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PRESS STATEMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CSO, SOAI DEMAND IMMEDIATE RE-PUBLICATION OF CLEANED-UP VOTERS REGISTER FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY BEFORE DECEMBER 15 FINALISATION.

...says INEC must give Nigerians, including diaspora voters, another opportunity to verify their registration details, identify omissions and confirm polling-unit changes before the 2027 elections.

Abuja - Speak Out Africa Initiative (SOAI) calls on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to immediately **republish and upload online the purportedly cleaned-up Preliminary Register of Voters** for the 2027 general elections, following the Commission's announcement that it has concluded the clean-up process. The republished register should be made fully accessible to Nigerians, including eligible voters in the diaspora, for renewed public scrutiny before the Commission presents the Final Register to political parties on 15 December 2026.

Having announced the removal of 1,608,660 confirmed invalid registrations and 873 records belonging to verified deceased persons, INEC should not proceed directly from its internal clean-up exercise to the publication and handover of the Final Register without giving citizens another opportunity to examine the outcome of the corrections. **If the Commission is confident that the identified irregularities have been addressed, there should be no compelling reason to withhold the cleaned-up register from public scrutiny.**

SOAI considers this demand a necessary and practical transparency measure that INEC can implement within the remaining preparation period. It does not require the Commission to abandon its timetable, suspend its operations or wait for a comprehensive independent audit. Rather, it provides an immediate opportunity to demonstrate that the corrective measures announced by the Chairman have translated into an accurate, accessible and credible register.
The Commission must understand that announcing the removal of invalid records is not the same as independently demonstrating that the resulting register is accurate and free from errors. Nigerians deserve to see the outcome of the clean-up, not merely hear about it.

1. CITIZENS DESERVE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO VERIFY THE CLEANED-UP REGISTER.
The controversy surrounding the Preliminary Register has exposed significant public concerns, including apparently manipulated or artificial photographs, duplicate registrations, unusual registration patterns, questionable entries and reports of deceased persons remaining on the register. These concerns have generated widespread scrutiny and calls from political parties, CSOs and other stakeholders for greater transparency and independent verification.

INEC's disclosure that 1,608,660 registrations were confirmed invalid and removed, alongside 873 verified deceased-voter records, is substantial. However, the scale of the intervention makes another round of public scrutiny even more important. **Citizens must have the opportunity to establish whether their records remain intact, whether previously reported**

irregularities have been addressed, and whether eligible voters have been inadvertently excluded in the course of the clean-up while waiting for the December 15 finalization.
The Commission has acknowledged that automated biometric screening identifies records requiring examination, while authorised adjudication determines whether those records are invalid. This distinction is important because a record flagged for examination is not necessarily fraudulent. Consequently, **the final outcome must be open to scrutiny to ensure that the adjudication process has not resulted in wrongful deletions, unresolved omissions or other errors.** Republishing the cleaned-up register would allow voters to confirm their registration details, identify possible omissions, raise further objections and report inconsistencies before the final register is certified and printed. It would also give INEC an additional opportunity to correct errors while there is still time to do so, rather than discovering them after the final register has been handed over to political parties or closer to election day.

2. THE ADDITIONAL 453 POLLING UNITS MAKE REPUBLICATION EVEN MORE URGENT.
The need for renewed public scrutiny is further reinforced by the development surrounding the additional 453 polling units introduced by INEC as part of efforts to decongest overcrowded polling units and improve access to voting locations. Although the Commission has presumably presented the exercise as an administrative measure intended to address congestion and improve the voting experience, the development has raised legitimate questions about public awareness, transparency, voter notification and the possible implications for existing polling-unit arrangements.

A polling-unit adjustment is not merely an administrative exercise. It directly affects where citizens are expected to exercise their constitutional right to vote. Where polling-unit locations, allocations or designations change, affected voters must be adequately informed and given sufficient time to verify their new voting arrangements.

Many Nigerians may still be relying on the polling units where they previously registered or voted. Without clear communication and an opportunity to verify any changes, eligible voters could arrive at their former polling units on election day only to discover that their registration records have been reassigned or that they are expected to vote elsewhere.

Such confusion could result in avoidable delays, voter frustration, reduced participation and possible disenfranchisement, particularly among elderly citizens, persons with disabilities, first-time voters and those who may have limited access to digital information.

SOAI therefore urges INEC to use the republication of the cleaned-up register to provide clear information on any polling-unit changes affecting individual voters. The Commission should ensure that voters can verify their assigned polling units, understand any changes made to their previous arrangements and obtain reliable information about where they are expected to vote on 16 January 2027.

The creation of additional polling units must translate into improved access to voting, not new obstacles to participation. Transparency about these changes is essential to preventing confusion and ensuring that every eligible voter knows where to exercise their franchise.

3. REPUBLICATION WILL ADDRESS CONCERNS OVER THE STATUTORY CLAIMS AND OBJECTIONS PERIOD.

SOAI is also concerned about the controversy surrounding the timeline for receiving claims, objections and complaints following the online publication of the Preliminary Register.

Section 19(2) of the Electoral Act, 2026, provides for a 14-day period within which claims and objections relating to the Preliminary Register are to be considered. However, concerns have been raised about the timing of the online publication on 26 October 2026 and the subsequent provision of a dedicated complaint mechanism on 28 October 2026, two days after.

