

In spite of the wide protests against moves by members of the Senate and the House of Representatives to make themselves automatic NEC members of their various political parties, the lawmakers seem determined to go ahead. What is your view about it?

The issue is not that of law, the issue is the prerogatives of the political parties. At their conventions, they could pass resolutions that include or exclude the members of the National Assembly from any organ of the party. I think the lawmakers are over-stepping their boundaries by appropriating to themselves what is not within their province. I can't see why an issue of membership of NEC could be inscribed into an Electoral Law. Electoral Law is about a law defining the processes that will lead to the conduct of an election. It is not about the composition of political parties. Therefore, I think that Nigeria legislature should really think twice before they take certain selfish decisions.

As a leading member of CPC, what would your party do if they go ahead and get that clause inserted in the Electoral Act?

What I will want to say is simple. We would have two options: either to take it to the court, to expunge that selfish motive they have inscribed into an existing law or we allow them to fool themselves as Chris Ngige said when he was taken to Okija, and wait for them at the appropriate corner when we form government and we have majority in the National Assembly. We repeal that law.

One of the major things in the Electoral Act or one of the major demands people are making, has to do with the internal democracy within the party. If the lawmakers succeed in making themselves NEC members of the party, will that enhance internal democracy?

In fact, that will kill internal democracy because they are not going there to contribute positively to the development of the party. They are only going there to defend their interest as it concerns them, whenever there is National Executive Committee meeting of the party. I think somebody has to talk to the legislators, that what they are doing is not only selfish but is senseless and stupid.

Does it not bother you that the PDP, which produced the bulk of these lawmakers, have not done much or spoken out loud enough even when some people from other parties had come out to condemn this action? Are you not bothered that it seems PDP has remained silent over it?

Do you expect PDP to speak against itself, or which is against the public opinion. PDP can never do that because they have been part of the system. I don't think PDP can ever do anything right. In fact, PDP can never, never and never do what I think is right. It is better for us to gear up and get rid of them. Nigeria cannot develop, Nigeria cannot see peace, Nigeria can never do anything that is right with PDP.

You said that CPC may either go to court to challenge them or wait when it forms government to repeal that aspect of the law. What is your advice to other political parties to do at this time?

If all these parties can come together, including PDP itself, if they are sincere about the will of the people, then we can come together and forcefully show our displeasure over what the legislators are trying to do and we stage a protest to the National Assembly until they abandon this obnoxious act they want to do.

In all sincerity, do you think the CPC is strong enough to wade off challenges from other political parties in the next coming elections?

PDP knows that they have to do all manners of tricks as they are used to in order to defeat CPC, maybe this time they will have to use rocket launchers; not only armoured cars and police - securities and army to write figures for them.

They know better than anybody, that what we are saying is not boast, that if there is any semblance of any election, not even free and fair, that PDP can't even get one state, and if there is any PDP man who thinks he is popular enough, that he can win his council seat in free and fair election, let him come and we put a ballot box in his constituency, including Jonathan.

One of the dangerous things that is happening again, towards the end of this tenure you will see a lot of people decamping from PDP to other parties, and CPC has even become a beneficiary of this culture of decamping, one thing is that at the end of election, those who use these platforms to win elections, go back to their former parties.

Is your party doing anything to ensure that party tickets are not given to those who do not share in the vision of the CPC?

There is difference between what is happening now and what was obtained before. Before, it was after the PDP primaries that they will now run to other political parties to seek for election on which they want to actualise their mission. In this case, PDP has not even had its primaries and all those that are decamping are genuinely doing it because they believe they have no chance in the PDP. Let me tell you what people have not understood. They leave the party and go back to PDP because PDP still manipulates the elections. If we are able to muster support, garner support and defeat PDP. It is the existing people in PDP who will decamp to CPC and not CPC people decamping to PDP. That is the reality on the ground and that is the Nigerian situation for you.

General Buhari has warned every leader of CPC to ensure that there is a level playing ground. How far are you people going to ensure that this warning is not disobeyed?

Well, this is party politics and you have to be proactive, you have to be open-minded; these we do. But the most important thing in all these are human factors that we have to work with and it is difficult to really change people's behaviours overnight, even as I talk to you, there is a resistance, because not every CPC man shares this our view, this our culture of justice and equity.

But since they are members of CPC, we will continue to preach what we think is right and a lot of people are imbibing this. We intend to be open, free, and transparent and do justice to all our

members, because if you cannot do justice to all our members, then we cannot do justice to members of the public who would eventually want to govern. There is no two ways about it and the Electoral Act is so clear that nobody can do anything undemocratic and be given chance to contest any election. We will make sure that we put down our feet and persuade all our supporters to make sure that they imbibe this culture of equity and justice for all.

The issue of negotiation with ACN has been causing a lot of controversies. Some people say the talks have broken down, others say it is still on. We want to know from you, as a prominent figure in the party. What is really going on?

Well, you have just listened to the National Secretary of the ACN. It was in the news and that of the CPC is also in the news saying the talks have not broken down, we will carry these talks to its logical conclusion. In politics you must keep on talking and talking and talking until you meet middle ground on which you can act. There are so many scenarios we can work with ACN. They wanted outright merger with us, we said no, we want alliance and maybe at the tail end of the day, we may even agree that we can go and do alliance. When we form central government, we can then merge. All these are possible things. Or we can even go our separate ways, they can have their presidential candidate, we have our own. From some states of the South-South and we take over the whole North, the election will be inconclusive, when we come to run off,

whether our candidate is knocked out or their own is knocked out, we are sure that we can work together during the run-off, we produce the next president of Nigeria.

Now that you talk about the issue of raising funds, what is your opinion about the recent funds raised by Jonathan for his campaign efforts?

Well, it is not Jonathan that is the problem, it is the corporate Nigerians. It is them that I pity. They are not only supporting a candidate of a party, but they have now moved from supporting a candidate to supporting an aspirant. That looks like they don't know what they are doing. Who told them that Jonathan will be president? So if another person becomes President, what happens to their businesses? I thought they will be wise enough not only to contribute to every aspirant or candidate, but also to contribute to all political parties, but if they think it is only PDP, we will see when the music changes, how they will dance.

NASS members pursuing personal interests over parties' NEC membership, says Buba Galadima

Written by Administrator

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