

**THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE ECOWAS COMMITTEE  
OF NINE ON THE LIBERIAN CRISIS**

**ABUJA, 21ST MAY, 1997 FINAL COMMUNIQUE**

1. The fifth meeting of Heads of State and Government of the ECOWAS Committee of Nine on Liberia was held at the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat Headquarters in Abuja on 21st May, 1997 under the chairmanship of His Excellency, General Sani ABACHA, Head of State, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and current Chairman of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS.
  
2. The following Heads of State and Government, or their duly accredited representatives, attended the meeting:
  - His Excellency, Mathieu KEREKOU, President of the Republic of BENIN;
  - His Excellency, Blaise COMPAORE, President of BURKINA FASO;
  - His Excellency, Flt-Lt (Rtd) Jerry John RAWLINGS, President of the Republic of GHANA;
  - His Excellency, General Lansana CONTE, Head of State, President of the Republic of GUINEA;
  - His Excellency, General Sani ABACHA, Head of State; Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of NIGERIA;
  - His Excellency, Mr. Kwassi KLUTSE Prime Minister and Head of Government of the TOGOLESE Republic;
  - Mr. Faustin KOUAME, Minister for Presidential Affairs, representing the President of the Republic of COTE D'IVOIRE;
  - Captain Edward SINGHATEY, Secretary of State for Presidential Affairs, representing the President of THE GAMBIA;
  - Mr. Massokhna KANE Minister of African Economic Integration representing the President of the Republic of SENEGAL.
  
3. Also in attendance as invited guests were:
  - Her Excellency, Mrs. Ruth PERRY, Chairman of the Council of State of Liberia;
  - His Excellency, Mr. Alpha Oumar KONARE, Head of State, President of the Islamic Republic of Mali;
  - His Excellency, Brigadier-General Ibrahim Bare MAINASSARA, President of the Republic of NIGER;
  - Honourable Mrs. S.Y. BGUIAMA, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Representing the President of the Republic of SIERRA LEONE.
  
4. The following personalities were invited as observers:
  - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU);
  - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Liberia;
  - The U.S. Special Envoy to Liberia.
  
5. In attendance were:

- Mr. Mahamadu OUHOUMODOU, Deputy Executive Secretary, representing the ECOWAS Executive Secretary;
  - ECOMOG Force Commander.
6. The fifth meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Committee of Nine was preceded by a meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Committee of Nine on Liberia.
  7. Heads of State noted with satisfaction that 13 out of the 14 items in the revised schedule of the Abuja agreement had been successfully implemented, in accordance with the revised schedule of implementation of the Abuja Agreement.
  8. They welcomed the restoration of peace to Liberia and consequently commended the efforts made by Member States to redeem their pledges to contribute troops to strengthen the operational capacities of ECOMOG. They expressed their appreciation to the friendly countries which had provided logistic, material and financial support to ECOMOG.
  9. Heads of State and Government took note of the dissolution of the Liberian factions, and the replacement of the Members of the Council of State.
  10. They commended the successful restructuring of the Supreme Court which will be responsible for adjudicating electoral complaints, by the appointment of new members, in consultation with the judiciary and the Bar Association.
  11. They expressed satisfaction at the appointment of the members of the Independent Elections Commission, the appointment of its chairman and the induction of the commission and commended the work they had so far undertaken under difficult circumstances and with meagre resources.
  12. Heads of State and Government considered and approved the electoral package governing the conduct of elections, prepared by the Independent Elections Commission and containing the electoral law, a code of conduct, the commission's operational work plan and the budget.

#### **ELECTION BUDGET**

13. The Heads of State and Government considered and approved the elections budget of \$700,000 for personnel and administrative costs and \$4.7m for technical aspect of the electoral process as proposed by the Independent Elections Commission. The Heads of State set a target of a minimum sum of \$1.5m to be sourced from the sub-region and established a minimum levy of \$100,000 in cash per Member State. However, Member States who are able to contribute above this amount are encouraged to do so, either in cash or in kind. They called upon the international community, to honour their pledges of assistance to the electoral process and to endeavour to redeem all pledges by the 16th of June, 1997.

14. Heads of State expressed the desire for IECOM to be insulated from influence both from within the country and from without. Consequently, they urged the international donor Community to make contributions to IECOM through ECOWAS.
15. Furthermore, the Chairman of IECOM was directed to make an inventory list of their requirements to be circulated among ECOWAS Member State so that those who are in a position to assist may have guidance from the list.

#### **DATE OF ELECTIONS**

16. Desiring to ensure a credible electoral process and organise free and fair elections whose results will be acceptable to the Liberian people and recognised by the international community, Heads of State and Government approved the postponement of elections, as had been recommended by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Independent Elections Commission after consultations with the political parties and the original signatories of the Abuja Agreement.
17. Heads of State and Government, decided that elections in Liberia should be held after a period of fifty-six days commencing from the 25th of May, 1997. In which case they approved that the elections day would be Saturday 19th July, 1997 with inauguration of the new government to take place on 2nd August, 1997. However, in the event of a runoff, elections should be on the 2nd of August, 1997, and inauguration on the 16th of August, 1997.

#### **EXTENSION OF THE TENURE OF THE LIBERIA NATIONALTRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT (LNTG)**

18. Heads of State and Government approved an extension of the tenure of the National Transitional Government (LNTG), as presently constituted under the Abuja Agreement. The tenure is hereby extended in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 17 above.

#### **REAFFIRMATION OF ECOWAS COMMITMENT TO A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE LIBERIAN CRISES**

19. Heads of State and Government reaffirmed the commitment of ECOWAS to a peaceful resolution of the Liberian crisis through democratic elections, which underpins the ECOWAS Peace Plan and which constitutes the best possible framework for the restoration of peace and stability to Liberia. Consequently, they appealed to the political parties and the Liberian people in general to ensure that the forthcoming campaigns and elections are conducted peacefully. This should be an opportunity for all concerned to learn to work together in the interest of the nation.
20. Heads of State and Government expressed gratitude to the OAU and the United Nations for their contribution to the quest for peace in Liberia.

## **VOTE OF THANKS**

21. At the end of their deliberations, Heads of State and Government expressed their sincere gratitude to His Excellency, General Sani ABACHA, Head of State, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and current Chairman of ECOWAS, and to the Government and people of Nigeria, for the warm and fraternal hospitality extended to them during their stay in Abuja.

**DONE AT ABUJA, THIS 21ST DAY OF MAY, 1997**