

# 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly': Nigerians on Trial

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## Nigeria Presidential Election Petition Tribunal

### His Excellency Peter Obi at PEPT

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It is amazing how most Nigerians will categorically state their desire for a positive change in the country's prospects. When interrogated to define what people mean by this change, everyone, bar none, is clear on what they wish to see take place in the country. Nigerians have been on trial since the advent of this APC-led government. The recent 2023 Presidential election was the crucible. Many stood up to be counted and to declare their stance.

When confronted on their reasons for seeking change, many describe what perhaps could only be realised in a dream state or a make-belief Nigeria whose reality is ever becoming a mirage than a possibility. Such utopia is perhaps what compells Nigerians to default to the Divine for salvation.

The average Nigerian would tell you how they would love to live in a place where all co-exist in harmony and are able to access opportunities currently only available to those well placed in government circles or employed in high-brow industries.

## Are you Obidient?

The common man drew hope in the opportunity offered by the recent 2023 Presidential elections. The emergence of His Excellency, Peter Obi, as a candidate in the race, a man whose pedigree was perhaps exceptional and well established; led to a remarkable movement of faithfults. Incentivised by the hope of a better tomorrow, against all odds repeatedly echoed by the two major political parties, the new found consciousness birthed a movement. **The Obidients**, as every citizen who believed in the candidature of Peter Obi, now identified themselves, began a new battle for existence. The fight for the survival of the soul of Nigeria, was an aftermath of decades of an oppressive deception that sold a lie and continued same everywhere they turned.

The All Progressive Congress (APC) led Buhari government despite all the good-will from Nigerians never got off the mark from inception in 2015 during its first four years in office.

The first six months of Buhari's 'democratic' dispensation as president, revealed his ineptitude in leadership. Despite all the claims and campaign promises that his government will hit the ground running, on assuming office, it became evident it was all soundbites to gain office. It took a good part of his first year to finally appoint ministers to run the affairs of state, attracting the sobriquet "Mr GO Slow". He shortly after that became an absentee President spending months in the UK for health reasons. Nigerians were left wondering if they were to expect another death of an ill president whilst in office. The trauma of [late President Yar'Adua's](#) demise whilst in office, half a decade before, was still haunting Nigerians. The hiatus in leadership led to many claims of Buhari being a "clone", and that the true Buhari had, well died whilst abroad in the UK. These narratives were becoming too familiar and Nigerians were re-living the trauma of claims and counter-claims that bedevilled late President Yaradua's eventual departure from mother earth.

Buhari miraculously recovered from what perhaps was very likely, a stress reaction to eventual attainment of Presidency. Something he had pursued doggedly since he became obsessed with re-claiming his lost military mandate; removed from office by a coup d'etat in 1984, approximately a year after he too assumed office under the same arrogation of authority as military head of state.

The promises APC government made to Nigerians - God bless them, I mean Nigerians, not APC of course; so trusting and patient. APC's promises to Nigerians read like a liturgy. It could only compare with Moses' proclamation of God's plan to get the the Israelites out of Egypt to the promised land.

The Inec Result Viewing portal (IREV) was perhaps a game changer in itself. Knowingly or otherwise, INEC defined what is now its own nemesis as pertaining to the outcome of the recent Presidential elections.

## **APC - mere promises, with no intention to fulfill a jot**

A land flowing with milk and honey. Where all Nigerians will be engaged with work and will experience the rebirth of Nigeria Airways, the national carrier again. Where Nigerians will re-experience steady supply of electricity and they would no longer suffer the droning of generators which has now deafened the hearing of most

Nigerians. Yes most Nigerians are deaf and getting dumbfounded by the realisation they also could not be heard even when they screamed out to their leaders, repeatedly assaulting their intellect with endless lies. Promises of jobs for all and Forex restored, with the Naira becoming at par with the dollar.

Well, Buhari's first term for many signalled he was a ne'er do well president. But Nigerians, like the bride, besotted with their own beauty, failed to realise their suitor was nothing other than a vampire who would under the cloak of darkness exsanguinate them with his ravenous appetite for the blood of Nigerians.

Indeed the blood of innocent Nigerians flowed across the land through out the last 8 years of Buhari-led APC government. *'Boko Haram', ISWAP, Bandits and Herdsmen Crises, IPoB, and Kidnappings; sometimes with security agencies collusion, were the new norm.* Non-State Actors became de facto government in certain regions. What a price to pay for ineptitude and fallacious belief on one man who truly had nothing up his sleeves for Nigerians. First four years was enough to know this fact. But no. The deception took another 4-years for the 'penny to drop'.

The #COVID pandemic revealed to Nigerians what indeed was the reality of the APC-led government. The measures considered necessary to safeguard communities from the onslaught of the disease became an opportunity for exploitation. #Covid palliatives were stockpiled and hidden away by persons appointed into offices. Getting vaccinated was a lottery. It is important however to acknowledge the efforts of some state governments in mitigating the impact of COVID by positive steps. Lagos State Government did attempt to deploy interventions to this effect and to its credit, brought some confidence and compelled other states to act, rather than feign helplessness. Sadly few governors preferred to play the Ostrich, denying COVID ever existed. Kogi state comes to mind. COVID however revealed the gaps in Health provision that was ever getting wider. Thankfully the incidence of #COVID in developing communities was less virulent. It was a disease that perhaps affected the affluent who are more likely to have travelled far and wide and hence exposed.

