



## **Nigeria: Parties' Accounts in Disarray, Says INEC**

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Abuja—The Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) yesterday said that going by the report of its auditors the accounts of political parties are in total disarray.

The Commission singled out the accounts of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as being the worst.

INEC National Commissioner in Charge of Political Parties, Dr. Ishmael Igbani, who disclosed this in a paper entitled, "Political Party Finance," at a workshop organized by the International Foundation for Election System (IFES) in Abuja accused the parties of having a disjointed and unorganized accounts.

"None of the registered political parties has an audited account that is in line with accounting standards. None of the parties prepared their own accounts that is in conformity with the laid down standards. No party has an accurate audited account.

"PDP officials refused to sign the audited accounts prepared by the auditors the commission appointed to audit their accounts. Rather, the party went ahead and prepared and presented its own audited accounts to the commission. What we have done at this juncture is to send all the reports of the INEC auditors to the National Assembly," he said.

Igbani said that the commission is recommending a legislation that would make any single private donation of more than N100,000 identifiable.

He also said that under the new bill now before the National Assembly the maximum election expenses to be incurred by a candidate at presidential polls shall not be more than N50 million, while governorship elections shall be pegged at N20 million and that of the Senatorial and House of Representatives expenses would be pegged at N8 million and N5 million respectively.

Speaking earlier, INEC Chairman Abel Guobadia, said that the commission is seeking constitutional amendments on the appointment of Resident Electoral Commissioners and ad-hoc staff for use during national elections.

He said the commission wants constitutional amendments that will replace Resident Electoral commissioners (RECs) in the state with career civil servants.

Also, the commission wants constitutional amendments that will stop the use of ad-hoc staff and the use of civil servants and personal staff as operation staff in all elections.

"The constitutional amendment is basically to stop the appointment of Resident Electoral Commissioners in the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. In its place, Directors who are career civil servants would be appointed.

"What we are doing is to appoint Directors in the States, these Directors would be staff within the civil servants in the commission and are cautious of what they are doing to avoid dismissal and in the process forfeit their pensions and gratuity. A situation where RECs who are mostly retired civil servants and politicians are appointed, it would be difficult to control them and ensure their loyalty to the commission," he said.

Guobadia said that INEC is planning to stop the use of ad-hoc staff as operational staff during elections. The aim, according to him, is to ensure that those so used can answer for their actions even after elections.