PREO #4
PRE-ELECTION OBSERVATION
KEY FINDINGS OF REPORTING PERIOD FOUR
July 6 - July 11, 2018
BACKGROUND

The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended), the Electoral Act No. 6 2010 (Amendment) Bill 2017 and INEC’s regulations as may be issued specifically for the conduct of the Ekiti election, will regulate the conduct of the election. Generally, the electoral outlook seems positive with various stakeholders living up to expectations, though there were reports of pockets of violence. Political parties had their primaries, nominated candidates and now on the field canvassing for votes in a generally peaceful manner. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are also involved in sensitizing and educating the electorate on the significance of participation and the need to eschew electoral violence. Media reportage has been largely professional, balance with report of activities by all political parties. Security agencies are issuing assurances about their capability and readiness to provide electoral security. Marginalized groups such as youth, women and PWDs are craving for more political space of inclusion and participation.

This report is the final in a series of four (4) released by YIAGA on its pre-election observation. The report also harmonizes findings from the first, second and third reporting phase that commenced in May 25, 2018. The report focuses on vital pre-election issues such as Permanent Voters’ Card (PVC) distribution, voter education and mobilization, political party campaigns, media and hate speech, electoral security, as well as interventions aimed at facilitating the participation of disadvantaged groups such as youth, women and people with disabilities (PWDs). Our findings suggest that preparations for election in the state are on course. However, there is room for improvement. This report also highlights areas that require improvements and offer suggestions on the way forward.
Summary of Findings:

- Election preparatory activities are currently undertaken by INEC in all the 16 LGAs of Ekiti state. These preparatory activities conducted by INEC include the distribution of the Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs), voter education and election observation kits by INEC.

- Voter education activities undertaken by both INEC and CSOs as observed by WTV observers increased during the period from July 6 to 11. However, YIAGA observers were not exposed to any voter education activities during the period in Ekiti East, Gbonyin, Ido-Osi, Ijero, Ikere, Ilejemeje, Moba or Oye LGAs.

- Voter education programming and messaging targeted at special interest and marginalized groups, such as youth, women and people with disabilities (PWDs) has been consistently observed by PREO observers since May 25 in the LGAs of Ekiti South West, Ikere, and Ilejemeje. Consistent voter education programming targeted at youth, women and PWDs was also noted in the LGAs of Efon, Ekiti West, Ido/Osi, Ikole and Ise/Orun. In all other LGAs, observers either did not observe or observed only limited campaigns targeting marginalized groups since May 25.

- Youth and women groups are increasingly engaging the political space by campaigning and canvassing for votes for political parties and candidates. Fifty-four percent of observers (13 of 24) witnessed or heard of women canvassing for votes during the reporting period and 63% (15 of 24) of observers witnessed or heard of youths canvassing for votes during the reporting period.

- Political campaigns and politicking have heighten in the state the election draws near. Based on our observation, only two parties have dominated the political space; APC and PDP. Campaign rallies for both APC and PDP were reported by observers in every LGA except Moba during the July 5-11 reporting period.

- Voter inducement through the distribution of money and gift items by politicians and their supporters is on the increase; 29% of observers (7 of 24) reported seeing the distribution of money or gift items by candidates in the LGAs of Ekiti East, Ekiti West, Gbonyin, Ido/Osi, Ijero, Ilejemeje and Irepodun/Ifelodun. In addition, 50% of observers (12 of 24) heard additional reports of such acts taking place in the LGAs of Ado Ekiti, Efon, Ekiti South West, Emure, Ikole and Oye.
Recommendations:

- INEC should continue to act with utmost professionalism and impartiality. This requires strict compliance with the regulatory framework of the election in all circumstances, no matter the odds or pressures from any quarters.

- Election logistics matter a lot. INEC must show utmost professionalism in the timely, effective and secure deployment of its staff, materials (sensitive and insensitive) and other resources needed for the election. The management of election logistics in the Anambra election is a defining factor in determining the integrity of the election.

