

DAILY

BULLETIN

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INEC CHAIRMAN REQUESTS IMMEDIATE ACTION OF SECURITY AGENCIES TO STOP THE SPREAD OF VIOLENT POLITICAL ATTACKS.

Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, has called for decisive action by security agencies to stem the spate of violent political attacks in the country, ahead of the general election next year. He noted that if no urgent and decisive steps are taken, the attacks will intensify as the country approaches the election date.

Prof. Yakubu made the call during an emergency meeting of the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) held at the INEC Headquarters, Abuja, on Friday.

He explained that the ICCES emergency meeting was convened due to simultaneous attacks on the Commission's offices in two states within the week, as well as the increasing spate of attacks during electioneering campaigns by political parties.

Speaking on the increasing spate of political attacks, Prof. Yakubu said, "The Commission has so far tracked 50 incidents across 21 States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory. These unhappy occurrences are coming just a little over one month into the election campaign, which is scheduled to last for about five months from 28th September 2022 to 23rd February 2023 for national elections (Presidential and National Assembly) and from 12th October 2022 to 11th March 2023 for State elections (Governorship and Houses of Assembly)."

"The Commission is worried that if no urgent and decisive steps are taken, the attacks will intensify as we approach the election date. As we all know, a peaceful campaign heralds a peaceful election. We need to take decisive steps to stem the ugly trend."

Calling for immediate and decisive action to arrest the ugly trend, the INEC Chairman said, "As a body, the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) brings together security, safety, and other agencies responsible for securing the process and ensuring peaceful elections in Nigeria."

"Understandably, Nigerians expect decisive action from ICCES. "It is important that we move swiftly to apprehend perpetrators, prosecute them as required by law and reinforce security around election officials and electoral infrastructure around the country."

ATTACKS ON INEC OFFICES

The INEC Chairman observed that the simultaneous attacks on the Commission's Local Government Area offices in Abeokuta South in Ogun State and Ede South Local Government office in Osun State, which happened yesterday, Thursday, November 10, 2022, around 1.15 am and 6 a.m., respectively, may not be isolated. He said, "We leave this determination to the security agencies who are investigating the incidents."

Commenting on the extent of damages caused by the attacks and the Commission's immediate response towards ensuring that no one is disenfranchised as a result of the dastardly act, Prof. Yakubu said, "While the damage in the attack in Ede South was minimal, that of Abeokuta South was extensive".

"Materials destroyed include 904 ballot boxes, 29 voting cubicles, 8 electric power generators, 57 election bags, 30 megaphones, 65,699 uncollected Permanent Voters' Cards (PVCs), and a host of other assorted items such as stamps and stamp pads."

"The Commission is taking urgent steps to repair the damage to the building and replace the facilities in the Ede South Local Government Area so that the office becomes functional again immediately."

He disclosed that due to the devastating effect of the damage to the Abeokuta South LGA office, the staff and all activities relating to that office have been relocated to the old state office in Abeokuta.

He said, "For the Abeokuta South Local Government Area office, the destruction was total. Consequently, the Commission is relocating our staff to the old State office (also known as INEC Office Annex) in the Oke-Ilewo area of Abeokuta. All activities involving the 15 Registration Areas (Wards) and 445 Polling Units

in Abeokuta South Local Government Area will henceforth be coordinated from the new location in Oke-Ilewo".

He continued: "Similarly, the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) for Ogun State has been directed to compile the Voter Identification Numbers (VINs) of all the 65,699 Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs) lost in the attack from our database and submit the record for immediate reprint. "We want to assure affected registered voters in Abeokuta South that no one will be disenfranchised as a result of this dastardly act."

In his remarks, the National Security Adviser and Co-Chairman of ICCES, Maj.-Gen. Babagana Monguno (rtd), in his remarks said that President Muhammadu Buhari had given all security agencies intelligence agencies the marching order to deal decisively with any individual or group who attempt to disrupt the peace and success of the election.

He said that from his own statistics, within a period of just one month, from Oct. 8 to Nov. 9 there had been 52 cases of violence across 22 states of the federation, describing it as a bad signal that must be addressed quickly.

"I want to assure you that the security agencies have been given clear cut instructions to pre-empt and deal with any situation in which any group organization or institution decides to embark on what we consider to be a fundamentally criminal enterprise for undertaking.

"Whether these are isolated incidents, collected group activities. It is not important. The important thing is that every Nigerian is allowed to cast his votes. And those votes must count."

The NSA said further warned t that any person or group who intends perpetrate any unlawful act, regards of his political affiliation, would be awarded appreciate sanction.

On his part, the Inspector General of Police, Alkali Baba Usman, called more synergy among security agencies in order to adequately secure the political and electoral space.

He said that the Police were committed to ensuring that the 2023 General Election is peaceful and credible, but stressed the need for political actors to play by the rule to enable security agencies protect them.

The IGP disclosed that a directive had been given to all Commissioners of Police and Divisional Police Officers (DPOs) to ensure that security is upscaled at all INEC office nationwide.

INEC DEBUNKS ALLEGED PLAN TO ABANDON RESULT VIEWING PORTAL

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has refuted a claim in the Reports of a section of the media alleging plans to rig the 2023 General Election by abandoning the direct and real-time electronic upload of polling unit results to the INEC Result Viewing (IREV) portal.

The Commission debunked the false allegation in a statement signed and issued by the Chairman, Information and Voter Education Committee (IVEC), Festus Okoye Esq., on Friday.

The Statement read: “Our attention has been drawn to reports in a section of the media of alleged plans by the Commission to rig the 2023 General Election by abandoning the direct and real-time electronic upload of polling unit results to the INEC Result Viewing (IREV) portal by the Registration Area Technical Support Staff (RATECHSS”.

“The claim is patently false. The Commission has repeatedly reassured Nigerians that it will transmit results directly from the polling units as we witnessed in Ekiti and Osun State Governorship elections and 103 more constituencies where off-cycle Governorship/FCT Area Council elections and bye-elections were held since August 2020. The results can still be viewed on the portal”.

“The IREV is one of the innovations introduced by the Commission to ensure the integrity and credibility of election results in Nigeria. It is therefore inconceivable that the Commission will turn around and undermine its own innovations”.

“The public is advised to ignore the reports. The Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and IREV have come to stay for voter accreditation and uploading of polling unit results in real-time in Nigeria”.

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