

Announcement #4

From the ANDDH: March 12, 2011 Election Observation

The Nigerien Association for the Defense of Human Rights (L'Association Nigérienne pour la Défense des droits de l'Homme [ANDDH]) proceeded with domestic observation of the second round of presidential elections on March 12, 2011 with the goal of evaluating the electoral process on the basis of international standards for regional election observation and in strict respect of the laws and registration regulations of our country. This observation was made possible thanks to financial support from the Danish Cooperation along with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and SWISSAID and in collaboration with the Independent National Election Commission (Le Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante [CENI]).

The ANDDH is a Nigerien civil society organization that observed all the elections in 1993. ANDHH is independent in its conclusions and its observers are nonpartisan and dedicated to honor and responsibility in order to assure credible election observation.

It is in this context that ANDDH conducted the presidential election domestic observation on March 12, 2011. For this effort, ANDDH deployed 2,078 national nonpartisan observers, including 300 under the Collective of Organizations for the Defense of Human Rights and the Promotion of Democracy, 25 supervisors and eight regional coordinators throughout the national territory.

The observation covered the eight regions of the county, the departments, the large cities, towns, villages, and neighborhoods in order to observe and report on the conduct of elections.

Throughout this election, the ANDDH observers observed at 2,000 polling stations, out of a total of 20,778 (or about 10%), to follow the voting operations, identify the critical incidents, report the results of the vote count, and follow the centralization of results by the administrative commissions.

Therefore, this declaration is a synthesis of the electoral process stage of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of various observations made on the basis of election observation, critical incidents, and the information gathered from the administrative boards of the votes by the observers, supervisors, and coordinators.

- **The pre-electoral period**

The ANDDH is very invested during the pre-electoral period to create the conditions for a successful execution of the of the March 12, 2011 election. Thus, ANDDH had to draw the attention of election authorities to a number of shortcomings in the process prior to and during this phase so that they were corrected.

Among other shortcomings, it had to be noted:

- Lack of communication between actors in the electoral process
- Disinterest of citizens in politics
- Tension arising from the insufficiencies of the electoral campaign
- Low level of training of certain members of voting locations

- Impossibility of controlling campaign expenses
- Electoral lists not posted according to the electoral law

In terms of pre-electoral activities, ANDDH, along with CODDH, contributed to awareness raising for voters about the unique ballot, peaceful elections, and refusing to sell votes.

ANDDH is thankful for the inclusion of most of the deficiencies cited above, and thanks the Authorities for the promptness with which they have faced them.

In the same realm of ideas, ANDDH welcomes calls for a peaceful election, which both the President of the CSRD and both presidential candidates called for on election day.

Finally, it's in this peaceful atmosphere, despite some regrettable incidents in Zinder and in Maradi, that the second round of presidential elections was held.

- **The day of the election**

The presidential election of March 12, 2011, occurred in a calm manner and without major incidents. Voters calmly went to polling stations to exercise their civic right. They demonstrated patience and discipline despite some organizational difficulties in certain locations.

The observers of ANDDH noted the following:

- Insufficient training for members of the voting bureaus
- Lack of information on the location of voting bureaus
- Late opening of certain locations
- Weak mobilization of voters to exercise their right to vote
- High number of voting by proxy
- High number of blank votes
- The demand for identity documents besides the voting card was not systematic.

ANDDH notes with satisfaction the following:

- The entirety of the election was calm and peaceful
- The conduct of the process was secured by the defense and security forces
- Awareness campaigns for peace and acceptance of the results by NDI-Niger, UNDP, CENI, ONC, etc.
- The handshake of the two candidates after having voted. ANDDH sees this as a sign calling for peace.

- **Conclusions**

ANDDH concludes that the election of March 12, 2011, was conducted in a tranquil climate and without major incidents. The insufficiencies observed here and there do not appear to be of a nature that would compromise the validity of the election.

The relatively satisfactory participation rate was 43.21% according to the results obtained in the 2000 voting locations observed, of which the highest rate was 65.45% in Tahoua and the weakest in Niamey (33.89%).

In light of the assessments of the nonpartisan national observation team and while awaiting the proclamation of provisional results from the CENI and their validation by the Constitutional Court of the Transition, ANDDH judges that the elections of March 12, 2011, were regular, transparent, credible, and peaceful.

ANDDH salutes the neutrality of the CENI and its support staff, notably the defense and security forces.

To the elections authorities, ANDDH recommends:

- 1- Reinforcement of the knowledge of the electoral staff on the voting process
- 2- Vigilance in the analysis of parallel vote tallies conducted in the headquarters of the political parties
- 3- Reinforcement of awareness activities towards electors for the understanding and completion of their duty as citizens
- 4- Use of a single voting bulletin, which has been proven as an instrument for secure elections
- 5- Posting of electoral lists according to the electoral law so that voters may register claims if necessary and in order to identify their polling location in advance.

ANDDH heartily thanks the administrative and political authorities, NDI, the Danish Cooperation, SWISSAID, the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), as well as the presidents of the voting locations for the good climate of collaboration that permitted the success of the national observers' mission.

ANDDH calls for the mobilization and support of the international community for our country, so that Niger, which has just rediscovered the road of democracy, may stay indefinitely in the community of democratic nations and begin to develop the ultimate goal of democracy that has been so highly desired by the people.

Finally, ANDDH renews its call to all Nigeriens, male and female, to exemplify maturity, civic mindedness, and to respect the verdict of the ballot boxes, and not to use, in case of disagreement, anything but the legal means of recourse to maintain peace and concordance that our country needs.

May God bless Niger !

Thank you.

Niamey, 12 March, 2011.

ANDDH