

Yiaga Africa Study and Election Observation Mission to the 2024 South Africa Elections



Delegation: Leadership Biographies



Mrs. Davidetta Browne Lansanah

Chairperson of the National Electoral Commission (NEC), Liberia

Madame Davidetta Browne-Lansanah hails from Maryland County and holds double Baccalaureate Degrees in Public Administration and Political Science respectively, from the University of Liberia, and a Master of Public Administration Degree in Public Sector Management from the Cuttington University Graduate School.

She is a veteran broadcast journalist who worked many years in the field at the Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS), Star Radio, and the Talking Drum Studio (Search for Common Ground). The Acting Chairperson of NEC also worked for a decade as a National Professional within the UN System as a Communications Officer with UNOMIL and UNDHA/UNHACO and as an Associate Gender Officer, in the Office of the Gender Adviser (OGA) with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

Madame Browne-Lansanah, like other chairpersons like Emmett Harmon, Cllr. Frances Allison, James Fromayan, Jerome Kokoyah, and others, lead Liberia to its new elected leaders as the second post-war female chairperson of the NEC.



Senator Sharafadeen Abiodun Alli

Chairman, Nigerian Senate Committee on Electoral Matters Commission (INEC)

Born in Oyo State, the lawmaker is currently serving his first term as Senator, representing Oyo South Senatorial District on the platform of the All Progressive Congress (APC) in the 10th Assembly. He chairs the Senate Committee on Electoral Matters and is Vice-Chairman of the Senate Committee on Customs. Senator Alli has a history of prominent political roles, including serving as the Secretary to the Oyo State Government, Chairman of Ibadan North local government, and Chairman of Odu'a Investment Company Limited. Senator Alli

earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in law from the University of Ibadan, and outside politics, he is a dedicated family man, philanthropist, and Maye Balogun of Ibadanland.



Senator Abdulaziz Musa Yar'adua

Deputy Chairman, Nigerian Senate Committee on Electoral Matters

Abdulaziz Musa Yar'adua hails from Katsina Local Government Area of Katsina State.

During his military career, he served in the Nigerian Army Signals Corps. Senator Yar'adua attended several civil and military courses, seminars, and workshops. He also held several military appointments ranging between staff, instruction, and command positions. His last appointment was an assistant director of Records, Department of Military Secretary, Army Headquarters, Abuja. He

was awarded the Silver Jubilee Medal, Meritorious Service Star, Forces Service Star, and Nigerian Army Sports Personnel Medal. He attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel before his voluntary retirement from the service on 30 September 2010, after 29 years and 4 months of eventful military service. After a fulfilling and eventful military career he resigned and ventured into politics. He contested in the gubernatorial elections and later contested for a seat at the House of Representatives.



In 2019, he contested for a seat in the senate to represent Katsina Central Senatorial District. He contested the senate seat as the candidate of the APC for Katsina Central in 2023 general elections and won convincingly. Presently, he is the Chairman of the 10th Senate Committee on Army and Deputy Chairman, Nigerian Senate Committee on Electoral Matters. Presently, he holds the title of Mutawallen Katsina and Akijiogo 1 of Ezeokwe Kingdom, Ibagwa Nike (Enugu) and Agba Akin of Odooro-Ekiti.



Hon. Prince Adebayo Balogun

Chairman, Nigerian House of Representatives Committee on Electoral Matters

Prince Bayo Balogun is currently serving his second term as a member of Nigeria's National Assembly (NASS) in the House of Representatives. Hon. Balogun hails from Ibeju-Lekki in Lagos state, Nigeria and represents Ibeju-Lekki Federal Constituency of Lagos state in the 10th National Assembly. He chairs the House of Representatives Committee on Electoral Matters and has a history of prominent political roles.

He is the former Commissioner Lagos State House of Assembly Service Commission, former Secretary to the local government at Ibeju-Lekki local government and the former Executive Chairman at the Ibeju-Lekki local government. From Lagos State University, Hon. Balogun earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree.



Hon Yakubu Adamu Danmaliki

Member, Nigerian House of Representatives Committee on Electoral Matters

Honorable Adamu Yakubu Danmaliki is a distinguished Nigerian politician who serves at the esteemed House of Representatives level. With a fervent commitment to public service, he currently holds the esteemed position of Deputy Chairman within the House Committee on Electoral Matters. In this pivotal role, Honorable Danmaliki plays a significant part in shaping electoral policies and legislation crucial to the democratic process in Nigeria.

