



2015 General Elections: **The Untold Story**

NATIONAL PEACE COMMITTEE REPORT

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FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that I write the foreword to this report detailing the role of the *National Peace Committee* in the largely peaceful outcome of the 2015 General Elections; an event that even the most restrained analysts feared would lead to the disintegration of Nigeria.

Given the tragic African experience where elections often result in violent conflicts and massive loss of lives and property, it was not surprising that Nigerians entered 2015 with great trepidation such that those who could; left the country with their families while the rest returned to the safety of their native (ethnic) regions uncertain what the future held.

Although the signing of Peace Accord on January 14, 2015 (*exactly a month to the presidential and National Assembly elections*) by all the parties and candidates contesting the election was somewhat reassuring, the vitriol and hate language on the campaign trail exploiting ethnic and religious differences exacerbated tensions across the country.

The situation was further complicated by the closeness of the contest in which the *All Progressive Congress* (APC), an amalgam of several political parties was challenging the

dominance of the ruling *Peoples' Democratic Party* (PDP) which had been in power since Nigeria returned to civil rule in 1999. It was therefore not surprising that very few gave the Peace Committee a chance to succeed when it was inaugurated on January 25, 2015- barely three weeks to the presidential elections.

Aptly sub-titled “the untold story”, the report details the public and private engagements of the Committee with critical stakeholders spanning government and security agencies, political parties, the organized private sector, civil society groups, multilateral organizations, development partners and much more.

At the centre of these engagements were the two principal candidates- then incumbent president, Dr. Goodluck E. Jonathan of the PDP and Gen. Muhammad Buhari (rtd) of the APC; who despite the occasional excesses of their more zealous supporters largely conducted themselves with dignity and decorum. The Committee and indeed all Nigeria remain very grateful to President Jonathan for his unprecedented act of statesmanship in promptly and unequivocally conceding the election and to General Buhari for being magnanimous in victory.

As a result, 2015 was the first Presidential election since the return to civil rule in 1999 that was not contested in the courts of law. Further, the massive violence that most people feared never materialized; an indication of the continuing growth, some will even say, maturation of our young democracy.

One can only hope that by this example, electoral contests in Africa will cease to be zero sum games where both incumbents and those challenging them will accept the will of the people as expressed through a free and fair balloting process.

I will be remiss if I end this without specially thanking the members of the committee who worked so hard and sacrificed so much to help bring about this outcome. They are all great patriots who passionately embraced the assignment as an altruistic call to national service and were undeterred by the occasional, but intense public scrutiny of the Committee's work. For the record, no member of the Committee asked for or received any remuneration. Support to the Committee was limited to the transportation and accommodation of members during meetings.

The success of the Committee show that Nigerians are peace loving people who are open to resolving their differences through dialogue, if they can find a trusted platform to facilitate the process. This undoubtedly was what they saw in the Peace Committee given the integrity and non-partisanship of its members.

The peaceful outcome of the 2015 General Elections underscores what is possible in this great country if we can all work towards building a just and democratic society for all citizens. As 2019 beckons, let us all recommit ourselves to the ideals of justice, peace and national unity and may God, continue to bless and protect the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

General Abdulsalam A. Abubakar, (Rtd), GCFR
(Chairman, National Peace Committee)

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Since Nigeria's return to civil rule in 1999, the country has conducted several elections with varying degrees of disturbances and violence. However, the lead-up to the 2015 general elections generated so much tension and fear that many informed analysts both within and outside the country predicted the disintegration of Nigeria. Reasons for such fears include the competitive nature of the elections in which the All People's Congress (APC), an amalgam of several smaller Parties was challenging the dominance of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) which had ruled Nigeria since the return to civil rule in 1999.

The situation was compounded by the very vitriolic tone of the campaign in which religious, ethnic and hate slurs were commonly used to pit groups against each other. Tensions were further heightened by the existential threat posed to Nigeria by the Boko Haram insurgency primarily in the North East along with the destabilizing influence of such ethnic militias like the Odua Peoples' Congress (OPC) in the South West, the Niger Delta Militants in the South-South and the Movement for the Actualization of Biafra (MASSOB) in the South East. A combination of some or all of these, many feared, would likely lead to the implosion of Nigeria with the almost inevitable disputation of the election outcomes as the final trigger.

In response to these, and in an effort to assure increasingly worried Nigerians that the country will outlive the 2015 elections, the Office of the Special Adviser to the President (inter – party affairs), (headed by Senator Ben Obi), in collaboration with the office of the National Security Adviser to the President (headed by Col Sambo Dasuki), began, in June 2014, series of consultations and engagements aimed at sensitizing the political class on the implications of their actions and utterances on social cohesion and political stability of the country. The goal was to get them to embrace a civil and patriotic approach in their quest for political power.

These efforts culminated in the January 14, 2015 National Sensitization Workshop on Non-Violence in the 2015 Elections in which all the Presidential Candidates and Political Parties contesting the election signed a Peace Accord committing themselves to peaceful conduct in the polls. The agreement was signed in the presence of the former Secretary General of the United Nations Mr. Kofi Annan and the former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Chief Emeka Anyaoku who chaired the event. Section 3 of the document which popularly came to be known as *The Abuja Accord* **(For full text of the Accord see**



■ President Jonathan & Gen. Buhari in a warm hand shake After signing the Jan. 14 2015 Peace Accord As Chief Emeka Anyaoku, former Secretary General of the Commonwealth & Mr. Kofi Anan former Secretary General of the United Nations look on

Appendix 1) recommended the setting up of a *The National Peace Committee for the 2015 Elections* comprising of respected statesmen and women, traditional and religious leaders from across the country to monitor adherence to the Accord.

Following the signing of the accord, Most Rev. Matthew Hassan Kukah, the Catholic Bishop of Sokoto and founder of the Kukah Centre, was approached by Chief Emeka Anyaoku to facilitate the setting up of the Peace Committee by identifying respected and credible Nigerians across the country and to persuade them to participate in this task. By the end of January 2015, all the prospective Members identified by Bishop Kukah had accepted to serve on the Committee. (For list of the Members of the Committee see Appendix 2).

On January 25, 2015, the Committee was formally inaugurated with former Military Head of State, Gen. Abdulsalam A Abubakar, GCFR who returned Nigeria to civil rule in 1999 unanimously adopted as Chairman while former military Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters, Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe, GCON, was made Vice-Chairman. While such critical factors like religious, ethnic and gender balance were considered in composing the Committee, the integrity and nonpartisanship of



■ A Picture they say is worth a thousand words

the individuals were paramount. At the inaugural meeting, the Committee adopted the following terms of reference:

- * To observe and monitor compliance with the Abuja Accord signed by the political parties on 14 January 2015.
- * To provide advice to the Government and INEC on resolution of political disputes and conflicts arising from issues of compliance with the Abuja Accord.
- * To make itself available for national mediation and conciliation in the case of post – electoral disputes or crises.

At the end of the inaugural meeting, and with no Secretariat facilities in place, the committee unanimously adopted The Kukah Centre, as its formal Secretariat. The critical challenge of funding was, in part resolved, when the United Nations' Development Programme (UNDP) which had funded the process leading up to the signing of the accord decided to assist the Committee with its travels and meetings. The Committee through the support of the UNDP engaged the services of Dr. Kelechi Akubueze as a Technical Consultant with Dr. Arthur-Martins Aginam, Executive Director, of The Kukah Centre, as the head of the secretariate. Mr. Chris Omotosho and other Kukah Centre's staff provided administrative support. The technical capacity of the Secretariat was further boosted with the engagement of two mediation experts - Dr. Babatunde Afolabi and Mr. Joseph Attang by the Centre for humanitarian Dialogue (HD).

The Geneva-based HD in partnership with the Swiss and Australian embassies in Nigeria had earlier approached Bishop Kukah on a separate initiative to use his influence and goodwill to convene a body of eminent Nigerians to help mediate the inevitable violent conflicts that would

result from the elections. Ultimately, the HD initiative which focused primarily on addressing post-election violence was integrated into the Peace Accord process with its proactive mechanisms to resolve election related disputes before they degenerate into violent conflicts. The responsibilities of the secretariat include the following:

- Sending of invitations (emails and SMS) to members of the Committee on the notice of meetings.
- Preparing materials for all meetings of the committee, and the provision of logistics and secretarial support to the committee.
- Tracking of election linked violence and conflicts across the country that could help the Committee in its work.
- Monitoring of adherence of political parties to the Abuja Accord. Furnishing the Committee with relevant research materials to aid its work.
- Interfacing with civil society groups, government agencies, political parties and other stakeholders on various initiatives relevant to the committee's work.
- Keeping records/reports of the Committee's meetings and activities.
- Helping with media outreaches on the work of the Committee including developing and managing the Committee's social media platforms, among others.

