



# ELECTORAL INTEGRITY AFRICA SUMMIT I FINAL COMMUNIQUE

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# Introduction

The Electoral Integrity in Africa Summit, Kampala, 10-12 September 2024, was one of the activities conducted co-implemented by the African Election Observers Network (AfeONet) and Alliance for Finance Monitoring (ACFIM) under the EU co-funded AHEAD - The Action for a Holistic Electoral Approach for Democracy - Africa project. AHEAD Africa aims to empower civil society, including citizen observers, in monitoring electoral-related issues and strengthening electoral integrity across in African Union member states.

## Objectives:

1. To discuss and develop actionable strategies for strengthening electoral integrity frameworks such as enhancing the legal, regulatory, and procedures governing elections across Africa.
2. To enhance coordination and cooperation among the three regional election observation networks under AfeONet and other key electoral stakeholders.
3. To develop and implement strategies for effective post-election follow-up, reflect on regional challenges, and work together to generate feasible solutions for democratic renewal.

The Summit brought together a diverse set of 85 participants from civil society and the public as well as state policy makers, regional mandate holders and members of the diplomatic corps. Notably, there was participation from the East African Community (EAC), the European Union Delegation to the Republic of Uganda, the Independent Electoral Commission of Uganda and the Government of the Republic of Uganda.

This communique consolidates the Summit's deliberations and proposes strategies to various stakeholders in order to improve post-election follow-up processes, address regional challenges, and generate solutions for democratic renewal.

# Preamble

**WE**, the undersigned members and partners of the African Election Observers Network (AfeONet), an independent Pan-African platform for coordinating election observers across Africa to contribute to democratic renewal and electoral integrity through the holding of credible, peaceful, and verifiable elections in African countries, meeting in Kampala, Uganda, East Africa, at the first continental Summit of AfeONet and the Alliance for Finance Monitoring (ACFIM), held from 10th to 12th September 2024.

**Inspired by** the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG), which underscores the significance of African States' adherence to universal democratic values, respect for human rights, and the promotion of regular, free, and fair elections that institutionalise legitimate governance and facilitate democratic change;

**Further inspired by** Article 7 (3) of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, which encourages States to enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures for elected public office and, where applicable, the funding of political parties, and Article X of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption on funding of Political Parties;

**Guided by** the participatory rights guaranteed under Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and Article 13 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Charter), ensuring that every citizen participates freely in the government of their country through periodic and genuine elections;

**Noting** the Resolution on Internet Shutdowns and Elections in Africa - ACHPR.Res.580 (LXXVIII)2024, by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, which calls upon African States to refrain from ordering interruptions to telecommunications services before, during, or after elections, a practice that disenfranchises election observers and restricts citizen participation;

**Taking note** of the progressive citizen rights provisions outlined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the ACDEG, and the African Charter's Protocols on the Rights of Women and Persons with Disabilities in Africa, all emphasising good governance, popular participation, rule of law, and human rights;



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**Concerned by** the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) and military coups, undermining electoral democracy and contributing to insecurity, conflict, and developmental stagnation across Africa;

**Cognizant** of the growing lack of trust in Election Management Bodies (EMBs) due to non-consultative appointment processes and weak transparency, both of which undermine public confidence in the electoral process.

**Bearing in mind** the commercialisation of elections, characterised by excessive campaign spending, which disproportionately disadvantages marginalised groups such as youth and women, further undermining the integrity of African elections;

**Alarmed by** the limited attention to political financing issues on the African continent, which has raised concerns about the influence of illicit funds in electoral processes;

**Concerned** about the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in election management without adequate legal frameworks, and the potential for AI to be misused to spread disinformation and fake news during elections;

**Appreciating** the crucial role played by citizen observers in providing oversight and accountability in electoral processes through election observation and monitoring across the continent;

**Reaffirming** our collective commitment to fostering good governance, supporting democratic institutions, and promoting electoral integrity through citizen participation, political diversity, and transparency;

**Further Reaffirming** our belief and recognition that electoral democracy and rule of law cannot be consolidated on the African continent without the cultivation of an open and safe civic space that facilitates citizen participation, either individually or through civic organisations and political groupings;

# Recommendations

## A. Empowering citizen observers and dispute resolution mechanisms in defence of electoral integrity

1. Urge African Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) to reform the accreditation processes for citizen observers to ensure they are not unduly burdensome, expensive, or restrictive. This will foster inclusivity and bolster the integrity of electoral processes.
2. Call on citizen observer organisations and academic institutions to work collaboratively in strengthening political party governance reforms and to provide capacity-building initiatives that promote internal democracy within political parties.
3. Urge African governments to legislate for a more open civic space, removing restrictive laws that hinder freedom of assembly, association, and expression, which are critical to robust political participation.
4. Encourage African governments to strengthen their judiciaries by providing adequate funding, resources, and guarantees of independence, especially in adjudicating electoral disputes.
5. Recommend ongoing training of judicial officers on electoral processes and emerging technologies to keep them informed and equipped to handle electoral disputes effectively.
6. Encourage all African States to ratify and implement the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance and other international instruments that uphold electoral integrity.

