



**AFRICA  
LIBERAL  
NETWORK**  
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# AFRICA LIBERAL GONG



**JANUARY to  
MARCH  
NEWSLETTER  
FIRST EDITION  
2024**

## >>>EDITORIAL

Dear Members of the Africa Liberal Network,

As we embark on the first edition of the ALN Newsletter for 2024, I am pleased to reflect on the significant strides we have made in charting a course for progressive action and advancing liberal values across the African continent.

First, Happy International Women's Day to all our liberal women. We celebrate all the giant strides women are making across the continent.

Our recent General Assembly served as a pivotal moment for the ALN, providing a platform for robust discussions and strategic planning. We emerged from the assembly with renewed determination to tackle the pressing issues facing our region, from promoting democracy and human rights to fostering economic development and social justice.

One of our key initiatives this year is the establishment of key committees within the ALN. These committees will play a vital role in addressing critical challenges and driving positive change in areas such as trade, rule of law, and human rights. By fostering collaboration and innovation, we aim to strengthen the capacity of liberal political parties and enhance their ability to effect meaningful change in their respective countries.

In our ongoing efforts to combat disinformation and safeguard the integrity of electoral processes, the ALN has partnered with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy. In another news, we have partnered with the Democratic Alliance, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, and Danish Liberal Democracy Programme for an election observation mission in South Africa. These collaborations underscores our commitment to promoting transparency, accountability, and democratic principles.



I must also emphasize the importance of member parties fulfilling their membership obligations. Your timely payment of membership fees ensures the sustainability of our organization and enables us to continue our vital work in advancing liberal values across Africa.

Lastly, I am pleased to share news from our region, highlighting both challenges and achievements in our collective pursuit of a more just, prosperous, and democratic Africa. Together, we have the power to effect positive change and build a brighter future for generations to come.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the Africa Liberal Network. Let us forge ahead with unwavering commitment and determination as we strive to make a meaningful difference in the lives of millions across our continent.

Warm regards,

Me Gilbert Noel Ouedraogo  
ALN President

## ➤➤➤ALN Charts Course for Progressive Action in 2024

The Africa Liberal Network (ALN) Executive Committee convened in March 2024 to deliberate on pivotal activity plans for the organization in the current year. Notable resolutions included adopting financial software management to improve ALN's financial management. Crucial for sustaining ALN's operations and executing ALN's multifaceted agenda, the EXCOMM revised and adopted the membership fees for both 2023 and 2024. Noteworthy was the decision to establish a dedicated working group with a focus on establishing the ALN Women Caucus, signaling a proactive stance towards gender equity and representation within the organization. Moreover, regional Vice Presidents provided insightful updates, highlighting progress and challenges within their respective areas, fostering a collaborative spirit to drive collective progress across Africa. ALN's commitment to advancing liberal principles remains unwavering as it embarks on a transformative journey in 2024.



## ➤➤➤REPORT ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 2023 General Assembly served as a pivotal moment for ALN to assess its strategies, performance, and impact over the past two decades. The resolutions and amendments made during this Assembly will guide the Network's future direction, ensuring its relevance, unity, and effectiveness as a leading political entity in Africa. The secretariat is working to update the constitution and will submit to the EXCOMM for adoption and approval. These resolutions have set the stage for a dynamic year ahead.



## ➤➤➤ALN FORGES AHEAD WITH ESTABLISHMENT OF KEY COMMITTEES

In a bid to bolster its advocacy efforts and promote liberal values in Africa, the Africa Liberal Network (ALN) Secretariat has initiated the groundwork for setting up Trade, Rule of Law, and Human Rights committees. This strategic move underscores ALN's commitment to addressing pressing issues pertinent to economic development, legal frameworks, and fundamental human rights across the continent.

In a proactive step towards ensuring the success of these committees, the Secretariat has engaged ALN members by sharing draft rules of procedure, inviting constructive feedback, and encouraging active participation in shaping the operational frameworks. This inclusive approach not only fosters transparency but also ensures that the committees are well-equipped to effectively carry out their mandates.