METHODOLOGY AND STRATEGY OF THE NPC

For the purpose of this Report, the work of the Committee can be divided into two broad phases: *the Pre-Election* and *the Post-Election* Phases. The Committee developed a methodology that focused on meetings, interactive sessions and direct contact and dialogue with key agencies such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), State Security Agencies (e.g. Office of the National Security Adviser, the Nigeria Police Force, the Military, Civil Defense Corps and the Department of State Security Services). It also identified the principal Political actors and platforms namely the Presidential Candidates and leadership of the two major political parties as well as the leadership of the Interparty Advisory Council, (IPAC) that represents all the registered political parties. And while many of the Committee's meetings were public, it also on occasions engaged privately with stakeholders, especially in situations where state security matters were involved or where such in camera approach would best yield the desired outcomes.

Although the Committee held plenary meetings to review its work plans, it largely adopted a collaborative strategy as a means of creating synergy. The Committee saw itself as a midwife, a facilitator of sorts whose duty was to encourage all sides to comply with the letter and the spirit of the Accord. Thus, the Chairman of INEC, Prof. Attahiru Jega, the leadership of the two leading Political Parties along with IPAC, though not members of the Committee were invited to attend

the major meetings of the Committee especially as the elections drew closer. In the face of allegations of threats of violence and intimidation especially by the Opposition, the Committee often had to summon the Security Chiefs for briefings and assurances.

The Committee also engaged members of the diplomatic community, especially a group of 20 “like-minded Ambassadors” representing democratic countries with whom it consulted regularly. Their input was always valuable given how much information and experience they had similarly, several international agencies and organizations who visited the country in the build-up to the election also met with the Committee. Such meetings were insightful as they, among other things, underscored the concerns of the global community to the potential destabilizing effect of electoral violence in Nigeria on the sub-region and the urgent need to do all that was necessary to avert the situation.

While space will not allow us to reproduce the reports of the Committee's extensive engagements here, much of the records are available for researchers who may be interested in exploring the issues further. However, for the purpose of this report, we shall simply provide a list of some of the key meetings that the Committee held in the lead-up to and immediately following the elections.



■ A group of like-minded Ambassadors from Democratic Countries Posing for a picture with Gen. Abubakar after a Meeting at The Kukah Centre



THE PRE-ELECTION PHASE

This first phase of the work primarily involved extensive public and private outreaches to critical stakeholders particularly the two leading political parties (the PDP and APC), State Security Agencies (the Military, the Police, Dept. of State Security Services, National Security and Civil Defense Corps), the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC); Civil Society Organizations, Donor Agencies and multilateral elections observer missions on the need for credible and non-violent elections.

The two leading political parties: whose Chairmen were coopted into the Committee along with the Chairman of the Inter-party Advisory Council (IPAC) were repeatedly pressed by the Committee to comply with the provisions of the Peace Accord which they willingly entered into; a plea that was not always successful as the campaign rhetoric remained, for the most part, virulent. There were often accusations and counter accusations of intimidation from both sides, but more so from the opposition.

However, credit must be given to the Presidential candidates of the two major political parties who, for the most part, adhered to peaceful conduct and utterances in their public statements. Quite often, the Committee was mostly concerned with the surrogates, the hangers on, the foot soldiers,

the Spokesperson and others who in their unrestrained utterances tended to give the impression that they were speaking for their Parties.

Yet, the Committee succeeded to a large degree in serving as the only platform of engagement between the political parties on many contentious issues leading up to the election. Besides monitoring compliance with the provisions of the Abuja Accord, another key issue the Peace Committee regularly dealt with in the build-up to the elections was the alleged partiality of state security agencies by the opposition. Curiously, unlike in past elections where INEC was perceived to serve the interests of the ruling party, in this instance, it was the ruling PDP that sometimes expressed concern about the impartiality of the electoral body.

Against the backdrop of the violence unleashed by Boko Haram, issues of security became critical but they were also not far from the fray of politics. For example, there were accusations and insinuations from all sides as to who was responsible for the violence. The Committee tried to avoid being drawn into this fray, but did its best to draw attention to the dangers posed by the persistence of violence, irrespective of its source. Further, the

Committee at all times underscored the need for the Security agencies to do everything possible to ensure that adequate security was provided to allay the palpable anxiety of the electorate, INEC and the Political parties over the distribution of the Permanent Voters Card (PVC) and other Electoral materials.

The following are some of the key pre-election phase meetings of the Committee with dates:

- * **January 26, 2015** - Inaugural meeting of the Committee where members adopted its terms of reference and affirmed its leadership.
- * **January 28, 2015** - The Convener of the Committee Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah and Committee member, former External Affairs Minister Professor Bolaji Akinyemi addressed a Press Conference announcing to Nigerians the inauguration of the Committee and its mandate.
- * **February 2, 2015** - The Committee met with the Chief of Defense Staff, Air Chief Marshal Alex Badeh, the Inspector General of Police, Suleiman Abba and other Service Chiefs, to assess their preparedness to provide security for the elections which at the time was scheduled for February 14. They all assured the Committee of their neutrality and readiness.
- * **February 19, 2015** - The Committee met with Political parties and representatives of foreign election observer missions- the African Union, ECOWAS, the Commonwealth and the European Union
- * **March 3, 2015** - The Committee Chairman General Abdusalam A. Abubakar, GCFR, met with 20 key Ambassadors at the Conference room of The Kukah Centre. The delegation led by the U.S. Ambassador Mr. James Entwistle and Head of the E.U. Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS Mr. Michel Arrion expressed concerns about the potential breakdown of law and order as a result of the postponement of the elections by 6 weeks and the sincerity of the President Jonathan-led government to conduct free and fair elections.
- * **March 7, 2015** - The Peace Committee met with INEC Chairman, the Inspector General of Police and Service Chiefs to assess their preparedness for the elections.
- * **March 24, 2015** - The Peace Committee met with the business community on the need for the organized private sector to support its mediation efforts. It also met with Media Regulatory Agencies and professional media organizations (Guild of Editors, Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria, the Broadcasting Organization of Nigeria etc.) on growing incidents of hate speech in the media and the need for greater sensitivity in reporting the results of the election.
- * **March 25, 2015** - The Peace Committee met with Election Observer groups for their insight as the campaign drew to an end. It also met with women and youth groups from the greater FCT area.

CROSSING THE RUBICON: THE DEAL BREAKER

INEC had originally scheduled the Presidential and National Assembly elections for February 14, 2015 to be followed by the Governorship and State Assembly elections on February 28. And despite persisting security challenges in the north east and the more widespread logistical challenges of distributing Voters cards and card readers across the country, the electoral body remained confident of its readiness to deliver free and fair elections as scheduled. However, exactly a week to the Presidential and National Assembly elections, INEC told a stunned nation it was postponing the election by at least 6 weeks on the grounds of inadequate security in parts of the country. This was on the basis of threat assessment issued by the security agencies two days earlier.

On February 7th, 2014, (exactly a week to the Presidential and National Assembly elections) INEC Chairman, Professor Attahiru Jega, OFR addressed a Press Conference in which he told a jittery nation, among other things that:

INEC not being a security agency that could by itself guarantee protection for personnel and materials, as well as voters during elections, the Commission cannot lightly wave off the advice by the nation's Security Chiefs. The Commission is specifically concerned about the security of our ad hoc

staff who constitute at least 600,000 young men and women, together with our regular staff, voters, election observers as well as election materials painstakingly acquired over the last one and half years. This concern is limited not just to the areas in the North-eastern part of Nigeria experiencing insurgency; the risk of deploying young men and women and calling people to exercise their democratic rights in a situation where their security cannot be guaranteed is a most onerous responsibility. Under such circumstances, few Election Monitoring Bodies (EMBs) across the world, if any, would contemplate proceeding with the elections as scheduled. No matter the extent of INEC's preparedness, therefore, if the security of personnel, voters, election observers and election materials cannot be guaranteed, the life of innocent young men and women as well the prospects of free, fair, credible and peaceful elections would be greatly jeopardized.

Consequently, INEC rescheduled the Presidential and National Assembly elections for March 25th, 2015 and the Governorship and State Assembly elections for April 11th, 2015 with the hope that the nation's security agencies would rapidly



■ A moment by the two major presidential candidates after reaffirming their commitment to peaceful elections on March 26, 2015

restore sufficient normalcy for safe and peaceful conduct of the elections. He reiterated INECs commitment to do everything within the law to conduct free, fair and credible elections and urged the candidates, political parties, all stakeholders and Nigerians at large to accept the extension in good faith by continuing to be peaceful.

Not surprisingly, the postponement exacerbated the already tense atmosphere across the country which has led to a mass exodus of Nigerians living outside their ethnic regions. Similarly, the elites with their families fled the country to escape what many saw as the looming Armageddon.

