



Security concerns remain while INEC & Election Stakeholders Intensify Election Preparatory Activities and Voter Education

Yiaga Africa Watching the Vote four Pre-Election Observation Report

October 8 to October 21, 2021

8 Days to the Anambra Election: Security concerns remain while INEC & Election Stakeholders Intensify Election Preparatory Activities and Voter Education

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Executive Summary

Yiaga Africa's pre-election observation efforts in the fourth reporting period focused on three (3) emerging trends that are likely to impact the conduct of the election. These include election preparatory activities by stakeholders, election violence or threats of violence and violations of the electoral code of conduct. The findings for this period highlight an increase in election preparatory activities by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and a shift in the level of voter education and information campaigns. Reports from WTV observers revealed that voter information campaigns were conducted in 14 of the 21 local government areas, the reports also indicated that there were voter information campaigns targeted at the marginalized communities (women, youths, and persons with disabilities) across most of the LGAs in Anambra.

With about 8 days to the Anambra Governorship election, election stakeholders have continued to show determination to ensure credible and peaceful conduct of the election. INEC had on Monday, October 25, 2021, convened a meeting of the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) on the Anambra Governorship election. During the meeting, the Chairman of the Commission, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu stated that the security agencies have assured INEC of a secured environment for the election. He further reaffirmed the commission's confidence in the security agencies to ensure a safe election. This was also confirmed by the State's Commissioner of Police; Echeng Oworo Echeng, who in a meeting with the members of the Yiaga Africa' Watching the Vote, stated that the Police remains committed to protecting election stakeholders and voters ahead of and during the November 6, governorship election.

There however remain critical security concerns with the recent threats by secessionist groups to shut down the region if certain conditions are not met. This remains a major threat to the election as elections continue to draw nearer. The current volatility of the state has continued to hinder political party campaigns, voter education and mobilization as stakeholders continue to deploy more caution. For instance, political parties have resorted to campaign strategies like campaigns at close-door locations, media adverts rather than their traditional outdoor rallies and campaign trails. This has widened the existing gap between candidates and prospective voters especially because the avenues for engaging candidates and parties on the agenda is almost non-existent. In addition, is the current rise in the activities of suspected cult groups in the state which is also likely to increase the threat to security in the state.

We commend INEC for its efforts to ensure the collection of old Permanent Voters Cards (PVC) from previous registration exercises. However, Yiaga Africa is worried that, with less than 8 days to the elections, the Commission is yet to commence the collection of PVC for the 76,104 new eligible voters who recently got registered during the Continuous Voters Registration (CVR) in the state. This, if not addressed, could potentially disenfranchise eligible voters.

Yiaga Africa has a total of 26 Long Term Observers (LTOs) deployed in the 21 Local Government Areas in Anambra state, to observe the pre-election environment. This report is the fourth pre-election observation report to be issued; it reflects the findings between October 8 to October 21, 2021. The findings in the report cover the 21 LGAs in Anambra state.

Summary of Findings

Electoral Preparations

1 Activities by INEC

Yiaga Africa WTV Long Term Observer (LTOs) keenly observed INEC's preparatory activities geared towards the smooth and successful conduct of the election. In the fourth reporting period, WTV LTO Observers heard of and witnessed preparatory activities carried out by INEC across all the 21 Local Government Areas of Anambra State. Some of these activities carried out by INEC include; training of ad-hoc staff as well as the publication of the notice of poll at the state and local government levels, in line with Section 46 of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended). Also, WTV received reports about the collection of Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) in 16 LGAs. In the last (third) reporting period, there was no collection of PVC in Idemili North, Anambra East & Onitsha South LGAs. Whilst this remains consistent with this reporting period, Yiaga Africa did not also receive any report of PVC collection in Aguata and Dunukofia.

