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"You're Islam's pride"

Muslim groups celebrate Oloyede's strides at JAMB

● Say no Registrar has transformed the 48-year-old examination body like the NSCIA Secretary-General
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PROF. IS-HAQ OLOYEDE

JAMB's greatest reformer of all time bows out

- After 10 years of transparent, sterling leadership
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Fajr Centre celebrates 27 Qur'an memorizers at second Haflah, urges sustained revision



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Abuja Declaration: Muslim, Christian leaders unite for peace, security



Sultan at 70: Tinubu, MUSWEN, Atiku, Northern Christians celebrate Nigeria's Amir al-Mu'minin
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The triumphs of two Maryams: How Nigerian Muslim girls excelled in Makkah, Shanghai against all odds

BY: MARYAM OLAGUNJU

Two young Nigerian Muslim girls, Maryam Dan'Azumi Ibrahim and Maryam Yusuf, have given Nigeria and the Muslim Ummah remarkable reasons to celebrate after recording outstanding performances at two major international competitions in Saudi Arabia and China.

While Maryam Ibrahim, an outstanding young Muslimah in hijab from Gombe State, emerged first in her category at the prestigious 2026 King AbdulAziz International Qur'an Competition in Makkah, Maryam Yusuf, an exceptional niqabi Muslimah from Kwara State, was part of the Nigerian team that won the Gold Award at the 2026 Spelling Bee World Cup in Shanghai.

The achievements came in completely different fields. Ibrahim excelled in Qur'anic memorisation, recitation and interpretation, while Yusuf distinguished herself in spelling and academic competition.

Yet, their stories share a striking similarity. Both are young Nigerian Muslims who achieved international success while openly observing their faith, with Ibrahim wearing the hijab and Yusuf wearing the niqab.

For both girls, the victories represented years of preparation, discipline and participation in competitions before reaching the international stage.

Maryam shines in Makkah

Ms. Ibrahim, a student of Abubakar Siddiq Community School for Qur'an Memorisation in Gombe, emerged first in the women's second category of the 46th King AbdulAziz International Competition for Memorisation, Recitation and Interpretation of the Holy Qur'an in Makkah.

She scored 97.70 marks in the category requiring contestants to memorise the entire Qur'an and demonstrate their understanding of its vocabulary and interpretation. Her victory earned her a prize of 300,000 Saudi Riyals, equivalent to about ₦120 million.

The 2026 competition attracted 334 contestants, comprising 202 males and 132 females, from 133 countries. The participants competed across five categories, with 50 contestants eventually emerging as winners.

The competition was held in Makkah between August 6 and 19, 2026, with its final rounds conducted around the Grand Mosque.

Ms. Ibrahim's victory was particularly historic because the 46th edition marked the first time female contestants officially participated in the competition since its establishment in 1979.

Her triumph therefore came at a landmark edition of one of the world's most prominent international Qur'anic competitions.

A journey built on Qur'anic excellence

Ms. Ibrahim's success in Makkah was not an overnight achievement. Before representing Nigeria internationally, she had already established herself as one of the country's outstanding young female Qur'an reciters.



Maryam Yusuf

In February 2024, she emerged overall winner of the National Qur'an Recitation Competition of Nana Asma'u. She later won the female category at the 40th National Qur'an Recitation Competition in Maiduguri, Borno State, where she scored 97.70 marks in the memorisation of the entire Qur'an with Tafsir.

Her performances at national Qur'an competitions earned her prestigious rewards, including a brand-new Toyota Corolla and an Umrah package, further highlighting that her progression from national to international glory is a result of relentless hard work.

Qur'an memorisation and university education

Beyond her Qur'an achievements, Ms. Ibrahim is also pursuing conventional higher education. She is a final-year student of Physics Education at Gombe State University, demonstrating that Qur'an scholarship and university education can coexist in the life of a young Nigerian Muslim.

Her story therefore extends beyond the competition hall. It presents the picture of a young woman combining Qur'an memorisation and scholarship with university education, while competing successfully at the highest international level.

Together with her sister, Hajara's international achievement in Jordan, the sisters' accomplishments have placed their family among those producing outstanding female Qur'anic scholars capable of competing successfully beyond Nigeria.

Maryam Yusuf takes Nigeria to

Shanghai

While Ms Ibrahim was making history in Makkah, another young Nigerian Muslim girl had earlier in July made her own mark on the international academic stage in Shanghai, China.

Maryam Yusuf, a 14-year-old student of Ar-Raheem International College, Ilorin, Kwara State, was part of the four-member Nigerian team that represented the country at the 2026 Spelling Bee World Cup in Shanghai.

Nigeria participated in the global competition for the first time at the event held in July 2026. The



Maryam Ibrahim

finished as the second-best performing country overall at the African championship, paving the way for the students to travel to China.

When achievement gave way to discrimination

Despite the significance of the two victories, both Maryams subsequently became subjects of online commentary, with some Nigerians focusing more on their religious identity than on their achievements.

For Yusuf, the criticism centred largely on her niqab. *Muslim News* reported that when photographs of Maryam and her teammates were shared on social media before the Shanghai competition, some users mocked her appearance instead of celebrating the young students selected to represent Nigeria.

Some commentators went as far as describing the niqab-wearing student as a "masquerade", while others questioned her appearance and participation despite her selection as one of Nigeria's representatives at the international academic competition following her performances at national and continental levels.

Yusuf nevertheless proceeded to Shanghai and returned as a member of Nigeria's gold-medal-winning team.

The controversy resurfaced after her victory when Vanguard Newspaper published an incorrect AI-edited photograph in a report celebrating Team Nigeria's achievement.

The image appeared to show Yusuf without the niqab visible in the original photograph released by the competition organisers.

The incident prompted condemnation and calls for accountability, including from MPAC, which raised concerns about religious identity, journalistic ethics and the authenticity of digitally altered images.

Vanguard later removed

the incorrect image, replaced it with the correct photograph and, on July 30, issued an unreserved apology to Maryam Yusuf and her family, describing the publication as an editorial error involving an AI-edited image.

Maryam Ibrahim also faces Islamophobic backlash

Miss Ibrahim faced a different form of criticism after her historic victory in Makkah. Rather than limiting the discussion to her performance, some social media users questioned what her achievement could contribute to the Nigerian economy.

"What can this win contribute to the Nigerian economy?" one commenter asked. Another questioned whether she was also being guided in economics, administration, law, business, trade, engineering, medicine and ICT.

Other comments questioned whether she could win competitions in mathematics, science, technology and engineering, effectively measuring her Qur'anic achievement against fields unrelated to the competition she had won.

There were also comments speculating about Ibrahim's ethnic background, including whether she might be Fulani, shifting attention from her historic international achievement to her perceived ethnicity and identity.

MPAC defends both Maryams

The reaction prompted the Muslim Public Affairs Centre, MPAC Nigeria, to describe the backlash as Islamophobic. In a statement issued on August 23 and signed by its Executive Chairman, Disu Kamor, the organisation condemned comments that dismissed the economic value of Ibrahim's achievement, questioned the worth of Qur'anic scholarship or sought to introduce ethnicity into the discussion.

MPAC argued that the reactions reflected a wider double standard in which Muslim achievements, particularly in Islamic scholarship, are sometimes subjected to demands for economic justification that are not routinely applied to achievements in other fields.

The organisation said a Nigerian child who memorises the Qur'an should be celebrated for that accomplishment in the same way that a Nigerian child who wins an international spelling, robotics, mathematics or science competition is celebrated for excellence.

Similarly, in its July 21 statement, the organisation expressed grave concern over the apparent digital alteration of Maryam Yusuf's image, noting that the original photograph showed Yusuf wearing her niqab while the version published by Vanguard appeared to have removed the face covering.

The organisation also called on media organisations to reflect on how their editorial decisions affect the representation of Nigerian Muslims. It argued that media bias could manifest not only through false reporting but also through decisions about whose achievements are celebrated and whose identities are ignored or altered.

BY RASHEED ABUBAKAR

In a country battling terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, communal violence and growing social distrust, Muslim and Christian leaders have adopted a new framework for tackling insecurity by placing religious dialogue, responsible citizenship, youth empowerment, education and social cohesion at the heart of the peace-building process.

The framework emerged from the International Conference on Religious and Cultural Diversity and Social Peace: A Partnership for a Promising Future, organised by the Muslim World League (MWL) in collaboration with Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'ah Wa Iqamatus Sunnah (JIBWIS), Nigeria, in Abuja.

Held on August 11 and 12, 2026, under the special patronage of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the conference culminated in the adoption of the Abuja Declaration, the endorsement of the Nigeria Youth for Peace initiative and the signing of a series of agreements between Muslim and Christian organisations to strengthen cooperation against religious intolerance, hate speech and violent extremism.

The declaration also provided for the establishment of a joint body of Muslim and Christian leaders in Nigeria, in cooperation with the MWL, as well as broader coordination involving government institutions, religious organisations, educational institutions, the media and civil society.

Muslim News gathered that the initiative, championed by the Secretary-General of the Muslim World League and Chairman of the Organisation of Muslim Scholars, Sheikh Dr Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, was designed to move the response to insecurity beyond military measures by addressing the social, religious and ideological factors that fuel conflict, while strengthening peace and cohesion across Nigeria and the wider West African region.

The significance of the Abuja gathering was reflected in the calibre of participants. President Tinubu's representative, Deputy Senate President Senator Barau Jibrin; the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III; JIBWIS National Chairman Sheikh Dr Abdullahi Bala Lau; governors, federal ministers, traditional rulers, Muslim scholars, Christian leaders, security experts and representatives of regional and international organisations participated in the two-day engagement.

Al-Issa arrives, inaugurates MWL mosque

Al-Issa arrived in Abuja on Monday, August 10, 2026, ahead of the conference and was received at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport by senior government officials, including Information and National Orientation Minister Mohammed Idris, Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare Prof Muhammad Ali Pate, Sokoto State Governor Ahmad Aliyu and JIBWIS officials.

The Saudi Ambassador to Nigeria, Yousef bin Mohammed Al-Balawi, was also among those who received the MWL Secretary General on his arrival and remained involved in engagements surrounding the visit and the conference.

Later that same day, Al-Issa inaugurated a newly constructed Muslim World League

Abuja Declaration: Muslim, Christian

• At Muslim World League-JIBWIS International Conference • Unity



Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa

Mosque in Abuja.

At the inauguration, Al-Issa commended President Tinubu's efforts to foster peaceful coexistence between Muslims and non Muslims in Nigeria.

He emphasised that peace and harmony in Nigeria would contribute significantly to stability across West Africa and the wider world.

The Information Minister, Mohammed Idris, who participated in the mosque inauguration, announced that Nigeria and the Muslim World League would hold the international conference the following day at the Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Conference Centre.

President Tinubu had also called for stronger dialogue and mutual understanding among Muslims, Christians and people of other faiths, with Idris conveying the President's position during the mosque inauguration.

Conference opens with call for unity

The conference opened on Tuesday, August 11, at the Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Conference Centre, Abuja, with calls for Nigerians to rise above religious, ethnic and political differences and work together against insecurity.

Speaking on the sidelines of the conference, Mohammed Idris said Nigeria needed unity more than ever.

All of us need to come together, think as Nigerians, think as human beings, and work together, irrespective of our differences, so that we can act as one," Idris said.

He said religious and ethnic divisions would complicate the fight against insecurity and urged Nigerians to reject violence, intolerance and attempts to exploit the country's diversity.

"There is no time for differences. If, in our fight against insecurity, we allow religious differences, it will only exacerbate the problem. The need for us to come together as one people is important," he said.

Idris said the conference was not organised by the Federal Government but that the government welcomed initiatives promoting interfaith dialogue, peaceful coexistence and national cohesion.

"If we want to advance and march towards prosperity, all of us must think and act together and come together as one people," he stated.

The minister also linked Nigeria's peace to stability beyond its borders, saying, "Nigeria is a very important country. It is a country of over 230 million people. Peace and tranquillity here mean peace and tranquillity everywhere in Africa and, indeed, the world."

Tinubu seeks stronger global action

Representing President Tinubu, Deputy Senate President Senator Barau Jibrin conveyed the President's commitment to sustainable security, national unity and international cooperation.

Tinubu called for stronger global action against insecurity and greater cooperation among countries and institutions in confronting threats to peace and development.

The President's message was delivered within the broader context of the conference's focus on the relationship between security, peaceful coexistence and sustainable socio economic development.

The Federal Government delegation also included senior officials and members of the National Assembly, while governors, traditional rulers, religious leaders and representatives of civil society participated in the discussions.

Al-Issa launches Social Peace in West Africa initiative

At the conference, Al-Issa launched the Muslim World League's initiative for social peace in West Africa.

The initiative brought together Muslim and Christian religious leaders, government

representatives, scholars and civil society leaders around a framework for strengthening coexistence and preventing conflict.

The MWL said the initiative was designed to address challenges affecting social peace and to promote cooperation among religious and civic institutions across the region.

