Investigation

Ongoing projects in South East: Truth vs lies

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here were screeching headlines on the front pages of na-
national newspapers on August 28, 2018. The story was about the 69 ongoing projects funded by the Federal Government in the South East part of Nigeria. It made headlines because the governors of the South East had met few days earlier to protest marginalisation of their zone. The governors had alleged that most federally-funded infrastructure projects in their zone were stalled.

Consequent upon this, Nigeria’s information minister, Lai Mohammed, refuted this claim, releasing a list of 69 projects that were ongoing in various parts of the zone. “His Excellencies were either poorly funded or not funded at all, hence work on the roads has lingered,” he added. Mohammed said the 69 roads and bridges, spread across the five states in the South East, were at different stages of completion, thanks to the funding provided by the present Mu-
hammadu Buhari administration from budgetary allocations, the Sokuk Bond and the Presidential Infrastructure Development Fund.

The most vexing problem

The South East is one of the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. It is made up of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states, which together constitute the six geopolitical regions with five states. The other five—South South, South West, North Central and North East states have, with North West having one more. Punits say the region has the worst infrastructure record, with major federal roads in state of disrepair. The zone was made up of mainly Igbo-speaking people of Nigeria, who are one of the tribes on which the zone is divided—while the other two being Yoruba in the South West and Hausa in the North-West/North East.

From the days of Olusegun Obasanjo to Umaru Musa Yar’Adua (2007-2010) and Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015), the infrastruc-
tures of infrastructure revival were made to the people of the region, but these often turned into political gimmicks targeted at winning votes. The promises would often come weeks before general elec-
tions and evaporate weeks after.

The investigation

My interest was, therefore, aroused the moment I saw the list of projects in the zone released by Nigeria’s Informa-
tion Minister.

I decided to fact-check these claims. I noticed that out of the 69 projects, 20 were classified as ‘construction’ while the rest were designated ‘rehabilitation’.

I moved down to the South East to investigate the one categorised as ‘construction’.

A bridge or a ridge?

I left Lagos for Ihiala. My first port of call was Osakwa Bridge. This project had been listed as ‘construction of Osakwa Bridge in Anambra State, C/No. 6043’ by the Minister. My findings showed that Osakwa Bridge was completed on August 6, 2009, to Horizon Construction Co. Ltd. According to the list released by Mohammed, this project was ‘ongoing’.

When I got to this location, I observed that there was no work going on here. My findings showed that the project was completed two years after the immediate past administration of Goodluck Jonathan.

But there is something striking about this project. What the Federal Government calls ‘Osakwa Bridge’ is not technically a bridge. It is just a road in a typical Nigerian vill-
age—sand, hilly and bumpy. The Cambridgeshire (online) defines a bridge as a ‘structure that is built over a river, road, or railway to allow people and vehicles to cross from one side to the other’. This so-called bridge does not fit into this definition.

Also, the road leading to it is not tarred and extending from it is decrepit and is not passed by vehicles. I observed that the road is not connected to other road systems and is largely unused. This bridge does not lead to anywhere.

Villagers told me that work was done and completed on the so-called bridge, but the road looks like nothing was even done.

Completed projects listed as ‘ongoing’

Findings showed that the list released by Mohammed contained a number of projects completed by the immediate past administration. Muhamma-
du Buhari’s administration is yet to complete some projects listed by Lai Mohammed on May 29, 2015, but the list released included projects completed before this date.

First is the Olokoro-Iso-
ala-Oboro-Nnno Junction Road completed on December 29, 2010, to Aba Bok Company at N515.315 million. This road runs from Federal University of Agriculture, Umudike, down to Isiala Ngwa. I found that it was completed in 2013. Contrary to claim made by the Minister, the road was not completed by May 2015.

No work was going on as of September 13 when I used this road. It was neither aban-
don nor poorly funded as residents testified that it was completed around 2013.

Another one completed by the immediate past adminis-
tration but listed as ‘ongoing’ by Lai Mohammed is the Oko-
la-Arukwu-Itajia-Okwu-
Obuochie-Iwawa, awarded on March 10, 2010, to Rhas Nigeria Limited at N990.673 million. I found that this road was completed before the advent of the current government. No work was going on as of September 14 and it was not poorly funded as claimed by the Minister.

