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DEMOCRACY WATCH

An E-newsletter from the TMG

Transition

Monitoring Group

(A coalition of Human Rights NGOs and Civil Society Organizations)

Block B, Flat 2,
Ogun Court,
Gaduwa Estate
Apo
P.O.Box 11312
Garki – Abuja

Tel: 234 (9)6705240
6702409

Website:

www.tmgnigeria.com

The E-Newsletter (Democracy Watch) is produced monthly via email by the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG)

The Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) is a coalition of over 230 human rights, non-governmental and civil society organizations formed in August 1998 for the purpose of developing integrity in the electoral process by monitoring and reporting on the

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News Papers Excerpts on Political Reporting:

➤ **Stories on Voters Registration**

Voters' Registration: House summons lwu

The House of Representatives has summoned the Chairman, Independent Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Maurice lwu, in connection with the on-going voters' registration, which the lawmakers said, has failed. lwu is expected to appear before the House on next Tuesday, at 10am.

The resolution on lwu came on the heels of a motion by the House Leader, Honorable Abdul Ningi, drawing the attention of his colleague to what he said was the failure of the electronic system in several parts of the country.

Thisday, Thursday, November 2, 2006 pg6

All Nigerians will register – lwu

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) register all eligible voters in the country before the end of the exercise despite the hitches experienced at the start of the exercise, the chairman of the commission, Prof. lwu says. He said 10,000 additional electronic registration machines are to be provided to improve the ongoing voter revalidation exercise across the country. He said the commission expects more machines to be delivered soon to increase the past of the registration exercise.

Daily Trust, Tuesday, November 21, 2006

prosecution of the political programme.

The work of the TMG is handled under a coordinating committee system of decision making and a secretariat which carries out its day to day activities. In addition to national committees of the TMG, it also has Zonal and State Coordinators drawn from among member organizations. TMG's Chairperson coordinates the activities of these committees and of the secretariat. Comments from Readers are Welcome and can be sent to tmgabuja@yahoo.com or tmg@tmgnigeria.org

Inadequate materials mar voters' registration

The ongoing revalidation of voters registration card exercise has been marred by Inadequate materials, inefficiency of officials among other teething problems which has led people to question the success of the exercise. Weekly Trust investigation in Kaduna and Zaria, showed that many people are unable to carry out their civic responsibility because they do not know where to registrar. Most other people are not aware of the exercise, while few have been able to register after undergoing some try and error processes. Though there is general shortage of the Data Capture Machines in Kaduna state just as it obtainable in other states, likewise the issue of breakdown of the system even as the batteries constitute another problem.

Daily Trust, Friday, November 3, 2006 pg7

Reps criticize voter registration exercise

Members of the House of Representatives yesterday criticized the hitches in the ongoing voters' registration exercise being conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), across the country. The House summoned the commission's chairman to appear before its plenary session yesterday to present the situation report on the commission's preparedness for the 2007 general elections particularly voters' registration. In a session that lasted over four hours, INEC boss told the lawmakers that the on-going electronic voters' registration across the country was "on course".

He said that out of the 33,000 machines needed for the on-going registration of voters', only 10000 units have been delivered so far, adding that the House should give him till November 15, to enable him deliver the remaining machines.

Daily Trust, Wednesday, November 08, 2006 pg1/4

INEC insist on e-Registration

Despite hiccups associated with the ongoing electronic registration of voters, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has said it will not return to manual registration as suggested by the House of Representatives. INEC Chairman, Prof. Iwu stated the commission's position, saying to abandon the use of Direct Data Capture (DDC) machines at this stage of the registration would compromise the integrity of the electoral process.

Thisday, Thursday, November 09, 2006 pg1/4

AC alleges night registration of voters in Ondo14

The controversy trailing the on going voters' registration heightened recently as the Action Congress (AC) Ondo state chapter has accused the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) of manipulating the exercise to stay in power at all cost. According to AC, some groups of voters believed to be strong supporters of Governor Olusegun Agagu were being registered every night at the Government house, in Akure since the exercise began. The allegation was immediately refuted by the Chief of Staff to the Governor, Mr. Femi Agagu who said there was no iota of truth in the rumor. But a leader of the AC, Senator Kayode Iwakun, insisted that registration of voters had turned into a thing of the night at the Government House, Akure. He said "when the registration officers want to register people in the day time, the machine would pack up and they would battle for hours to put the machine in order. This is because the machines would have been over used in the night by the so-called government people and in the daytime the Direct Data Capture machine would have become weak and it would not work until it is charged for hours.

Daily Trust, Wednesday, November 08, 2006 pg1/4

Senate to amend Electoral Act

The Senate has started a process to change the law that would guide the polls come 2007 in less than six months after its enactment. This decision is coming barely five months to the first set of elections coming up in April 14, 2007, is expected to whittle down powers of the electoral commission to postpone scheduled elections. Section 27 of the Electoral Act empowers the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to postpone elections in cases of natural or manmade crisis. This decision is not unconnected to the tardy voter registration exercise, which they say may provide INEC the excuse to postpone the elections. Senator Victor Ndoma-Egba confirmed the proposed review and the concerns of senators over the electronic voter registration. He added that the slow pace of the exercise might scuttle the entire election if prompt actions are not taken.

Daily Trust, Wednesday, November 15, 2006 pg1/4

Voter registration: Lagos politicians, INEC staff quizzed by SSS

Men of the State Security Service (SSS) have questioned some politicians in Lagos state, with at least two staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), over an alleged plot to sabotage the ongoing voters' registration exercise. Sources at the state INEC office in Yaba said that some staff of the electoral body perfected the act within Lagos state, especially in Badagry Local Government. The politicians were said to have compromised the senior staff of the electoral body and ensure that they sabotage the Direct Data Capture machines allocated to Lagos state with the aim of showing the world that the electronic machine was unsuitable for the forthcoming elections. The management of the electoral body has set up an administrative panel to look into the case, as well as identify other possible areas of leakages, which some people could exploit to discredit the voters' registration exercise.

