

DAILY

BULLETIN

VOLUME:2 NO:219 DATE: 1st September, 2022

INSECURITY: THERE IS STILL TIME TO ADDRESS CONCERNS BEFORE 2023 GENERAL ELECTION - INEC CHAIRMAN

Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, has expressed optimism that despite genuine concerns over insecurity in many parts of the country, there is still enough time to address the concerns ahead of the 2023 General Election.

Prof. Yakubu made the remark at the Expert Meeting on Conducting Elections in Volatile Security Environment, organised in collaboration with the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), held at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja, on Thursday.

The event had in attendance representatives of the various security agencies who make up the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), INEC National Commissioners and members of the Civil Society Community.

While commending the CDD for putting together the event, Prof. Yakubu said “by bringing together experts, senior security officials and the INEC leadership to share experience and discuss security concerns ahead of the 2023 General Election, CDD hopes to kickstart further collaborative engagements among stakeholders around the security challenges ahead of the election”.

He said: “I have no doubt in my mind that today’s meeting meets the twin tests of relevance and timeliness. The meeting is relevant because of the volatile security situation in some parts of the country and its implications on the forthcoming elections. It is timely because the election is fast approaching but there is still time to address the security concerns ahead of the election.”

The Chairman added that “most appropriately, I believe that arising from the shared experience of participants at this meeting, specific recommendations will be made to further enrich our understanding of the security issues in the forthcoming election, the various dimensions of the challenges and, most importantly, possible measures to respond to them to ensure that elections are held peacefully nationwide as required by law”.

He recalled that “only recently the office of the Inspector General of Police organised a nationwide capacity-building for police personnel on election security. The Police was not only motivated by the same concern of ensuring a secure environment for the election but also enhancing the professionalism of police personnel on election duty”.

The Chairman further explained that activities towards the 2023 General Election would enter the critical stages this month. He said in the next 19 days especially on Sept. 20, the Commission would publish the final list of candidates for national elections-Presidential, Senatorial and House of Representatives- as provided in Sec. 32(1) of the Electoral Act 2022 and the Timetable and Schedule of Activities released by the Commission.

“This will be followed on 4th October 2022 by the publication of the final list of candidates for State elections (Governorship and State Houses of Assembly). Campaign in public by political parties will officially commence on 28th September 2022 as provided by Sec. 94(1) of the Electoral Act 2022.

“As campaigns commence, we appeal to all political parties and candidates to focus on issue-based campaigns. This is the best way to complement our efforts to ensure transparent elections in which only the votes cast by citizens determine the winner”, he added.

INEC RAISES CONCERN OVER UNSERIOUS OBSERVER GROUPS

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has expressed concern over what it terms ‘unseriousness’ about election observation by some organisations accredited to observe elections.

Chairman of the Election and Party Monitoring Committee (EPMC) and National Commissioner, Mr. Sam Olumekun raised the concern during an Election Review Workshop, held in Abuja on Wednesday 31st August, 2022.

The EPMC Chairman noted that “while there are quite a number of trustworthy, honest, objective, hardworking and credible observer groups in the country and have contributed greatly to deepening democracy and the electoral process in

Nigeria over the years, there are still others who have continued to be unserious about election observation and cared less about integrity”.

Represented by the Director of Voter Education and Publicity Department, Ayodele Aluko, the National Commissioner disclosed that the Commission has evidence of observer groups engaged in plagiarism in their report. He said “we observed a number of groups submitting similar reports. The Commission is concerned with this development and new measures will soon be unveiled to manage such elements within the election”.

He further lamented the low number of accredited observer groups who have submitted their reports since the conclusion of the Ekiti and Osun states governorship elections.

According to Mr. Olumekun, “by our records, out of the 88 accredited groups for Ekiti and Osun states governorship elections, 85 completed accreditation process and deployed about 9,830 field observers, for Ekiti and Osun.”

“Since the conduct of these elections, observer groups have been submitting their reports to the Commission but it is pertinent to note that out of the 88 accredited groups, only 25 reports have been received for Ekiti, while only 27 groups have submitted for Osun election so far”, he said.

The EPMC Chairman however, commended majority of the observer groups who he said have continued to deepen the electoral process through active participation in all aspects of the Commission’s activities and have continued to offer advice on areas deserving of improvements.”

“I also appreciate you all for the role you played in ensuring that the Electoral Act 2022 was signed. On behalf of the Commission, I acknowledge your resilience and your support throughout the process, he added”.

Mr. Olumekun implored all Civil Society Organisations to study the Electoral Act 2022 in order to gain the needed knowledge of the provisions that have changed the framework and dynamics of election management in the country.

He further hinted that the Commission will soon commence the process of engaging observer groups for the 2023 General Election, and advised that organisations who maybe interested in observing the General Election should apply at the right time, stressing that the Commission will not accommodate late applications.

The Director, Election and Party Monitoring Department (EPM), Aminu Idris urged the Observer groups who were yet to submit their report to do so.

He said the Commission needed to study and review the reports for improvements before the general election next year.

The Director underscored the critical role observers play in the electoral process, stressing that their reports are considered valuable tools to assess the performance of the electoral body.

Editor-in-Chief: Victor Ayodele Aluko

Editors: Chukwuemeka Ugboaja & Chinwe Ogbuka

Reporter: Nathaniel Gana