- YIAGA would like to call on political parties to openly shun hate speech, inflammatory language and any form of violence in all the phases of the electoral process.

- YIAGA calls on all political parties to engage in issue based campaigns and shun from luring voters with unsustainable gifts that would not lead to economic development of the State.

MAIN FINDINGS

Election-Related Preparatory Activities by INEC

Preparations for the Ekiti election were well underway to the last week of the election. More than half (96%) of WTV LTOs reported either observing or hearing one form of election preparatory activity undertaken by the Electoral Commission in all the 16 LGAs in the Ekiti state. Electoral preparatory activities especially, the collection of permanent voter cards (PVCs) is also reported in the 16 LGAs.
Voter Education

WTV LTOs were tasked to observe voter education activities by all the electoral actors. This last reporting period recorded an increase in the level of voter education across the state. For instance, 42% of WTV LTOs were exposed to voter education campaigns by INEC as compared to 25%, 29% and 33% in the 3rd, 2nd and 1st reporting period, from May 5 to July 22, 2018. And 38% of WTV LTOs were exposed to voter education campaigns by CSOs as compared to 25%, 26% and 29% in the first three reports. Additionally, YIAGA observers were not exposed to any voter education activities during the period in Ekiti East, Gbonyin, Ido-Osi, Ijero, Ikere, Ilejemeje, Moba or Oye LGAs.

Political Party Rallies and Activities

During the reporting period, WTV LTOs were also asked to monitor political parties’ activities such as: posting of party or candidates’ posters and media ads, party meetings and rallies. APC and PDP continued to be the parties with the biggest campaigns in the state. The two parties were reported to have organised rallies or campaign trails in 15 of the 16 LGAs. 23 of the 24 deployed LTOs also reported seeing posters of APC and PDP candidates everywhere in the LGAs they reside.
Voter Inducement

Rumors and actual occurrences of vote buying increased during this reporting period; events associated to voter inducement were averagely reported by the WTV observers. Seven (7) WTV observers directly witnessed distribution of money or gift items by candidates or their supports and 12 heard of the distribution of gifts items to voters in their assigned LGAs. The distribution of these items was either witnessed or heard of in Ekiti East, Ekiti West, Gbonyin, Ido/Osi, Ijero, Ilejemeje and Irepodun/Ifelodun.

Attacks or Intimidation of Candidates and Supporters

During the reporting period, WTV observers reported hearing of attacks on or intimidation of candidates and supporters, and violent physical or verbal attacks on street political campaign trails. This incidence was reported from Ado Ekiti, Efon, Ekiti South West, Emure, Ikole and Oye LGA.
METHODOLOGY

YIAGA’s #WatchingTheVote deployed 24 long-term observers (LTO) to all the 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ekiti State to gather systematic information about the pre-election environment, including early warning signs of electoral violence. To achieve this, YIAGA’s LTOs are equipped with a checklist to observe and report on the electoral and political environment in the state. All YIAGA WTV LTOs are recruited from the local government areas within which they reside to observe electoral activities relating to voter education, political campaign activities, activities of marginalized groups youth, women, and people living with disabilities) and election-related violence in the pre-election period. Their reports cover activities of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), civil society organizations, political parties, National Orientation Agency (NOA), women and youth groups. The observers report on their observation findings on a bi-monthly basis via coded text messages to a YIAGA WTV Data Centre. Within reporting timeframes, observers also report on early warning signs and critical incidents demanding urgent attention as soon as they happen. The reports are compiled and shared with relevant election stakeholders for needed response.

YIAGA WTV PREO observation findings are not statistically representative of the entire state but provide an indication of emerging trends during the pre-election period. Unlike the WTV election day observation methodology, YIAGA does not rely on sample-based observation to carry out its PREO observation. This report covers the period of June 22 and July 5, 2018. YIAGA, therefore, encourages users of this report to independently corroborate and respond appropriately to trends identified in this report.