Daily Trust, Wednesday, November 08, 2006 pg10

➤ Stories on Impeachment

Court voids Ladoja's Removal

Oyo state Governor Rashidi Ladoja who was removed from office in controversial circumstances, January 12, 2006 has got a reprieve as the Court of Appeal sitting in Ibadan nullified his impeachment by 18 out of 32 members of the House of Assembly. In a unanimous decision read by Justice James Ogebe, the appellate court said the action of the 18 lawmakers contradicted the provision of section 188 of the 1999 constitution, which deals with impeachment proceedings, and must therefore be voided. The landmark judgment was immediately greeted by mixed reactions from the main actors. While Ladoja hailed it as a vindication of his cause and a victory for democracy. His deputy Otunba Adebayo Alao-Akala, who was installed by the 18 lawmakers, said the judgment had no effect on his current status.

But Ladoja says he will only resume office if the police and the Security agents provide him with enough security. The police boss said he would only provide security if the court's judgment is served on him. Meanwhile, counsels to Ladoja are making efforts to ensure that the court's judgment is served on all parties concerned to see that the impeached governor returns to office.

Thisday, Thursday, November 2, 2006 pg1/4

Supreme Court refutes IG's claim on Ladoja

Supreme Court last night denied issuing any directive that police recognition be withheld from the Oyo state governor, Alhaji Rasheed Ladoja. The apex court also disclosed that as at close of work yesterday, it was yet to receive any notice of appeal against the judgment of the Court of Appeal, Ibadan Division, which voided the controversial impeachment of the governor on the January 10, 2006.

The Inspector General of Police, Mr. Sunday Ehindero, had after receiving the news of the Appeal Court judgment told the Guardian that he could not act on it because he had been directed by the Supreme Court to maintain the *status quo ante bellum*

The IG said the Supreme Court had told him that an appeal against the judgment had been received and that any action on the decision must be withheld.

But the deputy Registrar of the Supreme Court, Usman Musale, in a press statement signed on behalf of the Chief Registrar, said that the police Chief boss could not have made the claim as attributed. The apex court in response said, the court had not received any notice of appeal as claimed by the police boss and that the court did not direct that the police maintain the status quo ante bellum

The Guardian, Friday, November 3, 2006 pg1/2

Senators differ on Anambra crisis, want respect for constitution

For over an hour, a motion brought by Senator Ben Obi on the political situation in Anambra state yesterday divided the upper legislative house. However, Senators resolved that the National Judicial Council (NJC) should be prevailed upon to comply strictly with the provision of the constitution.

Two other motions, which sought the Senate to strongly condemn the absence of legislative due process in the early morning impeachment of Governor Peter Obi and resolve that since 15 of the 30 members of the State House of Assembly did not meet the required two thirds majority as enshrined in Section 188 and therefore made the impeachment of Obi invalid, divided the senators. All were advised to adhere to Section 53(5) of the Senate Rules, which is against interference with matter before the court.

The Guardian, Thursday, November 09, 2006 pg7

Obi goes to court again

In a bid to regain his mandate again after his impeachment recently, the Anambra state governor Peter Obi has headed for the court a second time. The suit filed by Hon. Ben Chuks Nwosu and 12 other members of the Anambra state House of Assembly against the 15 other lawmakers led by Hon. Mike Balonwu, on the impeachment of Mr. Peter Obi as the governor of Anambra state is slated for hearing in November 28, 2006. The suit seeks to annul the impeachment of Mr. Peter Obi, and an interlocutory injunction restraining the present governor Mrs. Dame Virgy Etiaba from parading herself or acting as the governor of Anambra state based on the action of Hon. Balonwu and others.

Daily Trust, Wednesday, November 15, 2006 pg5

Impeached Dariye on the run

The whereabouts of Plateau state Governor Joshua Dariye, who was removed from office on

Monday, November 13, 2006 by the Mike Dapialong led six-man House of Assembly, remains unknown even as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) declared him wanted for alleged corrupt practices and money laundering. The run battle between governor Dariye ended when the six-man legislature announced his removal and directed that his deputy, Chief Michael Botmang be sworn-in as governor by Justice Lazarus Dakyen who the former governor had dramatically sacked as acting chief judge recently. The deputy has since been sworn in as the new governor of Plateau state.

Thisday, Tuesday, November 14, 2006 Pg1/4

EFCC declares Dariye and Fayose wanted

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has declared two former Governors wanted, the hiding governors are Mr. Ayo Fayose former governor of Ekiti state and Dr. Joshua Dariye, former governor of Plateau state. The commission says they are wanted to assist in the ongoing investigation of allegations of corruptions, abuse of office, fraudulent conversions of funds and money laundering.

Thisday, Tuesday, November 14, 2006

Chief Justice of Nigeria warns CJs

The Chief Justice of the Federation has warned the Chief Judges of each state to shun partisanship and selfishness when setting up members of a panel to investigate alleged impeachable offences against governors of their various states. The CJN, Justice Alfa Belgore, said judges should comply with constitutional procedures during the investigations. He added that in view of the impeachment of five governors, it has become imperative to caution the chief judges on the need to avoid involving their official responsibilities with politics but to ensure that due process is not violated. He advised the CJs that as civil servants, they should handle with caution investigations of alleged impeachable offences against governors so as to safeguard the integrity and image of the judiciary. Daily Trust, Monday, November 21, 2006pg4

Attorneys-General blames EFCC and CJs for impeachment

Attorneys-General of both the Federation and States of the nation have blamed the spat of impeachment on the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the various states CJs. They condemned the emerging pattern of controversial impeachment of governors across the country. They unanimously identified the EFCC and some states Chief Judges as major culprit in the gross violations of the rule of law that threaten the very foundation of our democracy citing the instances of impeached governor of Bayelsa state Diepreye Alamieyeseigha, and Ladoja of Oyo state and the recent impeachment of Ekiti, Anambra and Plateau states governors. They are concern with the constitutionality of the action behind these impeachments.