In hindsight, the 6 weeks postponement turned out to be a blessing as INEC used the opportunity to both address the logistical challenges of distributing critical electoral materials across the country and to perfect its processes. And for the Peace Committee, the extension offered a window to reassure wary Nigerians that the country would survive the election. A key component of this effort was to ensure that the two major contestants for the presidency renew their support for the Peace Accord by pledging to accept the outcome of the elections. This was the plan from the beginning and became imperative given how tense and acrimonious the campaign

became due to the deep suspicion engendered by the postponement.

As the elections drew close, the Committee reached out to President Jonathan and General Buhari (the main opposition candidate) seeking a meeting to which both responded positively. The idea was to first meet with each of them separately and then bring them together to ventilate their perceived grievances as a way to foster healing and reconciliation.

The meeting with President Jonathan was held at the Aso Rock Villa in the afternoon of Wednesday, March 25, 2015. At the meeting, he raised some issues concerning the state of the nation, the threat of violence by the opposition based on the allegations that he and his Party were planning to rig the elections. He noted that he took very seriously the threat by leading members of the opposition to form a parallel government in the event that they did not win the elections but that he chose not to react to such apparent treasonable acts in the interest of peace.

President Jonathan reiterated his previously stated stance that his political ambition is not worth the life of any Nigerian and expressed his willingness to meet with General Buhari, even

outside the Aso Rock Villa, if such a meeting would help douse tension and reassure Nigerians that the country would survive the elections. He informed the Committee that he had an official engagement in Warri, Delta State the following day (Thursday, March 26) but that he would be available to meet with General Buhari later that day once he returned to Abuja.

Wednesday, March 25, 2015 was the last day of campaigns for the Presidential elections and General Buhari was involved in a flurry of activities in Lagos. The APC candidate had promised to meet with the Committee upon his return to Abuja later that day. However, weather related flight delays in Lagos meant he couldn't get into Abuja until after mid-night.

A meeting with the Committee was hastily scheduled for 8am that morning (Thursday, March 26) as the candidate (Buhari) had made plans to travel same day to his home town Daura, where he would vote and monitor the elections which were barely 48 hours away.

The Committee's meeting with General Buhari went well. Like President Jonathan, he too had a lot on his chest, mostly allegations of plots by the PDP to cling on to power at all cost. The pain in his voice was very palpable. Having lost three presidential elections, under sometimes controversial circumstances, it was natural that he would feel that the same forces were working again to keep him out of power.

As the meeting progressed, the need to get both President Jonathan and General Buhari to sit down together to clear the air became even more pertinent. The next two hours proved to be the most action packed in the work of the Committee. Following a flurry of telephone calls to the Villa that began around 6am that morning, the Committee was able to persuade President Jonathan to alter his schedule (i.e. the trip to Warri

that morning) and join in the meeting with General Buhari at the Sheraton Hotel so both men can iron things out and find common ground.

President Jonathan stopped on his way to the airport to join the meeting and behind closed doors, the Committee facilitated a robust but thoughtful dialogue with both sides listening to one another and clarifying the issues. It was a great meeting that ended on a very good note, with enough trust and confidence having been renewed on both sides. The Chairmen of the two parties were supposed to be at the meeting as witnesses, but unfortunately, it was only Dr. John Oyegun, Chairman of the APC who was there from the start. The Chairman of the PDP, Alhaji Adamu Mu'azu could not make it in good time given how hastily the meeting was arranged but that did not change anything.

The Committee had prepared a draft statement which it wanted both candidates to sign. General Buhari who read it in the course of his meeting with the Committee raised only a few minor objections. The Committee also managed to get President Jonathan to read the full text before he got to the Sheraton Hotel. With an approved draft agreement, the Candidates and the two Party Chairmen accompanied by the Committee stepped out of the room to reaffirm their commitment to a peaceful elections and to pledge to accept the outcome of the elections if it were free and fair. The signing of the accord which was widely covered by local and foreign media ended in a warm embrace between the two candidates and helped in no small way to reassure nervous Nigerians that the country could survive the elections. *(For full text of the agreement see Appendix 3)*

VOTING, ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS AND THE HISTORIC CONCESSION

The Peace Agreement of March 26, 2015 which was signed barely 48 hours to the presidential elections undoubtedly helped douse tensions across the country. With the campaigns formally over, things were relatively quiet as Nigerians waited anxiously for actual voting to begin. And as voting got underway on Saturday, March 28, the Secretariat of the Peace Committee working with local and foreign election observer groups continued to monitor developments in the field to determine if and where the Committee's intervention may be needed. Despite administrative hiccups in some areas and sporadic violence in others, the elections were largely peaceful and within two days, the official results began to trickle in from the States. By late afternoon of Tuesday, March 31, only two States Yobe and Bornu were yet to announce their results. The tallied official votes at the time showed President Jonathan of the PDP trailing APCs General Buhari by an insurmountable deficit of over 4 million votes with both candidates exceeding the other key constitutional requirement of securing 25 percent of the votes in two thirds of the States and the Federal Capital Territory.

From the outset, the Committee's primary concern

has always been how to get the defeated candidate to accept the outcome of the election by conceding promptly and unequivocally. The winner naturally has a much easier task: to be magnanimous in victory. And with the result of the election all but certain, the Committee in the evening of March 31 requested audience with President Jonathan at the Villa.

As it awaited confirmation for the meeting with the President, the Committee Chairman General Abdulsalam A Abubakar, GCFR also put a call through to General Buhari who informed him that President Jonathan had only minutes earlier called to concede the elections. He particularly asked the Committee to please convey his good wishes to President Jonathan for his great act of statesmanship. Shortly after, members of the Committee who were greatly relieved headed to the Villa where they met privately with President Jonathan and thanked him for his great courage and unprecedented act for which history would remember him. As the Committee members left the Villa, they were accosted by the State House Press and in a brief exchange the Chairman explained that the Committee had come to thank President Jonathan for his great act of patriotism and statesmanship in conceding the elections.

At this point, the Buhari Campaign team were yet to address the press on the historic development and as such many Nigerians got the news of the concession from Gen. Abubakar's brief media scrum with State House Correspondents which perhaps helped create the wrong but widespread impression that the Committee sat with President Jonathan at the Villa as the results came in and had directly prevailed on him to concede.

From the Villa, the Committee went straight to General Buhari's campaign headquarters wading through thousands of euphoric supporters along the street to get to the building. At the meeting, General Buhari again urged the Committee to

convey his appreciation to President Jonathan for his uncommon act statesmanship while the Committee members who spoke emphasized the need for the President-elect to do all he could to unite and heal the country by being a President and father to all now that the election was over.

There is no need to restate the historic outcome of the elections and the reactions of both Nigerians and the international community. Across and beyond the country, the work of the Committee was widely acknowledged and effusively praised. Not surprisingly, the committee played host to several organizations which came to both congratulate and also express support for the success of the elections.

■ Members of the Peace Committee in private audience with President Jonathan at the Vila shortly after he conceded the election



Below are of some of the key meetings the Committee had immediately following the elections:

- * **March 31, 2015** - The Committee met with the full delegations of the AU, ECOWAS and the Commonwealth Elections Observer Missions. It was basically a thank you visit by the missions to the Committee for a job well done. Former President Kuffor of Ghana led the ECOWAS delegation while Ex-Liberian President Prof. Amos Sawyer led the AU team. The Commonwealth Mission was led by the former President of Malawi Dr. Bakili Muluzi.
- * **April 1, 2015** - The European Union election observer Mission led by Mr. A. Santiago Fisas (MEP) accompanied by the Head of the European Union Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ambassador Michel Arion paid a courtesy visit to the Peace Committee Chairman General Abdulsalam A Abubakar at The Kukah Centre. The delegation acknowledged the work of the Committee in the peaceful outcome of the election and promised to continue to support Nigeria's effort at democratization.
- * **April 9, 2015** - With two days to the Governorship and State Assembly elections, the Peace Committee met with leaders of Civil society groups (e.g. Transition Monitoring Group, Civil Society Situation Room) to assess the potential of violence around the States with a view to determining where its intervention may be needed. On the whole, there was great optimism given the reality of the peaceful nature of the Presidential elections.
- * **April 16, 2015** - The Committee reconvened five days after the April 11 governorship elections to take stock now that both sets of

elections (*Presidential and National Assembly/ Governorship and State Houses of Assembly*) have been completed. Several local and international stakeholders were invited to the meeting. All noted with satisfaction the relative peace witnessed in most States during the Governorship elections such that the intervention of the Committee was rarely required. However, the European Union Observer Mission used the opportunity of the meeting to present its preliminary report on the election and implored the Committee to use its influence to champion the cause of electoral reforms in the country. Following this meeting, the Committee adjourned indefinitely.

