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TEXT OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE ADDRESSED BY THE HON. MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE, ALHAJI LAI MOHAMMED,ON THE ONGOING APC MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION EXERCISE ...IN ORO, KWARA STATE, ON MONDAY, FEB. 15TH 2021

#Thread ■



Good morning gentlemen of the press.

2. As you are aware, the All Progressives Congress (@OfficialAPCNg) membership registration started in Kwara State on Feb. 9th 2021.

Ahead of my registration this morning at my polling unit, PU 006, Oro Ward 2, we had sent out our people to monitor the process to ensure compliance with the guidelines stipulated by the party.

The reports from our monitoring teams are out, and I wish to inform you, gentlemen, that sadly, the whole exercise did not comply with the stipulated guidelines.

3. The guidelines stipulate consultation with all stakeholders by the Registration Officials from Abuja. After the botched attempt to have a meeting of stakeholders, due to orchestrated violence...

...the Registration Officials failed to consult with all stakeholders before the commencement of the membership registration exercise, opting instead to work with only one of the four tendencies here in Kwara,

the Fagbemi Group to which the Governor belongs, thus excluding the three other tendencies - The Akogun Group, the Gbemi Saraki Group and the Lai Mohammed Group, without which the 'O To Ge' Movement would not have succeeded.

Ironically, the Fagbemi Group is the weakest of the four tendencies. Out of the 193 wards in the state, the group has only nine ward chairmen and does not have even one local government chairman.

Even at the state EXCO, the Fagbemi group has only four members.

Also, the recruitment of officials for the registration has been a one-sided affair and indications are that the hand-picked officials are under strict orders 'from above' as to how to carry out the exercise. We have evidence to corroborate this.

4. The guidelines are also clear on how registration materials are to be handed over and distributed. It says officials for the assignment are prohibited from handing over registration forms other materials inclusive of registration data in a manner not prescribed...

by the exercise to unauthorized persons, other materials inclusive of registration data in a manner not prescribed by the exercise to unauthorized persons, and that the materials (forms, registers and others) are to be distributed directly to the Registration Officers...

...and records of the distribution are to be captured and reported accordingly.

Well, I regret to say that these particular provision of the guidelines were not complied with. When the Registration Officials from Abuja landed in Ilorin, they simply handed over the registration materials to an individual, not recognized by the provisions of the guidelines

who has decided to hoard them instead of distributing them to the wards (we also have evidence to back this up).

5. The implication is that the registration is being carried out without Party Membership Register, while temporary membership slips, to be signed and detached from the forms after registration, are not being given to those who have purportedly registered.

According to our findings, since the commencement of the registration, over 80% of the registration units do not have either membership register or membership registration slip.

In the few places where they are available, they are kept in private apartments of some political office holders. In Baruten, the registration materials were handed over to the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, who is from there.

In Oyun, the materials were given to one Olayiwola Ojo, a member of the State House of Assembly. In Shao, in Northern Kwara, the registration materials were taken to the police station, where the DPO of that station presided over membership registration...

... in contravention of the party guidelines.

It was only when the people mobilized against the use of the police station for registration that the illegality was stopped.

What happened in Shao is the clearest indication yet that the police and other security agencies may be complicit in the mess being made of the membership registration in Kwara State.

6. Gentlemen, instead of membership registers, conniving registration officials are using exercise books or foolscap sheets to register members.

Even senior Kwara government officials and State House of Assembly members were made to write their details in the exercise books or foolscap sheets, in clear violation of the guidelines.

We have pictorial and video evidence of this. More worrisome is that members who have purportedly registered are being asked to come back for their registration slips. Till date, no such member has been given the registration slip.

Even senior officials of the State Government, including Special Advisers, as well as House of Assembly members, have had to register using exercise books/foolscap sheets (we have video and pictures to corroborate this).

Also, due to the shoddy and
non-compliant mode of registration, using exercise books and foolscap sheets instead of the membership register, many members are unwilling to submit their personal details via such unsecured and illegal process.

The question to ask, gentlemen, is: Where are the Registration Materials that were brought to the state?

7. Now, the membership registration guidelines prohibit any form of discrimination or exclusion of all interested, eligible members of the public during the exercise.

However, there seems to be a deliberate policy of exclusion by the Registration Team from Abuja and their collaborators.

It seems there is a plan to de-register even high-ranking members and stakeholders who have not only paid their dues in the parry, but without whose contribution this government would not have been in power.

For example, at the Registration Unit of Senator Gbemi Saraki, the Hon Minister of State for Transport, which is PU 005 at Ode-Opobiyi in Ajikobi Ward of Ilorin West LGA, not a single registration official has been sighted at the designated point since the commencement of...

...the exercise, not to talk of registration materials. This is the situation in all other places considered to be the stronghold of high-ranking party members.

Also in Ifelodun, my local government, registration officials only showed up once and disappeared, making it impossible for many members to register.

Also, even though the registration exercise was supposed to last two weeks, registration officials only showed up in many registration units for only one day.

There is no stronger evidence of deliberate exclusion than this. Also, if the purpose of this registration exercise is to revalidate old members and register new ones, why then are people being prevented from registering?

Meanwhile, members across the state who have complained about the non-compliance with the guidelines have been arrested and threatened with prosecution, while many have been beaten up. At the last count, over 100 of our members have had to been bailed from police stations.

8. Gentlemen, since their arrival in Kwara State, the seven-member @OfficialAPCNg Membership Registration Committee for Kwara, led by Senator John Danboyi, seems to have gone underground.

They have not had any useful interaction with lawful members of the State EXCO as well as party leaders and other stakeholders, including Local Government Chairmen and their executives and Ward Chairmen and their executives.

These are lawfully-constituted party executives that the registration guidelines stipulate should not only be consulted but carried along during the exercise.

9. It is clear, from what I have enumerated above, that there seems to be a policy to massively disenfranchise/de-register APC members in Kwara State. This has left many members disillusioned.

Based on the communication that I have received from APC stakeholders across the state on the report of the monitoring teams, and the glaring
non-compliance with the stipulated guidelines for the membership,

we, the critical stakeholders of the APC in Kwara State, hereby demand the following:

A) - Immediate cancellation of the APC Membership Registration Exercise in Kwara State and the putting in place of a process to ensure the conduct of a credible and fair exercise that will enjoy the support and confidence of all.

B)- The Immediate disbandment of the Senator John Danboyi-led Membership Registration Committee for Kwara State. A vast majority of the APC stakeholders in the state have lost confidence in the committee.

C) - The constitution of a fresh Membership Registration Committee that is truly independent, non-compromised and sensitive to the delicate diverse interests in the party

D) - A thorough investigation into the botched membership registration exercise by the Senator John Danboyi-led committee.

E) - That these demands are the irreducible minimum requirements for peace and progress in the Kwara APC.

10. Gentlemen, I thank you for your kind attention