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HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!

62 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE. ARE WE THERE YET?

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"You can have my power bank since I won't need it anymore", Tochi teased me. I watched my childhood friend pack her last items before leaving for the airport. Most of my friends had left the country too. I would have joined them if I had the funds to 'japa' just like them. Tochi's father, a retired professor, had just been released from the captivity of the popularly known '*unknown gunmen*'. Her petrified father decided to relocate to a safer country with his family. All thanks to the **incessant ASUU strike**, I have been a struggling fourth-year Medical student for two years now. I decided to take my mind off all the sadness and depression that the current state of the nation had plunged many citizens like me into. Checking for news updates was the last thing that would lift my mood, with **news of insurgencies and political bants everywhere**.



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I didn't wait for long since the rumble from my stomach came as a quick reminder that I hadn't eaten for the day. I smiled at my only hope of food. *Garri!* I thought to make my meal of garri appetizing by adding groundnuts and milk but quickly changed my mind on remembering the new change in their prices. The inflation has affected even the items that used to be affordable. "Who groundnut and milk help?" I consoled myself. **The average Nigerian man struggles daily despite 62 years of independence.** Indeed, we seem to be going from '*top to bottom*'. They say better days are ahead, but most Nigerians still refer to the past as 'the good old days'. Have we truly experienced our own better days? **Regardless, the hustle and bustle spirit still lives in us.**



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The roads are crammed each day, with resilient people struggling to earn a living and in a quest for a better Nigeria. Despite the cultural and ethnic diversity, the different languages, and our varying religious beliefs, one thing still resonates in the minds of many: **Someday, the dream of a better Nigeria will become a reality.** The day when the last line of the second stanza of our anthem, '*To build a nation where peace and justice shall reign,*' will finally be actualised.

Happy Independence Day Nigeria!