The Race is On; Are Political Parties Ready to Play Fair?

Pre-Election Observation Report V
Background

The pre-election observation of YIAGA AFRICA’s Watching The Vote has in a series of four reports highlighted major trends in the pre-election phase ranging from the PVC collection rate, to the increase in the preparatory activities of INEC and the increase in political party campaigns nationally, the reports on verbal and physical violence especially associated with political rallies, to the persistent report of hate speech and purchase of the permanent voters card (PVC). As projected, the 2019 presidential election will be keenly contested especially between the All Progressive Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). This is also confirmed by the WTV Pre-election findings showing the dominance of the APC and the PDP in the political campaigns.

For the 2019 Elections, the pre-election observation commenced from the 9th of November, 2018 and will last until the week of the Presidential Election in February 2019 with a total of 822 Long Term Observers (LTOs). This report is the fourth of six reports to be issued by the organization covering the period of January 11th to 24th 2019, and it is based on reports received from all the LTOs reporting from the 774 Local Government Areas (LGA) across the country. In this report, we present findings on the preparedness of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), voter education and information activities, political campaign activities, inclusion of women, persons living with disabilities (PWDs) and youths, as well as issues relating to pre-election violence.
Summary of Findings

The 2019 general election will be the fifth general elections to be conducted in Nigeria since the 1999 Election. With a total of 23,316 candidates contesting for the 1558 elective with prospects for the, the 2019 elections will so far be the most contested elections in Nigeria. The pre-elections environment towards the elections as indicated by the WTV observation, has remained politically active with an early commencement of preparatory activities by the Electoral Commission as reported from November 2018 with increase in the percentage of reports from the different LGA on activities by the Commission and other voter education activities by the third and fourth report in January. This reporting period highlights certain findings consistent with the trends observed in previous reports. Major highlights for this reporting period includes the high reporting of distribution of the Permanent Voters Card (PVC), the increase in the reporting of ongoing voter education activities by INEC, the National Orientation Agency (NOA) and Civil Society Organization (CSO), the reduction in the reports of the purchase of the PVCs. The following are the summary findings for this reporting period:

1. More Voter Education Activities in States across the Country: WTV findings shows that INEC, National Orientation Agency (NOA) and a number of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are conducting voter education activities in more LGAs as the Election Day draws closer. Voter education activities were directly/indirectly witnessed to be conducted by: INEC in 74% of LGAs, NOA in 48% of LGAs and CSOs in 63% of LGAs. This reveal a 5% increase (from 69% to 74%) in voter education activities conducted by INEC, as compared to the fourth reporting period and 8% increase in voter education activities by NOA (from 40% to 48%).

2. INEC Achieves Massive Distribution of PVCs: Reports from WTV LTOs in the phase reveals that PVCs distributions is going on in almost all (96%) of the LGAs across the country. This success can also be attributed to the decentralization of PVC collection to ward levels by INEC between the 16th and 22nd of January, 2019. South South geopolitical recorded highest (97%) number in PVC distribution and South East geopolitical lowest

3. APC and PDP Rallies Hits over 80% of the LGAs:

WTV findings shows that voter education activities are increasingly conducted by INEC, National Orientation Agency (NOA) and CSOs across the country. The findings also reveal that voter education activities were conducted by INEC, NOA and CSO in 6%, 9% and 13% more LGAs respectively, when compared to the third reporting period. More importantly, voter education messages are targeted at marginalised groups like youth, women and People Living with Disabilities (PWDs).

4. Voter Inducement Remains at the Same Level: WTV LTOs witnessed the cases of voter inducement in only 18% of LGAs same as the last reporting period and a marginal increase of; 3% from 15% in the third reporting period.

5. Reduction in Report of Purchase of the Permanent Voters Card (PVC): Unlike the third and the fourth pre-election observation report, this reporting period had a reduction in the report of the buying and selling of the PVCs. The States with at least 3 LGAs reporting the purchase of the PVCs include: Yobe, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Zamfara, Abia, Ebonyi, Imo, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Rivers, Ogun, and Oyo States.
Recommendations

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

1. As the Elections draw closer, there is the need to ensure proper safeguard of the polling officials and election materials. This also includes the issues of welfare of the ad-hoc officials should be top priority.

