

**REMARKS BY PROFESSOR A. BOLAJI AKINYEMI, THE CHAIRMAN, AT THE  
LAUNCHING OF DR. ZIMAKO O. ZIMAKO, FACE OF A NATION: DEMOCRACY IN  
NIGERIA, FOREIGN RELATIONS AND NATIONAL IMAGE.**

**Protocols:**

I feel very humbled and honoured to be in the company of two very distinguished former Heads of States, General Mohammed Buhari and General Abdulsalaam Abubakar, two eminent statesmen for whom I have a lot of respect. The former Senate President, the Hon. Ken Nnamani and the Hon John Nwodo , the former Federal Minister of Information complete the list of those who have held high offices of State, whose presence this morning add dignity to this occasion.

Under normal circumstances, I will normally forgo my right to make some remarks so that I don't take the shine off the remarks by the book reviewer. But these are not normal circumstances and in any case, whatever I say will be overshadowed by the remarks of General Buhari who has the attention of the nation now.

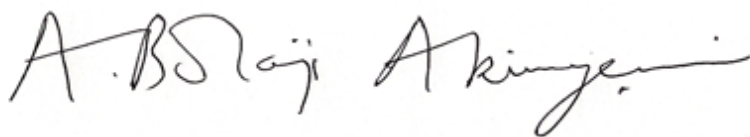
These are not normal times, and I will want to use the presence of these eminent Nigerians to draw some attention to my remarks.

Firstly, there is now a consensus that it is the better part of wisdom for the National Assembly to concentrate on just electoral reforms than to lump them with Constitutional reforms as well. 2011 is too critical for the survival of this country for us to miss the opportunity to put a credible electoral system in place, at least a year before the actual elections start. Therefore I appeal to the National Assembly to forgo the exercise of a wholesale revision of the 1999 Constitution and concentrate on the various electoral reform bills before it.

Secondly, we need to be careful that the solution which we propose will not do more damage than good. Let me say with all the emphasis at my command that OPTION A4 is not the solution. It is inappropriate and inapplicable. The historical facts are that Option A4 was used for party primaries and not for the national Presidential elections. What Option A4 did for party primaries was that contests were started at Ward level, Local Government level and State level before the national primary. Any candidate who did not scale the ward level could not proceed to the Local Government level or state level or national level. So much has been said about voters queuing behind pictures of candidates. It did not happen all over the country. The common feature in all the elections was the use of the open-secret ballot system. That is what we should be emphasizing and advocating. The use of the open secret system, where ballots are marked secretly but cast openly, is the best system.

Even if, just for the purpose of argument, we were to consider the system of queuing behind the pictures of candidates on its merits, can anyone, considering the level of violence that now attends our electoral system, really believe that the queuing procedure will work? Ordinary intra-party primaries has been characterized by so much violence that parties have now resorted to adoption of candidates by consensus or party executive. Is it under these circumstances that electorates will be asked to commit suicide by queuing only behind candidates?

Let us be motivated by the common good as we approach 2011



**PROFESSOR A. BOLAJI AKINYEMI  
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