THE POST-ELECTION PHASE

Following the very successful outcome of the election, the question now turned to the future of the Committee. For many Nigerians, the Committee was very instrumental to the outcome of the election and as such should transform into a permanent body to help deal with the seemingly intractable conflicts in various parts of the country. On its part, the Committee felt it needed to consult with Nigerians, particularly the emergent political leadership, particularly at the national level before deciding on its future.

Much as the Committee appreciated the public acclaim, it still felt that there was need to do some internal reflection about its future. Thus, the Committee believed that the best approach was not to score itself, but to seek the views of a cross section of the Nigerian society on the way forward. Following about a two month break during which the transition in both the Presidency and the National Assembly were successfully conducted, the Committee reconvened, in part, to gauge the public mood about its future. The following meetings were critical deciding the Committee's future:

* **July 30, 2015** - The Committee met with the leadership of the United Nations system in Nigeria led by the Special Representative of the

United Nations Secretary General for West Africa, Dr. M. Ibn Chambas. Dr Chambas and his team had been very active in encouraging and supporting the work of the Committee. The UNDP had literally been embedded in the working of the Committee as they were responsible for funding the logistics meetings of the Committee's.

In his comment at the meeting, Dr M. Ibn Chambas the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for West Africa and the Sahel, thanked the Chairman and Members of the Committee for the collaboration with the UNDP. He praised the Members for the historic contribution that the Committee had made in the entrenchment of Democracy in Nigeria. He reminded the Members that there were lessons for the rest of Africa to learn from the achievement of the Committee. In his view, the work of the Committee needed to be replicated in other parts of Africa, given the precarious nature of the continent's governance architecture. He therefore appealed to the Chairman and Members to kindly consider transforming immediately to a peace Council with a mandate that goes beyond elections.

The Media and Civil Society groups at the meeting



■ Dr. Chambas (left) with the Nigerian UNDP team at the meeting

also commended the work of the Committee. Mr. Clement Nwankwo, Executive Director of the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) who had chaired the *Situation Room* elections initiative spoke eloquently on behalf of Civil Society in appreciation of the work of the Committee. He also insisted that the Committee needed to institutionalize itself immediately. The Media was represented by Segun Adeniyi, a former Presidential Spokesman to the late President Yar'adua and a very informed commentator on Nigerian politics and media. He shared the optimism of those who had spoken before him and believed that the Committee needed to reposition itself to continue to help stabilize Democracy in Nigeria.

* **On August 10, 2015:** The Committee continued the consultation with political parties starting with a joint meeting of the National Executive Council and Board of Trustees of both the APC and the PDP. Since the Chairmen of both Parties and their representatives had

attended all the Meetings of the Committee, they were very familiar with its workings and the contentious issues it has had to address. However, it was instructive that now that the elections were over, the PDP which lost power was now accusing the new APC government of the same crimes of intimidation, harassment, and blackmail, the same kind of accusations that the Opposition had made while they were contesting the elections. The lesson here was that there was need for eternal vigilance. In the end, both sides strongly endorsed the Committee continuing its good work.

* **On August 11, 2015:** The Committee visited the National Assembly to meet with the Senate President and the Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives along with their principal officers. Although the meetings were separate, the enthusiasm was the same at both meetings. They were all of the view that the work of the Committee had greatly contributed to the success of the elections and that it was



necessary to ensure that the Committee is supported to continue its work. Both the Senate President and the Speaker at the two different meetings assured the Members that they were ready to support whatever Legislative initiatives were required to institutionalize the work of the Committee.

- * **August 12, 2015:** The Committee met with former President Goodluck Jonathan to again thank him for his statesmanship in conceding the election. On the whole, the meeting was cordial. The President commended the Committee for its work in facilitating a largely peaceful election and pledged to continue to work to consolidate democracy in the country and the continent at large. The same day (August 12, 2015) the Committee met with President Buhari at the Villa with the Vice President Prof. Yemi Osinbajo in attendance.

The Committee again congratulated the President on his historic electoral victory. It also urged him to remain steadfast in his fight against corruption and to ensure that due process is followed in its execution. On his part, President Buhari who was very warm in his

reception commended the Committee for its work and was enthusiastic in endorsing its transformation into a Council. In fact, he asked the Committee to immediately liaise with the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation with a view to securing a permanent office for its work.



- Among Civil Society leaders who addressed the Committee are Mr. Clement Nwankwo (Right) of PLAC & Prof. Chidi Odinkalu



■ Members of the Committee during the meetings with the Senate Leadership (above) and that of the National Assembly (below)



LOOKING BACK: ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THE FUTURE

The National Peace Committee, though having no legal enforcement powers, emerged as the most credible and trusted body in the 2015 electoral process. This was partly due to the high moral authority it commanded in the minds of Nigerians given the personalities who constituted it, and also the non-partisanship of its members. The profile and integrity of the members of the Committee contributed to its independence as they could not be easily manipulated or intimidated by the government or any political party.

Further, the National Peace Committee functioned as a voluntary body whose members were not paid any salary or sitting allowances. Most remarkably, the Committee helped to turn what was expected to be Nigeria's most violent election into the most remarkable signpost in Nigeria's electoral history. For the first time, an incumbent President conceded defeat to his opponent even before the final results were announced.

Given what has been the culture of sit tight leadership in Africa where leaders have often preferred to sacrifice the lives of their people on the altars of their own ambitions, and given even Nigeria's experience with its own leaders seeking to manipulate their ways into power, the outcome

of Nigeria's 2015 presidential election cycle was indeed worth celebrating. This also had a direct knock on effect on later developments in the subsequent elections that followed. The nation watched as many Governors and members of the National Assembly who lost elections willingly conceded to their opponents. For the first time, Nigeria's elections almost turned out to be a celebration of brotherhood and sisterhood in what can at best be described as the burgeoning of our nascent democracy.

Indeed, in summary, the National Peace Committee's impact on Nigeria's electoral process can be summarized as follows:

Established the culture and practice of acceptance of outcome of elections even by incumbents, through preventive diplomacy, dialogue, confidence and peace building measures.

The 2015 General elections witnessed the lowest number of court cases. For the first time since 1999, the Presidential Elections were not contested in court.

The culture and practice of acceptance of election results saved Nigeria from the ugly past of

post-electoral violence. The cost of lives and property that could have been destroyed in post-electoral violence in 2015 would have been unquantifiable.

Restored confidence to the Nigerian democracy as having matured and capable of self-stabilization.

Since the 2015 General Elections, the Committee has intervened in the Southern Kaduna violent conflicts and has worked with INEC in helping stabilize the volatile security situation in Rivers State that enabled the electoral body successfully conduct much delayed rerun elections in the State in late 2016.



■ From left APC National Chairperson John Oyegun Cardinal John Onayinkan, Gen Abdulsalami abubakar President Goodluck Jonathan (PDP Candidate) Gen, Mohammadu Buhari (APC Candidate) Saultan of Sokoto Alh. Saa'ad Abubakar and Bishop Hassan Matthew Kukar at the Signing the Renewal of Pledges to a Peaceful Election in Abuja On Thursday 26th March 2015

CONCLUSION

Going forward, it is important to more closely study the remarkable achievement of the National Peace Committee in the 2015 Election as a best practice that can be shared continentally. It is our hope that the achievement of the Peace Committee will serve as an inspiration that indeed, God loves our country and situations can always change. We hope that Nigeria's democracy can and will continue to grow and that key political actors will come to terms with the fact that politics is a game in which some lose and others win, but the ultimate winners are the citizens.

The Committee remains very grateful to Nigerians and the international community for their support. As 2019 approaches, we should all work together to consolidate the achievements from the 2015 elections. Only then can we confidently speak of the maturation of our young democracy.

