PRESS RELEASE

Kano supplementary elections: CISLAC berates deliberate sabotage, unchecked intimidations, inefficiency of police

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) condemned in totality the open display of lawlessness and rascality involving indiscriminately massive deployment of hoodlums in the conduct of supplementary gubernatorial elections with resultant sabotage of electoral process and loss of lives in Kano state.

While an election constitutes a formal citizenry decision-making process by which a population chooses a credible individual to hold public office, we find it disturbing that citizens’ choices and decisions were largely influenced and determined by high incidences of vote-buying facilitated by hoodlums and party agents, vote rigging and intimidations from various political parties in several Local Government Areas, including Gaya, Dala, Nasarawa and Karaye.

We are not unaware of the arrogant and unchecked display of badges by the party agents and supervisors in many polling centres as an indication of their preferred political party—APC or PDP and outright prevention of photographic evidence which raise suspicious motives for rigging as extensively reported and narrated by independent observers.

We find it worrisome that without an iota of respect to the rule of law and democratic values, a larger population of hoodlums was unlawfully deployed to disrupt electoral process and deprive voters the right to exercise their electoral freedom through free, fair and credible process.

We are concerned that the deployment of violence and cruelty in electoral process as demonstrated in several polling centres without appropriate justice would without doubt widen the existing distrust by citizens in electoral body and security agents and amplify unwanted electoral apathy.

We find the unprincipled decisions of relevant political parties to result in deployment of illegalities and destructive mechanisms in influencing voters’ decisions, instead of constructive proposal and realistic ideology, as despotic, undemocratic and unacceptable in our democratic system.

We are seriously perturbed by the unwary decisions of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and security agents to continue with the election despite reported outcries and anticipated threat to peaceful electoral process as evident in some polling centres, constituting a total breach of Section 26 (1) of the Electoral Act which calls for immediate postponement of elections in such circumstance.

We are surprised that even with the deployment of highly placed police personnel, the situation could not be managed and down-playing by the police of the obvious problems that arose is a source concern. The inability of the police to manage the situation leading to widespread violence and unchecked intimidation of voters is highly disappointing.
We are surprised at a clear case of double standard reportedly maintained by both Kano REC and the State Returning Officer who had agreed and called for cancellation of the earlier result from Gama as thugs disrupted the collation process; and their present reluctant to cancel the latest results given despite widespread violence across all the 62 polling units.

We also bemoan a dishonest move by four presiding officers from Nasarawa Local Government Area of the state, who made away with the result of election to an undisclosed location. This hampers credibility and further justifies our call for discountenance of the supplementary elections.

We therefore call on INEC to discountenance the supplementary elections and return to status quo prior to the 23rd March 2019. Anything of short will be setting a very dangerous precedent where the use of force to capture electoral gain will become the rule rather than the exception.

Signed:

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