



State Independent Electoral Commission's (SIEC) Autonomy: MIRAGE OR REALITY?

Local government elections should be a level playing ground for both incumbent and opposition parties. In recent times however, the credibility of local government polls have been challenged by the clean sweep recorded by incumbent parties.

The 'winner takes it all' syndrome pervades governance at the state level as SIECs are controlled by the governors. This is clearly evident in the findings from our research on local government elections in various states.



Section 7(1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) guarantees that the government of every State shall conduct a democratically elected local government council. "The system of local government by democratically elected local government councils is under this Constitution guaranteed; and accordingly, the Government of every State shall, subject to section 8 of this Constitution, ensure their existence under a Law which provides for the establishment, structure, composition, finance, and functions of such councils."

- * As of February 2022, the LGAs are being run by the Head of Local Government Administration in the various Local Government Councils. The date for the fresh election is yet to be announced.
- ** As of October 2021, the court dissolved the Transition Implementation Committees (TIC) in the 16 LGAs, pronounced it illegal & directed the governor to conduct a fresh election. The Governor has appealed the judgement, and the LGAs are still being run by the TIC. Although the LGA election has been included in the State Budget to hold in 2022, the state government is yet to determine the election date.
- + Adamawa State Independent Electoral Commission (ADSIEC) has announced April 9, 2022, as the date for the LGA elections.
- o In Anambra State, the LGAs are being run by Transition Committee Chairmen hand-picked by the Governor. No date has yet been scheduled for the elections.
- ◆ In Imo State, Governor Hope Uzodinma appointed 27 Interim Management Committee chairmen to take over the running of affairs of the local government pending when LGA elections are conducted. The State Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC) has announced that the election will be conducted in March 2022.
- ▲ In Osun State, the LGAs are currently being run by caretaker committee chairmen. In December 2021, the State House of Assembly confirmed the governor's request for an extension to another six months. The LGA election date is yet to be announced.
- ◆ Since the illegal dissolution of the Council by the Governor in 2014, the LGAs have been run by the caretaker committee chairmen nominated by the Governor, despite the supreme court judgement voiding the dissolution. The Katsina State Independent Electoral Commission (KASIEC) has announced the LGA elections will hold on April 11, 2022.
- † Newly created Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs) inclusive