The Guardian, Friday, November 17, 2006 pg1/2

...And yet another impeachment plot

The current gale of impeachment which has been sweeping through the country seems to be headed towards Jigawa state as indications has emerged that the state House of Assembly has concluded plans to impeach the Deputy Governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia. There have been secret meetings by Legislators who are planning the impeachment process. Sources has it that the offence of the Deputy Governor is connected to his gubernatorial aspiration as the powers that be want him out in order to frustrate his aspirations to enable a favored candidate contest the election.

Thisday, Thursday, November 09, 2006 pg7

Impeachment plot hit Jigawa and Imo

Impeachment vice has hit Jigawa and Imo states but this time, it threatening the seats of the deputy governors. Meanwhile, embattled deputy governor of Jigawa state, Alhaji Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia has declared that he would not be blackmailed or intimidated into resigning as the deputy governor of the state. He added that though he might be on his way out of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). He said he had not received any impeachment notice but added that he is not scared of an impeachment process if done properly and with due process.

The vice, may have spread to Imo state as the Deputy Governor Engineer Ebere Udeagu, is being tried by the state House of Assembly for violating some sections of the constitution. Information has it that plans are in progress to serve the deputy governor impeachment notice. Though his offences have not been made public.

Thisday, Thursday, November 16, 2006pg7

News Titbits

Violence, confusion mars PDP congresses20

The People Democratic Party (PDP) Ward congresses, which commenced nationwide, recently turned tragic in some state as the exercise was marred by violence while in some other areas, it was confusion galore. At least two people were feared dead in troubled Oyo state as the Deputy Governor of the state, Alhaji Hazeem Gbolarumi, allegedly led thugs round the venues of the PDP congresses in Ibadan while in Bayelsa State, a mobile policeman in the escort team of a member of the state House of Assembly was short by one of the thugs in the lawmaker's entourage. Also, in Kwara, Rivers and Bauchi states, complaint of all kinds of irregularities trailed the congress.

In Lagos, Ogun, Delta, and Kogi states the exercise was said to have taken off on a peaceful note as well as in the FCT. Ward congresses are the first in the series of the intra-party elections to pick PDP candidates in the forthcoming 2007 general elections.

Council polls holds February 24, 2006

Forum of States Independent Electoral Commissions of Nigeria (FOSIECON), has fixed local government elections throughout the country for February 24, 2006. However, the chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Maurice Iwu has said the final voters roll will be ready by February 14, 2007, and that the commission will not back down on the use of the Direct Data Capture (DDC), inspite of complaints and criticisms trailing the use of machines. Dr. Aliyu Yandoto said that all things being equal, council polls would be held of February 24, 2006 because failure to conduct elections either on or before that date will automatically lead to the violation of Section 7 of the 1999 Constitution, which guarantees a democratically elected local government councils.

According to him, tenure of current council chairmen will expire in April next year, and there are statutory requirements in most state electoral laws for issuance of notice of election ranging from 30 to 60 day.

Funsho Williams' wife joins race

Wife of slain frontline Lagos state governorship aspirant, Engineer Funsho Williams, Hilda Williams has declared her intension to contest the 2007 governorship elections in Lagos state on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Mrs. Williams has hinted the presidency of her intentions.

Cracks in Lagos AC over Governorship

The Lagos state chapter of the newly formed Action Congress (AC) may suffer a major set back in its preparations for the 2007 elections as there are indications that some of its gubernatorial aspirants may be considering pulling out of the party following alleged moves by the state Governor, Asiwaju Ahmed Bola Tiunubu to impose his former Chief of Staff, Mr. Babatunde Fashola as the gubernatorial candidate of the party. The moves to impose Fashola which is being resisted by other aspirants and their supporters and some party leaderships met its first obstacle recently when other aspirants gathered that there was a move by the group pushing for Fashola's candidacy to hijack the party's registration process and ensure that only his supporters are register as party members in order to ensure that he had a smooth sail in the primaries. This led to fracas at the party secretariat in Ikeja Lagos where some party members sustained injuries following alleged moves to make party leaders adopt Fashola as the party's candidate ahead of the state primaries.

A female governor emerges as obi bows out

A first Nigerian female state governor has emerged in Anambra state following the removal of the state Governor, Mr. Peter Obi from office. Mrs. Dame Virgy Etiaba took over from her boss, Mr. Peter Obi who was impeached by the Anambra House of Assembly recently following allegations of financial misconduct. Mrs. Etiaba took the oath of office and that of allegiance, which was administered on her by the state Chief Judge, Justice Chuka Jideofor Okoli.

Obi was impeached in a controversial circumstance at about 5.30am on Thursday, November 2, 2006 by a faction of the state House of Assembly led by the Speaker Hon. Mike Balonwu. While reacting to the development, Obi says he remains the legitimate governor of the state.

Revert to manual voter registration Niger advises INEC

The Forum of Council of Chairmen of Local Government Councils in Niger state has advised the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to revert to the old manual system of voter registration. The chairman of the Forum, Alhaji Umar Muhammed, described the ongoing voter registration as an exercise in futility going by the difficulties in registering voters. Muhammed who spoke on behalf of the local government chairmen said that findings in all the local government areas in the state revealed that most of the people could not be registered due to the gross inadequacy of the numbers of registration machines provided by INEC. He expressed concern that out of the 7744 registration machines expected in the state, only 23 were made available.

