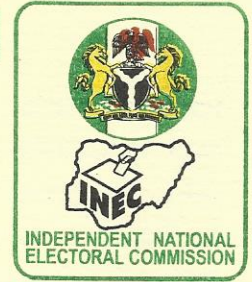


INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION

INEC - HEADQUARTERS

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INEC/DVEP/P/PR/01/I

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STATEMENT BY INEC ON THE RESCHEDULED LEGISLATIVE HOUSES RE-RUN ELECTIONS IN RIVERS STATE

It will be recalled that following court orders, the Independent National Electoral Commission fixed re-run elections into various seats in the National and the Rivers State House of Assembly for 19th March, 2016. Regrettably, the elections in all three Senatorial Districts and several of these Constituencies could not be concluded due to violent disruption of the process which necessitated the suspension of the exercise in all the Senatorial Districts and affected constituencies.

Following widespread consultations with all major stakeholders in Rivers State, well respected individuals and organisations nationwide, as well as mediation efforts by Mediators, a tentative date (30th July 2016) was fixed by the Commission for the conclusion of the process. While the Commission reiterated its readiness to conclude the outstanding elections, it also indicated its readiness to review and reconsider the suggested date as the security situation unfolded in the State.

INEC has, in conjunction with the Security Agencies, relevant extra Ministerial Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) undertaken periodic electoral risk assessments in the three and a half weeks since this decision was reached at the National Stakeholders' Meeting held in Abuja on the 30th of June 2016.

The reports of these assessments have been almost unanimous in concluding that the prevailing security situation in most parts of the state where elections are to be undertaken are not conducive for peaceful elections. In the Commission's view, the rhetorics of some of the political actors, the incidence of violence in a number of the Local Government Areas where these elections are scheduled and the atmosphere of fear and intimidation created by these rhetorics and violence, all indicate a clear and present danger in proceeding with the elections as earlier scheduled. This situation is now further worsened by direct attacks on the Commission, of which the most recent and glaring was the burning down of the INEC office in Khana Local Government Area on 22nd July 2016.