PREO #1
PRE-ELECTION OBSERVATION

KEY FINDINGS OF REPORTING PERIOD ONE
July 20 – August 16, 2018
Executive Summary

YIAGA AFRICA, a non-governmental, civil society organization committed to promoting electoral democracy and citizens participation, is conducting a comprehensive, long-term pre-election observation of Osun 2018 Governorship election under the Watching the Vote (WTV) project. The pre-election observation commenced in July 20, 2018 by 31 WTV Long Term Observers (LTOs) in the 30 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Osun State. Accordingly, this pre-election report presents information on Osun pre-election environment for the period of July 20 to August 16, 2018, as the first of the four reports for the Osun 2018 Governorship Election. YIAGA-WTV pre-election reports will provide information about INEC’s activities, voter education campaigns, political party campaign and activities of marginalised groups throughout the pre-election environment.
Summary of Findings:

1. There is impressive and visible election preparatory activities undertaken by INEC in the state. Over half (65%) of WTV LTOs reporting from 20 of the 30 LGAs in the State reported witnessing election preparatory activities undertaken by INEC and over a quarter (35%) heard of election preparatory activities undertaken by INEC, in the state.

2. Distribution of Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) is ongoing in all the 30 LGAs of the state.

3. There is visible voter education campaigns by both INEC and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Voter education programming and messaging targeted at marginalized groups, such as youth, women and people with disabilities (PWDs) was observed by WTV LTOs in 25 of the 30 LGAs which includes; Boluwaduro, Boripe, Ifedayo, Irepodun, Ila, Odo-Otin, Olorunda, Oriade, Orolu, Osogbo, Ayedadae, Ayedire, Atakumosa East, Atakumosa West, Ife East, Ife North, Ife South, Ilesha East, Ede South, Egbedore, Ejirgbo, Isokan, Iwo, Ola-Oluwa, and Irewole LGAs.

4. There is minimal political parties’ activities especially campaigns rallies, across the state. None of the major political parties in the state (ADP, APC, PDP and SDP) conducted party rallies in Boripe, Ifedayo, Ifelodun, Atakumosa East, Atakumosa West, Ife Central, Ife East, Ife North, Ife South, Obokun, Ayedadae, Ayedire, Ede North, Ede South, Egbedore, Irewole, Isokan LGAs.

5. Voter inducement through the distribution of money and gift items by politicians and their supporters is visible in the state. 45% of observers (14 of 30) reported seeing the distribution of money or gift items in Boripe, Atakumosa East, Atakumosa West, Ife Central, Ife East, Ife North, Ife South, Obokun, Ayedadae, Ayedire, Ede North, Ede South, Egbedore, Irewole, Isokan LGAs.

6. Early warning signs of election violence were observed in some LGAs. The most prevalent events observed and reported by WTV LTOs were destruction of candidates and parties posters and violent physical or verbal attacks on contesting candidates. There were reports of fighting between communities or groups over resources in Olorunda, Boluwaduro, Ilesha West, Ife Central and Egbedore LGAs of the state.
Recommendations:

1. To mitigate vote buying, INEC, NOA and CSOs should continue to educate Osun voters on their civic responsibilities and the value of their vote, emphasizing that vote buying is an electoral offence which undermines the legitimacy of elections and weakens representative democracy.

2. Political parties as a matter of urgency should initiate issue-based campaigns in all 30 LGAs addressing Osun state development priorities. The campaigns should state how they intend to achieve solutions to the issues raised.

3. Early warning signals should be addressed by relevant security agencies to avoid escalation or spillover to the electoral process. Both CSOs, INEC and community leaders should call on the attention of security agencies, if this incidences continue or persist.

MAIN FINDINGS

Election-Related Preparatory Activities by INEC

INEC is the institution responsible for election administration in Nigeria. During this pre-election observation period, the WTV LTOs were charged with the responsibility of observing INEC’s preparatory activities, including the distribution of Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs). Interestingly, WTV found that electoral preparatory activities are ongoing across the 30 LGAs in the state. Over half (65%) of WTV LTOs reported witnessing election preparatory activities undertaken by INEC and over a quarter (35%) heard of election preparatory activities undertaken by INEC, in the state. In addition, all WTV reported witnessing or hearing of distribution of PVC across the 30 LGAs of the state.
Voter Information Workshops/Campaigns

WTV LTOs also monitored voter education workshops and campaigns in their deployed LGAs. Reports of YIAGA’s WTV LTOs observation revealed that voter education campaigns are ongoing in the state and are conducted by both INEC and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). WTV LTOs were exposed to voter education workshop by INEC in Boluwaduro, Irepodun, Orolu, Osogbo, Atakumosa East, Atakumosa West, Ife East, Ife North, Ife South, Ilesha East, Ede South and Irewole LGAs and by CSOs in Boripe, Ifedayo, Irepodun, Ila, Odo-Otin, Olurunda, Atakumosa East, Ife South, Ilesha East, Oriade, Ayedaaade, Ayedire, Ede North, Egbedore, Ejirgbo, Irewole, Isokan, Iwo and Ola-Oluwa LGAs.

