

## THE ELECTORAL HUB - IRIAD COMMEMORATES INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRACY DAY 2022

... Urges all national and local stakeholders as well as citizens to promote and imbibe democratic ideas and values and safeguard the Integrity of the upcoming 2023 General Elections.

TODAY, The Electoral Hub and the Initiative for Research, Innovation, and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD) join the rest of the world to celebrate the International Day of Democracy.

In 2007, the UN (United Nation) General Assembly passed a resolution setting aside September 15 of each year as the International Day of Democracy<sup>1</sup>. It is a day specially dedicated to reviewing the state of global democracy and sustaining and promoting democratic principles, namely: citizen participation, equality, respect for human rights, transparency, regular free and fair elections, economic freedom, etc.<sup>2</sup>

Although in recent years, many countries have adopted one form of democracy or the other, however, the ideal democracy of “government of the people, for the people, and by the people” has remained largely farfetched in most of these countries – notably the developing and underdeveloped countries.

Elections are a large part of the democratic process of any country; and if characterized by inconsistencies and irregularities, the democratic system is bound to be negatively impacted. Since Nigeria returned to constitutional democracy in 1999, there have been documented reports of electoral malpractices, election violence, vote-trading, under-aged voting, intimidation of election officials, ballot box snatching and stuffing, and other electoral vices that have challenged the integrity of successive elections. The absence of a multi-sectoral institution that deals specifically with election-related offences contribute to increasing electoral impunity and marring the democratic processes.

In line with The Electoral Hub’s commitment to promoting electoral knowledge, accountability, and integrity and IRIAD’s of improving citizen’s participation in governance and promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), we urge all relevant national and local stakeholders to make necessary efforts in ensuring that the upcoming 2023 general elections reflect the collective will of Nigerians. The following<sup>3</sup> are, therefore, advised:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://nationaltoday.com/international-day-of-democracy/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/observances/democracy-day>

<sup>3</sup> See Report of the Seventh Technical Meeting of The Electoral Forum. [www.electoralhub.iriad/electoralforum](http://www.electoralhub.iriad/electoralforum)

- Massive voter education and sensitization by the National Orientation Agency (NOA), the Ministry of Education, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and other electoral stakeholders in order to create awareness among citizens about their civic responsibilities and rights, as well as about electoral offences and sanctions.
- Extant rules guiding the conduct of elections should be strictly implemented by the Election Management Body and all relevant institutions such as the EFCC, ICPC, etc., so as to ensure compliance and deterrence.
- The National Broadcasting Commission should censure broadcast stations that allow their platforms to be used to propagate incendiary remarks.
- Presidential and Governorship debates should be made mandatory in order to gauge the preparedness of candidates, as well as help the voting public make informed choices.
- Workshops and sensitization programs should be held for political parties and candidates in order to educate them on ways to improve the electoral process. Issues such as policy-based campaigns, political party ideologies, and clearly defined and actionable manifestos, should be at the front burner of deliberations, discussions, and discourses.
- Reports on campaign monitoring should be made available timely in order to promote transparency and accountability.
- The media should encourage and focus more on policy-based campaigns by candidates and political parties.
- The secrecy of the ballot should be upheld in order to curb the issues of vote trading.
- INEC and all relevant stakeholders including security agencies should ensure that the issue of terrorism, insurgency, kidnapping, rural banditry, and other security challenges do not disenfranchise voters in affected areas, particularly internally displaced persons - IDP.

Finally, as we celebrate the International Day of Democracy, it bears mentioning that we all have a responsibility to protect our elections and democracy.

#InternationalDayOf Democracy #NigeriaDecides2023 #NaijaDecides2023  
 #ElectoralIntegrityNaija #InclusiveElectionNaija #ElectoralCredibilityNaija  
 #Roadto2023GeneralElections

**Signed**

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