

## Knowledge Production

DATE: Wednesday November 30, 2022 // TIME: 1-4pm  
VENUE: Reiz Continental Hotel, Abuja

...promoting electoral knowledge, accountability, and integrity



# ADELE JINADU AND ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA: KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND PRAXIS

November 30, 2022



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**KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE COLLOQUIUM ON ADELE  
JINADU AND ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA:  
KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND PRAXIS**

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This publication can be downloaded at

<https://electoralhub.iriad.org/electoralforum/colloquium/professor-adele-jinadu/>

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# Acronyms

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AAPS	African Association of Political Science
AfriMap	African Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanisms
AU	African Union
CDD	Centre for Democracy and Development
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DGD	Democratic Governance for Development
DFID	Department for International Development
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECES	European Centre for Electoral Support
ECONEC	ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West Africa Society
EMB	Election Management Body
EU-SDGN	European Union Support for Democratic Governance in Nigeria
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
ICPC	Independent Corrupt Practices & Other Related Offences
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
NIIA	Nigeria Institute of International Affairs
OAU	Organizations of Africa Unity
OSIWA	Open Society Initiative for West Africa
NEWG	Nigerian Election Working Group
NISER	Nigeria Institute of Social and Economic Research
NPSA	Nigeria Political Science Association
RERC	Registration and Election Review Committee
SSAN	Social Science Academy of Nigeria
TEI	The Electoral Institute
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP/DGD	United Nations Development Programme/Democratic Governance for Development

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# Background

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The Colloquium in honour of Professor Adele Jinadu, “*Adele Jinadu and Electoral Democracy in Nigeria: Knowledge Production and Praxis*” was held on Wednesday, 30 November 2022, at Reiz Continental Hotel, Abuja. The Colloquium focused on the intellectual input, contributions, and impact of Professor Adele Jinadu in electoral democracy in Nigeria. The objectives of the Colloquium were not only to celebrate an Icon of electoral democracy, Professor Adele Jinadu and his contributions, but also to reflect on the journey of Nigeria’s democracy in the areas of knowledge production and practice - electoral administration and advocacy- as well as to recommend actionable solutions as a way forward.

The Chair of the Colloquium was the former Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and Professor of Democratization, Professor Attahiru Jega OFR. Goodwill messages were from Professor Mahmood Yakubu, Hon. Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission, Professor Bolaji Owasanoye, SAN, Hon. Chairman, Independent Corrupt Practices & Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, Eminent Political Scientist, former Minister of External Affairs, Former DG, Nigeria Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), and Fellow of Social Science Academy of Nigeria (SSAN), Professor Okwudiba Nnoli, Eminent Political Scientist, Professor Hassan Saliu, President, Nigeria, Political Science Association (NPSA), Professor Tunde Adeniran, KJW, OFR, FCPA, Professor Emeritus of International Relations and Strategic Studies, Former Minister of Education and Ambassador Extraordinaire and Plenipotentiary to the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr. Kole Shettima, Africa Director, MacArthur Foundation. Other notable personalities were also present: Professor Antonia Simbine, DG, Nigeria Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) and former INEC National Commissioner, Hajia Amina Zakari, former INEC National Commissioner, Professor Okechukwu Ibeanu, former National Commissioner INEC, Professor Nuhu Yaqub (OFR), former Vice-Chancellor University of Abuja, Professor Ameze Guobadia, former DG, Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (NIALS). Professor Anthony Asiwaju Eminent Professor of History, Dr Bukar Usman, General Ishola Williams<sup>1</sup> and General Martin Luther Agwai.

The Colloquium also featured respectable panellists who are giants in the subject of the colloquium and mentees of the Professor Jinadu as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Bukar Usman and General Ishola are alumni of the Kings College Lagos where Professor Jinadu had his secondary education

- a. Professor Jibrin Ibrahim, Professor of Political Science and Foremost Public Intellectual.
- b. Professor Okechukwu Ibeanu, former INEC National Commissioner and Professor of Political Science
- c. Professor Antonia T. Simbine, D.G, Nigeria Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) and Former INEC National Commissioner.
- d. Professor Ameze Guobadia, Professor Law and Former D.G, Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies.

Other participants included members of civil society, academia, and policymakers.

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## Key Takeaways from the Colloquium

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During the Colloquium, great intellectuals, professionals, and well-wishers shared personal experiences of encountering the amiable Professor Adele Jinadu in different spaces and spheres of life. Discussions covered the broader notion of electoral democracy and electoral governance - rules-making, implementation, and adjudication. Other issues were the electoral reforms of the last 15 years, beginning with the Uwais's Electoral Reform Committee (ERC) and how the report of the ERC set the background and tone to the reforms witnessed in the electoral process since then. There was also a profound reflection on Nigeria's democratic project and journey since the return to civil rule in 1999.