While going to Aba, the industrial nerve centre of the region, from Owerri, Imo State capital, I alighted at Imo River. This road borders Imo and Abia states. The road leading to this river was listed as ongoing. But I found that it was completed before May 2015.

No work was going on as of September 13 when I used this road. It was neither aban-
don nor poorly funded as residents testified that it was completed around 2013.

Another one completed by the immediate past adminis-
tration but listed as ‘ongoing’ by Lai Mohammed is the Olokoro-Isiala Ngwa Road, awarded on December 23, 2010, to La Ann Engineering and Construction Ltd for N589.54 million.

I found that this road was completed in 2014 and is in good shape.

Eight out of 20 ‘not on-
go ing’

I classified eight out of these 20 roads as ‘not on-
go ing’ because they are un-
completed and no work was going on around them as of September 15.

On my way to Ihiala Town-Amufu-Ulli with Spur (Ihiala-Ouru-Umu-Umudu Sec-

Olokoro Bridge

Completed Mbaise-Nwoga road at Imo River

So, it is correct that this road was not completed and could have been poorly fund-
d.

I moved down to ‘Ikenne Drive Spur on Oba-Oke古ri Road with abutments to Lai Okoro University, Awdu and University of Ibadan’.

The Federal Government said it awarded a contract on this road to IDC Construction in June this year.

I went through this road but no work was going on.

“We have not seen any con-
tactor on this road. We only heard someone accepting the contract,” Daniel Okoro, a commercial driver plying this road, said.

“Either they are working for the rains to subside,” Uche Ene, another commercial vehi-
cle driver said.

My investigation took me to ‘Ojhi-Achi-Mmakw-Awgu Road With Spur To Otopa Ogbu in Enugu State’. This road was not completed and no work was going on when I used it. The same fate applies to Ogbute-Umuida-Ak-
paa-Oduru Road in Enugu State.

I witnessed an anomaly on ‘Agbou-Owa-Mbargha Owa-Ebenbe (Anambra State Border)’ road. I was supposed to ongoing. I find it difficult to make it a bit more notable.

But as of the second week of this investigation, no contracts corres-
pon
d visitor to the road, the road looked decent.

Roads in this area have been abandoned for ages and politicians play politics with them.

Once the government announces the construction of roads in the region, politicians begin to take the praise by claiming that they influenced the immediate past government. The list of Ozu Abam Ohafia told me.

‘It is not their job to influ-
cence contracts’ he asks, rhetorically.

Next is the Ocha-Oso Road, a busy road that forms an axis between Anambra and Ebonyi states’ border. Work on this road, though ongoing, is slow.

The N979.889 million Omur-Umbuka Road, which borders Anambra and Enu-

gu states, is ongoing, just as Nnem-Udume-Udum-Urba Road. Similarly, construction of Nnem-Umone-Mburu-

b-Nara Road with spur to Ogbute/Okula Road/Enugu State is on going and is handled by Arab Contractors OAO Nigeria Limited.

Also, Umuwe-Nwen-
weh, Eze Alex Agba-Obeagu-Mmali-Nnedu Road Project Enugu State is ongoing, and is handled by Arab Contractors OAO Nigeria Limited.

