



GUIDELINES
FOR POLITICAL RALLIES AND CAMPAIGNS
BY POLITICAL PARTIES, CANDIDATES,
ASPIRANTS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS



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FORWARD

The commission in the exercise of the powers granted to it by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (As Amended) has issued these Guidelines to set the parameters for meetings, rallies and campaigns by political parties, candidates and their supporters.

The Guidelines, while addressing all aspects of meetings, rallies and campaigns also take full cognizance of relevant provisions of the Constitution (1999, As Amended) and the Electoral Act 2010 (As Amended).

Practitioners' and other stakeholders will find in the guidelines, clear definitions and differentiation of key terms and actors including the following; political parties, supporters, Aspirants, candidates and political rallies/processions.

This document no doubt offers political parties and candidates a good understanding of the rules and legal limits regarding the conduct of rallies and campaigns. It also provides a more comprehensive reference point for Monitors and Observers to easily establish levels of compliance and/or non-compliance by political parties, candidates and their supporters respectively.

The Commission has deemed these guidelines as one more necessary tool in our collective quest for an open, transparent and credible electoral environment. I therefore commend it to political parties, candidates, civil society observers and all that have a stake in the democratic evolvement of Nigeria.

Prof. Attahiru M. Jega, OFR
Chairman, INEC.

In exercise of the powers conferred on it by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) and the Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended) the Independent National Electoral Commission (in these Guidelines referred to as the Commission) hereby issues the following guidelines for political rallies, campaigns, and processions by political parties, candidates, aspirants and their supporters.

Preamble

1. The Commission is empowered to monitor public political campaigns, rallies and processions and provide Rules and Regulations which shall govern political parties, as well as keep records of the activities of all Registered Political Parties.

Powers of the Commission to monitor Political Parties
[Third Schedule, Paragraph F, 15(f) of the 1999 Constitution]

2. Political party' is any association (Registered by the Commission) whose activities include canvassing for votes in support of a candidate for election to the Office of President, Vice President, Governor, Deputy Governor, membership of Legislative House or Local Government Council and the Federal Capital Territory Area Council. Only a Political Party can sponsor a candidate and canvas for votes. Section 221 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended)

Definition of Political Parties

3. Political party supporters shall be persons who agree, choose or support a political party's programmes, policies, and projects, and partake in campaign or canvass for votes for the political party or its candidates, within the time stipulated for campaigns in section 99 (1) the Electoral Act 2010 as amended.

Definition of Political Party Supporters

Definition of Aspirants

4. An aspirant is any member of a political party seeking sponsorship and support to be a candidate for an elective office in an election.

Aspirants seeking sponsorship as candidates can solicit for support from their political party members by holding private fund raising, reception, courtesy calls, visits, display of party flag, emblem, slogan, posters, billboards through traditional or new social media platforms (such as the internet and related social networks) provided such aspirants do not solicit for votes or advance their aspirations for any specific elective office before the release of the Time-Table for elections by the Commission in compliance with Section 99 of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended).

Political party members wishing to be sponsored or nominated as candidates for elective office may aspire for sponsorship under the platform of their political parties by way of holding rallies, processions, fund raising, receptions, courtesy calls, visits, distribution of handbills, display of party flags, emblems, slogans, posters or billboards only at the Headquarters of the political party office, ward, local government and State offices throughout the Federation – Provided, that aspirants do not publicly solicit for votes for any specific elective office throughout the year before the release of the Time-Table for Elections by the Commission.

5. Campaign materials shall refer to any tangible or intangible material that conveys an aspiration to contest or actual participation in a contest for a

Campaign materials

7. a) Political Rallies or processions are activities and/or events organized by a political party, candidate, aspirant, member or supporter or on their behalf as a means of publicly projecting to the electorate, their candidates, ideas, programmes, policies or preferences as contained in their manifestoes, symbols, flags, logos or emblems in accordance with the law.

b) Political Rallies or processions are ways and means by which a party offers itself and its members and/or candidates to the electorate as a preference to other political parties based on the programmes, policies, projects or objectives of the political party as contained in its Manifesto.

c) Political rallies and/or processions shall include, public media advertisement by public and private media organizations, internet advertising, house-to-house calls on voters, public marches, public gatherings, public receptions, public fund raising, courtesy calls, public displays of party flags, public entertainment, posters, handbills or billboards in public places such as markets, schools, streets, highways, air-display, audio, video, painted vehicles, use of public address systems in vehicles, fences of private houses as well as internet and new social media networks.

d) Prior to the release of the Time-Table for elections by the Commission, public political rallies or processions shall only hold at appointed times agreed between a political party and the Commission in accordance with these Guidelines, subsisting laws of the land and other Guidelines and Regulations issued by the Commission.

