

Calling for Peaceful Elections

[Page 1]

Praise be to God, the Lord of the Universe.

Giving glory to God should be our only concern.

The elections are approaching, let's be united!

Between all of us, we must not forget the fraternity that binds us.

From the towns of Sedhiou, Ziguinchor, Kolda,

Oussouye, Tamba to Bignona, we are all one family.

Please, let us unite to preserve our fraternity!

The children of a single mother must not be separated.

Let's not wait until tomorrow to cultivate peace, and let's not undermine its foundations.

Amen, may God grant peace to our country!

[Page 2]

From the village chief to the imam, we must organize a meeting

to discuss in order to strengthen our bonds of fraternity because we are all brothers.

Between Abdou Diouf and all his companions,¹

God has already chosen the one who will be elected a long time ago:

Famara Sagna and Moctar Kébé in Kolda;

Robert Sagna and Sy Le Maire in Ziguinchor;

Ousmane Tanor Dieng, Mame Baara Seck,

Madieng Khary Dieng, Djibo Ka and Madia Diop;

and the owner of a transportation business Mbacké Kamara in Ziguinchor,

¹ This refers to Abdou Diouf, the president of Senegal from 1981 to 2000, and his political companions from the Socialist Party (PS).

Lemou Touré and Kounadi Sadio;

[Page 3]

Daour Cissé, Al-hadji Amath and Diary; and

Moussa Daffé, Moussa Kanté, and Woury Diatta.

Eighty-four people were chosen from Abdou Diouf's supporters.

The thirty-six seats of deputies that remained
were attributed to the other parties that support him.

President Diouf, your hour of glory has come!

Winning the presidential elections and the majority of eighty seats in the assembly,

this is the objective of the political leaders of President Diouf's coalition!

The one to whom God has given success, if you want to make fun of him,

you will be disappointed and sad because you can't do anything about it!

[Page 4]

Toumani Danfa says he has also created his own political party!

As for me, El-hadji Kawoussou Dramé, I demand respect!

The opposition begged [Toumani], convinced him, and now he has joined their party.²

The elections are approaching. May God spare me from their practices!

As for me, I remained faithful to my political conviction without accusing them of corruption!

Yet they say they will beat me and denigrate me with trickery!

Members of [Toumani] Danfa's party who have come to our village,

may God create conflict that divides them all!³

² Here the poet refers to the Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS) of Abdoulaye Wade.

³ These two verses are preceded by two other indecipherable ones: *Jama'ahum kasal'u ya'las fa'akala'u/Kala'u sikaalu mamayta baalaka kalanu.*

[Page 5]

May conflict, contention, backbiting, and disrespect divide them.

May God make their party end in tears,

by the greatness of the Quran recited forty-five times!

May God transform it for them into disagreement and indiscipline!

The meat cooked in oil that was offered to them to bribe them and that they ate on Friday,

they emptied it into the toilet on Saturday evening. What a shame!⁴

That fool Fodéba also regards me as his enemy!

I don't know what wrong I did to him. The rivalry is truly regrettable!

Isn't his dignity affected! It really is because of a bowl of rice!

You say there was a big crowd. But forty thousand activists, it is not huge!

[Page 6]

It was not you [Fodéba] who disrespected me, but rather the members of your party!

You didn't tell them what I said when we last met.

You yourself know that I am your lucky charm!

They said you don't represent anything in your companionship!

Jeefeeri, that misguided woman, be quiet!

You are envious; you can't be a leader!

Men and women say they want to be members of parliament for the opposition party.

A bachelor member of parliament, who is not even able to have his own bed!

When the visitors arrived, they were told: "Do not go to Kawoussou Sounkari!"

But the visitors replied: "It is Kawoussou our guardian!"

⁴ It is a common practice during electoral periods in Senegal for some politicians to offer people food, especially in rural areas, to win their support. Here the poet suggests that one of his rivals must be ashamed of having changed his convictions only because of the food offered to him to corrupt him, food that will end up in the toilet in any case!

