

**ELECTORAL REFORM AS A  
MEANS FOR SAVING NIGERIAN  
DEMOCRACY AND UNITY**

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# **ELECTORAL REFORM AS A MEANS FOR SAVING NIGERIAN DEMOCRACY AND UNITY**

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## **1. Introduction:**

Elections are a means to an end, and that end is democratic governance and a democratic society. There can be no democracy without free, fair and valid elections, but such elections merely open the door into a democratic culture and society. Let me briefly explain the meaning and relevance of these concepts.

## **2. Democracy**

### **i. Meaning.**

The popular definition of Democracy as "Government of the People by the People for the People", which is ascribed to Abraham Lincoln, has become a mere slogan devoid of any scientific or measurable factors. More precise and scientific definitions can be proffered. Democracy is based on two key principles.

- a) "Popular control over collective decision making and decision makers", and
- b) an equal right to share in such control, i.e., political equality<sup>1</sup>. Here the key words are 'popular control' 'collective decision making and decision makers'. Another definition by John Planneta, which provides measurable ingredients, goes as follows: "government by persons freely chosen by and responsible to the governed". What

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<sup>1</sup> See D. Beetham, Key Principles and Indices for a Democratic Audit (London, Sage, 1994)

this means is that if a government is not freely chosen by the governed or it is not responsible to the governed, it is not a democratic government.

Although these definitions appear to cover the essence of true democracy, other major attributes must be present for democracy to exist. These include:

1. Transparency and Accountability in governance.
2. Freedom of thought, expression and Association.
3. Existence of Independent and Accountable Institutions of Civil Society.
4. Existence of Independent of Election Institutions.
5. Existence of an Independent Judiciary.
6. Access to Courts and to Justice, even against Government.
7. Freedom of Information.
8. Existence of effective oversight by the Legislature over Executive activities.
9. Accessibility of Constituents to Elected Representatives.
10. Respect for Human Rights.

These and many more components constitute the measuring rod of a truly democratic society: and the quantity and quality of their presence in the Nigerian polity should determine the degree and level of existence of true democracy in our society.”

### **3. Elections**

Genuine, free and fair elections, as I stated earlier constitute the threshold or doorway into a democratic, stable and progressive society. Without free and fair elections, there can be no democracy.

Elections are part and parcel of the democratic process, and as the right to democratic governance has become established as a human right, so too has the right to regular, free and fair elections. Thus by resolution 45/50 of 1991, entitled "Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Principle of Periodic and Genuine Elections" the U.N. General Assembly stressed the conviction of members states that:

"periodic and genuine elections are a necessary and indispensable element of sustained efforts to protect the rights and interests of the governed and that as a matter of practical experience, the right of everyone to take part in the government of his or her own country is a crucial factor in the effective enforcement by all in a wide range of other human rights and fundamental freedoms, embracing political, economic, social and cultural rights."

These principles were re-iterated by the Assembly at its 48th session (1993-4) during which it declared that "periodic and genuine elections" are "necessary and indispensable elements and a crucial factor in the effective enforcement of a wide range of rights". The resolution established a procedure for authorizing the monitoring of national elections in states all over the world and endorsed, the Secretary-General's' decision to create an office for the purpose of monitoring elections in member states.

#### **4. The Troubled History of Elections in Post Independent Nigeria**

##### **i. First Republic**

Nigeria has a long standing history of defective elections.

In the first Republic, the Ruling NPC (Northern Peoples Congress) and the NNDP (Nigerian National Democratic Party) of

Chief S.L. Akintola formed an alliance called Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) whilst the rump of the NCNC (National Council of Nigerian Citizens) now essentially restricted to the Eastern Region, with a sprinkling of support in the Midwest Region, formed an alliance with what was left of the Action Group Party, after Chief Akintola left it with his government. This Alliance was called the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA). This progressive Alliance had affiliates from the North like United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) of J.S. Tarka and Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) of Aminu Kanu. Thus the battle was joined for the December 1964 Federal Elections.

The strategy of the NNA was simple. Prevent the candidates of the UPGA from filing their nomination papers, and NNA candidates would be returned unopposed. It was a simple scheme and it was successfully implemented. In the North alone, 78 NPC candidates out of a total 167 constituencies were unopposed. The tactic was repeated in the West, although the proportion of un-opposed NNDP candidates was smaller, only 15 out of about 94 seats. The UPGA boycotted the election and the country was precipitated into a crisis that nearly ended in violence and country-wide anarchy.

