

July 05, 2021

The National Assembly,
Joint Committee on Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)
and Electoral Matters,
SB 15, Red Carpet, Basement,
Senate Wing, White House,
National Assembly Complex,
Abuja.

Electoral Bill 2021: #FixPolitics Calls on NASS to STOP THE RIGGING!

#FixPolitics Initiative is a citizens-led research-based initiative designed to be executed as a “Big Push” for structural change of politics and governance in Nigeria and on the African continent at large. Our goal is to transform Africa’s democratic practice into one that is “of the people, by the people, for the people”. It represents a new way of thinking and engaging the existing political order by citizens acting in a collaborative and systemic way to produce sustained change that guarantees democratic progress and wellbeing of all citizens.

The Electoral Bill 2021 - Is it by the People?

Rumours are rife across the country that the Electoral Act 2021 about to be passed by the National Assembly on Tuesday, June 6, 2021 contains some provisions which are of grave concern to Nigerian citizens. This is troubling because these alleged provisions were never advocated for in the course of the public hearings which were conducted; on the contrary, what the National Assembly appears to have done, purportedly, is to go against provisions which Nigerians expressly advocated for and on which the existing Electoral Act is actually silent – as in the case of the alleged prohibition of the electronic transfer of election results, for example.

Publicize the Proposed Electoral Bill before it is Passed

#FixPolitics joins Nigerians across the land to condemn this development, if true, and calls on the leadership of the National Assembly to immediately address the Nigerian populace. We are aware of some reports claiming that NASS has denied the existence of such provisions in the Electoral Bill it is about to pass. If such is the case, then this must be, with the utmost sense of urgency, clearly, publicly and authoritatively declared so that citizens’ minds may be put at rest. In the case of such provisions having been introduced into the Electoral Bill 2021, however, we hasten to make some important assertions, particularly in respect of the provision banning the electronic transfer of election results.

Remove provisions in Section 50 (2) banning electronic transmission of results

The sanctity of our election results (as the endpoint of a process that has been seen to be fair and just) is the bedrock of our democracy and of our hope of a stable, secure, just and prosperous nation. It is obvious that Nigeria as a nation is yet to get it right in respect of ensuring the sanctity of election results.

Allowing electronic voting was a step towards its achievement; the next logical step is the electronic transmission of results. Banning the electronic transmission of results as contained in section 50 subsection 2 of the proposed electoral bill would suggest that the National Assembly is not working towards improving the conduct of elections in Nigeria, but rather, seeks to legalise the avenues through which the rigging of elections takes place and, thereby, perpetuate fraudulent elections.

Benefits of Electronic Transfer of Election Results

On the contrary, allowing the electronic transfer of election results will have the following positive effects on our election process:

1. Significantly minimise or completely remove errors in the collation of results;
2. Remove delays in the declaration of results due to manual computation and improve the overall efficiency of the process;
3. Block any fraudulent manipulation of results;
4. Be in tune with current developments which are geared towards a greater deployment of technology in conducting business and governance in the 21st century;
5. Ensure greater transparency of the whole process.

Remove provisions in Section 88 increasing limits on political campaigns

The proposed increases in campaign funding, as contained in section 88 of the proposed electoral bill, will serve the negative purpose of:

- a. Legalizing the monetisation of our electoral process;
- b. Reinforcing the perverse reality that elective offices in Nigeria are for sale to the highest bidders;
- c. Promoting corruption in the electoral process;
- d. Becoming a barrier to the participation of women, young people and people living with disabilities.

Remove Provisions in Section 65 Disempowering INEC from Reviewing Election Results

Rejecting the proposal to empower INEC to review election results declared under duress encourages politicians to intimidate polling agents and use other anti-democratic means to secure false results.

Our Demand

Our demand, therefore, is that the decisions taken by NASS be immediately rescinded and these undemocratic provisions be removed as follows:

1. Remove the phrase in section 50 (2) starting from “PROVIDED that the Commission shall not transmit results of elections by electronic means.” Section 50 (2) should read: “Voting

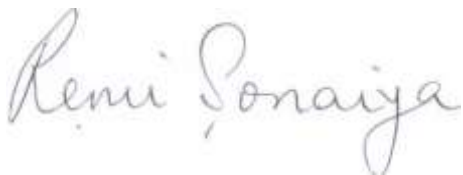
at an election under this Bill shall be in accordance with the procedure determined by the Commission, which may include electronic voting and transmission of results”.

2. Pass the Electoral bill containing the key provisions Nigerian citizens presented through the various public hearings and our #FixPolitics submission attached as Exhibit 1.

The National Assembly members are representatives of their various constituencies. Nigerians spoke boldly and clearly during the public hearings. NASS members have no right to scuttle the aspirations of Nigerian citizens.

Thank you for your attention and expected prompt action.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Remi Sonaiya
Co-Chair, Constitutional,
Political and Electoral Reforms



Anthony Ubani
Executive Director, #FixPolitics