

## **SECURITY CHALLENGES MAY MAR 2011 POLLS, MIMIKO TELLS ARMED FORCES**

The Ondo State Governor, Dr Olusegun Mimiko at the weekend warned that a repeat of the security challenges experienced by the electorate during past elections especially during the 2007 general elections were capable of truncating the hope of conducting free and fair elections in the country in 2011.

The Governor gave the warning while welcoming to Akure, the Flag Officer Commanding, Western Naval Command, Rear Admiral Emmanuel Ogbor who paid him a courtesy visit during his familiarisation tour of the Nigerian Navy Forward Operations Base at Igbokoda.

Dr Mimiko who specifically reflected on the shoddy security situation at the July bye-election in Ilaje Local Government Area told the Naval Chief that the coming general polls was already a security matter as it would go beyond the realm of politics.

“It is important to be pro-active because having credible elections in this country depends largely on the security situation. It beholds on the armed forces to ensure that the 2011 elections and subsequent ones are free and fair as we normally have security challenges during elections. Elections in 2011 is going to go beyond the realm of politics, it is already a security matter and you know even reputable intelligence agencies in the country didn’t perform their duties during past elections.

“The last bye-election we had in Ilaje, we had real serious security challenges. As a matter of fact, it was your men that went to rescue INEC officials who were held hostage by some hooligans who wanted to attack them and perhaps they could have had a fatal encounter with those hoodlums, but your men rose to the occasion. So, we hope that during next year’s election, you will beef up security in the water ways, policing the water ways is very important in conducting free and fair election in the riverine areas.

“As a nation, Nigeria is regarded as the giant of Africa and must prove that leading position. It must perform or lead by ensuring the conduct of successful free and fair elections and everyone in Nigeria have a role to play if the next elections must be credible” Mimiko told the Naval Chief.

Earlier, Rear Admiral Ogbor had commended the state government for its commitment to the welfare of Naval officers and men in the state and called for government support in ensuring the movement of the FOB to its permanent base.

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