

*Nigerian Elections, 2023:*

## **Tinubu calls for “Healing Process”; Atiku – The Call is hypocritical**

### **Nigeria: Issues in Governors Elections of 18 March 2023**

March 22, 2023

On February 25-26, 2023, Presidential Elections took place in Nigeria. The Gubernatorial elections along with Local Government elections were scheduled for Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023. However, the Supreme Court ordered the elections to be re-scheduled to Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

On 18<sup>th</sup> March, Governorship polls took place in 28 states, while elections into states Houses of Assembly held in 36 states on Saturday.

**VIOLENCE at/after Elections:**

In many places violence at the local level started soon after the Presidential elections. It was also reported that some public and political figures used inflammatory ethno-religious language during the one month between the Presidential elections and the elections for governorships and state assembly elections.

Reports about widespread violence and voter intimidation, during the elections of 18<sup>th</sup> March, were filed by the media and by Election Observer Groups.

Due to violence, the governorship elections in Adamawa and Kebbi states have been declared inconclusive by INEC.

**BOLA TINUBU STATEMENT of 21<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2023:** In a statement entitled, “Elections are over: Healing process must begin”, Tinubu said “..I’m saddened by the reported isolated infractions during the elections and its aftermath in some states. I strongly condemn it. He added,” “The physical and verbal assaults committed are unacceptable and antithetical to democratic ethos.”

Some extracts, which bring out the ideas in Tinubu’s statement are as follows:

‘As democrats, we have to safeguard free expression. Winners must be magnanimous and those who did not win should have a large heart for tolerance and respect for the greater interest of the nation.’

**‘We must take urgent steps to unite the people; those who voted for us and those who did not. We must champion the healing process by embracing the opponents and their supporters.’**

At the end, the President-Elect called on all for bonding together, in unity of purpose and renewed hope for, the betterment of our blessed country and beloved people.

STATEMENT by ATIKU ABUBAKAR of PDP: On Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023, the presidential candidate of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Atiku Abubakar issued a statement, blaming Tinubu for the issues in the election process of March 18, 2023 through his Special Assistant on Public Communication, Phrank Shaibu.

Mr Shaibu said that

- for a whole month, traditional leaders, transport hooligans and politicians in the camp of APC threatened non-indigenes but Bola Tinubu kept mute;
- Tinubu’s lackey, Musiliu Akinsanya, who is a member of APC’s Presidential Campaign Council, was seen on video threatening Igbo people but Tinubu said nothing; (Musiliu is Lagos State Parks Management Committee Chairman. He is also known as MC Oluomo.)
- Tinubu’s campaign spokesmen, Bayo Onanuga and Femi Fani-Kayode, went on social media to warn Igbo people against exercising their franchise but Tinubu looked the other way;
- traditional rulers imposed curfews and went about slaughtering goats and placing them in front of polling units but Tinubu said nothing;
- a traditional leader and council chairman in Gbara community, Eti Osa local government summoned non-indigenes to a meeting where they threatened non-indigenes with eviction if they failed to vote for the APC but Tinubu said nothing.

Atiku Abubakar’s Special Assistant Phrank Shaibu added that “on the day of election, many people who looked Igbo were beaten and prevented from voting but Tinubu kept mute.

In his statement, Shaibu said that if Tinubu is serious, he should ensure that all those found culpable are arrested and prosecuted.

REPORT from UK OBSERVER MISSION:

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023: The UK Government said members of its observation mission personally observed violence and voter suppression in numerous voting locations.

The UK Observer Mission said, “We witnessed and received credible reports from other observer missions and civil society organizations of vote buying and voter intimidation, the destruction and hijacking of election materials and the general disruption of the process in numerous states including Lagos, Enugu and Rivers.

On Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023, the UK Government said that it was collecting information about people, who disrupted the elections in Nigeria.



*Rt. Hon. Andrew Mitchell, U K Minister of State (Development & Africa)*

Earlier on 21<sup>st</sup> February, Andrew Mitchell, the UK Minister of State for Development and Africa, had said that the UK was prepared to take action against those who engage in or incite electoral violence and other anti-democratic behaviors, and the action could include preventing people from obtaining UK visas or imposing sanctions under the country’s human rights sanctions regime.

US GOVERNMENT on the ISSUES DURING GOVERNORSHIP ELECTIONS:

Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023: The US Government joined the EU Observers Group in condemning the violence and intimidation that marred the governorship election. The US Government called on Nigerian authorities to hold accountable and bring to justice any individuals found to have ordered or carried out efforts to intimidate voters and suppress voting during the governorship elections. It noted that it is

“deeply troubled” by the acts that took place during the polls in Lagos, Kano, and other states. It also found the use of ethnically charged rhetoric before, during, and after the gubernatorial election in Lagos concerning.

“We commend all Nigerian political actors, religious and community leaders, youth, and citizens who have chosen to reject and speak out against such violence and inflammatory language, affirming Nigerians’ commitment to and respect for the democratic process,” it added.

USA PRAISES INEC: us Government statement went further to commend the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for improving voting processes and technical elements that experienced flaws in the presidential election.

“The March 18 elections appear to have had significant operational improvements, as polling stations generally opened on time and most results were visible on an electronic viewing platform in a timely manner,” it noted.

APPENDIX: One important set-back for Tinubu was when he lost the State of Lagos, even though he topped the list of Presidential elections in terms of number of votes, polled.

<b>2023 Nigerian Presidential Election in Lagos State</b>			
25 February 2023			
Number of Registered Voters: 7,060,195			
Turnout: 18.92%			
<b>Nominee</b>	Bola Tinubu	<b>Peter Obi</b>	Atiku Abubakar
<b>Party</b>	APC	<b>LP</b>	PDP
<b>Home State</b>	Lagos	Anambara	Adamawa
<b>Vice-Presidential Nominee</b>	Kashim Shettima	<b>Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed</b>	Ifeanyi Okowa
<b>Popular Vote</b>	572,606	<b>582,454</b>	75,750
<b>Percentage</b>	45.04%	<b>45.81%</b>	5.96%

Ref: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2023\\_Nigerian\\_presidential\\_election\\_in\\_Lagos\\_State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2023_Nigerian_presidential_election_in_Lagos_State)

Violence and voter intimidation in Lagos, between Feb 25 and 18<sup>th</sup> March, tells upon the moral authority of Bola Tinubu. Neutral observers had expected that the President-Elect would move more effectively to stop the violence and voter-intimidation in Lagos.