[Page 7]

Me, Kawoussou, I don't like disputes or quarrels.

Visitors⁵ remember the past well.

[They say]: "El-hadji Kawoussou came to us with good intentions,

and we have come to respond to his call."

The authorities in Dakar as well as all the committees,

I informed you all of this meeting a long time ago.

Voting is approaching, the time of pretentious men and that of ceaseless comings and goings!

Yes, that time has come, the time of loudmouths and complainers!

The run-off election they say is what they are waiting for now!

Know that the meat shares are spread out, everyone will take their share and leave!⁶

[Page 8]

If you are hunting a rabbit while being hunted by a lion, then know that you have two challenges.

Pass the rabbit and save yourself, because if it is a lioness, she is terrifying!

Why beat the celebratory drums without having received the final results of the elections!

The horse can run, but it does not know in advance which horse will arrive first!

Please let us be tolerant. Let's not get angry!

An adult antelope can be chased by six male dogs without being caught!⁷

Since Abdou Diouf has sat on his throne [the presidency],

all reasonable Senegalese are pleased.

Abdou you are good and very generous, and you do not deceive anyone.⁸

⁵ These are voters who came from nearby villages in the Sedhiou area.

⁶ This Mandinka maxim means that the die is cast, and everyone will reap what they have sown.

⁷ In this metaphor, the antelope represents President Abdou Diouf and his political party, and the six dogs represent the coalitions of the opposition.

⁸ This verse and the following are in the Wolof variety spoken in Casamance in southern Senegal.

Don't get angry, don't get tired, don't be afraid because God supports you!

[Page 9]

El-hadji Kawoussou Dramé, come pray for us

so that God brings us peace in this country!

Dear Senegalese compatriots, may God give us peace!

May God protect us and grant us prosperity.⁹

El-hadji Kawoussou Dramé, come pray for us

so that God grants peace to our country and saves it from any trouble!

May He grant us long life, good health and luck.

Amen! May God grant peace to our country.

Life on earth is unimportant. Pride makes no sense here!

Among brothers, we must not quarrel!

[Page 10]

Life is a clay pot full of water, not a dipper full of water to drink alone. Do not get mad. The dipper

used to take water from the pot, use it to drink, then you pass it to another person!

To you paddlers, the wind is blowing hard, the canoe is old,

and fear has invaded us. May God enable us to cross peacefully!

My dear, you sit in the dark, and I paddle!

The fear, when crossing a river, is great because we imagine the depth of the water!

Let's be tolerant and avoid getting angry at each other.

Wickedness must be removed, because everyone has a chance.

Focus on what belongs to you, and do not look at what is in the hands of others,

for it only breeds envy and anger, and there is nothing you can do about it.

⁹ This verse and the three previous ones are in Casamance Wolof.

[Page 11]

Even among your close relatives, there are also wicked people who may wish you harm.

But on the day of your death, they will say that a great personality has passed away!

We only recognize the value of a wise man when he dies. We will see people crying

hypocritically and saying: "A great man has just left us!"

You must go and learn, because the lack of education is a real handicap.

It is sad to choose as a leader someone who lacks education.

Let's all extend our hands for the Creator to offer us

a good son and a good daughter

who answer us when we talk to them, and respect us,

because nowadays fear is growing. I'm scared!

[Page 12]

Children no longer respect their fathers, let alone their mothers!

It is rare to see a respectful child unless you are lucky enough to meet one.

Our fathers and mothers must not give up on educating us.

We must not dispute the instructions they give us.

Don't say: "My dad is difficult. I can't stay with him!

My mother is complicated. I can't stand it!"

[Remember that] the mother, during pregnancy, suffered

so much to the extent that it was thought she would not survive childbirth!

Your father also fought hard to find a decent place for you and your mother, and he will fight

to give you a good education and to protect you. So be grateful!