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## Carter Center Finds Ghana's Presidential Run-off Elections Credible and Peaceful

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### **Ghana Presidential Run-off Election Dec. 28, 2008 Election Observation Mission Preliminary Statement**

The Carter Center election observation mission has been in Ghana since May 2008 following an invitation from the Electoral Commission of Ghana. During the Dec. 7 first-round election, the Center deployed a 57-person observer team to more than 300 polling stations in 30 districts. A preliminary statement released on Dec. 9 details the Center's findings on the political environment and election-day activities.

Following the announcement of a run-off election, the Center redeployed 8 long-term observers on Dec. 14 to assess run-off preparations in five regions throughout the country. On election day, 58 Carter Center observers from 17 countries visited 354 polling stations in 33 districts throughout all regions of the country to observe voting and counting. The delegation was led by Honorable Aminu Bello Masari, the former Speaker of the Nigerian House of Representatives, and Dr. John Stremlau, Vice President for Peace Programs at The Carter Center. Carter Center observers continue to assess the conclusion of counting and vote tabulation and will remain in Ghana to observe the post-election environment.

Carter Center observation missions are conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation.

This statement is preliminary and details only those activities and observations that have occurred since Dec. 10, 2008. For information on activities or events prior to this time, please refer to the Carter Center statement of Dec. 9, which includes a preliminary review of findings from the Center's long term assessment of the Ghanaian electoral system and the Dec. 7, 2008 first-round elections. This statement includes analysis of the election administration, registration period, voter education efforts, media environment, role of women and civil society, political party activities and campaigning.

A final report will be published four months after the end of the electoral process.

### **Executive Summary**

The Carter Center found that Ghana's voters participated in a transparent and relatively peaceful presidential run-off election on Dec. 28, 2008. Preliminary reports of the election, which was contested by John Evans Atta Mills of the National Democratic Congress and former Foreign Minister Nana Addo

Dankwa Akufo-Addo of the ruling New Patriotic Party, indicate that the administration of this election was well executed, illustrating the successful organization of the Electoral Commission and the determination of the Ghanaian public to ensure continued democratic consolidation. As vote aggregation continues, it is now essential for Ghana to remain calm, to await the final results, and to follow appropriate legal channels for the adjudication of disputes. The provision of a timely response to election disputes both at the polling station and higher levels may ultimately determine issues of franchise and public confidence in the democratic process; therefore, the Center urges the Electoral Commission to continue their commendable administration of the electoral process throughout the dispute period and transfer of power. The Carter Center will continue to observe the national tabulation until complete and, when appropriate, comment further on the electoral process.

- The Carter Center deployed 58 observers from 17 countries. Observers deployed to 33 districts in all 10 of Ghana's regions and visited 354 polling stations to observe voting and counting.
- Most polling places observed were adequately equipped with election materials and opened on time and were incident free.
- Extensive campaigning, primarily at the grassroots level, was conducted by both parties following the Dec. 10 run-off announcement.
- The parties also engaged in widespread door-to-door voter education efforts. In combination with the Electoral Commission's retraining of polling officials, these efforts appear to have resulted in a substantial decrease of rejected ballots.
- Civil society actively engaged in the electoral process. The National Peace Council of Ghana—which includes representatives of the NPP, NDC, and major Ghanaian religious, economic, and political interests—held bipartisan discussions on run-off issues. The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), Institute for Democratic Governance, and Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice deployed domestic observers on election day. Additionally, CODEO conducted a parallel vote tabulation.
- Security forces played a positive role in the election and The Carter Center noted no major instances of intimidation.
- Transparency was a hallmark of election-day activities. Throughout the country, significant transparency was exhibited in polling stations observed by The Carter Center in both voting and vote counting processes; party agents of both presidential candidates were present and were allowed a high degree of access and public observation.
- The counting process was generally peaceful and largely free from irregularities that would compromise the integrity of the process. Counting was completed swiftly and accurately.
- While counting was conducted in a transparent and impartial manner at the vast majority of stations observed, The Carter Center notes that many observed polling stations did not correctly complete their 'Statement of Poll' form resulting in minor discrepancies in the reconciliation of ballot papers.
- Ghana's special-voting day, held Dec. 23, 2008, was marked by reports of polling officials indiscriminately accepting voters not registered for special voting. These voters names were allegedly not vetted from the election-day voters' register as having already voted, leading to fears of possible derogation from the principle of equal suffrage and a strict disallowance of multiple voting.
- While Ghana has experienced significant issues with electoral dispute adjudication during past electoral process, the Ghanaian Supreme Court has worked to establish a program to speed the adjudication of disputes and uphold their commitment to provide timely and efficient electoral dispute resolution. The Court recently published a manual explaining how to access the courts and has endorsed alternative dispute resolution practices as a means to further expedite electoral dispute resolution.

