

PRESS RELEASE

February 20, 2024

WADEMOS URGES STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH SENEGAL'S CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL RULING ON PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION POSTPONEMENT

The West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network (WADEMOS), a network of pro-democracy national and transnational civil society organizations across the West Africa region, having monitored and followed the recent political developments in Senegal with keen interest and concern, welcome the ruling by Senegal's Constitutional Council which nullifies the postponement of the country's Presidential election, originally scheduled for February 25, 2024.

We particularly commend the Council for its swift action in overturning the National Assembly's vote on February 5 to postpone the elections until December 15, thereby violating constitutional provisions on the term of office of the president. This judgment provides a glimmer of relief amidst the subregion's most crucial governance crisis and democratic decline. This comes against the backdrop of the recent announcement of the withdrawal of three countries all under military regimes - namely, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, from the ECOWAS.

In light of these developments, we acknowledge the President's commitment to fully abide by the Council's decision without delay. Consequently, we urge the President and the election management body to immediately set a new date that aligns with the provisions of the constitution. We implore all stakeholders to make necessary arrangements to ensure the timely and transparent conduct of the election to restore trust in the democratic process in Senegal.

We acknowledge the role played by the Senegalese civil society, the international community, AU, ECOWAS and the ordinary citizens of Senegal who added their voice to the calls for the disruptive decision by the National Assembly to be rescinded. We commend the boldness and conviction demonstrated in siding with the law over anarchy, democracy over authoritarianism and truth over convenience.

We, however, continue to call on the international community and other democracy watchdogs to intensify their support and advocacy efforts as a collective to ensure that the state fulfills its democratic obligations and to ensure the completion of the electoral process within the confines of the laws of Senegal.

We welcome the release of several political detainees, including Aliou Sane, the coordinator of the citizens' opposition movement "Y'en A Marre." We endorse the urgent calls to cease the ongoing arrests and detention of opposition candidates, the intermittent shutdown of media, and the crackdown on free expression. We unequivocally condemn the killing of the three Senegalese protesters (Alpha Yero Tounkara 22 years; Modou Gueye 23 years; and Landing

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Camara 16 years) who were exercising their democratic and constitutional right to express their justified displeasure and anger at these developments.

We encourage ECOWAS to facilitate an inclusive dialogue between government, opposition parties, and civil society to address grievances and find mutually acceptable solutions to any foreseen political impasse.

WADEMOS will intensify its monitoring and advocacy efforts with all stakeholders and will stand in solidarity with civil society to ensure full compliance with the Council's ruling.

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About WADEMOS

WADEMOS is an independent and a non-partisan network of diverse national and transnational civil society organizations and civic groups working to promote and defend democracy, good governance and inclusive development in the West Africa region. WADEMOS mobilizes, coordinates, and leverages the collective voice and power of civil society and other pro-democracy actors, resources, and opportunities within the West Africa region to advance its mission. The current membership of WADEMOS stands at over 45 spread across West Africa. The WADEMOS Secretariat is based in Accra, Ghana.

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