2 Political Party Campaigns

The continuous attacks on political rallies and campaigns by assailants have affected campaigns and rallies by political parties ahead of the election. Yiaga Africa WTV observation report has shown that there has been no significant increase in the activities of the political parties as the elections inch closer. The finding reveals that;

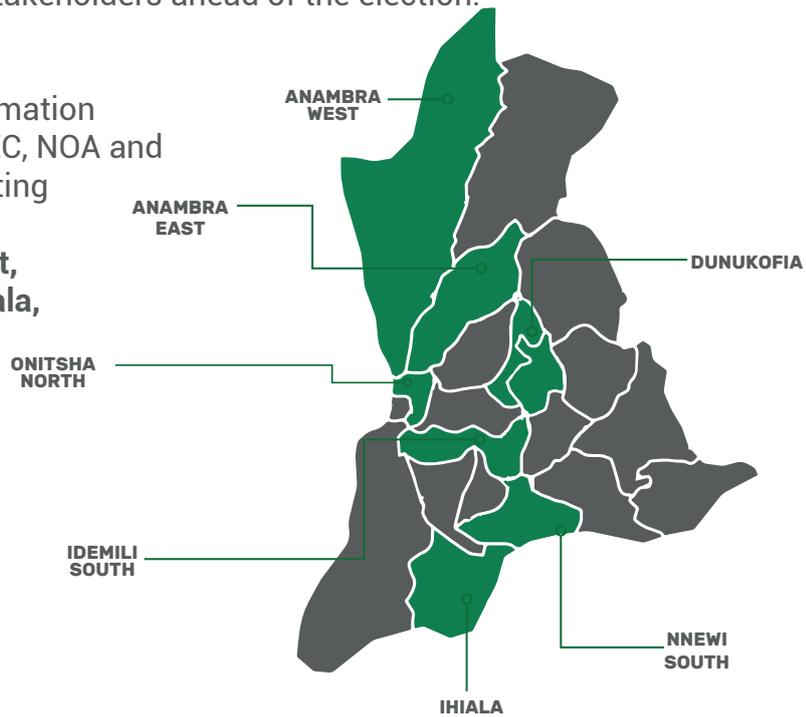
- Campaigns associated with the APC were witnessed or heard of in Aguata, Anambra East, Awka North, Awka South, Idemili North, Njikoka, Ogbaru, Onitsha North, Onitsha South and Oyi LGAs.
- Campaigns by APGA were observed and reported in Agauta, Awka North, Awka South, Anambra East, Anambra West, Ayamelum, Dunukofia, Idemili North, Njikoka, Ogbaru, Onitsha North, Onitsha South and Oyi LGAs.
- Campaigns by the PDP were observed in Aguata, Awka North, Anambra East, Awka South, Ayamelum, Idemili North, Ogbaru, Onitsha North, Onitsha South and Oyi LGAs.
- YPP conducted its campaigns in Aguata, Anambra East, Awka North, Awka South, Idemili North, Ogbaru, Onitsha North, Onitsha South and Oyi LGAs.

3 Voter Education/Information Campaigns

INEC, NOA and CSOs have continued to engage in the conduct of voter education to sensitize citizens and encourage them to participate in the electoral process. Reports from WTV observers revealed that voter information campaigns were conducted in 14 of the 21 local government areas. Some of these campaign activities involved information

to voters about the dates of the elections, the final date for campaign activities, the need to locate their polling units ahead of the elections, and on some of the preparatory activities conducted by the stakeholders ahead of the election.

WTV LTOs did not witness or hear of voter education/information campaigns conducted by INEC, NOA and CSOs during the fourth reporting period in the following LGAs: **Anambra East, Anambra West, Dunukofia, Idemili South, Ihiala, Njikoka, Nnewi South and Onitsha North.**



Voter Information Campaigns Targeted at the Marginalized Communities

Reports by the LTOs within this period revealed improved voter education campaigns by INEC, NOA and civil society organizations, targeted at marginalized groups. Notably, campaigns encouraging youth, women and persons with disabilities participation like the Vote Not Fight, Stop Violence Against Women in Politics (STOPVAWIP) and Access Nigeria: Disability Votes Matter campaigns' activities were prominent in the state. In specifics;