Furthermore, recognizing the importance of strong leadership in driving these committees forward, the Executive Committee of ALN has resolved to extend the call for interested individuals to express their willingness to assume leadership positions. This decision aims to broaden the pool of qualified candidates and cultivate a diverse leadership team reflective of ALN's values and aspirations.

The establishment of these committees marks a significant milestone in ALN's journey towards promoting trade, upholding the rule of law, and safeguarding human rights in Africa. As ALN continues to galvanize support and foster collaboration among its member parties, these committees are poised to play a pivotal role in advancing liberal principles and driving positive change across the continent.

## »»ALN ADVANCES EFFORTS TO COMBAT DISINFORMATION AHEAD OF ELECTIONS

The Africa Liberal Network (ALN) Secretariat has reported significant progress in the establishment of a working group for its disinformation project, aimed at enhancing the resilience of liberal political parties in Africa against misinformation during elections. Several countries have stepped forward to participate in this initiative, demonstrating a strong commitment to combating the spread of fake news and ensuring the integrity of electoral processes.

The following countries have expressed interest in the project and will serve as the working group: Mauritania (RPM), South Africa (DA), Kenya (ODM), Zambia (UPND), Sudan (SF), Ghana (PPP), Morocco (MP), Malawi (FDD), Swaziland (AUDP), Guinea (UFDG), Burkina Faso (ADF-RDA), and Congo Brazzaville (MR). These nations will play a pivotal role in spearheading efforts to strengthen the capacity of liberal political parties to counter disinformation campaigns effectively.



Besides, the Secretariat has outlined the target audience for the upcoming training sessions, focusing on the public relations/publicity secretaries or officers responsible for communications within these parties. This strategic approach ensures that individuals with access to internal and external communication platforms are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to tackle the challenges posed by fake news.

In collaboration with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, the project partner, the next phase of the initiative is set to commence pending approval for its programs in the new financial year starting in April 2024. The project aims to achieve several key objectives, including strengthening party resilience, raising awareness about the impact of fake news on democratic processes, and fostering collaboration between liberal parties, civil society organizations, and technology experts to develop innovative solutions.

## »»EMPOWERING WOMEN: FORGING A PATH FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE ALN

The African Liberal Network (ALN) has taken a decisive step towards gender parity and the empowerment of women leaders within its ranks. The establishment of the ALN Women Caucus at the 2023 General Assembly heralds a new era of inclusivity and representation.

The creation of the Women Caucus will provide a dedicated platform for women within ALN member parties to engage, collaborate, and advocate for gender equality and women's rights. Through this initiative, we seek to amplify women's voices, address gender-related challenges, and promote women's leadership and participation in political decision-making processes.

Leading the charge is Khadija oum El-Morabit, the Chair of the International Network of Liberal Women. Her expertise and guidance will be invaluable in steering the committee towards its objectives. The committee's diverse makeup, including members from the EXCOMM and representatives from member parties with strong women's leagues, ensures a comprehensive approach to the Caucus' development.



Upon completion, the working group's report will introduce the new texts into the ALN constitution. These amendments, along with other approved changes, will be presented to the EXCOMM for ratification. This process marks a pivotal moment in the ALN's history, as it evolves to better represent and serve its diverse membership.

## »»»ALN PARTNERS WITH DA, FNF, AND DLDP FOR SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

ALN is proud to announce its partnership with the Democratic Africa Liberal Network c Alliance (DA), Danish Liberal Democracy Programme (DLDP), and Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) for the upcoming South African Elections observation mission.

The mission aims to monitor and assess the electoral process in South Africa, contributing to the enhancement of democratic practices and fostering international cooperation in election observation efforts. ALN extends invitations to its member parties to participate in this significant initiative, offering an opportunity to engage firsthand in promoting democratic values and principles.

This mission will be similar to the Presidential election observation mission conducted on November 16th, 2023 under the Liberal International observation mission in Madagascar.

Interested member parties are encouraged to apply through a dedicated link that will be shared with them to facilitate their involvement in this vital election observation mission.