If the complaint mechanism was only made available on 28 October and the process was closed on 7 November, the opportunity provided to citizens appears to have been shorter than the statutory 14-day period. INEC must therefore publicly explain how the statutory period was calculated, how citizens were able to submit complaints during the relevant period and whether all eligible claims and objections were received and considered in accordance with the law.

Republishing the cleaned-up register would provide a practical additional opportunity for citizens to identify and report errors that may have remained unresolved or emerged during the correction process. It would also help address concerns that voters were not afforded a meaningful opportunity to scrutinise the register and exercise their statutory rights.

This measure should not be interpreted as replacing or curing any statutory obligation that may have been breached. INEC must still account for its compliance with the Electoral Act. Nevertheless, providing renewed public access and a clearly communicated correction mechanism would demonstrate responsiveness to citizens' concerns and help prevent avoidable disputes over the final register.

4. 15TH DECEMBER IS TOO CLOSE TO ELECTION DAY TO BEGIN ANOTHER ROUND OF PUBLIC SCRUTINY.

With the Final Register scheduled for presentation to political parties on 15 December 2026 and the presidential and National Assembly elections scheduled for 16 January 2027, the time available for identifying and resolving errors after finalisation will be extremely limited.

The **Commission should not wait until December 15 before making the cleaned-up register available for public scrutiny.** By then, the process will have moved considerably closer to finalisation, leaving little room for comprehensive public verification, further corrections and adequate communication with affected voters.

The period between now and December 15 should therefore be treated as an opportunity for additional transparency and quality assurance. Since INEC has announced that the clean-up exercise has been concluded, the most logical next step is to republish the corrected register immediately, allow sufficient time for public examination, receive any further documented concerns and resolve them before the final register is certified.

This is a reasonable request that serves both the Commission and the electorate. It allows INEC to identify outstanding problems before they become election-day controversies, while reassuring Nigerians that the final register is not being prepared behind closed doors.

5. INEC MUST USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REBUILD PUBLIC TRUST.

SOAI recognises the Commission's efforts in acknowledging the irregularities, disclosing the scale of the clean-up and identifying 54 personnel across 10 states for further investigation over alleged complicity in registration infractions. These disclosures represent important steps towards institutional accountability.

However, the credibility challenge facing INEC cannot be resolved through announcements alone. The controversy has deepened an existing trust deficit arising from previous electoral experiences and longstanding concerns about transparency, responsiveness and the handling of legitimate public complaints.

The Commission must recognise that the repeated calls by Nigerians, political parties and civil society stakeholders for greater scrutiny are not necessarily intended to discredit the institution. They reflect the public's desire for assurance that the 2027 elections will be conducted using an accurate and credible voters register.

Republishing the cleaned-up register would be a practical demonstration that INEC is listening to citizens and willing to subject its work to public scrutiny. It would also complement the calls for an independent audit by providing an immediate transparency safeguard within the Commission's existing electoral timetable.

Failure to yield to this reasonable demand could deepen public suspicion, reinforce perceptions of institutional opacity and create avoidable controversies around the final register. Conversely, taking this step would strengthen INEC's transparency credentials, reduce uncertainty among voters and improve confidence in the electoral process.

OUR DEMAND TO INEC

Speak Out Africa Initiative (SOAI) therefore calls on the Chairman of INEC, Professor Joash Amupitan, SAN, and the Commission to:

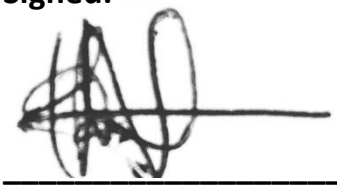
1. **Republish and upload the cleaned-up Preliminary Register of Voters on INEC's official website, following the Commission's announcement that the clean-up exercise has been concluded.**
2. **Provide sufficient time before 15 December 2026 for Nigerians, political parties, civil society organisations and eligible diaspora voters to scrutinise the corrected register and report any outstanding irregularities.**
3. **Provide an accessible mechanism for submitting and tracking complaints concerning omissions, wrongful deletions, duplicate records and other inconsistencies, with clear information on how and when such complaints will be resolved.**
4. **Make available reliable information on the additional 453 polling units and any resulting changes in voter allocation, so that every affected citizen can verify their correct polling-unit location before election day.**
5. **Ensure that all identified errors are corrected and that eligible voters are protected against wrongful exclusion before the Final Register is certified, printed and presented to political parties on 15 December 2026.**

THE 2027 ELECTIONS MUST NOT BE PRECEDED BY A VOTERS REGISTER THAT CITIZENS HAVE NOT HAD A MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITY TO VERIFY.

SOAI reiterates that the credibility of an election begins long before election day. It begins with an accurate voters register, transparent administrative decisions, accessible information and public confidence that every eligible citizen has an equal opportunity to participate.
INEC has announced that it has cleaned up the register. The Commission must now demonstrate that commitment by making the outcome visible and verifiable to the Nigerian public. The waiting period before December 15 should not be a period of silence; it should be a period of renewed transparency, public scrutiny and corrective action.

Our position is unequivocal: republish the cleaned-up voters register now, allow Nigerians to scrutinise it, correct outstanding errors and protect every eligible voter's right to vote. Public trust cannot be demanded; it must be earned through openness, accountability and demonstrable action.

Signed:



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