

WADEMOS BULLETIN

The Official Newsletter of the West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network

First Quarter

January-March 2023

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Message from the Acting Network Coordinator, Paul Osei-Kuffour

I am delighted to provide you with updates on the WADEMOS first quarter activities 2023.

On September 14, 2022, the Network members met in Accra, Ghana, for the first-ever Network members' meeting. After thorough deliberations, members highlighted five areas it would prioritize moving forward. These include elections in West Africa, countries in transition, shrinking civic spaces, protection of human rights defenders and frontline democratic, and terrorism and insecurity.

Our workplan for 2023 has been developed based on our priority areas. The first quarter has been dominated by our intervention in the 2023 Nigerian elections, which were held on February 25, 2023, for the national elections and March 18, 2023, for the sub-national elections. The election is the first of three national elections in the ECOWAS sub-region; the other two are in Liberia and Sierra Leone, which the WADEMOS Network will closely monitor. The Nigerian election was the sixth consecutive presidential election held in the country since its return to multiparty democracy in 1999.



Paul Osei-Kuffour, Acting Network Coordinator

In a solidarity mission to Nigeria from January 24–27, the Network engaged key stakeholders in the country, including the Independent National Electoral Commission, the National Peace Committee of Nigeria, the National Human Rights Committee of Nigeria, the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC-Nigeria), the media, CSOs, and ECOWAS. We released a statement detailing our findings and recommendations.

The Network also deployed a technical team to observe the February 25 national election and learn lessons from the Nigerian electoral processes. The outcome of the elections in Nigeria has implications for the sub-region both politically and economically, and it is therefore not surprising that several institutions trooped to the country to observe the elections. We are grateful to our Nigerian members for supporting and facilitating our work and involvement in the whole electoral process. We will release a report to present our observations, findings, lessons, and recommendations for future elections in West Africa, especially as we hope to improve the electoral outcomes in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

At the institutional level, we have made giant strides towards establishing the governance structure of the Network. At the March 30 Steering Committee meeting, new Co-Chairs were elected to steer the affairs of the Network for the next two years. .

We extend a hearty congratulations to them and look forward to a fruitful and successful leadership under their stewardship. The Advisory Committee would be inaugurated in the second quarter of the year.

In addition to focusing on the Sierra Leonean elections, the second quarter will see the implementation of programs including the Gender Assessment, Demo'creatives, Human Rights Defenders Initiative, and a major regional convening on the transition countries. To effectively carry out these planned activities, we count on your usual cooperation and participation, as you have demonstrated in our quest to counter the threats to democracy in our sub-region.

I am excited at the progress we are making and the milestones we have achieved, and I am confident that we will build on the great start we have made in 2023 to accomplish our goals for the year.

Idayat Hassan is the Director of the Centre for Democracy and Development-West Africa (CDD-West Africa), a Nigeria-based organization engaging in policy advocacy and research with a focus on deepening democracy and development in West Africa.

Idayat's interests include democracy, peace and security, and transitional justice in West Africa. She has been granted fellowship in several universities across Europe and America.



Hassan Idayat, Executive Director, CDD-West Africa



Dr. Aliou Barry, Executive Director, Stat View International

Dr. Aliou Barry is the Founder and Director General of Stat View International in the Republic of Guinea. He is an international development professional with over 25 years of experience in development work with local, international, and the government of Guinea. He is also among the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption's (GOPAC)'s Global Task Force Team (2021–2023) on the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and the head of a coalition of key CSOs in Guinea that has launched the "Alliance Citoyenne pour la Transition" or the "Citizens Alliance for the Transition" to push against the military coup that took place in the country in 2021.

Dr. Barry has served in the Parliament of Guinea as the President of the Commission for Agriculture, Energy, Water, Natural Resources, Environment, Transport, and Industry. He was a key member of the Executive Committee of Parliament (2010–2014). He has been a member of the Guinean Presidency's National Anti-Corruption Agency (2007–2014); a coordinator of the Francophone CSO Coalition for Integrity and Development (2009–2012); a member of the United Nations technical advisory committee for the Equator Prize on sustainable development (2013–2015); and a member of the Audit Committee of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) based in Toronto (2010–2014).



