

IDEG-CFI Press Conference Statement

(For Immediate Release: 2nd March 2021)

Maintaining Peace Post Supreme Court Elections 2020 Verdict: A Call for Peace and Calm

Good Morning, Members of the media, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Civic Forum Initiative (CFI), we are pleased to welcome you to the auditorium of the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG). Thank you for honouring our invitation to this press conference through which the Civic Forum Initiative will share our thoughts on how as a nation we can preserve peace and stability after the Supreme Court has delivered its verdict on the Presidential Election Petition.

The presidential and parliamentary elections of 2020 did not pass without some sporadic incidents of violence and loss of lives. By comparison with elections elsewhere on the continent, however, it was a relatively peaceful process. We commend the political party leadership, the flagbearers, the Electoral Commission (EC), the security agencies, civil society organizations and the media, who in diverse ways contributed to the relative peace in the election.

The high point of the national effort to sustain election peace was recorded two days to the election when the flagbearers of the two major parties, NPP and NDC appended their signatures to a Presidential Election Peace Pact and pledged to keep the peace, accept the election results or otherwise challenge peacefully in court any aspect they considered to be flawed. They also pledged to co-operate to undertake the Constitutional Amendments necessary to improve on our system of democratic governance after the election.

In consonance with the Peace Pact, the NDC Presidential Candidate filed on December 30, 2020, a Presidential Election Petition seeking to reverse the official Presidential Election results as declared by the Chairperson of the EC, and Returning Officer of the 2020 Presidential elections. In short, the NDC flagbearer believed that none of the candidates in the 2020 elections polled more than fifty per cent of valid votes cast. And he prayed the Court for a re-run of the election between the two

candidates with the highest votes. After weeks of legal arguments, the Supreme Court, is now scheduled to deliver its verdict on Thursday, March 4, 2021.

The current petition has once again underscored the need to build and sustain trust in our democratic institutions. The two leaders, as candidates, signed a peace pact and committed themselves to go to court to resolve any disputes that might arise over the elections results. We commend them for doing so. We remind the nation that the logic of going to court is that you accept the verdict of the court; or you may disagree with the verdict, in which case, you use legal means to seek redress; or you may decide to move on, in the interest of peace. We appeal to all to abide by these norms.

Members of the media, we are now close to the moment of decision. It is important to recognize that in all democracies, verdicts of this kind will always bring indignation and disappointment to some and jubilation and satisfaction to others. This is part of the practice of democracy in all countries. What is important for us as a people is our collective resolve to maintain the peace and stability of our country. Accordingly, we appeal to our fellow citizens to accept the eventual verdict in national interest and move on.

We further call on the NPP and NDC to live up to expectation and encourage their supporters to avoid engaging in violent and aggressive conduct that would endanger national peace, security and threaten our democratic gains. Regardless of the outcome, we must all remember to put Ghana first and take the necessary actions to guarantee that our nation does not plunge into political turmoil.

We encourage the leadership of the NDC and NPP to work together to undertake the longstanding constitutional reforms in order to eradicate the root causes of vigilante violence in Ghana and the winner-takes-all system as committed to in the 2020 Presidential Peace Pact.

We also call on the Ghana Police Service to ensure law and order as well as the safety of citizens through professional enforcement of our country's laws. We plead with the media to also be circumspect in their reportage and ensure that their outlets do not become platforms for hate speech and insult.

Finally, we urge fellow citizens, political parties and you, our friends from the Media, to remain calm and uphold the peace as we await the decision of the Supreme Court on Thursday, 4th March, 2021. Let us not forget that in this verdict, democracy should be the ultimate winner.

May God bless our homeland Ghana.

Thank you.

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Chairman, CFI

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Members of CFI

1. Institute for Democratic Governance
2. The ARK Foundation
3. National Chief Imam's Office
4. Labour Policy International
5. National Association of Charismatic and Christian Churches
6. Ghana Integrity Initiative
7. Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council
8. Christian Council of Ghana
9. National Catholic Secretariat
10. Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition
11. Women in Law and Development
12. West Africa Civil Society Institute
13. Ahmadiya Muslim Movement Ghana
14. Legal Resource Centre