An unsatisfactory compromise was agreed to under which the elections were to be repeated in the East alone and a broad-based Federal Government was to be formed. The NCNC was invited to join this broad-based government and the storm was averted for a short while. Everyone was waiting for vindication in the October 1965 Western elections. The Action Group to whom the NCNC rump in the West was allied was certain of

winning the election – such was its overwhelming popularity. The NNDP was determined to hang on in government, regardless of the votes cast. As was widely reported in those days one of the leaders of the NNDP felt confident enough to tell the people of the West, “whether you vote for us or not, we will remain in power.”

The election came. This time it was impossible to use the “nominated unopposed” tactics. Instead, in total disregard of the election results announced and certified at counting centers in constituencies, the Western Region Radio Station broadcast a pre-arranged list as the official result. Victorious candidates with certified result slips literally still warm in their hands, heard fictitious results being announced on the radio, declaring opponents who in fact lost their deposits, as the winners. At the end, the NNDP awarded itself 73 seats, and gave the Action Group and NCNC 15 and 4 seats, respectively. This was the final straw. Hell broke loose. The long suffering people of the West decided to take matters into their own hands and literally brought the curtain down on the First Republic.

ii. Second Republic: 1979 - 1983

“One major cause of the collapse of the Second Republic was the effort of the NPN to move from being merely the ruling party whose strength exceeded that of other parties, to one which enjoyed a monopoly of power within the political system<sup>2</sup>. The NPN wanted to bring about a situation it had frequently and openly boasted as already existing namely, that there were only two political parties in Nigeria, the NPN and the Military. To this

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<sup>2</sup> See Richard Joseph, Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria, Spectrum Books, p. 178

end it schemed to take over critical States under the political control of the other parties. Four states were of strategic importance in this scheme. These were, Oyo, Anambra, Bendel and Kano States.

In other words, the NPN was determined "to pry away from the opposition, the heart of their political bases." Although there was nothing illegitimate in this ambition, the NPN knew that it would be impossible to achieve it by fair means, so they set out to achieve it by foul means. To achieve this purpose, they decided to tamper with the voter registration and the voting process. Thus the voter registration of areas sympathetic to the NPN was grossly inflated in order to prepare for "landslide" results. Modakeke, a suburb of Ile-Ife in the Oyo State, enjoyed a phenomenal increase in voter registration from about 26,000 to over 250,000. The Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) which was itself a willing recruit to the planned electoral fraud, saw nothing wrong with this new figure, which was even higher than the actual population of Modakeke. This farce was replicated throughout the country.

Election results in the 1983 elections were manipulated and false and inflated figures, all favouring the NPN, were announced by FEDECO which decreed, with threats of dire consequences, against any one in breach of its Order, that no other organization, be it newspapers, radio, television stations or political parties, should publish any election result, other than those released by it. At the national level, FEDECO's manipulation of voter registration was further revealed when it

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<sup>3</sup> See Richard Joseph – Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria, Spectrum Books, p. 178.

announced that the number of registered voters in Nigeria had increased from 48,499,097 to 65,304,818. Considering that the earlier figure of 48 million (1979) was already grossly inflated, it was clear that the farcical 1983 figure of 65 million was intended to be used for rigging the subsequent elections. And that is precisely what happened. The 'landslide' victory of the NPN predictably led to the end of the second Republic. For as Chief Awolowo has accurately prophesied, the NPN 'victory' only lasted for a short time.<sup>4</sup>

iii. Fourth Republic

The electoral process of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic ended in the fiasco of the annulment of the June 12 Presidential Election by Babangida's Military Government. As for the present Republic, i.e. the fourth Republic, the 2003 and 2007 elections have remained the sort of stuff that legends are made of.

With regard to the 2007 elections, it combined all elements of election fraud and rigging to achieve an unprecedented level of misconduct in elections in the chequered election history of Nigeria.

1. Strong contestants from parties other than the PDP, were eliminated by illegal disqualifications.
2. Election materials, like ballot papers and result sheets did not arrive at polling units at all or did so when voting was over or about to end.
3. Where election materials were available, they were hijacked by armed PDP thugs and officials who carted away ballot boxes, and

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<sup>4</sup> West African, 12 September 1983.



returned them later to collation centres, stuffed with thumb imprinted ballot papers.

