



YIAGA AFRICA Watching The Vote 2019 Governorship and State Assembly Supplementary Elections

Preliminary Statement on Counting, Collation and Results collation

(2:00pm, Sunday 24 March 2019)

Introduction

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests – welcome to the YIAGA AFRICA Watching The Vote (WTV)'s Press Conference on March 23, 2019 governorship supplementary elections. On 23 March, YIAGA AFRICA deployed 264 observers to 311 polling units in the 98 Local Government Areas (LGA) and 95 observers to 95 LGA results collation centers in the five states where the governorship supplementary election was conducted. The distribution of polling units covered by YIAGA AFRICA are as follows; Bauchi – 35 polling units, Benue – 89 polling units, Kano – 93 polling units, Plateau – 42 polling units and Sokoto – 52 polling units.

This is an update report on accreditation and voting, counting of ballots, announcement and posting of results and collation of results in the 5 states based on reports received from observers deployed to the polling units and LGA results collation centers.

Watching the Vote Findings

Based on reports received from our observers, we present the following findings from the polling units and LGA results collation centers;

Findings from Polling Units

1. Accreditation and Voting

- The Smart Card Reader was used throughout, for the accreditation of voters in 98% of 31 PUs in Bauchi, 91% of 70 PUs in Benue, 95% of 39 PUs in Plateau, 94% of 79 PUs in Kano and 98% of 44 PUs in Sokoto state.

- In 90% of 31 PUs in Bauchi, 94% of 70 PUs in Benue, 97% of 39 PUs in Plateau, 81% of 79 PUs in Kano and 91% of 45 PUs in Sokoto state, only voters whose PVCs were verified by the card readers were allowed to vote.
- In 96% of 31 PUs in Bauchi, 100% of 70 PUs in Benue, 97% of 39 PUs in Plateau, in 85% of 79 PUs in Kano and in 91% of 45 PUs in Sokoto state only voters whose names were in the Register of voters were allowed to vote.
- Party agents attempted to influence voters or INEC polling officials in 23% of 32 PUs in Bauchi, 9% of 68 PUs in Benue, 15% of 39 PUs in Plateau, 37% of 79 PUs in Kano and 20% of 44 PUs in Sokoto state.
- INEC polling officials were crowded in 23% of 30 PUs in Bauchi, 12% of 68 PUs in Benue, 13% of 39 PUs in Plateau, 44% of 79 PUs in Kano and 32% of 44 PUs in Sokoto state during accreditation and voting.

2. Intimidation and Harassment

- INEC polling officials were intimidated, harassed or assaulted in 20% of 30 PUs in Bauchi, 10% of 70 PUs in Benue, 8% of 39 PUs in Plateau, 23% of 79 PUs in Kano and 4% of 45 PUs in Sokoto state, during accreditation and voting.
- Voters were intimidated, harassed or assaulted in 23% of 30 PUs in Bauchi, 13% of 70 PUs in Benue, 10% of 39 PUs in Plateau, 33% of 79 PUs in Kano and 16% of 45 PUs in Sokoto state, during accreditation and voting.

3. Counting and Posting of Results

- INEC officials counted the number of unused gubernatorial election ballot papers in 90% of 30 PUs in Bauchi, 74% of 70 PUs in Benue, 92% of 39 PUs in Plateau, 84% of 79 PUs in Kano and 90% of 42 PUs in Sokoto state.
- In 97% of 30 PUs in Bauchi, 93% of 70 PUs in Benue, 95% of 39 PUs in Plateau, 95% of 79 PUs in Kano and 93% of 42 PUs in Sokoto state INEC polling officials showed how every gubernatorial ballot paper was marked to all party agents and observers.
- The polling unit level results were posted for the public to see only in 86% of 28 PUs in Bauchi, 90% of 69 PUs in Benue, 74% of 39 PUs in Plateau, 62% of 76 PUs in Kano and 79% of 33 PUs in Sokoto state.

4. Disruption of the Process

- In Polling unit 006 Ello, Ward 02, Agatu LGA in Benue state, thugs disrupted the process and destroyed all voting materials.
- In Polling unit 003 Alkala, Gaya Arewa ward, Gaya LGA in Kano state alleged police officers moved the election materials and polling officials from the polling units to an unknown location leaving voters in the queue.
- In Polling unit 010 Jabbori Primary School, Jama'are B ward, Jama'are LGA in Bauchi state alleged mobile police officers moved away the polling officials and election materials during an argument between the APC and PDP party agents leaving voters on the queue. The result for this polling unit was cancelled at the collation centre.

Findings on the Results Collation Process at the LGA Result Collation Centres

1. Accessibility

Observers, media and party agents were generally granted access to the LGA results collation centers to observe the process. However, observers were denied access to the result collation centres in **Gboko, Otukpo and Okpokwu LGAs** in Benue State by the Police while political thugs in **Gaya LGA** in Kano state prevented the party agents of the opposition party from accessing the collation centre.

2. Submission of Results Form EC 8B and Transfer of Results to Form EC 8C

In line with the INEC Guideline on results collation, the results Form EC8b (Results collated at ward Level) was submitted to the LGA Collation Officer in the 79 LGA results collation centres. In addition, the LGA results collation officers transferred the results for each LGA to the result forms EC8C in 79 LGA collation centres.