The conference also agreed on the Abuja Declaration and a joint action plan involving government institutions, Muslim and Christian leaders and civil society organisations.

He said attempts to suppress diversity were bound to fail because diversity was part of human existence, while calling for religious leaders to promote authentic teachings and reject extremism and intolerance.

Sultan urges Muslims, Christians to stop insults

The Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, also spoke on the need for sustained dialogue and cooperation among Nigerians.

He called for honesty in addressing the country's challenges and urged religious leaders and citizens to strengthen trust and cooperation across religious and ethnic lines.

The Sultan's intervention formed part of the conference's broader call for Muslims and Christians to work together on issues affecting national peace and stability. The MWL subsequently published highlights of his address as part of its documentation of the initiative.

He also urged Nigerians to stop insulting one another on the basis of religious differences, stressing the need for mutual respect and responsible engagement between followers of different



Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa arriving in Abuja for the international conference



Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa signing of an MoU between Muslim and Christian leaders

Bala Lau calls for education, skills development

JIBWIS National Chairman, Sheikh Dr Abdullahi Bala Lau, called for stronger collaboration among government, religious organisations and communities in tackling insecurity.

He urged the government to invest more in education and skills development as part of measures to prevent young people from becoming vulnerable to radicalisation and criminal recruitment.

Lau also emphasised the

We chose the Federal Republic of Nigeria for our commitment to social coexistence through preventive-peace projects for the next 50 years. — Sheikh Dr Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa

role of religious organisations in promoting peace and guiding communities, saying religious leaders should work with government and other stakeholders to address the causes of insecurity.

The JIBWIS chairman's remarks formed part of the organisation's contribution to the MWL initiative for social peace in West Africa. The MWL later published highlights of his address during the launch of the initiative.

Yilwatda: Preach truth without incitement

APC National Chairman, Prof Nentawe Yilwatda, urged religious leaders to promote peace and reconciliation rather than hatred and division.

He said Nigeria's religious, ethnic and cultural diversity should be regarded as a source of strength rather than a trigger for conflict and suspicion.

"I came here to this

BY RASHEED ABUBAKAR

The 70th anniversary of the birth of the Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, has drawn tributes from across Nigeria, with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Muslim and Christian organisations, political leaders, traditional rulers and senior government officials commending his leadership, statesmanship and commitment to peace and national unity.

The Sultan attained the milestone on Monday, August 24, 2026, nearly two decades after ascending the throne of the Sokoto Caliphate and assuming the leadership of Nigeria's Muslim community as President General of the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA).

For millions of Nigerian Muslims, Sultan Sa'ad Abubakar remains a foremost religious and traditional authority, widely regarded as the Amirul Mumineen, while his influence has extended beyond the Muslim community through his engagement on interfaith relations, national security, humanitarian affairs and peaceful coexistence.

The tributes came from President Tinubu, the Muslim Ummah of South-West Nigeria (MUSWEN), former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, the Northern Christian Religious Leaders Assembly (NOCRELA), Etsu Nupe Alhaji Yahaya Abubakar and Minister of State for Defence Mohammed Matawalle, among others.

Tinubu hails Sultan as stabilising voice

President Tinubu, in a statement personally signed by him to mark the milestone, described the Sultan as a "stabilising voice" in periods of national turbulence, a bridge builder across faiths and communities and a moral compass not only for the Muslim Ummah but for the entire nation.

Tinubu said the Sultan's 70 years were a testament to "a life lived in service, wisdom, and grace", adding that for nearly two decades on the throne of his forebears, he had embodied the finest traditions of the Sokoto Caliphate through scholarship, humility and an unwavering commitment to peace.

The President commended the Sultan's advocacy for education, interfaith dialogue and humanitarian service, as well as his support for peaceful coexistence, the girl child and the dignity of every Nigerian.

"Your palace in Sokoto has become a sanctuary for dialogue, and your words carry weight in every corner of this country," Tinubu said.

He described the Sultan as a leader who speaks truth with compassion, counsels patience without weakness and champions unity without compromising conviction.

Sultan has consistently championed religious harmony — MUSWEN

The Muslim Ummah of South-West Nigeria congratulated the Sultan and described him as a respected traditional and religious leader whose wisdom and statesmanship had contributed to the unity of the Muslim Ummah and the

Sultan at 70: Tinubu, MUSWEN, Atiku, Northern Christians celebrate Nigeria's Amir al-Mu'minin

● Etsu Nupe, Matawalle, others hail Sa'ad Abubakar's peacebuilding, unity drive



The Sultan of Sokoto and President General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, alongside the leadership of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, NSCIA, receives Archbishop Paul R. Gallagher and his delegation at the National Mosque, Abuja, on Monday, July 6.

stability of Nigeria.

In a statement signed by its President, Alhaji Rasaki Oladejo, and Executive Secretary, Professor Wole Abbas, MUSWEN said the Sultan had consistently championed religious harmony, interfaith understanding and national unity.

The organisation particularly acknowledged his efforts to promote unity among

means of promoting peaceful coexistence in Nigeria.

Atiku prays for robust health, wisdom

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar also joined the tributes, praying for more years of good health, strength and wisdom for the Sultan.

In a message shared on his

or cultural backgrounds.

Abubakar also commended his leadership of the NSCIA, saying it had strengthened the role of traditional and religious leaders in addressing challenges confronting the country.

Matawalle links Sultan's counsel to security efforts

The Minister of State for Defence, Mohammed Matawalle,

leadership of Nigeria's Muslim community and remains the spiritual and traditional leader of millions of Nigerian Muslims.

He is also President General of Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), as well as Co-Chairman of the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) and the National Council of Traditional Rulers of Nigeria (NCTRN).

These responsibilities place him at the intersection of religious leadership, traditional authority and national dialogue, giving him a prominent role in engagements involving Muslims, Christians, traditional rulers and the Federal Government.

From the Sokoto palace to the Nigerian Army

Born on August 24, 1956, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III comes from the distinguished lineage of the Sokoto Caliphate and is a descendant of Sheikh Usman dan Fodio, the Islamic scholar and reformer whose movement gave birth to the caliphate.

His father, Sir Siddiq Abubakar III, was the 17th Sultan of Sokoto and occupied the throne from 1938 until his death in 1988.

The young Sa'ad received both Islamic and Western education, attending Barewa College, Zaria, before proceeding to the Nigerian Defence Academy in Kaduna. He subsequently joined the Nigerian Army and rose to the rank of Brigadier General, making military service a defining part of his early public life.

Following the death of his elder brother, Sultan Muhammadu Maccido, he succeeded him and was crowned the 20th Sultan of Sokoto on November 2, 2006.

Since his accession, Sultan Sa'ad Abubakar has led the Sokoto Caliphate through nearly two decades of national challenges, consistently using his traditional and religious authority in promoting peaceful coexistence, dialogue, unity and understanding among Nigerians.

As President General of the NSCIA, his leadership has also placed him at the centre of efforts to foster unity among Muslims and coordinate responses to issues affecting the wider Muslim community. His responsibilities include the coordination of important aspects of Islamic religious life, including the moon-sighting process used in determining the commencement and conclusion of Ramadan and the dates of Eid celebrations, among others.

Alhaji Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar III has remained a unifying father, a bridge across faiths and a voice for peace, wisdom and national unity.

Muslims and strengthen cooperation among Islamic organisations and leaders across the country.

It said his interventions on matters of national importance had demonstrated courage, maturity and a deep commitment to the peace and progress of Nigeria.

Northern Christians describe him as bridge builder

The Northern Christian Religious Leaders Assembly (NOCRELA) described the Sultan as an "indispensable bridge-builder" and a voice for peace whose leadership had helped unite Nigeria's diverse religious, ethnic and cultural communities.

In a congratulatory statement, NOCRELA Secretary General, Simon Dolly-KIF, said the Sultan's seven decades represented a remarkable milestone characterised by wisdom, unwavering service and commitment to national stability.

The Christian leaders described him as a unifying father figure and custodian of values capable of bringing people together across religious and cultural divides.

NOCRELA also commended his continued advocacy for unity, tolerance and dialogue as

X handle on behalf of his family, Atiku prayed that Almighty Allah would continue to bless the monarch with "robust health, enduring strength and greater wisdom" in his service to the Muslim faithful and the nation.

Etsu Nupe praises Sultan's statesmanship

The Etsu Nupe and Chairman of the Niger State Council of Traditional Rulers, Alhaji Yahaya Abubakar, described the milestone as an opportunity to thank Almighty Allah for His mercy, protection, guidance and blessings upon the Sultan throughout his life.

The retired Army General commended the Sultan's exemplary leadership, wisdom, humility and commitment to Nigeria's development.

According to him, the Sultan had distinguished himself as a respected traditional and religious leader whose contribution to national unity and peaceful coexistence remained invaluable.

He said the Sultan's wise counsel, statesmanship and fatherly interventions had promoted religious tolerance and mutual understanding among Nigerians regardless of their religious, ethnic

said the Sultan's peacebuilding efforts and counsel had continued to support the Federal Government's efforts to tackle insecurity across the country.

In a tribute in Sokoto, Matawalle described the Sultan's 70 years as "seven decades of wisdom, humility, and service to humanity".

He said the monarch had remained a father to all and a custodian of Nigeria's moral and spiritual values.

According to the minister, the Sultan's reign had been characterised by efforts to strengthen bonds of faith, promote interfaith harmony and give voice to vulnerable members of society amid Nigeria's complex challenges.

He also cited the Sultan's interventions in national security, education and humanitarian affairs, saying his commitment to justice and peaceful coexistence had inspired leaders and communities beyond Nigeria.

A leader of millions and a bridge across faiths

Sultan Sa'ad Abubakar's roles extend across Nigeria's religious and traditional landscape. As President General of the NSCIA, he occupies a central position in the



A cross-section of the graduands at the Fajr Centre.



Male graduands pose for a group photograph at the Fajr Centre.



A cross-section of female graduands at the Fajr Centre building.

BY: ABDULLAH ABDULGANIY

What began as a two-year commitment to memorising the words of Allah has ended in a milestone for 27 young Muslims, as The Fajr Center celebrated its second set of graduates from its residential Qur'an memorisation programme in Ikorodu, Lagos.

The 20 boys and seven girls, drawn from seven states across Nigeria, graduated at the Second Haflatul Qur'an ceremony held on Sunday, August 30, 2026, at The Companion Mosque, 254 Owutu-Isawo Road, Ikorodu, Lagos.

Muslim News gathered that the ceremony marked a significant expansion of the Centre's programme, with the number of graduates rising from 10 in the pioneer class of 2024 to 27 in 2026.

The graduands are from Oyo, Ogun, Kwara, Ondo, Lagos, Osun and Kano states, underscoring the growing reach of the Centre's residential Qur'an memorisation programme beyond Lagos.

The graduation also marked another chapter in the development of The Fajr Center, which commenced operations in 2019 and launched its Fajr Center Qur'an Scholarship (FCQS) in 2022 to provide talented Muslim children with access to intensive Qur'an memorisation, Islamic education and character development.

From a vision to a growing institution

Chairman, Board of Trustees (BoT) of the Centre, Ustadh Zikrullah Kunle Hassan, welcomed the distinguished guests, students, graduands, family members and friends to the occasion, saying the Centre was established to nurture a generation of Muslims whose lives would reflect the teachings of the Qur'an.

"Two years ago, we stood before Allah to celebrate our maiden graduation, during which ten students successfully completed our intensive Qur'an memorisation programme. Today, by the grace and mercy of Allah, we celebrate the graduation of twenty-seven students, twenty boys and seven girls," Ustadh Hassan said.

He described the growth as

Fajr Centre graduates 27 Qur'an memorizers at second Haflah

- Urges them to sustain Qur'an revision, live by its teachings
- Memorisation is only the beginning, live the Qur'an – Founder

a testimony to Allah's blessings and an indication that the Centre was steadily fulfilling its mission.

According to him, the objective goes beyond producing children who can recite the Qur'an from memory.

"The Qur'an should be reflected in your character, your speech, your conduct and your service to humanity. Wherever Allah takes you in life, strive to be worthy

established with a simple but profound vision: to nurture a generation of Muslims whose hearts are illuminated by the Qur'an, whose minds are enriched with beneficial knowledge, and whose lives exemplify the noble character taught by Islam," Alhaji Mukaila said.

He said the Centre commenced operations in 2019 and, following planning and consultation, launched the Fajr Center Qur'an

accommodate under a fully funded model. This led Management to introduce a partial scholarship arrangement for subsequent editions of the FCQS.

Under the arrangement, parents make a subsidised contribution, while every scholarship beneficiary continues to receive support amounting to well over 40 per cent of the total cost of the two-year programme.

Qur'an memorisation with Islamic upbringing and character development.

"This overwhelming interest is a strong indication that families across Nigeria increasingly recognise The Fajr Center as a trusted institution for quality Qur'anic education, sound Islamic upbringing and character formation," he said.

However, he noted that the demand also highlighted the need to expand the Centre's capacity to accommodate more deserving children.

