

Dear Editor,

WIKE: When loudness does not depict intelligence, arrogance becomes public embarrassment

"And the constant chest-beating is beginning to look less like confidence and more like a desperate attempt to convince everybody—including himself—that he is as politically powerful as he thinks he is".

Nyesom Ezenwo Wike has once again demonstrated why political loudness should never be confused with political intelligence. This man speaks with the arrogance of someone who personally owns Nigeria, yet the more he talks, the more he exposes the poverty of his political reasoning. Wike recently declared that "2027 elections will be the easiest one for the President compared to 2023" and described the opposition as "crippled, homeless, no feather." He even told them to "start crying now." Imagine that level of political sophistication. While Nigerians are worried about the economy, insecurity, unemployment and the future of their children, a senior government official is busy behaving like a political school bully celebrating the frustration of his opponents. Is this governance or political kindergarten? Then came his astonishing explanation of the Osun election. Wike argued that Ademola Adeleke won because President Tinubu allowed a free and fair election, asking: "If Tinubu did not allow a free and fair election, would they have won? No!?" That statement deserves serious scrutiny. Since when did allowing Nigerians to vote freely become a presidential favour? Free and fair elections are not a gift from Tinubu. They are supposed to be a basic requirement of democracy. Yet Wike speaks as though Nigerians should congratulate the government for simply allowing an election to happen without determining the outcome. That mentality is precisely what is wrong with Nigerian politics. And Wike should stop behaving like the political emperor of Nigeria. You are not the owner of this country, Mr. Wike. Being a former governor does not make you the owner of political wisdom. Being an FCT minister does not make you the owner of democracy. And being politically connected does not make every statement that comes out of your mouth intelligent. Sometimes, Wike talks with such enormous confidence that you would think he has discovered the secret formula for governing Nigeria. But confidence without substance is simply well-dressed ignorance. The man should understand that Nigerians are not impressed by political chest-thumping. We want leaders who can discuss governance, institutions, economic development and the future of young people—not politicians who derive excitement from telling opponents to cry. 2027 is not Wike's private wrestling match. It is an election involving millions of Nigerians. He can insult the opposition. He can mock them. He can predict their defeat. He can call them homeless. He can even tell them to cry. But when Nigerians enter the polling booths, Wike's mouth will not be on the ballot. The arrogance is becoming embarrassing. The political theatrics are becoming exhausting. And the constant chest-beating is beginning to look less like confidence and more like a desperate attempt to convince everybody—including himself—that he is as politically powerful as he thinks he is. Mr Wike, calm down. Nigeria is bigger than your ego. Democracy is bigger than your political connections. And 2027 belongs to Nigerians—not to Nyesom Wike.

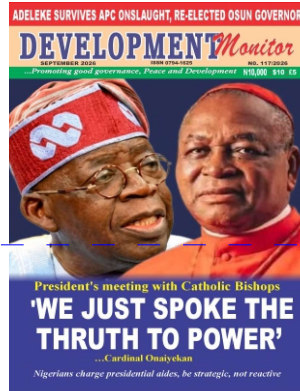
Mr Ajakaiye-the people's advocate

Dear Editor,

Serving two masters; a dangerous gamble with Nigeria' data and Money

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has made a decision that should alarm every Nigerian. He has taken two of the most sensitive offices in this country and handed them over to his campaign. This is not politics as usual. This is a red line. And if we are quiet about it today, we will regret it tomorrow. The NIMC Chief: Guardian of our data. Now campaign data manager. Dr. Abisoye Coker-Odusote sits on the most dangerous database in Nigeria. As DG of NIMC she holds the fingerprints, NINs, photos, and addresses of over 136 million Nigerians. That same woman is now Director of Data Management for the APC Presidential Campaign Council. Let me ask it directly: What exactly will she be "managing"? Our NINs? Our biometrics? Our voting patterns? The woman sworn to protect our privacy is now working for a political party. That is not just a conflict of interest. That is a threat to every Nigerian's identity. When the person who guards the vault also runs the heist, no one is safe.