Hoodlums invade registration centres in Kano

Hoodlums have taken over voters' registration centres in Kano metropolitan. In a communiqué issued after a meeting organized by the National Orientation Agency for political parties on plan way to make the exercise smooth said apart form the invasion of thugs at some centres, registration cards were being sold at the cost of N200 to politicians by people who did multiple registration. Poor turnout of women, acute shortage of registration materials, absence of security personnel at the centres, cases of multiple registrations, failure of some machines, and batteries marred the ongoing exercise in the state, the communiqué noted. The indiscriminate sale of voters' registration cards by

some politicians in centres in the state worries political parties in the state.

Mobilize voters INEC tells politicians

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has appealed to politicians in Lagos state to help mobilize electorate to participate in the ongoing voter registration exercise. It also promised that the 8,465 registration units would be covered during exercise. The commission through its Public Relation Officer, Femi Akinbiyi said in a statement said that INEC every eligible voter would be registered before the end of the registration exercise in all states of the federation.

Blame politicians for political thuggery

The public should attempt to arrest violent criminals if they see them committing offences the Minister for Police Affairs, Alaowei Broderick Bozimo has said, people should put their lives on the line because police officers could not be at every crime scene. He said "Nigerians should not wait for the police to be able to arrest someone who has committed a crime. There is something like citizens arrest especially when they see some one stabbing another to death." He added that politicians are to be blamed for the nation's political thuggery and we must deal with it ourselves as politicians as the police always cannot provide answers to such problems overnight.

INEC restates ban on donation to parties by firms

Preparations for the 2007 general elections were raised a level recently with the Independent National Electoral Commission releasing more rules for the game. Prominent among the new regulation was INEC strong warning of corporate bodies to desist from contributing money to political parties and candidates to prosecute their campaign and election agenda. While citing Section 38 of the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA), Iwu said that it was an offence or companies, associations and socio-cultural unions to fund political parties. He reminded that even individuals are not allowed to go beyond the limit of an amount to contribute to such project.

2007: IBB picks form

After months of speculations, former military president, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida finally picks the presidential nomination form of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), thus ending weeks of sustained anxiety over the platform he would use to pursue his 2007 presidential ambition. While obtaining the form, he told the PDP Chairman, Dr. Ahmadu Ali that he was bidding for gold medal of the contest, the Presidency. He said his decision to seek the position of president was not based on any desire to change the direction of Nigeria, but to expand the frontier of reforms that are designed towards building better society.

Race for President open to all says Obasanjo

President Olusegun Obasanjo has declared his intention to leave the presidential seat come May 2007. He also declared that he has no anointed candidate for the nation's leadership. He says he is not interested in "power by conspiracy". Meanwhile the vice president Atiku Abubakar has reinstated his intention to run for the number one seat on the nation come 2007 while receiving a delegation at his resident recently. He also called on all his supporters to ensure they register for the ongoing voter registration to enable them vote in 2007.

British lawmakers, INEC, EFCC discuss 2007 polls

As part of efforts to ensure free and fair polls in 2007, some members of the British parliament under the auspices of All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), paid a visit to Nigeria recently and held discussion with some stakeholders, including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). The leader of the team, John Robinson, said there were concerns both in the country and within the international community about the next year's general elections in Nigeria hence the resolve by the British lawmakers to have keen interest in what happens in the country between now and the elections. The British lawmakers commended the EFCC and pledge the support of the British parliament for the commission.

INEC, EFCC to track source of campaign funds

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has said it would work with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and security agencies and banks in tracking the source of funds for campaigns by parties and politicians in the 2007 election. The commission is said to ensure that funds secured from criminal activities and drug business is not use to finance campaigns for elections. The commission's chairman Prof. Maurice Iwu said the INEC would prosecute anybody found violating the provisions of the Electoral Act 2006 with regards to how much should be spent on elections during a workshop on Political party Administration and Cost of Election (PACE) organized by the commission.

15 women vie for legislative seats in Niger

The wife of the Niger state governor, Hajia Zaynab Kure and 14 other women politicians from the state have obtained the People Democratic Party (PDP) nomination forms to contest legislative seats in the 2007 elections into the state and National Assembly. The wife of the governor picked the nomination form to contest the Niger-west senatorial district currently being occupied by Senator Isah Mohammed. Zaynab has therefore set the record for being the first woman to aspire for a senatorial seat, the highest elective position ever sought for by women in the state.

The contest gets tougher

More aspirants are emerging and picking nomination forms for the number one seat in the country as recently, Governor Bukar Abba Ibrahim picked up his nomination form to contest the presidential election next year, under the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP). Also on the presidential list is Okhai Mike Akhigbe, a former Chief of General Staff, in the Abdusalami Abubakar regime, under the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). All aspirants have so far promised to continue with the reform programme of the present administration.

US vows to ensure free and fair polls in Nigeria

The United States will do all it can to ensure next year's elections are free and fair, the US Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. John Campbell said. In his word, he said; "we will do everything towards a credible polls. In fact, America is already looking forward to celebrating Nigeria's first transition from one civilian administration to the other". He added that the press is the oxygen of democracy and that the survival of a democratic society and a free press are interdependent.

Governorship aspirant attacked in Gombe

Vehicles belonging to the convoy of a PDP governorship aspirant in Gombe state, Engr. Sa'ad Muhammad was smashed and several of his supporters wounded by unknown hoodlums recently

on their way to the party secretariat to return his nomination form. The Assistant commission of Police in the state, Alhaji Salisu Fagge, confirmed this, adding that arrests have been made. The aspirant is the only challenger of the incumbent governor, Alhaji Danjuma Goje.