To the people of Ghana: The Carter Center commends the enthusiasm and determination of Ghana's people to continue democratic consolidation through active participation in an electoral process marked by its inclusiveness and transparency. The active participation of the Ghanaian people in civil society

organizations illustrates a strong commitment to peace and accountable democracy.

To the political contestants of Ghana: The Carter Center notes the statesmanship and dedication of political leaders to a peacefully conducted campaign period during a hotly contested electoral process. It recognizes the commitment of both contestants to a campaign marked by respect for the fundamental political rights of freedom of expression, assembly, and participation in public affairs.

To the Election Commission: The Carter Center offers its congratulations on the Commission's impressive ability to conduct its work impartially and effectively. The Center recognizes the Commission's crucial role in Ghana's electoral process.

### **Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions**

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### **Political Background**

The first round of Ghana's 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections, held on Dec. 7, 2008, was widely commended as being held in a peaceful, efficient, and transparent manner. With no incumbent and no clear frontrunner, the election was highly competitive. Professor John Evans Atta Mills of the National Democratic Congress, who had previously run against and lost to John Kufuor in 2000 and 2004, ran against former Foreign Minister Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo of the ruling New Patriotic Party. Six smaller party candidates also contested the presidency, including Papa Kwesi Nduom of the Convention People's Party and Edward Mahama of the People's National Convention.

The official election results, certified by the Electoral Commission of Ghana, show a gain of 20 seats for the NDC from the ruling NPP, giving them nearly half the seats in parliament. The PNC, the CPP, and independent candidates won a total of seven seats. In the presidential contest, Nana Akufo-Addo led Professor Atta Mills by a small margin, but was unable to cross the necessary 50 percent threshold to secure the presidency.(1) In accordance with Ghana's electoral code, a run-off election was scheduled for 21 days after the Dec. 7 election.

The smaller parties' support was split fairly evenly between the parties for the run-off election. The national executive committees of the PNC and the CPP could not reach a consensus on which candidate to endorse; therefore, both parties remained neutral during the second round.

For the run-off election, in the absence of parliamentary races or smaller party candidates, the stakes were significantly higher. Focus on the two remaining contenders intensified campaign rhetoric. While campaigning continued in all regions of the country, both parties decreased their use of road shows and large rallies in favor of door-to-door canvassing for supporters.

Both parties expressed fears and circulated rumors of elaborate plans by the opposing campaign to manipulate the electoral process. The parties also renewed their concerns about the alleged vulnerability of the Electoral Commission and security forces to bias and manipulation.

### **Legal Framework**

Ghana has ratified several international treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,(2) the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, (3) the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination,(4) the Convention on the Political Rights of Women,(5) the Convention on the Right of People with Disabilities, (6) and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.(7) In addition, Ghana has ratified a number of important regional treaties, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,(8) the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption,(9) and the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. Ghana is also a signatory to the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance; The Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa; and is party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Ghanaian constitution guarantees to its citizens important political and civil rights, including the right to vote by secret ballot, associate with a political party, and participate in public affairs.(11) Additionally, political rights are incorporated into the 1996 Ghanaian Public Election Regulations, 1995 Registration Regulations, and the 2000 Political Parties Law, among others. Both the constitution and legislative statutes create a legal framework in line with international commitments.(12) It is against these commitments and the iteration of their principles in the Ghanaian Constitution and the Ghanaian electoral code that election-day activities have been assessed by The Carter Center.

