

Adeleke survives APC onslaught, re-elected Osun Governor

OSUN GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION WHEN THE PEOPLE SPEAK, DEMOCRACY MUST PREVAIL

It is increasingly evident that the All Progressives Congress (APC) understands that the survival and advancement of our democracy depend not merely on winning elections, but on respecting the democratic process, the constitutional rights of citizens, and ultimately, the sovereignty of the people. Against this backdrop, I warmly congratulate His Excellency, Governor Ademola Adeleke, on his electoral victory. More importantly, I congratulate the good people of Osun State, whose votes have once again demonstrated the fundamental principle upon which democracy rests: the people must have the final say in determining who governs them. Democracy, being the most participatory form of government, cannot flourish in an atmosphere where political actors are only prepared to celebrate the electoral process when the outcome favours them. It requires maturity, tolerance, mutual respect, political restraint and, perhaps most importantly, the ability to accept victory with humility and defeat with dignity. Elections are contests, not wars. Political opponents are not enemies, and electoral defeat is not a personal humiliation. In every genuine democracy, there must be winners and losers, and the willingness of the losing side to accept the verdict of the electorate is just as important as the willingness of the winning



side to celebrate its victory responsibly. The outcome of the Osun governorship election deserves commendation because it has once again provided an opportunity to reflect on the true meaning of participatory democracy. Political gladiators presented themselves before the electorate, campaigned for their respective parties and exercised their constitutional right to seek the mandate of the people. At the end of the process, the people made their choice.

For the opposition, the outcome represents a victory for democracy. For the ruling party, it is democracy in action. But beyond partisan interpretations, there is a

bigger victory, the victory of the electorate and the democratic principle that political authority ultimately derives from the consent of the people. It is also worthy of commendation that the process has been received with considerable political maturity by stakeholders across the divide. Where an election is declared credible when one's candidate wins, the same standard of judgment must be applied when the result goes the other way. This is where political maturity becomes indispensable. It cannot be democratic to describe an election as free, fair and transparent simply because one's preferred candidate emerged victorious, and then immediately question the integrity of the same process because the result did not conform to one's expectations. Such selective acceptance of democratic principles does not strengthen democracy; rather, it creates unnecessary distrust in the electoral system and undermines public confidence in democratic institutions.

If genuine irregularities are suspected, the Constitution and the law provide legitimate avenues for redress. Responsible political actors should therefore channel their grievances through established legal mechanisms rather than resorting to inflammatory rhetoric, emotional accusations or attempts to delegitimize an election simply because the result is inconvenient. The ability to concede defeat is not a sign of weakness. On the contrary, it is one of the clearest demonstrations of political maturity and respect for the electorate. The Osun election has also provided another important lesson for Nigerian politicians: elections are ultimately determined by the people, as executive, the infrastructure you put in place, security and welfare of people etc. as a lawmaker your legislation, oversight and constituency projects etc not by social media noise. The number of press conferences held by a candidate does not automatically translate into votes. The volume of online propaganda does not constitute a popular mandate. Political theatrics, elaborate motorcades, impressive convoy displays and temporary gestures of financial inducement cannot permanently substitute for credible governance and tangible dividends of democracy.

The people are watching. They observe the roads constructed and rehabilitated. They notice improvements in healthcare, education, security and social infrastructure. They evaluate the accessibility of their leaders and the responsiveness of government. They remember promises made and measure them against what has actually been delivered. Ultimately, the ballot box becomes the place where these judgments are expressed. This is

why every government must understand that electoral victory is not a permanent entitlement. A mandate is a contract with the people, and every administration must continually justify the confidence reposed in it by delivering meaningful governance. The Osun electorate has exercised that sovereign responsibility. Whether one agrees with their decision or not, the democratic obligation is to respect it. The lesson for political parties, therefore, is profound: never underestimate the intelligence of the electorate. The people may listen to political speeches, attend rallies, watch television debates, follow social media campaigns and observe political propaganda, but when the decisive moment arrives, they retreat into the privacy of the ballot box and make their own judgment. That judgment may not always correspond with the calculations of political strategists, opinion polls, social media trends or the expectations of political elites. But that is precisely what makes democracy powerful. The people are sovereign.

Consequently, the Osun election should not merely be viewed through the narrow prism of which political party won or lost. It should be viewed as another chapter in Nigeria's continuing democratic journey—a journey that requires all political actors to place the stability and credibility of our democratic institutions above temporary partisan interests. To the victors, victory should inspire humility, responsibility and a renewed commitment to service. To those who did not prevail, defeat should be regarded not as the end of the political journey but as an opportunity for reflection, reconstruction and renewed engagement with the people.

Most importantly, all sides must recognize that democracy is bigger than any individual, candidate or political party. I therefore congratulate Governor Ademola Adeleke on his victory and commend the people of Osun State for exercising their constitutional right to determine their political leadership. I equally commend all the candidates, political parties, electoral officials, security agencies, observers and citizens who participated in the democratic process.

Let this election serve as a reminder that democracy is not defined only by the ability to win elections; it is equally defined by the ability to respect the will of the people when the result does not favour us. The ballot has spoken. The people have spoken. And in a democracy, the voice of the people must remain the ultimate voice of authority.