



PRELIMINARY DECLARATION

I- INTRODUCTION

1. The year 2020 has generally been an election year in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This year was also special for the Republic of Niger, which held municipal and regional elections on 13th December 2020, followed by legislative and presidential elections on 27th December 2020.
2. Pursuant to the provisions of the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001), the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, and in line with its tradition of support to Member States organising elections, the President of the ECOWAS Commission, His Excellency **Mr. Jean-Claude Kassi BROU**, deployed an Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) to observe the elections held in the Republic of Niger on 27th December 2020.
3. The mission was led by **H.E. Mohamed Namadi SAMBO**, former Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and supported by a technical team led by the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the ECOWAS Commission, **General Francis A. BEHANZIN** and **H.E. Madam Liliane ALAPINI**, Resident Representative of ECOWAS in the Republic of Niger.
4. The Mission which is made up of a total of 100 Long-Term and Short-Term Observers, comprises Ambassadors of Member States accredited to the ECOWAS Commission, the ECOWAS Parliament and the ECOWAS Court of Justice. It also includes experts drawn from the relevant Ministries and

Electoral Management Bodies of Member States, Civil Society Organisations, as well as security and media experts.

II- GENERAL CONTEXT OF THE ELECTIONS AND SUPPORT TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

5. The ECOWAS Commission has been closely monitoring the political and security situation in the Republic of Niger through the Office of its Permanent Representation in Niger and its Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism.
6. Prior to the deployment of the Election Observation Mission, and in accordance with the relevant provisions of the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001) and the 2002 OAU/AU Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, a joint high-level pre-election mission of the ECOWAS Commission and the African Union visited the Republic of Niger from 3rd to 4th December 2020. The purpose of the joint mission was to hold consultations with Nigerien stakeholders and heads of the key institutions in charge of organizing the general elections to assess the level of preparation for inclusive, transparent, credible and peaceful elections. The ECOWAS Commission equally supported the audit of the country's voter register by international experts and provided financial support to the Electoral Commission.

III- ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN

7. The electoral campaign took place from 5th to 25th December 2020, with the participation of all political parties and candidates in the presidential election. All the thirty (30) presidential candidates had the opportunity to present their manifestos and programmes to the 7.4 million registered voters unhindered, in all the eight regions of the country.
8. However, the period of the electoral campaign was marked by two deadly terrorist attacks. The first occurred in the East region on 12th December 2020 and claimed the lives of 34 persons and the second occurred in the West region on 21st December 2020 resulting in the death of 7 soldiers. The Mission noted that despite such regrettable events, candidates and political parties were able to conduct an active campaign on the ground. The



ECOWAS Mission would therefore wish to extend its condolences to the Government of the Republic of Niger and the families of those who lost their lives in the attacks.

9. The Mission noted with satisfaction the steps and measures taken by the Government to ensure the security of the electoral process and the safety of electoral officials, candidates, voters, and observers.

IV-ARRIVAL OF THE HEAD OF MISSION, CONSULTATIONS AND DEPLOYMENT OF OBSERVERS

10. Upon his arrival in Niamey on 23rd December 2020, the Head of Mission, **H.E. Mohamed Namadi SAMBO**, paid a courtesy visit to the President of the Republic, **H.E. Mahamadou ISSOUFOU**, and held extensive consultations with various stakeholders, including the Minister of the Interior, the President and Commissioners of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), and members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Republic of Niger.
11. The Mission noted the commitment of stakeholders to organize credible and transparent elections that would enable the Republic of Niger experience her first democratic change of power in a peaceful manner.
12. Following a general briefing and orientation held on 25th December 2020, ECOWAS observers were deployed in 27 districts of 6 regions, with the exception of Agadez and Diffa regions due to security challenges. On Election Day, the Observers visited an average of 430 polling stations in the regions and maintained regular contact with the Mission's Situation Room located in Niamey.