### **Election Preparations**

#### *Election Administration*

Following the first-round election held Dec. 7, the Electoral Commission of Ghana completed an assessment of problems identified during voting and actively worked toward their correction. Due to the high number of rejected ballots on Dec. 7, the commission retrained polling officials on the proper

procedures for inking fingers, removal of excess ink, and assessment of voter intent.**(13)** Polling officials were additionally trained to provide voter education at the polling station level throughout election day as necessary. Although The Carter Center observed isolated cases in which such procedures were not followed, the re-training of polling officials appears to have resulted in a decrease in rejected ballots and a better understanding of electoral procedures.

After a review of voting procedures the Electoral Commission rejected requests that the order of first inking voters' fingers and then casting ballots be changed. While the Commission understood that the proposed change might limit the number of ballots rejected due to the appearance of extra ink, it remained adamant the procedure had been developed to decrease opportunities for duplicate voting and any change would be a breach of the electoral code.**(14)** Similarly, the Commission recognized that many larger polling stations became overwhelmed with long lines during the first round of voting. However, at the behest of political parties who felt this would increase the ability for multiple voting, the Commission decided not to take steps to divide these stations or provide extra sets of voting supplies.

The Electoral Commission successfully completed a reallocation of election materials between Dec. 7 and Dec. 28, ensuring that the vast majority of polling places were adequately equipped for election day.**(15)** Carter Center observers noted that polling places were generally supplied with adequate materials and such materials had arrived in a timely and secure fashion.

#### *Voter Education*

States must take specific measures to address difficulties that may prevent persons from exercising their electoral rights effectively.**(16)** Voter education is recognized in international law as a principal means of ensuring that an informed electorate is able to effectively exercise their right to vote. In accordance with these principles, voter education in Ghana is the responsibility of the Electoral Commission and the National Commission on Civic Education, which, following the Dec. 7 election, engaged in education efforts to ensure that all voters understood voting procedures and would be able to effectively cast their ballots. These efforts included the distribution of posters showing election-day processes and an NCCE-led media campaign. While preliminary assessments show the number of rejected ballots decreased in the Dec. 28 election, it must be noted that both parties also conducted widespread, door-to-door voter education efforts.

#### *Campaign Activities*

The right of individuals to participate in public affairs, including through the establishment of and association with political parties and participation in campaign activities, is protected by Ghanaian electoral law and international principles.**(17)**

Extensive campaigning was conducted by both parties following the Dec. 10 run-off announcement, primarily at the grassroots level with both parties engaging actively in canvassing. Carter Center observers note that campaign activities during this time were conducted peacefully, and obligations for freedom of assembly, movement, and expression were respected throughout the campaign period.**(18)**

#### *Civil Society and Domestic Observation*

An international commitment that every citizen has the right to participate in the public affairs of their country establishes the right of all citizens to freely participate within civil society and domestic observation organizations.**(19)** Further commitments obligate the state to utilize the efforts of civil society organizations to ensure a peacefully contested election.**(20)**

Prior to the Dec. 28, 2008, elections, the National Peace Council of Ghana held bipartisan discussions on run-off issues. These National Peace Council meetings included members of the NPP, NDC, and major Ghanaian religious, economic, and political stakeholders. The intent of the Peace Council was to provide a sounding board for party concerns—such as potential conflict flashpoints—alleviate electoral tensions, and create the foundation for a peaceful process. The Carter Center notes the success of this council and commends Ghanaians for the creation of an effective peacemaking body.

The Carter Center also noted the continued activities of a number of domestic observer groups, including the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), Institute for Democratic Governance, and the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice. All organizations deployed observation missions throughout the country on election day. CODEO prepared to re-deploy its 4,000 observers to conduct both election observation and a parallel vote tabulation, which contributes significantly to the transparency of the process.