4. Where this did not achieve the required level of pre-determined votes, INEC cooperated with the PDP to allocate votes to the parties on result sheets.
5. In some cases the INEC headquarters at Abuja, announced results on State elections in favour of the PDP, when the votes were still being collated and counted.

All the Reports of Observers and Monitors, International and Local, came to the same conclusion namely, that the so called elections were a charade, marked by outright vote rigging, ballot box snatching, fraudulent allocation of votes and criminal thumb imprinting of illegally acquired ballot papers.

According to the European Union Election Observation Mission:

“The 2007 State and Federal elections have fallen far short of basic international and regional standards for democratic elections. They were marred by poor organization, lack of essential transparency, widespread procedural irregularities, significant evidence of fraud, particularly during the result collation process, voter disenfranchisement at different stages of the process, lack of equal conditions for contestants and numerous incidents of violence. As a result, the elections have not lived up to the hopes and expectations of the Nigerian people and the process cannot be considered to have been credible. This is all the more regrettable since they were held in an improved atmosphere in which freedom of expression and assembly were broadly

respected during campaigning, the judiciary played a generally positive and independent role and the people showed remarkable commitment to democracy, eagerly engaging in the electoral process and waiting patiently to vote in often very difficult circumstances.” (Statement of preliminary findings, 23-4-07)

5. **ELECTORAL REFORM**

Not surprisingly there was such a public outrage and universal rejection of the elections because of the monumental fraud and gross misconduct associated with them that President Musa Yar Ardua whose own election was badly tainted by the fraud, constituted an Electoral Reform Committee on 28 August 2007 under the leadership of the retired Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Muhammadu Uwais with the following terms of reference, amongst several others.

“Undertake a review of Nigeria’s history with general elections and identify factors which effect the quality and credibility of the elections and their impact on the democratic process”.

Whilst the Committee was doing its work, the victims of the fraud, filed an unprecedented 1,475 election petitions, as against only 574 in 2003, less than 30 in 1983 and only 1 in 1979.

In its Report submitted on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2008, the Committee proposed some very fundamental reforms of the Nigerian electoral system. I shall now present a summary of each major reform being proposed followed by the Federal Government’s decision and my commentary thereon. The letter (a) represents the Committee’s Report, (b) the decision of the Federal Government and (c) my views comment.

1. Unbundling of INEC

(a) Uwais Committee

INEC should consist of:

- i. a Board that formulates broad electoral policy and direction for the Commission; and
- ii. a professional/technical election management team, mainly civil servants, to handle the actual conduct of elections.

The State level Secretariat of INEC should therefore consist of 37 Directors of Elections, one for each State and the FCT, appointed by INEC, trained and posted to States other than their States of origin. These Directors should be career officers, and non-partisan persons of integrity.

At the Local Government level, full time 774 Local Electoral Officers should be appointed by INEC after public advertisement inviting applications and posted outside their own Local Government Area. At least one-third of these Local Electoral Officers should be women.

The new body is to be known as **Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission** which shall be empowered to perform the following functions:

- i) register political parties in accordance with the provisions of the 1999 Constitution and the Electoral Act 2006;
- ii) monitor the organization and operation of the political parties, including their finances;

- iii) arrange for the annual examination and auditing of the funds and accounts of political parties;
- iv) monitor political campaigns and provide rules and regulations which shall govern the activities of political parties;
- v) accredit domestic civil society groups and organizations working in the area of elections and provide rules and regulations which shall govern their observation of elections;
- vi) accredit international election observers and provide rules and regulations which shall govern their observation of elections;
- vii) accredit national and international media organizations observing elections and provide rules and regulations which shall govern their activities; and
- viii) all the functions listed in section 46, 78 – 105 of the Electoral Act 2006, and Sections 222, 225, 226 and 228 of the Constitution.

The Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission shall have power to appoint, dismiss, and exercise disciplinary control over its own staff.

The Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission (PPRRC) should ensure that legal provisions to check political party financing and expenditure are fully enforced and the findings published in an open and transparent manner to ensure accountability.

(b) Federal Government

The recommendation on unbundling of INEC was accepted by the Federal Government without modification.