- Voter information campaigns targeted at women: by INEC were observed in Awka South, Ayamelum, and Idemili North, while by NOA, in Awka South, Idemili North, Nnewi North Ogbaru, Onitsha North and Orumba South LGAs. Campaigns targeted at women by CSOs were only observed in Aguata, Awka South, Ogbaru, Onitsha South and Orumba South LGA.
- Voter information campaigns targeted at youth by INEC were observed in Awka South, Ayamelum and Idemili North LGAs; while by NOA in Awka South, Idemili North, Nnewi North, Ogbaru, Onitsha South and Orumba LGAs. CSOs also carried out campaigns targeted at the youth in Aguata, Awka South, Ogbaru, Onitsha South, and Orumba South LGAs.
- Voter information campaigns targeted at PWDs by INEC were observed in Ayamelum, Awka South and Idemili North LGAs; and by NOA, in Awka South, Idemili North, Nnewi North, Ogbaru, Onitsha South and Orumba South LGAs. Campaigns targeted at PWDs by CSOs were observed in Aguata, Awka South, Onitsha South and Orumba South LGAs.

Voter Information Campaigns on INEC's guidelines for voting during COVID-19

As the election day approaches, WTV LTOs from 13 of the 21 LGAs reported that they were exposed to or heard of specific voter information campaigns on INEC's guidelines for voting during COVID-19. The commission had stated that it will enforce the use of disinfected/methylated spirits to clean the surface of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) upon processing a voter, and it will ensure physical distancing of 2 meters between voters on the queue on the day of the election. WTV findings reveal that there were no voter information campaigns on INEC's guidelines in Anaocha, Agauta, Awka South, Anambra West, Dunukofia, Idemili South, Njikoka, Nnewi North, Onitsha North, Onitsha South and Orumba North LGAs.

COVID-19 Prevention Messaging

Agencies and institutions of government as well as CSOs are promoting COVID-19 prevention messages as observed in the fourth reporting period.

- WTV LTOs in 20 LGAs reported that they were exposed to COVID-19 prevention messaging by NCDC.
- WTV LTOs in 5 LGAs reported that they were exposed to COVID-19 prevention messaging by NOA
- WTV LTOs in 9 LGAs were exposed to COVID-19 prevention messages by CSOs.

4 Activities of Marginalized Groups (women, youth)

WTV LTOs heard of or witnessed youth groups campaigning and canvassing for votes for political parties or candidates in **Awka North, Awka South, Anambra East, Dunukofia, Idemili North, Ogbaru and Onitsha LGA.**

Also, reports were received from **Anambra East, Awka North, Awka South, Dunukofia, Idemili North, Ogbaru and Onitsha South** LGA of women group campaigning and canvassing for votes for political parties and candidates.

Violation of the Electoral Code of Conduct

5 Increased Reports of Voter Inducement

LTOs also tracked and reported incidents of voter inducements in the form of distribution of money or gift items. In Ogbaru LGA, Yiaga Africa's LTO witnessed the distribution of fabrics materials (Ankara) during party campaigns. WTV LTO in Awka North heard about the distribution of money (N1500) during an APC rally in the LGA. Observers in Ayamelum, Idemili North and Onitsha North LGAs also heard about the distribution of monies or gift items during political party rallies in their LGAs.

Electoral Violence and Violence Indicators

6 Violent physical and verbal attacks during campaign rallies;

Yiaga Africa LTOs heard of physical attacks during political parties campaign rally in Ihiala LGA. Assailants attacked the candidate and supporters of APGA during the party's rally in Ihiala, one person was shot in the leg during the attack. These attacks led to the destruction of properties belonging to candidates or their supporters. Similarly, LTOs reported verbal attacks during party campaigns in Awka North and Ihiala LGAs.

7 Inter-communal conflicts:

WTV LTO reported fighting between communities in Umuoji in Idemili North over leadership positions for the community, the hostilities have been going for a while now and the warring parties have led protests to the government house in Awka, but the dispute is yet to be resolved. Fighting over resources (land and leadership position) has also been reported from the Ogwu-Aniocha community in Ogbaru LGA. The crisis has been ongoing since the discovery of oil in the community over two years ago, the recent crisis was ignited as a result of reactions to the arrest of supporters of the Odidiga group by the security forces, allegedly on the orders of the Igwe Nnaji.