WADEMOS Network Pays Solidarity Visit to the ECOWAS Commission, INEC, Other Stakeholders Ahead of the Nigeria Elections

The West Africa Democracy Solidarity (WADEMOS) Network, embarked on a 3-day solidarity mission to Nigeria, from January 25-27, 2023, ahead of its February 25 national elections. The election was the sixth consecutive presidential election since the country's return to multiparty democracy in 1999.

While in Nigeria, the WADEMOS delegation met and engaged with the ECOWAS Commission in Abuja, Nigeria, the Independent Electoral Commission of Nigeria (INEC), CSOs, on the preparations for the national elections.

Access the story here: <https://bit.ly/3LTXB0V>

WADEMOS Meets With Selected CSOS and the Media in Nigeria

On Wednesday, January 25, the Center for Democracy and Development-West Africa hosted the WADEMOS delegation in a debriefing session with Network members in Nigeria on the state of the electoral processes and dynamics in the lead-up to the elections. This was followed by a meeting with selected journalists. The delegation also visited the studios of Arise TV and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN).

The interactions with the media enabled the delegation to gather more information, identify topical issues and to appreciate them from different perspectives.





WADEMOS Meets National Human Rights Commission and Inter-Party Advisory Committee

The team also held meetings with the National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria, to discuss minority groups, insecurity, youth participation in the elections, and the protection and respect of the rights and freedoms of citizens, among others.

A section of the WADEMOS team also held discussions with the Inter-Party Advisory Committee of Nigeria on the concerns of political parties and their candidates, as well as their conduct going into the polls.

WADEMOS Holds Discussions With the ECOWAS Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department

The team had fruitful deliberations with the ECOWAS Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security in Abuja, as part of our solidarity mission to Nigeria with discussions focusing on identifying avenues for partnerships, ways of fostering a beneficial rapport with ECOWAS and building a stronger civil society front.

ECOWAS lauded the initiative indicating it is timely and relevant considering the threats to democracy facing the sub-region and expressed its willingness to work with WADEMOS.



WADEMOS Engages With the National Peace Council of Nigeria

Fr. Atta Barkinda, head of the Kukah Centre, the Secretariat of the National Peace Committee of Nigeria, outlined cyberbullying, violation of the Peace Accord, fuel shortage and insecurity, among others, as some of the key issues undermining peace in Nigeria in the lead-up to the national elections on February 25.

He also divulged interventions by his outfit to address the issues identified when he hosted the WADEMOS delegation.

Here is a solidarity message he shared with Nigerians ahead of the elections: <https://youtu.be/FGBLEPy47HU>

WADEMOS, INEC Chair, Hold Close-door Meeting Ahead of Nigerian Polls

Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission of Nigeria gave WADEMOS Network strong assurances that the Commission was ready to hold free, fair and transparent national elections on February 25 and sub-national elections on March 11. He gave the assurances when a delegation from the Network visited him as part of the stakeholder engagement during our solidarity mission to Nigeria.

Dr. Kojo Pumpuni Asante, leader of the delegation also took the opportunity to point out some issues that had been observed during the team's stakeholder engagements and called for intensified dialogue among various stakeholders to address the challenges identified.





WADEMOS Releases a Statement Detailing its Findings and Recommendations after the Solidarity Mission

The WADEMOS Network issued a statement highlighting its observations, findings and recommendations to all stakeholders ahead of the elections. The Network commended the INEC, CSOs and the media for their work in promoting voter education and sensitization, tolerance, and peace ahead of the elections. However, the Network also observed some challenges that could mar the elections and made some recommendations.

These concerns include; the need to put in place contingency measures against any large-scale malfunctioning of the BVAS on election day; multiple security concerns that could significantly threaten the smooth conduct of the elections; challenges with the deployment of electoral materials and logistics; lack of tolerance, cyberbullying and misinformation; concerns about constitutional interpretation of electoral laws.

Read the statement here - <https://bit.ly/3B9E7GJ>

WADEMOS Hosts Twitter Spaces in Support of Nigeria's 2023 Election

WADEMOS held two Twitter Spaces to discuss topical issues in the lead up to the 2023 Nigerian elections.