INEC to compile secondary list for unregistered voters

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has said that the commission intends to improvise with a “secondary list” for Nigerians who do not get registered by December 14, when the exercise comes to an end. The Chairman of the commission Prof. Iwu said that the secondary list would be compiled from complaints filed in by unregistered voters and would be published by February 14, 2007. He added that he was hopeful that his commission would meet the expectation of Nigerians. So far, statistics shows that INEC has registered 2million Nigerians out of the estimated 95 million voters.

Atiku alleges assassination plot

The Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Atiku Abubakar has alleged an assassination plot. He claims his life and that of his family is in danger. He also claimed that his planed declaration might suffer a setback, as venue for the event has not yet been secured. His campaign organization says they are currently concerned with the safety of the vice president’s life and a plot to robe him into a phantom coup.

Meanwhile the President replied through its Special Assistants on Public Affairs, Mallam Uba Sani, that the VP is only crying wolf, that there is no threat to the vice president’s life and there is no plan to arrest him or scuttle his planed declaration for the top job. He says it just another calculated attempted to blackmail the president. Adding that the VP has privileges of security and the rest and remains the VP as far as the president us concerned.

Taraba PDP disqualifies 12 Assembly aspirants

The People Democratic Party (PDP) disqualified 12 of its aspirants from contesting elections into the Taraba House of Assembly. Seven of the aspirants were said to have been disqualified based past records of political thuggery, violence, indicting petitions and improper resignation. While five others were disqualified because they failed to appear before the screening committee. Those disqualified include: Emmanuel Yakubu for Donga constituency was accused of political thuggery, Mrs Salamatu Fabian from Yorro Constituency, Mohammed Bello Ahmed and Hussein from Gassol-2 constituency, Abbas Umar Kaura from Gassol-1, Shuaibu Tippa from Yorro, and Dauda Maikomo from Bali-1 constituency. With the screening, the state’s PDP Public Relation Officer, Kalamu Ahamdu said the party is set for the state Assembly elections.

This Month’s Politricks:

The incessant impeachment of elected governors of some states in the past few months, and the current wind that is still blowing in many other states, have drawn the attention of many right thinking persons and therefore calls for serious concern, as this exercise now appears to be a new found coup de’tat weapon by some powerful politicians to cut short the constitutional tenure of elected officers in the country, who are unwilling to yield and respond to their unpopular and illegal calls for loyalty at the

expense of the electorates and the states.

Impeachment clause as enshrined in the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria was to be used as appropriate, to check corruption in government and remove elected officials where there are convicting evidence of gross misconducts, abuse of office and other criminal offences. We are not told in the constitution that the case of disloyalty to so-called godfathers and Abuja exist or is recognized in anyway. However, when there are glaring cases of such disloyalty, this so-called powerful group of politicians in search for available grenuts of gross misconduct and criminal offences to indict elected state executives especially, and initiate their removal from office to install their loyalists. It is even very painful and ridiculous to the system that in doing this, they become so desperate that as against specifications for a tow-third majority in the House of Assembly, only five lawmakers out of twenty-eight in some cases having received instruction from empowerment form Abuja, sat somewhere outside the specified place by the constitution, which is their state of House of Assembly complex, and remove a seating state governor. And this arrangement immediately gains accolades from the villa, which quickly instructs Inspector-General of Police to withdraw the security of the removed governor and release the group that has since been on standby to their loyalist new-comer.

The drama all started with the detained Bayelsa state's executive governor, Diepreye Alamieyesiegha, who was alleged of money laundering in London. No one is holding for him but the motive behind actions is always viewed with serous concern in crime detection, even at law. Can it be said of Abuja that there is no notice prejudice and hatred in the case of this Nigerian? Can that be said to be the first time Alamieyesiegha traveled with such amount of money or that that was his first criminal offence or gross misconduct and abuse of office since the inception of his administration in 1999? Are there no traces of his disloyalty to Abuja? Why is it that his deputy, who is now happy with his new job, is enjoying so much support and praises from Abuja? Let us not be too fast to say that no matter the process, corrupt people should be chased out of office.

The right legal process ought to be followed to avoid abuse of rule of law and other democratic tenates. If so be that any how process be followed, then it should be melted to all because, there are worst off corrupt persons in government presently, some have resigned to run in 2007 who are enjoying protection in their iniquity and no matter how loud the cry is for their arrest and probe, it makes no meaning to Abuja.

Oyo state governor, Rashidi Ladoja, became the new on the list. Inspite if not forming a quorum, divisions and other unconstitutional short-cuts, the few lawmakers still had the boldness to shamelessly announce his nullified impeachment. His offence was that he did not give the state's political godfather his own share of the state's monthly

revenue allocation, laughable you may say, but it is a very serious issue for the state and nation, where gangsters dictate the tune of everything in the democratic terrain.

The judiciary recently proved that it was equal to the task, with its recent landmark ruling that the impeachment of Ladoja was unconstitutional, hence null and void. Despite this triumph of the constitution, the godfather of the state and the beneficiaries of the action of the 18 lawmakers, are not in pleasing terms with the judgment, hence an appeal to the Supreme Court of Nigeria for a final verdict. Although the Apex Court recently, said it will give a dispatched hearing on the matter, the question here is; when will the Supreme Court hand down the much expected judgment for the absolute triumph of the constitution and the readiness of the Judiciary to defend democracy?

The next on the toll was the suspended Governor, Peter Fayose of Ekiti state, whom so many elite from the state would describe as rascal, but he is widely admired by those outside the walls of the state, who describe him as “the action governor”.