32 began the journey, 27 graduated

The Centre's Manager, Administrative, Mrs. Madinah Abdussalam, said the 2024 cohort began with 32 students, with 27 successfully graduating at the ceremony.

"Actually, they were 32. That's why the going becomes tougher with me. So Alhamdulillah, we have 27 of them graduating today, and it has not been easy," Mrs. Abdussalam said.

She described the cohort as one with different personalities and challenges, requiring continuous supervision, guidance and problem solving.

She described the graduation as a joyful moment, having watched the students progress from their admission in 2024 to completing their programme two years later.

The discipline behind memorisation

Beyond the classroom, the programme demanded discipline and a structured daily routine. Mrs. Abdussalam said the students were

The Qur'an should be reflected in your character, your speech, your conduct and your service to humanity. Wherever Allah takes you in life, strive to be worthy ambassadors of His Book. — Ustadh Zikrullah Kunle Hassan, Founder, Fajr Centre

ambassadors of His Book," he said.

Scholarship in 2022.

Ustadh Hassan urged the graduands to understand that completing the memorisation programme was the beginning of a lifelong responsibility. "Memorising the Qur'an is a great honour, but the greater responsibility lies in living by its teachings," he said.

How the journey began

Member, Management Board, of the Center, Alhaji Tajudeen Akolade Mukaila, said the institution was founded with the belief that Qur'an memorisation should be accompanied by sound Islamic scholarship, academic development and character formation.

"The Fajr Center was

The pioneer scholarship was fully funded and covered tuition, accommodation, feeding, learning materials, uniforms, healthcare and other major educational expenses.

Alhaji Mukaila said the initiative was made possible through the generosity of the Centre's founders, family members and philanthropists who shared its vision of making quality Qur'anic education accessible to talented Muslim children irrespective of their financial background.

The success of the pioneer programme, however, revealed another challenge.

More children were seeking admission than the Centre could

Alhaji Mukaila described the model as a means of widening access without compromising the quality of education and care provided to the students.

Over 100 applications for successive editions

The growing demand for places at the Centre has also been reflected in its scholarship applications.

Alhaji Mukaila said the third scholarship edition in 2025 and the fourth edition in 2026 each attracted well over 100 applications from different parts of Nigeria.

He said the response demonstrated increasing confidence in the Centre's model of combining



Prof. Oloyede

PROF. IS-HAQ OLOYEDE: JAMB'S GREATEST REFORMER OF ALL TIME BOWS OUT

BY RASHEED ABUBAKAR

How should hard work, excellence and dedication to public service be rewarded? Is it by dancing, popping a bottle, receiving a standing ovation or exchanging warm embraces with colleagues at the end of a long journey? All of these, perhaps. The greatest reward, however, is what remains after the celebrations: an institution that is stronger, systems that work better and a legacy that outlives the great achiever.

That was the significance of Friday, July 31, 2026, when Professor Is-haq Oloyede formally bowed out as Registrar of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, JAMB, after 10 years of service. At the Board's headquarters in Bwari, Abuja, he handed over the leadership to Professor Segun Aina, a Professor of Computer Engineering from Obafemi Awolowo University, marking the end of a decade that fundamentally altered the character, operations and public image of JAMB.

Oloyede's departure was more than an ordinary change of leadership. It represented the closing

chapter of one of the most remarkable landmarks in the history of public administration in Nigeria. For an organisation responsible for determining the educational pathway of millions of young Nigerians every year, the changes introduced under his watch affected candidates, parents, tertiary institutions, examination officials and the Federal Government.

When Oloyede assumed office in 2016, JAMB was already one of Nigeria's most important education agencies, but it also faced serious challenges. Concerns over examination malpractice, impersonation, fraudulent examination centres, admission irregularities, cumbersome procedures and public confidence confronted the new Registrar. His response was to combine technology with institutional discipline, financial prudence with staff welfare and transparency with firm enforcement.

Ten years later, the JAMB he handed over was considerably different from the institution he inherited. Stakeholders including students and other Nigerians who witnessed the transformation widely agreed that his far-reaching reforms

had made him the greatest reformer in the 48-year-old history of the examination body.

The Man Behind the Reforms

Professor Is-haq Olanrewaju Oloyede is not an accidental administrator. His career reflects a long journey through Islamic scholarship, academia, university administration, Muslim leadership and national service.

Born on October 10, 1954, in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Oloyede developed an early interest in Arabic and Islamic scholarship. He studied Arabic and Islamic Studies before proceeding to the University of Ilorin, where he graduated with a First Class degree in Arabic in 1981.

He joined the University of Ilorin as an Assistant Lecturer in 1982 and steadily rose through the academic ranks. He eventually became a Professor of Islamic Studies and later served as Vice Chancellor of the University of Ilorin from 2007 to 2012.

His university career gave him substantial experience in managing a complex institution, dealing with staff, students, finances, government authorities and other

stakeholders, interestingly, locally and internationally, indeed, continentally. Oloyede's extraordinary performance endeared him to fellow vice-chancellors beyond Nigeria to the extent that he ultimately emerged as the first Nigerian to become the President of the Association of African Universities, AAU. Oloyede's leadership ingenuity later inspired the administrative philosophy that would later become visible at JAMB.

Beyond the university system, Oloyede became prominent in the Nigerian Muslim community. His service as Secretary General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, NSCIA, placed him among the country's leading Muslim administrators and public intellectuals.

A Decade Built Around Reform

Oloyede's administration was built around several interrelated principles: welfare, discipline, technology, transparency and strategic partnerships.

Rather than attempting to solve JAMB's problems through isolated interventions, he pursued a broad institutional transformation. Technology was deployed to improve examination security and admissions. Financial controls were strengthened. Staff welfare was expanded. Candidates were given greater access to digital services, while examination malpractice and other forms of misconduct were met with repulsive sanctions.

From CBT to a New Era of Examination

When JAMB began Computer-Based Testing nearly two decades ago, little did many people know that it was inspired by what Oloyede had pioneered at Unilorin as VC. JAMB therefore had to understudy Unilorin.

By the time he had to assume the leadership of JAMB, the system was still in its early stages, with limited CBT centres, merely basic infrastructure and, ironically, many candidates unfamiliar with taking examinations on computers. Under Oloyede, CBT evolved into a sophisticated and nationally reliable system.

The incessantly adventurous scholar even introduced Mock UTME at no cost to interested candidates. He went on to expand the network of accredited centres, strengthened biometric verification, introduced CCTV surveillance and tighter centre standards, and deployed digital monitoring systems to track the examination process more effectively.

The transformation meant that CBT was no longer simply about candidates answering questions on computers; it became an integrated system for candidate identification, examination security, monitoring and

the prevention of malpractice, helping to make the UTME more credible, efficient and transparent.

CAPS and the Digitalisation of Admissions

One of the most significant reforms of the Oloyede era was the development and expansion of the Central Admissions Processing System, CAPS. Admission into Nigerian tertiary institutions had long been one of the most sensitive aspects of the education system. Candidates often faced uncertainty over admission offers, while institutions had to manage increasingly large numbers of applicants.

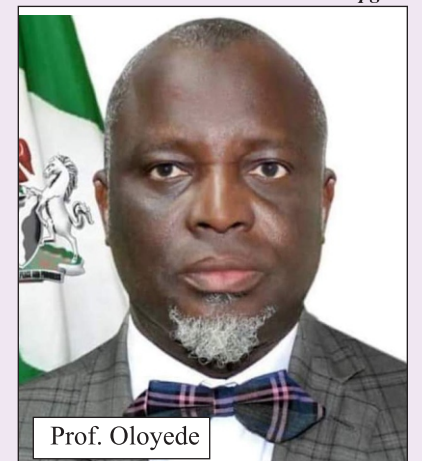
CAPS brought greater structure and transparency to the process by creating a digital platform through which admissions could be processed and monitored. The significance of the reform went beyond convenience. It helped strengthen JAMB's coordinating role in the tertiary admissions process and reduced opportunities for some of the manipulation associated with opaque and fragmented admission procedures.

The War Against Examination Malpractice

Oloyede in his characteristic consistency with transparency unleashed uncompromising campaign against examination malpractice. Biometric verification made impersonation more difficult, while CCTV surveillance, tighter monitoring of examination centres and stronger centre accreditation procedures increased the risks for those attempting to compromise the UTME. The reported figures provide an indication of the impact. Examination malpractice cases fell from 123 in 2024 to 85 in 2025 and 52 in 2026.

An earlier comparison also showed impersonation cases falling dramatically from about 74,000 to 4,900 following the implementation of stronger verification measures. The significance of these figures lies not simply in the number of cases detected. They demonstrate an attempt to redesign the examination environment itself so that cheating would become extinct or at least, more difficult. Oloyede's approach

Continues on pg. 8



Prof. Oloyede

Cont'd from pg. 7

was also characterised by the willingness to sanction those within the system who violated established standards. More than 10 JAMB staff members were prosecuted for alleged misconduct during his tenure.

The Financial Transformation

Perhaps the most striking evidence of the Oloyede era is found in JAMB's finances.

During his 10-year tenure, the Board remitted more than N50 billion to the Federal Government. In one year alone, its remittance exceeded N7 billion. The figure became particularly more significant when compared with the approximately N50 million reportedly remitted by previous administrations over nearly four decades.

The transformation was not simply about generating more money. It reflected a broader approach to financial management, expenditure control and accountability. Oloyede repeatedly emphasised that public money belonged to the public and that a government agency should be able to account for the resources entrusted to it. His tenure therefore turned JAMB into an unusual example of a public institution that could simultaneously expand its services, invest in technology, improve staff welfare and still remit substantial funds to the owner government. An avowed believer in surrender value, like he pioneered at UNILORIN, Oloyede initiated the weekly bulletin published by JAMB. In addition to reporting all other activities of the Board, the bulletin consistently reported the income and expenditure of the Board for the whole world to see.

Amanah and the Meaning of Public Service

For *Muslim News Nigeria*, there is an important dimension to this story that goes beyond statistics. Oloyede is a conscious and practising Muslim whose academic career has been rooted in Islamic Studies and whose public life has included senior responsibilities within the Nigerian Muslim community. The Islamic concept of amanah, or trust, provides a useful framework for understanding his approach to public administration.



Prof. Oloyede

In Islam, leadership is not simply a privilege. It is a responsibility for which a person is ultimately accountable.

That principle was visible in Oloyede's repeated emphasis on transparency, financial accountability, discipline and responsibility. It would be simplistic to claim that every reform introduced at JAMB was directly caused by his religious background. His transformation of the institution also depended on professional competence, technology, teamwork and administrative experience. However, his Islamic worldview undoubtedly provides the important context for the seriousness with which he approached the idea of stewardship.

Welfare, Discipline and the JAMB Workforce

One of the less publicised aspects of his administration was the emphasis on staff welfare. Oloyede disclosed that more than N8 billion was committed to staff retirement savings and related welfare initiatives. His administration also introduced a 13th month salary, increased examination duty

allowances from 10 per cent to 20 per cent and provided free transportation and meals for staff involved in examination duties.

Retiring employees reportedly received retirement packages ranging from N3 million to N10 million.

Medical assistance was also provided to staff. In one cited case, JAMB reportedly spent N12 million on the treatment of a staff member at the National Hospital.

The message was clear: an institution that demanded commitment from its workforce also had a responsibility to care for its employees. At the same time, Oloyede maintained that welfare could not be separated from discipline. Staff who breached the rules were not shielded simply because of their employment status.

Putting Candidates at the Centre

The reforms were not restricted to institutional efficiency. Oloyede's administration also introduced measures intended to reduce the financial and physical burden on candidates.

According to his valedictory account, JAMB reduced the cost of

UTME application forms by 30 per cent during his tenure.

The Board also expanded support for candidates living with disabilities. Over the period covered by its inclusion initiatives, 4,216 candidates with disabilities benefited from measures designed to facilitate their participation in the examination. This included candidates with visual impairment, autism, Down syndrome and albinism.

Rewarding Excellence in Tertiary Institutions

Oloyede also sought to influence the wider tertiary education system through the National Tertiary Admissions Performance Merit, NATAPM, awards.

The initiative recognises tertiary institutions for their performance in the admissions process, with about N750 million reportedly distributed annually. The programme reflected an attempt to encourage institutions to improve their own processes rather than leaving JAMB to carry the entire burden of maintaining standards.

It also demonstrated Oloyede's broader understanding of institutional reform. JAMB could not improve the admission system by focusing exclusively on its own internal operations. Universities, polytechnics and colleges also had to be encouraged to uphold standards.

When JAMB Faced an Unprecedented Challenge

A fair assessment of the Oloyede years must also acknowledge that his decade was not without challenges. The most notable came during the 2025 UTME, when technical problems affected 379,997 candidates across 157 centres in Lagos and the five South East states, forcing JAMB to order a resit for the affected candidates. The Board attributed the problem to faulty server updates by a technical service provider, which affected the uploading of candidates' responses.