### **Voting**

The voting process is the cornerstone of the obligation to fulfill genuine, democratic, periodic elections. Certain participatory rights must be fulfilled in order for the voting process to accurately reflect the will of the people. Foremost among these rights are the right to vote, to participate in public affairs, and to enjoy security of the person. **(21)** The state must take all necessary steps to ensure such rights are fully protected and awarded to all citizens in an equal and non-discriminatory manner. **(22)**

Successful election preparations and efficient deployment of election supplies by the Ghanaian electoral commission meant polling stations throughout the country were able to open on time. **(23)** Polling officials appeared to be well prepared. Observed delays were minor in nature and were the result of double-checking materials or rearranging the polling area setup. Despite these commendable preparations, The Carter Center notes that in the Tain district, Brong-Ahafo region, election materials were discovered to be by short 1,800 ballots during a reconciliation of materials prior to distribution. As a result, the voting process in Tain was suspended indefinitely. The Tain Electoral Commission office was destroyed in an arsonist's fire during the pre-election period, causing the loss of electoral records from the first round and creating additional difficulties for the district's allocation of materials. As a result approximately 54,000 voters in the Tain district have yet to be provided an opportunity to cast ballots. The Carter Center urges the electoral commission to quickly rectify this situation by conducting an emergency voting day and providing the Tain district the opportunity to exercise their right to vote.

Party agents of both presidential candidates were present in all of the polling stations observed by The Carter Center, demonstrating significant transparency in the voting process. Party agents appeared well informed of their rights **(24)** and worked very well both with one another and with polling officials to ensure the poll was conducted in a calm and peaceful manner. Domestic observers also played a significant role in the observation process, including through CODEO's conduct of a parallel vote tabulation. The Carter Center observers noted the presence of CODEO observers in a percentage of polling stations consistent with their proposed data collection methodology. Additionally, while party agent and observer access was generally granted, Carter Center observers found incidents of restricted access for agents at some polling stations in Volta, Ashanti, and Central regions.

Security forces played a generally positive role in the election, and no major instances of intimidation were noted. Observers reported the presence of security agents in polling stations throughout most regions of the country. Observers in both the Upper West and Western regions noted a scarcity of security forces,

with Carter Center observers in the Western region reporting security forces in only 20 percent of polling stations. While this misappropriation of police and military forces in particular regions is notable, voting in both regions was conducted peacefully and this does not represent a derogation from the state's obligation to ensure security of the person.(25) Additionally, The Carter Center regrets a grave incident of violence involving the deaths of several NDC supporters in the Ashanti region but notes the singular nature of this incident does not illustrate a larger pattern of violent activity.

The Center observed that some polling officials failed to correctly check voters' fingers for ink before allowing them to vote. While polling officials in more than 80 percent of polling places observed by The Carter Center acted in accordance with the electoral law by examining all voters' fingers prior to their receiving a ballot paper, some deviation from this practice in a minority of polling places was observed.

In line with obligations to provide an opportunity to vote to the broadest pool of electors, Ghana held a special-voting day Dec. 23, 2008, for citizens who would not be able to vote election day because of election-related duties. (26) The Carter Center conducted only a limited observation of special voting with five observer teams deployed to five regions of the country during which it noted a generally peaceful environment marked by isolated incidents of election violence. Throughout the special-voting day, the Center received reports of polling officials indiscriminately accepting voters not registered for special voting, and final special voting day tallies show a significant increase from the numbers observed in the Dec. 7 election. While this increase in numbers might be attributed to the inclusion of special voters from a broader pool of the electorate, including media personnel and party agents, observers noted that eligibility decisions of who might cast a special voting day ballot were made in an inconsistent manner in several regions of the country. While many constituencies adhered to the electoral law that allows any voter with a legitimate election-day duty that would take them away from the polling station in which they were registered to vote as a special voter, others restricted this right to only security personnel. (27)

Furthermore, Carter Center observers found the many special voting lists were not aggregated by the Electoral Commission in a timely manner, and concerns were expressed to our observers that voters who cast special-voting day ballots were not consequently added to the absent voters list of their appropriate polling place.(28) The reported acceptance of a large number of voters not appropriately registered as special-voting day electors and the slow aggregation of special voting day lists by constituency-level Electoral Commissions raises questions about the effectiveness of Electoral Commission efforts to limit multiple voting and represents a possible derogation from the principle of equal suffrage, which requires each elector's vote to count equally.(29)

