

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

TVCNEWS

FEBRUARY 18, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

NIGERIA AT A CROSSROADS: HIGH-STAKES REFORM AMIDST ECONOMIC & ELITE FRAGMENTATION (FEBRUARY 2026)

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE: Electoral Act 2026 Signed, Triggering Political Firestorm



THE CATALYST: ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT 2026

Signed Feb 18, 2026. Reduces notice to 300 days.

Key TENSION: Mandatory Electronic Transmission vs. Manual Collation Backups (Section 60).

Opposition walks out over "manual interference" risks; Proponents cite lack of internet in 5,000+ communities.

ECONOMIC VOLATILITY & INDUSTRIAL STRAIN



EXTREME DISTRESS:
Commercial lending rates
PEAK AT 60%.

Manufacturing & Agriculture
survival threatened.

**"NIGERIA INDUSTRIAL POLICY
2025-2026"** unveiled, relying on
private champions.

DANGOTE CEMENT paid 900
Billion Naira tax (2025),
showing state dependence on
OLIGARCHIC ENTITIES.

Inflation at 15.1% (official),
Exchange Rate ~1,350 Naira/USD.

SECURITY FAILURE & UNGOVERNED SPACES



CRITICAL FAILURE POINTS:
Plateau State Mining Disaster
(37 dead) highlights
"ungoverned" extractive
sector & gaseous emissions.

Banditry persists (37 killed in
Niger State).

Security forces claim victory
against Bandit Leader Batijo
(Kogi) with aerial assets.

US MILITARY ARRIVAL for
"technical empowerment" &
training, signaling strategic
alliance.

ELITE FRAGMENTATION & LEGAL WARFARE



HIGH-LEVEL RIFT:
Former Governor
NASIR EL-RUFAI extended
detention by EFCC over
432-Billion-Naira fraud probe.

Accusations of "transferred
aggression" involving National
Security Advisor **NUHU
RIBADU**, who emerges as a
central power broker.

Intra-elite warfare intensifying
ahead of 2027 cycle.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS & THEMES (THE UNDERLYING CURRENTS)

HYBRIDIZATION OF LOGISTICS



Manual/Electronic 'halfway house'
acts as a **STRATEGIC HEDGE** for
ruling party, but critics fear
local-level manipulation in
'criminal collusion centers'.

WEAPONIZATION OF INSTITUTIONS



Anti-corruption drive viewed as
'LEGAL WARFARE' (Lawfare) to
neutralize political rivals and
consolidate executive influence.

CORPORATIZED GOVERNANCE



State survival increasingly linked
to fiscal health of private
monopolies, while bottom-up
economic collapse risks mass
insolvency for SMEs.



STRATEGIC FORESIGHT & FUTURE OUTLOOK



RISKS & SCENARIOS:

Electoral Integrity Crisis (litigation over hybrid system),
Manufacturing Collapse (mass insolvency from 60% rates),
Elite Purge (El-Rufai case as beginning). Potential for
'De Facto One-Party State' if digital gap is weaponized.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS:

Statecraft: Formalize US military treaty for transparency.
Bipartisan committee for Section 60 oversight.
Private Sector: Avoid high-leverage, diversify supply chains.
Investors: Prepare for regulatory scrutiny in extractive
sectors.

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NIGERIA ENTERS A PERIOD OF
HIGH-STAKES INSTITUTIONAL
REFORM AMID EXTREME
ECONOMIC VOLATILITY AND
DEEPENING ELITE
FRAGMENTATION.

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

February 18, 2026, marks a pivotal moment for Nigerian governance as President Bola Tinubu signed the **Electoral Act Amendment Bill 2026** into law. While the administration frames this as a modernization effort, the bill has triggered a [political firestorm](#) over the retention of manual result backups alongside electronic transmission. This legislative shift occurs against a backdrop of severe macroeconomic distress, characterized by [maximum lending rates](#) reaching a staggering 60% in key sectors, threatening the survival of the nation's manufacturing and agricultural bases. The government is attempting to counterbalance these pressures through the unveiling of the **Nigeria Industrial Policy 2025-2026**, relying on private sector champions like Aliko Dangote to signal stability.