The crisis was compounded by the 20 suspects arrested by security agencies over alleged hacking of JAMB's CBT servers. The suspects were reportedly linked to a syndicate accused of deliberately sabotaging the system to discredit JAMB and undermine the credibility

of computer based examinations. While investigations continued, the incident highlighted the increasingly sophisticated threats facing JAMB's technology driven system.

Oloyede publicly accepted responsibility and apologised to affected candidates, becoming emotional while addressing the crisis. For an administrator whose tenure was defined by accountability, it was a reminder that true accountability means accepting responsibility when systems encounter serious challenges.

The University of Ilorin Legacy

The reforms at JAMB did not emerge in isolation. Oloyede's earlier experience as Vice Chancellor of the University of Ilorin prepared him substantially for the enormous managerial responsibilities he would later assume at JAMB.

Professor Waha b Egbewole, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ilorin, once noted that Oloyede replicated at JAMB some of the reforms he had introduced during his time at the university. This continuity is important.

It shows that Oloyede's approach to administration was rather proactive, not simply a reaction to the challenges he encountered at JAMB. It was part of a leadership philosophy that had developed over decades.

A Decade of Collective Achievement

Despite the strong association between Professor Is-haq Oloyede and JAMB's transformation, he consistently acknowledged that the achievement was not his alone. At the valedictory ceremony in his honour, he appreciated President Bola Tinubu, the late former President Muhammadu Buhari, successive Ministers of Education, governors, heads of tertiary institutions, security agencies, development partners, JAMB management and staff for their support. Oloyede's contribution was not that he did everything himself, but that he provided the leadership, direction and accountability that brought thousands of people together to build stronger systems and transform JAMB into a more efficient and credible institution.

“I Feel Relieved. It Is As If I Haven't Slept for 10 Years” — Oloyede

Prof. Ishaq Oloyede, who recently bowed out as Registrar of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) after two terms spanning 10 years, speaks with Dr Reuben Abati of Arise News about his childhood, faith, career, reforms at JAMB, his most painful experiences in office, future plans, politics, examination malpractice and the values that have guided his life. MUSLIM NEWS transcribes the interview. Read on.

Dr Abati: You have just left JAMB after 10 years. How do you feel?

Prof. Oloyede: Thank you very much. I think it is very relieving... I feel very relieved. I could sleep very well. I enjoy my sleep now and it was as if I had never slept before.

We thank Allah. We also thank all of you who stood by us to make sure we did what we were supposed to do. So, it was very, very exciting. Looking forward to this, and when it finally came, I felt relieved and happy.

Dr Abati: You have had a remarkable journey in education and public service. What do you attribute it to?

Prof. Oloyede: I think the grace of God and the support of all those who

are around me. Like you said, I would not even be able to recognise who my mother was because I was too young when my mother died. My late father and grandmother took care of me, living between Somolu and Akoka, Lagos.

Then all those things that you are supposed to do started with my primary education. My father insisted on Islamic education. It was a mosque converted to a school on Friday. We only parked our benches for the mosque to pray. After the mosque, we turned it back to school. That was my primary education.

After primary education, I went to Arabic school. I attended different types of Arabic schools, but eventually ended up at an institution in Agege, Lagos, from where I moved to the University of Ibadan for my certificate course in Arabic and

Islamic Studies in 1976.

From there, I moved again to the Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, from where I got admission to the University of Ilorin... And that is how I started.

You could see that it was all about the grace of God, His blessing and guidance, and the insistence of my late father that I should be an Islamic student of Islam. That contributed to making me.

Along the line, many people came up to assist and to learn. I was monitored and raised by so many people who contributed to my development. We thank Almighty Allah, who has made the journey so far so good, and all those we met along the line who also contributed, one way or the other, to shape who I am today. I thank God.



Prof. Oloyede

Dr Abati: What values would you recommend to a young person who wants to make something remarkable out of life?

Prof. Oloyede: I would say very clearly that the person should be focused, prayerful and sincere. Once you are sincere, focused and you really understand God, I believe that there is no way you cannot overcome obstacles. You'd have obstacles, of course... But you are definitely sure that you will crush all the obstacles.

I believe that anybody who sets out to be sincere in what he is doing, who sets out to be focused and determined to do whatever he wants to do with passion and is prayerful, because even if you have all the wisdom of this world, if whatever you are doing is not blessed by God, it amounts to nothing.

And if you say you are prayerful, but you are not also sincere in the prayer, you are deceiving yourself. Being sincere in prayer means that you act what you preach. You do anything you want to do in a transparent form, in a manner that anything you will not be able to do in public, you are not doing in secret. So, it is just as simple as that.

And you are focused. Why do I say focused? Also, you have to strive to be competent in whatever you are doing. You are not going to be focused on emptiness. You have to be full. You have to be competent. You have to acquire skills. You have to study the environment in which you operate.

We thank God that Almighty Allah has made it possible for many people to succeed, to show that that is the path to go.

Therefore, for anybody who is a servant, anybody who can really study the situation will know that, in my own view, those are the three critical values that one should guide towards making whatever is going to be regarded as success, not in this world, but more importantly, in meeting the pleasure of God in the hereafter.

Dr Abati: What are your plans now that you have left JAMB?

Prof. Oloyede: Yes, many good people are in politics, and we cannot all go one way. I believe that I am not gifted in that area. I would rather be supporting those who are politically competent. Politics is out of it, completely out of it.

When you started this question, I was smiling because I read in some newspapers this morning that I said I was going to beg God. When I saw it, I was like, "Where did I say that?" I now remember where they quoted me out of context. They misinterpreted what I said.

It would have been that I would be more active in serving God, not begging God.

As a Muslim, if you want to be devoted to God, there are so many things you do, at least 12 hours a day. Some of those things I have missed in the last 10 years during my assignment.

Apart from the essentials of prayer, where would I have the time to fast on Monday and Thursday? There was no time. Even if I wanted to do it, I could not do it. There are many other non mandatory prayers that you are supposed to be involved in. I could not combine some of those things with this heavy responsibility that I had to carry.

That is what I mean when I say that I have to go and make up for the deficiencies I have.

One Christian friend of mine called me this morning, and he told me, "I heard you said you are going to beg God. The best way to go and beg is Makkah."

So, "I will fund you to go to Umrah for one week." I was excited. I said, "Good." He said, "I will pay for everything."

Oh, I thank those who put it out that I said I was going to beg God, because to go to Makkah and stay for one week, that had been solved by my brother who felt that that was the right thing to do.

On a very serious note, I believe that having spent over 70 years, God has been very gracious to me. And I believe that now that I have been able to finish that aspect of my life, the right thing for me to do is to try and make up, not just for 10 years, but about 50 years.

Because my stay in UNILORIN as a Vice Chancellor was as occupying, engaging, as I was as the Registrar of JAMB.

So, I thank Almighty God, and I believe that the right thing to do for me is to give back, to get closer to God if He spares one's life. Because God has done enough by allowing me to live to this age. If God still blesses me with life, I think what I need to do is to devote more time to spiritual development so that when I meet my God, it will be with ease. So, that is what I meant.

And as regards the future, I believe that God determines the future of everything. It is just for us to plan. And my plan, by God's grace, is that I will be going back to the classroom, because I have accepted to be an emeritus professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Ilorin. So, as a result of that, I have a duty to go back to the classroom to make sure that I contribute. And again, it is a makeup.

Because while I was Registrar, I was still teaching occasionally, supervising one or two students, but not as intensely as I would love to do. So, I am eagerly looking forward to engaging my students, being myself and being able to build human capacity in the area of my discipline.

Dr Abati: Looking back after 10 years at JAMB, is there anything you would have done differently?

Prof. Oloyede: Frankly speaking, I have not seen any. I have reflected over it, and I want to thank God that I have been rightly guided throughout the period. I cannot remember anything that, if I became wiser now, I would have done differently. I thank God.

Everything I did in that office, I did consciously.

And so far, I do not know what will happen tomorrow. But so far, I cannot think of anything, because none was done by accident. None was done because I had to do it. I did whatever I did because I believed that was the right thing to do. So, I do not see anything that I would have done differently.

Dr Abati: What were your most memorable or challenging moments at JAMB, including the snake incident and examination malpractice?

Prof. Oloyede: Some of them were false. Some of them were incomplete truths. Some of them were just shades, different shades of truths.

But before I go into that, permit me to answer a question that I appear not to have answered. That is the question of putting down my experience in the form of a memoir.

I have some restrictions. I have this strong belief that when you talk of autobiography, people writing, some of them are so detailed that I look at them as either the refurbished truth or something that looks like a drama that you must have acted.

Because some of them give

The greatest reward for public service is not the applause at departure, but leaving behind an institution that is stronger, systems that work better and a legacy that outlives the administrator.

to the minutest detail that you will now be thinking, "Was it written at the time the action was happening? Was it being recorded for later writing?" That is one aspect of it. Some of them you cannot even accurately report. You cannot be sure that what you are saying 20 or 30 years after might be as accurate as you recall.

The second one is that unless one wants to either create confusion in society, create more enemies for society or cause trouble, there are many things you come to know that you better die with.

I believe that if one wants to be truthful and to narrate all you had come across, you will be waking the dead and you will be creating enmity or things that ought to be allowed to die. You will be waking them up.

I believe very strongly that those who write autobiographies, I respect them because they know what to write and what not to write. But by my own nature, if I must say it, I will say everything. And some...may not be good.

For now, I do not intend to put up any write up or to give a narration of what happened. Many things in this country have happened. Recently, I was at an interview and I enumerated how I had to be with the late Kudirat Abiola, of blessed memory, in the last 24 hours before she was killed. I was narrating the experience of about 24 hours we were together before the unfortunate assassination of Kudirat Abiola. May God bless her soul.

So, there are so many things that I know and many people know, and it is better you do not go back to. And when you now talk about whether everything was exciting, you have mentioned some of them, but to me, the most troublesome, the most painful period of my experience in JAMB had to do with the level of involvement of parents in the organisation of examination



Prof. Oloyede

malpractice.

They are introducing their wards, their children, to the world of crime. I have no difficulty, and I think most of the candidates are not problematic. They are not the problem.

The problem is the parents, and every time I was confronted with the reality of what parents were doing, most of the time I became very emotional about it because I asked myself, how on earth do people hate themselves, hate their future to this level?

Because it is like, even if you have deficiencies, you would not want to pass the deficiency to the next generation. But that is what many people do with their children.

So, to me, most of the things that people see, they probably see about us, and they are not important, like the Mmesoma case you referred to. Mmesoma was just sensationalised by a group of people who felt they wanted to defend her. We met more than 10 Mmesoma type cases. Even last year, somebody still attempted something like that. We dealt with such cases. We resolved them. It was a normal occurrence for

us. Unfortunately, the publicity surrounding the Mmesoma case made it appear unique to people outside the institution.

On the snake incident, that did not happen during my tenure. It happened before I assumed office. I simply had the unfortunate responsibility of addressing it because I was the JAMB Registrar.

I thank God for the way I handled the matter because, while it was being investigated, I insisted that everything should be recorded on tape because the story was unbelievable.

There was no snake, but we found it astonishing that someone could make such a claim. Later, the person almost denied making the statement. If we had not recorded it, even I would have doubted myself. The recording preserved the account of what happened.

Some people still say, "Snakes were swallowing naira in JAMB," even though they know it was simply a fabricated story. Many people took it literally and believed snakes could swallow money. That was part of the amusement. The reality is that it never happened.



Alhaji Oladejo



Mal. Disu



Prof Akanni



Dr Alao



Dr Ajibola

"You're Islam's pride," Muslim groups celebrate Oloyede's transformative decade at JAMB

● Say no Registrar has transformed the 48-year-old examination body like the NSCIA Secretary-General

ABDUL-MUMIN ABDUL-QUADIR

Leading Muslim organisations across Nigeria have paid glowing tributes to the immediate past Registrar and Chief Executive of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, Professor Is-haq Oloyede, describing his decade long leadership of the examination body as the most transformative since its establishment 48 years ago.

The organisations, including the Muslim Ummah of South West Nigeria (MUSWEN), the Muslim Public Affairs Centre (MPAC), the Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria, Lagos State Area Unit (MSSN), University of Lagos Muslim Alumni (UMA), and The Companion, praised the outgoing registrar for restoring integrity, transparency, accountability and public confidence in Nigeria's tertiary education admission system.

The groups also congratulated Prof Oloyede, who doubles as Secretary-General of Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, on the successful completion of his tenure, describing him as a pride of Islam whose service has reflected the ethical values of the Muslim faith.

Professor Oloyede, who was appointed Registrar of JAMB in 2016 by the late former President Muhammadu Buhari and reappointed for a second term in 2021, officially concluded his tenure on July 31, 2026, after serving for 10 years.

'No registrar transformed JAMB like Oloyede'

The organisations unanimously agreed that no previous registrar had transformed JAMB as profoundly as Oloyede.

They noted that under his leadership, JAMB evolved from an institution frequently associated with inefficiency and financial opacity into one of Nigeria's most respected public agencies.