APPENDIX 1



ABUJA ACCORD

On the Prevention of Violence and Acceptance of Elections Results by Presidential Candidates and Chairpersons of Political Parties contesting the 2015 General Elections

We the undersigned Presidential Candidates of the under-listed political parties contesting in the General Elections of 2015;

Desirous of taking proactive measures to prevent electoral violence before, during and after the elections;

Anxious about the maintenance of a peaceful environment for the 2015 General Elections;

Reaffirming our commitment to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;

Desirous of sustaining and promoting the unity and corporate existence of Nigeria as an indivisible entity;

Determined to avoid any conduct or behaviour that will endanger the political stability and national security of Nigeria;

Determined to place national interest above personal and partisan concerns;

Reaffirming our commitment to fully abide by all rules and regulations as laid down in the Legal Framework for Elections in Nigeria;

Hereby commit ourselves and our parties to the following:

1. To run issued-based campaigns at national, state and local government levels; In this, we pledge to refrain from campaigns that will involve religious incitement, ethnic or tribal profiling, both by ourselves and by all agents acting in our names;
2. To refrain from making, or causing to make in our names or that of our party, any public statements, pronouncements, declarations or speeches that have the capacity to incite any form of violence, before, during and after the elections;



3. To commit ourselves and political parties to the monitoring of the adherence to this Accord by a **National Peace Committee** made up of respected statesmen and women, traditional and religious leaders;
4. All institutions of government including INEC and security agencies must act and be seen to act with impartiality;
5. To forcefully and publicly speak out against provocative utterances and oppose all acts of electoral violence whether perpetrated by our supporters and and/or opponents; and

Adopted in Abuja this 14th Day of January, 2015

Signed

Presidential Candidate

1. Tunde Anifowoshe-Kelani
Action Alliance (AA)

2. Dr Rafiu Salau
Alliance for Democracy (AD)

3. Alhaji Ganiyu Galadima
Allied Congress Party of Nigeria
(ACPN)

4. Dr Nani Ibrahim Ahmad
African Democratic Congress (ADC)

National Chairman


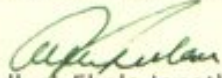
- Hon. Mohammed Lawal Nalado
Action Alliance (AA)

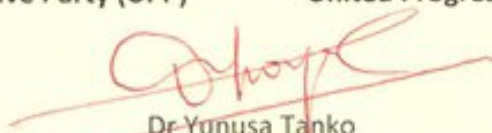
- Senator Mojisoluwa Akinfenwa
Alliance for Democracy (AD)

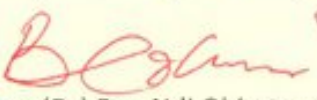
- Alhaji Mohammed Sanni
Allied Congress Party of Nigeria
(ACPN)

- Chief Ralphs Okey Nwosu
African Democratic Congress (ADC)



5. 
Maj.-Gen. Muhammadu Buhari
(rtd.) GCFR
All Progressives Congress (APC)
- 
John Odigie-Oyegun
All Progressives Congress (APC)
6. Ambrose Albert Owuru
Hope Democratic Party (HDP)
- Ambrose Albert Owuru
Hope Democratic Party (HDP)
7. 
Prof. Comfort Oluremi Sonaiya
Kowa Party (KP)
- Alhaji Umar Mustapha
Kowa Party (KP)
8. Martin Onovo
National Conscience Party (NCP)
- Dr. Yunusa Tanko
National Conscience Party (NCP)
9. 
Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan GCFR
Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
- 
Dr Mu'azu Adamu CON
Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
10. 
Barr. Godson Okoye
United Democratic Party (UDP)
- 
Barr. Godson Okoye
United Democratic Party (UDP)
11. 
Chief Chekwas Okorie
United Progressive Party (UPP)
- 
Chief Chekwas Okorie
United Progressive Party (UPP)


Dr Yunusa Tanko
Chairman, Inter-Party Advisory Council


Senator (Dr) Ben Ndi Obi CON, FNIPR
Special Adviser to the President on Inter Party Affairs



W. Dasuki

Col. Sambo Dasuki (rtd.) CFR
National Security Adviser

Attahiru Jega

Professor Attahiru Jega CFR
Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

Emeka Anyaoku

Chief Emeka Anyaoku GVC, CON
Chairman of the Occasion

Chibwe Eke
CHIEF SAM EKE, PHD
CITIZENS POPULAR PARTY

Prince Dr. Kelvin Chinedu Opuwara Allagba
PRINCE DR KELVIN CHINEDU OPUWARA ALLAGBA
PEOPLE PARTY OF NIG.

Musa Ayeni
Ain. Musa Ayeni
African Peoples Alliance (APA)

Dr. J. C. Ekwueme
HON. EKWEME KAZA
Dr J. C.
CHIEF OF PPA

APPENDIX 2

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL PEACE COMMITTEE FOR 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS

General Abdusalam A. Abubakar, GCFR

Former Nigerian Head of State, he organized the political transition programme in 1999 and handed over power to an elected President. General Abubakar has since become a renowned conflict mediator within the Continent.

Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe, GCON

Former Chief of General Staff and the Second in Command during the regime of former Military President, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida (rtd).

His Eminence, Sultan Sa'ad Abubakar III

Sultan of Sokoto and head of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs.

Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor

President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)

His Eminence, John Cardinal Onaiyekan

Catholic Archbishop of Abuja Diocese

Dame Priscila Kuye

Life Bencher and Former President of the Nigeria bar Association (NBA)

Archbishop Nicolas Okoh

Primate (Head) of the Anglican Church of Nigeria

Justice Rose Ukeje (Mrs)

Retired Jurist and Former President, Federal High Court

Prof Ameze Guobadia

A Professor of Law

Professor Zaynab Alkali (Mrs)

Renowned Novelist and Literary Scholar, she was former Deputy Vice Chancellor, Bayero University, Kano and currently at the Nasarawa State University, Keffi

Alhaji Aliko Dangote

Renowned Business Mogul and President of Dangote Holdings PLC

Professor Ibrahim A. Gambari

Former Foreign Affairs Minister, Federal Republic of Nigeria and former Assistant Secretary General United Nations

Mr Sam Amuka

Media Practitioner and Publisher of Vanguard Newspapers

Professor Bolaji Akinyemi

Professor of Political Science and former Foreign Affairs Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Bishop Matthew Kukah

Convener of the Committee, Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese and Founder of the Kukah Centre

COOPTED MEMBER REPRESENTING INSTITUTION/POLITICAL INTEREST

Dr. Adamu Mu'azu

National Chairman, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)

Chief John Odigie-Oyegun

National Chairman, All Progressive Congress (APC)

Professor Attahiru Jega

Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

Senator Dr. Ben Obi, CON

Special Adviser to the President (Inter-Party Affairs)

Dr. Yunusa Tanko

Chairman, Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC)

APPENDIX 3

RENEWAL OF OUR PLEDGES TO PEACEFUL ELECTIONS

Joint Statement issued by His Excellency, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR and Major General Muhammad Buhari, GCFR, on Thursday, 26th March, 2015, ahead of the 2015 Presidential Elections.

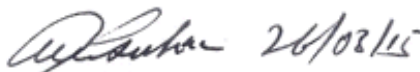
You may recall that on the 14th of January 2015, both of us, along with nine other party leaders signed what has now come to be known as the **Abuja Accord**. The substance of that Accord was our commitment to free, fair and credible elections in our dear country.

In the Accord, we agreed to, among other things, *Run an issue-based campaign and pledged that our electoral campaigns will not involve any religious incitement, ethnic or tribal profiling, both by ourselves and all agents acting in our names.*

Now that the campaigns have come to an end, we meet today to renew our pledge for peaceful elections. We therefore call on all fellow citizens of our dear country, and our Party supporters, to refrain from violence or any acts that may in any way jeopardise our collective vision of a free, fair and credible election. In addition, we call on INEC and all Security Agencies to ensure strict adherence to their constitutional roles. We also pledge to respect the outcome of free, fair and credible elections.

Today, we again renew our commitment to a united, democratic and prosperous Nigeria. We want to appeal to all Nigerians to stand together at this critical phase of our nation's history.

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria. God bless you all.



Dr. Goodluck Ebele JONATHAN, GCFR, President, Federal Republic of Nigeria and Presidential Candidate, PDP.



Major General Muhammad BUHARI, GCFR, Presidential Candidate, APC



General Abdusalam A. ABUBAKAR, GCFR, Chairman, National Peace Committee

Text of the Press Conference by Bishop Kukah Announcing the Inauguration of The National Peace Committee (January 28th 2015)

**PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE BOARD ROOM OF THE YAR'ADUA
CENTRE, ABUJA ON THE NATIONAL PEACE COMMITTEE FOR
THE 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS BY BISHOP MATTHEW
HASSAN KUKAH**

On the 14th of January, 2015, exactly one month ahead of the elections, the two leading political contenders for the Presidency, President Goodluck Jonathan, GCFR and General Mohammed Buhari, GCFR at a public forum organised by the Office of the Special Assistant to the President for Interparty Affairs, Senator Ben Obi and chaired by Chief Emeka Anyaoku, and along with the leaders of nine other Political Parties took an unprecedented step. Before the whole world, they appended their signatures to a Peace Accord titled, *The Abuja Accord on the prevention of Violence and acceptance of election results by the Presidential Candidates and Chairpersons of the Political Parties contesting the 2015 General elections.*

The highlights of the Accord include the following;

- *To run issue based campaigns at national, state and local government levels. In this we pledge to refrain from campaigns that will involve religious, ethnic or tribal profiling, both by ourselves and by all agents acting in our names;*
- *To refrain from making or causing to make in our names and that of our party, any public statements, pronouncements, declarations or speeches that have the capacity to incite any form of violence, before, during and after the elections*
- *To commit ourselves and political parties to the monitoring of the adherence to this Accord by a National Peace Committee made up of respected statesmen and women, traditional and religious leaders.*
- *All institutions of government including INEC and the security agencies must act and be seen to act with impartiality.*
- *To forcefully and publicly speak out against provocative utterances and oppose all acts of electoral violence whether perpetuated by our supporters and/or opponents.*

Immediately after the signing of the Accord, action was initiated to bring this about.