It is worth noting that Professor Adele Jinadu played a vital role in the ERC. Professor Jinadu also chaired the other central independent committee, the Registration and Election Review Committee (RERC)<sup>2</sup> set up by INEC to assess the two major electoral events of 2011, namely, the nationwide register of voters, and the general election. The recommendations from the RERC formed the mainstay for the reforms witnessed within INEC so far.

This section provides the summary of the discussions during the colloquium. These are presented as key insights and recommendations under three broad themes as follows:

- A. **On Professor Adele Jinadu:** This provides insights into Professor Jinadu as an individual, teacher, scholar, electoral administrator, advocate, and electoral democracy icon.
- B. **On Electoral Democracy:** Highlights the difficulties, challenges, and promises of electoral democracy.
- C. **On INEC and Electoral Reforms:** Focuses on Nigeria's electoral process, governance issues, and challenges. It emphasizes the recent history and depths of electoral reforms in the last three electoral cycles. It concludes with a call to action to protect the gains and advances in electoral integrity to prevent rollbacks by the current crops of the predatory political class.

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<sup>2</sup> The RERC comprised of seven members. Recommendations included: the development of strategic and operational plans for elections and INEC, Constitutional and Electoral Act amendment, early release of notice of election, monitoring of political parties, number of political parties/deregistration of parties.

## On Professor Adele Jinadu

1. Professor Jinadu's contributions to democracy and electoral governance are to understand the mechanisms, operation, and interconnections of a broad ensemble of relations in an electoral ecosystem. These invaluable contributions have impacted all aspects of election management, from EMBs to political parties, Civil Society, media, and judiciary.
2. As a professor of political theory and practitioner of electoral democracy per excellence, Professor Adele Jinadu has written extensively on democracy and produced sterling students who have become intellectuals in their rights.
3. Professor Jinadu has shown the importance of electoral Democracy in Nigeria in his life work as the struggle to improve the democratic performance under the National Electoral Commission, set up under military rule from the difficulties and challenges faced by the first republic and second republic.
4. For Professor Jinadu, scholarship is sustained engagement with writing and theorizing in the social world and engaging and connecting with that world. To Professor Jinadu, theorizing is a "lived" and "living experience." In the true sense of the word, *praxis* is the integral relationship between theory and practice.
5. Professor Adele Jinadu served as a Member<sup>3</sup> of the Professor Eme Awa led National Electoral Commission (1987-1992); this provided him insights into the operations of an Election Management Body (EMB).
6. Professor Adele Jinadu served as the Chair of INEC's 2011 Registration and Election Review Committee (RERC), an independent committee set up to access the 2011 registration of voters and the General Election. The recommendations from the RERC formed the backbone of the reform process in INEC, rolled out by the Jega's Commission and continued by the Yakubu's Commission. The recommendations from the RERC contributed significantly to the wholesome reforms of INEC in the last 12 years.

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<sup>3</sup> What we know today as National Commissioner of INEC

7. Professor Adele Jinadu served on the Board of The Electoral Institute (TEI), one of the reorganized institutions following the report of the RERC. As a member of the Board of TEI, he applies his vast knowledge of the electoral process to bring tangible innovations and technical know-how to support INEC. His Contributions have immensely influenced the Commission's activities in the last twelve years.
8. Professor Adele Jinadu was once the President of the Nigeria Political Science Association (NPSA). Professor Jinadu's contributions will be remembered particularly in the resuscitation of the Association after five years of inactivity by the preceding executives. He served for a term and handed over a much more improved Association to his successor in Abuja in 2005. He has remained a mentor and great supporter of the Association as he continues to contribute immeasurably to the Association, serving as the Chief Adviser to the current President.
9. Professor Adele Jinadu sees his calling as the search for wisdom about proper conduct by which he could guide the intellectual and moral improvement of Nigerians. He spends quality time discussing virtue, justice, righteousness, and good governance wherever fellow citizens congregate. He has not abandoned public service, as seen from his contributions to the work of some government agencies and civil society organizations.
10. Professor Adele Jinadu's rich contribution to electoral governance is further demonstrated in his membership in The Electoral Forum. A Forum aimed at deepening understanding of the electoral process in Nigeria and providing solutions to improve electoral integrity and credibility. Similarly, he is the Chair of the Centre for Democracy and Development's Election Analysis Centre. Professor Jinadu is undoubtedly an embodiment of profound knowledge, rich experience, and expertise in electoral democracy.
11. Professor Adele Jinadu is an intellectual that can link political theory with forms of practical engagement that lead to the consolidation of democracy. He has also been an active knowledge producer about African electoral governance, a member of several election observation missions, and an advocate embedded within civil society platforms.
12. Professor Adele Jinadu contributed to identifying mandate protection by citizens as the key strategy for deepening democracy. Consequently, this has led to the practice

of citizen agency in mandate protection, commonly understood as a norm and deployed throughout Nigeria.