Security remains a critical failure point, with the [death of 37 miners](#) in Plateau State highlighting the ungoverned nature of the extractive sector and the persistence of "gaseous emissions" in illegal sites. Simultaneously, a high-level rift has emerged within the ruling elite, evidenced by the [extended detention](#) of former Kaduna Governor Nasir El-Rufai by the EFCC. The broadcast portrays a state attempting to maintain social cohesion by emphasizing the rare "spiritual convergence" of Ramadan and Lent starting on the same day, a narrative clearly designed to mitigate public anger over inflation and insecurity. However, reports of [assaults on party chairmen](#) and continued banditry suggest that the social contract is fraying at the edges.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Enactment of the Electoral Act 2026

- The President signed the amendment bill, reducing the election notification period from [360 to 300 days](#).
- Intense debate persists over [mandatory electronic transmission](#) of results versus manual collation backups, with the opposition staging walkouts in protest of "manual interference" risks.
- Proponents argue that [manual backups](#) are necessary due to Nigeria's limited internet penetration in over 5,000 underserved communities.

Macroeconomic Crisis and Industrial Policy

- Commercial lending rates have peaked at [60%](#), specifically impacting the manufacturing and agriculture sectors.

- The administration unveiled the **Nigeria Industrial Policy 2025**, emphasizing [local component development](#) and infrastructure for manufacturing.
- Dangote Cement reportedly paid [900 billion Naira](#) in taxes for the 2025 fiscal year, highlighting the government's dependence on a few massive corporate actors.

Elite Conflict and Legal Warfare

- Former Governor Nasir El-Rufai remains in [EFCC custody](#) over a 432-billion-naira fraud investigation, leading to accusations of "transferred aggression" involving the National Security Advisor.
- The Plateau State mining disaster (37 dead) has forced the [immediate closure](#) of specific mining sites and a review of safety protocols in the artisanal sector.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Leadership Dynamics & Governance

- The administration is centralizing power through legislative amendments, while facing significant [internal party friction](#), such as the assault on the APC State Chairman in Akure by suspected thugs.
- Efforts to promote "youth inclusion" are highlighted by the appointment of a Minister of Youth in his [mid-30s](#), intended to bridge the gap with a disillusioned younger demographic.

Macroeconomics & Trade

- Inflation stands at [15.1%](#), though the government claims "consistent decline" from higher peaks in late 2025.

- The exchange rate has stabilized near [1,350 Naira to the Dollar](#), with the government projecting further appreciation as foreign reserves approach 50 billion USD.

Terrorism & Asymmetric Threats

- Security forces reported a [significant victory](#) against a bandit leader, Batijo, in Kogi State, involving aerial bombardment and armor.
- Violence continues in Niger State, where [37 people were killed](#) in attacks on the Tungon Makira community.

Global Health & Biosecurity

- Nigeria faces a severe [pediatric cancer crisis](#), with only a 20-30% survival rate compared to 80% in developed nations, driven by late presentation and misdiagnosis.
- The Gombe State Snake Bite Research Center is [overwhelmed](#), reporting 43,000 cases annually and a shortage of expensive antivenom costing over 200,000 Naira per vial.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Hybridization of Election Logistics

The move to retain manual collation while promoting electronic transmission ([Section 60](#) of the new Act) indicates a "halfway house" approach to technology. This reflects a lack of trust in digital infrastructure and serves as a **strategic hedge** for the ruling party, allowing for "fallback options" that critics argue are susceptible to local-level manipulation. The [editorial stance](#) suggests that the "criminal

collision centers" in rural areas remain a primary threat to democratic integrity.

Weaponization of Anti-Corruption

The detention of El-Rufai and the investigations into his tenure suggest the **intensification of intra-elite warfare** as factions begin positioning for the 2027 election cycle. The public discourse is being shaped as a struggle for "accountability," yet the timing—concurrent with legislative changes that consolidate executive influence over the electoral calendar—suggests **legal warfare** (lawfare) intended to neutralize potential political rivals.

Economic "Resilience" vs. Bottom-Up Collapse

There is a stark disconnect between the government's narrative of "gradual recovery" in the [oil and gas sector](#) and the lived reality of 60% interest rates. The reliance on **private sector monopolies** to provide basic state functions (like power generation) indicates a trend toward **corporatized governance**, where the state's survival is inextricably linked to the fiscal health of a few oligarchic entities.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

- **Party Polarization:** The APC is struggling with [internal thuggery](#) and "micro-zoning" disputes ahead of its national convention. The physical assault on the Akure party chairman suggests that local power struggles are increasingly bypassing institutional mediation in favor of violence.

