



**AFRICA CENTER FOR  
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION**

*Transforming Africa's Future through Digital Leadership*

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14<sup>th</sup> October, 2024

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Press Statement

Immediate release

### Voter register discrepancies

## A forensic audit of EC's IT systems is the surest way of ensuring a free and fair election. EC's Use of External Individual IT Consultants puts Election 2024 security at grave risk.

The Africa Center for Digital Transformation (ACDT) is calling on all stakeholders, including political parties, civil society organizations, and the general public, to ensure an immediate and a comprehensive forensic audit of the Electoral Commission's (EC) IT systems.

In the wake of increasing digital threats, data manipulation risks, and the critical role of technology in electoral processes, it has become imperative for the EC to ensure the integrity, transparency, and security of its IT infrastructure. The reliability of our electoral systems is vital for the credibility of election 2024 and for maintaining public trust in our democratic institutions.

There are evidence of cyberattacks targeting institutions worldwide, including electoral bodies, more specially; there are evidence of cyberattack on the Electoral commission of Ghana. We believe a forensic audit of the EC's IT systems will help identify and address any vulnerabilities that could potentially compromise the integrity of election data.

It is essential that the electoral database, voting systems, and digital platforms used by the EC are free from any form of interference. A forensic audit will ensure that the systems are working as intended, that there has been no unauthorized access, and that the public can have full confidence in the results produced.

Given that elections are the cornerstone of democracy, public confidence in the electoral process is non-negotiable. Any doubts about the integrity of the EC's systems could undermine trust in our democratic processes and destabilize the socio-political environment.

The Africa Center for Digital Transformation [ACDT] also profoundly expresses with deep concern over the repetitive decision by the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC) to hire external individual IT consultants for critical technological functions.

We recognize the importance of leveraging IT expertise to strengthen electoral processes, but the habit of consistently engaging external individual consultants poses significant risks to the integrity of Ghana's national elections especially if there are concerns of direct relationship with political actors. The Consistency of hiring external individual IT consultants undermines in-house capacity development of IT expertise.





Ladies and gentlemen of the Press, with about 60 days to election 2024, the Electoral Commission of Ghana is only seeking to talk away the call for a forensic audit of its IT Systems by simply quoting C.I 91 regulation 23 and 24, even though the EC has acknowledged discrepancies in the Provisional Voter Register (PVR).

An Electoral Commission currently operating behind it's time table should be forthright in ensuring that all issues of discrepancies are addressed.

The Electoral Commission of Ghana, in a Press Statement signed by the Chairperson; Mrs Jean Mensa dated 25th September, 2024 with Ref:C/EC.07/SF.2/V6.2, in her quest to respond to the call been made by many peace –seeking Ghanaians both in Ghana and abroad for a forensic audit of the PVR said the following on Page 6 of the statement:

*Corrupt and Incomplete Voter Data*

*The production of the provision voter Register (PVR) cannot be perfect. It involves the retrieval of data from a database and formatting it into a Register that is presented to the Public. In the extraction of the data, network errors may occur and lead to the corruption of data which is then expressed in the PVR. This did occur in the production of the PVR.*

*However, this was detected and the affected registers were promptly regenerated during the Exhibition. The Commission has since instituted a more stringent process of quality checking and assures the General Public that these errors will not be present in the Final Voter Register printed.*



The Africa Center for Digital Transformation [ACDT] has identified several negative implications arising from the decision of the Electoral Commission to consistently hire external individual IT consultants as against developing a robust in-house IT expertise.

**1. Data Security and Privacy Concerns.**

The management of sensitive electoral data should remain within the oversight of trusted and accountable internal personnel. Outsourcing this responsibility to external individuals exposes critical data to unnecessary risks, including potential breaches of data privacy.

These individuals, without long-term accountability to the Electoral Commission, may not be fully aligned with Ghana's data protection standards. This could compromise the security of voters' information and erode public trust in the electoral process.

