

ELECTIONS  
2011



# Voter Information Pamphlet

*Things You Need to  
Know About the 2011  
General Elections*



Resource Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education

# Elections 2011: Voter Information Pamphlet

## 2011 Election Dates

ELECTION	DATE
National Assembly Elections	April 2, 2011
Presidential Election	April 9, 2011
Governorship and State Assembly Elections	April 16, 2011

## You Must Register to Vote

**1. You cannot vote if you do not register.** If you are 18 years and above and you wish to vote in the 2011 elections, you **MUST** register during the voter registration exercise

2. When you register to vote, you must get your voter's card from the INEC Voter Registration Officer. If you register but do not obtain your voter's card, you will **NOT** be allowed to vote in the elections

## Who Can Register to Vote?

To be qualified to register to vote:

1. You must be a Nigerian citizen, and

2. You must be at least 18 years old by the date of the voter registration exercise

In addition, you can only vote if:

1. You have not been judged by a court of law to be mentally incompetent. A mentally incompetent person is one who is considered unable to take decisions like a normal person, being unable to understand the meaning and likely effects of the decision he or she may take

2. You have not been convicted by any court of law for any serious crime (such as murder, armed robbery, stealing, and so on) at any time in the past. If you have, you can only vote if the government or a court has returned your civil rights to you

## Have You Moved Home?

If before the elections you move your home from the constituency in which you registered, you will not be allowed to vote in your new constituency unless you transfer your registration to it. To do that:

1. You must make an application (accompanied by your voters' card) to the Resident Electoral Commissioner of the

State where you are currently resident for your name to be entered on the Transferred Voters List for the constituency

2. You must make the application not less than 30 days before the date of the election in which you wish to vote in the constituency where you are now resident

When you have done this, the law requires the Resident Electoral Commissioner to whom you have sent the application to enter your name in the Transferred Voters' List **IF HE IS SATISFIED** that you are truly resident in a polling area in the constituency and were registered in another constituency.

## Why You Should Vote

**1. Your vote is your power to change your life and that of your**

**family:** You want a better life for yourself and your family. You want better houses, roads, jobs, electricity supply, education, and health. You can only get them when you look for and vote for candidates whom you are sure will work to provide them for the public. If you do not vote, such candidates may not win the elections

**2. Your vote can make the difference:** You may think that since millions of people will be voting, your own vote cannot make any difference in the outcome of the election. That is wrong! Many good candidates have lost elections only by a few votes, even just one vote. Your vote may be that one vote that your preferred candidates need to win, but they will not get it if you do not go out to vote

**DID YOU REGISTER TO VOTE?** If you did not, you cannot vote in the 2011 elections

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**3. Your vote can defeat election rigging:** You may think that it does not matter whether or not you vote, because some people will rig the elections and put their own persons in office. Again, that is wrong! Things are changing in Nigeria. The courts have removed from office many politicians who stole elections in 2007 and put the true winners in office. If your preferred candidate wins the election but is cheated out of office by his or her opponents, the courts can return him or her to office later; but that will only be if he or she actually won the election. If you do not vote, your candidate may not win the election and will not be able to win in court

**4. Your vote is your power to remove bad leaders from office:** Many people like you are not happy with many bad leaders that are in office in Nigeria. Your vote gives you the power to remove them and put in good leaders. If you do not vote, those bad leaders may remain in office or replace themselves with others like them. If you vote, you will help to stop and remove such bad leader. If they rig to win, the court will look into the matter and put the true winner in office. So, go out and vote for



your preferred candidates!

## For Whom Should You Vote?

Whom you should vote for is for you to decide. Do not let anyone force you to vote for their candidate. Do not let politicians bribe you to sell your vote to them. Your vote is your power to change your life and that of your family for the better. If you sell your vote, you have sold your life and that of your family to the politician. What is the value of the life of your husband, wife, or children? N500? N1000? N5000?

Instead of selling your vote, it is better for you to vote for candidates of your choice. How do you decide which candidate for whom to vote? Ask yourself these questions:

1. Is the candidate in any public office at present or has he or she been in such office before? If the

Many good candidates have lost elections only by a few votes, even just one vote. Your vote may be that one vote that your preferred candidates need to win... **GO OUT AND VOTE!**



answer is yes, then ask yourself the following questions:

- a. Did this candidate while in office help to solve the problems that I and other people like me have been concerned about – be it roads, education, health, crime, or jobs?
- b. Did this candidate while in office do those things that he or she promised to do when asking for our votes in the last elections?
- c. Was this candidate while in office always informing the public about what he or she was doing and explaining to us how he or she was using the money and power put in his or her control?
- d. Now that this candidate is asking for our votes again, is he or she talking about the problems that concern people like me?
- e. Beyond just making promises,

is this candidate also telling us how he or she plans to do these things? Do I really believe that the plan will work?

f. Do I really trust this candidate to do all the things he or she is promising now or, at least, to do his or her very best to keep these promises?