Among the reforms highlighted were the strengthening of the Computer Based Test system, the introduction of the Central Admissions Processing System, improved transparency in the admission process, technology driven measures that drastically reduced examination malpractice, prudent financial management and the remittance of more than N55 billion to the Federal Government.

The organisations also pointed to the reduction in the cost of the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination forms (UTME),

improved welfare for staff, sponsorship of candidates with special needs and sustained investments in institutional development as evidence of Oloyede's people centred leadership.

MUSWEN praises transparency and accountability

In a statement jointly signed by its President, Alhaji Rasaki Oladejo, and Executive Secretary, Professor Wole Abbas, the Muslim Ummah of South West Nigeria described Oloyede as a model of transparency and accountability.

The organisation said his administration fundamentally changed the financial culture of JAMB, noting that before his appointment, the board remitted very little to the national treasury.

According to MUSWEN, Oloyede's prudent management enabled the board to return more than N55 billion to the Federal Government while restoring public confidence in Nigeria's examination system.

personal enrichment.

MPAC said his achievements had established a benchmark for institutional excellence and urged Professor Segun Aina to consolidate on the reforms by preserving the gains while introducing new innovations that would further strengthen the credibility and global competitiveness of JAMB.

The organisation also called on public office holders across Nigeria to emulate Oloyede's commitment to transparency and accountability.

MSSN Lagos highlights reforms in education

The Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria, Lagos State Area Unit, also applauded Oloyede's contributions to educational assessment and admissions management.

The Amir of MSSN Lagos, Dr Ajibola Yusuf Salami, said Oloyede's commitment to fairness and

outstanding in Nigeria's public service.

Its President, Dr Mumini Alao, said Oloyede transformed JAMB into one of Nigeria's most efficient public institutions through bold reforms, innovation and prudent management of public resources.

He added that the former registrar projected the true values of Islam through honesty, humility, justice and service to humanity, making him a worthy ambassador of the Muslim Ummah and an inspiration to young Muslim professionals.

Dr Alao also commended Oloyede's courage in accepting responsibility during difficult moments, describing his openness and sincerity as rare leadership qualities that strengthened public confidence in the institution.

Charge to the new registrar

While celebrating Oloyede's remarkable legacy, the organisations urged the new Registrar, Professor

Muslim men in business and the professions, also recognised Prof. Oloyede's contributions, with some members participating in activities marking his departure from JAMB.

One of them is the organisation's National Publicity Secretary, Prof. Tunde Akanni, who described Prof. Oloyede as an administrator whose leadership had transformed JAMB into one of the most technologically driven Federal Government agencies in Nigeria.

In his tribute, Akanni noted that Oloyede's reform-minded approach had its roots in his tenure as Vice Chancellor of the University of Ilorin, where he pioneered the large-scale deployment of computer-based testing.

According to Akanni, the experience at the University of Ilorin eventually became a model for JAMB, with the examination body studying and adopting the system before gradually expanding computer-based testing nationwide.

Oloyede's appointment to lead JAMB, he added, provided an opportunity for him to bring to the national level an innovation he had helped develop within the university system.

Akanni also highlighted Oloyede's commitment to transparency, recalling the introduction of regular reporting of JAMB's activities and finances.

He cited the Board's remittance of billions of naira to the Federal Government as a significant indication of the culture of accountability established under his leadership.

He further described Oloyede as a team player who surrounded himself with experienced professionals while demanding high standards from his team.

Rather than taking personal credit for JAMB's achievements, Akanni noted that Oloyede built systems that enabled competent officials to contribute to the institution's success while maintaining close oversight of the examination process.

Beyond his administrative achievements, the tribute placed Oloyede's public service within the context of his life as an academic, Muslim leader, family man and community leader.

Akanni noted that his insistence on transparency and responsibility reflected values he had consistently demonstrated throughout his academic, professional and community engagements.

"Oloyede transformed JAMB into one of Nigeria's most efficient public institutions through bold reforms, innovation and prudent management of public resources." – Dr Mumini Alao

The organisation urged education stakeholders, civil society organisations and the media to support the new Registrar, Professor Segun Aina, in sustaining the reforms introduced over the last decade.

MPAC says Oloyede embodied Islamic leadership

The Muslim Public Affairs Centre described Oloyede's stewardship as a shining example of ethical public leadership rooted in Islamic values.

Executive Chairman of MPAC, Disu Kamor, said Oloyede demonstrated that integrity, competence, justice, honesty and accountability remain the strongest foundations for effective public administration.

According to the organisation, Oloyede's conduct reflected the Islamic concept of amanah, describing public office as a sacred trust rather than a privilege for

transparency empowered millions of students while strengthening confidence in the country's admission process.

The society highlighted several reforms introduced during his administration, including a 30 per cent reduction in UTME application fees, the introduction of CAPS, sponsorship of candidates with special needs and their guides, increased staff welfare and significant contributions to retirement savings.

MSSN Lagos urged the incoming registrar to sustain transparency through stronger monitoring systems and wider deployment of technology to improve examination integrity.

UNILAG Muslim Alumni calls Oloyede a worthy ambassador of Islam

The University of Lagos Muslim Alumni described Oloyede's stewardship as one of the most

Segun Aina, to build on the solid foundation laid by his predecessor.

They stressed that sustaining JAMB's credibility would require continuity in institutional reforms, innovation, transparency and accountability.

The groups expressed confidence that with the support of stakeholders, Prof. Aina would be able to preserve the gains of the last decade while taking Nigeria's tertiary admission system to greater heights.

They also prayed for Prof. Oloyede's continued good health and greater opportunities to contribute to national development, describing his service at JAMB as a lasting reference point for ethical leadership and institutional transformation in Nigeria.

The Companion hails Oloyede's transformative leadership at JAMB

The national leadership The Companion, an association of

Cont'd from pg. 6

expected to maintain a demanding schedule, including early morning activities and sustained Qur'an revision.

She appealed to parents to help the graduates maintain that discipline after leaving the Centre.

Her central message was the need for continuous muroja'ah (revision) of the Qur'an they memorised during their training.

"Memorising the Qur'an is not the ultimate goal. You have to keep doing muroja'ah, which is revision, because once you stop revising what you have memorised, you will gradually lose it," she said.

Mrs. Abdussalam also urged the graduates to become good ambassadors of Islam and The Fajr Center.

"I want them to carry what we have instilled in them at the Fajr Center wherever they go and let people see the values they have acquired during their time at the Centre," she said.

Graduands celebrate milestone, hail tutors, sponsors, management

The joy of the graduands knew no bounds as they expressed appreciation to their tutors, funders, parents and the management of The Fajr Center for supporting them throughout the two-year Qur'an memorisation journey.

Speaking with *Muslim News*, Abdur Rahman Ashafa, one of the graduands, described his journey to completing the programme as a lesson in persistence and determination.

Ashafa said he had previously applied to join the Centre but was not admitted. He later reapplied and was eventually offered admission.

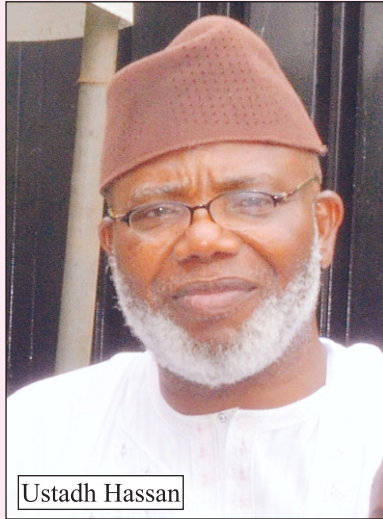
His journey was also interrupted when he had to leave the Centre to sit for his examinations before returning to complete his Qur'an memorisation.

He said distractions and the frustration of repeatedly memorising verses only to forget them were among the challenges he encountered. However, he remained determined to achieve his goal.

"If you are determined to do this, Allah will make it easy. And if you put the effort required to memorise it, Allah will make it easy also," Ashafa said.

He stressed the importance of regular muroja'ah, or revision, saying it was essential to retaining memorised portions of the Qur'an.

"If you keep on with your muroja'ah, you are not going to forget. But once you leave the muroja'ah, you are going to forget," he said.



Ustadh Hassan



Alhaja Mutiat



Ustadh Danjaji



Sakeenah



Mrs Abdussalaam



Abdurrahman

Ashafa said he found both individual and collective memorisation useful, although he sometimes preferred studying individually.

He advised young people aspiring to memorise the Qur'an to set clear goals, remain determined and put in the effort required to achieve them.

'I could not be the oldest and be at the back'

For 18-year-old Sakeenah Muhyideen Adedayo, one of the seven female graduates, competition and determination played a major role in helping her complete the programme.

Adedayo, who joined the Centre in 2025, said the experience was initially challenging. Although she had memorised some portions of the Qur'an before joining the Centre, she had to adapt to its intensive routine and demands.

She said being the oldest among the girls became a source of motivation after she realised that she was behind some younger students in memorisation.

"I was determined. I was like, no, because I'm the oldest, I cannot be the one that will be at the back. I don't like being the one at the back," she said.

Adedayo said the progress of her younger colleagues and the healthy competition among the

students pushed her to work harder.

Beyond memorisation, she said the Qur'an had taught her important lessons about humility, kindness, good speech and obedience to parents.

"Not to be arrogant, to be kind to people, to speak nicely to people and to be kind to parents. There are many lessons in the Qur'an," she said.

She also acknowledged that living and studying alongside six other girls sometimes came with disagreements and challenges.

However, she said prayer, patience and perseverance helped them overcome their differences and build better relationships.

Fajr Center chairperson lauds parents, sponsors, teachers

The Chairperson, Management Board, The Fajr Center, Alhaja Mutiat Olasumbo Hassan, has commended parents, sponsors, teachers, management and other stakeholders for their contributions to the success of the Centre's Qur'an memorisation programme.

She said parents had made significant sacrifices by entrusting their children to the centre and supporting them throughout the two-year journey.

"Your prayers, sacrifices, patience and unwavering support have contributed immensely to their success. Today is as much your

celebration as it is theirs," she said.

Alhaja Hassan, wife of the Centre's founder, also commended the teachers, hostel staff, administrative workers and volunteers for their dedication and commitment to the students' development.

She particularly appreciated the sponsors and donors whose support, she said, had helped create opportunities for young Muslims to memorise the Noble Qur'an.

Rising applications spur Centre's expansion, scholarship drive

With applications continuing to rise, the Centre said expanding its facilities and scholarship opportunities had become increasingly important.

Alhaja Hassan said the Centre was looking to expand its facilities, increase scholarship opportunities, invest in qualified teachers, improve learning resources and build a sustainable endowment to preserve the initiative for future generations.

She appealed to individuals, families, corporate organisations and charitable foundations to partner with the Centre in expanding its Qur'anic education and scholarship programme.

"Every verse they recite, every prayer they lead, every student

they teach and every life they positively influence will, by Allah's permission, become part of your enduring Sadaqah Jariyah," Alhaja Hassan said.

...Inaugurates alumni association for 2024, 2026 graduates

A major feature of the Second Haflatul Qur'an was the formal inauguration of The Fajr Center Alumni Association.

The association brings together the pioneer graduates of 2024 and the new 2026 graduating class.

Alhaja Hassan said the initiative was designed to ensure that graduation would not mark the end of the relationship between the Centre and its students.

"This Association is not merely a social network; it is a lifelong platform for mentorship, spiritual growth, mutual support and service to Islam," she said.

She said the association would provide opportunities for networking, mentorship and continued spiritual development while helping graduates remain connected to one another and the Centre.

Meet the 27 new huffaz

The 27 graduands who completed the two-year programme are Abdulazeez Alli Temitope (Oyo), Alimi Muadh Opemipo (Ogun), Abdulmuqeeet Lukman Oluwaferanmi (Ogun), Hudhayfah Bunyamin Aremu (Kwara), Abdussalam Lukman Adisa (Kwara), Abdullah Adetimilehin Ololade (Ondo), Anas Alamutu Iyanda (Ogun), Hussain Abduladheem Ayomi (Lagos), Yussuf Al Ameen Omolade (Kwara), Abdullah Muhammad Solih (Kwara), Abdulhafeez Akorede Akanni (Oyo), Abdur Rahman Ashafa (Osun), Ismail Abubakr Sawaneh (Kano) and Abdullah Uthman Ishaq Olanrewaju (Kwara).

Others are Junaid Abdulqodir Abebe (Osun), Abdul Salam Murithador Ayomide (Oyo), Abdul Salam Abdullah Akanji (Kwara), Hamzah Abdulqodir Akanni (Osun), Abubakr Lawal Ajetola (Oyo), Abdulghaniyy Abdullah Ajagbe (Oyo), Maryam Yunus Jannah (Osun), Sakeenah Muhyideen Adedayo (Kwara), Nusaybah Abdulqodir Oluwatosin (Osun), Faatimah Abdulrafee'u Ashabi (Kwara), Zaynab Ipoade Aderonke (Oyo), Hamdalah Abdulkareem Titilope (Kwara) and Maryam Abdussalaam Najah (Ogun).