**2. Weakening Local IT Capacity.**

The engagement of external individual consultants comes at the expense of nurturing local IT talent. This short-term solution hinders the development of in-house expertise within the EC, which is crucial for managing complex electoral technologies in future elections. Building the capacity of local professionals should be a priority, as it creates a sustainable foundation for the country's digital transformation. Continuous dependence on external individuals stifles opportunities for Ghanaians to acquire the skills and experience needed to manage sophisticated electoral systems.

**3. Increased Financial Burden.**

The hiring of external individual consultants often comes with high consultancy fees, which can place an unnecessary strain on the national budget. This could have long-term financial implications for taxpayers, as the need for external consultants will persist if the internal capacity gap is not addressed. Investing these resources in training and upskilling local IT professionals would provide a more cost-effective and sustainable solution for managing the EC's technological needs.

**4. Potential for Systemic Disruptions.**

Individual external consultants, with limited institutional knowledge of the EC's operational framework and electoral landscape, are more prone to making errors or experiencing difficulties when managing complex IT systems. The lack of continuity and institutional familiarity could lead to operational disruptions, especially during critical periods like voter registration or the collation of election results. Internal experts with a deep understanding of the electoral processes would be better positioned to ensure stability and efficiency.





## Recommendations

To mitigate these risks, the Africa Center for Digital Transformation urges the Electoral Commission of Ghana to reconsider its strategy of hiring external individual IT consultants and focus on long-term, sustainable solutions that prioritise national interests. We recommend the following steps:

- **Invest in Local IT Talent**

Develop a comprehensive strategy to train and empower local IT professionals. This includes partnerships with educational institutions, tech hubs, and government agencies to build a strong pipeline of skilled IT experts capable of managing the EC's technological infrastructures.

- **Strengthen Internal IT Capacity**

Establish an internal IT department with skilled professionals who have long-term knowledge of Ghana's electoral systems. This approach ensures continuity and accountability while reducing the dependency on external individuals.

- **Enhance Transparency and Data Protection Measures**

Implement robust data protection protocols and ensure that all IT personnel, whether internal or external, adhere to strict transparency and accountability measures. These steps will reinforce public trust in the EC's ability to safeguard sensitive electoral data.

- **Prioritise National Interest in IT Decision-Making**

Ensure that all technology-related decisions prioritise Ghana's long-term digital transformation goals. Outsourcing should only be considered when absolutely necessary, and efforts should be made to cultivate local expertise that aligns with national objectives.

At the ACDT, we believe that a robust, transparent, and secure electoral process is fundamental to the health of our democracy. A forensic audit of the EC's IT systems is not only an immediate necessity but also a long-term investment in the integrity of our democratic processes.

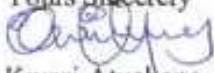
We call on all stakeholders to come together in the spirit of national unity to ensure this audit is conducted with speed and precision. Together, we can safeguard the democratic future of our nation.



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The Africa Center for Digital Transformation believes that Ghana's electoral process should be driven by a vision of sustainability, accountability, and local empowerment. The decision to hire external individual IT consultants undermines these goals and places undue risks on the country's electoral integrity. We call on the Electoral Commission of Ghana to take decisive steps in building local IT capacity and securing the future of Ghana's digital governance. Thank you.

Yours Sincerely  
  
 Kwesi Atuahene  
 Executive Director  
 (0266080904)



CC:

1. Chairperson; Electoral Commission of Ghana
2. Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament
3. Majority Leader, Parliament of Ghana
4. Minority leader, Parliament of Ghana
5. General Secretary; New Patriotic Party (NPP)
6. General Secretary, New Democratic Congress (NDC)
7. General Secretary, Great Consolidated Popular Party (GCPP)
8. General Secretary, All People's Congress (APC)
9. General Secretary; Liberal Party of Ghana (LPG)
10. General Secretary; National Democratic Party (NDP)
11. General Secretary; Convention People's Party (CPP)
12. General Secretary; Ghana Freedom Party (GFP)
13. General Secretary; Ghana Union Movement (GUM)
14. Hon. Alan John Kwadwo Kyerematen; Independent Candidate
15. Hon. Nana Kwame Bediako; Independent Candidate
16. Hon. Kofi koranteng; Independent candidate
17. Hon. George Twum –Barima Adu; Independent Candidate

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