

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Whereas it is in the national interest of the United States to maintain a strong bilateral relationship with a politically stable, democratic, and economically sound Nigeria that can play a leadership role in the region and the continent more broadly;

Whereas Nigeria has presidential and National Assembly elections scheduled for February 16, 2019, and gubernatorial and state-level elections scheduled for March 2, 2019;

Whereas credible, transparent, and peaceful elections could further consolidate democratic gains achieved in Nigeria since the transition from military to civilian democratic rule;

Whereas a 2017 survey conducted by Afrobarometer found that the overwhelming majority of Nigerians agreed that democratic elections are the best means of choosing their country's leaders, thus indicating that the country's citizens are deeply committed to democracy;

Whereas collaboration between civil society actors and the international community was a key factor that contributed to successful elections in 2015;

Whereas successive elections in Nigeria have featured varying degrees of violence;

Whereas both the ruling coalition and opposition parties have incited ethnic violence in an apparent effort to gain electoral advantage, intimidate electoral rivals, and suppress voter turnout;

Whereas, during the Ekiti and Osun gubernatorial elections in July 2018 and September 2018, respectively, there were concerning incidents in which some elements of Nigeria’s security agencies displayed partisanship and a lack of objectivity, which risks escalating tensions within the country;

Whereas Nigeria’s Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has taken important steps to improve electoral processes, notably through the introduction of continuous voter registration, the adoption of simultaneous accreditation and voting, improvements to the secrecy of the ballot, and the advancement of smart card reader technology;

Whereas remaining challenges to the conduct of credible, transparent, and peaceful elections in Nigeria include the failure to enact additional, critical reforms to the legal framework for elections, instances of vote buying, reported security threats in the Middle Belt and North East, incitement, and disinformation; and

Whereas ensuring transparency in electoral preparations and building public confidence in the electoral process is vital to the success of the upcoming elections in Nigeria: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*
- 2 *concurring), That Congress—*

1 (1) reaffirms the commitment of the United
2 States to supporting peace and democracy in Nige-
3 ria;

4 (2) calls on the Government of Nigeria and all
5 Nigerian political parties and actors to—

6 (A) take actions to facilitate credible,
7 transparent , and peaceful elections that reflect
8 the will of the people and advance the consoli-
9 dation of democracy and the stability of the
10 broader region;

11 (B) condemn in the strongest terms the
12 use of speech that incites violence, and refrain
13 from efforts to demonize or delegitimize oppo-
14 nents, sow division among Nigerians, or other-
15 wise inflame tensions;

16 (C) seek to resolve any disputes over re-
17 sults peacefully, including through judicial proc-
18 esses as necessary;

19 (D) respect the impartiality of the Inde-
20 pendent National Electoral Commission; and

21 (E) take measures to combat vote buying;

22 (3) calls on the Government of Nigeria to—

23 (A) refrain from deploying security forces
24 in a partisan manner;

1 (B) ensure that security services maintain
2 the highest level of professionalism and impar-
3 tiality in facilitating the electoral process, en-
4 able accredited observers and journalists to per-
5 form their work, and protect the right of citi-
6 zens to exercise their votes freely; and

7 (C) enforce laws against election malfea-
8 sance, including vote buying, and ensure equal
9 and robust application of such laws through ap-
10 propriate mechanisms, including through the
11 establishment of an Electoral Offenses Commis-
12 sion and Tribunal;

13 (4) urges all Nigerians to fully and peacefully
14 engage in the electoral process, insist on full enfran-
15 chisement, reject inflammatory or divisive rhetoric or
16 actions, and seek to resolve any disputes over results
17 through the legal system;

18 (5) calls upon the Independent National Elec-
19 toral Commission to sustain confidence and trust in
20 its management of the electoral process by taking ef-
21 fective measures to—

22 (A) combat vote buying through voter edu-
23 cation campaigns;

24 (B) institute a nationwide ban on cell
25 phones in the voting cubicle;

1 (C) ensure the participation in the election
2 of internally displaced persons (IDPs); and

3 (D) clean the voter rolls and ensure timely
4 production and distribution of the Permanent
5 Voter Card to new voters;

6 (6) encourages political parties in Nigeria to
7 adhere to and enforce existing codes of conduct that
8 commit parties to democratic electoral standards re-
9 garding campaign use of resources, engagement of
10 voters, peaceful resolution of disputes, and accept-
11 ance of verified and credible results;

12 (7) condemns any efforts on the part of any
13 politicians or political parties in Nigeria to politicize
14 the security and law enforcement agencies;

15 (8) encourages civil society organizations in Ni-
16 geria to—

17 (A) promote the peaceful participation of
18 citizens in the electoral process and draw on ex-
19 isting inter-religious and peacebuilding bodies
20 to enhance their efforts;

21 (B) disseminate information about citizen-
22 based observation findings and analysis to in-
23 crease public knowledge and understanding
24 about the conduct of the elections; and

1 (C) continue leading important early warn-
2 ing and response activities to mitigate election-
3 related violence, including monitoring efforts to
4 incite violence or further inflame tensions;

5 (9) supports efforts by the Department of State
6 and the United States Agency for International De-
7 velopment (USAID) to assist elections preparations
8 in Nigeria, including through programs focused on
9 conflict mitigation; and

10 (10) calls on the United States Government and
11 other international partners, especially election-fo-
12 cused nongovernmental organizations, to—

13 (A) continue to support efforts by the Gov-
14 ernment of Nigeria to address the remaining
15 electoral preparation challenges and identify
16 gaps in which additional resources or diplomatic
17 engagement could make important contributions
18 to the conduct of credible, transparent elections;
19 and

20 (B) support civil society organizations and
21 media organizations working to enhance trans-

- 1 parency and accountability in the use of state
- 2 resources around the election period.

Passed the Senate February 14, 2019.

Attest:

Secretary.

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. CON. RES. 1

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Calling for credible, transparent, and safe elections
in Nigeria, and for other purposes.