(c) Comment

It is doubtful whether an election management team made up of public servants will by itself bring any positive changes into the electoral system. Civil Servants are as equally prone to being used by authorities in power, as politicians. After all Menkiti, who prematurely rushed to proclaim the Alhaji Shehu Shagari winner of the Presidential Election in 1979, was a civil servant. At the end of the day, integrity, principles and honour are what count.

The proposal that a single body, made up of civil servants appointed at the federal level should conduct all elections, including local government elections, has grave implications for federalism. However, one admits that the States Independent Electoral Commissions have been a dismal failure, even worse than INEC.

In the States, all the elections so far conducted by SIECS have resulted in unintelligent 100% victory for the Ruling Party in each State, since the SIEC Commissions are always party men whose mission is to eliminate the opposition party from the State by fair or foul means.

Therefore on the short run, pending when Nigerian politicians will achieve maturity, we have to accept some infringement on true federalism.

## 2. Composition of INEC

### (a) Uwais Committee

The Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission shall comprise the following members who should be non-partisan:

- i). a Chairman who must be a person of unquestionable integrity;
- ii) a Deputy Chairman who must be a person of unquestionable integrity. However, the Chairman and the Deputy must not be of the same gender; and
- iii) six persons of unquestionable integrity, two of whom must be women and I of whom must come from each of the six geographical zones of the Federation;
- iv) one nominee of Civil Society Organisation working in the area of elections and accredited by the proposed Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission;
- v) one nominee of Labour Organisations;
- vi) one nominee of Nigerian Bar Association;
- vii) one nominee of Women Organisations; and
- viii) one nominee of the Media.

Once appointed, no organization shall have the power to recall its nominee.

The mode of appointment of the Chairman and members of the Board of the Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission shall be as follows:

- i. the National Judicial Council shall advertise the position of the Chairman, Deputy and the 6 National commissioners;

- ii. the National Judicial Council shall screen the application received and recommend to the President for appointment subject to confirmation by the Senate;
- iii. the Tenure of office of members of the Board of Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission shall be 5 years renewable only once; and
- iv. the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Members of the Board shall be removed from office by the President acting on the recommendations of the National Judicial Council that the member be so removed for his/her inability to discharge the functions of his/her office or appointment (whether arising from infirmity of mind or body) or for misconduct or contravention of the Code of Conduct.

In terms of qualifications, the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Members of INEC should:

- i. be persons of integrity
- ii. be non-partisan.
- iii. Possess vast professional/administrative/academic experience.
- iv. Be not less than 50 years of age for Chairman and Deputy and not less than 40 years for the others; and
- v. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman should not be of the same gender.

(b) Federal Government

The Federal Government rejected the proposal that the NJC should handle the process of the appointment of the members of INEC because this would constitute a breach of the doctrine

separation of powers as the Judiciary would be performing executive functions.

(c) Comment

The recommendation of the Uwais Committee that the NJC should play a central role in the appointment and composition of INEC is absolutely correct. The major cause of a failure of INEC and its predecessor in the administration of election has always been the subservience and unrestrained loyalty of that body to its appointor, the President, who is an interested, and active participant in the electoral processes. These has led to the shameless partisanship of INEC with the President's party against all the other parties. It is therefore critical and necessary for the president to be separated and detached from the process of the appointment of the INEC.

The NJC, a body of Judges which has no interest whatsoever in electoral outcomes and with the professional background of the members sustained by the high integrity of judicial office, are in the best position to appoint the members of the INEC for the benefit of the country.

However, I disagree with the Uwais Committee in the following respect:

- i) the involvement of the President as a middleman ins the appointment and removal from the office of the INEC members.
- ii) The provision for the advertisement of the position of Chairman, Deputy Chairman and six National Commissioners of INEC. No self-respecting Nigerian will



apply for such a position rather instead of advertisement the NJC should invite Nigerians to nominate the Chairman and members of the Commission.

- iii) The National Council of State should be totally excluded from the process.

3. Funding of INEC

(a) Uwais' Committee

INEC's funding will also be a first charge from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federal Government.

(b) Federal Government

Accepted.