V- PRELIMINARY OBSERVATION

13. Having analysed the information received from the various teams deployed in the field, and following a Debriefing Session with the Observers upon returning from the field, the ECOWAS Election Observation Mission to the 27th December 2020 Presidential and Legislative elections in Niger noted the following:



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A) On the conduct of the ballot:

- I. On polling day, in the 64% of polling stations observed, voting began between 8 am to 9am beyond the official opening time of 8 am and closed after 11hours.
- II. The delay in the commencement of vote was generally due to the late arrival of polling officials and the delay in the delivery of electoral materials in some polling stations;
- III. The demographic disaggregation of the voters showed a predominance of women and young people;
- IV. A visible presence of the security forces was observed in 89% of the polling stations. However, this presence has been reinforced in certain places, notably in Niamey;
- V. The Non-compliance with COVID 19 protocols, including lack of hand sanitizers, social distancing and wearing of face masks was observed;
- VI. Political party agents, particularly representatives of the MNSD- MPR- PNDS- PJP- MPN- RDR- AMEN- RPP- ANDP, were present in 97% of the polling stations observed;
- VII. Polling officials and voters largely maintained order and voters cast their ballots in a peaceful environment.
- VIII. Arrangements were made in polling stations to facilitate the voting of certain persons such as the physically disabled, the elderly, pregnant women and mothers of infants and young children;
- IX. Polling station officials exhibited a nuanced mastery of the voting process;
- X. International and national observers were met in some polling stations visited;



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XI. The sorting, counting and tallying of the ballots, as well as the publication of results at the polling stations, were carried out professionally and transparently in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Code and related texts, and were monitored by party agents and observers;

14. Overall, the voting process was orderly, peaceful, and professional, and the secrecy of the vote was generally respected.

B. Recommendations for improving future elections:

15. In the light of the above observations and analysis, the ECOWAS Election Observation Mission for the 2020 general elections in the Republic of Niger wishes to make the following recommendations that would help improve future elections:

- a) The timely deployment of election materials to polling stations;
- b) Increasing voter awareness and civic education campaigns;
- c) Reinforce the training of polling officials for better management of future elections;
- d) Improving health procedures and protocols to prevent the spread of Covid-19;
- e) Improving lighting provision to enhance visibility and transparency in polling units and collation centers.

VI- PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

16. Based on the observations and analysis of the electoral process, the ECOWAS Election Observation Mission hereby draws the following preliminary conclusions:

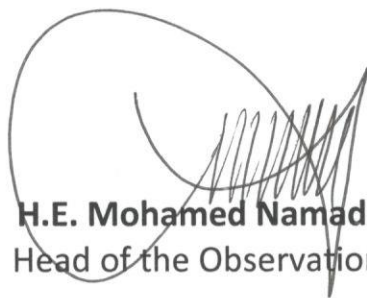
- I. The preparations for the 27th December 2020 elections, the conduct of the election campaign, the election process on Election Day, and the sorting, counting and tallying of the ballots were relatively free, fair, transparent and professional. Voters exercised their constitutional right to vote with confidence. The Mission particularly noted the massive participation of young people and women in the voting process.
- II. The ECOWAS Election Observation Mission congratulates all stakeholders and the people of Niger for demonstrating patriotism and maturity by



participating peacefully in the voting process and urges them to maintain the same spirit till the conclusion of the whole process;

- III. The ECOWAS Election Observation Mission took note of the few shortcomings in the conduct of the election and invites the relevant state institutions to take appropriate measures to address all concerns while urging all stakeholders to resort to the institutions of the Republic to seek redress in the event of any disputes;
- IV. The Mission invites the institutions in charge of the elections to publish the results of the election within the legal deadlines and in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Code. It appeals to the political parties and candidates to use the legal channels to seek redress in case any election-related dispute arises and to refrain from declaring unofficial results.
- V. The ECOWAS Mission wishes to congratulate the people of Niger for their exemplary comportment up to this point and urges them to exhibit same in the post-election phase in order to preserve the peace and stability of the country. The ECOWAS Election Observation Mission, through the long-term observers and the ECOWAS Representative's Office in the Republic of Niger will continue to closely monitor the post-election developments.

Done in Niamey, 29th December 2020

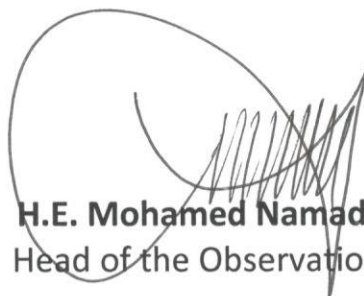


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