2. To ensure citizen confidence in the electoral process, there is need for a more proactive communications using different channels of communication to counter misinformation in the days to the elections, on election day and after the polls especially the before the official announcement of the results.

3. This general elections will be having a larger number of political parties contesting, this may also increase the pressure on INEC and more importantly on polling officials on election day. INEC should ensure that its oversight and monitoring system are further strengthened to ensure compliance to the electoral laws and guidelines.

4. The Electoral Commission should ensure that there is proper oversight in the deployment of the polling officials and security officials for election day activities.

Security Agencies

5. There is need for more active engagement and communications by the security agencies with citizens on the principles regulating security deployment and its operations on election day. This also includes messaging that is backed by action on the role of the Security to promote peaceful elections.

6. There must be more intentionality in the deployment of personnel to ensure that personnel deployed are properly trained, are ready to be deployed and are not easily influenced to manipulate the process.
Political Parties

7 Political parties have a major role to play in the efforts towards promoting electoral integrity, parties should desist from inducing voters and buying PVC’s.

8 Candidates and political party leaders must ensure they promote peace and unity in their statements and actions, and in also building citizens confidence to promote active participation.

9 Political party leaders and candidates should refrain from any form of hate or dangerous speech and also encourage their supporters from refraining from those kinds of speech.

10 Political parties have a role to play in getting out the votes and mobilizing voters to turn out peacefully to vote.

Citizens:

11 The Elections is about Nigerians, every Nigerian has a role to play to promote peaceful elections.

12 Voters should get ready with their PVCs to vote and actively participate on election day.
Main Findings

i. Preparatory Activities of INEC

Since November 9th 2018, the WTV LTOs have consistently monitored the activities of INEC, to ascertain the commission's preparations for the forthcoming election. Findings from the 5th reporting period (11th to 24th January 2019) reveals that 69% of the WTV LTOs directly witnessed one or more activities by INEC in preparations for the 2019 general election and 24% of them heard of activities of INEC in preparation for the elections. Moreso, WTV LTOs witnessed/heard that PVC distribution and collection is ongoing in 96% of LGAs in the country. This however, indicates a 3% increase, when compared to the distribution of the PVCs in the fourth reporting period.
iii. Participation of Marginalized Groups (Women, Youth and PWD’s)

Despite the fact that the statistics shows that over half of the people on the register of voters falls within the youth age and about half are women. The representation of women and other marginalised groups in public offices of the country remains low. As a result, the WTV project continue to monitor the activities of marginalised groups, including voter education information targeted at them in the 2019 pre-election environment. The LTOs witnessed/heard of voter information/education targeted at women by INEC, CSOs, and other stakeholders in 37%, 46% and 36% of LGAs, respectively. The same was witnessed or heard for youth targeted voter education activities by INEC, CSOs and other stakeholders in 29%, 48% and 46% of LGAs respectively and for PWDs by INEC, CSOs and other stakeholder in 30%, 27% and 30% of LGAs as well.

Activities of Women and Youth

Women or women’s groups were directly/indirectly seen to be canvassing for votes in 67% of LGAs and youth or youth groups in 74% of LGAs.

iv. Political Campaigns

WTV LTOs monitored political party campaign activities such as, rallies, meetings, town or street trails and display of posters of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), All Progressives Congress (APC), People’s Democratic Party (PDP), and Social Democratic Party (SDP). Findings from this observation period reveal that political parties campaign activities have significantly increased. The campaign rallies of ADC was witnessed/heard of in 36% of LGAs, of APC in 87% of LGAs, PDP in 90% of LGAs and for SDP in 47% of LGAs. Which indicates that the campaign rallies of the ADC increased by 2%, APC increased by 7%, PDP increased by 9% and SDP by 4% of LGAs, as compared to the fourth reporting period. Additionally, LTOs saw not less than one poster of candidates associated with ADC in 55% of LGAs, APC in 98% of LGAs, the PDP in 99% of LGAs and the SDP in 66% of LGAs.
Campaigns by Political Parties by Geopolitical Zone