- **Institutional Decay:** The [health sector](#) "[brain drain](#)" is reaching a breaking point, illustrated by a single doctor attempting to run an entire hospital unit for 24 hours. Public trust is further eroded by the [high cost of essential medicine](#), such as antivenom, which is priced out of reach for the agrarian poor.
- **Social Unrest:** While the "spiritual convergence" of [Ramadan and Lent](#) is being utilized as a sedative, underlying anger over food inflation and the perceived "unrealistic revenue projections" of the government remain volatile triggers.

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

- **Strategic Alliances:** Nigeria is increasingly leaning on the United States for security training, with [hundreds of American soldiers](#) recently arriving to provide "technical and skill empowerment" for Nigerian troops fighting insurgency.
- **Regional Standing:** The administration is positioning Nigeria as a "big time player" in the [global banking sector](#), with Nigerian banks expanding operations into the UK, Paris, and the US. However, this outward projection of power contrasts sharply with the [loss of authority](#) within ECOWAS, which the broadcast mentions is "lamenting" ignored judgments.

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Nigeria's economic landscape is characterized by extreme dualism: a booming corporate tax-paying sector alongside a struggling

manufacturing and SME base crippled by prohibitive borrowing costs.

- **Inflation:** 15.1% reported for January 2026, with [food deflation](#) reported in some specific sub-sectors.
- **Interest Rates:** Maximum lending rates reached [60%](#), with Stanbic IBTC recording the highest rates in the industry.
- **Exchange Rate:** Approximately [1.350 Naira per USD](#) on the parallel market.
- **Taxation:** Dangote Cement's [900 billion Naira](#) payment accounts for a massive portion of non-oil revenue.
- **Oil Production:** Averaging [1.64 million barrels per day](#).
- **Infrastructure Debt:** Concerns over the [long-term servicing of loans](#) taken during previous administrations, specifically in Kaduna State.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

- **Nasir El-Rufai (Former Governor):** Current status is [under detention](#) and investigation by the EFCC; his political future is effectively frozen as legal proceedings intensify.
- **Nuhu Ribadu (National Security Advisor):** Emerging as a **central power broker**, engaging in public rhetorical battles with El-Rufai's camp, signaling he holds the "scaffold" of the current administration's anti-corruption drive.
- **Bishop Steven of Artmit:** Appointed as Executive Secretary of the [Nigerian Christian Pilgrim Commission](#), highlighting the use of religious leaders to bolster the administration's moral authority.

- **Siliman Hasan:** Inaugurated as [Chief Registrar](#) of the Federal High Court, a key position in the "technology-driven judicial selection process" touted by the Chief Justice.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

The broadcast exhibits a **dual-track editorial posture**. The "Lead Stories" focus on presidential accomplishments: the Electoral Act signing and the National Industrial Policy. These are presented with a nationalistic, reassuring tone. "Buried Stories" include the [regret and unfulfilled dreams](#) of medical professionals and the [slaughter of 37 civilians](#) in Niger State, which are relegated to the second half of the broadcast. A **conspicuous omission** is any deep analysis of why lending rates reached 60%, a metric that in most systems would signal imminent bank failures or total economic shutdown.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The broadcast frames Nigeria as a "giant" emerging from a "theater of blood" through divine intervention and US-supported military professionalization.

COUNTRIES

- **United States:** Portrayed as a **principled and stabilizing partner**, providing the military expertise and "technical empowerment" necessary to flush out bandits [on the ground](#).
- **Iran/Syria/Cuba:** Framed as chaotic zones of [hostage crises](#) and instability, used as a contrast to Jesse Jackson's diplomatic successes.

- **Rwanda:** Framed as a **competent role model** for women's rights and post-conflict recovery, albeit through the tragic baseline of the 1994 genocide [history](#).

LEADERS

- **President Bola Tinubu:** Portrayed as a **strong, proactive strategist** who acts "within time" to stabilize the nation's democratic and industrial foundations [consistently](#).
- **Donald Trump (US President):** Portrayed as a **supportive global peer** who recognizes Nigeria's progress and supports joint security collaboration [in DC](#).
- **Nasir El-Rufai:** Framed as **corrupt and desperate**, using "gobelish" propaganda to deflect from a 432-billion-naira mismanagement scandal [publicly](#).