Participation of Marginalized and Disadvantaged Groups (Youth, Women and PWDs)

For the purpose of inclusion and diversity, targeted voter education and information to marginalized and disadvantaged groups as audience of the education message is encouraged. WTV LTOs reported of very measurable interventions aimed at enhancing the capacity of women and PWDs in the upcoming election by INEC, and CSOs. 32%, 54% and 38% of WTV LTOs directly witnessed or heard of INEC’s voter education targeted at women, youth and PWDs respectively. While, 35%, 32% and 55% of WTV LTOs witnessed/heard of voter information targeted at PWDs, women and Youth by CSOs, respectively.
Activities of Youth, Women and PWD Groups

In this reporting period, youth and women groups were reported to have been actively involved in canvassing for votes in the state. WTV LTOs reported witnessing/hearing of women groups canvassing for votes in Boripe, Ifedayo, Orolu, Atakumosa West, Ife North, Ife South, Ilesha East, Ede South and Iwo LGAs, and youth groups canvassing for votes in Boluwaduro, Boripe, Ifedayo, Irepedun, Orolu, Osogbo, Atakumosa East, Atakumosa West, Ife North, Ife South, Ilesha East, Oriade Ede South and Iwo LGAs. Only one WTV LTO reported hearing of a PWD/PWD group canvassing for votes in Boluwaduro LGA.

Political Party Campaigns

During the reporting period, WTV LTOs monitored the distribution of political party campaigns throughout the state by reporting on the presence of party posters, media ads, party meetings and rallies in each local government area. YIAGA observers used a broad definition for rallies to include both party or candidate rallies organized within the LGAs. Overall, YIAGA observed that none of the major political parties in the state (ADP, APC, PDP and SDP) conducted party rallies in Boripe, Ifedayo, Ifelodun, Atakumosa East, Atakumosa West, Ife Central, Ife East, Ife North, Ife South, Obokun, Ayedaaide, Ayedire, Ede North, Ede South, Egbedore, Irewole, Isokan LGAs.
Violent Physical or Verbal Attacks

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. These incidents occurred in Ife North, Ilesha West, Ife Central, Ife East, Odo – Otin, Osogbo, Ilesha East, Ejigbo.

Voter Inducement

WTV LTOs monitored and tracked voter inducements through money, gift items and its kinds. They however, reported to have witnessed or heard of distribution of money or gift items by candidates or their supporters in Boripe, Atakumosa East, Atakumosa West, Ife North, Ife South, Obokun, Ede North, Egbedore, Boluwaduro, Ila, Irepodun, Iwo LGAs.
Fighting Between Communities or Groups over Resources

WTV LTOs reported hearing of community clashes over resources in Olorunda, Boluwaduro, Ilesha West, Ife Central and Egbedore LGAs.

Conclusion

Having observed the pre-election environment over a period of two weeks, it is clear that election campaigns are just starting, and other pre-election activities will soon be in full swing. YIAGA WTV therefore assures the public that it will continue to observe the Osun 2018 pre-election environment and will duly share its findings with the public periodically. Should any issue arise, YIAGA will also amplify any issue (s) or anomaly that may arise during the pre-election phase with the view that the appropriate actors in charge of such situation will address it.
METHODOLOGY

YIAGA’s WTV has closely monitored the pre-election environment processes since July 20th 2018. This entailed deploying LTOs in each of the 30 LGAs of Osun state to gather systematic information about the pre-election environment, including early warning signs of electoral violence. To achieve this, YIAGA WTV 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 LGAs within which they reside to observe electoral activities relating to voter education, political campaign activities, activities of marginalized groups (youth, women, and PWDs) and election-related violence in the pre-election period. Their reports cover activities of the INEC, political parties, National Orientation Agency (NOA), CSOs, women, youth and people with disability groups. The observers report on their observation findings on a bi-monthly basis via coded text messages to a YIAGA 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 pre-election observation (PREO) findings are not statistically representative of the entire state but does 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. YIAGA, therefore, encourages users of this report to independently corroborate and respond appropriately to trends identified in this report.