A group of eminent persons, reflecting the above ideals and objectives was immediately composed across the country and is made up of the following:

- 1: General Abdusalam ABUBAKAR (rtd.)
- 2: Commodore Ebitu UKIWE (rtd.)
- 3: John Cardinal ONAIYEKAN
- 4: Sultan Sa'ad ABUBAKAR
- 5: Alhaji Muhammad MUSDAFA
- 6: Archbishop Nicolas OKOH
- 7: Pastor Ayo ORITSEJAFOR
- 8: Justice Rose UKEJE (rtd.)
- 9: Aliko DANGOTE
- 10: Professor Ibrahim GAMBARI
- 11: Professor Bolaji AKINYEMI
- 12: Professor Ameze GOUBADIA
- 13: Professor Zaynab ALKALI
- 14: Mr. Sam AMUKA
- 15: Bishop Matthew Hassan KUKAH
- 16: Dame Priscilla KUYE

In Attendance:

- 1: Professor Attahiru Jega, Chairman, Independent Electoral Commission (INEC)
- 2: Dr Adamu MU'AZU, Chairman, Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP)
- 2: Dr John OYEGUN, Chairman, All Progressive Congress (APC)
- 3: Senator Ben OBI, Special Adviser to the President on Inter-party Affairs
- 4: Dr. Yunusa TANKO, Chairman, Inter-Party Advisory Council of Nigeria

The Terms of Reference of the Committee in the spirit of the Accord include the following:

- To observe and monitor compliance with the Abuja Accord signed by the political parties on January 14, 2015.

- To provide advice to the government and INEC on resolution of political disputes and conflicts arising from issues of compliance with the Abuja Accord.
- To make itself (the Committee) available for national mediation and conciliation in the case of post-electoral dispute or crises.

The Committee held an inaugural meeting on Sunday, January 25th at the Sheraton Hotel and Towers in Abuja. The meeting was chaired by Commodore Ukiwe. Some special guests in attendance included, His Excellency, Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative to the UN Secretary General on West Africa, the resident Coordinator of the UNDP and Head of the U.N. System in Nigeria, Mr. Daouda Toure, Representative of the Department of International Development (DFID), Ms. Catherine Weiss, a representative from the Kofi Annan Foundation, Mr. David Lambo from the Institute for Humanitarian Dialogue, Mr. Paschal Holliger from the Swiss Embassy among others. They brought the good wishes of their organisations and expressed their willingness to support the process.

The main meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Monday, February 2, 2015. This meeting will be presided over by the Chairman, General Abdulsalam Abubakar who is taking time off from his very busy schedule in the negotiations in South Sudan. We hope that within the brief period available to us, the Committee will map out some clear initiatives it intends to take to realize its objectives.

We must note though that this initiative is meant to build on the historic gesture which the candidates themselves demonstrated by not only signing the document but going further to embrace one another, thus showing their commitment to putting the nation before anything else. We are most pleased by this.

We will be reaching out to you all. Our plans and hopes are that each and every one of you will see us merely as a symbolic expression of the hopes of our people with the firm belief that we will allow God to guide us and lead us to the right path. Our intention is to help to give hope to the

contestants that Nigerians are not watching in judgment, but that we are here to encourage them and encourage one another.

We deeply appreciate the show of concern by the international community and we know that we can continue to count on their support. With God on our side, we shall, as the saying goes, do bravely. I want to thank you gentlemen of the media and plead with you to appreciate your critical role. Be more discerning in what you report and remember that whatever you put out, people will have reason to make reference to you.

We are not unaware that there are many other initiatives going on at different levels. We are very much encouraged by the foot soldiers of Democracy, the members of the Civil society family. We are here and open to collaboration and co-operation with everyone who believes we can work together. Time is not on our side, but as they say, a day is a long time in politics. We can still do much..

The KUKAH CENTRE has been saddled with the responsibility of holding and managing this process. We are here and the Director of the Centre, Dr. Arthur-Martins Aginam is here with me. I am playing the double role of being a member of the Committee but also helping to co-ordinate the entire process. We are working towards strengthening our modest Secretariat and we plead with you to bear with us. As you can see, the Chairmen of both Parties and INEC are in attendance so that we can harmonise our goals and objectives. We shall keep you well informed as we go along. We hope to see you after our meeting on Monday.

I am here with a member of the Committee, Professor Akinyemi. We will be able to take a few questions from you about the Committee. Thank you very much and God bless you.

Press Statement of the National Peace Committee on the Re-Scheduling of the 2015 General Election

NATIONAL PEACE COMMITTEE FOR 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS

February 10, 2015

PRESS STATEMENT OF THE 'NATIONAL PEACE COMMITTEE' ON THE RE-SCHEDULING OF THE 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS

The National Peace Committee for 2015 General Elections has taken note of the decision of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to re-schedule the Presidential and Legislative Elections from 14 February to 28 March 2015, and the Gubernatorial and State Legislative Elections from 28 February to 11 April 2015. The Committee notes in particular, that INEC made the decision after due consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, notably State Security agencies, Political Parties, Civil Society organizations among others. The Committee notes further that the re-scheduling is predicated on the need to allow the security agencies to provide adequate security for the holding of elections throughout the Federation.

While taking note of the divergent positions of the political parties on the issue, the Committee wishes to commend them for their matured response and commitment to respecting INEC's decision in the interest of national unity and peace. In particular, it commends the understanding shown by the Presidential Candidates.

In the light of these developments, the Committee calls on all Nigerians to remain calm and the political parties to recommit themselves to the ideals of the *Abuja Peace Accord*. Further, the Committee urges INEC to take advantage of the postponement to enhance its preparedness for the elections, including in particular, the distribution of the PVCs to ensure that no eligible voters are disenfranchised.

Finally, the Committee wishes to express its profound gratitude to the international community for their abiding commitment to the conduct of transparent and credible elections, in accordance with the provisions of the Nigerian Constitution. God bless Nigeria.


General Abdulsalam Abubakar (Rtd.) GCFR
(Former Head of State and Chairman, National Peace Committee for 2015 General Elections)

SECRETARIAT
THE KUKAH CENTRE

THE KUKAH

Flat C1, American Specialist Hospital Complex, (opposite Rock View Royale Hotel), 1, Luanda Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja.
+234 814 693 7133, +234 812 896 3626 arthurmartinsaginarh@gmail.com

Statement By The National Peace Committee Between The Presidential Election and the Declaration of Results (March 30th 2015)



NATIONAL PEACE COMMITTEE FOR 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS

MARCH 30, 2015

AN APPEAL FOR CALM

1: We want to first thank God for the very successful conduct of the first phase of our elections last Saturday. Across the entire country, we were gratified to receive news of huge turnouts of our people to cast their votes. Nigerians across the different segments of our society conducted themselves in a most peaceful and credible manner. They patiently stood with equanimity, co-operated with the officials of INEC in areas where minor glitches occurred with card readers, late arrival of officials and materials along with other logistical challenges. We saw voters supporting one another with food and water, seats, mats, umbrellas and so on. We watched the young assist the elderly. We showed that our common humanity is more important than political differences. We could not have asked for more from our people. Our citizens performed their civic duties faithfully and we are very proud of what we achieved as a people.

2: Now, we are entering the most difficult phase, namely, the vigil before the declaration of the results. We want to commend our people, especially the security agencies, civil society groups and the Internet community. The social media is a great tool for enhancing accountability and transparency which all goes to strengthen Democracy. The social media has given us voice as individuals and communities. The challenge however, lies in how responsibly we use this great tool.

3: We must note that so far, no individual, institution or platform is allowed by law to announce the results of these elections, no matter how accurate or factual their information may be. We all

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Flat C1, American Specialist Hospital Complex, (opposite Rockview Royale Hotel), 1 Luanda Crescent, Wuse 2. Abuja.
+234 814 693 7133, +234 812 896 3626 arthurmartinsaginam@gmail.com

know that INEC is the only body under our laws with the powers to announce these results. The organisation will do this after a painstaking and diligent collection and collation of final results from well over 120,000 polling units across the country. In our experience, the journey of these results from the Ward, Local Government to the State level is a challenging one and fraught with many dangers. This is where the anxieties and fears of Nigerians lie. This is where the land mines leading to violence are planted. This is where conscience and patriotism beckon on us before God to do the right thing.

