



United States Diplomatic Mission to Nigeria, Public Affairs Section  
Plot 1075, Diplomatic Drive, Central Business District, Abuja  
Telephone: 09-461-4000. Website at <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov>



## **PRESS RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release*

May 29, 2018

PR-018/2018

### **U.S. Joins Allies and Partners in Celebrating Nigeria's Democracy Day and Calls for Free, Fair, and Inclusive 2019 Elections**

Abuja, Nigeria – We join Nigerians today in celebrating the day on which democracy and civilian rule were restored.

In Nigeria, as in so many of our countries, the right for all citizens to enjoy equal participation in the democratic process was achieved after considerable struggle and suffering. We remember and celebrate all those who sacrificed so much for the freedoms we enjoy today.

The struggle to achieve democracy gives it a special value and places responsibility on all of us to support the democratic process. We congratulate Nigeria on its progress since 1999, including the first peaceful transition of power from a ruling party to an opposition party in 2015. As we celebrate your progress, we encourage and support Nigeria and its people to consolidate and deepen democracy as the country heads towards important elections next year.

Who will win the general elections in 2019 is a decision for the Nigerian people. Our concern as partners of Nigeria is to see a process that is free, fair and inclusive. We are particularly keen to see greater participation in politics from under-represented groups, including women, young people and people with disabilities.

We offer our strong support to the Independent National Elections Commission (INEC) and welcome the technical improvements they have introduced to the electoral process. We encourage the government and legislators to work with INEC to achieve further improvements at least six months before the elections, in line with the established ECOWAS protocol.

Democracy is not only about the voting process. It also requires a strong and ongoing commitment from political actors to uphold the democratic ideal. We have noted with concern recent reports of violence, intimidation and corruption, both within parties and between parties. We take advantage of this national celebration of democracy to urge all political parties to maintain Nigerian and international norms and support a credible process. It is the fundamental right of the Nigerian people to freely express their will now and in the forthcoming elections.

*Signatories:*

European Union, Germany, France, United Kingdom, United States, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden.