



AFRICAN NETWORK OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAWYERS
RÉSEAU AFRICAÏN DE DROIT CONSTITUTIONNEL
REDE AFRICANA DE JURISTAS CONSTITUCIONALISTAS

PRESS STATEMENT: THE AFRICAN NETWORK OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAWYERS CALLS FOR A FAIR, CREDIBLE AND PEACEFUL ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA

The African Network of Constitutional Lawyers (ANCL) has been following with great interest the lead up to the 2023 Nigerian general elections. Nigeria is an iconic country both in Africa and the world. These elections therefore matter not only for Nigerians but also for the rest of Africa and the world. As the continent's biggest country and economy, Nigeria carries the hopes of the entire Continent, and with it the responsibilities, to ensure, during these times, a fair, credible and peaceful election.

In this context, we are delighted that the nascent tradition of respect for presidential term limits will continue in Nigeria. We are also delighted that the Independent National Electoral Commission has been doing a commendable job in registering all the eligible political parties and candidates and preparing the close to 100 million voters in the country.

Our hopes for a free, fair, credible and peaceful election also raise our concerns regarding reported violence, including against candidates, as well as the insecurity and violence in relation to the Naira redesign, as well as conflicting orders and mandates issued by State Governors against the Presidential directives.

The ANCL is a pan-African network of established and emerging lawyers, scholars, practitioners, and public intellectuals promoting and protecting constitutional democracy to lay the foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa.

We therefore call on stakeholders, particularly the Nigerian Federal and State governments and electoral candidates, to do their utmost to ensure that the elections are conducted in an honest manner respectful of Nigeria's laws, and fundamental electoral principles found in African Union and ECOWAS instruments. In this regard, we applaud the deployment of prominent election observation missions from these institutions, which we hope will contribute to the credibility of the elections.

While differences can be expected on the conduct and outcomes of the elections, all stakeholders must affirm and uphold their commitment to peaceful elections and urge their supporters to follow the appropriate legal procedures to contest the outcomes.

Ultimately, the elections should not be seen as do-or-die winner-takes-all engagements. Regardless of whoever wins the election, the ANCL calls on all actors to ensure that all stakeholders are given a fair chance to influence public policy through deliberative and participatory processes, where the opposition and civil society are seen as genuine partners in building a strong, resilient and progressive Nigeria. We hope that the competitive spirit of the pre-election and election period will give way to a cooperative spirit in the post-election season.

The ANCL wishes the people and government of Nigeria a peaceful and credible democratic general election.

For any questions on this statement and further information on the ANCL, contact

The Secretariat of the African Network of Constitutional Lawyers at secretariat@ancl-radc.ac.za

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