2. If the candidate has not been in any public office before, ask yourself these questions:

- a. Has she or he been speaking out and been involved in activities to solve the problems that concern people like me?
- b. In campaigning and asking for our votes, is this candidate talking about the problems that concern people like me?
- c. Beyond just making promises, is this candidate also telling us how he or she plans to do these things? Do I really believe that the plan will work?
- d. Do I really trust this candidate

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to do all the things he or she is promising now or, at least, to do his or her very best to keep these promises?

When you have answered these questions, you can then decide whether you want to support and vote for that candidate in the elections.

## Your Rights And Duties

As a registered voter, you have the right to:

1. Vote in elections, so long you are at the polling station at the time fixed for voting
2. Ask questions on election procedures, and review a sample of the ballot before voting
3. Vote in privacy, free from anyone trying to force or frighten you to vote as they want
4. Have equal access as everyone else to vote, to do so in a place that is accessible, and to occupy

the voting booth for up to two minutes if others are waiting in line

5. Have your ballot counted by the polling officers if it is cast legally and timely
6. Receive assistance in voting if you are blind, have a physical disability, or unable to read English. You may choose any person or an INEC official to assist you
7. Request and have an immediate hearing before the Electoral Officer on Election Day if your eligibility to vote is questioned

Your responsibilities as a voter are to:

1. Register to vote before the election
2. Respect the privacy and voting rights of others
3. Follow all official instructions concerning election procedures

**If you sell your vote, you have sold your life and that of your family to the politician. What is the value of the life of your husband, wife, or children? N500? N1000? N5000?**



4. Abide by the provisions of the electoral law and the relevant provisions of the constitution

5. Review your ballot before casting it to ensure it is complete and correct

6. Treat election workers and other voters with courtesy and respect

7. Seek information about the candidates and issues in the elections

## Where Are You To Vote?

Usually the place where you registered is also the place where you will vote, although INEC may have reason to change the voting place. INEC would usually publicise information about such changes before the elections. However, it is wise to confirm at the nearest INEC office that they have not moved the voting unit from where you

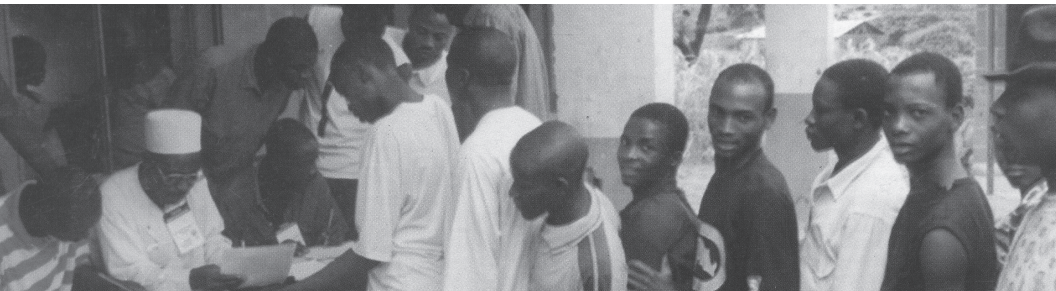
registered. You may also get the required information from nongovernmental organisations involved in voter education or election monitoring.

The polls are open from 7.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. All those in line by 5.00 p.m. will be able to vote.

## What You Must Not Do

Under the 2010 Electoral Act, it is a crime for a voter to wilfully and knowingly:

1. Register in more than one place
2. Change anything on any voter's card, whether it belongs to you or another person
3. Use force to prevent another person from registering or to interfere in the work of the registration officer
4. Pretend to be another person in order to vote or to attempt to vote



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5. Vote or attempt to vote under a false name
6. Vote or attempt to vote more than once in the same election
7. Influence or attempt to influence a voter's voting decision through the use of force, threat, menace, intimidation, bribery, reward, or offer of reward
8. Have unlawful possession of a voter's card
9. Sell or attempt to sell your voter's card
10. Buy or attempt to buy a voter's card

If you do any of these things, you will be caught and, if found guilty, sent to prison.

## If You Have Problems

If you have any problems or believe that anyone is violating or threatening to violate your rights as a voter, you may contact these INEC officials in Kano State:

1. Mallam Abdullahi Danyaya, Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC): Tel: 08034518177 or Email: audanyaya@yahoo.com
2. Ismaila Moyi, INEC Administrative Secretary, Kano State: Tel: 08065928791 or Email: ismailamoyi@yahoo.com
3. INEC Election Officers in your local government

**Your vote  
is your  
power...  
GO OUT  
AND VOTE!**

If you have any questions, please contact CHRICED: Tel: 08099260514, 08050593989, and 08023133924; Email: chracenigeria@yahoo.com; Street Address: HEDA Suite, 2nd Floor, 20 Mojidi St., Off Toyin Street, Ikeja, Lagos State, Nigeria; Web: [www.chriced.org](http://www.chriced.org)



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