8 Increase in the activities of assailants/cult groups

LTOs in Ihiala and Nnewi North LGAs reported an increase in the activities of cult groups in their LGAs in the fourth reporting period. In Ihiala, the LTO reported that some cult groups ransacked the communities civic centre and the residence of a party stalwart in search of the party man, they shot sporadically in the air and those around the vicinity who were registering for their National Identification card scampered for safety. There have also been reports of increased activities of cult groups/unknown assailants in Nnewi North LGA who have been advancing fear-mongering through acts like shooting sporadically in the air to scare people from participating in the electoral process.

9 Violence or interference by security forces;

WTV also engaged in monitoring and tracking excessive use of force as well as intimidation and violation of human rights by all security agencies. Specifically, WTV LTOs in Anambra East and Ihiala LGAs witnessed excessive use of force and intimidation by security forces (military personnel) in the fourth reporting period.



REGISTERED VOTERS BY SENATORIAL DISTRICT IN ANAMBRA STATE

Anambra North



1,820
Polling Units



845,994
Registered Voters

ANAMBRA WEST



164
Polling Units



62,637
Registered Voters

AYAMELUM



191
Polling Units



87,051
Registered Voters

ONITSHA NORTH



313
Polling Units



159,292
Registered Voters

ANAMBRA EAST



Polling Units
241



Registered Voters
98,474

ONITSHA SOUTH



321
Polling Units



161,578
Registered Voters

OYI



207
Polling Units



102,663
Registered Voters

OGBARU



383
Polling Units



174,299
Registered Voters

Election Date: Nov, 6th 2021

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or visit www.inecnigeria.org/elections/polling-units/