## B. Regional Collaboration and Building of Synergies for Democratic Renewal

7. AfeONet and ACFIM commit to establishing an African Academy on Elections, which will serve as a centre for training election experts from the continent and provide a platform for sharing best practices in electoral management.
8. Call upon all electoral governance stakeholders to support and promote the re-tooling of citizen observers with modern methods, tools, and mechanisms to enhance their ability to monitor and assess electoral processes. Special emphasis should be placed on expanding the role of monitoring, as opposed to mere observation.



## C. Transparency in Campaign Financing for Electoral Integrity

9. Call on African governments to enact and strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks that regulate the financing of political parties and candidates for election campaigns. This will ensure transparency, curb the rising costs of elections, and mitigate commercialisation of elective politics as a driver of electoral violence.

10. Urge African governments to strengthen the independence of Election Management Bodies and/or Political Party Regulators by guaranteeing the transparency in appointing officials that manage them, ensuring security of tenure, and providing adequate funding.

11. Encourage citizen observers, in collaboration with the African Union Advisory Board Against Corruption, to advocate for the amendment of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (Article X) to include provisions regulating the funding of electoral candidates.

## D. Implementing and Monitoring Election observation Recommendations

12. Call for collaboration between governments and citizen observers to formalise the election observation process and ensure that recommendations from observation missions are systematically reviewed and implemented.

13. Encourage citizen observers to create digital databases of observation recommendations, allowing easy access and encouraging public engagement with the findings. This should complement and not replace other necessary forms of public outreach.

14. Support the establishment of strong post-election mechanisms for effective and responsive engagement of stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of observation recommendations, with the assistance of development partners.

## E. Artificial Intelligence and Integrity of African Elections

15. Call on all electoral governance stakeholders to advocate for the enactment of legal frameworks to regulate the use of AI in electoral processes, ensuring that these technologies are employed to enhance, rather than undermine, electoral integrity.

16. Urge the citizen observers to maintain vigilance and consistency in monitoring and independently auditing the design and deployment of AI powered electoral management systems being adopted by the EMBs across Africa.

17. Urge the citizen observers to review and revamp their tools, elections assessment matrixes and knowledge acquisition concerning AI and elections in order to enhance their capabilities in elections observations and monitoring in AI driven electoral systems; and thus harness its dividends for a free, fair and credible election.

18. Encourage citizen observers to engage in public interest litigation to build jurisprudence regarding the use of AI in elections, ensuring transparency and accountability.

## **F. Collaborative Knowledge Production and Media Engagement**

19. Commit to further research and collaboration in areas such as political financing, the role of AI in elections, and the follow-up of electoral observation recommendations.

20. Develop an African Elections Handbook on the follow-up of recommendations, which will serve as a guide for monitoring the implementation of election observation findings.

21. Enhance the capacity of media professionals to report on elections through targeted training on investigative reporting, thereby improving the quality and integrity of electoral journalism across the continent.

## **Conclusion**

This Communique serves as our collective commitment to advancing electoral integrity, transparency, and accountability across Africa. We believe that through collaboration, innovation, and unwavering dedication to democratic principles, Africa can build stronger, more resilient electoral systems that truly reflect the will of the people.

Signed on 12 September 2024, at ONOMO Hotel in Kampala, Uganda.



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## Co-Signatories

1. Accountability Lab
2. African Election Observers Network (AfEONet)
3. AfricTivistes
4. Alliance for Finance Monitoring (ACFIM)
5. Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU)
6. Association Réseau Mourakiboun
7. Centre for Constitutional Governance (CCG)
8. Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG)
9. East and Horn of Africa Election Observation Network (E-HORN)
10. ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC)
11. Election Support Network of Southern Africa (ESN-SA)
12. Gambia Participates
13. Kampala Analytica
14. National Democratic Institute (NDI)
15. Penplusbytes
16. Réseau des Observateurs Électoraux Nationaux Francophones (ROEF)
17. Transparency International, Madagascar
18. Transparency International, Uganda
19. Transparency International, Zambia
20. Uganda National NGO Forum
21. West African Election Observers Network (WAEON)
22. Yiaga Africa





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