

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 143

Reaffirming the commitment of the House of Representatives to fortify relations with the people and Government of Nigeria and calling for the country to commit to a peaceful, credible, and timely electoral process.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 21, 2023

Mr. ALLRED (for himself, Mr. JAMES, Ms. JACOBS, and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Reaffirming the commitment of the House of Representatives to fortify relations with the people and Government of Nigeria and calling for the country to commit to a peaceful, credible, and timely electoral process.

Whereas Nigeria is Africa's most populous country with over 215,000,000 people as of 2022 and is projected to grow to 375,000,000 by 2050 and become the third most populous country globally;

Whereas Nigeria is the largest economy in Africa with an estimated gross domestic product of more than \$1,050,000,000,000 as of 2021;

Whereas the United States and Nigeria share strong economic and trade relations in which the United States re-

mains the country’s largest foreign investor concentrated in petroleum, mining, and wholesale trade sectors;

Whereas the Nigerian people and the Nigerian diaspora have contributed both to the United States and Nigeria through culture, business, and trade, and reaffirms their longstanding transatlantic ties;

Whereas Nigeria’s electoral cycle scheduled in 2023 includes Presidential, parliamentary, State gubernatorial, and assembly races that has been described as “different from the six previous elections” since Nigeria’s transition from military to civilian rule in 1999;

Whereas, as of 2023, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) reported an “unprecedented surge” in voter registration, with a voters’ roll of nearly 93,500,000 in which 40 percent of those registered are under the age of 35;

Whereas youth civic engagement is paramount to cultivate the next generation of leaders in Nigeria as they navigate a path forward from economic challenges caused by the COVID–19 pandemic;

Whereas, in the 2015 Presidential elections, an opposition party won the Presidency and control of the National Assembly for the first time in the country’s history through transparent elections;

Whereas the subsequent general and gubernatorial elections in 2019 were fraught with last-minute delays, political infighting, and electoral offenses that undermined public confidence in the electoral process, INEC, and the Nigerian Government as a whole;

Whereas the National Democratic Institute and International Republican Institute described in their International

Election Observation Mission report that the 2019 general elections fell “significantly short of standards set in 2015” and “demonstrated Nigerian political elites’ lack of commitment to opening space for new faces and new voices” for women and youth;

Whereas civilian trust in the electoral process considerably waned with one-fourth of Nigerians reportedly trusting the INEC “somewhat” or “a lot” as of 2023;

Whereas the country’s National Assembly passed a national reform act in 2022 aimed at improving the conduct of polls, including by enabling the electoral commission to determine necessary technological devices for transparency and perceived credibility for voters;

Whereas Nigerian civil society organizations improve the preelection, election-day, and postelection environments by monitoring registration and voting processes, conducting voter education and peace messaging, and actively collaborating with INEC and international donor agencies through the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room;

Whereas, despite electoral and democratic reforms, insecurity and government corruption still remain key challenges;

Whereas governments at the local, State, and Federal level and members across political parties continue to participate in high levels of corruption, including bribery, embezzlement, voter intimidation, and other numerous financial and nonmonetary crimes, thereby undermining the nature of its democratic institution;

Whereas Nigeria is facing record levels of unemployment and high inflation as a consequence of the COVID–19 pandemic, unplanned migration, changes in weather pat-

terns, violent insurgencies from extremist groups such as the Islamic State–West Africa Province and Boko Haram, and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine;

Whereas, according to the International Crisis Group, armed groups killed more than 10,000 people and abducted more than 5,000 in about 3,000 incidents that occurred in at least 550 of the country’s 774 local government areas in 2022 alone;

Whereas, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, Nigerian military forces have been accused of perpetrating extrajudicial killings and war crimes, with over 400 civilians killed at the hands of security forces since 2018;

Whereas attacks on electoral commissions, polling locations, and staff remain a serious concern where in 1 incident, 3 gunmen bombed the headquarters of INEC in Nigeria’s southeastern Imo State that killed a police officer in December 2022;

Whereas the Nigerian people expressed their country “going in the wrong direction” in response to the significant and compounded security crises;

Whereas the U.S. Agency for International Development is supporting electoral processes, observation programs, and peace messaging, including by encouraging candidates to adhere to a peaceful and credible process in Nigeria;

Whereas the United States underscored its commitment to expanding and deepening its partnership with African countries and working to bolster democracy and strengthen electoral processes during the 2021 Summit for Democracy and the 2022 United States-Africa Leaders Summit; and

Whereas, on January 25, 2023, Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced visa restrictions on specific individuals involved in undermining the democratic process in a recent Nigerian election, and warned of similar sanctions for anyone who intends to undermine the 2023 elections: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) reaffirms its commitments to bolstering the
3 enduring ties between the people and the Govern-
4 ments of the United States and Nigeria;

5 (2) supports the continuing efforts of the Nige-
6 rian people, civil society, and members of the dias-
7 pora in exercising their undeniable rights to free,
8 fair, credible, and transparent elections;

9 (3) condemns the Islamic State–West Africa
10 Province, Boko Haram, and other violent extremist
11 groups and nonstate actors for egregious violations
12 of human rights and impeding democratic institu-
13 tions, processes, and values;

14 (4) calls on the Government of Nigeria to up-
15 hold its commitments to transparency, account-
16 ability, and good governance, including by—

17 (A) ensuring citizens have unfettered ac-
18 cess to necessary voting materials and polling
19 locations;

1 (B) allowing elections to take place on time
2 and to resolve any potential administrative
3 issues in a timely fashion;

4 (C) apprehending officials and others de-
5 termined to have participated in voter intima-
6 tion and other forms of electoral criminal acts
7 by enforcing already-existing laws, such as the
8 Public Order Act, meant to curb impunity;

9 (D) pursuing a comprehensive, inclusive,
10 and expeditious electoral reform process;

11 (E) improving coordination among stake-
12 holders and trusted partners to expand and
13 deepen voter and civic education for current
14 and future elections;

15 (F) implementing robust fact checking
16 mechanisms to curb the dissemination of misin-
17 formation, disinformation, and distorted nar-
18 ratives; and

19 (G) investing in robust accountability
20 mechanisms to hold security forces, including
21 the police, military, and the Department of
22 State Services, accountable for crimes com-
23 mitted that undermine elections; and

24 (5) calls on the United States Government to—

1 (A) provide the technical assistance needed
2 to allow for strengthened electoral support,
3 monitoring, and accountability in a timely fash-
4 ion;

5 (B) collaborate with the Independent Na-
6 tional Electoral Commission to provide training
7 and professional development for electoral work-
8 ers, political party agents, civil society organiza-
9 tions, and elected officials; and

10 (C) utilize necessary diplomatic measures
11 against those responsible for undermining the
12 rule of law.

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