

**RESS RELEASE.**

**STANDING WITH THE PEOPLE THROUGH A RESOLUTE ELECTORAL BODY: CALL FOR A SHIFT IN THE 2023 ELECTION TIMETABLE A ROUTE TO DERAIL THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.**

The Centre for Transparency Advocacy is alarmed by the request of to The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for a shift in the 2023 election timetable by political parties under the auspices of the Inter Party Advisory Council (IPAC). Nigerians are relying on INEC to institutionalize credible electoral process that will lead us as a progressive society. Therefore, the tantrum drums that some political parties are playing just when preparations towards the 2023 General Elections is full speed, is not only a distraction to INEC but a calculated attempt to clog the wheel of progress and the incremental successes recorded by INEC in recent times.

According to the IPAC Chairman, “It is within the framework of the enduring bond between the INEC and IPAC in service to the country, that all the eighteen registered political parties on the platform of IPAC are jointly, without exception, requesting the INEC to consider a slight adjustment to the recently announced timetable and schedule of activities for the 2023 general elections”. It is the view of CTA that IPAC should rather explore positively the recognized bond between it and the EMB rather than exploiting the goodwill extended by INEC and the Nigerian people to selfish ends.

To deepen its request IPAC further said, “In summary, the General Assembly of IPAC, after an exhaustive examination of the INEC timetable and related issues, arrived at a unanimous decision to request for an extension of thirty-seven (37) days to the deadline of the time frame for the conduct of party primaries and resolution of conflicts arising from the primaries. By implication, the IPAC leadership is appealing to the INEC to extend the deadline for the conduct of party primaries and resolution of ensuing conflicts from the present INEC given date of 3rd June 2022 to the 4th of August 2022.” CTA restates that this call is uncalled for, diversionary and not in the interest of our democracy.

CTA and other well-meaning Nigerians are gratified by the response of INEC through its Chairman Professor Mahmud Yakubu who in clear terms refused to accede to the toxic request by IPAC. He in clear terms said, “twice in the last two weeks, the Commission had cause to remind political parties of the necessity for strict compliance with the timelines for party primaries. I hereby reiterate the position of the Commission that there will be no review of the timelines. There are so many inter-related activities that are associated with the timelines which must be carried out. Any review to extend the timeline for one activity will affect other activities and put unnecessary pressure on political parties and the Commission. This will ultimately result in more complications than what the extension seeks to achieve. Therefore, the Commission will not review the timelines. Working together, we should ensure fidelity to the timelines in conducting transparent and democratic primaries for the purpose of electing candidates for the 1,491 constituencies for which elections will be held on 25th February and 11th March 2023”. CTA share in the views expressed by the INEC Chairman in turning down the request that any review to extend the timeline for one activity will affect other activities and put unnecessary pressure on political parties and the Commission.

Equally, CTA is pleased with some of the bold steps already taken by the EMB towards achieving a credible electoral process leading to transparent, free, fair, and peaceful election.

CTA calls on the political parties to heed to the guidelines under the electoral act and the same level of commitment towards a credible poll.

We hope campaigns by political actors remain issue-based and expect politicians and their supporters to refrain from making comments capable of overheating the already tensed political environment.

It is also our hope that political parties take time to study the Electoral Act 2022 and abreast themselves with the provisions under the new Act.

Nigerians should recall that INEC had since February 26th released the Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the 2023 General Election. To this regard, CTA wishes to advise the political parties to re-position itself bearing in mind the realities of today.

In the same manner, the Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) welcomes the level of preparedness by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) ahead of the Ekiti governorship election and indeed other elections that will follow the Ekiti election. It is important that

political parties adhere strictly to the guidelines as provided by INEC not only for the General Elections but for other off-season elections as they occur.  
Thank you.

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