Conclusion

Out of the 20 projects list-

ed as ongoing by Mohammed, only seven are actually ongo-
ing. The few pictures and videos we were able to get are not enough to prove them. Mathematically, this is equal to 35 per cent.
**Investigation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Date Awarded</th>
<th>Contractor</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
<th>Amount voted for the contract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nkporo-Abiriba-Ohafia</td>
<td>May 2012</td>
<td>Dutum Construction Nig Ltd</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Abandoned by Goodluck Jonathan. Project work in fits and starts now.</td>
<td>N2.739 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okokoro-Ijesa-Osoro-Nnono Junction</td>
<td>December 21, 2010</td>
<td>Abia Bok Company</td>
<td>Completed Before 2015</td>
<td>Was completed by Goodluck Jonathan</td>
<td>N515.315 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahiakwo-Amangwo-Umuhia-Ngwa-Ngw Road</td>
<td>December 23, 2010</td>
<td>La Ann Engineering Nig Ltd</td>
<td>Completed Before 2015</td>
<td>Was completed by Goodluck Jonathan</td>
<td>N589.554 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okokoro-Alakwau-Itaja-Okwu-Obucha-Ikwoan</td>
<td>March 10, 2010</td>
<td>Rhas Nigeria Limited</td>
<td>Completed before 2015</td>
<td>Was completed by Goodluck Jonathan</td>
<td>N990.673 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Ohafla-Oso Road in Abia/Ebonyi States</td>
<td>December 13, 2012</td>
<td>Uniglobe Construction Engineering Limited</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Project ended mid-way before Health Centre Ohafla. No work going on now from this point to Ihiala junction</td>
<td>N711.888 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction of Ihiala-Orlu Road in Ikese Town-Amfani-Uli with Spur (Ihiala-Orlu-Umuduru Section) in Anambra State</td>
<td>October 30, 2013</td>
<td>Tomline Nig. Ltd.</td>
<td>Not ongoing</td>
<td>Much of the work completed by last administration</td>
<td>N625.690 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Osekawa Bridge in Anambra State, CI No. 6043</td>
<td>October 6, 2009</td>
<td>Horizon Construction Co. Ltd</td>
<td>Bridge not seen anywhere</td>
<td>Road extending from the so-called bridge dilapidated and unmotorable</td>
<td>N896.863 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Omor-Umukpa Road in Anambra and Enugu States</td>
<td>December 22, 2014</td>
<td>Arrays Global Services Limited</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Slow, in fits and starts but ongoing</td>
<td>N979.889 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Nnenna-Uduma-Uburu Road, Section I (26.22km), and Section II: Spur to Ishiagu-Mile 2 Road (14km), Enugu/Ebonyi States</td>
<td>November 14, 2012</td>
<td>Setraco Nigeria Limited</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>N11.603 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Oji-Achi-Mmakuk-Awgu Road With Spur To Obegu-Ugbo in Enugu State.</td>
<td>December 11, 2014</td>
<td>Golden Construction Company Limited</td>
<td>Abandoned and not ongoing</td>
<td>Achi to Awgu Road not motorable</td>
<td>N994.661 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Aguobu-Owa-Mgbagba Owa-Ebenebe (Anambra State Border) with Spur to Awaha-Oyoha-Oyofilo-Iwollo Road in Enugu State</td>
<td>December 13, 2012</td>
<td>Coduc Nigeria Limited</td>
<td>Not completed and not ongoing</td>
<td>Only good road is Ebenebe road</td>
<td>N3.035 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umuuma-Ndumu-Agba Umuuma-Ebenebe-Arnasi Akwa Express Road with Spur from Umuma – Ndumu (Agba-Ebenebe) Section I in Enugu State,</td>
<td>December 17, 2012</td>
<td>Master Holdings Nigeria Limited</td>
<td>Limited rehab done and completed by Goodluck Jonathan</td>
<td>Road still bad. Not ongoing. You will have to pay N1,000 for a bike to take you through this road.</td>
<td>N995.369 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Nnenna-Abua-Awgu Nsukka Road with spur to Obegu Uduuma Road in Enugu State</td>
<td>March 22, 2017</td>
<td>Arab Contractors OAO Nigeria Limited</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>N6.437 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Mbaise-Ngwa Road with Bridge at Imo River, Phase I in Imo/Abia States</td>
<td>December 13, 2012</td>
<td>Mangroveotech Nigeria Limited</td>
<td>Completed by Goodluck Jonathan</td>
<td>It is in good shape and not ongoing.</td>
<td>N2.943 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Ikot Ekpin Border-Aba-Owerri Dualisation Road, Section I, Phase I (11.28Km from Owerri End) in Akwa Ibom/Abia/Ibom States</td>
<td>December 13, 2012</td>
<td>Arab Contractors OAO Nigeria Limited</td>
<td>Not ongoing</td>
<td>Work stopped about two months ago. Some sections of Aba axis bad.</td>
<td>N3.780 billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: My Findings, Federal Ministry of Power, Works & Housing