The governor, whose impeachment was latter reversed to suspension by the state of emergency action of the Federal government on the state, was impeached by members of the Ekiti House of Assembly, based on allegations of financial misconduct, money laundering, etc, leveled against him by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Out of desperation to become governor, the speaker, Friday Adeyemi mobilized that law makrs and unconstitutionally removed the governor and his deputy from office through illegal processes.

The suspended Speaker of the Assembly, acted over-ambitiously, by sacking the state’s Chief Judge, Justice Bamisile and appointing an Acting Chief Judge, Justice Aladejan, who set up another panel that found the governor guilty of the alleged offences, which the former panel had given the governor a clean bill of health. Consequent upon these illegalities, the governor and his deputy were frustrated out of the government House. However, even before the national broadcast by President Obasanjo, which declared that the actions of the Legislators were illegal, Nigerian people had already condemned and are still condemning the unconstitutional approach used by the House to remove the state’s Chief Executive and his second-in-command.

The erstwhile, All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) governor of Anambra state, Mr. Peter Obi, was the third on the impeachment row. Although after a protracted legal battle, he managed to regain his mandate, which was said to

have been stolen by People Democratic Party (PDP) in 2003, to Chris Ngige, he hardly served for six months, before the PDP Legislators in the state ganged up and removed him from office. This came shortly after President Obasanjo visited the state. And it is widely believed that he, (Obasanjo), initiated the deal during his visit because of some of the utterances, which he allegedly made during his state visit to Anambra.

After that of Obi, it was the turn of the die-hard Joshua Dariye of Plateau state, whose impeachment is the current on the series.

Dariye was impeached by six members of the Plateau House of Assembly, while the remaining 18 members are still in the EFCC net. The governor's impeachment did not come as a shock to political onlookers, seeing that he has been on the black book of Abuja before his allegations of money laundering in 2005.

As usually, the EFCC played a pivotal role in the removal of this die-hard politician, who has since been replaced by his deputy Mr. Michael Botmang. Whether the allegations of financial misconduct, leveled against him were true or false, the manner through which Dariye was impeached still remains a thing of worry to the Nigerian people.

From all evidence, it is very clear that the powers that be are fueling this unpopular action that is spreading like wildfire throughout the country. Almost every deputy governor and speaker of Houses of Assembly, alongside godfathers and political helmsmen of the state are plotting democratic coup, to see their democratically elected Chief Executives out of office, for them to cheaply occupy the seat. The judiciary must therefore stop this ugly trend, if this democracy must survive and be sustained.

ON THE FOREIGN SCENE

Clashes trail release of provisional results in DRC

Clashes have erupted between security forces and supporters of a presidential candidate in the Democratic Republic of Congo's capital, Kinshasa. Police said two civilians were killed in crossfire after gunfire and explosions were heard near the offices of former rebel leader Jean Pierre Bemba. He is said to be trailing his rival President Joseph Kabila, with most votes counted in the second round of a presidential poll. Fighters loyal to both men clashed after the first round of voting.

Latest results from the second round run-off gave Kabila 61 percent of the vote, and the former rebel leader Bemba 39 percent, according to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) website.

Congo Supreme Court on fire

The Democratic Republic of Congo Supreme Court has been set on fire following protests over alleged fraud in the presidential run-off. Supporters of Jean-Pierre Bemba, the ex-rebel leader who says he was cheated of victory clashed with police recently. The violence has led the Supreme Court to suspend hearing on the suit filed by Bemba that he was cheated of victory.

Democrats takes over U.S congress

A new political order has emerged in the United State of America (USA) as power slips from the Republican to the Democrats at the House of Representatives, paving way for the emergence of the country's first female Speaker at the lower legislative chamber. Meanwhile, U.S President, George W. Bush took responsibility for the electoral losses. It also appears that Democrats are one seat closer to holding a majority in the Senate as well.

DR Congo: court declares Kabila president

Democratic Republic of Congo's Supreme Court has pronounced Joseph Kabila President after throwing out a legal challenge to his election victory by rival Jean-Pierre Bemba. The court rejected a challenge filed by former rebel warlord Bemba against results from the October 29, 2006 presidential run-off showing Kabila has won 58.05 percent of the votes against 41.95 percent for Bemba, whose camp had alleged "systematic Cheating". The polls was the culmination of Congo's first free polls in more than four decades, aimed at ending years of war, dictatorship and chaos in the former Belgian colony in central Africa.

WE COUNTRY STORI

My country people long time no hear, how una dey and hope say una don register becos I don register. How I take do am? Dat one na long stori for another day. My country people, I get one thing wey I wan tell una make una no laugh me, becos I dey serious, de thing be say I wan contest for presidency for dis we country, una dey laugh? No be may fault, since everybody dey contest, if I no bring myself out to serve una my country people e no go good becos I sabi wetin my country want. I no say una want food, water, light, free hospital service, house, cloth and plenty plenty tins wey dey una mind wey I no fit see now. My people de tin wey make me say I wan comot for presidency be say he be like say na only me nefa put leg for de run.

Dis na im be say make una shine una eye well well, becos de kind people we I dey see for dis contest now dey fear me oh, every body wan be president for Nigeria even mumu wey no no im left from im right and wey nefa fit rule nursery school children wan be oga number one for nigga. My country people make una go register so dat una go fit pursue those people wey wan use style thief we country money. Mak we join hand to say no to magomago, wuruwuru, plus including corner corner election. Mak una no becos of money vote anybody, if dem bring money una fit chop am but mak we vote de correct people wey go serve us. Mak we no take we hand spoil we future and we children tomorrow. I go see una next month.

Na me una country sista Ojo 'Seyi dey say mak una go register.