4: We therefore appeal to our citizens to remain calm, to INEC to ensure that its officials along with party agents uphold the tenets of transparency and accountability that the body has so much espoused. We call on the security agencies to remain vigilant and neutral. We renew our trust in the leadership of INEC and its commitment to doing the right thing.

5: We already have received the assurances of both the two leading candidates, President Goodluck Jonathan, GCFR and Major General Muhammad Buhari, GCFR to the effect that they are willing to cooperate with INEC so long as we have a transparent process. We therefore want to assure our citizens that we will all do everything in our power to ensure that Nigeria crosses this very difficult bridge. We appeal to you to remain calm to ensure that our nation is the final victor.

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria. God bless you all.

General Abdusalam Abubakar, GCFR, Chairman, National Peace Committee

Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah, Coordinator, National Peace Committee.

Statement by the National Peace Committee on the Eve of the Governorship and State Assembly Elections (April 10th 2015)

AN APPEAL TO NIGERIANS: PLEASE CONTINUE TO KEEP THE PEACE

You will recall that in our Statement of March 27, 2015, we assured Nigerians that the two leading candidates, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, and Major-General Muhammad Buhari, GCFR, had both pledged to us that they would abide by the rules of the game as long as the elections were free, fair and credible.

Although we believed both men, nothing prepared us for the dramatic response that greeted the nation when the news broke that His Excellency, President Jonathan had called to congratulate General Buhari and concede victory to him. In one swift moment, the clouds of fear, doubt and uncertainty that had gathered suddenly became a rainbow of hope bursting in the horizon of our nation. Nigerians broke into instant celebrations as to what marvels God Almighty had done for us.

The Committee immediately met with and commended the President for his spectacular show of grace and honour. By this singular act, he had pulled our nation back from the dangerous precipice that stared at us. We also met with General Buhari and congratulated him for his doggedness and faith in our country. In the end, we must all concede that God has done great things for us by rescuing us from the ominous danger that some parts of the world had earlier predicted.

Thank God and mercifully, the future now lies before us and it is within our grasp. Nigerians, right across the board must now step forward to take personal and community responsibility as to how we perform our civic duties.

Tomorrow, the nation goes to the polls again, to conduct the last phase of the elections. Naturally, those who have been victorious would legitimately wish to consolidate their gains while those who may have suffered setbacks, would be committed to snatching victory. Here, we call again on all the contestants for the office of Governor and state Assemblies to appreciate that at this level, the elections should be easier to manage especially given that the leaders at the Federal level have shown us a good example.

We renew our gratitude to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Security Agencies again. Overall, they have done commendably well. INEC has promised to redress some of the lapses that followed the use of the Card Readers, the accreditation process and other logistical difficulties. INEC must redouble its effort in this regard, so that it can reinforce the confidence which Nigerians now repose in it. We appeal to fellow citizens, contestants and their supporters to continue to place the country before every individual or party interests. This is the enduring lesson we must all learn from these elections.

We note that up till now, some Nigerians, including leaders of communities, are still making some provocative and inciting statements capable of setting our people against themselves. We condemn this in the strongest terms. Nigerians must know that no matter their position, no one is above the law. We therefore call on the security agencies to remain vigilant.

Finally, we once again thank God the Almighty for His love and graciousness towards our country. We are grateful to the international community for standing by us. We thank the national and international observers and call on them to continue to travel this road with us as we enter the final phase of the 2015 electoral process.

May God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria!

General Abdulsalam A. ABUBAKAR, GCFR, *Chairman, National Peace Committee.*

Bishop Matthew Hassan KUKAH, *Coordinator, National Peace Committee.*

Statement By the National Peace Committee on the Leadership Elections in The Senate (June 16th 2015)



NATIONAL PEACE COMMITTEE FOR 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS

AN APPEAL FOR ORDER, MATURITY AND DISCIPLINE IN THE SENATE

June 16, 2015

1: We, the members of the National Peace Committee wish to congratulate the President, Vice President, Governors and all the members of the National and State Legislative Assemblies across the country for very successful and peaceful inaugurations recently. Nigerians at home and around the world watched with pride and gratitude to God as world leaders assembled from across the globe to show solidarity with our nation in its moment of historic joy.

2: Even the most optimistic of us did not imagine that we would be where we are today in our country. Up till the last elections, the atmosphere after every election since 1999 has been poisoned by endless quarrels among the political élites, long drawn out appeals at Tribunals and occasional violence leading to loss of lives. Happily, this has not been the case since the last elections. All the doomsday prophets have watched as God has guided our nation. What else can we ask for?

3: This is why we have watched with some measure of sorrow, the unacceptable attitude of the members of the highest Legislative body, the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in the last week. What was supposed to have been a routine process of inaugurating the Principal officers is gradually turning into a vicious internecine duel that threatens to undermine the moral authority and efficacy of that important body.

4: The story of the process leading to the elections of the principal officers in that august body in the last week is well known to all Nigerians. Given the maturity, track record and experience of the body, we wonder why a routine process has turned into an ugly, selfish dogfight. This is unacceptable to Nigerians. It neither dignifies the

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Flat C1, American Specialist Hospital Complex, (opposite Rockview Royale Hotel), 1 Luanda Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja.
+234 814 693 7133, +234 812 896 3626 arthurmartinsaginam@gmail.com

Senate nor does it honour what Nigerians voted for. It is not the way to thank God for what He has done to those who were lucky to be elected to that high office, nor does it honour what He has done to our country.

5: We commend the members of the Lower House who have successfully concluded their process and are positioned to face their challenge of Law making. We therefore call on the members of the Senate to very quickly put their house in order.

6: We appreciate the anxieties of both the leaders of the All Progressive Congress, (APC), and their members in the Senate. But this is at best a family quarrel that should not become a public spectacle. The challenge now is for the APC to justify the confidence that Nigerians placed on them when they bought into their mantra of CHANGE. We expect this CHANGE to be marked by personal and institutional acts of patriotism, altruism, discipline, decorum, maturity, sacrifice and decency.

7: Finally, we salute the President for upholding his position and philosophy of being for all and belonging to none. Let the Senators very quickly restore the order, dignity and integrity that are the hallmarks of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. We must have all arms on deck so that we can quickly rout Boko Haram, restore law and order and proceed with the much-desired change of cleansing the Augean stable and delivering quality services to the Nigerian people.
May God bless our country!

General Abdusalam Abubakar, *GCFR*
Chairman

Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah
Convener

STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL PEACE COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF THE NATION (JULY 11TH 2017)



NATIONAL PEACE COMMITTEE

Issued on July 11, 2017

A CALL FOR RESTRAINT

We've recently come to the end of the holy month of Ramadan, for millions of Nigerians, a time of spirituality, introspection and the request for God's forgiveness. Therefore, there could be no better time than now as a nation for us all to be thoughtful, deliberate and make ourselves worthy of divine mercy, especially in the atmosphere of a steep rise in divisive and hateful rhetoric in our country. It is indeed, the appropriate time to underscore the imperative of peaceful co-existence of all communities and all Nigerians.

We cannot afford at this or any other time to stoke the fires of hate and divisiveness in our body politic especially when ordinary Nigerians are engaged in difficult struggles to secure their livelihood, amidst rising insecurity and increasing fear. We have lost too many of our citizens to random and diverse acts of violence, have many more maimed for life or living in displacement. Tens of thousands of children have been orphaned by conflict and millions of our fellow citizens now face threats of starvation in the face of rising food insecurity. In many parts of the country, mass killings go unpunished and unresolved, inter-communal clashes have become chronic, economic deprivations and growing social exclusion and feelings of alienation, particularly among the youths are being exploited by segments of the elite with potentially dangerous and painful consequences for us all.

These developments are sources of serious concern for the *Nigeria Peace Committee*. We know, of course that we are not alone in our worries and would like to commend the Acting President, Professor Yemi Osinbanjo, SAN, GCON, for engaging with leaders of influence across the South-East and North in a bid to check the rise of mutual hostility and tension that have been stoked by elements from parts of the country. Nonetheless, the *National Peace Committee* appeals to further voices of leadership, reason and moderation from all communities in the country to reinforce the message of the Acting President.

SECRETARIAT

THE KUKAH CENTRE

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In this regard, the *National Peace Committee* acknowledges that the drums of rising division also reflect the perceptions by our citizens that there is poor governance in Nigeria today. Politicians who have failed in delivering on the mandate of the electorate for better livelihoods and neighbourhoods have, instead, found common cause with advocates of division and hate. In many parts of the country, young people who have been left without means of livelihood or hope in their future have become converts to radicalisation preached by demagogues in various guises including ethnicity and religion.

