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PRESIDENT, ALG  
HOST

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CLERIC & CIVIC VOICE  
GUEST

## A WORD FROM OUR HOST

Dear Friends, Colleagues, and Fellow Nigerians,

Some conversations are hard to begin. This is one of them. Every week, the Nigeria Leadership Series opens a space for honest, courageous dialogue about the Nigeria we love and the Nigeria we still believe is possible.

This week of May 7, that space was tested — because the question we asked is one no country should ever have to ask: What is the value of a Nigerian life?

Our guest, Pastor Isa El Buba — a voice of faith, conscience, and civic courage — helped us sit with that question honestly. Not to score political points. Not to apportion blame. But to grieve what must be grieved, see what must be seen, and do what must be done.

This edition may be the most important we have ever published. Read it. Share it. Let it stir something in you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ituah Ighodalo'.

*With hope,*

**Pastor Ituah Ighodalo**

*President, ALG | Host, Nigeria Leadership Series*

# The Value of a Nigerian Life

# WHAT DOES A LIFE COST IN NIGERIA?

*On Insecurity, Governance, and Our Collective Conscience*

*Somewhere in the Middle Belt, a farmer who woke before dawn to tend his fields never came home.  
In a village in the North, children sat down to class on a Monday and never returned.*

*In a community that has been attacked three times in the past year, people are not asking when things will improve — they have stopped expecting them to.*

*This edition asks the question that should disturb every Nigerian in power, and every Nigerian who cares: What does our government truly believe a Nigerian life is worth?*

**"No nation can build a future where citizens cannot safely farm, study, trade, or move freely. When life is treated cheaply — even silently — every other ambition becomes a pretence."  
— Pastor Isa El Buba**

## The Silence That Shouldn't Be

There is a particular kind of grief that settles over a nation when the news of mass killings is met — not with outrage — but with a quiet scroll to the next story.

Pastor Isa El Buba named this plainly: Nigeria has normalized violence. Communities across the Middle Belt and Northern regions have been attacked — not once, not twice, but repeatedly — and the national response has grown quieter each time. That silence is not peace. It is the sound of a nation losing faith in itself.

Farmers have abandoned their land. Schools operate under fear. Traders lock up early. And families displaced from their homes wait in camps, not knowing when — or if — it will be safe to return.

These are not abstract governance failures. These are human beings. They are mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, teachers and farmers — people with names, stories, and futures that were violently cut short.

## Where Has Justice Gone?

One of the most painful threads in the conversation was this: known perpetrators of violence are rarely prosecuted. Communities report attacks with specific information. Intelligence exists. And yet — nothing happens.

This is not simply a security failure. It is a justice failure. And justice, when repeatedly denied, does not disappear quietly — it transforms into resentment, mistrust, and eventually, despair.

The question being asked — quietly, painfully, in affected communities — is not just "where are the security forces?" It is: "Do the people in power believe our lives matter?"

That question demands an answer. Not a press release — an answer. Visible prosecutions. Equitable protection. A government that responds with the same urgency regardless of who the victims are.

## WHAT INSECURITY IS COSTING NIGERIA

- Farmlands abandoned across the Middle Belt and North — a direct threat to food security
- Schools disrupted; children missing class out of fear
- Businesses shuttered early, trade routes dangerous
- Displacement camps growing with families unable to return home
- Investor confidence weakened, economic productivity lost

## WHAT WE MUST RECLAIM

- The right of every citizen to farm, trade, and move freely
- A justice system where perpetrators are prosecuted regardless of affiliation
- Community resilience built on trust between citizens and their leaders
- Security forces that are visible, accountable, and protective
- A national conscience that refuses to normalize any loss of life

## An Economy Cannot Grow Where Life Is Unsafe

There is a connection that gets too little attention in policy circles: the link between personal safety and economic productivity. When farmers cannot access their fields, food prices rise. When traders cannot move goods across a dangerous highway, supply chains break. When schools are disrupted, a generation loses years of learning it will never recover.

