

PRESS RELEASE

April 4, 2024

WADEMOS CONGRATULATES SENEGAL'S NEW PRESIDENT; CALLS FOR COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

The West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network (WADEMOS), a network of over 45 pro-democracy civil society organizations, across the West Africa region, proudly congratulates the people of Senegal for their commitment and resilience despite significant threats to the country's democratic governance and extends our profound congratulations to His Excellency, Bassirou Diomaye Faye on his inauguration as the President of Senegal.

WADEMOS closely monitored the recent political developments in Senegal, including a pre-election and election-day visit to Senegal in solidarity with civil society and all election stakeholders, and we commend the tenacity and determination demonstrated by Senegalese civil society and citizens in upholding democratic principles during these challenging times. We stand in solidarity with our network members and all Senegalese who tirelessly advocated and fought for the promotion of democratic norms and the rule of law.

We acknowledge the crucial role played by election observation groups in ensuring the transparency and integrity of the electoral process, despite the uncertainty surrounding the election. We commend the international community, including ECOWAS, for its efforts and commitment to enforce its Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

The decision by Senegal's Constitutional Council to nullify the postponement of the presidential election and the subsequent conduct of a peaceful and generally acceptable election on March 25 are significant milestones in the journey towards reaffirming Senegal's commitment to democracy. We applaud the Senegalese democratic institutions for ensuring the integrity of the electoral process and once again congratulate President Bassirou Diomaye Faye on his victory.

As Senegal transitions to a new leadership, WADEMOS emphasizes the importance of a renewed commitment to democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and regional cooperation and integration. We call on the new administration to prioritize inclusive governance, respect for fundamental freedoms, and the protection of civil liberties for all Senegalese. Most importantly, the new administration should draw lessons from the past three years of unprecedented political unrest, characterized by multiple waves of deadly anti-government protests and unlawful arrests.

While recognizing the gains from the elections, the need for post-election reforms remains critical. In this regard, we express deep concerns over the high concentration of powers vested in the President, particularly in determining election dates, which poses a risk to the country's democratic stability. Hence, we call for the initiation of post-electoral reforms to address the vulnerabilities that contributed to the recent crisis and to establish a more resilient democratic framework.

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Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) | Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) | West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) | WANEP | Center for Democracy and Development-West Africa (CDD-West Africa), Nigeria | StatView International, Guinea | Center for Democratic Governance (CDG), Burkina Faso | Africivistes, Senegal | Sindicato de Jornalistas e Técnicos de Comunicação (SINJOTEC), Guinea-Bissau | Association Femmes Leadership et Développement Durable (AFLED), Mali | Network of Women Leaders for Development (RFLD), Benin

We call upon civil society and the media to remain vigilant, ensuring that the new president and his government uphold the trust bestowed upon them by the people and refrain from pursuing any anti-democratic agenda.

We specifically call upon the new government to exercise exemplary leadership, recognize Senegal's role as the solitary democracy in the Sahel region and build trust within the West Africa community towards addressing some of the complex reversals facing the sub-region.

WADEMOS reaffirms its commitment to supporting democratic governance and civil society activism and advocacy in Senegal and across the West Africa region. We remain steadfast in our mission to promote and defend democratic values, and we stand ready to collaborate with all stakeholders, including the new administration, in advancing the democratic aspirations of the people of Senegal.

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About WADEMOS

WADEMOS is an independent and 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 47 spread across West Africa. The WADEMOS Secretariat is based in Accra, Ghana.

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