The Fajr Center: 1, Fajr Close, Off Alhaji Kawu Alabi Crescent, Oja Bus Stop, Owutu, Ikorodu, Lagos.

Al-Barakah Microfinance Bank announces profit at stakeholders' meeting, plans State expansion

One of Nigeria's leading Islamic microfinance banks, Al-Barakah Microfinance Bank, has recorded significant growth in earnings, investment and profitability despite the country's challenging economic environment, with Managing Director, Mr Rasak Tunde Agboola, declaring that the institution is preparing to expand from a unit Microfinance Bank into a State Microfinance Bank.

Mr Agboola disclosed this on Saturday, August 15, 2026, at the bank's Annual Stakeholders' Meeting held at Hajj Maburur

Ventures Limited's Hall, Idiroko, Lagos, where the institution reviewed its performance for the 2024 and 2025 financial years.

He said the bank had remained resilient despite the difficult economic environment and was now focused on consolidating its gains, widening financial inclusion, strengthening digital services and expanding its reach.

Earnings, investment and profit rise

The financial report presented at the meeting showed that Al Barakah's gross earnings rose

from N198.742 million in 2024 to N232.412 million in 2025.

Its investment portfolio also increased from N352 million to N499.9 million during the period, while profit after tax climbed from N34.12 million in 2024 to N43.853 million in 2025.

Muslim News gathered that the two years therefore produced a combined profit after tax of N77.973 million.

Mr. Agboola said the figures reflected the bank's progress despite the economic pressures affecting businesses across the country.

Shareholders get five kobo dividend, bonus shares

As part of the outcome of the meeting, the bank declared a dividend of five kobo per share to shareholders.

Stakeholder approved a bonus arrangement under which shareholders would receive one additional share for every 10 shares held.

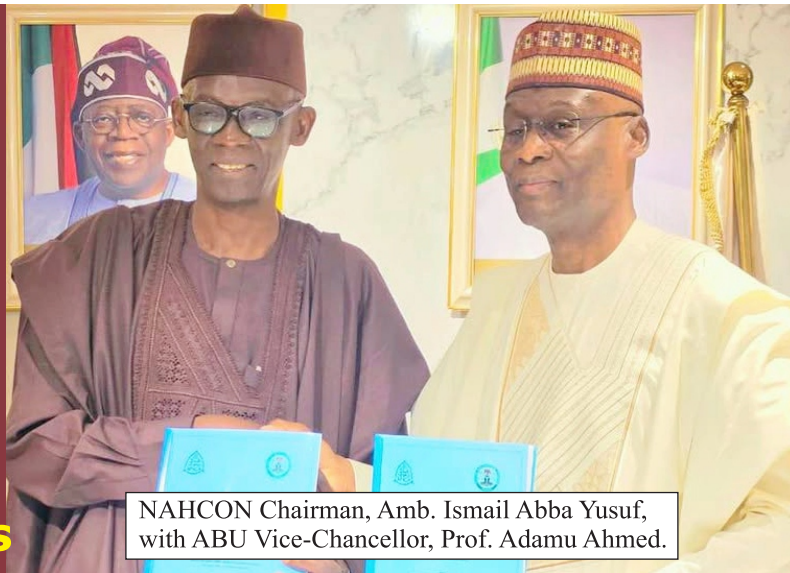
The dividend and bonus shares were presented as part of the benefits accruing to shareholders from the bank's improved performance.



Mr. Agboola

Hajj 2027: NAHCON approves Hajj Mabror, Hamdallilahi, Raudah, Inayatullah, 136 others

• Sets September 26 biometric, December 2 remittance deadlines



NAHCON Chairman, Amb. Ismail Abba Yusuf, with ABU Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Adamu Ahmed.

The National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) has approved 140 private Hajj tour operator companies to participate in the 2027 Hajj operations.

The approved list was contained in a letter dated August 26, 2026, forwarding the list of qualified tour operator companies for the 2027 Hajj exercise.

The Commission directed the approved companies to contact its Operations Division to collect their slot allocation papers.

140 private operators approved

Among the companies on the approved list are Hajj Mabror Ventures Ltd, Hamdallilahi Travels Ltd, Raudah Travels and Tours Ltd, Al Qibla Travel and Tours Ltd and Qiblah International Services Limited.

Also on the list are Qiblatayn International Travels and Tours Ltd, Al Hujjaaj International Umrah and Hajj Services Ltd, Al Iklas Hajj & Umrah Travelling Agency Limited, Al Mahbuub Hajj and Umrah Services Nigeria Ltd, Al Umra Travel and Tours Ltd, Al Waseelat Travels and Tours Ltd, Al Yusuff International Travels and Tours Ltd, Hijaba Travel and Tours Nigeria Limited and Virgo International Hajj and Umrah Limited.

Other approved operators include A.M.T Global Travel & Tours Ltd, Abu Faruk Travel and Tours Ltd, Adson Travels and Tours Ltd, Agaji Travelling Agency Nigeria Limited, Ahid Travel and Tours Ltd, Ajoke Travels and Tours Ltd, Al Abrar Travels and Tour Ltd,

Al Alam Travel Agency, Al Faozan Tours and Travels Ltd, Al Gazal Travels and Tours Limited, Al Halal Travel and Tours Ltd and Al Haqq Air Travels and Tours Limited.

The list also includes Amisad Air Support Services Ltd, Aphamok Tours and Travel Ltd, Arafat Air Services Nigeria Limited, Asan Umrah, As Sakeenah Travel & Tours Ltd, Assembly Travels and Tours Ltd, Ayla Travel Agency Limited, Azhab Travels and Tours Ltd, Badoko Travels and Tours Ltd, Barakatul Bait Ltd, BBATIGA Travel and Tours Ltd, Belas Travel and Tours Ltd and Bellamatgold Travels and Tours Ltd.

Bintus Travels and Consultants Ltd, Bridgestone Travel and Tours Ltd, Cargozeal Technologies Ltd, Crisp Lesure Travels and Tours Ltd, Dala Air Services Ltd, Danbare Travels Agency Ltd, Inayatullah Travels and Tours Ltd, Dar Al Slam Hajj and Umrah Ltd, Daso Travels and Tours Ltd, DGM Pleasure Travels and Tours Ltd and Dwise Travels and Tours Ltd are also among the approved companies.

Others are Eminasta Travels and Tours Ltd, Faith Path Travels and Tours Ltd, Famak Travels and Tours Ltd, Family Travels and Tours Ltd, Fasul Travel and Tours Ltd, Finest Travels and Tours Ltd, Firdausi Transport Services Limited, Focal Point Travels and Tours Ltd, Gaskiya Tourism and Travels Agency Limited, Grandtrack Tours Limited, Habbat Xpress Travels Ltd, HAYATI Travels and Tours Ltd, HH Travel Services Ltd, Hinterland

Travels and Tours Ltd and Honeydan Travel and Tours Ltd.

Husna Travels and Tours Ltd, IBBSA Travel and Tours Limited, Ibtisam Travel and Tours Ltd, Imam Travel and Tours Ltd, Influential Travel Nigeria Ltd, Isada Travels and Tours Ltd, Isma Travels and Logistics Services Ltd, Jewel Wings Travel and Tours Ltd, Kamlat Travels and Tours Ltd, Karamchi Travels and Tours Agency Ltd, Kanzulgina International Ltd, Kentas Travel and Tours Ltd and Khairat Travel and Tours Ltd are also listed.

The approved list further contains Kingdom Travels and Tours Ltd, Kolly Pleasures Tours and Travels Limited, Kusa Travels and Tours Nig. Ltd, Lale Travel Agency Ltd, Libragold Travels and Tours Ltd, Lora Moreki Travels, Lutfu Asmadany Travels and Tours Ltd, Madina Travel and Tours Ltd, Mai-Bitl Travel and Tours Limited, Majema Travel and Tours Ltd, Manaah Travel and Tours Ltd, Maqbuul International Ltd, Marquis Concierge Ltd, Masanawa Travels and Tours Ltd and Matasa Worldwide Travel Agency Ltd.

Millenium Travels and Tours Ltd, Morkasu Li Hawi Travels & Tours Ltd, Moslima Travel and Tours Ltd, MSL Travel and Tours Nig. Ltd, Mubash Shirin Air Services Limited, Mumtazam Travelling Agency Ltd, Mundace Travel & Tours Ltd, Murna Travel Agency Ltd, Nokbah Travels and Tours Ltd, Nusra Travels and Tours Ltd, Oasis Air Services Ltd, Olajide Hajj and Umrah Travels Ltd, Omosa Travels and Tours Ltd, Portfolio Travels and Tours Ltd and

Pyramid Travel and Tours Ltd are among the other approved operators.

Qausain Tours Ltd, Qiblah International Services Limited, Qiblatayn International Travels and Tours Ltd, Raudah Travels and Tours Ltd, Ruby Travels and Tours Ltd, Rufaiya Tourism and Travelling Agency Ltd, Samari Travel and Tours Ltd, Sanilak Travels and Tours Ltd, Shebra Travels Limited, Sifiri System Nig. Ltd, Skytime Travel and Tours Ltd, SMY Travel Agency Limited, Splendour Travels and Tours Ltd and Strive Wata Travels and Tours Ltd are also approved.

The list is completed by Tafsan Tours and Travels Ltd, The Traveller Enterprises Ltd, U.A Travels and Tours Ltd, Usu Travel and Tours Limited, Visa Travels & Tours Limited, Visit Travels and Tours Ltd, Wakil Travels and Tours Ltd, Whitebird Tourism Ltd, Yasin Global Travels and Tours, Zango Travel and Tours Ltd, Zetim Travels & Tours Limited, Zetim Travels and Tours Ltd and Zero Interest Multi-Purpose Co. Ltd.

Hajj fares and payment deadlines

The approval comes as preparations for the 2027 Hajj continue, following the Federal Government's approval of pilgrimage fares announced by NAHCON.

The approved fares are ₦7,560,822 for pilgrims departing from the Maiduguri and Yola zone, ₦7,672,822 for the Northern zone and ₦7,882,822 for the Southern zone.

NAHCON said intending pilgrims who had previously deposited ₦5 million are required to pay the outstanding balance to complete their registration, while new intending pilgrims are to make payments through their respective State Muslim Pilgrims' Welfare Boards, Agencies or Commissions or through an approved Hajj Savings Scheme participating bank.

September 26 biometric deadline

The Commission fixed September 26, 2026 as the final and absolute deadline for the complete upload of intending pilgrims' biometric data on the designated Nusuk Masar digital platform.

It also set December 2, 2026 as the deadline for states to complete the remittance of all 2027 Hajj fares.

NAHCON stressed that no extension would be granted beyond the stipulated deadlines, explaining that data synchronisation and seat allocation depend on timely remittances.

The Commission warned that failure to meet the deadlines would result in the forfeiture of allocated Hajj slots.

Five airlines approved

NAHCON had earlier approved five air carriers for the 2027 Hajj operations.

They are Air Peace Limited, Flynas, Max Air Limited, Saudi Air and UMZA Aviation Services Limited.

The Commission said passenger allocations and airlift schedules would be worked out with the respective State Pilgrims' Welfare Boards and approved operators.

However, the list of approved tour operators could still be updated as NAHCON considers appeals from companies that were not included. As of Friday, August 28, some affected operators had lodged appeals with the Commission, raising the possibility of further additions to the approved operators for the 2027 Hajj.

The development means prospective pilgrims and other stakeholders may need to monitor further announcements from NAHCON as the Commission concludes its review of the appeals and preparations for the 2027 pilgrimage continue.

Zakat Foundation disburses N735.8m to 2,916 beneficiaries in 28 states

BY: OLOWOYOBIOJO AISHAT

One of Nigeria's leading charity organisations, the Zakat and Sadaqat Foundation, has disbursed a total of N735,831,356 to 2,916 beneficiaries across 28 states as part of its 2026 Zakat distribution programme.

The distribution was held on Saturday, August 29, at the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Alausa, Ikeja, where N516,974,947 was distributed to 1,756 beneficiaries in Lagos State.

The Lagos beneficiaries received support across a range of critical areas, including accommodation support, community projects development, debt relief, economic empowerment, education support, medical assistance and support for the elderly, as part of the Foundation's broader interventions across Nigeria.

The ceremony marked the formal closing of the Foundation's

2026 Zakat distribution cycle across the country, providing an opportunity for stakeholders to reflect on the impact of Zakat contributions on vulnerable individuals and communities.

The Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation, Prince Sulayman Olagunju said the 2026 distribution cycle commenced on June 23, International Widows' Day, when N37,035,000 was distributed to 185 widows for economic empowerment and medical support.

He said the Foundation's interventions throughout the year demonstrated its commitment to using Zakat to address both immediate needs and the long-term wellbeing of beneficiaries.

Economic empowerment gets largest share

Muslim News findings revealed that a sectoral analysis of the Foundation's 2026 interventions showed that economic empowerment, medical support and education received the largest

allocations.

According to Prince Olagunju, N426,689,837 was committed to economic empowerment, N128,965,442 to medical support and N54,822,656 to education support.