## Counting

An accurate and non-discriminatory vote counting process is an essential means of ensuring that the fundamental right to be elected is fulfilled.(30) Because counting is a fundamental part of the electoral process, transparency in the conduct of the vote count and the announcement of electoral results is paramount.(31)

The vote counting process was marked by significant transparency: party agents were allowed a high degree of access, and public observation was a hallmark of the process. In every polling station at which closing was observed, Carter Center observers reported adequate party agent access and adherence to transparent procedures—such as opening the ballot box in the presence of party agents and observers—by polling officials.

The counting process was generally peaceful and largely free from irregularities that would threaten the

integrity of the process. Counting was generally completed swiftly and accurately. Voter education efforts and the retraining of polling officials led to a significant decrease in the number of rejected ballots in observed counting places. The Carter Center commends these efforts and recognizes the Electoral Commission's role in rectifying procedures that may have led to the unusually high number of rejected ballots during the Dec. 7 election. However, The Carter Center observed one counting in the Akwatia district of the Eastern Region where more than 200 ballots were ruled invalid despite clearly illustrating the correct intent of the voter. Furthermore, the invalidated ballots were overwhelmingly for one candidate. Such invalidation of ballots is in conflict with the Ghanaian electoral law, <sup>32</sup> and The Carter Center urges the Electoral Commission to promptly and fully investigate this incident.

While counting was conducted in a transparent and impartial manner at the vast majority of stations observed, The Carter Center notes that many observed polling stations did not correctly reconcile their vote count on the Statement of Poll forms. <sup>33</sup> Moreover, the form itself failed to ask for a tally of the total number of used ballots, not necessitating a final reconciliation. Also the procedure did not appear to require that unused ballots be counted, meaning that any discrepancies were unlikely to be discovered. On several occasions, when there were minor discrepancies between the number of voters said to have cast ballots, according to the enumeration form, and the number of ballots counted, polling officials rectified this discrepancy by adding the number of unaccounted ballots to the rejected ballot number. Observers also noted that, in cases where presiding officers had incorrectly completed the math on the forms, officials at collation centers simply changed insignificant mistakes rather than conducting a recount of that polling place. While in all observed cases these discrepancies in numbers were single digit and were not so large as to indicate a serious effect on the integrity of the process, The Carter Center urges the Electoral Commission to appropriately train polling officials on reconciliation practices for future elections.

Additionally, Carter Center observers noted multiple instances where polling officials did not consider the stamp on the back of the ballot before determining ballot validity. According to electoral legislation, ballots missing this stamp or a signature of a polling official are to be considered invalid. <sup>34</sup> As observers saw several examples of non-stamped or possibly illegitimate ballots being counted without any assessment as to whether they bore an Electoral Commission stamp or polling official's signature, the Carter Center urges future training of polling officials to also include stringent requirements for checking the validity of ballot papers.

#### Electoral Dispute Resolution

Efficient electoral dispute mechanisms are one means of ensuring that effective remedies are available for the violation of fundamental rights and that everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing. <sup>3</sup>

The major obstacle regarding electoral dispute resolution in Ghana has been the low confidence that people have in the ability of the courts to provide timely responses to election-related complaints. Recent election cycles have been marred by high profile cases which remained in adjudication for the full term of the presidential and legislative seats. Electoral disputes are acutely time bound, requiring narrowly tailored logistical and administrative planning on the part of the electoral management body. The provision of a timely response both at the polling station and higher levels may ultimately determine issues of franchise and public confidence in the democratic process.

Ghana has responded to calls to uphold its commitment to provide timely electoral dispute resolution <sup>36</sup> through the establishment of a program to expedite the adjudication of disputes. Measures taken include the modification of existing dockets to give priority to election cases, establishing special branches to hear cases, and approving weekend work hours for the courts. While The Carter Center has not directly



observed the current disputes process in Ghana, these measures have been well received by Ghanaians.

The Supreme Court recently published a manual explaining how to access the courts and has endorsed alternative dispute resolution practices as a means of further speeding the settlement of disputes. The Carter Center commends the Ghanaian court system for these positive measures, which the Center believes have the ability to facilitate expedited review and proper adjudication of electoral disputes.

The Center urges candidates and their parties to take any electoral complaints to the appropriate channels and to fully utilize the dispute resolution mechanisms available to them under Ghanaian law. It reminds parties of the importance of peaceful adjudication processes and the need for party supporters to remain calm throughout the dispute resolution process.

*The Carter Center conducts election observation in accordance with the Declaration of Principles of International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observation adopted at the United Nations in 2005.*

*The Carter Center was founded in 1982 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, in partnership with Emory University, to advance peace and health worldwide. A not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization, the Center has helped to improve life for people in more than 65 countries by resolving conflicts; advancing democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity; preventing diseases; improving mental health care; and teaching farmers to increase crop production. Visit [www.cartercenter.org](http://www.cartercenter.org) to learn more about The Carter Center.*

1 1992 Presidential Elections Law PNDCL 285, Art. 4(2)

2 Ratified by Ghana September 7, 2007

3 Ratified by Ghana January 2, 1986

4 Ratified by Ghana September 8, 1966  
Entered into force July 7, 1954

6 Signed by Ghana 30 March 2007; entered into force May 3, 2008  
Ratified by Ghana June 27, 2007

8 Ratified by Ghana January 24, 1989  
Ratified by Ghana June 13, 2007

10 Entered into Force, 2005

11 1992 Constitution of Ghana, Arts 42, 49(1) and 55

12 "Domestic law consistent with Charter of the United Nations and other international obligations of the State in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms should be implemented and enjoyed." UN General Assembly Resolution 53/144. The Ghanaian electoral law generally reflects the country's international commitments including through the provisions for a free and independent media, voting by secret ballot, freedom of assembly and association and freedom of movement.

13 State must take effective measures to ensure that all persons entitled to vote are able to exercise that right, this includes an assessment of voter intent to ensure that the maximum number of votes casts are counted. UNCHR General Comment 25, para 11

14 1996 Public Elections Regulations C.1.15, 31(c)

1 The Carter Center notes that certain election materials, namely voting screens, did not hold up well during re-use and consideration may be taken to replace such materials in the future.

16 Specific difficulties include such things as language barriers, poverty, and impediments to the freedom

of movement. States must ensure that voter education reaches the broadest possible pool of voters. United Nations Human Rights Committee General Comment 2, para. 11.

1. 2000 African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance, art. 3.11.

18. African Charter on Human and People's Rights, article 11, 12. Declaration on Principles of Freedom of Expression in Africa, art. 1.1. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, arts. 21, 12.1, and 1.1.

1. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 2.1.

20. Economic Community of West African States Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, art. 8.

21. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, arts. 2, 2(a) and

22. The State must take necessary measures to give effect to rights enshrined in the treaty to which they are party. Such rights include the right for all citizens to be treated in an equal and non-discriminatory manner. PR, art. 2.2, African Charter on Human and People's Rights, art. 1. International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, art. 1.

23. Ninety-percent of polling stations observed by the Carter Center opened on time.

24. This includes the right to place party seals on the ballot box. Electoral Law, arts. 2.2, and 3.4a.

2. African Charter on Human and People's Rights, art.

26. International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, art. c.1. Public Elections Regulations, .1. 21.1.

2.1. Public Elections Regulations, .1. 21.1, 21.4.

28.1. Public Elections Regulations, .1. 21.4a, b.

2. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 2. b. International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, art. c.

30. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 2. b.

31. E.O. Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, art.

32.1. Public Elections Regulations, .1, 38.2.

33. Form E. 21.

34.1. Public Elections Regulations, .1, 38.1a.

3. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 14.1. African Charter on Human and People's Rights, art. 7.

36. E.O. Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, art. 7.1. 2. Presidential Elections Law P.D., 28. art. 1. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 14.1.