



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

Isiala Mbano/Okigwe/Onuimo Federal Constituency, Imo State.

Chairman, House Committee on Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) and other Services



THE ATIKU ABUBAKAR ALLEGATION ABOUT NNPC'S ACQUISITION OF OVH

My attention has been drawn to a press release signed by one Phrank Shaibu, on behalf of former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, titled: "Atiku to FG: Explain Why Oando Got Accelerated Approval in AGIP/ENI Purchase," issued on August 25, 2024, wherein I was quoted to have moved a motion directing the suspension of OVH assets.

The press release reads: "In July 2023, the House of Representatives, following the adoption of a motion moved by Miriam Onuoha, directed NNPC Ltd to suspend the acquisition of OVH assets pending an investigation by its committee."

For the record, on July 28, 2023, I sponsored a motion on the "Need to Investigate the Irregularities and Alleged Corruption in the Nigerian Energy Security Provider, NNPC Retail Limited and the Acquisition of OVH Energy Marketing," in response to petition by staff members of NNPC Limited, who were unsure of their employment status following the acquisition of OVH by NNPC Limited, and subsequent relocation of NNPC Retail Limited to Lagos.

Following this motion, an Adhoc Committee was set up by the House leadership, and to which I was named a member, to investigate the allegations.

I would like to state that the Committee invited the Group CEO of NNPC, Mallam Mele Kyari, the Head of NNPC Retail Limited, and their management staff members, who appeared before the Committee where they gave reasons for the acquisition of OVH, as well as the procedures followed in the acquisition. They also rationalized the relocation to Lagos, which according to them, was to enable easy access to the market.

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From their submissions and the bills, it was obvious that members and management of NNPC Retail were constantly commuting to Abuja to engage in trade, which was not only expensive but was also resulting in loss of man-hour, among other challenges.

Some staff members of NNPC Limited, who wrote and submitted the petition were also engaged by the Committee, and their fears were allayed on account of the detailed explanation by the NNPC management, and the Committee's ability to ensure a transparent investigation.

In the course of the investigation, the Committee undertook a tour of the NNPC Retail facilities in Lagos. The exercise showed that the facilities were in good condition.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the management and leadership of NNPC Retail Limited, and indeed, the Group CEO of NNPC Limited, for his pragmatic leadership approach to transparent operations in the energy sector, and management of the NNPC Limited.

In the course of the investigation, the Committee found that President Bola Tinubu had taken some commendable steps to reposition the oil and gas sector.

The Committee also discovered that the NNPC Limited, under Mele Kyari, had made significant strides in enhancing transparency and accountability within the company. For instance, despite the criticisms it had received in recent times, the national oil company trumped the distractions by releasing its annual financial statement for 2023, wherein it posted a number of positive results. This demonstrates transparency.

Mele Kyari's leadership has been characterised by a commitment to openness, which has fostered and bolstered trust and confidence in and among stakeholders. This, understandably, aligns with the implementation of his leadership's Transparency, Accountability, and Performance Excellence (TAPE) Agenda, which aims to ensure that NNPC's operations are open, transparent, and accountable. This management philosophy, from our findings, has involved various measures, such as regular reporting, public disclosure of financial information, and collaboration with external auditors.

Also more importantly, the NNPC has increased its communication efforts to engage with the public and address growing concerns. This includes regular press conferences, social media updates, and community outreach programmes.

Without a doubt, Kyari's leadership has contributed to building a more transparent and accountable NNPC. His efforts have helped to restore public trust in the NNPC and to position the company as a more responsible corporate citizen. Even so, there is still room for improvement.

While, as a legislator, I will continue to hold the Executive accountable, I will not allow myself to be used as an instrument of witch-hunt, blackmail, and intimidation. I will not be a willing tool for the opposition to destroy the good work of Mr. President, His Excellency Bola Tinubu, who is the Minister of Petroleum Resources.

The oil and gas sector is very critical to the Nigerian economy. It should not be politicised. While constructive criticism is necessary to strengthen the sector in the interest of our nation, deploying propaganda and blackmail to score cheap political points is unhelpful, and worse, unpatriotic.

May God bless Nigeria.

Hon Miriam Onuoha

Member Representing Isiala Mbano / Onuimo / Okigwe Federal Constituency