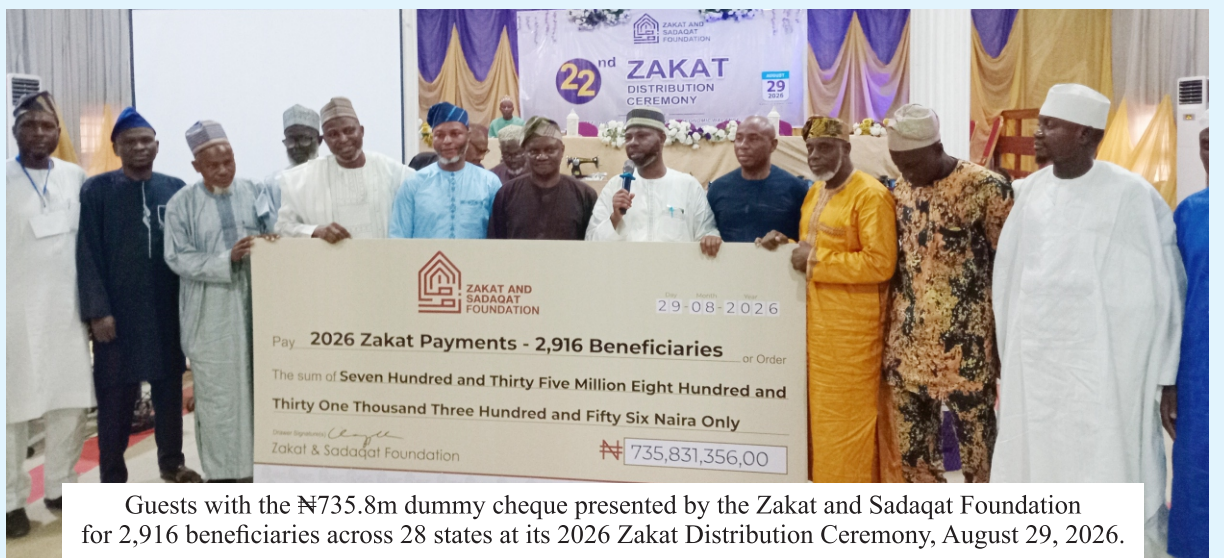
He said the figures reflected the Foundation's deliberate

focus on addressing immediate needs while creating opportunities for beneficiaries to achieve sustainable livelihoods.

"Economic empowerment remains particularly important because it provides beneficiaries with opportunities to become self-reliant, establish sustainable

livelihoods and contribute meaningfully to the economy," he said.

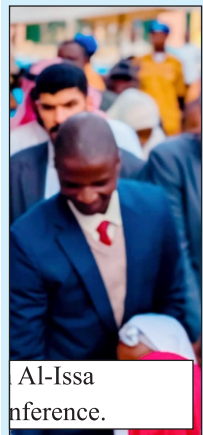
He added that medical support helped vulnerable individuals access essential healthcare, while education support invested in the future by enabling deserving beneficiaries to pursue their educational aspirations.



Guests with the N735.8m dummy cheque presented by the Zakat and Sadaqat Foundation for 2,916 beneficiaries across 28 states at its 2026 Zakat Distribution Ceremony, August 29, 2026.

Religious leaders unite for peace, security

...tolerance key to Nigeria's security, peace and progress, says Tinubu



Al-Issa
conference.



The newly inaugurated Muslim World League Mosque in Abuja.



L R: Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Senator Barau Jibrin, Sheikh Bala Lau and Mallam Muhammad Idris at the event.



supervising the
ian leaders.



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu meeting with
Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa.



Islamic scholars and leaders, including Sheikh Abdurrahman Ahmad (second left,) at the international conference.

conversation not as a new person to diversity. I've experienced the painful part of diversity, and I've experienced the beautiful part of the same diversity," Yilwatda said.

He recalled growing up in a community where his pastor father maintained a close relationship with the local chief imam, saying the relationship between the two families showed him that religious differences should not create human distance or separation.

Yilwatda also recalled witnessing communal violence in Bauchi after his father was transferred there in 1991.

He said his family's home and

incitement. We can preach truth without inciting people. That is the hallmark of teaching as a religious leader," he said.

Abuja Declaration adopted

The conference on Wednesday, August 12 adopted the Abuja Declaration, which recognised religious, ethnic and cultural diversity as a universal reality and said its proper management was a foundation for national unity and cohesive societies.

The post conference communiqué issued by JIBWIS in Abuja stated that religion, in its essence, is a message of mercy and peace, and placed responsibility on religious leaders to present authentic religious values and reject the use of religion to fuel conflict or justify violence and extremism.

The communiqué called for regular institutional dialogue among religious leaders and stronger cooperation on issues affecting social cohesion, security and peace. It also resolved to establish a coordinating body for Muslim and Christian leaders and institutions in Nigeria, in cooperation with the Muslim World League, to coordinate joint initiatives and promote consultation and

cooperation on matters of common interest.

The communiqué further called for nationwide public awareness programmes promoting patriotism and citizenship, respect for diversity and rejection of hate speech and intolerance.

It urged media organisations and cultural institutions to promote responsible messaging, combat rumours and inflammatory rhetoric, and highlight positive examples of unity, coexistence and mutual understanding.

The communiqué also called for educational curricula and training programmes promoting responsible citizenship, mutual respect, dialogue and coexistence, while strengthening young people's resilience against harmful ideologies.

Nigeria Youth for Peace adopted

The conference endorsed Al-Issa's Nigeria Youth for Peace initiative.

According to the communiqué, the initiative would work with the proposed coordinating body and operate across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, with its achievements and outcomes shared with international organisations.

The MWL described the initiative as part of its wider effort to empower young people to play an active role in consolidating sustainable community peace.

The communiqué also

called for cooperation among government institutions, religious leaders and civil society organisations on coexistence, mental resilience and social peace.

It further called for stronger cooperation in conflict prevention, protection of national unity and promotion of trust among communities.

Muslim, Christian leaders sign four agreements

Later on the same day (August 12), Al-Issa witnessed a high level roundtable of Muslim and Christian leaders in Abuja titled "Religion and Building Social Harmony."

The meeting was organised in line with the MWL's Social Peace in West Africa initiative and the resolutions contained in the Abuja Declaration. It focused on joint action in conflict prevention and protection of the national fabric across Nigeria's religious and ethnic diversity.

Four memoranda of understanding were signed at the meeting.

The first was between the Muslim World League and the Interfaith Mediation Centre in Nigeria. The second was between JIBWIS Nigeria and the Council of Christian Religious Leaders in Northern Nigeria.

The third was between Jama'atu Nasril Islam in Nigeria and the Christian Youth Initiative for Peace and Development, while the fourth was between the Union of Ahl al Sunnah Organizations in Nigeria and the Progressive Pastors' Alliance.

The Coordinating Body for Religious and Civic Leaders and Institutions in West Africa is expected to oversee implementation of the memoranda and the commitments contained in the Abuja Declaration, including periodic assessment of their progress and results.

Chairman of the Northern Christian Religious Leaders' Assembly, Archbishop John Praise Daniel, welcomed the agreements

and said they would help religious leaders moderate their public utterances.

"Definitely we are very optimistic that this action will guide us and will help religious leaders to guide their utterances, they don't speak negatively, no hate speech, and no disrespect for other religious groups, no calling of people as infidels or destroying other religions just to lift yourself up," Daniel said.

Al-Issa said extremist ideas had affected all communities and expressed confidence in the implementation of the Abuja Declaration.

"We do not deny that extremist ideas have harmed everyone; all have been affected by them," he said.

He said the charter agreed by the parties through the Abuja Declaration, together with its implementation programmes and coordinating and executive bodies, would be subject to regular assessment.

Al-Issa also explained why Nigeria was chosen for the West African initiative.

"We chose the Federal Republic of Nigeria because of its commitment to social coexistence and religious tolerance," he said, adding that the MWL had worked on preventive peace programmes for more than 10 years and conducted periodic assessments of its programmes.

Al-Issa meets Tinubu, Ribadu

Following the conference, Al-Issa met President Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the State House in Abuja. The meeting focused on the MWL's initiative for social peace in West Africa and the outcomes of the Abuja conference.

The MWL said Tinubu reaffirmed his full support for the Abuja Declaration, its action plan and implementation programmes, including the coordinating body established for joint cooperation.

Al-Issa also met the National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu, in Abuja. According to the MWL, their discussions centred on matters relating to the implementation of the outcomes of the Abuja Declaration following the conference and roundtable discussions held under the patronage of President Tinubu.

Friday sermon at National Mosque

Al-Issa's visit also included a major religious engagement at the National Mosque in Abuja, where he delivered the Friday sermon and led Jumu'ah prayers on Friday, August 14, 2026.

The sermon was attended by a large congregation, with Nigerian Islamic religious leaders among those present.

In the sermon, Al-Issa addressed the guidance of the Noble Qur'an towards what is most upright and discussed Islamic teachings relevant to believers' religious and worldly affairs.

He spoke about gratitude for Allah's blessings, adherence to Islamic manners and consistency in their application, while warning against conduct that could harm Muslims themselves or their religion.

Al-Issa also praised what he described as Nigeria's distinguished religious and national values.

His National Mosque appearance followed several days of engagements involving government officials, Muslim and Christian leaders, traditional rulers, scholars and security officials, beginning with his arrival in Abuja on August 10.

**...of Nigeria because of its
...and religious tolerance.
...has worked in this area
...programmes for more than 10
...bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa**

neighbourhood were burnt and that both Christians and Muslims lost their homes and sought refuge in military barracks.

He said the experience demonstrated that violence did not discriminate on the basis of religion, ethnicity or social status.

The APC chairman warned against terrorism, banditry, armed conflict, communal violence, ethnic suspicion, religious intolerance, hate speech and the manipulation of identity for political purposes.

"We weaponise religion. We weaponise division for political advantage. Temporary advantage, but it leaves permanent damage on our lives," he said.

Yilwatda urged religious leaders to turn mosques and churches into centres of peace, reconciliation and responsible citizenship.

"Let us preach truth without hatred, conviction without contempt, and truth without



Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa delivering
a historic sermon at the National Mosque, Abuja.

Türkiye marks 10 years after failed coup with Abuja event

Can democracies survive the combined threats of terrorism, disinformation, violent extremism and attempts to undermine constitutional order?

That question dominated discussions in Abuja on Thursday, July 16, as diplomats, academics, security experts and media practitioners called for stronger democratic institutions, greater international cooperation and responsible journalism to safeguard democracy in an increasingly volatile world.

The experts spoke during an international panel discussion organised by the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye's Directorate of Communications to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the defeated July 15, 2016 coup attempt.

Held under the theme, "National Will and Democratic Resilience: July 15 in Its 10th Year," the programme formed part of simultaneous commemorative events organised in Nigeria and other countries selected by the Turkish government.

The Abuja gathering brought together diplomats, academics, journalists, policymakers, civil society representatives and security experts to examine how Türkiye's experience could contribute to discussions on democracy, counter-terrorism, responsible journalism and international cooperation.

'Will of the Nation, Victory of Democracy'

The programme opened with a photo exhibition documenting the resistance mounted by ordinary Turkish citizens against the failed coup attempt, featuring images of civilians confronting tanks and scenes depicting their determination to defend constitutional order.

Participants also watched a

pre-recorded opening address by Türkiye's Head of Communications, Prof Burhanettin Duran, which was simultaneously broadcast at commemorative events across participating countries.

Duran described July 15 as one of the defining moments in Türkiye's democratic history and unveiled the official theme for the tenth anniversary commemorations, "Will of the Nation, Victory of Democracy."

He said the theme reflected the unity, courage and sacrifices demonstrated by the Turkish people in defending their elected government and constitutional order.

Nigeria and Türkiye share security concerns

Moderating the discussion, researcher at the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research, SETA, Dr Tunç Demirtaş, described Nigeria and Türkiye as strategic partners confronting similar challenges, including terrorism, violent extremism, misinformation and threats to democratic governance.

He said bilateral relations between both countries had expanded through defence cooperation, education, trade and diplomacy, urging deeper collaboration in counter-terrorism, institutional development and democratic resilience.

"The security threats we face today do not recognise borders. They require cooperation among governments, researchers, journalists and civil society," he said.

Citizens defeated coup, says Gummi

President of the Türkiye Alumni Association of Nigeria, Dr Mohammed Bawa Gummi, said the July 15 experience demonstrated the

critical role ordinary citizens could play in defending democratic institutions.

Although Nigeria's security environment differs from Türkiye's, he said lessons could still be drawn from the Turkish experience.

According to Gummi, defeating terrorism requires more than military operations. He advocated stronger intelligence gathering, economic development, effective public communication and closer collaboration with religious, traditional and community leaders capable of countering extremist narratives at the grassroots.

He also welcomed the expanding defence partnership between Nigeria and Türkiye, identifying technology transfer, military training and defence production as important areas for strengthening Nigeria's security architecture.

