



THE COMPATRIOTS



PRESS RELEASE

STATEMENT OF THE COMPATRIOTS AFTER MEETING WITH PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES ON FRIDAY, 3RD FEBRUARY, 2023

THE COMPATRIOTS met with **Presidential Candidates** of The Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) Kola Abiola, Prince. Wole Adebayo of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), representative of The Labour Party candidate and running mate of Peter Obi, Dr. Datti Baba Ahmed and representative of The People's Democratic Party Presidential Candidate, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, former Governor of Adamawa State, Boni Haruna. The other two invited candidates from The APC and The NNPP were unable to attend. The meeting was part of a series of engagements with major stakeholders in the forthcoming elections.

Based on their combined presentations and answers to specific questions, the interactive session revealed the collective and exceptionally high quality of the contestants, their profound understanding of the critical issues and their strong commitment to the democratic process. It was also clear that individually and collectively, there is strong commitment to the development of the inalienable fortunes and power of the citizen to shape the future of our country.

The Compatriots saw a powerful alignment between its objective of ensuring the **citizen's sovereignty is protected** and the collective commitment of parties present to ensure an electoral process that safeguards **no citizen is disenfranchised** from the democratic process.

AT THE END OF A VERY USEFUL AND INSPIRING MEETING, THE FOLLOWING WERE AGREED.

1. INEC's **integrity and competence** should be **protected** by all stakeholders and Nigerians. It is necessary, however, to insist on the utilization of capacities that represent **independent audit of its systems and processes** from now until the elections.
2. Candidates and their supporters should recognize that all Nigerians look forward to this election as being the one that will produce a leadership that will make a difference between further decline and sustainable greatness. Nigerians expect a decent contest, a credible election and a peaceful transition to great leadership from all three arms of government. Nigerians expect a decent contest, a credible election and a peaceful transition to great leadership from all three arms of government. Losers should accept defeat or seek redress in the court. At all costs, the elections must hold, and we must avoid throwing the country into crises over the elections.
3. All Nigerians who have registered should be availed opportunities to vote. These include allowing those who are legally registered to collect their PVCs, and improving the security environment so that it does not disenfranchise voters on election day.
4. The judiciary has a vital role in improving the quality of our democratic process, and this election will provide it with an opportunity to exercise its responsibility with the highest level of integrity and impartiality.
5. Government should take steps to relieve the citizen of severe difficulties under which he lives at the moment. This will greatly improve the atmosphere under which the elections will hold.
6. Students in tertiary institutions represent a critical segment in the entrenchment of our democracy. Government should allow students the time and all opportunities to vote in the elections.
7. Politicians should recognize that the elections are about the citizen's right to freely exercise choices, and not just about the ambitions of the contestants. Nigerians are worried about negative campaigns which include damaging rhetorics and actions which strip contestants, one of whom we expect to be elected President soon, of dignity and respect.
8. More Nigerians should be availed opportunities to see contestants discuss issues and contest ideas and strategies in the most mature manner as was witnessed at this meeting.
9. For the new government to enjoy **legitimacy** and general support from the citizens, among other things, there must be an emphasis on **ensuring credible elections**.
10. Irrespective of who wins the election, the new President will take over a sharply divided nation along regional, religious, and tribal lines with huge security issues. Consequently, the new government must immediately focus on reconciliation of national grievances and strengthening of accountability and removal of impunity from governance.
11. The candidates and the compatriots agreed that polarization of the nation and the insecurity issues are fueled by unfairness, inequity, and injustices. It was agreed that the new President will inherit a **fractured nation** and must immediately **embark on a journey of reunification**. The Compatriots should collaborate with whoever wins the election to address these triple evils. **The Compatriots** believe that because of the diversity and composition of the group which represent the major tribes, religions, geo-political zones, the three generations and all the major social cultural groups, the new administration will **gain instant credibility with Nigerians** by partnering with The Compatriots.
12. The Compatriots expressed gratitude to the contestants who accepted their invitations and have been encouraged by the realization that Nigeria does have aspiring leaders who, given the opportunity, will lead it well.

OBONG VICTOR ATTAH
Chairman, The Compatriots