The first Twitter Space took place on December 19, 2022, with speakers from the Network, and the second Space was conducted on February 18 in collaboration with Savvy Rinu Oduala, a social activist from Nigeria. There were about 14, 000 participants on the second Space

Among others, participants discussed issues regarding voters register, the INEC Results Viewing Portal, Biometric Voter Accreditations System and Insecurity.



- 01** There are 18 political parties represented in the national elections
- 02** On February 25, electorates will vote in the national elections to elect:
 - A President
 - Senators in all 109 Senatorial Districts
 - Members of the House of Representatives in all 360 Federal Constituencies
- 03** On March 11, voters will elect 28 Governors and 993 State Assembly members.

Facts About 2023 Nigerian Elections

WADEMOS Network produced infographics to disseminate essential election-related information as part of efforts to regionalize the Nigerian elections.

Details about the INEC Results Viewing (IReV) Platform, the Biometric Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), and Nigeria's presidential election regulations were among the topics explored.

The information, which was distributed to the members of the Network, was also shared on various social media platforms in French and English.

WADEMOS Receives Solidarity Messages from Former Heads of State, Democracy Champions in Support of Nigeria's Elections

WADEMOS Network interviewed some former Heads of State, democracy champions and institutions to share solidarity messages in support of the Nigerian elections.

H.E. John Agyekum Kufuor, the former President of Ghana, H.E. Lansana Kouyaté, a former ECOWAS Executive Secretary and Prime Minister of Guinea solidarized with Nigerians ahead of the elections.

The Peace Council of Ghana, Nigerian High Commission in Ghana, among others, also shared peace and goodwill messages with Nigerians.



Prof. Prempeh Introduces WADEMOS to the African Union

On Monday, February 6, Prof. Prempeh, the WADEMOS Network Project Director, delivered a presentation to the African Union Network of Think Tanks for Peace (#NETT4Peace) on the WADEMOS concept.

The presentation, which was done virtually during the inaugural meeting of a Strategy Group for the Launch of the African Union Network of Think Tanks for Peace, enabled the AU to learn about the governance structure of the Network and how to ensure a sustainable relationship between CSOs and the AU.



WADEMOS Steering Committee Holds Quarterly Meeting in Accra, Ghana

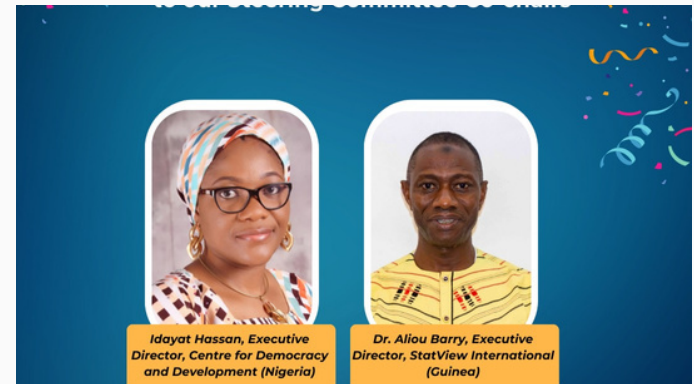
On March 20, 2023, the Secretariat welcomed its Steering Committee to Accra, Ghana, for their first meeting of the year, during which deliberations on the recent political developments in the ECOWAS sub-region and the Network's work plan for the year were held.

Among others, the Steering Committee was also fully constituted as directed by the Network's by-law. The 11-member Steering Committee is made up of the following organizations - Ghana Center for Democratic Development (Ghana), Center for Democracy and Development-West Africa (Nigeria), Africivistes (Senegal), Media Foundation for West Africa, West Africa Civil Society Initiative, Stat View International (Guinea), Center for Democratic Governance (Burkina Faso), West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Association Femmes Leadership et Development Durable (AFLED), Network of Women Leaders for Development (RFLD) and the Sindicato de Jornalistas e Tecnicos de Comunicacao (SINJOTEC).

WADEMOS Steering Committee Elects New Chairpersons to Lead the Network

The WADEMOS Steering Committee on March 30 elected Dr. Aliou Barry, Executive Director of Stat View International and Idayat Hassan, Executive Director of CDD-West Africa as Co-chairs of the Committee.

The two organizations were elected to lead the Network at the first quarterly meeting of the Committee in 2023. The Co-chairs will steer the affairs of the Network for the next two years.



WADEMOS will liaise and collaborate with Network members in Sierra Leone to embark on a pre-election solidarity mission to the country. This will form part of stakeholder engagement ahead of the elections and also enable the Network to observe and understand the socio-political environment leading up to the elections. The Network will make recommendations based on the findings aimed at improving the outcome of the elections. Sierra Leone's election is set for June 24, 2023.

The Pre-election Mission will take place from May 15-19, 2023. The delegation will comprise representatives from Network members in Nigeria, Mali, Liberia.

Regional Convening on Democratic Decline in Francophone West Africa



WADEMOS will begin preparations towards its Regional conference on democratic decline in Francophone West Africa set to take place in July.

The conference will be based on the findings, observations and recommendations of the Transitional Report.

The Network has also commissioned an analysis of the countries under transition to review efforts and interventions including the roadmap and transition charter deployed by regional and national level stakeholders to restore democracy.

WADEMOS to Kickstart Demo'creative Initiative

In furtherance of our objective to mobilize creative talent and resources (artists, poets, musicians, comedians, cartoonists, social media influencers, etc.) within the Region to use their arts to promote and raise awareness about democratic norms and values in the next generation of democracy advocates, we will commence our demo'creative initiative.

WADEMOS Democracy Opportunity Support Fund

The Democracy Opportunity Support fund (DOSF) is a flagship initiative of WADEMOS that seeks to contribute to advancing and protecting democracy in West Africa.

When opened, the Fund will support Projects and timely-needed interventions that are carried out in less than 6 months and only within the ECOWAS sub-region.

Also, the Fund is accessible to Network Members. However, it can be expanded to external organizations only if the application by that external organization is supported by a recommendation from a Network member.

Further details will be posted on our social media platforms and the website - www.wademosnetwork.org

Gender and Inclusion Assessment of West African Countries

The Secretariat is focused on undertaking a gender and inclusion assessment of countries within the sub-region.

To this end, Network members will be engaged to assist with collecting primary data in respective countries for a Gender Analysis.

Data from the survey and assessment will inform WADEMOS action plan and priority areas implementation strategies.





NEWSLETTER

Call for Contributions

WADEMOS Network's quarterly newsletter intends to dedicate a section of the publication to the activities of its members and pro-democracy actors. Please send us news, stories, and updates of your activities, upcoming events, pictures from your events, seminars, feedback, and suggestions.

These activities should be related to the priority areas of WADEMOS or our thematic areas. All submissions can be sent to info@wademosnetwork.org or to the Communications Officer, Jonah Eledi, via j.eledi@wademosnetwork.org.

For all our latest publications, press releases, reports and knowledge products, please visit the following sections of the website:

News tab - <https://wademosnetwork.org/news/>

Publication tab - <https://wademosnetwork.org/publications/>

List of WADEMOS Steering Committee Members

1. Center for Democratic Governance - Burkina Faso
2. Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) - Regional
3. West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) - Regional
4. West Africa Civil Society Initiative (WACSI) - Regional
5. Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) - Ghana
6. StatView International - Guinea
7. Association Femmes Leadership et Development Durable (AFLED) - Mali
8. Center for Democracy and Development-West Africa (CDD-West Africa) - Nigeria
9. Africivites - Senegal
10. Network of Women Leaders for Development (RFLD) - Benin
11. Sindicato de Jornalistas e Technicos de Comunicacao (SINJOTEC) - Guinea Bissau

Knowledge Products & Convenings



WADEMOS issues a number of research, analytical and communication pieces such as newsletters, reports, publications, press releases, and knowledge products like the 'Eye on West Africa' that will form the basis of regional convenings and advocacy campaigns.

The knowledge Hub products focuses on topics like term limits, unconstitutional changes, transitional countries and ECOWAS Protocols.

We want to share your views with the world. Please send us your contributions, articles and think pieces.

Engage with Us!!!



WADEMOS has presence on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Flickr. We have grown impressively over the past year. We aim to get bigger. Follow us today!

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