2027: Wike speaks on PDP zoning arrangement, Peter Obi’s return to party

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The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has cautioned the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) against moves to readmit former Labour Party presidential candidate, Peter Obi, insisting that such a decision would amount to political suicide.  
  
Speaking during a media chat on Monday, the minister accused the PDP of refusing to learn from its mistakes in the 2023 general elections, saying the party’s arrogance and disregard for fairness have left it weak and vulnerable.  
  
Mr Wike, a PDP member serving as minister in the APC-led federal government, recalled how he had repeatedly warned the opposition party against allowing both its presidential candidate and national chairman to come from the North during the last election cycle.  
  
He described the move as unjust and politically reckless, arguing that it was a major factor in the party’s defeat.  
  
“From day one, I told my colleagues, you are shooting yourself. You cannot have the presidential candidate and the national chairman from the same zone,” he said.  
  
Mr Wike, a former governor of Rivers State, accused the PDP leaders of “stealing” both positions despite calls for balance, declaring that the consequences of such injustice “purged” the PDP at the polls.  
  
“It is better now you have stolen the presidential ticket and again stole the national chairman. I said it will purge you, and it really purged them. I have no regret for it,” he added.  
  
According to him, equity and zoning remain the only path for the PDP to recover national relevance.  
  
Obi’s exit from PDP and his LP gamble  
  
Mr Obi left the PDP in May 2022 after months of frustration with the party leadership over its zoning arrangement and internal power tussles.  
  
His exit came just days before the PDP’s presidential primaries, which later produced former Vice President Atiku Abubakar as the flag bearer.  
  
Mr Wike’s supporters had complained about the dominance of entrenched interests in the PDP and argued that the party was unwilling to give a fair chance to candidates from the South-east.  
  
Mr Obi quickly joined the Labour Party, transforming it into a third-force platform in the 2023 elections.  
  
His candidacy drew massive support from the Nigerian youth and urban voters, largely through social media mobilisation, and he eventually polled over six million votes, an unprecedented outcome for the party.  
  
Although he did not win, the “Obidient movement” became a defining factor in Nigerian politics, shaking both the PDP and the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).  
  
Obi’s return is dangerous, hypocritical  
  
It is against this background that Mr Wike dismissed talks of Obi’s possible return to the PDP, describing the move as dangerous and hypocritical.  
  
“To what? Bringing Obi to where? You want to kill the party? Obi that was abusing the PDP, calling it rotten, so now the party is good for him? Ambition can make people go even to Satan’s house,” Mr Wike said.  
  
The minister stressed that accepting Mr Obi back would signal that the PDP has abandoned ideology and principle, reducing it to nothing more than a vehicle for personal ambition.  
  
“If you want to destroy this party, dare it, bring Obi. There’s no way he will come back just because of ambition. No more ideology, no longer principle,” he warned.  
  
The single-term question  
  
Earlier, a former governor of Kaduna State, Nasir El-Rufai, criticised Mr Obi, and a former governor of Rivers State, Rotimi Amaechi, for making promises to serve for only one term if elected Nigeria’s president in 2027.  
  
He cautioned that they should stop making promises to serve for a single term because “no one believes” them.  
  
Responding to Mr El-Rufai’s warning, Mr Wike also dismissed Mr Obi’s suggestion that he would govern for only one term if elected president.  
  
He argued that no one can predetermine whether they would serve a single term in office.  
  
“How can a president say I will only run for four years? Circumstances change. When you get there, you will find out if you will run for a second or third term. Some people even tried to run for a third term,” he said.  
  
Mr Wike further questioned Mr Obi’s silence on the political platform he intends to use in the future.  
  
“This era of social media, people should know the party you are running on. Is it Labour? Is it PDP? Or is it another party? Why are you keeping your supporters guessing? You cannot just jump in at the last minute and expect everyone to line up behind you,” he said.  
  
Tinibu’ll win in 2027  
  
The FCT minister expressed confidence that President Bola Tinubu will win re-election in 2027, insisting that the ruling APC has a stronger footing compared to the divided opposition.  
  
Beyond partisan politics, Mr Wike turned his attention to security challenges in Abuja, vowing to crush criminal networks hiding in informal settlements, shanties, and undeveloped plots across the city.  
  
He assured residents that tackling insecurity remains his top priority, promising decisive measures to secure the territory.