(c) Comment

Good

4. Independent Candidacy

(a) Uwais' Committee

Independent candidates should be allowed to contest elections under the following conditions:

- i. constituency based nomination by verifiable signatures of 10 registered voters in each ward in the constituency;
- ii. payment of financial deposit which will be subject to refund if the independent candidate scores at least 10% of the total valid votes cast in that election in the constituency. The rate of deposit should be equal to 10% of the approved election expenses for the various offices as provided in Section 93 of the Electoral Act, 2006; and

iii. in addition to items (i) and (ii) above, the candidate must meet all other conditions for eligibility stipulated in the Constitution, the Electoral Act or any other laws.

(b) Federal Government

Accepted, with stipulations on the minimum number of sponsors which candidate must have in every ward.

(c) Comment

Good

5. Proportional Representation

(a) Uwais' Committee

Nigeria should retain the first-Past-The-Post electoral system but should also inject a dose of Proportional Representation based on closed party lists, thus evolving a mixed system.

For elections to the House of Representatives, the existing 360 seats would be retained and filled by the First-Past-The-Post system. In addition, 108 additional seats (i.e. 30% of the existing 360 seats in the House should be based on proportional representation calculated on votes won by each party. This should also apply to the Senate and State Houses of Assembly.

(b) Federal Government

Accepted.

(c) Comment

Very good.

6. Burden of Proof of Election Fraud

(a) Uwais' Committee

The law should shift the burden of proof from the petitioners to INEC to show that disputed elections were indeed free and fair and complied with the provisions of the Electoral Act.

(b) Federal Government

The government also accepted the recommendation that relevant provisions of the Electoral Act should be amended to create exception to the general legal rule, which places the burden of proof in respect of allegation of election rigging on the party that alleges, to the electoral body.

According to the federal draft, "Section 146 of the Electoral Act 2006 should also be amended to reflect that a petition based on allegation of fraud and corrupt practice shall succeed if the petitioner proves on the balance of probability that the election was marred by such practices."

(c) Comment

A very good provision, since INEC is in possession of all the election materials and is therefore in the best position to explain and justify its own decision.

7. Open Secret Ballot System

(a) Uwais' Committee

There are practices associated with the current voting system that are worthy of retention. The following are accordingly recommended:

- a. Open Secret Ballot System: This allows a voter to go into a polling booth to mark his ballot in secrecy and drop it in the ballot box in the open.
- b. Provision of fixed polling booths: The use of institutional building such as schools, community centers, etc, which are centrally located, where available, or permanent polling locations should be encouraged.
- c. Accreditation of registered voters prior to the commencement of voting for the purpose of tracking how many people cast their ballot in a polling station.
- d. Display of voter's register prior to the elections to enable registered voters, political parties, and the electorate generally make claims and objections.

(b) Federal Government

Accepting these recommendations, the Federal Government added that Election results will be announced at all polling centers by presiding officers, and duly signed and copies will be given to accredited agents, the Police and the State Security Service officers.

(c) Comment

Very good.

8. Tribunals: Time Limit to Conclusion of Petitions

(a) Uwais' Committee

Elections to the office of President and Governors should be held at least six months before the expiration of their terms. A maximum of four months should be devoted to hearing petitions by the tribunals and another two months for hearing appeals by the

Court of Appeal or Supreme Court, making a maximum of 6 months. No executive should be sworn in before the conclusion of the cases against him/her. In the case of legislators, no one should be sworn in before the determination of the case against him/her.

The adjudication of presidential and gubernatorial election disputes should be concluded expeditiously, before swearing-in of winners of the elections. This will require the amendment of **Section 132(2)** and **Section 178(2)** of the 1999 Constitution and section 149 of the Electoral Act 2006.

The number of tribunals should be increased by reducing the number of judges that sit on a tribunal from five to three, so that more tribunals can be established per State.

(b) Federal Government

“Government did not accept the recommendation that election petitions should be concluded within six months after the elections; four months at the Tribunal and two months at the Appellate Court because the current system in which judgments sometimes come after six months presents a better dispensation of justice to the aggrieved.” The Government however accepted that the number of Judges sitting in Tribunals should be reduced to three.

(c) Comment

The recommendation that all election petitions should be concluded before any executive is sworn into office or any legislator allowed to take a seat, is probably the second most

important of all the recommendations made by the Uwais Committee. Under the current provisions of the Constitution and the Electoral Act fraudulent usurpers of office have been enabled to use government funds, the Police, the SSS and other Security Agencies to fight the innocent winner of the election who is struggling to reclaim his mandate through a petition. The recommendation of the Uwais' Committee would at least ensure a level playing ground in the struggle to reclaim the mandate.

