

DAILY

BULLETIN

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WE'LL ENSURE ELECTIONS ARE NO LONGER POSTPONED AT THE 11TH HOUR ON ACCOUNT OF LOGISTICS – PROF. YAKUBU

The Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, has said the Commission, through its proactiveness and effective collaboration with relevant stakeholders, is determined to ensure that elections are not postponed at the eleventh hour on account of election logistics.

He gave the assurance, at the inauguration of the Electoral Logistics Committee (ELoC), held at the INEC Headquarters, Abuja on Friday.

Prof. Yakubu explained that the Committee, which is an ad-hoc inter-agency committee established close to the General Election, was borne out of the Commission's effort to ensure the speedy and safe delivery of huge quantities of sensitive and non-sensitive materials for the 2023 General Election.

He noted that "the logistics for the clearance, handling, custody, delivery, and distribution of enormous quantities of election materials is the biggest operation Nigeria undertakes every four years," and as such, he maintained that "every national asset must be mobilized."

Speaking on the composition of the Committee, the INEC Chairman said, "For the movement of election materials and protection of personnel nationwide, Section 27(3) of the Electoral Act 2022 empowers the Commission to seek the support of the armed forces."

"Accordingly, the three-armed services (Army, Navy, and Air Force) are members of ELoC. similarly, the Nigeria Police Force, being the lead agency in election security is also a member as well as the sister security agencies".

"The Nigeria's Customs Service (NSC) and the Nigeria Ports Authority (NPA) are also members pursuant to their statutory responsibilities for the clearance and release of materials at seaports and other entry points."

Commenting further on the composition and roles of member agencies, Prof. Yakubu said: "At our various airports, aviation agencies such as the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), and the Nigerian Air Space Management Agency (NAMA) play important roles, including the facilitation of access to all airports nationwide for shuttle services for elections as the need arises."

"So too are the aviation handling companies, Nigerian Aviation Handling Company (NAHCO) and Skyway Aviation Handling Company (SAHCO), in the provision of ground facilities for loading and offloading of cargo at airports." He continued: "Furthermore, in 2019, some of the flights conveying essential electoral materials could not land at some airports because of poor visibility. Accordingly, the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMET) is a member of ELoC to "provide expert advice on weather-related issues to facilitate proper and efficient planning and delivery of materials."

The INEC Chairman urged the Committee to commence their meeting immediately and submit periodic reports through the Chairman of the Committee, who is an INEC National Commissioner. "In this way, we will be tracking progress and knowing well in advance of potential weak links in the logistics chain. "We will also be updating Nigerians on the progress we are making on a regular basis," he explained.

Other members of the Committee include; staff of the Commission, heads of the Nigerian Immigration Service, the Federal Road Safety Service Corps (FRSC), the Federal Fire Service, and various Aviation agencies. Others are the President of the Nigeria Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), and heads of other Transport Unions in the Country.

The Committee which is chaired by National Commissioner, Major General Modibo Alkali (Rtd), has the following Terms of Reference; to develop a seamless strategic plan for airlift, receipt, and distribution of sensitive materials; to determine areas of challenges or inadequacies in material storage, vehicles, aircraft, cargo, and other material delivery modes in order to ensure timeous delivery of materials for the election; and to determine, source, and coordinate air cargo carriage and delivery to specified airport in Nigeria.

The Committee was also mandated to; determine, source and coordinate truck cargo carriage and delivery to specified States, Local Government Areas etc; to develop and define a workable template for the provision of security, transportation and deployment/distribution of materials for election; to Identify and map out difficult terrains, areas with security challenges, and crisis-prone areas; and identify the mode of transportation to those areas.

Others are: to co-opt any professional, person, or agency that will strengthen the work of the committee; to Make recommendations that will assist the Commission for a successful 2023 General Election.; and submit a comprehensive report detailing an actionable plan with timelines.

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