



bishop's question about forthcoming presidential election in Nigeria.

On 25th March 2015 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, received the following answer to a written question about the forthcoming Presidential election in Nigeria:

The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the prospects for a free and fair Presidential election in Nigeria in 2015, and (2) progress made by the Nigerian Independent National Electoral Commission towards minimising the possibility of electoral fraud. [HL5761]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The British Government is closely following developments ahead of Nigeria's presidential and gubernatorial elections on 28 March and 11 April respectively. This vote will set Nigeria's course for the next five years and beyond and as Africa's largest democracy its impact will be felt well beyond its borders. It is vital the elections go ahead without any further delay on 28 March.

As the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond), said on 8 February, the Nigerian people have the right to credible, peaceful and transparent elections. The UK welcomes efforts undertaken to date to this end, including the 14 January 'Abuja Accord' in which political leaders committed to preventing violence before, during and after the elections.

We encourage all parties to respect the result of the vote and to pursue any grievances through the proper channels. We continue to support Nigeria's Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) to deliver the elections. Over 80% of Permanent Voter Cards have now been collected and field tests of the card readers were broadly successful. This is testament to the positive advances that INEC have made, under the leadership of Professor Jega, to enable the successful delivery of the elections.

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