- **North West**
  - APC: 93%
  - PDP: 94%
  - SDP: 46%

- **North East**
  - APC: 92%
  - PDP: 90%
  - SDP: 59%

- **North Central**
  - APC: 88%
  - PDP: 87%
  - SDP: 54%

- **South West**
  - APC: 80%
  - PDP: 84%
  - SDP: 29%

- **South East**
  - APC: 84%
  - PDP: 91%
  - SDP: 56%

- **South South**
  - APC: 91%
  - PDP: 98%
  - SDP: 47%

- **National Average**
  - ADC: 55%
  - APC: 75%
  - PDP: 79%
  - SDP: 31%
ii. Voter Education and Information Activities

INEC and NOA are the key public institutions responsible for civic and voter education in the country. Like the Electoral Commission, the National Orientation Agency, NOA, is mandated by the law to sensitize the citizens on government policies and civic responsibilities education like voter education. Both institutions and a number of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have undertaken voter education activities ahead of the 2019 general elections. Voter education activities conducted by INEC were directly/indirectly witnessed in 74% of LGAs, by NOA in 48% of LGAs and by CSOs in 63% of LGAs. This reveals a 5% increase (from 69% to 74% of LGAs) in voter education activities conducted by INEC, as compared to the fourth reporting period and 8% increase in voter education activities by NOA (from 40% to 48%). In addition, data from WTV LTOs indicate that the North East has the highest record of voter education activities by INEC, while North West by NOA and CSOs, of all the three political actors.

Even though there is a slight increase in the activities of these three major stakeholders in sensitization of voters towards the election, there is need for more work by the NOA in disseminating necessary information for voters in more LGAs across the country.

Table showing voter education by INEC, CSOs and NOA in the five reporting periods

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>INEC</th>
<th>CSOs</th>
<th>NOA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREO I</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREO II</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<tr>
<td>PREO III</td>
<td>63%</td>
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<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>PREO IV</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>58%</td>
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<tr>
<td>PREO V</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>63%</td>
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Critical Incidents

v. Voter Inducement

WTV LTOs reported incidences of voter inducement in this fifth reporting. The LTOs witnessed the cases of voter inducement in only 18% of LGAs same as the last reporting period and a marginal increase of 3% from 15% in the third reporting period. The incidences were also heard of by WTV LTOs in 31% of LGAs. Overall, the states that reported at least 1 incidence of voter inducement are: Benue, FCT, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Plateau, Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara.

vi. Buying of Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs)

Buying and selling of PVCs is one of the predominant election malpractice recorded in this 2019 pre-election environment. As such, the WTV LTOs continue to monitor cases of purchase of PVCs in their assigned LGAs. Findings from this observation period reveal a net reduction in the number of reports buying or selling of PVCs. Reports of purchase of PVCs witnessed by WTV LTOs has reduced from 2% to 1% of LGAs from the fourth to fifth reporting period. The state and LGAs the WTV LTOs witnessed/heard of incidences of buying of PVCs are in the map below.
Violence Monitoring

vii. Verbal Attacks During Political Party Activities

In period five, the WTV LTOs directly/indirectly observed incidents of verbal attacks during party rallies and campaign trails in 19% of the LGAs, a 1% increase, as compared to the last reporting period. Similar to the third reporting period, North West geopolitical zone witnessed more cases of verbal violence than other geopolitical zones. States with the predominant reports of verbal attacks at rallies, meetings and campaign trails are: Jigawa (Birniwa, Garki, Jahun, Ringim, Sule-Tankarkar, Raura, Yankwashi), Kano (Fagge, Garun Malam, Kura, Madobi, Minjibir, Ungogo, Warawa, Bichi, Danbata, Kunchi, Tofa, Gaya), Katsina (Jibia, Kaita, Kusada, Zanga, Dandume, Faskari, Malufashi), Sokoto (Binji, Gada, Goronyo, Gwadabawa, Illela, Kebbe, Kwarar, S/Birni, Silame, Tambuwali, Tangaza, Tureya, Wurno, Yabo), Akwa Ibom (Abak, Etim Ekpo, Ikono, Ikot Abasi, Ini, Mbo, Nsit Atai, Nsit Ibom, Okobo, Oruk Anam, Ukana, Uru, Offong/Oruko), Cross River (Calabar Municipal, Calabar South, Etung, Obanliku, Obubra, Obudu, Ogoja), Delta (Etiopie West, Isoko South, Okpe, Ughelli South, Ope, Ughelli South, Ukwuani), Ogun (Ikenne, Odogbolu, Remo North Akure South, Ijebu, Ode), and Oyo (Afijio, Atisbo, Oyo West, Lagelu, Ogbomoso North Ori Ile). The percentage of LGAs in each geopolitical zone where verbal attacks was observed is shown below.