The Tax Chief: Collector of our money. Now campaign fund raiser. Zacheus Adedeji is Chairman of the Nigerian Revenue Service. He takes money from your salary, your business, your market. He controls the revenue that builds roads, pays teachers, and buys drugs in hospitals. He



is also now Deputy Director of Fund Raising for Tinubu's campaign. So, the tax collector is now the campaign collector. Tell me where public money stops and campaign money starts. Tell me how Nigerians can trust that their taxes will not be used to fund one man's ambition. This is corruption in broad daylight. And it is being normalized.

A warning to all of us. Mr. President, you have the right to campaign. But you do not have the right to hijack the state to do it. Dr. Coker-Odusote and Mr. Adedeji, you have a choice to make today. Resign from the campaign council, or resign from government. You cannot serve Nigerians and serve a political party at the same time. Not with NIMC. Not with NRS. To the civil service: If this stands, no agency is safe. Tomorrow it will be CBN. Next it will be INEC. Then the entire government becomes a department of one party. To citizens: If we keep quiet, we are giving them permission.

Permission to use your NIN to target you. Permission to use your taxes to buy your vote. Some will say "other presidents did it." That is the excuse of cowards. A wrong does not become right because it is old. NIMC and NRS are not party offices. They belong to 230 million Nigerians. The line must be drawn now. This is my warning: Withdraw these two names immediately. Keep government out of campaigns. Keep our data out of politics. Keep our money out of elections. If you don't, Nigerians will know exactly what 2027 is about. It will not be about "Renewed Hope." It will be about using state power, state data, and state money to force a result. And a democracy built on that foundation will not stand. Nigerians deserve leaders who know the difference between governing and campaigning. Between public service and personal ambition. The time to speak is now. Before it is too late.

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Dear Editor

Experience is the best Teacher

There is this popular moonlight story about a baby mosquito who went out to feed on people's blood one day and came back to his mother mosquito saying, "Mummy, I had a great day. Human beings are wonderful. When I was feeding on them, they were clapping for me." The mother mosquito called the baby to one side and said, "My baby, you see those sounds of clapping you heard were not cheers but attempts to kill you. Next time, be careful, otherwise you will be lost forever." What do you think was the difference between the mother and the baby mosquitoes?

EXPERIENCE! These two examples emphasize one thing - the importance of experience! Experience, they say, is the best teacher but I will like to say that it is "other people's experience" that is the best teacher. If you wait to experience a lot of things by yourself before you learn, you would have received several hard knocks and for your lifetime, you may not graduate from the University of Hard Knocks. Don't wait to learn from personal experiences, learn from other people's experiences. Your own experience is a bad teacher because it gives you a test before teaching you the lessons. But when you learn from other people's experiences, you learn the lessons before you are faced with your tests. This is what mentorship can afford you. When you interact with an experienced mentor, you will achieve much more success quicker and with lesser pains. You don't need to ask anyone to be your mentor, if you need them, make efforts to find them, follow them and learn from them. Mentorship is like a stepping stone and not a stumbling block to what you plan to be. My mentor told me several years ago that the secret of wisdom is by reading books and exposing myself to the experiences of impactful people. Thank God for smartphones now, it has given me the opportunity to read on the go, listen on the go, watch on the go, without ceasing. Ebooks are now available flying everywhere and some people will still say they are looking for a mentor. It's important, however, to have a mentor that's accessible to you, who can keep track on you and hold you accountable. Some of you, the only thing you do with your phone is to snap pictures endlessly and then waste time and life watching reels and videos on social media, while some watch pornography, thereby introducing viruses into your life rather than reading books, articles, etcetera that can benefit your life. You can't grow or develop this way. You should make up your mind to learn from people's experiences - to know the mistakes to avoid and the examples you can model. Whatever you are not exposed to, you cannot model. We grow and develop through positive emulation. Don't remain forever a student of the University of Hard Knocks, escape by learning from the experiences of other people so you can evolve. Otherwise, you will become an experience that we will all learn from some day. I hope this helps you to grow better, quicker, with lesser pains.

Timothy Asuquo from Ikeja, Lagos