## »»»ALN URGES MEMBER PARTIES TO FULFILL MEMBERSHIP OBLIGATIONS

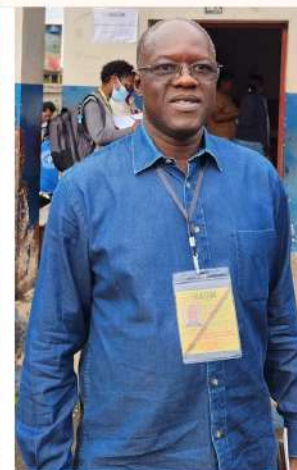
The Africa Liberal Network (ALN) calls upon its member parties to promptly settle their membership fees as part of their commitment to the organization's continued growth and sustainability. In a recent decision by the Executive Committee (EXCOMM), it was resolved to increase membership fees to half of the amount required by the ALN constitution thus reflecting the end of the pandemic period and ensuring ALN's financial resilience. It can be recalled that the membership fees were reduced to \$200 USD as a palliative to cushion the effect of the pandemic.

Effective immediately, observer members and associate members are required to pay \$250 USD, while full members will pay \$500 USD annually.

Furthermore, in a bid to address outstanding dues and streamline financial processes, the EXCOMM has authorized the Secretariat to invoice member parties for all outstanding fees from 2020 to 2024.

As ALN prepares for its upcoming elective General Assembly in 2024, member parties are reminded that compliance with membership obligations is essential. To enforce this, the EXCOMM proposes that defaulting members will not be allowed to vote in the General Assembly. Additionally, logistical support for defaulting members attending the General Assembly will not be subsidized.

Please pay the fee immediately into the network's bank account as provided by the Secretariat . Payment can be made by bank transfers, paypal, or any other electronic means.



# THE PERSISTENT GENDER GAP IN EAST AFRICAN LEADERSHIP: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS

BY HON. IRENE MAYAKA, KENYA

## Abstract:

Women remain significantly underrepresented in leadership positions across East Africa. This article explores the current state of the gender gap in leadership, the challenges women face, and potential solutions to achieve greater equity. Despite positive developments, cultural norms, unequal access to resources, and social stigma continue to hinder women's advancement. The article examines initiatives undertaken by countries like Kenya and Uganda to address these challenges. It concludes that a multi-pronged approach, including policy changes, educational investments, cultural shifts, and support for women's organizations, is necessary to achieve gender parity in leadership across East Africa.

## Introduction:

Globally, women are significantly underrepresented in political participation and leadership. The United Nations Women estimates that achieving gender equality in the highest positions of political leadership will take an estimated 130 years. This underrepresentation is also evident in East Africa, where despite recent economic growth, a persistent gender gap remains in leadership roles across government, business, and civil society.

## The Current Landscape:

Although there have been positive developments, statistics paint a clear picture of the gender gap. Women hold a disproportionately small number of parliamentary seats and leadership positions within companies across East Africa. Cultural norms that confine women to domestic duties, unequal access to education and resources, and a lack of mentorship programs all contribute to this disparity. This underrepresentation has a demonstrably negative impact. When women are excluded from decision-making tables, their perspectives and talents are lost, hindering economic development and social progress.

## Challenges Faced by Women:

Several factors contribute to the underrepresentation of women in leadership:

**Cultural Barriers:** Traditional gender roles often restrict women to domestic duties, limiting their opportunities for education and professional advancement.



**Unequal Access to Resources:** Women may lack access to quality education, mentorship programs, and the financial resources needed to pursue leadership positions.

**Social Stigma:** Societal biases against female leaders can discourage women from aspiring to leadership roles and make it harder for them to be taken seriously.

## The Path Forward:

Several East African countries are implementing initiatives to address the gender gap in leadership:

**Kenya:** The G7 movement, launched by Kenyan female governors, aims to increase women's representation in government. Their strategy focuses on socio-economic development, good governance, and access to justice, with the goal of having 16 female governors out of 47 counties.

**Uganda:** Uganda's constitution and laws promote gender equality, which has resulted in a significant number of women holding positions in government, particularly at the local level. Continued efforts to address social norms, promote economic opportunities for women, and improve access to healthcare are crucial for sustained progress.

**Tanzania:** While Tanzania faces challenges, its score on the Global Gender Gap Index has been steadily improving in recent years, indicating progress towards gender equality.

### **Other countries in the region face more significant hurdles:**

**Burundi:** Despite laws promoting female employment and quotas for women in government, traditional practices continue to hold women back.

**Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC):** The DRC has a very low ranking on the Gender Inequality Index, with significant underrepresentation of women in politics, economic opportunities, and a high prevalence of gender-based violence.

**Somalia and Somaliland:** Deeply rooted patriarchal norms and limited access to education and work opportunities create significant challenges for gender equality in these countries.

**Sudan:** Sudan faces challenges similar to Somalia, with deeply entrenched patriarchal norms, practices like child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), and a lack of data on gender issues hindering progress.

### **Bridging the Gap:**

A multi-pronged approach is required to bridge the gender gap in leadership across East Africa:

**Policy & Legislation:** Implementing quotas for female representation in parliament and boards can create space for women's voices.

**Education & Mentorship:** Investing in girls' education and providing mentorship programs can empower women to pursue leadership aspirations.

**Shifting Cultural Norms:** Promoting awareness campaigns and community dialogues can challenge traditional gender roles and encourage greater acceptance of female leadership.

**Supporting Organizations:** Organizations dedicated to women's leadership development need to be supported and empowered to continue their vital work.

### **Conclusion:**

East Africa has the potential to benefit immensely from the full participation of women in leadership. By dismantling the barriers that hold them back, the region can unlock its full potential and create a more equitable and a prosperous future for all.



# NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

## ➤➤➤ NORTH AFRICA REGION- JAWAD CHAFIL, VICE PRESIDENT

In North Africa, the political landscape is abuzz with developments and challenges that are shaping the region's trajectory. The Africa Liberal Network (ALN) is closely monitoring the situation, particularly concerning potential new membership from Egypt's ADL party. Given Egypt's complex political environment and the hurdles faced by liberal parties, careful consideration is being exercised before any decisions are made.

Meanwhile, Mauritania's recent appointment as Chair of the African Union (AU) signals its increasing influence in regional affairs, offering an opportunity to champion human rights and development initiatives continent-wide. Similarly, Morocco's chairmanship of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) positions the country to advocate for global human rights agendas and reinforce its commitment to fostering a culture of respect for human rights.

However, Algeria's actions, particularly concerning its relations with Mali and neighboring countries, have raised concerns about regional stability. The Africa Liberal Network's North Africa office urges Algeria to prioritize peaceful cooperation with its neighbors for the prosperity and stability of the region.

In other news, Rabat hosted the Arab Liberals meeting in March 2024, organized by Freidrich Naumann Foundation (FNF). The event featured a seminar on migration and the General Assembly of the Al-Hurriyya Liberal Network (AHLN), fostering dialogue and cooperation among liberal movements in the region.

Finally, a proposal has been put forth to the Union Constitutionnelle (UC) to host an ALN Executive Committee meeting in Morocco, underscoring the region's growing importance in liberal politics and international cooperation.

## ➤➤➤ CENTRAL AFRICAN REGION- RUDY MANDIO, VICE PRESIDENT

In the heart of the Central African region, recent events have stirred both hope and concern among political circles. The aftermath of the December 2023 elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has left many questioning the integrity of the electoral process. Opposition coalition parties have voiced grievances over alleged irregularities and lack of transparency, citing instances of voter intimidation and manipulation. Despite facing formidable challenges in ensuring fair representation, the opposition remains steadfast in its commitment to democratic values and holding the government accountable.

Meanwhile, the Liberal Democratic Party of Burundi has expressed interest in joining the Africa Liberal Network (ALN), signaling a potential shift in regional political dynamics.

Additionally, the coalition Lamuka is gearing up for its congress in April 2024, underscoring the ongoing efforts to consolidate political alliances and advocate for democratic reforms in the region.

West Africa





# NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

## WEST AFRICA REGION OUSMANE BEN FANA TRAORE, VICE PRESIDENT

In the West African region, political uncertainties loom large over Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, with the status of elections in these countries remaining unclear. Allegations of political involvement in military coups further exacerbate the challenges faced by these nations. Amidst these tumultuous circumstances, the Africa Liberal Network (ALN) silently extended support to Dr. Ablasse Ouedraogo in Burkina Faso, who faced arrest. Despite efforts to negotiate his release and defend his human rights, the outcomes were not realized, prompting ALN to adopt a more discreet approach to avoid escalating tensions.

