

In deluge of protests, fuel subsidies prove hard to abolish

LONDON, Aug 8 (Reuters) - Like thousands of Nigerians and millions of others across the developing world, higher fuel costs have irked Antonia Arosanwo.

"I am angry," the 46-year-old mother of five said at a bus stop in Lagos, the teeming commercial capital of Africa's most populous nation.

Her journey from Ojuelegba, a bustling suburb just 8 miles north of Lagos's business district, has more than doubled in price to 700 naira (45 U.S. cents) since the government announced an end to fuel subsidies last year - allowing petrol prices to triple.

Arosanwo's anger mirrored that of thousands of other Nigerians, whose nationwide protests last week demanding protection from rocketing inflation, spreading hunger and dwindling jobs rattled the government.

Nearly all had one core complaint: fuel prices.

Across Africa - and a string of other emerging market nations - debt-laden governments trying to shed costly fuel subsidies are running headlong into angry populations reeling from years of increasing living costs.

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