

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 20, 2015

President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan
The Office of the President
Presidential Villa,
Aso rock
Abuja

Dear President Jonathan

We write to express our concern about Nigeria's upcoming national elections, and to urge you to do your part to ensure that they are carried out in a timely and credible way. Nigeria and the United States have built a strong relationship in the years since the end of military rule, 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 were very disappointed to learn 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 Elections 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 – compelling him to postpone the polls. We nonetheless commend your public commitment to the revised election date of March 28, your signing of the “Abuja Accord” opposing all acts of election violence, and your unequivocal statement that the May 29 date for the inauguration of the next Administration is “sacrosanct.” We ask that you do everything within your power to ensure that both the country's security forces and your political allies refrain from harassing or intimidating supporters of your opponents, or from otherwise seeking to obstruct or interfere in the electoral process.


Should the outcome of these elections be determined to be credible, we look forward to strengthening mutual cooperation on a wide range of issues. If, however, the elections are further delayed, or should they be deemed so deeply flawed that the outcome announced is questionable, our bilateral relationship will inevitably suffer. We hope to see a 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, that meet the expectations of Nigerians in terms of fairness and credibility, and election results which truly reflect the will of the Nigerian people.

President Jonathan, we know Nigeria is facing serious challenges, including rampant corruption, terrorism, widespread poverty, communal violence, and diminished revenue from falling oil prices. With effective, committed leadership, these problems can not only be addressed, but overcome; ensuring elections move forward without violence or interference is a critical first

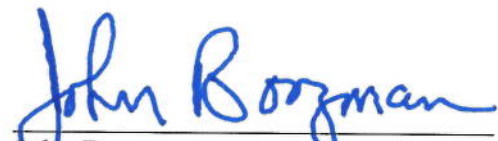
step. As Secretary of State John Kerry said during his visit to Lagos in January, the international community is paying close attention to this election.

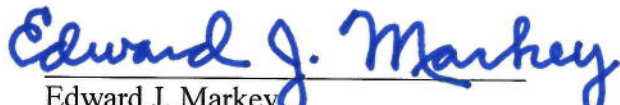
We sincerely hope that you will do everything within your power to see that these elections are the most transparent, credible and peaceful in Nigeria's history, and are urging General Buhari to do the same.

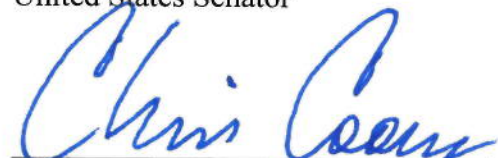

Sincerely,
Robert Menendez
United States Senator


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