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

- **Narrative Seeding:** The government is aggressively seeding the narrative that [inflation is decelerating](#) despite astronomical interest rates, attempting to manage market expectations and prevent capital flight.
- **Domestic Propaganda:** The vocational training centers (e.g., Darkada) are heavily featured as a ["mandate for technical skills,"](#) serving as a distraction from the collapse of primary healthcare and rural security.
- **Psychological Operations:** The "spiritual convergence" of [Ramadan and Lent](#) is being messaged as a "signal everyone" to lower political and religious tensions, weaponizing faith to ensure state stability during a high-risk period.

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- **Electoral Integrity Crisis:** The hybrid manual/electronic system will likely lead to [unprecedented litigation](#) in 2027. The lack of internet penetration will be used as a pretext for "manual overrides" in key opposition strongholds.
- **Manufacturing Collapse:** If lending rates remain at 60%, a **mass insolvency event** for Nigerian SMEs is inevitable within the next six months, potentially leading to widespread labor strikes and youth unrest.
- **Elite Purge:** The El-Rufai case is likely the beginning of a **wider purge** of Northern political leaders who are not sufficiently aligned with the Tinubu administration's 2027 vision.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Anticipate [civil unrest](#) in response to rising food costs as Ramadan begins; police presence in markets will likely be bolstered. Expect more high-profile arrests of former governors as the EFCC broadens its "accountability" drive.

Medium Term (1-6 Months): Regulatory shifts in the mining sector will attempt to formalize artisanal sites to [capture revenue](#), though enforcement will remain weak. The Central Bank may be forced to intervene if the 60% lending rate triggers a banking crisis.

Long Term (1-5 Years): Structural changes to the Electoral Act may lead to a **de facto one-party state** if the "digital gap" is successfully weaponized to justify manual result manipulation. The reliance on US military training may lead to a permanent American footprint in Northern Nigeria.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The confluence of extreme economic measures and fragmented internal security has created a high-volatility environment where a single social trigger could lead to systemic contagion.

- **Macroeconomic Insolvency:** 60% lending rates decimate the private sector. Triggers: Default on industrial loans or a sudden drop in oil revenue. Likelihood: High. Impact: Catastrophic. Mitigations: Emergency interest rate caps or targeted sector subsidies.
- **Electoral Delegation Conflict:** Rejection of the Electoral Act by opposition factions. Triggers: Large-scale protests led by 15-plus opposition senators. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: High instability. Mitigations: Inclusive constitutional review of [Section 60](#).
- **Illegal Extractive Industry Disasters:** Continued loss of life in unmonitored mining sites. Triggers: Another mass fatality event involving "gaseous emissions." Likelihood: High. Impact: Moderate local unrest. Mitigations: Deployment of [rapid response protocols](#) and site formalization.
- **Healthcare System Implosion:** Mass resignation of exhausted medical professionals. Triggers: Deaths of prominent figures due to [understaffing](#). Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: Severe public health risk. Mitigations: Immediate wage increases and "brain drain" retention policies.

- **Elite Conflict Escalation:** The El-Rufai investigation sparks a regional Northern backlash. Triggers: Formal indictment or [extended detention without trial](#). Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: High political volatility. Mitigations: Judicial transparency and bipartisan oversight of anti-corruption agencies.

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- The broadcast fails to explain **the technical mechanism** behind 60% interest rates, leaving a massive gap in understanding the credit crunch.
- The role of **private security firms** in protecting illegal mining sites in Plateau State is ignored, despite 37 deaths from "gaseous emissions."
- The exact nature of the **US military's "technical empowerment"** is unverified; it is unclear if this involves kinetic operations or just training.
- The survival rate data for pediatric cancer (20%) is cited without explaining **the lack of specialized centers** outside of a few urban hubs.

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

- **Managed Collapse:** The high interest rates may be a **deliberate "burn" of the economy** to flush out underperforming sectors and consolidate control under state-aligned oligarchs like Dangote.
- **Electoral Act as Trojan Horse:** The reduction of the notice period to 300 days might be a **preemptive maneuver** to catch the opposition unprepared for an early election call.

- **Black Swan:** A large-scale cybersecurity hack of the INEC server during a local election, proving the "unreliability" of electronic transmission and forcing a permanent return to manual collation nationwide.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- Security: Nigeria should formalize the US military collaboration into a **transparent treaty** to avoid accusations of sovereignty loss.
- Diplomatic: Re-engage with ECOWAS to address "ignored judgments" and maintain regional legitimacy.
- Governance: Establish a **bipartisan technical committee** to oversee the implementation of Section 60 of the Electoral Act.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- Capital Allocation: Avoid high-leverage positions in Nigeria given the [60% interest environment](#); focus on sectors with independent power generation capabilities.
- Regulatory Compliance: Prepare for increased scrutiny in the extractive and agricultural sectors as the government hunts for [unrealistic revenue targets](#).
- Supply Chain: Diversify logistics to bypass Northern regions still prone to [stargated killings](#) and banditry.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The current legislative session is dominated by electoral reform and industrial survival strategies. The **Electoral Act 2026** has now

moved into the implementation phase, while the **Nigeria Industrial Policy 2025** serves as the executive's primary tool for economic signaling.

• BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Electoral Act Amendment Bill 2026:** Reduces election notification from 360 to 300 days; permits manual collation as a fallback to electronic transmission.
- **Mining Act 2007 (Review):** Oversight of underground mining and safety measures in response to Plateau State fatalities.

• HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Nigeria Industrial Policy Unveiling:** Strategic event featuring Aliko Dangote and VP Kashim Shettima to promote manufacturing [infrastructure](#).
- **FRSC 38th Anniversary:** Public event discussing "smart roads" and the introduction of enhanced driver's licenses [technologically](#).

KEY STORIES

- **Tinubu Signs Electoral Act 2026:** President signs controversial bill into law, reducing election lead time and setting the stage for 2027 logistics.
- **60% Interest Rates Shock:** Data shows lending rates have peaked at 60%, with Stanbic IBTC as a lead indicator of a credit crunch.
- **Plateau Mining Disaster:** 37 miners confirmed dead in Zurak due to gaseous emissions; site closed by federal order.
- **El-Rufai Fraud Investigation:** Former Kaduna Governor Nasir El-Rufai detained for a third day over 432-billion-naira mismanagement allegations.

- **Bandit Killings in Niger State:** 37 residents of Tungon Makira killed in renewed insurgent attacks on the border of Kwara state.
- **Kogi Banditry Victory:** Security forces defeat bandit leader Batijo in a major operation involving helicopters and armor.
- **US Military Arrival:** Hundreds of American soldiers land in Nigeria to train local forces in anti-insurgency tactics.
- **Lent-Ramadan Convergence:** Christians and Muslims begin fasting on the same day for the first time in 30 years; framed as a unity event.
- **Death of Jesse Jackson:** Civil rights icon dies at 84; Nigeria's president joins global mourners, recalling his 1990s diplomacy.
- **Pediatric Cancer Crisis:** Report reveals dismal survival rates for Nigerian children due to late diagnosis and expensive treatment.
- **Snake Bite Epidemic in Gombe:** Overwhelmed facility reports 43,000 cases; antivenom costs exceed 200,000 Naira per vial.
- **Dangote's 900 Billion Tax Bill:** Aliko Dangote's companies credited with paying 900 billion Naira in taxes, propping up state revenue.
- **APC Leadership Assaulted:** Akure APC State Chairman attacked with machetes and sticks by suspected thugs at a party meeting.
- **Healthcare Brain Drain:** Video of a single doctor running an entire hospital unit goes viral, highlighting systemic staff shortages.
- **Cooking Content Creator Fame:** John Ava (Dadim) invited to cook at Echo Hotels after viral social media success, illustrating the digital economy's reach.

- **Mirabelle Sexual Assault Case:** Outrage over a viral video of an underage girl in a gym; state agencies vow zero tolerance for sexual violence.
- **Smart Roads Initiative:** FRSC discusses the "architecture" of smart roads and the vandalism of traffic lights and cameras by "ignorant people."
- **Darkada Skills Acquisition:** Vocational center in Akwa Ibom touted as a solution for youth technical skill deficits.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Media Trends is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover

connections, emphases and narrative shifts that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

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