8. A person is a candidate at an election if he or she:
- (i) Is a member of a political party;
 - (ii) Is sponsored by the political party;
 - (iii) Is nominated by the political party through the process of party primaries (in line with Section 87 of the Electoral Act 2010 as amended) or adjudged to be a candidate by a competent Court or Tribunal; and
 - (iv) Has satisfied other requirements or qualification for elective office in the Constitution (FRN) 1999 (as amended) and the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended)

9. Political campaign is the process by which political parties and their candidates, members or supporters upon the release of timelines for Elections publicly canvass for votes from registered voters for elective offices upon the release of Notice of Elections by the Commission in compliance to Section 99 of Electoral Act 2010 (as amended).

Definition of political campaign

Political campaign can also be conducted by way of processions, rallies, media advertisement, posters, handbills, billboards, and house-to-house contacts with voters, etc. within the time frame of 90 days before election in accordance with the law.

10. a) Illegal campaign shall be all campaigns, rallies, processions, fund raising, public advertisement on land, air or waterway by

Definition of illegal campaign, etc.

public or private media organizations; use of public places to display posters, billboards or handbills; public use of private and public vehicles for public address in images, audio or video; use of social media to project aspirants, candidates or political parties before the release of time-table for election and before 90 days to a general election.

- b) Illegal campaign shall include campaigns by Associations not registered as Political Parties
- c) No aspirant, candidate or political party shall use hate speech or images, or project ideas that are discriminatory on the grounds of birth, sex, religion or ethnic origin during campaigns, meetings, rallies or processions.

Hate speech and discrimination

11. Social Media refers to any means of interaction among people in which text, voice or images are created, shared, and/or exchanged in Virtual Communities and networks.

Definition of social media

Social media include (but are not limited to):

- a) Collaborative Projects (e.g Wikipedia)
- b) Blogs and Micro Blogs (e.g Twitter)
- c) Content Communities (e.g YouTube)
- d) Social Networking Sites (e.g Facebook)
- e) Virtual Game-Words (e.g Apps)

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| 12. Campaign through social media shall refer to the use of social media to achieve any of the purposes defined in Sections 7 and 9 of these Guidelines. | Campaign through social media |
| 13. Legal provisions in the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) relating to election campaigning shall apply to social media in the same manner in which they apply to any other form of election campaign using any other media. | Legal provisions apply to social media |
| 14. In order to monitor campaigns through social media, the Commission shall from time to time require website of candidates and/or political parties to file affidavits about their social media sites in a prescribed Form issued by the Commission that will include, but not limited to, the following information:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Contact telephone number(s); (ii) E-mail addresses; (iii) Webpage addresses and those of their sponsors; (iv) Social media accounts and those of affiliates/supporters; and (v) Details of social media sites over a period of time. | Commission to monitor social media campaigning |
| 15. Every political party, aspirant, candidate and supporters of such candidate, aspirant and political party intending to issue information or political advertisement for purposes of campaigns, rallies or procession on television channels, radio/electronic media, cable television, the Internet or specific social media shall apply to the Commission for pre-certification of such | Pre-certification of public and political advertisements |

political campaign, advertisement, rallies and procession before the publication on all electronic and social media in compliance with Section 99 of Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended).

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| 16. Advertisement, promotional campaign contents posted on social and/or electronic media without pre-certification with the Commission, by candidates, political parties and supporters in breach of the law on campaigns/advertisements shall be fined in accordance with the Electoral Act and these Guidelines. | Imposition of fines |
| 17. To ensure correct estimates of expenses of every campaign, the Commission may from time to time request media houses to provide it detailed information about the political advertisement expenditures by aspirants, candidates, parties, entities, individuals or supporters. It shall be the responsibility of aspirants, candidates and political parties to ensure that correct records are kept in their transactions with media houses and that media houses provide such information when requested by the Commission | Monitoring expenditures |
| 18. Party agents, candidates, supporters, accredited election observers, individuals, organizations, entities or the media may report violations of campaign rules or these Guidelines to the Commission with a sworn affidavit. | Reporting campaign rules violation |
| 19. Every candidate shall submit to the Commission copies of all his/her campaign materials. Copies of receipts indicating the cost of the materials shall be attached to the audited accounts of the campaign expenses. | Submission of campaign materials and receipts |