In the midst of the Pandemic came the #ENDSARS debacle. Another "*nail in the coffin*". Nigerians who went to the LEKKI TOLL GATE peaceful protest against the activities of the [Special Anti-Robbery Squad \(SARS\)](#) police unit, were literarily massacred. The Lagos state government appointed panel of enquiry investigating this avoidable event that took place on the 20th October 2020, concluded that lives were lost and harm was done. Compensation were paid to some. Yet many live with

the trauma of that event fresh in their memories.

Pro APC sympathizers would draw attention to '*major infrastructural*' projects completed in Buhari's tenure. Rail networks - Lagos to Ibadan, Kadunna to Abuja or Warri - Itakpe lines. The Second Niger bridge now about completed etc. These were projects passed on from previous government which for a change, were seen through. No doubt Buhari could have been celebrated if, and indeed if transparency and costs were something he could really make claims to. He could also have been applauded if he eschewed nepotism and myopic understanding of what Nigeria as a country represents and stopped conflating it with '*Nigerien*', his avowed cousins across the Northern border.

The collective consciousness and indeed unconscious memories of Nigerians are replete with these last 8-years of mindless leadership.

## **Any hope after all hopes in 2023 Elections?**

So 2023 elections was indeed an opportunity to salvage and perhaps attempt to rescue that which is a disaster unfolding.

Many parties fielded very good candidates for the 2023 Presidential election. There was no doubt that Nigerians are more than capable of providing quality leadership if a **level-playing field** was provided.

The [Independent National Electoral Commission \(INEC\)](#) promised it would be an independent umpire at these elections. INEC went beyond itself and further promised that by deploying technology - [the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System, BVAS](#) this election would indeed be a turning point for Nigerians. It made all believe that their votes will count and be counted! INEC with the billions made available to it as an independent agency of government, embarked on a campaign to sensitize Nigerians as to participating in what it claimed would be a free and fair election. The Permanent Voters Card drive was unprecedented. The icing on the cake was the IREV online system for "real-time" monitoring of the progress of the elections. The Inec Result Viewing portal (IREV) was perhaps a game changer in itself. Knowingly or otherwise, INEC defined what is now its own nemesis as pertaining to the outcome of the recent Presidential elections. Perhaps Buhari may be remembered for one thing, signing the 2022 Electoral Act into Law. Yet he fails to uphold the same law he signed.

Against this backdrop, Nigerians and particularly many who aligned themselves with the Obidient movement, believed that change was perhaps possible. Post #EndSars, Nigerians now took the view that citizens need to be the architect of the Nigeria they desired.

Nigeria has seen the good the bad and the outright ugly. The litmus test of a good leader is perhaps their past records as no one can ever know the future. Unfortunately 2023 election has played out in real time what the good is and what the outright ugly looks like.

Whilst a number of Nigerians remained cynical of the system and refused to believe change was possible, the Obidients and its sympathisers saw this opportunity and became more determined to tread this path. Obidients became the scorn of the two major older parties - APC and PDP who derided them.

Peter Obi and his running mate Dr Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed found a new home in the Labour Party where most if not all Obidients now berthed.

This piece is not really about any of these parties. It is rather about Nigerians and their readiness to change the countries prospects and what that change truly looks like.

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The APC 2023 Presidential election primaries which took place in mid-2022, months before the campaigns kicked off, revealed itself for what it was. The term referring to Nigeria as a "fantastically corrupt" country comes to mind. The APC flag bearer Bola Ahmed Tinubu was, sine qua non, the epitome of that phrase. The events at the APC primaries was mind-boggling and continues to hurt true meaning Nigerians whose quest for an egalitarian society bereft of impugned leadership, is now looking like a pipe-dream. Many revelations regarding the candidacy of ex senator and former governor of Lagos state, 'His Excellency', Bola Ahmed Tinubu and his running mate Kashim Shettima, also a former governor and ex-senator from Borno State, North East of Nigeria, remained in contention. Whilst the APC-led government and its party members dismissed, denied and refuted a number of these revelations, the

veracity of some of these reports have now been confirmed to be objective facts. The APC party machinery are now dancing to a different tone, to counter the effects of these past infractions of their candidate and now presumed president-elect, Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

When Nigerians thought they had seen it all, the *non-independence* of the electoral commission suddenly became a rude awakening. In the early hours of the morning of 1 March 2023, INEC contrary to its previous evenings press conference, declared Bola Ahmed Tinubu the [winner of the 25th February 2023 Presidential election.](#)

The declared winning votes for Bola Ahmed Tinubu by most accounts did not seem to add up. Whilst it is accepted that most pre-election pollsters may not be necessarily correct, the margins ascribed to APC was to say the least preposterous and not backed by any evidence. The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Labour Party(LP) who were declared second and third runners up saw through INECs charade and have since "***gone to court***", making the judiciary the last bastion of Nigeria's mockery of a democracy.

As at 21 May 2023. All three parties are in court contesting APC's position. Presumed President-elect Bola Ahmed Tinubu, by INECs calendar *may or may not* be sworn in on the 29th of May 2023.

## Nigeria on Trial

Obidients, with bated breath, watch the Presidential Election Petitions Tribunal hold their pre-hearing court sessions. Nigerians all wait and wonder what the immediate future holds for them. The jury is infact still out on this one!

It is now the state versus the people of Nigeria. A government who no longer represents the people by virtue of its complicit acts, is like a ship run aground. Buhari-led APC government has left Nigeria in a sorrier state than he met it. Perhaps President Yar'Adua and Jonathan's PDP-led government for all its sins was the good. It is clear that Buhari was Bad for Nigeria. It is frightening to think that we might be in for an ugly run with another APC-led government continuing the pillage people have suffered in recent years.

Could the 'Obidients' truly rescue Nigeria at this critical time?

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