

## **Code of conduct for political parties**

### **Preamble**

WHEREAS there is need for peace and public order, freedom of political campaigns and compliance with electoral laws and regulations for the conduct of free, fair and credible elections in Nigeria. We the political parties of Nigeria have voluntarily set out in this code a system of rules to guide our activities and we pledge to one another and to the Nigerian people that we shall undertake to ensure that the code is fully publicised and brought to the notice of all officers and members of our parties and that the contents thereof are fully observed by all.

Accordingly we do hereby make and give to ourselves the following code of conduct:

### **The rule of law:**

1. All political parties shall at all times uphold the rights and freedoms of the Nigerian people as guaranteed by law. In this context, every political party shall provide equal opportunity to qualified persons to participate in electoral activities.
2. All political parties shall abide by all the laws, rules and regulations of Nigeria relating to elections and the maintenance of public order. In this regard, all the parties shall fully cooperate with the Police in any investigation and processes of enforcement of the relevant laws, rules and regulations.
3. Subject to the relevant laws and regulations, all political parties have the right and freedom to put forward their views to the electorate without hindrance. For this purpose, every political party shall respect the rights of all participants in an election.
4. No political party shall use state apparatus including state owned print and electronic media to the advantage or disadvantage of any other political party or candidate at an election. That is to say, all ruling political parties shall allow other parties equal and fair access to the use of state owned print and electronic media.
5. No political party shall engage in violent activity or intimidation of any kind, as a way of demonstrating its strength or supremacy. Accordingly, all political parties shall publicly condemn any form of political violence or intimidation in all its ramifications.
6. Every political party shall at all fora and at all times avoid defamatory, derogatory and insulting attacks on rival parties or individual personalities through any form of communication, verbal or written.

### **Campaigns:**

7. No political party or candidate shall during campaign resort to the use of inflammatory language, provocative actions, images or manifestation that incite violence, hatred, contempt or intimidation against another party or candidate or any person or group of persons on grounds of ethnicity or gender or for any other reason. Accordingly, no political party or candidate shall issue any poster, pamphlet, leaflet or other publication that contains any such incitement.
8. All political parties shall take all necessary steps to coordinate their campaign activities in such a way as to avoid holding rallies, meetings, marches or demonstrations close to one another at the same time. Accordingly, whenever the date, venue or timing of any such activities of different political parties clash, their representatives will meet to resolve the issue amicably, without resort to intimidation, force or violence.
9. All parties are required to file with the commission details of their public rallies and meetings in any particular area.
10. No political party or any person or group of persons acting in its name shall obstruct, disrupt, break-up or in any way whatsoever interfere with a meeting, rally, march, demonstration or any campaign activity of another political party. In this regard, no party or any person or group of persons acting in its name shall try to obstruct or prevent any person from participating in the activities of another party.
11. All political parties shall separate party business from government business. No political party shall use state vehicle, or other public resources for any electioneering campaigns or any other party business.
12. Every political party shall expressly forbid its supporters from shouting its slogan, wearing its identifying colours or other paraphernalia to the rallies and any public gathering of other political parties.
13. All political parties shall instruct their members and supporters that no arms or any object that can be used to cause injury shall be brought to a political rally, meeting, march, demonstration or any other political function.
14. No political party or candidate shall prevent other parties or candidates from pasting their posters or distributing their leaflets, hand bills and other publicity materials in public place. Furthermore all parties and candidates shall give directives to their members and supporters not to remove, destroy the posters and other campaign materials of other parties or candidates.

**Elections:**

15. All political parties and candidates shall at all times cooperate fully with election officials in the performance of their lawful duties, in order to ensure peaceful and orderly elections.
16. Every party shall instruct its members and supporters that no weapon or any object that can be used to cause injury shall be brought to the polling station, and that no party attire, colours symbol, emblem or other insignia shall be worn to polling station on Election Day.
17. All political parties and their candidates shall extend all necessary help and cooperation to law-enforcement agents for purposes of censuring the safety and security of election officials and party agents on polling day.
18. All political parties and their candidates shall instruct their agents in attendance at polling stations to perform their duties in accordance with the electoral laws and regulations, and to cooperate fully with the election officials for the efficient, transparent and uninterrupted conduct of the elections.
19. No political party and its agent shall engage in any of the following corrupt practices:
  - a. Forcible occupation or invasion of a polling station
  - b. Encouraging its supporter to cast more than one vote (multiple voting)
  - c. Encouraging any supporter to vote in the name of another person, living, dead or fictitious (impersonation)
  - d. Buying votes or offering any bribe, gift, reward, gratification or any other monetary or material consideration or allurements to voters and electoral officials.
  - e. Offering any form of inducement to a person to stand or not to stand as a candidate, or to withdraw or not to withdraw his or her candidature.
  - f. Canvassing for votes within the vicinity of a polling station on polling day.
  - g. *Any other form of cheating or doing any act considered to be a malpractice under the electoral laws and regulations.*
20. Every political party and its officials shall pay due regard to the law restricting access to the polling station to authorized persons only. Accordingly, no party official shall enter any polling station on polling day without express permission from the commission.
21. No official of political party shall engage in confrontation or open argument with election officials at the polling station. To this end, any complaint, protest or challenge relating to processes and procedures at a polling station shall either be routed through the party agent to the presiding officer or shall be made directly to an officer of the commission for appropriate resolution. Thereafter, an aggrieved party or person is at liberty to seek redress in court.

22. Definition: Code of conduct means 'a set of rules of behaviour for political parties and their supporters relating to their participation in an election process, to which the parties ideally will voluntarily agree; and which may subsequent to the agreement be incorporated in law.'
23. We the undersigned representatives of the political parties hereby collectively subscribe to this code of conduct.