

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 20, 2015

All Progressive Congress Headquarters
40, Blantyre Street
Wuse II
Abuja

Dear General Buhari

We write to express our concern about Nigeria's upcoming national elections, and to urge you to do your part to ensure that they proceed peacefully and serve to unify your country. Nigeria and the United States have built a strong relationship since Nigeria's transition to democracy in 1999, and we hope that the conduct of these elections will help reinforce that relationship, rather than erode it.

On February 24, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed a resolution calling for free, fair, and transparent national elections in Nigeria. We shared the disappointment of many Nigerians that just one week prior to the long-established date for the Presidential and National Assembly elections, the security service chiefs sent a letter to the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission, Attahiru Jega, claiming they would not be able to provide the requisite security for elections throughout the country – despite earlier promises that they could and would do so – thereby compelling him to postpone the polls. We commend your appeal for restraint and for faith in the democratic process following the announcement of the delay. We additionally commend your support for the revised election date of March 28, and your earlier signing of the “Abuja Accord” whereby you pledged to oppose all inflammatory or corrosive rhetoric and actions. As the election approaches, we ask that you do everything within your power to ensure that your supporters refrain from violence, from harassing or intimidating political opponents, or from otherwise obstructing or interfering with the electoral process.

Legitimate elections are a critical first step to creating conditions under which Nigerian leadership can address rampant corruption, terrorism, widespread poverty, communal violence, and diminished revenue from falling oil prices. We hope to see an electoral process that adheres to international principles of democratic elections set forth by organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union, which meets the expectations of Nigerians in terms of fairness and credibility, and election results that truly reflect the will of the Nigerian people. While we recognize that you do not control the security forces or other levers of government power, you nonetheless have a significant role to play in shaping the actions of your allies and supporters.

Regardless of which party wins, should the outcome of these elections be determined to be credible, we look forward to strengthening mutual cooperation on a wide range of issues. Conversely, if the elections are further delayed, or should they be deemed so deeply flawed that the outcome announced is not credible, our bilateral relationship will inevitably suffer. We wish to affirm that even in the event of a disputed election result, it will be essential for the aggrieved

party to seek redress through appropriate channels, and avoid – as you so eloquently wrote following the elections’ postponement – “being tempted into taking actions that could further endanger the democratic process.” Violence is never an acceptable means of protest, and we urge you to reiterate that both publicly and privately with your allies before the elections commence, and if necessary after the results are announced. As Secretary of State John Kerry said during his visit to Lagos in January, the international community is paying close attention to this election and its aftermath. This includes the United States Senate.

We sincerely hope that you will do everything within your power to see that the elections and the period following them are the most peaceful, transparent, and credible in Nigeria’s history, and we are urging President Jonathan to do the same.

Sincerely,



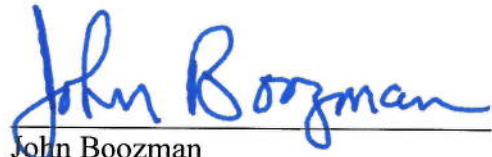
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



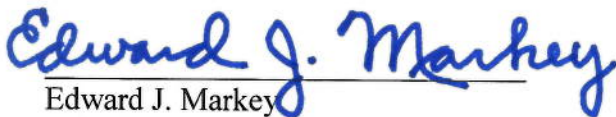
Johnny Isakson
United States Senator



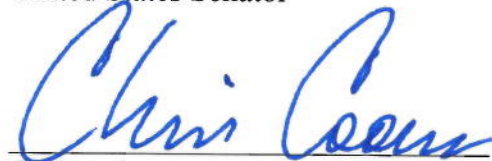
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senate



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator