



# Voter Education and Campaign Activities Blighted by Vote Merchandising and Thuggery

**Yiaga Africa's Watching The Vote  
Third Osun Pre-Election Observation (PREO) Report**

May 26 - June 16, 2022



# Executive Summary

The July 16th Osun State governorship election is coming on the heels of the just-concluded Ekiti governorship election, which poll watchers and other election stakeholders have judged as an improvement from the November 2021 Anambra governorship election and the February 2022 FCT local council elections. The governorship election is the last off-cycle election to be held before the 2023 general elections. It is considered a decisive election that may shape the narratives and can set the tone for the conduct of the 2023 general elections. The attention of stakeholders has shifted to the final preparation for the Osun state election in what promises to be a fiercely contested election. This election presents another opportunity for all stakeholders to raise the

bar for not just a credible and peaceful process but an election with optimum legitimacy.

The elections will be contested by 15 political parties that have fulfilled all the criteria of participation as set by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). This was preceded by intra-party infractions which led to an array of defections from one political party to another ahead of the election. According to INEC, a total of 1,955,657 voters are registered to vote in the election as of the time Continuous Voters Registration was suspended in the state. In addition, over three hundred thousand (333,179) new Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs) have been printed so far, and these are being distributed ahead of

election day. While the PVC collection is still ongoing, we expect INEC to consistently provide information on the rate of collection for transparency.

However, as observed in this reporting period, the Osun Governorship Election is also shaping up to be blighted by vote merchandising despite consistent voter education by the election management body and Civil society organizations. The role of voter inducement has continued to influence electoral outcomes and delegitimize citizens' mandates in the electoral process. Thus the direct legal and governance consequences of vote-trading must explicitly remain at the front-burner of electoral discussions going into the July 16, 2022 poll leading into the 2023 general elections.

In addition, this pre-election observation period still reveals activities of hoodlums and cultists in the state with the recent critical incident being the disruption of PVC collection in Ilesa Local Government Area of the state. Reports of activities of cultists and hoodlums are gradually becoming a recurrence in the Osun pre-election environment ahead of the election.

This edition of Yiaga Africa's Pre-Election Observation (PREO) report captures the activities of the key election stakeholders: INEC, Political parties, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and the National Orientation Agency (NOA), as well as indicators of electoral violence. It contains key findings of the third observation period (between May 26 and June 16, 2022).

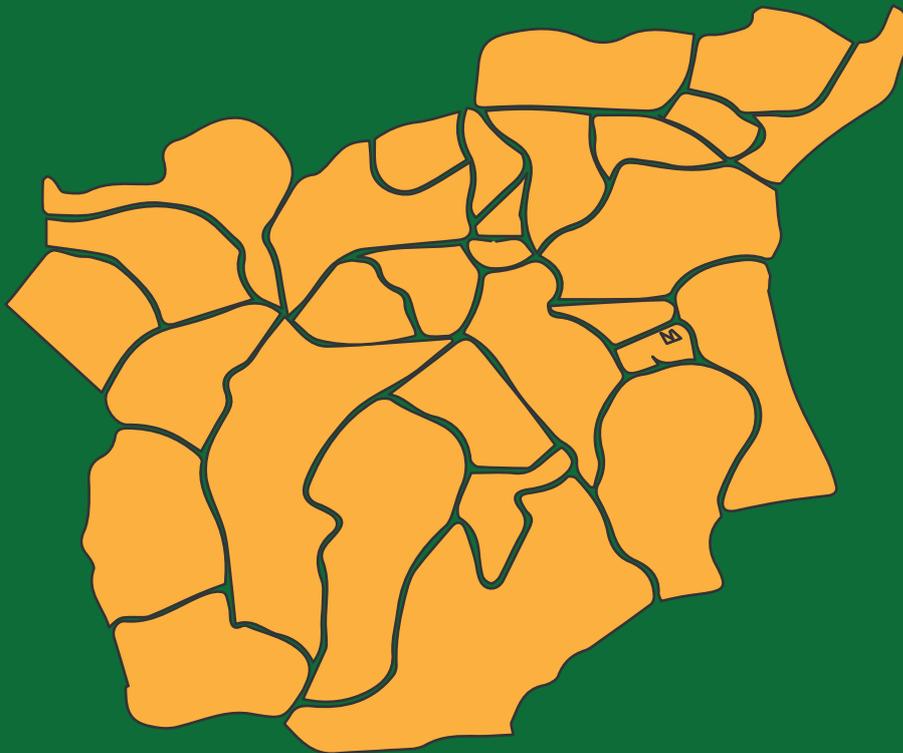
# Key Observation Findings



## Election Preparatory Activities by INEC

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WTV long-term observers continued to follow the activities of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) across the 30 local government areas of Osun state. In this reporting period, WTV LTOs reported the distribution of non-sensitive election materials such as ballot boxes, and cubicles to the local government INEC offices and the ongoing collection of permanent voter cards.



# **Voter Education by INEC, NOA and CSOs**

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The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the National Orientation Agency (NOA), the Civil Society Organization (CSO), and other election stakeholders engaged in voter education and sensitization in the state. The activities were designed to inform the populace about the foundations of democracy, the importance of elections, the value of voting, and how to participate in the democratic process. This was done throughout the State using seminars, voter education workshops, voter sensitization campaigns, posters, social media, jingles, and TV and radio shows.