Indeed, it is my suggestion that no executive shall be in an office during both the election period and the post election period whilst a petition is still substituting. In this regard, I suggest that Section 132(2) of the Constitution be deleted and replaced with by the following:

- (i) The term of office of a President or Governor shall expire 3 years and 9 months after he takes the oath of office.
- (ii) The Chief Justice of the Federation or the Chief Judge of a State, as the case may be, shall act as President or Governor until elections for President or Governor have been held and all election petitions against such elections have been concluded.
- (iii) Elections for the offices of President or Governor will only be held after the end of the term of office of an incumbent President or Governor.

9. Electoral Crimes Commission and Ban from Politics

(a) Uwais' Committee

The penalty for anyone convicted of certain offences relating to a voter's card as set out in Section 24 of the Electoral Act 2006

should be extended to include legal disability to participate in elections conducted under the Act for a period of ten years.

All offences committed within the electoral context should be prosecuted expeditiously. The prevailing atmosphere of impunity with regard to election offences should be ended by prosecuting and holding accountable those responsible for electoral offences, including those of a criminal nature. This would reduce the impunity which has marred Nigeria's electoral process to date, and which threatens to undermine citizens' confidence in the country's political institutions.

A special prosecutorial body to be known as **Electoral Offences Commission** should be established to work independently in the arraignment and prosecution of electoral offenders. This will include offences arising from failings of INEC before, during and after voting day.

(b) Federal Government

The Council also accepted that politicians convicted of violence and thuggery during elections, in addition to any other punishment should be banned from holding public office for 10 years.

Establishment of the Electoral Offences Commission to, among other things, deter the Commission of electoral malpractices investigate where they occur and prosecute alleged offenders was also accepted.

(c) Comment

Good.

10. Centre for Democratic Studies

(a) Uwais' Committee

Reform of the electoral process requires an enlightened and socially conscious electorate that is empowered morally and materially to make informed choices and resist manipulation of the process. In this regard, a Centre for Democratic Studies should be established to facilitate inter-agency cooperation and engage with civil society in the conduct of civic and political education.

The Centre for Democratic Studies, INEC and other stakeholders should engage in sustained public education campaigns in the period leading up to the 2011 elections, including mass media campaigns on registration and voting process and procedures. These campaigns should be supplemented with individualized information efforts to allow Nigerians to know the location of their registration and voting stations.

(b) Federal Government

Establishment of the Centre for Democratic Studies to undertake broad civic and political education for legislators, political office holders, security agencies, political parties and the general public was accepted.

(c) Comment

Good.

12 Involvement of INEC in Election Cases

(a) Uwais' Committee

INEC should have no right of Appeal, against an unfavourable judgment.



(b) Federal Government

No comment.

(c) Comment

I agree with the recommendation. As an umpire, INEC should have no interest in appealing against an unfavourable judgment. It should standby to await the tribunal's judgment for the purpose of implementation. I strongly suggest that the term 'Independent' be deleted from the Commission's name. 'Independence' is determined from the record and achievement of the Commission, not from nomenclature.

**6. Conclusion**

The most important recommendation of the Uwais' Committee is the insistence on integrity as character trait for all members of the Electoral Commission. In the case of Cole v. Akinyele 1960 5 FSC, page 84, Breth, F.J., stated as follows:

"When a man indulges in irregular, unions no rule regarding the legitimacy or legitimation of his children, however liberal, can altogether avoid anomalies"

This can be translated to mean generally that:

"When the officials of a country are addicted to an obsessively deviant and perverse orientation, no rules intended to ensure the just and legitimate operations of the state can be free of anomalies and absurdities."

The point been made here is that there is no perfect Constitution or law. The worst law can be made to operate effectively and

successfully by the best human operators acting with integrity and in good faith. By contrast, the most perfect legal system will crash if it is operated by men who lack integrity, reputation and a sense of shame and embarrassment. We must therefore work very hard to ensure that the next set of people appointed to run our electoral system are men of honour and integrity and not the dregs of humanity that are currently inflicted on us.