



Centre for
Humanitarian
Dialogue

Mediation for peace

Code of Conduct for Responsible Social Media in Kaduna State

During the 2023 elections

Preamble

The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) is a leading private diplomacy organisation with its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. In line with its mission of supporting communities to prevent, mitigate and resolve armed conflicts, HD has brokered numerous peace agreements across the globe that address the offline and online behaviour of conflict parties. As the frontlines of conflict become increasingly digital, HD is translating its experience in mediation to the world of online conflict.

As Nigeria's 2023 general election draws closer, HD seeks to mitigate risks associated with social media content and behaviour, particularly in Kaduna State, a state often affected by election-related violence. After thorough consultations and bilateral meetings, HD secured the support of stakeholders across the state to facilitate a dialogue on harmful social media behaviour. This Code of Conduct is a result of the dialogue and was drafted by political leaders, candidates and social media influencers who have a significant role in Kaduna State's social media environment.

General Principles

We, political leaders, candidates and influencers, agree to uphold the following basic principles of the Code of Conduct:

- Respect and guarantee the rights to privacy and the freedom of opinion, including criticism in politics, and access to information without hindrance.
- Take responsibility and be accountable for online actions and their consequences.
- Act in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner with of all forms of communication on social media, respecting the diversity of ethnicities, religions and cultures of the Nigerian people. We will ensure the production, distribution and consumption of conflict-sensitive content that guarantees women's rights and is inclusive of people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.
- Make a sustained effort to educate our supporters, particularly the youth, on social media risks and encourage positive online behaviour.



Standards for responsible use of social media

- Standards for party leaders
- Standards for candidates
- Standards for influencers

Standards for party leaders

- Ensure that all online campaigns are aligned with the regulations of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and are issue-based
- Refrain from using language on social media that threatens or incites violence against any person(s), group(s) or institution(s)
- Refrain from posting content that targets or harasses any person(s), group(s) or institution(s), particularly women
- Refrain from posting disinformation about political opponents and the election process and commit to fact checking all information before posting online
- Use only genuine and official accounts on social media and refrain from using fake accounts or inauthentic networks to mislead or undermine the election process
- Refrain from prematurely sharing election results online before being verified by INEC to avoid confusion on the authenticity of results which may lead to outbreaks of violence, and discourage party members from doing so too
- Condemn violations of these standards by our own party candidates
- Support the establishment of an independent monitoring body to enforce and monitor adherence to these standards

Standards for candidates

- Refrain from using language on social media that threatens or incites violence against any person(s), group(s) or institution(s)
- Refrain from posting content that targets or harasses any person(s), group(s) or institution(s), particularly women
- Refrain from posting disinformation about political opponents and the election process and commit to fact checking all information before posting online
- Use only genuine and official accounts on social media and refrain from using fake accounts or inauthentic networks to mislead or undermine the election process
- Refrain from prematurely sharing election results online before being verified by INEC to avoid confusion on the authenticity of results which may lead to outbreaks of violence
- Educate supporters on the risks of social media and encourage supporters to fact check information before sharing on social media
- Publicly condemn the actions and statements of the media or bloggers that contain threats, slander, or insults to a candidate that could lead to violence
- Support the establishment of an independent monitoring body to enforce and monitor adherence to these standards

Standards for influencers

- Refrain from using language on social media that threatens or incites violence against any person(s), group(s) or institution(s)
- Refrain from posting content that targets or harasses any person(s), group(s) or institution(s), particularly women
- Refrain from posting disinformation about political opponents and the election process and commit to fact checking all information before posting online
- Use genuine and official accounts on social media platforms and refrain from using fake accounts or inauthentic networks to promote our candidates
- Refrain from prematurely sharing election results online before being verified by INEC to avoid confusion on the authenticity of results which may lead to outbreaks of violence
- Provide our candidates with guidance on how to focus on factual, issue-based campaigns rather than engaging in inciteful personal attacks on social media platforms
- Establish a forum for social media influencers to communicate and share guidance on positive social media behaviour
- Support the establishment of an independent monitoring body to enforce and monitor adherence to these standards

Monitoring the Code of Conduct

To ensure the implementation and adherence of the principles and standards in this Code of Conduct, all signatories have entrusted HD to establish an independent monitoring body to monitor the online behaviour of all parties to the agreement. The monitoring body will be composed of non-partisan individuals with strong knowledge of Kaduna State's political and social context. The monitoring period will commence in October and will end in May 2023 after the inauguration of successful candidates.