Distinction between Political Rallies/Processions and Campaigns

Political Rallies and Processions:

20. The objective of political rallies and processions, shall be to project, offer, sensitize and create awareness about the party as an entity, the party logo, emblem, flag, slogan, its programmes as distinguishable from other political parties. Political parties shall therefore not canvass or solicit for votes for specific candidates or aspirants at rallies and processions but shall be limited to projecting the manifesto of the political party within a period appointed by the Commission upon application by a political party wishing to conduct rallies and procession. The period appointed could be anytime before the 90 days period stipulated by law for commencement of public campaigns.
- Objective of public political rallies/ processions**
21. a) For each political rally/procession, a political party shall issue written notice to the Commissioner of Police of the State or FCT indicating the exact venue(s) and time of the rally/procession and pledging peaceful conduct and control against violence or public nuisance.
- Procedure for conducting political rallies/ processions**
- b) All political parties shall file with the Commission through the Electoral Officer at the LGA, the Resident Electoral Officer at the

State or the INEC Headquarters, Abuja, details of their public rallies and meetings in any particular area prior to such rally, meeting, procession or gathering in public.

22. All rallies/processions shall hold in the daylight and must end before 7 pm at anytime of a year. **Time Permissible**
23. The target audience of a rally/procession shall be the general public or specific groups such as women, youth, physically challenged, etc. **Target audience for Rallies/ Processions**
- 24 **Political Campaigns:**
- a) Political campaigns shall aim at canvassing for votes in favour of a political party and/or candidates in competition with other political parties and/or candidates for an elective office. **Objectives of campaigns**
- b) Political campaigns shall commence only after the release of Timetable for elections to the political parties and candidates have emerged through primaries conducted by the political parties.
- c) Political parties shall ensure compliance with the statutory time to commence campaigns of ninety (90) days before polling day and end twenty-four (24) hours prior to poll day for general elections.

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| 25 | <p>a) Notices of political campaigns shall be forwarded to the Commission <u>within 48 hours</u>, stating the times, venues, dates, agenda and list of organizing committee.</p> | Procedures for conducting political campaigns |
| | <p>b) Campaigns shall be in compliance with all extant laws, regulations and codes including the Code of Conduct for Political Parties, media regulators like National Broadcasting Commission, and shall be based on issues as contained the Manifesto and Constitution of the Party.</p> | |
| | <p>c) Campaigns shall commence 90 days to the General Elections and end twenty-four hours (24hrs) before the opening of Poll or Polling day in accordance with the law.</p> | Statutory period to commence and end campaigns |
| | <p>d) Political campaigns shall be conducted anytime of the day and not after or before daylight.</p> | Time of Campaigns |
| | <p>e) Political campaigns shall commence only after the party congresses, conventions and primaries are concluded and candidates have emerged with the list of candidates submitted to the Commission.</p> | Target audience for campaigns |
| | <p>f) The target audience for political campaigns shall be registered voters. The programmes, policies and projects of political parties are offered to voters as contained in the political party's Manifesto and Constitution.</p> | Target audience for campaigns |

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| | f) | Political campaigns shall have limitations on election expenses, candidate expenditures as provided by law, and the Commission shall enforce compliance to the limitations. | Limitations on expenses |
| 26. | a) | Where there is conflict in the date, venue or timing of the activities of different political parties, their representatives shall meet in the presence of law enforcement agencies to resolve the issue amicably without recourse to intimidation, force or violence | Clash of date time or venue |
| | b) | Where the parties are unable to resolve the conflict amicably or between themselves, the Commission shall request the political party that submitted its notice later in time to the Commission to reschedule its campaign, meeting, rally, procession, congress, convention or other activity for effective monitoring | |
| | c) | The Commission may request any Political Party to reschedule its campaign, meeting, rally, procession, congress, convention or other activity in the interest of the parties to avoid clashing with other statutory functions of the Commission that require performance within a specified time. | Rescheduling in the public interest |
| 27 | | This Guideline may be subject to review from time to time as circumstances dictate/warrant. | Review of the Guideline |

ISSUED IN ABUJA, THIS 27 DAY OF October, 2014

Professor Attahiru M. Jega, OFR
Chairman