

MPAC REPORT

2015

ELECTION 2015: MPAC Recommendations and Guidelines



Muslim Public Affairs Centre
21 Salvation Road, Opebi, Ikeja, Lagos

Contents

Recommendations and Guidelines



In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

For a number of years now, the Muslim Public Affairs Centre (MPAC) has advocated that the Nigerian Muslim constituency takes its vote seriously as a means, in a free and fair electoral process, to contribute to the emergence of responsive and ethical leaders that will lift our nation out of its present woes and miseries and provide the citizenry with the tangible benefits of good governance.

It is worth noting that the Muslim community has the potential to influence the outcome of elections in most constituencies through their vote alone, and much better when coordinated with other sectors of their respective local constituencies. Seeing our votes as Amanah (trust) and a means to effect lasting positive changes in our society for the benefit of all, we urge Nigerian Muslims to vote according to their conscience and elect God-fearing leaders based only on the candidates' track-records and competencies. We urge assessment of candidates - Muslim and non-Muslim - based on the candidates' worth and his/her knowledge, disposition and action plans on the issues that are of concern and importance to the community and the society.

Further to this, we urge Mosques and Muslim organisations in particular to seek face-to-face interactions with decision makers and figures of authority to discuss specific issues confronting the society, e.g. threat of terrorism, unemployment, insecurity, etc. and the specific issues we are dealing with in the Muslim community. Our nation is besieged with challenges

of epic proportion, and such meetings with the influential public figures and electable candidates should also provide opportunities for Muslim leaders and organisations to present excellent ideas to frame and shape an adequate narrative on the visions and strategies for the birth of a new Nigeria. A rebirth to usher in new promises and opportunities for all citizens, and secure inalienable rights for all Nigerians – foremost of which is the right to life.

Also, Muslim leaders should (continue to) hold elected officials, political candidates and public officials accountable and demand their commitment on vital issues that affect our community - such as Islamophobia, religious discrimination and harassment, etc.

Muslim kids have suffered in some public schools due to the use of hijab; a number of Muslim Youth Corpers and workers remain targeted and continue to suffer from open harassment and prejudice. These societal ills, and the media silence that

"I have been given the authority over you, and I am not the best of you. If I do well, help me; and if I do wrong, set me right. Sincere regard for truth is loyalty and disregard for truth is treachery. The weak amongst you shall be strong with me until I have secured his rights, if God will; and the strong amongst you shall be weak with me until I have wrestled from him the rights of others, if God will. Obey me so long as I obey God and His Messenger (Muhammad, PBUH). But if I disobey God and His Messenger, you owe me no obedience. Arise for your prayer, God have mercy upon you."

Caliph Abu Bakr's Inaugural Address

mostly accompany them, have naturally led to the rise in Islamophobic practices to the level of absurdity, and is set to climb even further in the current climate of the Boko Haram's ungodly activities.

VOTE SMART

Unless the government adopts a clear policy, which protects those targeted and secure constitutional rights to protect against direct and indirect discrimination, the trend will only get

worse. Discharging our civil responsibility conscientiously will enable us to contribute to building a system that values all Nigerians equally, places no price tag on being a Muslim and serves justice to all without any hindrance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are the issues we believe are of vital importance to consider for candidate suitability:

MPAC urges Muslim voters to assess candidates, regardless of party affiliation or slogans, by considering the main issues which affect Nigerians and reflect our national interests. Nigerian Muslims 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. As a result of lengthy and thorough consideration, MPAC proposes that the main issues of concern for the forthcoming election should be as follows:

- Security & Terrorism
- Education
- Health
- Justice
- Sustainable livelihood
- Discrimination & Islamophobia
- Youth Development and Empowerment
- Corruption
- Human Rights and Social Justice & Equality (including religious strives and conflicts)
- Minority Rights
- Housing, Electricity & other infrastructures.
- Poverty & Low Income
- Media & Culture
- Foreign Policy/International Affairs

“Our search together must be for leaders that have excelled in **knowledge, skills and character**”

PRODUCING WORTHY LEADERS: GUIDELINES

Candidates' track-record and political parties manifesto must set out clear understanding of important issues, and define the roadmap to bring about measurable improvements and needed changes. There is no shortcut to overcoming the predicament that has been piling on us; there is also no shortcut to achieving easy gains in this highly competitive and merit-based world. At this

election, we must commit to work hard to elect exemplary social leaders who, through their love for people and social competence, would be able to bring a sea-change in our communities and the wider society. Only leaders who are physically and emotionally attached to people around them, would be able to build on the strengths we have and work selflessly to turn our current challenges into opportunities.

As Muslims, we must think deep in identifying who our allies are and work credibly with others to build a great nation together. Our search together must be for leaders that have excelled in knowledge, skills and character. Our introspection, our duties and our dealings with others should be built on the deepest love that emanates from Allah. Muslim thought and opinion leaders, scholars, Imams and community leaders must increase the quality and frequency of awareness campaigns on the duty of voting responsibly, and teach the concept of the exercise as a TRUST that must not be squandered; a trust to bring about lasting positive changes, God willing, for our own benefits and that of the coming generations.

“...we must think deep in identifying who our allies are...”

MPAC looks forward to a peaceful election where Muslims will turn out in numbers and influence the outcome of Election 2015 in a positive and constructive manner and in an effort to bring about what is best for their community, local constituency and our country.

In the 2015 elections, the Nigerian people and our politicians especially have a heavy responsibility to be God-fearing and not to go down the well-trodden but self-destructive road of sectarian or political violence.

From the Inaugural Speech of Caliph Umar (RA)

"...Friends you have some rights on me, and I tell you of these **rights**, so that you may be in a position to call me to account. These rights are:

- Firstly, that I should not exact any tax or other levy from you not **authorized** by law;
- Secondly, that whatever taxes are lawfully realized from you are spent in your **best interests**;
- Thirdly, it is incumbent on me that I should **protect** the frontiers of your land;
- Fourthly, it is my duty to promote your **prosperity** and look after your **interests**;

MPAC is a non-partisan and incorporated public service agency working for Muslim Defence, Muslim Empowerment and for promoting individual liberties, religious, civil and political rights of Muslims.

MPAC is equally devoted to promoting the integration of Islam into the Nigerian pluralism, for a positive and constructive relationship between Nigerian Muslims and other elements in the society; building the Nigerian Muslim constituency to become an influential component in the Nigerian politics, at all levels of policy-making arena; and making Islamic ethical values available to the Nigerian political process.

As an experienced and independent voice within the Nigerian Muslim community working for the good of the society, MPAC operates on the core Islamic values of justice, mercy, human dignity, freedom, sanctity of human life and equality for all.

The Muslim Public Affairs Centre, MPAC, Nigeria

21 Salvation Road, Opebi
Lagos State
+234 803 535 0720, +234 807 604 9545
website: www.mpac-ng.org
email: admin@mpac-ng.org; communications@mpac-ng.org

January 2015