

South-East election: litmus test for INEC

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It is the region with the least number of states but the South-east zone of Nigeria has produced peculiar outcomes in the keenly contested national assembly and governorship elections.

It began last week in Anambra state where the former Minister of Communications, Prof. Dora Akunyili of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) and her co-contestant, Dr. Chris Ngige of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) had to settle for a re-run to decide who would represent Anambra Central Senatorial district at the Senate from May 2011 to 2015.

It was the first re-run to be conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the 2011 general election. Ngige was declared the winner of the contest on Wednesday April 27, 2011.

The re-run became necessary when the original election held on Saturday April 9 2011 was declared inconclusive by the Returning Officer, Prof. Charles Esimone.

It was Esimone who also announced the eventual winner in a much improved work by the electoral body.

The stalemate in Imo State is another litmus test for INEC. Stakeholders are eager to see how the constitutional requirement of securing twenty five percent of the votes in two third of the state will play out, as both the APGA candidate, Mr. Rochas Okorocha and the ACN flag bearer, Mr. Ikedi Ohakim of the ruling PDP had won eleven seats each of the twenty-two House of Assembly seats.

The extent to which Imo State benefits from the free, fair and transparent conduct of the general elections will be determined by the re-run in Ohaji/Egbema, Mbaitoli local government areas, and in some wards in Oguta, where elections could not hold as earlier scheduled by INEC.

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