

Politics

Nigerians ready to vote out Tinubu in January —Davies, ADC's scribe

•Destiny of Nigeria is at stake

By Daniel Abia

Drs Sokonte Davies is Secretary of the Membership Revitalisation, Mobilisation and Registration Committee of the Action Democratic Congress, ADC. In this interview, he speaks on the amended Electoral Act, the appointment of the new INEC chairman, the opposition's strategy for 2027 and the political situation in Rivers State.

What is your reaction to the signing of the amended Electoral Act amid the controversy over real-time electronic transmission of results?

There is no timeline for signing a law. The earlier an Act is signed, the better, because it allows the law to begin functioning immediately, particularly an Electoral Act.

Unfortunately, in Nigeria we often rush to amend the Act when elections are already approaching and timelines are tight. Immediately after elections, when flaws are observed, the law should be amended so that the Act can mature and those responsible for implementing it will have time to properly understand and apply it.

However, I have some concerns about the Act as signed into law. It should have been explicit about making real-time electronic transmission of election results

mandatory, and even making it the primary method rather than manual transmission.

It could also have stipulated that where results cannot be transmitted in real time, such polling units should not count. But that raises another question: would you then disenfranchise voters in those areas?

Take the recent Area Council election in the FCT for instance. The FCT traditionally records high voter turnout, but that was not the case during the last election.

Another issue with the Act is that it appears to limit how political parties conduct their internal affairs, especially in the selection of candidates. Membership of political parties is voluntary. While national laws can regulate certain conduct, they should not dictate how parties choose their candidates.

Even if someone wants to challenge the law now, elections are approaching and there is hardly enough time to pursue such legal action.

People are eager to vote out this government but even with that sentiment, we cannot relax; we must present a credible alternative that will inspire real hope — not a promise of hope that never delivers

With the Electoral Act now force and a new INEC chairman appointed, do you believe the 2027 elections will be free and credible?

I don't think many Nigerians, whether in the opposition or not, see anything right in the appointment

of the current INEC chairman. Even if the intention was good and the person is credible, appointing someone who has consistently represented you in court to head the electoral body creates serious questions.

It is unfortunate that Prof. Joash Amupitan was appointed into INEC. It is equally unfortunate that the electoral umpire who presided over the controversial election that brought President Tinubu to power, Prof. Mahmud Yakubu, was later appointed ambassador

While many Nigerians are still questioning the integrity of that election, the government appears to be rewarding him. It sends a wrong signal — that if you do the government's bidding, you will be rewarded handsomely.

Critics say the ADC has been relatively quiet despite these developments. Why is the party not more vocal?

It is not correct to say ADC has been silent. The party is relatively new and people joined it gradually. Yes, Nigerians are in a hurry because

defeat the ruling party in 2027?

The destiny of Nigeria is at stake. We are not here to try our luck. Trying your luck is gambling, and we are not gamblers. If we were gamblers, we would not be better than the government we seek to remove.

By every indicator, Nigeria is experiencing the worst form of government in its history. Any government that is performing well cannot be afraid of the opposition. But when you see a government constantly intimidating and harassing opposition leaders, it shows insecurity.

A bully is always a coward who knows he has lost the game.

As an opposition party, we are organising to present a formidable front for the elections. Nigerians are already expressing their frustrations in markets, public transport and other public spaces.

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We must present a credible alternative that will inspire real hope — not a promise of hope that never delivers.

Your party currently has prominent figures like Atiku Abubakar, Peter Obi and Rotimi Amaechi being mentioned as possible presidential contenders. Who is likely to emerge as the ADC candidate?

I would not limit the race to just those three individuals. The time for that conversation has not come. INEC has issued its guidelines and the party will also develop its own timetable when the time comes.

Atiku and Obi have both contested national elections. In the last election, Obi did not outscore Atiku. Amaechi, on the other hand, has remained visible in the political space and has a strong record. He served eight years as governor of Rivers State and did very well.

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