July 15 belongs to the people, says Mahdum

Director of the Yunus Emre Institute in Nigeria, Fatih Erkin Mahdum, said the significance of July 15 extended beyond politics.

He explained that millions of Turkish citizens from different political and social backgrounds united to defend constitutional governance, demonstrating that democracy ultimately depends on the commitment of ordinary people.

Mahdum reiterated the Turkish government's position that the Fethullah Terrorist Organisation infiltrated state institutions before orchestrating the attempted coup.

July 15 exposed media reporting gaps in Africa

The discussion also examined the role of the media during political crises and armed conflicts.

Publisher of Muslim News Nigeria and media analyst, Rasheed Abubakar, warned that misinformation, propaganda and unverified reports could worsen national emergencies and undermine democratic institutions if journalists failed to uphold accuracy and verification.

Abubakar said the failed July 15, 2016 coup attempt exposed weaknesses in the reporting of major international developments across parts of Africa.

He explained that many

Nigerian journalists had limited knowledge of Türkiye at the time, largely because of the language barrier and inadequate familiarity with the country's history, politics and society.

He noted that most Nigerian media organisations had no correspondents in Türkiye when the coup unfolded, forcing them to rely heavily on Western news agencies such as Reuters, Agence France Presse, Associated Press, BBC and CNN.

Witness recounts unforgettable night

Providing a personal perspective, Dr Zainul Abideen Jibril of Skyline University Nigeria recounted witnessing the July 15 events while studying International Relations in Bursa, Türkiye.

He recalled the uncertainty surrounding the attempted coup as 2 military aircraft flew overhead and reports of troop movements spread across the country.

Responding to calls to defend democracy, he joined thousands of Turkish citizens who gathered in opposition to the attempted military takeover.

Read the full story at www.muslimnews.com.ng.



L R: Dr. Tunç Demirtaş, Dr. Mohammed Bawa Gummi, Fatih Erkin Mahdum, Rasheed Abubakar and Dr. Zainul Abideen Jibril, during the international panel discussion marking the 10th anniversary of the defeated July 15, 2016 coup attempt in Abuja.

Nigeria, Türkiye deepen defence industry partnership, target joint production

Nigeria and Türkiye have renewed their commitment to strengthening cooperation in the defence industry, with both countries targeting increased investment, innovation, technology transfer and joint production to build sustainable defence capabilities.

The commitment was made on Wednesday, August 26, at the 7th Nigeria-Türkiye Defence Industry Business Forum held at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja, where senior government officials

and defence industry stakeholders from both countries explored opportunities for deeper industrial collaboration.

The Minister of Defence, Gen. Christopher Gwabin Musa (retd.), said Nigeria was seeking to transform its longstanding defence relationship with Türkiye from a predominantly buyer-seller arrangement into a balanced partnership driven by local manufacturing, joint production, research and development, technology transfer and skills development.

"Our objective should be to translate our longstanding bilateral cooperation into practical industrial partnerships, sustainable investments, technology-driven collaboration and enduring defence capabilities," Musa said.

He said Nigeria attached great importance to its defence relationship with Türkiye, noting that cooperation between both countries had expanded over the years from military-to-military engagements to defence equipment acquisition, training, technical assistance and defence industry

cooperation.

Musa said the Federal Government remained committed to building a strong, self-reliant and globally competitive defence industrial base, stressing that the Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria (DICON) Act 2023 provides an important framework for achieving the objective.

He identified Türkiye's emergence as a major and increasingly self-reliant defence industrial power as a valuable example for Nigeria, saying its experience demonstrated the importance of sustained government commitment, research and development, innovation, private-sector participation and collaboration among government, the military, academia and industry.

Also speaking, the Minister of State for Defence, Dr Bello Mohammed Matawalle, said the forum was taking place at a critical point in Nigeria's efforts to strengthen its defence-industrial capability and deepen its strategic partnership with Türkiye.

Matawalle said the engagement brought together government representatives, defence institutions, investors and technology partners from both countries to explore practical opportunities for investment, local production, innovation and long-term industrial cooperation.

He encouraged Nigerian and Turkish stakeholders to explore practical models for joint production, technology licensing, co-development and localisation.

Uçar: Meeting opens way for deeper Nigeria-Türkiye cooperation

On the Turkish side, the Deputy Minister of Defence, Gokhan Uçar, said the successful conclusion of the 7th Nigeria-Türkiye Defence Industries Cooperation Meeting had created a strong basis for expanding cooperation between both countries.

Uçar said the business forum could serve as a platform for bringing Nigerian and Turkish defence companies together to develop practical areas of collaboration.

"I believe today's Nigeria-Türkiye Defence Industry Business Forum could start a new chapter in our relations by bringing our companies together," he said.

He said participants would examine the strategic defence partnership through the lens of defence industrialisation, with subsequent discussions focusing on joint production, technology transfer, localisation and Nigeria's regulatory and investment framework for strategic partnerships.



Nigerian and Turkish delegations after the 7th Türkiye-Nigeria Defence Industries Cooperation Meeting and Defence Industry Business Forum in Abuja.

Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan have signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, establishing a collective defence framework under which an armed attack against any one of the three countries will be regarded as an attack against all.

The agreement was signed on Friday, August 7, by Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif during the Makkah Joint Defence Summit at Al Safa Palace.

Erdoğan and Sharif visited Saudi Arabia at the invitation of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and were received by the Crown Prince at the Royal Court in Makkah. During the summit, the three leaders reviewed the relations between Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan and discussed issues of mutual interest.

According to a joint statement, the agreement builds on the three countries' longstanding historical ties, Islamic solidarity, shared strategic interests and close defence cooperation. It aims to strengthen joint deterrence against aggression and expand defence cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

Erdoğan: Pact carries message for world peace

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan described the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement as a different kind of transformation and said its signing presented an opportunity for the three countries to deliver an important message to the world.

Speaking in an interview with Al Jazeera Arabic television recorded on August 14, Erdoğan said the fact that the agreement was concluded in Makkah and signed by Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan gave it additional significance.

"First of all, the Makkah

Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Pakistan sign Makkah defence pact



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif signed a joint defence agreement in Makkah on August 7, 2026.

agreement represented a different kind of transformation," Erdoğan said.

He added that the signing of the trilateral agreement in Makkah had provided an opportunity to send an important message to the world.

Erdoğan said the three countries had signed the agreement with satisfaction and prayed that it would be beneficial.

He also described the pact as an important message for world peace, particularly because it was concluded during a difficult period involving the United States and Iran.

"I call it an important message for world peace because Türkiye is a country that stands for peace, and the choice of Makkah has been an important step for peace," he said.

Türkiye says Iran not named as threat

Türkiye's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said the defence pact was not directed against Iran or any other specific country.

"There is no common threat that we have put in writing," Fidan

told Türkiye's state run Anadolu Agency, explaining that countries that did not attack any of the signatories would not be considered targets under the agreement.

Fidan described the arrangement as technically similar to NATO's Article 5 collective defence clause, under which an attack against one member is treated as an attack against all.

He, however, said the response would depend on the circumstances of any particular attack.

According to Fidan, a country coming under attack would first have to request assistance and specify the type of support required. Such assistance could include intelligence, logistics, ammunition or the deployment of military units.

He said the three countries would also establish political and military committees comprising foreign and defence ministers and military chiefs, alongside a secretariat in Saudi Arabia.

Cooperation would cover joint training, intelligence sharing, logistics, threat assessments and

military interoperability.

Sharif: Pact sends message of unity, peace

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the new defence agreement had brought Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan closer together and sent a message of unity and peace across the region.

Sharif made the remarks on Friday, August 28, during a meeting in Islamabad with Saudi Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture Abdulrahman bin Abdulmohsen Al Fadley, according to a statement issued by the Pakistani Prime Minister's Office.

"The prime minister said that the recently signed Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, between Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan had brought the three countries even closer together and sent a message of unity and peace throughout the region," the statement said.

The Makkah agreement is intended to strengthen collective deterrence against external aggression and expand defence cooperation among the three

countries.

Pakistan has also stressed that the agreement is defensive and is not aimed at any particular country.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said the pact does not replace existing bilateral or multilateral defence arrangements and remains open to other regional states willing to uphold its principles.

The agreement follows the Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement signed by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in September 2025, which similarly provided that aggression against either country would be considered aggression against both.

Pact open to wider regional participation

The Makkah agreement has been signed at a time of heightened regional security concerns and brings together Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia in an expanded framework for defence cooperation.

The Pakistani Foreign Office has described the pact as a mechanism through which the three countries can share responsibility for regional peace and security and coordinate their response to common threats.

The agreement provides for enhanced defence cooperation, although publicly released details have not specified precisely how the collective defence commitment would operate if one of the signatories came under attack.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh has expressed interest in joining a framework involving Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's foreign affairs adviser, Humayun Kabir, said the government maintained a positive approach towards the possibility of joining an economic or defence framework involving the three countries, while stressing that Bangladesh's national interests would remain central to its foreign policy.

ENTERTAINMENT

Nollywood in tears as Taiwo Hassan 'Ogogo' buried in Ogun

Tears and grief enveloped Ilaro, Ogun State, on Monday as thousands of mourners gathered to bid a final farewell to veteran Nollywood actor, Alhaji Taiwo Hassan, popularly known as Ogogo, who was laid to rest according to Islamic rites.

Family members, friends, colleagues, traditional figures, religious leaders and residents of the community converged on the Asade Agunloye Pavilion in Ilaro for the Janazah of the 66-year-old actor, whose death has left the Yoruba film industry mourning one of its most recognisable figures.

Muslim News gathered that the burial was marked by an emotional atmosphere, with mourners accompanying Ogogo's remains to its final resting place.

His longtime friend and fellow veteran actor, Yinka Quadri, was visibly overcome with emotion and broke down in tears as he bade farewell to the late actor. Quadri, who shared a close relationship with Hassan, was also among the colleagues who rallied around him during his illness.

Other Nollywood personalities at the burial included Jide Kosoko, Ireti Osayemi, Femi Adebayo, Faithia Balogun, Mr Latin, Dele Odule, Egun Oloyede and Toyosi Adesanya, among several others who gathered in Ilaro to pay their final respects.

Imam leads Janazah, urges Muslims to build lasting legacies

The Janazah prayer was led by the Chief Imam of Ilaro Central Mosque, Imam Tajudeen Mustapha-Adewunmi, who also delivered the sermon at the burial.

In his sermon, the respected Muslim scholar said the widespread mourning reflected Ogogo's character and the impact he made during his lifetime, describing his death as a major loss to the Yoruba movie industry and the Islamic community.

Sheikh Mustapha-Adewunmi noted that Hassan often reflected his faith and cultural heritage through his roles and urged the living to lead exemplary lives and build legacies that would outlive them.

The funeral prayers were held at the Asade Agunloye Pavilion Ground, where members of the Ilaro Muslim Community joined family, friends and colleagues to observe the Islamic burial rites.

Following the prayers, Ogogo's remains were taken to the burial ground, where mourners and members of the Yoruba entertainment community

accompanied him to his final resting place.

Ogogo dies after stage-four cancer battle

The later Nollywood actor Hassan died at about 3pm on Sunday, August 23, 2026, at the age of 66, following a battle with stage-four cancer. His death came days after his daughters publicly appealed for medical assistance as his condition deteriorated.

The family had sought access to appropriate medical treatment rather than financial donations. The appeal generated an overwhelming response, with more than 500 people reportedly offering to assist with his treatment.

However, Jide Kosoko, who spoke on behalf of the management team, explained that the number of offers created logistical challenges because Ogogo was already receiving treatment and moving him to another facility required careful consideration.

One of Ogogo's daughters, Lima Taiwo had earlier made an emotional appeal for help, saying the family only became aware of the severity of his condition about three

weeks earlier. She also disclosed difficulties in finding appropriate treatment as doctors reportedly indicated that chemotherapy could no longer be administered because of his condition.

From Owo Blow to Aníkúlápó

Ogogo's death marked the end of a career spanning more than four decades in Yoruba-language cinema. He began acting in 1981 while working as a mechanic before eventually leaving the job to pursue acting full-time. Beyond acting, he also established himself as a filmmaker and screenwriter, featuring in numerous productions across different generations of Nigerian cinema.

His career was defined by several memorable performances, with his role as Wole Owolabi in Tade Ogidan's 1996 classic, Owo Blow, standing out as one of the major milestones of his journey. The film explored poverty, crime, ambition and redemption and was released in three parts: The Genesis, The Revolt and The Final Struggle.

His performance in Owo Blow brought him wider recognition, while his portrayal of



Ogogo

Wole Owolabi earned him the Best Actor of the Year award at the 1997 THEMA Awards.

Ogogo subsequently featured in numerous productions, including Agbelebu, Danfo Driver, Ekun-Ayo, Omin, Elewon and Omo Ghetto. He also remained active in newer generations of Nigerian cinema, appearing in Kunle Afolayan's 2022 epic, Aníkúlápó, where he played Alaafin Ademuyiwa. He later reprised the role in Aníkúlápó: Rise of the Spectre.

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