REGISTERED VOTERS BY SENATORIAL DISTRICT IN ANAMBRA STATE

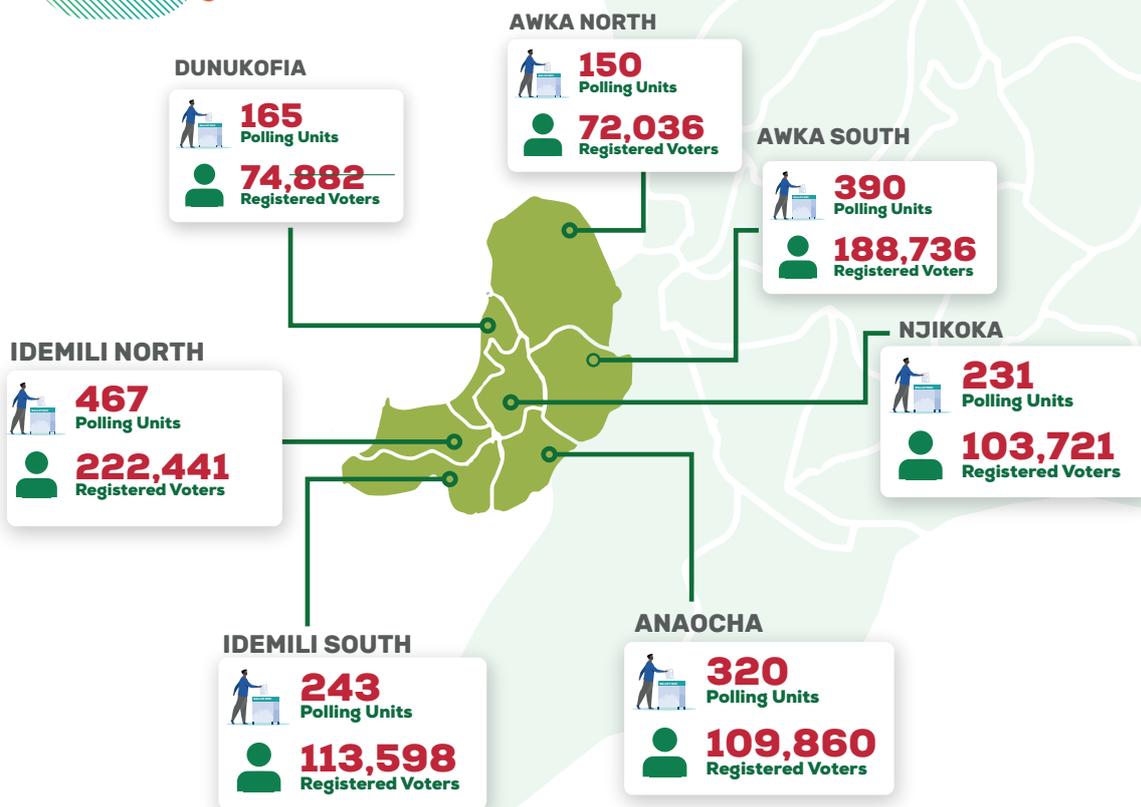
Anambra Central



3,987
Polling Units



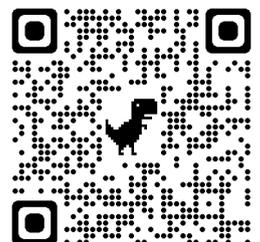
887,295
Registered Voters



Election Date: Nov, 6th 2021


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REGISTERED VOTERS BY SENATORIAL DISTRICT IN ANAMBRA STATE

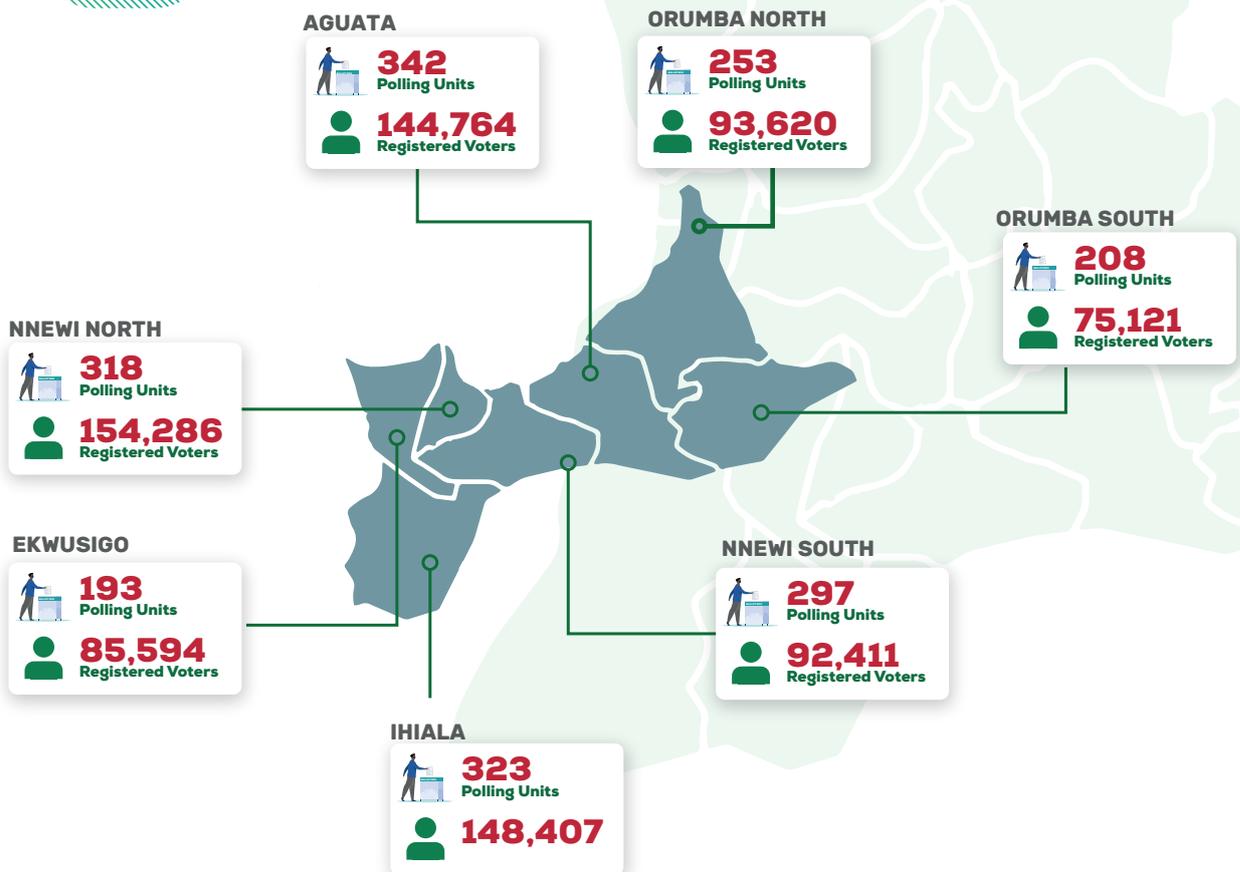
Anambra South



1,934
Polling Units



794,203
Registered Voters



Election Date: Nov, 6th 2021


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Key Recommendation

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

1. Should ensure more consistent and harmonious coordination within the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) on measures to forestall incidences of violence and safety of voters and poll officials.
2. Should as a matter of urgency collaborate with CSOs, NOA and other relevant stakeholders and leverage existing platforms to amplify and intensify voter education and inspire confidence in voters across the state in the coming days to the election.
3. Should take steps to address the concerns of low voter education, especially for the marginalized groups, there is a need for a more creative and proactive approach for targeted communication using different channels to ensure the participation of the marginalised groups.

Security Agencies

4. Security agencies should partner with CSOs to promote activities and initiatives that will increase citizens confidence and encourage participation in the election.
5. Security agencies should ensure that their personnel are adequately trained on election security before they are deployed for the election.
6. Security agencies should deploy monitoring mechanisms to checkmate and curtail personnel excesses.

Political Parties

7. Political party candidates and supporters should ensure they promote peaceful elections, encourage citizens to collect their PVCs to vote and refrain from any form of physical or verbal attacks on opponents or their supporters.
8. Political party leaders, candidates and supporters should refrain from manipulating the insecurity in the state by creating mayhem and politically related attacks/crises.