Representing the Birnin-Kudu/Buji Constituency of Jigawa State in the 10th National Assembly, Honorable Danmaliki is deeply rooted in his community and dedicated to advocating for the needs and concerns of his constituents. His tenure as a lawmaker has been marked by tireless efforts to promote development initiatives, address pressing issues, and enact legislation that uplifts the welfare of the people he serves.

With a strong sense of integrity and a steadfast commitment to his duties, Honorable Adamu Yakubu Danmaliki embodies the principles of leadership and service. He remains a beacon of hope and a driving force for positive change within the Nigerian political landscape, earning the respect and admiration of colleagues and constituents alike.



Dr. Matthew Ayibakuro Noah

Governance Adviser, FCDO, Nigeria

Dr. Matthew is a Governance and Development Expert with academic and policy experience working on the cross-cutting issues of democratic governance, international development law, and human rights. His professional experience spans work in the public sector, private sector, academia, and international development. He is a fellow of the Institute of Professional Managers and Administrators and is a member of the Royal Institute of International Affairs – Chatham House, International Dispute Resolution Institute, and the

Interdisciplinary Corruption Research Network. He holds a Postgraduate Diploma in International Economic Law from Queen Mary University and a Master's in Law from King's College London. Matthew also holds a PhD from the University of Birmingham, where his research focused on rights-based approaches to anti corruption in sub-Saharan Africa. Matthew currently works as a Governance Adviser with the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office at the British High Commission, Abuja where he leads the Mission's work on Elections, Legal Reform, and Democracy.



Sarah Mostafa-Kamel

Program Manager, The Symposium for Strength and Solidarity

Sarah Mostafa-Kamel is a quadrilingual professional with over a decade of experience in program management, human rights advocacy, and team leadership. Her expertise spans organizational and cultural differences across four continents, having lived, learned, and worked in Egypt, France, Malawi, Uganda, Costa Rica, Canada, and Kenya. Sarah is recognized as a proven executor and trusted advisor with multi-sectoral, multi-issue experience, and she is deeply committed to strengthening the global human rights movement

across diverse fields and geographies.

Currently, Sarah serves as the Program Manager for The Symposium on Strength and Solidarity for Human Rights, which seeks to inspire renewed efforts to build organizational strength and solidarity within the human rights field. Before joining the Symposium, she spent a decade in the Canadian labor movement as an organizer, representative, and manager with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC).



Samson Itodo

Executive Director, Yiaga Africa

Samson Itodo is an experienced community organizer and development practitioner with two decades of experience in constitution building, governance reform, electoral governance, civic engagement, and political organizing. He serves as the Executive Director of Yiaga Africa and founding convener of the Not Too Young To Run Movement. He provides strategic policy advice to parliamentary committees, electoral commissions, political parties, civil society organizations, and academic institutions. In 2018, he was appointed by the

Gates Foundation as a Goalkeeper and honored by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) Washington DC as the 2018 Rising Democracy leader in Africa. He was also inducted into the 100 Most Influential Young Africans by the African Youth Awards in 2017. Samson is a member of the Board of Kofi Annan Foundation and the Board of Advisors of International IDEA. He previously served as lead researcher for WFD on developing case studies on candidate selection processes and its impact on the emergence of women candidates in African liberal parties. Samson leads one of Nigeria's largest citizen movements on electoral integrity, #WatchingTheVote. He has led international election observation missions to Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone, United States of America, and South Africa. Samson holds bachelor' and master' degrees in Law, both from the University of Jos, and a Master's of Public Policy from the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. He was a Visiting Scholar on Election Law on Election Law at the Nassarawa State University. He is the Principal Partner at the Election Law Center, a think tank committed to strengthening Africa's electoral jurisprudence and election law scholarship.



Cynthia Mbamalu

Director of Programs, Yiaga Africa

Cynthia Mbamalu is the co-founder of Yiaga Africa, where she serves as the Director of Programs. She is an experienced and certified community organiser and election expert boasting a rich 17-year experience and expertise in championing democracy, youth and women's political inclusion, electoral integrity, and human rights. Cynthia has participated in and led different election observation missions and study in Nigeria, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Liberia, South Africa, and the US. A key figure in providing technical support

for systematic and gender-sensitive election observation, she spearheads the #WatchingTheVote project, a data and tech-driven initiative for election integrity. Her advocacy efforts were pivotal in Nigeria's adoption of the Electoral Act 2022. Cynthia is a founding member of the Not Too Young

to Run movement, which achieved the amendment of Nigeria's Constitution to reduce the age for contesting elections. She manages the Annual Community Organizing Program for young people in Nigeria and West Africa and provides mentorship to young people under different initiatives. She is the executive producer and host of the Unamplified Podcast, driving diverse conversations on democracy and development in Africa. Cynthia Mbamalu has an LLM in Comparative Constitutional Law from the Central European University.