The insecurity affecting Nigeria's Middle Belt and Northern agricultural belts is not a regional problem — it is a national economic emergency. These regions feed Nigeria. When they are under attack, all of Nigeria goes hungry. Literally, and in the larger sense of the word.

What Pastor El Buba made clear — and what the NLS conversation deepened — is that insecurity and poverty are not separate crises. They are the same crisis, wearing different faces. Solve one, and you begin to solve the other. Ignore one, and neither can ever truly be fixed.

**"Insecurity, corruption, inequality, and weak institutions are not separate problems. They are one wound with many entry points. Nigeria will need to heal them together."**

## 5 Things Nigeria Must Do Right Now

- **Prosecute identified perpetrators — justice must be visible and real, not promised**
- **Protect food-producing communities — farmers deserve armed escorts and security presence**
- **Fund community vigilance properly — citizens organising lawfully deserve resources and recognition**
- **Redirect government waste into security and recovery — excessive public spending must end**
- **Restore trust through equitable governance — every region, every ethnicity, equally protected**

[ INSERT IMAGE — symbolic of resilience, community, or Nigeria ]

## The Role of Every Level of Government

Security is not only Abuja's responsibility — but Abuja sets the tone. When the Federal Government treats some killings as urgent and others as regrettable, communities notice. When known perpetrators walk free, communities notice. When budgets protect legislators but not farmers, communities notice.

State governments must move beyond press statements. The communities suffering most are often rural, agricultural, and under-resourced. Governors who claim to care must show it through deployment, through investment in local vigilance structures, through rehabilitation of the displaced.

Security agencies must rebuild trust. That happens not through promises but through presence, professionalism, and follow-through. Communities that have been let down repeatedly need to see different behaviour — consistently, over time.





## This Isn't Just a Government Problem. It's Everyone's.

It is tempting, when reading about insecurity, to close the newsletter and think:

"I don't live there. There's nothing I can do." But that very thought — multiplied across millions of Nigerians — is part of why the problem persists. Silence and distance are choices. And they carry consequences.

### HERE IS WHERE EACH OF US FITS:

#### **If you are a citizen:**

Speak up. Share this. Attend your local government meeting. Ask your representative what they are doing about insecurity in your area — and hold them to it.

Demand that media covers these stories. Outrage, expressed clearly and consistently, moves governments.

#### **If you are a faith or community leader:**

Refuse to let your congregation or community become comfortable with injustice. Lead peacebuilding.

Reject divisive narratives rooted in ethnicity or religion. Every platform of influence carries a responsibility right now.

#### **If you are in government or security:**

The mandate you were given is to protect Nigerian lives — all of them, equally. Audit your response. Ask whether the communities suffering most would describe your presence as protective. Then act accordingly.

#### **If you are in civil society or the diaspora:**

Your voice amplifies what communities cannot say loudly enough on their own.

Advocate. Document. Support trauma healing initiatives. Fund local resilience. The distance between you and the problem does not diminish your responsibility.

## 3 THINGS WE'RE TAKING AWAY FROM THIS CONVERSATION

1.

Every life has equal value — or none of this works.

Nigeria cannot build a just, prosperous nation while treating some citizens' lives as more grievable than others.

Equality of protection is not optional — it is the foundation of everything.

2.

Insecurity is an economic crisis, not just a humanitarian one.

Abandoned farms, closed businesses, disrupted schools — insecurity destroys productivity.

Food security, GDP growth, and national development are all downstream of safety. We cannot separate them.

3.

Citizens cannot outsource this fight entirely to government.

While government bears primary responsibility, communities, faith leaders, civil society, and ordinary Nigerians all have a role: to organize lawfully, demand accountability, and refuse to be silent.

*Thank you for reading.  
Share this with someone who needs to read it.*

### Join Us Every Thursday

The Nigeria Leadership Series gathers every Thursday at 5:00 PM WAT.

***Real conversations. Real people. Real change.***

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