At this time in Nigeria, more than ever before, we need government at all levels, which work for the people, with commitment to respect for the rule of law and to the security and well wellbeing of persons and communities in the country. We also need credible institutions, an economy that guarantees a fair deal and outcome for hardworking people, better physical infrastructures and an enabling environment in which citizens can thrive. The *National Peace Committee* therefore calls on State governments to commit to developing their own people more and relying less on Abuja to fund their consumption through monthly allocations. We also encourage the Acting President and the Federal Government to remain steadfast in the steps they are taking to reassure all communities and citizens of equal stake holding in the Nigerian project. In brief, Nigerians need an effective state that we can all call our own.

To reinforce these steps, the *National Peace Committee*:

1. Appeals that on-going efforts to reach out to leaders from various parts of the country should be broadened into honest dialogue with all segments of the Nigerian population to ensure that ordinary citizens get the opportunity to convey their views to government at the highest levels and get carried along in the formulation and implementation of government policies;
2. Underscores the need for government to urgently work with the private and voluntary sectors to put in place measures to address the crisis of skills and jobs as key vectors of radicalisation;
3. Recommends to the federal government to review, update and enforce all laws relating to citizenship in Nigeria to ensure the equality of all under the law;
4. Advises the government to consult on the possibility of examining the reports of the *Political Reforms Conference of 2005* and other National Conferences as bases for further and continuing dialogue on co-existence among communities in Nigeria;

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5. Calls on politicians to deny support to or endorsement of groups that harbour or express disdain for peaceful coexistence among Nigerians;
 6. Supports the position of Government on the need to ensure effective enforcement of laws that prohibit hate and divisive speeches that constitute a threat to our constitutional and collective right to live in a democracy founded on free expression.

SIGNED:

General Abdusalam ABUBAKAR, GCFR, Most Rev. Matthew Hassan KUKAH

(Chairman, NPC)

(Convener, NPC)

Looking back now, it is quite intriguing how things have turned out for the Peace Committee. The idea of the Committee as noted in the body of this Report was one of the many initiatives aimed at calming the cloud of anxieties that hovered over the 2015 elections. It was considered one way of sustaining the lofty vision of those Party men and women who had gathered in Abuja to address the issues of electoral violence among other themes. Essentially, the leaders of the different parties wanted to show the world their commitment to playing according to the rules. Here, great credit must go to Chief Ben Obi, the urbane patriot and the Special Assistant to the President on Inter-Party Affairs. He it was who, in his position had convened this very important meeting.

President Goodluck Jonathan, whatever may have been his many failings, had signaled a deep concern about violence as a means of holding on to power, a trait that had become embedded in African politics. He had said openly that his political ambitions were not worth the life of any citizen. This was a vital signal that the nation needed. This meeting therefore was very timely.

I had received an invitation to be at the Conference of Political Parties and actually told Chief Obi that I would be at the event. Sadly, on that day, other

developments made it impossible for me to be at the event. I had planned to call and apologise to him and seek further information as to how the event had done. Then, on the news, I was pleased to see the warm embrace between Major General Buhari and President Jonathan, the two leading contenders in the Presidential race.

At about 8:30pm that same evening, I received a call from Chief Emeka Anyaoku who had chaired the event. After the pleasantries, I feared he had called to scold me for not showing up at the conference. I immediately began to apologise for not attending the Conference but he calmly changed the topic and asked if I had ever met Mr. Kofi Annan. I told him I had not had the honour. He said he and Mr. Anan were at the Transcorp Hilton and asked if I had time and could come over because Mr. Anan was leaving for the airport within the hour.

I got into my car and headed to the Transcorp Hilton hotel. I met up with them in the 10th floor Suite of Mr. Anan. After the pleasantries, both men spoke briefly about the coming elections and the general concerns and fears within the nation and the international community about the possibility of electoral violence.

Chief Anyaoku said that the event at the Conference seemed to suggest that we have a window. He spoke of the significance of the warm embrace between the President and Major General Buhari. He informed me that all the leaders of the Political parties who came to the Conference had signed the peace agreement. There was, he said to me, a provision for the setting up of a National Peace Committee to monitor the implementation of the Peace Accord. However, he continued, we are not sure how to go about it. But, if there is anyone who can bring together members of this Committee, I think you are very well placed to do that. People respect you and you know a lot of people across the country. I would like to request you to kindly consider setting up this very important Committee.

I have always had the highest regards for this great statesman, admired his deep intellect, patriotism and his worldwide experience. I really did not know what to say, but given that Mr. Annan was at this point anxious to leave for the airport, I nodded, shook hands with both of them and left the hotel.

On my way back, I contemplated how to go about this. Later, I spoke again briefly with Chief Anyaoku who mentioned one or two names to me but decided that he would better let me get on with the task as he trusted that I would do a good job of it. He did not ask me to report to him but more or less gave me the impression that the ball was fully in my court.

My mind went back to a meeting I had attended with the Swiss Ambassador in his office about a month earlier. In the course of the meeting, he had spoken about the possibility of setting up a Committee of the Wise. We discussed the issues and it was a week or so later that I was given a list

of the proposed members of the Committee. I recall that the Embassy had again turned to me and asked if I could help with contacting those on the list because, as the official put it: You know everyone in Nigeria and everyone knows you, so you can do this. I was not sure of the linkages then, but somehow, it all seemed to fall into place.

I spent a good part of that evening thinking of names, carefully mentally scanning the Nigerian landscape, reflecting over a range of options and what should go into setting up such a Committee given the fractured nature of the Nigerian environment and our tendency to read or insinuate all kinds of motives in constituting any platform. I thought hard, taking into consideration these sensibilities, seeking out the best way to ensure balance, trust and acceptability of the membership of the Committee. I reviewed background, gender, experience, religion, region, exposure, credibility etc. In the end, after penciling down about twenty names, I set about making calls to them personally. From General Abdusalam A Abubakar, Commodore Ukiwe, Cardinal Onaiyekan, Sultan Abubakar to the last person on the list, everyone I called responded positively and quite enthusiastically. People were really committed to serve and I was quite humbled by the trust of everyone that I called.

Each call, I made, I tried to give an idea of who and who were on the list. By and large, there was no hesitation from anyone. These were very busy people but no one placed any condition on participation, nor did anyone express any reservations about others. It was for me a moment of great hope. As they say, the rest is history.

The elections came and went as the report has documented. The level of appreciation of the work of the Committee span across the entire political

spectrum, civil society and the nation. The international community, local and international observers of the elections were all very enthusiastic. The next challenge was the task of governance.

It was at this point that some sections of the political class began to wage a media campaign against the Committee suggesting that the Committee had completed its work and needed to be disbanded. Well, it is a measure of the credulity of the Chairman and the entire Members of the Committee that even these critics have since come round to appreciate that the Committee still has a role to play in encouraging the political class to foster a peaceful environment for governance.

I want to personally thank the Chairman of the Committee and its Members for not only reposing such trust on me, but further asking the Kukah Centre, to offer Secretariat services to the Committee. It is my hope that the Committee will reposition itself and prepare to play a more active role in mobilizing our people to the path of reconciliation and progress so as to help achieve national cohesion. The task is great, but the future has more promise and we must hold on to this promise of a just and democratic society.

Matthew Hassan Kukah

Bishop, Catholic Diocese of Sokoto
Founder, The Kukah Centre

PHOTO GALLERY



■ National Executive Councils of the APC and the PDP in post general Election Meeting with the Committee





Meetings of the Committee in Session



Bishop Kuksh & Prof. Akinyemi at the Press Conference Announcing the Inauguration of the Peace Committee (Jan. 28, 2015)



Members of the Committee and their Guests pose for a picture after a meeting



Committee Members Archbishop Okoh & Cardinal Onyiah Monitoring the Presidential Election results on TV between meetings



Gen. A. Abubakar, Dr. Chambas & Committee Member Aliko Dangote in a chat in between meetings



Gen. A. Abubakar, in a meeting with the EU Election Observer Mission at the Conference Room of the Kukah Centre



Inspector General of Police, Suleiman Abba and Chief of Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Alex Badeh in one of the appearances before the Committee



THE KUKAH CENTRE

The Centre was established by Bishop Kukah to enhance and encourage greater citizen engagement in Nigeria. The Kukah Centre is a nonprofit organization that promotes an active and engaged citizenry by providing support for inclusive dialogue and advocacy initiatives.

The Centre treats political leadership as a collaborative exercise and aims to promote governance structures which incorporate multiple levels of engagement, including individuals, households, small businesses, the private sector, NGOs and government.

Interfaith dialogue is at the core of the Centre's work and involves actively promoting conversations among Nigeria's faith communities, as well as between leaders in faith and public policy.

for Inquiries please contact:
Flat C4, American Specialist Hospital Complex,
(opposite Rockview Royale Hotel),
1, Luanda Crescent, Wuse 2,
Abuja - Nigeria

e-mail: info@thekukahcentre.org
website: www.thekukahcentre.org

