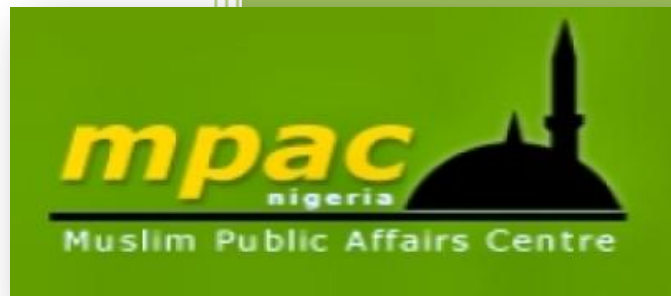


# MPAC Guidelines: General Elections 2011



**Be Active, Be Responsible**

# Muslim Citizens

It is essential that Nigerian Muslims participate in our nation's democratic process. There are many ways to do this; one of the simplest and most critical is voting in national and local elections. Civic participation, especially voting, is a citizenship right. Islam's message is comprehensive, encompassing all aspects of life. Inaction, or worse cynicism, denies this. If you are not present to give your opinions you are inadvertently providing space and mechanism for others to do so for you.

Our divine message is to serve humanity by enjoining the right, forbidding the wrong and believing in God. This puts a responsibility upon the Nigerian Muslim community to act for the betterment of the society and for our future. This philosophy should guide the 2011 elections. Nigerian Muslims should consider the following:

- Every eligible person should register to vote. A person who is not registered to vote is politically non-existent and has no voice.
- We should vote based on our conscience as shaped by the principles of Islam, in order to seek what is best for all people.
- Nigerian Muslims should not participate in any act of injustice, fraud, oppression or violence. We must remember that we are answerable to God for our actions.
- Raise awareness for their issues of concern, educate the public about candidates' views on a broad range of issues and encourage individuals to vote.

**You are the best community that has ever been brought forth for mankind: you enjoin good and forbid evil, and you believe in God. [Quran 3:110]**

It is our duty to give our leaders sincere advice. We should support public officials who prove themselves trustworthy and a benefit to the nation. We should vote to remove from public offices corrupt politicians and other political office holders whose services are of no benefit to the nation even when they are Muslims.

# Muslim Political Candidates

Your participation in public affairs should aim to promote good in the society— a service to fellow mankind- reducing poverty, combating crimes and corruption, promoting social welfare and justice, making quality medical care easily accessible, and ensuring everyone's



religious and civil rights are preserved. Bringing your Islamic values and character to political life to support such universal ideals as honesty, strong families, protection of the weak and securing justice for the oppressed. Empowering these ideals ensures that our nation projects to the world the best of its values not the worst of its misdoings. There is no better time for pious, honest, resourceful and conscientious Muslims to get politically involved in our nation's affair than the present moment when our governing structures are under severe stress.

Nigerian Muslims are an integral part of the larger Nigerian society; therefore Muslim political office holders should not limit their desire to promote good to *any* exclusive group. Good Islamic character compels us to care for others and show concern for their problems. Faith should compel us to act in ways that benefit all people. Muslims have a long history of utilizing bridges across major divides and diversity, strong values, extraordinary talents, work and family ethics to develop their societies; these are the traits Nigerian Muslim office holders must contribute to defining a better course for the Nigerian society.

## Guideline to Voting in the Elections

The purpose of this guide is not to offer advice as to which candidates or political party be considered by Muslims as worthy of our vote. We must all decide on our own, according to our own consciences which candidates we will vote for. Still, we must also keep in mind the criteria for judgment that God has taught us in the Qur'an and through the Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) sunnah or way of life.



Having said that, it is important for us to also say that the only way to change the things we don't like about our government and society at this time is to vote. In our representative democracy, we make our voices heard at the ballot box. This is why it is essential that we vote and that we vote according to a set of priorities, and based upon what we believe.

We have seen and heard enough over the past few years exactly what each of those aspiring to lead are capable of doing or saying they would do, and what their political parties are all about. It is now time to understand very clearly what is at stake for us and for our country, so that we can exact our will in this election cycle.

### **Following are the Issues of Concern to Muslims:**

MPAC urges Muslim voters to assess candidates, regardless of party affiliation, by considering the main issues which affect Muslims, reflect our national interests and then vote according to their conscience knowing full well that their vote is a trust (Amanah) with God for which they will be held accountable. Nigerian Muslims, being the majority in the population, share common concerns, needs and aspirations of our fellow citizens; concerns about education, health, security, quick and easy access to justice, national prosperity, and above all God consciousness, are common to us all. MPAC proposes, as a result of its lengthy and thorough consideration, that the main issues of concern to the Nigerian Muslims in the coming election should be as follows:

- ❖ Education
- ❖ Economy
- ❖ Sustainable livelihood
- ❖ Empowerment, Development and Welfare of the Youth and Women

- ❖ Fight Against Corruption
- ❖ Human Rights and Social Justice & Equality (including inter-religious strives and conflicts)
- ❖ Housing, Electricity & other infrastructures.
- ❖ Security
- ❖ Health
- ❖ Distributive Justice
- ❖ Poverty & Low Income
- ❖ Discrimination & Islamophobia
- ❖ Media & Culture
- ❖ Foreign Policy/International Affairs

The MPAC looks forward to a peaceful election where Muslims will turn out in numbers and fulfill their civic duty to influence the outcome of election 2011 in a positive and constructive manner, and in an effort to bring about what is best for their community, local constituency and our country. You can and should be the change you desire for the country. Muslims should be at the forefront of organized political efforts and will to bring enduring hope to millions of Nigerians who are experiencing despair. That change starts with you. As God states in the Qur'an: You are the best community that has ever been brought forth for mankind: you enjoin good and forbid evil, and you believe in God. [Quran 3:110]. We pray that God grants our country the blessing of God-fearing, courageous and compassionate leaders that will work for the prosperity, development and security of our nation, and God-conscious and forthright citizens.

**MPAC is an independent voice within the Muslim community and, as a policy, does not endorse campaigns or candidates.**



- Raising Awareness
- Lobbying for Change
- Promoting Empowerment
- Encouraging Dialogue and Good Relations
- Challenging Islamophobia and Discrimination



He is the One GOD; the Creator, the Initiator, the Designer.  
To Him belong the most beautiful names.  
Glorifying Him is everything in the heavens and the earth.  
He is the Almighty, Most Wise. [Al-Quran - 59:24]

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