COMMENT ON A MAJOR POLITICAL ISSUE IN THE MONTH

THE ELECTRONIC VOTER REGISTRATION PALAVER

When the issue of electronic voting system was being discussed, many Nigerians were against it. But the Independent national Electoral Commission (INEC) boss, Prof. Maurice Iwu, promised that the arrangement would work. It is very clear today that the arrangement has failed, giving the 'tokumbo' computer machines that are being used for the exercise, and the general inefficiency on the part of INEC officials.

Nigerians are of the opinion that the nation's democracy and indeed, the nation itself, is not yet ripped for electronic voting system. But as Iwu would always say that the Electoral body does not want to be seen to have failed in this direction, he argues at every meeting with stakeholders that this arrangement is the best ever for the country. However, since INEC has insisted to continue with the system, Nigerians have remained very apprehensive and worried over the efficacy of the Direct Data Capture machine, being used for the registration of voters, which was honed after a trial run of the exercise in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Also, during the exercise, some special areas were mapped out ahead of others on account of the difficulty of their terrains, and the fact that some of these areas were unfortunately caught up in one mayhem or the other during the 2003 elections.

With all these preambles, one had thought that the INEC would have taken notice of the problems during the trial run, to correct them during the general registration exercise, to register at least, a good number of the eligible voters in the country, if not all. Unfortunately, the INEC never learnt any lesson from the trial run, which was characterized by hiccups as widely noticed in this main exercise too.

Sadly enough, in the course of the exercise, which has been marred by machine-related problems, general inefficiency by officials amongst other crises, stakeholders have continued to advise INEC to revert to status quo, but the commission would not consider it as an option.

Highly rated bodies like the National Assembly, Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP), Political Parties, Civil Society Organisation (CSO) and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), including the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) have tried to convince INEC to revert to the use of manual register for now, but the fact remains that INEC would not have a rethink. Reasons for not considering popular opinion and advices are only best known to the commission, the chairman and his employers.

We understand that the original arrangement was that four registration booths would register 2000 voters for 10 days, but not more than 80 voters per day are being registered, which makes it very impossible for the INEC to meet the target; considering the population rate of the total eligible voters in the country.

All over the country, there are reports and complaints of eligible and willing voters, who are unable to register. For instance, in a Council Area like Egbe-Idimu in Lagos state, the

Chairman, Otumba Ashimiyu Oseni-Olorunfemi at a time complained bitterly that only two machines that were not even functioning well were available through out 30 booths in the area. The executive chairman of Alimosho Local Council in Lagos, Chief Jimoh Ajao, also had occasion to complain that his people will be disenfranchised by INEC.

In some places like Alimosho, which we leant had over 700 registration centres in 2003; it is very unacceptable that it could now be seen to be allocated only six registration centres now. Today, the population of eligible voters have increased, due to the fact that many have now attained the age of 18 years and also, mass movement of people to the local government. With this development, one would have thought that the registration centres should increase above 700, and not ridiculously reduced to six centres. The story is not different through out the country because we have researched and discovered that presently, several people are yet to be registered.

People are apprehensive over 2007 election because; they cannot imagine how the present arrangement by the INEC would accommodate all the eligible voters, in view of the widely reported hiccups, even though the Electoral body, out of pressure, has continued to extend the closing date for the exercise.

INEC has a constitutional duty to prevent the nation's democracy from collapsing. With the type of shoddy arrangement that characterizes the voter registration exercise, which is the first cardinal step towards a successful election, one does not think the INEC is ready to conduct a free and fair election come 2007. With all these hiccups on the voter registration exercise, one is not sure that Prof. Maurice Iwu, with his team, is sincere about ensuring a smooth transition in 2007.

An Electoral Commission that is independent and people oriented would have thought it wise to respect the views of the electorates, to adopt any process, which the people deem the best to give them a smooth transition. What INEC is doing presently portends danger for the 2007 elections. Observers and stakeholders have always raised alarm that this development of forcing the electronic voting system on Nigerians is a potential avenue to rig election in 2007.

Is it not painful that in most places, people who want to register could not locate where INEC placed their registration centres? Is it not very painful that eligible voters waited endlessly to be registered in the INEC arrangements, which is in shambles? With all these pains, Nigerians are worried that the federal government is not willing to handover power in 2007. It appears what we are witnessing in the voter registration is a grand design to elongate the present federal administration.

Let us watch this government very carefully. The INEC knows that section 27 of the Electoral Act 2006, empowers the commission to postpone elections in cases of natural or manmade crisis. This crisis can be the inability of the commission to make ready the voter register before the election period. Therefore, the only way out is for the senate to hasten in its decision to amend the Electoral Act 2006, to whittle down powers of the electoral commission that could enable it to postpone elections in 2007.

TMG HOLDS WORKSHOP ON MANDATE PROTECTION

Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) has successfully held the workshop on mandate protection in Kaduna and Lagos states respectively, where it charged participants to be alert over their mandate, by ensuring that only credible individuals are voted into office during elections.

Speaking on the workshop, which held between Friday November 24 and Saturday 25, in Kaduna, and Wednesday November 29 and Thursday 30, 2006 in Lagos, the National Coordinator of the Group, Mabel Ade, said the essence was to get people to understand the true meaning of democracy and to fully participate in actualizing it.

Reminding that democracy is the government of the people by the people and for the people, she said even though it is the minority of the people that is ruling, the process should be by the people.

Mabel disclosed that the TMG has a duty to get the electorates informed on the political situation of the country, to enable them vote for the right people and hold them accountable.

During the workshop, civil society, women and youths groups were trained to go down to the grass root and monitor political activities, to be sure that only the right thing is done.

The training, the Group's Coordinator said, afforded TMG the opportunity to learn from some of the participants, how politicians hired them for thuggery and how they carry out their activities.