3. Announcement and Posting of Results

LGA Collation officers announced and posted the results in 52 LGAs in the 5 states. However, the results were not posted in **Alkaleri, Gamawa and Jama'are LGAs** in Bauchi state, **Agatu, Buruku, Kwande, Makurdi, Obi and Ushongo LGAs** in Benue state, **Garun Malam LGA** in Kano state, **Bokkos and Mangu LGAs** in Plateau state and **Binji, Goronyo, Silame and Tambuwal LGAs** in Sokoto state. Notably, in **Bodinga LGA** in Sokoto state, only results for

APC and PDP were announced and the results for **Kebbe** LGA in Sokoto state were not announced at the LGA collation centre.

4. Presence of Security Personnel and Party agents

Security agents were present in 79 LGA results collation centers observed. APC and PDP agents were seen in not less than 89% of these LGAs collation centres.

Critical Incidents

- 1. Intimidation and Harassment:** Incidents of intimidation and harassment during the results collation process were reported in Mangu LGA in Plateau, Ganjuwa LGA in Bauchi, Danbatta and Gaya LGAs in Kano and Isa LGA in Sokoto state.
- 2. Disruption of the process:** The LGA collation process in Toro LGA in Bauchi state, was disrupted by political party agents and supporters. The collation was therefore moved to the state collation centre in Bauchi. Political thugs disrupted the process of collation in Tudun Wada LGA collation centre in Kano state although this was later brought under control. There were also reports of attempts to disrupt the process in Mangu LGA in Plateau, Ganjuwa LGA in Bauchi, Gaya and Minjibir LGAs in Kano and Wurno LGA in Sokoto state.

Observations

- 1. Electoral Integrity:** The non-compliance with electoral guidelines, intimidation of voters and observers, violence and voter suppression impede on the integrity of the election in some states. YIAGA AFRICA questions the credibility of some results announced by INEC in polling units and LGA collation centres where observers and voters were chased away by political thugs and police officers. This was prevalent in Kano state in places like PUs 008 and 010, Kwarkiya Ward of Minjibir LGA, PU 008, Kanawa ward; Cikin Gari ward 05, in Sumaila LGA; and PU 07, Batayya ward 02, Albasu LGA; Zango PU 021, Karaye ward 03, Karaye LGA in Kano state. In Polling unit 003 Alkala, Gaya Arewa ward in Gaya LGA, Kano state, voting was not concluded at the polling unit but results were announced at the collation centre.
- 2. Electoral impunity:** The level of impunity observed in the supplementary elections is an indication of recession in the quality of elections in Nigeria. As noted earlier, political thugs unleashed violence and terror on unarmed voters, INEC officials and citizens without any form of restraint or reprimand from security agencies deployed for the elections. In some cases, political thugs

overpowered security agents despite massive security deployment as reported in Makurdi, where the Returning Officer for Gboko was shot by unknown gunmen on her way to the state headquarters to submit election results as well as Ukum LGA, Benue state where thugs burnt election materials for polling units in Azendieshi Ward-02 and the Incidence of this nature, questions the effectiveness of massive security deployment for elections. Nigeria cannot continue to condone this brazen disregard for law and order by political actors. As a country determined to make progress, electoral impunity must be checkmated else it will imperil our 20-year-old democracy.

- 3. Electoral mandate for sale:** In the pre-election period, YIAGA AFRICA observed voter inducement by political actors through the provision of gift items, suspicious community empowerment programs and cash handouts in locations considered to be swing wards and polling units. This desperation by the political class and their determination to obtain political power at all cost was extended to vote buying at the polling units.
- 4. Exploitation of the Margin of Lead Principle:** It is apparent from the conduct of the 2019 elections that the margin of lead principle has become a tool of manipulation by the political class in undermining the electoral process. Nigeria needs a new legal regime on the implication of cancelled votes and supplementary elections. Rewarding deliberate obstruction of the electoral process, electoral violence and non-use of card reader with supplementary elections is counterproductive.
- 5. Prosecution of electoral offenders:** Several electoral offences were observed and reported by WTV observers and other domestic and international observer groups. We urge INEC and Nigerian police to properly investigate cases of infractions and ensure diligent prosecution of electoral offenders. INEC and the police should extend the investigation to cases of complicity and collusion of its staff to compromise the process.

In conclusion, YIAGA AFRICA commends INEC for the improved management of election logistics and timely deployment for the elections as noted in our situational statement delivered yesterday. We urge INEC to make concerted efforts to vacate the substituting court order restraining it from concluding the elections in Adamawa and Bauchi state. YIAGA AFRICA calls on all stakeholders to reclaim our democracy by demanding accountability against all state and non-actors whose acts undermined the electoral process.

YIAGA AFRICA undertook the Watching The Vote project to provide Nigerian voters, governorship candidates, political parties, civil society and INEC with independent information on the conduct of the elections. The Watching The Vote project is “Driven by Data – For All Nigerians – Beholden to None!”

Thank you and God Bless the people of Nigeria!

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