



IIJD Official Position on Elections in Africa

For democracy to flourish, elections must reflect the will of the people. Fair and transparent elections organized by independent electoral bodies enable citizens to choose new representatives and national leaders; such elections also test the strength of existing democratic institutions and processes. The International Institute for Justice and Development (IIJD) strongly encourages the organization of free and fair elections as a major step towards democratic governance and creating stable, transparent and accountable governments in African States. In order for elections to qualify as free and fair, there are several characteristics that the IIJD believes need to be present throughout the electoral process. If these factors are not in existence, the IIJD cannot support the elections taking place, nor can we consent to participate in said elections as observers or administrators providing undeserved legitimacy to autocratic regimes.

The IIJD requires the following factors to be present in the event of governmental elections to be acknowledged as free, fair, and legitimate. **First**, an independent national electoral commission must exist within the country to carry out and monitor the election process without influence from political parties or the existing government. **Second**, a fair, just, and transparent electoral law must be recognized as such by all members involved, including members of the government, political parties and voters. **Third**, there must be free and open media coverage regardless of any dissent displayed by a candidate or their party. **Fourth**, the citizenry must be registered and have free and unrestricted access to the media and press. By extension, voters must also be able to make their decision and to vote without intimidation or persuasion. **Fifth**, all political candidates must have access to a free campaign in all areas of the country, even in traditional political strongholds.

Without the presence of these factors, the IIJD cannot support the elections taking place. These characteristics must exist as a fundamental step in ensuring fair elections, which play a major role in the transition to and consolidation of democratic governance, peace, and universal security. However, the IIJD will offer assistance in establishing these institutions so that free and fair elections can take place. The IIJD also strongly encourages governments and their citizens, NGOs and other groups involved in elections to demand that these factors be set in place before the electoral process begins. Once they do exist, the IIJD will readily provide support for and/or participate in the electoral process. The IIJD will work with state governments, public officials and the international community to provide comprehensive assistance in election planning and administration where there are regimes and organizations with a political will toward establishing democratic institutions.

The IIJD calls upon all the Democrats on earth, and those working on this issue, to adopt the same position. Uniformity in the position will guarantee the result in our collective effort in advancing DEMOCRACY, Freedom for long term global peace, security and stability.

The IIJD will tirelessly advocate this approach and position.

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