Mabel stated that in the course of interaction during the workshop, victims of political thuggery were able to disclose how they have been unprofitably used and vowed never to make themselves available again for such a useless venture.

Further more, the Coordinator said different groups at the workshop, were able to identify the different stakeholders responsible for mandate protection in their localities and have also drawn their action plans, which she said it is what TMG would use to follow up the projects in those areas.

Averring that participants learnt so much during the workshop, Mabel expressed optimism that when they go back, they will be able to replicate what they have learnt, and form mandate protection committees in form of community town halls.

Disclosing that the Group intends to establish mandate protection offices in every local government in the country, the Coordinator said TMG has already requested some wireless telephone sets from the United States, which she said will enable the Group in data collection on those zones and the people.

NETHERLAND DONATES INTERNET FACILITIES TO TMG

The Government of Netherlands has donated and installed internet facilities with one-year subscription to the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG).

The donation was made few weeks ago in Abuja, through its Embassy's contact person in Nigeria, Mac Rutgers.

Receiving the donation for the Group, the National Coordinator, Mabel Ade, expressed TMG's appreciation for the gesture, which she said would go a long way to enhance the activities of the Group in the area of communication.

She maintained that with this gesture, the TMG will be able to frequently update its website to continue to inform the world on the activities of the Group.

While expressing the Group's gratitude to the Netherlands government, Mabel also hoped that others will emulate Netherlands to assist TMG to serve humanity.

FOR THE RECORDS



Transition Monitoring Group

Block B, Flat 2, Ogun Court, Gaduwa Estate Apo - Abuja
P.O. Box 11312 Garki, Abuja- Nigeria. Tel: 234 (9) 6705240, 6702409
Email: tmg_ng@yahoo.com, tmgabuja@yahoo.com, tmg@tmgnigeria.org,
Website: www.tmgnigeria.org

PRESS RELEASE

TMG WELCOMES LADOJA'S REINSTATEMENT

The Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) is highly elated by the decision of the Appeal Court sitting in Ibadan to restore the status quo in Oyo state by reinstating the state's elected executive head, Governor Rasheed Ladoja, who was infamously removed by 18 out of 32-member state's House of Assembly few months ago.

TMG is particularly encouraged by this singular action of the Judiciary in Oyo state and hopes that other governments at states and national levels will learn a lesson and take a cue from this positive democratic development to respect Rule of Law for the good of our fledgling democracy.

TMG considers the court decision as popular and a good signal for the judiciary to reassert its credibility and independence in that lopsided tripod called three-arm governance.

Finally, TMG wishes to use this opportunity to appeal to the Judiciary in other states of the federation, especially the currently volatile states of Ekiti, Anambra and Plateau to leave up to their bidding as they are very instrumental to the sustainability and stability of democracy in those states and Nigeria as a whole.

Mabel Ade
National Coordinator
Transition Monitoring Group (TMG)
November 3, 2006

PRESS RELEASE

TMG DECRIES ELEVATION OF DEPUTY GOVERNOR IN ANAMBRA STATE

The Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) laments the mockery of democracy currently going on in some states of the federation and particularly wishes to condemn in its entirety the outcome of the impeachment drama in Anambra state which has eventually led to the removal of erstwhile Governor and the installation of his deputy Dame Virginia Etiaba as the new state helmsman.

TMG is no doubt completely taken aback by this ugly development and would not mince words in making the following pronouncements;

1. That the situation in Anambra state is a rape of our nascent democracy which calls for concern and must therefore be reversed forthwith to allow Governor Obi's regime to lapse.
2. That no matter how attractive or popular the action of the House of Assembly in Anambra state appears, it certainly constitutes gross illegality and therefore unconstitutional and must be voided.
3. That the decisions in Anambra and other states engulfed by these craze to upturn democracy for selfish gains are unfortunately dictated by political expediency rather than the letters and spirits of the constitution.
4. That it is neither in the interest of Anambra state nor our young democracy to allow the fate that have befallen Ekiti to be replicated in Anambra state.
5. That it would do all political actors in the unfolding political crisis and our fragile democracy a lot of good if they could take the part of honour and settle their differences amicably to allow Anambra state know some peace.
6. That the continued silence and non-challant attitude of Governors and the Presidency to the unfolding drama in the states is unfortunate and suspect.
7. That TMG deeply regrets the role played by the Nigerian Judiciary in the whole episode and wish to remind that arm of Government on the need for a self-reassessment of its constitutional duty as it has become a conduit pipe for illegalities.
8. Finally, TMG hereby warns that should what is now happening in the states of Ekiti, Anambra, Oyo and Plateau snowballs into a threat to the scheduled elections, we shall consider it programmed and neither the Presidency nor the Governors shall be exonerated.

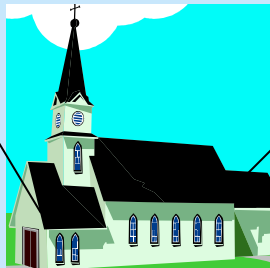
Mabel Ade
National Coordinator
Transition Monitoring Group (TMG)
November 9, 2006

Jus Joke

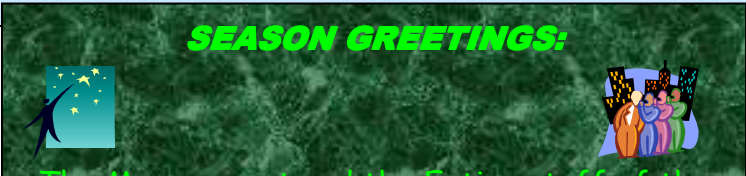
Impeachment

Lord, deliver me from the hands of my enemies in the **Assembly** and **villa**. May their hands be too short to catch me.

Lord, pls use the **Assembly** and **villa** for my promotion **soon. Amen**



ADVERTORIALS



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