In Senegal, however, a positive development has emerged as the election issues have been resolved, paving the way for elections to be conducted on the 24th of March. ALN commends the President of Senegal for upholding democracy and implementing decisions in line with the Constitutional Council, signaling a beacon of hope amidst regional uncertainties.



## SOUTHERN AFRICA, STENAH SHAMPILE VICE PRESIDENT

As South Africa gears up for its upcoming national election scheduled for May 29th, 2024, preparations are in full swing across the nation. The election, which marks a significant moment in the country's democratic process, is expected to draw widespread attention both domestically and internationally.

ALN member party, Democratic Alliance, is actively engaging in campaign strategies, rallying supporters, and outlining their platforms to gain the trust and votes of the electorate. The party is also intensifying efforts to present their vision for the nation's future and address the pressing issues facing South Africa.

Key stakeholders, including election officials, civil society organizations, and international observers, are closely monitoring the preparations to ensure a free, fair, and transparent electoral process. With the eyes of the world on South Africa, there is a collective emphasis on upholding democratic principles and safeguarding the integrity of the election.

Amidst the preparations, ALN is also focusing on fostering international relations and collaboration. Recently, the Southern Africa Vice president, Stenah Shampile, reached out to the Botswana Movement for Democracy (BMD) to reestablish their connection and strengthen ties within the liberal political sphere.





## MEMBER'S CONTACT INFORMATION UPDATE: DO YOU HAVE VOTING RIGHTS?

In preparation for the 2024 elective General Assembly and in the quest to continue to position itself as the apex think tank on liberal ideals on the continent, it is crucial that contact information is kept up to date, as we inform members directly by email and, when necessary, by other means of communication based on the information in the member register.

Kindly send current information about your parties by clicking the link below to fill the Members contact information form.

<https://forms.gle/Csb8t4ZaXJBD61ha6>

## CALL FOR MEDIA AND JOURNALIST VOLUNTEERS

Are you a journalist? Do you share liberal values? ALN is calling for members of the network who are journalists to support the Network's outreach and campaigns through the promotion of our work and activities on their platforms. If you would like to join the ALN Media group, please send an email to ALN Secretariat, [sola@africaliberalnetwork.org](mailto:sola@africaliberalnetwork.org) with ALN Media as the subject of your email.

## CALL FOR STORIES: SHARE YOUR SUCCESS WITH THE ALN QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

As we gear up for the next edition of our Quarterly Newsletter, we're excited to extend an invitation to all member parties to contribute their stories, successes or even write articles or opinion pieces.

Your experiences, initiatives, and achievements are at the heart of our network's progress, and we believe that sharing them through our newsletter can inspire and inform others within our community. Whether it's a project milestone, a successful campaign, a groundbreaking policy change, or any other noteworthy endeavor, we want to hear from you.

### By featuring your stories, we aim to:

1. Highlight the diverse range of activities and accomplishments across our network.
2. Provide valuable insights and best practices to fellow member parties.
3. Foster collaboration and solidarity among our community.

If you or your party have a story to share, we encourage you to submit it for consideration along with any relevant images or supporting documents in our upcoming newsletter and social media pages. Please include contact information for further inquiries or follow-ups.

Please send your submissions to [sola@africaliberalnetwork.org](mailto:sola@africaliberalnetwork.org) with the subject line "ALN Newsletter Submission - [Your party/Name]."

Thank you for your ongoing support and contributions to the ALN. Together, we can continue to advance our shared goals and create positive change in our Network.



## **ABOUT AFRICA LIBERAL NETWORK**

**The African Liberal Network (ALN) is a coalition of liberal political parties across Africa, dedicated to promoting democratic values, human rights and economic freedom on the continent. Committed to fostering collaboration between liberal parties, the ALN works to create a more open and progressive political landscape in Africa**

**Contact:**  
**Olusola Folayan**  
**Network Coordinator,**  
**African Liberal Network**  
**[admin@africaliberalnetwork.org](mailto:admin@africaliberalnetwork.org)**  
**[www.africaliberalnetwork.org](http://www.africaliberalnetwork.org)**

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