

ECOWAS Commission calls for concrete actions to Safeguard Democracy in West Africa



The President of the ECOWAS Commission, Omar Aliou Touray, has called for concrete actions to safeguard democracy and to restore the region as the bastion of democracy in Africa. He made the call in his address at the second ordinary session of the ECOWAS Parliament of the year 2023 in Abuja. He said that the Republic of Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Guinea have all experienced coups recently; creating fears that democracy could be in danger in the region. "The resurgence of coup d'états has challenged us all in more ways than one and led us to reflect on what is not working in our process of consolidating democracy.

"As politicians, you are best suited to guide us on what we must do to tackle the root causes of all these unconstitutional changes of government. "We count on your wisdom to help in safeguarding the rights of our people and for the preservation of peace, security, and stability, which are necessary for our socio-economic development and regional integration process," he said while addressing the parliament. Touray said, at the political level, ECOWAS was engaging in dialogue with the Member States in transition, namely Burkina Faso, Mali, and Guinea, in order to support them to return to normal constitutional order through the organization of free, transparent and inclusive elections. "As far as the Republic of Niger is concerned, we adhere to the guidance of the current Chairman of ECOWAS to resolve this crisis through dialogue and negotiation. "On the security front, the region continues to suffer from attacks by armed

groups and terrorists who seriously threaten the territorial integrity of Mali and Burkina Faso, resulting in loss of life, material damage and millions of displaced persons and refugees. "In this regard, we continue to provide multifaceted support to help these countries face these challenges, despite the sanctions," he said.

Speaking earlier, the Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, Dr Sidie Mohammed Tunis, noted that the region's prosperity and security are inextricably linked to its members shared responsibility to look out for one another. He said: "Only a foolish neighbour goes to bed when his neighbour's roof is on fire," Tunis said. "In a region of interconnected threats and challenges, we can only address our issues effectively through broad, deep, and sustained cooperation among states."

Tunis also called for greater self-reliance from ECOWAS member states. He said that the region cannot rely on outside help to solve its problems. "We need to be more self-reliant," Tunis said. "Each Member State must take on more responsibility for the development and advancement of the ECOWAS region." Despite its numerous challenges, Tunis expressed confidence that the ECOWAS region is on the right track. He pointed to the recent successful presidential and legislative elections in the Republic of Liberia as a sign of progress. "The people of Liberia have shown us that democracy is possible in our region," Tunis said. "We can all learn from their example."

The opening ceremony of the 2023 Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Parliament currently underway in Abuja on Wednesday 22nd November, 2023