13. Finally, on praxis, Professor Adele Jinadu has been involved in electoral democracy at the different spaces and spheres of practice, such as an election administrator, with civil society organizations, with activist scholars whom he has mentored over time. He has been involved through these spheres in election administration and activism.

## On Electoral Democracy

14. In understanding electoral democracy, we first need to understand the difficulties of electoral democracy in Nigeria, which are *structure, infrastructure, and culture, the character of Nigeria's ethnic federalism (the state)* and the impact of these on the democracy
15. A significant problem of electoral democracy is the culture of excessive power, particularly the power of incumbency. Riding on this is a question of infrastructure to drive expectations of democracy.
16. Another problem of electoral democracy in Nigeria is the political class and money politics. The political class and practices need restructuring and rejigging with new actors, norms, and procedures. And to ensure these new actors act differently, we need to de-primate money politics by stopping the movement of money in the political sector
17. It is vital to commit to researching universal norms and standards to build our electoral democracy upon. This can be classified into four critical criteria as follows:
  - a. **Humanism:** Electoral democracy must be humanistic in terms of uplifting all people and not just a few. And in dealing with the quality of life of the vast majority.
  - b. **Integrity:** Of those who run the system and the elections. The need to focus on the election administrators regarding accountability and integrity is crucial.
  - c. **Limited Powers:** There is a need to limit the power of the incumbents to allow for fairness and equity in the field of play
  - d. **Inclusiveness.** There should be more consultations, broad base engagements, and inclusiveness in decision making. All persons, groups, categories should matter and be allowed to participate and be represented.
18. Required in addition to these four standards is the right balance between structure and agency. The *structure* is how the system is designed and organized, whereas *agency* refers to the actors who drive the system.
19. Where electoral democracy consistently fails to attain these norms, citizens must regain the right to alter that system, not just in terms of the structure through

electoral reforms but also in holding the personnel to account. The role of political theory is to assist the political community with ways to actualize these operations.

20. They recognize that the elected never set out to exercise power democratically unless citizens constrain them to do so, and the role of civil society in providing this constraint is crucial. This approach has shown the value of always understanding the concept of democracy and hidden etiquette.
21. There is an urgent need to move away from townhalls of media houses and cities to a more inclusive townhalls where rural dwellers, market sellers, traditionists etc. are invited and are participants.
22. The twin issues of mandate and mandate protection are essential. But in understanding what is happening to the mandate, we must closely examine political behaviour and political culture. Beyond the technical understanding of the twin issues, is to look at the trust between those *giving* the mandate and those *given* mandate
23. Examining political behaviour and culture will help us to show the various practices that exist in the society which depreciate *the mandate*, such as those practices that renegades the uses of *the mandate* including the choice to political violence in determining outcomes
24. The people have used *the mandate* to exercise their power. Henceforth, it is important to ensure that those who wield power do so in conformity with those who gave them the mandate – that is, the citizens. It is, therefore, beneficial if this logic is practiced in advocacies conducted by civil society.
25. It is crucial to have strong civil society organizations based on research and knowledge.
26. We need a competent and knowledgeable election management body with the ethics to ensure its work is based on the foundational principles and values of electoral democracy it serves.
27. Finally, the challenges and difficulties of electoral democracy of the past decade encourage us to seek new pathways we should try to confront the internal challenge of making sure that praxis works.

## **On INEC and Electoral Reforms**

28. The core message and the symbolism of the Colloquium is the imperative for our intellectuals, middle and professional classes, and civil society to reclaim and reinvent the democratic impulses found in knowledge production about democracy and development. These are by Afrocentric African and progressive expatriate Africanist scholars in universities and research centers such as the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA).
29. It is imperative that the reclamation and reinvention be done urgently and vigorously if we are to advance "the feasibility" of democracy. Bold action must be taken to unlock the heavy fetters placed on democracy and development by the political class, the country's party system, and the frightening loss of direction in our pro-democracy civil society organizations.
30. There are worrisome signs, particularly within the civil society, of a growing vicious attempt to discredit the leadership of INEC to bring about the reversals of huge gains and advances towards the routinization of electoral democracy in the country, made under Attahiru Jega and now under Mahmood Yakubu.
31. The Colloquium reflects our enduring hope in combining theory and praxis in navigating the tortuous knowledge production and praxis nexus skillfully as mechanisms for nurturing and sustaining democracy and development in our country.
32. Under Professor Jega's visionary and strategically proactive leadership, INEC was reinvented through internal administrative and financial reform and the deployment of technology to sanitize the Nigerian electoral process. These reforms have been continued and strategically consolidated under the leadership of Professor Yakubu.
33. There has been heavy intellectual capital invested in the reforms, in the forms of knowledge production and application since the 2007/2008 Electoral Reform Committee (ERC). The ERC recommendations, in a fundamental sense, presaged some of the bold reforms carried out by INEC under the leadership of Attahiru Jega and Mahmood Yakubu since 2015.