Voter Education and Information Activities by Geopolitical Zone

- North-Central: 7%
- North East: 9%
- North West: 30%
- South-East: 13%
- South South: 28%
- South West: 13%

viii. Violent physical attacks during political party activities

In this reporting period, only few states recorded violent physical attacks in rallies and political campaign trails. Though there’s a net increase in incidences, when compared to the last reporting period (in 1% of LGAs), WTV LTOs directly witness the aforementioned incidence in 3% of LGAs and heard of it in 10% of LGAs (same as the last reporting period). The LTOs witness this cases in: Benue (Gboko), Kogi (Idah, Yagba West), Niger (Magama), Adamawa (Mfagoli, Song), Bauchi (Misau), Borno (Ngala, Kala Balge), Jigawa (Garki), Kaduna (Lere, Jaba), Kano (Madobi, Warawa, Danbata), Katsina (Charanchi), Kebbi (Aliero), Sokoto (Kware, Tureta, Wamakko, Yobe), Imo (Isu/Umundugba)
ix. Violence Against Women in Election

WTV LTOs reported directly observing violence towards women at campaign rallies in 1% of the LGAs. The reports were received from Kogi (Okehi, Yagba West); Adamawa (Madagali); Borno (Mafa); Kano (Warawa); and Imo (Orlu) states. This was heard of in about a tenth (6%) of the LGAs in the country.
Methodology

The process adopted in this PREO involves the deployment of 822 carefully recruited and trained LTOs in every state and LGA of the country to systematically observe and gather information concerning their respective environments as well as early warning signs of conflict and electoral violence. The observers are equipped with a checklist to record the relevant information and provide verifiable findings. 774 of the observers report bi-weekly on a standard set of questions at the local government level, while 48 observers are mobile within a state and report critical incidents only.

The LTOs on the WTV project are recruited from their LGA of residence where they are expected to observe electoral activities relating to voter education and information, political campaign activities, activities of marginalized groups (youths, women and PWDs) as well as election related violence. They track the activities of INEC, political parties, NOA, CSOs, women, youths and PWDs.

All findings from the observers are transmitted to the WTV data center via coded SMS on a bi-weekly basis. During the reporting period, the observers are also expected to report any critical incidents and early warning signs that occur within their LGAs, which are then verified and shared with the relevant stakeholders to resolve the issue.

YIAGA AFRICA PREO findings are obtained from the entire LGAs within the country and not from a representative of the entire state thus providing an indication of emerging trends during the pre-election period. Unlike the WTV election-day observation methodology, which relies on sample-based observation, YIAGA AFRICA WTV PREO uses a more traditional approach that investigates the activities in all LGAs in the country. YIAGA, therefore, encourages users of this report to independently corroborate and respond appropriately to trends identified in this report.
Watching The Vote is a citizen-led election observation initiative aimed at enhancing the integrity of elections in Nigeria.

**OBJECTIVES**
- To provide timely and accurate information about the Election process to voters and stakeholders.
- To ensure that citizens’ votes count by deterring fraud and manipulation during conduct of elections and collation of results.
- To build citizens’ confidence in the election.

Watching The Vote uses PVT technology to observe the process of voting, counting, and verifying the official election results.

**METHODOLOGY**
- Opening & Setup
- Accreditation & Voting
- Sorting & Counting
- Accounting of Ballot
- Announcement & Posting of Result

Watching The Vote deployed 822 Long Term Observers, 3030 Mobile Observers, 774 Polling Unit Observers, and 46 Vote Counters for the 2019 Nigerian Elections.

**FOR ALL NIGERIANS**
BEHELDEN TO NONE

**DRIVEN BY DATA**