Segun Ogundare

Africa Division, Head of Operations and Research. Yiaga Africa

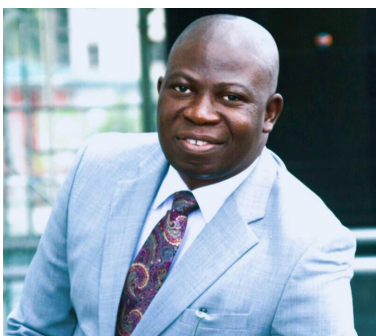
Segun Ogundare is a lawyer who is passionate about leadership development, democratic governance, human rights and youth participation, and provides cutting-edge analytics on governance in Nigeria and across the world. Segun is currently the Africa Division Head of Operations and Research at Yiaga Africa. He is also a member of the Strategy Team of the Not Too Young To Run Movement. Segun obtained his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Law from the University of Jos and is called to the Nigerian Bar. He is a member of the Unity Branch of the Nigerian Bar Association.



Ayodele Ozugbakun

Bureau Chief, TVC in Abuja and Northern Operations.

Born in Lagos State, Mr Ayodele Ozugbakun has over two decades of experience in the Broadcast Media, studied at the University of Lagos and earned his Bachelor's Degree in Mass Communication - 2000 and his Master's in Public And International Affairs (MPIA) 2002. He got his Certificate in Investigative Journalism - Boston University - 2015. He is a member - Investigative Reporters and Editors, Inc. (IRE) - amongst others. He covered the 2003 and 2007 elections with Galaxy TV and the 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2023 elections as Senior Political Correspondent with TVC. He has also covered elections in the United States of America, Ghana, Senegal, Mali, Togo and Equatorial Guinea. He was appointed Bureau Chief, TVC in Abuja and Northern Operations in 2023, where he serves till date.



Sambo Sumner Shagari

Arise Television

Sumner Shagari Sambo is a multi-skilled Journalist who is currently the Director of News and Politics Editor at Arise News Television, one of Africa's most promising TV channels where he combines his skills with other creative minds to reposition news coverage and programming for premium news content consumers. He is a 2018 Fellow of the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ). He also won the 2016 Nigeria Investigative Journalist of the Year (TV) award run by the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ) and was winner of the 2017 Senate Reporter of the Year (TV) award by the Senate Press Corps of Nigeria's National Assembly. Sumner was the Public Affairs Coordinator of the 2023 Arise Presidential Townhall Debate Series and also the Media Coordinator of the 2011 NN24 Nigeria Presidential Debate. He has also won other awards like the Most Promising Youth, 2012 presented to him by the Chamber Social Club. An MSc and BSc Mass Communication graduate of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; he is a technology-savvy and probing mind who also acts as a Fixer for many international news crews coming to Nigeria or West Africa to source for interviews and news stories.





Chinwe Dominica Kayla Megwa

Kayla is an award-winning broadcast journalist with a passion for uncovering the truth. With extensive experience in the field, she has covered a wide range of topics, including politics, human rights, and social justice issues. Known for her compelling presenting style and her ability to connect with audiences, Kayla has earned recognition for her work on programs such as Dateline Abuja, Political Paradigm, and Sunrise Daily. Kayla has also covered the State House, the foreign desk and the defense beats as a reporter.

As a senior presenter, producer, and reporter, Kayla excels in chasing stories and digging for facts. When she is not on the job, she enjoys reading and traveling. Residing in Abuja, Nigeria, Kayla looks forward to continuing her journey in journalism and making a difference through evidence-based reporting.

The delegation will engage key electoral stakeholders in South Africa in line with the mission's objectives. After the elections, a report will be issued on transforming electoral governance in Africa. **For mission details, contact: Olusegun Ogundare** at sogundare@yiaga.org or **Ibrahim Faruk** at fibrahim@yiaga.org

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