34. Electoral reforms of the last decade witnessed profound intellectual engagements, support, and rigorous policy formulation from the support of respected intellectual giants in political and social sciences in Nigeria.
35. Intellectual work has been sacrificed on the altar of crass materialism and philistinism. Consequently, with the commoditization of the scholarly vocation, we must reaffirm our faith in and commit ourselves as an expression of our social responsibility to the transformative power of knowledge production as a force for electoral democracy and development in Nigeria.
36. Pro-democracy stakeholders in the state and society must devote, now more than ever, more proactive energy to resist ongoing attempts by anti-democracy forces in the state and society in and outside our country to derail the electoral process by launching a coordinated attack on INEC.
37. INEC is not the enemy of democracy. Instead, it is those who are afraid of INEC's daring attempt to routinize electoral integrity as the core of our country's electoral process and electoral governance and whom we must expose for their diversionary tactics to shift attention from their undemocratic, unpatriotic agenda.
38. To stop a sliding back, there is a need for intergenerational cooperation to ensure a more proactive drive in steadily building upon the gains of a reenergized intellectual workforce attaining transformational achievements in Nigeria's electoral democracy and development.
39. There is a great need and urgency as we march towards the 2023 general election to address and counter anti-democracy forces in state and society who are poised and determined to roll back the gains from reclamation, reinvention, and reforms in the electoral process of the last fifteen years.
40. Finally, mandate protection by citizens as an expression of democratic agency and rights and a strategy for democracy consolidation should be revived and encouraged going into the 2023 General Election.

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## Conclusion

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The central message and call of the Colloquium are the imperative for all citizens, including the intellectuals, middle and professional classes, and civil society, to reclaim and reinvent the democratic impulses that found expression in knowledge production about democracy and development by Afrocentric African and progressive expatriate Africanist scholars. These are established in various African intellectual sites, including centers such as CODESRIA. Nigerian public intellectuals should speak truth to power, from the heart and without dissimulation and dishonesty, described as "defensive radicalism" by Claude Ake. Also important is the point about moving from just theories and theorizing to finding trends and openness, rather than abstraction, to being more authentic knowledge producers.

The Colloquium was a very insightful and exciting gathering of intellectuals, professionals, and stakeholders in the electoral space and academia. The Colloquium's sub-title, Knowledge Production and Praxis, highlights the theory-praxis nexus. The Colloquium was illuminating as it brought into light the outstanding contributions and achievements of Professor Adele Jinadu in electoral knowledge production, administration, and advocacy, striding theorizing and practice of electoral democracy - the academia and the electoral practice.

Professor Adele Jinadu is a political scientist per excellence, while the previous generation could boast of intellectual giants such as Billy Dudley and Claude Ake. This generation is pleased and proud to have Adele Jinadu among us. Testimonies shared prove that Professor Adele has been a great mentor to three generations of social scientists from his generation to the present, and his works will impact future generations. His achievements are profound and have been instrumental to the development of Nigeria's electoral democracy in the last three decades. Professor Jinadu is undoubtedly an embodiment of profound knowledge, rich experience, and expertise in electoral democracy.

Let it also be reiterated that INEC is not the enemy. Still, the zero-sum politics of the predatory ruling class determined to roll back the gains of our electoral democracy with their unethical practices and approach to electoral craftsmanship of 'do or die' politics.

On a final note, as Professor Adele Jinadu noted and encouraged, we should not conform to the "siddonlook" narrative but rather embrace the heroic, uplifting message expressed in Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem "Ulysses."



## **ABOUT THE ELECTORAL**

**The Electoral Hub is an affiliate of the Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD). It is a multidisciplinary knowledge and advocacy hub which seeks to improve electoral knowledge, accountability and integrity. Our mission is to strengthen electoral governance and accountability in Nigeria through the promoting electoral knowledge, provision of data and critical analysis, improving the integrity and credibility of the electoral process and democratic governance. Our vision is to be an electoral knowledge and innovation one-stop-shop for sustainable democracy. Our core values are knowledge-exchange, inclusion, justice, equity, transparency, and accountability.**



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