman of the Board of the Nigerian Communications Commission, brought together members of the creative industry, both Muslims and non-Muslims, alongside family, friends and admirers of the late artiste.

Muslim News Entertainment gathered that the fifth edition of the lecture addressed pressing challenges facing contemporary Muslims and society, with the National Missioner of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Sheikh Abdur Rahman Ahmad, serving as the guest lecturer.

Through lectures, charity activities, community gatherings and spiritual journeys, Nigerian Muslim entertainers continue to demonstrate how faith and the creative industry can intersect positively during Ramadan.



Mojtaba Khamenei in front, with his father Ayatollah Ali Khamenei behind him.

## US-Israel strikes on Iran during Ramadan cause casualties, spark global economic shock

and refineries for the first time in the campaign, causing large fires and releasing toxic smoke over the capital.

The continued attacks on infrastructure, residential neighborhoods, and public sites have prompted international concern, with humanitarian organizations warning of a deepening crisis.

The conflict marks the most severe escalation in US and Israeli operations against Iran in recent years, following smaller engagements in 2024 and 2025. Analysts note that the 2026 campaign has already surpassed previous strikes in scale and intensity, raising fears of a prolonged regional conflict.

Iranian officials have condemned the attacks as acts of war, accusing the United States and Israel of targeting civilians and critical infrastructure.

According to official reports, the conflict has caused significant casualties on all sides. Iran's health officials have reported that more than 1,200 people, including both civilians and combatants across cities such as Tehran, Qom, and Alborz, have been

killed, and over 10,000 injured since the strikes began.

Among the dead are the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and at least 175 school girls and their staff who were killed in US and Israeli airstrikes on educational institutions.

The United States has confirmed that seven of its service members have been killed and around 140 wounded, most with minor injuries.

Israeli authorities report that thirteen people have died in Iran's retaliatory missile and drone strikes, including eleven civilians and two soldiers. Nearly two thousand Israelis have also been injured.

The war has also had significant economic repercussions well beyond the battlefield. According to Al Jazeera, crude oil prices have surged above 100 dollars per barrel amid fears over disrupted shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital route for almost a fifth of the world's oil supplies.

This spike in oil prices has translated into higher fuel costs around the world, as elevated crude benchmarks feed directly into retail

gasoline and diesel prices, raising the cost of transportation and basic goods for consumers and businesses alike.

In the Middle East, energy market volatility has strained economies dependent on oil and gas exports and imports alike, contributing to inflationary pressures and uncertainty over growth prospects.

The ripple effects have reached Nigeria's economy as well. Retail petrol prices in major cities including Lagos and Abuja have climbed sharply, with filling stations reporting pump prices in the region of ₦1,200 to ₦1,300 per litre as traders adjust to higher global oil and refined product costs.

This has forced up transportation fares and increased the cost of goods and services throughout the country, compounding existing cost of living challenges for ordinary Nigerians.

International calls for restraint and dialogue have continued, but the situation remains tense, with no immediate end to hostilities in sight as at the time of filing this report on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, for the Muslim News foreign desk.

The United States and Israel have launched a series of large scale air and missile strikes across Iran, escalating tensions in the region and causing widespread destruction and civilian casualties.

US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ignored the fact that the Muslim world had just begun the sacred Ramadan fast before they launched what they termed a preemptive attack on February 28, 2026.

Muslim News foreign gathered that the strikes targeted

Iran's military installations, nuclear facilities, and infrastructure, including residential areas in Tehran and other major cities.

According to reports from Al Jazeera, the initial strikes prompted immediate retaliatory missile and drone attacks by Iran on US and allied positions in the Gulf region.

Over the following days, the bombardment intensified, affecting cities including Qom and Alborz, as Iran's defense forces sought to counter the offensive.

By March 8, 2026, Israeli jets had struck Iran's major oil depots

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