CSOs

9. CSOs should engage in building citizens' confidence ahead of the elections and encourage voters to turn out and vote.

Citizens

10. Voting in elections is the legitimate means of making citizens voices heard and of recruiting desirable leaders. Citizens should get involved in getting out the vote campaigns in the days leading up to the election in order to increase participation and voter turnout.

Methodology

Yiaga Africa Watching the Vote recruited and trained 25 long term citizen observers (LTOs) and deployed them across the 21 LGAs of Anambra State to systematically observe the pre-election environment in their various local governments. The observation also includes monitoring of early warning signs of electoral violence that may influence the outcome of the election in Anambra State. The observers are equipped with a checklist to record the relevant information and provide verifiable findings of the pre-election happening in their various LGAs.

The LTOs send reports of their observation bi-weekly on a standard set of questions at the local government level, while the others serve as mobile observers within the state and they report critical incidents only. All 25 LTOs are also recruited from their LGAs of residence where they are expected to monitor electoral activities: voter education and information, political campaign activities, activities of marginalized groups (youth, women and PWDs), election-related violence and critical incidents all around the clock. Additionally, they track activities of electoral stakeholders like; INEC, political parties, NOA, CSOs, as well as women, youths and PWDs.

All findings from the LTOs are transmitted to the WTV data centre via coded SMS and are thereafter, analyzed and reported periodically. Yiaga Africa PREO findings are obtained from the entire LGAs within the state 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 that relies on sample-based observation, Yiaga Africa's WTV PREO uses a more traditional approach that investigates the activities in LGAs of Anambra State.



WATCHING THE VOTE

Making Votes Count... **ORG**

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