



# PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY

## Akwa Ibom State Chapter



*Justice, Unity & Progress*

Secretariat:

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### INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF BLAME GAMES: A CASE STUDY OF APC AKWA IBOM STATE

*Being the text of the Press Conference on the judgements of the National and State Assemblies election Petition Tribunal by the Peoples Democratic Party Akwa Ibom State.*

**W**hen the idiomatic expression “a bad Workman blames his tools” was birthed, we are certain that it was prophetically providing the most apt words to describe the ill preparedness, scaremongering and buck-passing attitude of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Akwa Ibom State. How else can you describe people who protested the location of the Tribunal before the tribunal was even constituted? Since then, they have been shouting to high heavens over non-existent issues.

When the tribunal started, they filed processes that were manifestly and incurably defective. Now that the natural consequences of their actions have manifested, instead of taking a sincere introspection, they have decided to apply their stock-in-trade – pass the buck.

Let us undertake an analysis of their cases and why they failed: In the case against Pat Ifon, the APC and their candidate filed the petition with a wrong heading of the court, wrong name of the Federal Constituency, non-compliance with Electoral Act and inability to prove allegations of corrupt practices in line with Section 135 of the Evidence Act. How is the PDP or the Tribunal responsible for fatal mistakes made by the lawyers of the APC?

In Ukanafun/Oruk Anam Federal Constituency, the Petitioners claimed that “in majority of the polling units in that Federal Constituency, electoral materials were hijacked and therefore elections could not hold and many of the voters were disenfranchised”.

The tribunal held and correctly too, that in proof of this allegation, the petitioners did not lead evidence to substantiate their claim by showing hijacking in majority of the over 270 polling units in the federal Constituency. It held further that the few units where the APC called witnesses, even if the results there were canceled or given to the APC, the figures from the unchallenged units (which were in the majority) will not alter the result as declared by INEC. For disenfranchisement, is it not amazing that the petitioner did not call any disenfranchised voter to testify? What could the tribunal have done in this case, other than to hold that their claims were not substantiated?

In Victor Antai's case, the entire Petition was fraught with unimaginable mistakes, which the petitioners and their counsel conceded. For example, the petitioner intermittently used Uyo and Oron federal Constituencies in his petition; used grounds alien to the Electoral Act in seeking redress and sought contradictory reliefs.

Additionally, they filed an affidavit where 23 paragraphs therein, contained vague, imprecise and nebulous claims of alleged errors occurring at polling units, without stating the exact polling units where these alleged errors happened. The petitioners in their characteristic untidy manner, brought witnesses who were either totally confused or were certified liars. Their PW3 stated that he did not vote and did not see when results were entered, but insisted that he knows there was manipulation – nothing more witless has ever been said since the creation of man.

In Godswill Akpabio's case, the majority judgement of the tribunal is a soothing balm to the people of Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District (North West) who massively rejected him at the polls. They ensured that he lost convincingly in eight LGAs, had a slim victory in one.

He supervised a reign of terror and harassment against his people in Essien Udim but still could not get a result to fertilize his ill-fated return to the senate. The judgement is therefore a confirmation of the sanctity of the ballot and the tribunal must be commended for their integrity and resoluteness. They stood against financial inducement, intimidation and blackmail to deliver a majority judgement that is firmly rooted in Law and reflective of the socio-political temperature of the Senatorial District. The world can only imagine the pressure that the tribunal would have come under from the National Comedian and ignoble proponent of “what money cannot do, more money can do”.

Truly, God has shown himself mightier than men, who think themselves powerful.

We wish to remind the APC, especially their youths who recently through their State Youth Leader, issued a press statement demanding among other things that “President Muhammadu Buhari, the National chairman APC and other stakeholders of the ruling party should not sit back to watch this injustice done yet again to the APC family in Akwa Ibom State”, that this is a call for extra judicial intervention, which if read alongside their 2015 exposed playbook and the following intimidation of the judiciary that was witnessed then, indicates their desperation to subvert justice, which is most condemnable and anti-democratic.

We challenge them, like we have done severally, to produce any thread of evidence, against the judges, apart from the habitual blackmail occasioned by a warped thought process inherent in their party. If they have any issue against the judges they should direct their petition to the NJC.

Again, we refer the APC to the ruling in the Bulkachuwa's recusal demand which remains in force as of date: “Concerning the complaints of the petitioners/applicants to the extent that the affinity between the Honourable President of this court will engender a likelihood of bias on the part of the Honourable President of this court if she remains the Presiding Justice, I am of the firm view that enough materials have not been placed before this court to show that the Presiding Justice of this panel is likely to be biased against the petitioners/applicants in the hearing and determination of the petition.... I am of the view that the fact that the Honourable President of this court is the wife of Honourable Adamu Mohammed Bulkachuwa and the mother of Aliyu Haidir Abubakar are not weighty enough to impute likelihood of bias against the President of the Court of Appeal. The two of them are not parties to the petition before us, and have not shown to be listed as witnesses of the 3rd respondent (the APC) in the petition before us.... There is no allegation made against the spouse or the son of the Honourable President of this court in the petition of the petitioners/applicants.... Their relationship with the Presiding Justice of this panel is not at all capable of causing likelihood of bias against any of the parties in the petition.... The full court has been empanelled consisting of five Justices of this court, in full appreciation of the importance of due process and just dispensation of justice in the hearing and determination of this case relating to the presidential election, notwithstanding that the court will be duly constituted if it consists of at least three Justices of the Court of Appeal....”

Justice Ijohor did not sit alone but with two other judges and her husband was not a party before the tribunal and therefore was very competent to hear and determine the matters before the tribunal. Justice Ijohor and indeed any other Tribunal Judge cannot be held responsible for the way the APC cases went, especially considering the fact that they had known ab initio that they had no case, but only approached the tribunal as a face-saving mechanism, while earnestly seeking for federal appointments.

We urge the general public to ignore the illogical, baseless, senseless and slow-witted utterances made by the All Progressives Congress Akwa Ibom state and treat them as their usual straw-clutching antics and the last kicks of a dying horse. The people have stated through their votes that Akwa Ibom state is not a fertile ground for the APC and will never be.... That is the inevitable truth!

Signed:  
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