WTV LTOs reported having heard or witnessed voter education conducted by INEC in 15 local government areas in the reporting period. INEC did not conduct voter education campaigns in Atakumosa East, Atakumosa West, Ayedaade, Ayedire, Boriipe, Ede South, Egbedore, Ife Central, Ife East, Ife South, Ila, Iwo, Odo-Otin, Ola-Oluwa, and OroluLGAs. LTO's reports also revealed that voter education activities were conducted by CSOs in only four LGAs Boluwaduro, Ifelodun, Ilesa East, and Ilesa West local government areas. Voter Education by the NOA was observed in Atakumosa West, Ede South, Ejigbo, Ife North, Ila, Ilesa East, Ilesa West, Irepodun (Osun), Iwo, Olorunda, Orolu, Osogbo – North, and Osogbo – South local government areas.

# **Information Campaign on the New 2022 Electoral Act**

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WTV LTOs have reported having heard or witnessed specific information campaigns on the key provisions of the New 2022 electoral Act by INEC, NOA, and CSOs ahead of the July 16, governorship election. This was reported in Atakumosa West, Boluwaduro, Boriipe, Ede South, Egbedore, Ejigbo, Ifedayo, Ifelodun (Osun), Ila, Ilesa East, Ilesa West, Irepodun (Osun), Irewole, Isokan, Olorunda, Oriade, and Osogbo - North local government areas. As part of the messaging in the public space by the commission, INEC will be deploying the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) for the accreditation of voters and transmission of election results from the polling units on election day.

# Campaign Activities by Political Party

Political party campaigns and rallies have intensified across the local governments as the date of the election draws closer. These campaign activities were carried out through radio jingles, Tv adverts, meetings, and campaign trails. In this reporting period, WTV LTOs report suggested campaign activities by the APC and the PDP were more visible, these are the major contenders in the election.

Accordingly, reports of political party campaigns by the Accord party were reported in Ayedire, Ede North, Ejigbo, Ife North, Ifelodun (Osun), Ilesa East, Ilesa West, Irepodun, Obokun, Odo-Otin, Ola-Oluwa, Olorunda, Oriade, Orolu, and Osogbo LGAs. The LTOs also reported an intense political party campaign by APC in 28 of the 30 LGAs these include Atakumosa East, Atakumosa West, Ayedire, Boluwaduro, Ede North, Ede South, Egbedore, Ejigbo, Ife Central, Ife East, Ife North, Ife South, Ifedayo, Ila, East, Ilesa West, Irepodun (Osun), Irewole, Isokan, Iwo, Obokun, Odo-Otin, Ola-Oluwa, Olorunda, Oriade, Orolu, and Osogbo. Campaign activities by the PDP were also observed in 27 of 30 LGA across the state in Atakumosa East, Atakumosa West, Boluwaduro, Ede North, Ede South, Egbedore, Ejigbo, Ife Central, Ife East, Ife North, Ife South, Ifedayo, Ila, East, Ilesa West, Irepodun (Osun), Irewole, Isokan, Iwo, Obokun, Odo-Otin, Ola-Oluwa, Olorunda, Oriade, Orolu, and Osogbo respectively. While the YPP campaign activities were observed and reported in Ejigbo, Ifelodun (Osun), Ilesa East, Ilesa West, Irepodun (Osun), Ola-Oluwa, Olorunda, Orolu, Osogbo.



**Accord was seen campaigning in** Ayedire, Ede North, Ejigbo, Ife North, Ifelodun (Osun), Ilesa East, Ilesa West, Irepodun, Obokun, Odo-Otin, Ola-Oluwa, Olorunda, Oriade, Orolu, and Osogbo LGAs



**APC was seen campaigning in** Atakumosa East, Atakumosa West, Ayedire, Boluwaduro, Ede North, Ede South, Egbedore, Ejigbo, Ife Central, Ife East, Ife North, Ife South, Ifedayo, Ila, East, Ilesa West, Irepodun (Osun), Irewole, Isokan, Iwo, Obokun, Odo-Otin, Ola-Oluwa, Olorunda, Oriade, Orolu, and Osogbo



**PDP was seen campaigning in** Atakumosa East, Atakumosa West, Boluwaduro, Ede North, Ede South, Egbedore, Ejigbo, Ife Central, Ife East, Ife North, Ife South, Ifedayo, Ila, East, Ilesa West, Irepodun (Osun), Irewole, Isokan, Iwo, Obokun, Odo-Otin, Ola-Oluwa, Olorunda, Oriade, Orolu, and Osogbo



**YPP was seen campaigning in** Ejigbo, Ifelodun (Osun), Ilesa East, Ilesa West, Irepodun (Osun), Ola-Oluwa, Olorunda, Orolu, Osogbo.



# Key Recommendations

## Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

- INEC should intensify the education of citizens and stakeholders on the consequences of vote-trading, especially on election day.
- The commission should consistently provide updates on the number of PVCs collected ahead of the state election.

## Security Agencies

- As the elections draw near, security agencies working on the elections should ensure that all personnel deployed are properly trained.
- Security agencies should ensure the arrest and prosecution of all involved in any form of violence in the days leading to the election.
- Security agencies, especially the police, should publicize hotlines for citizens to make complaints, report incidents, or access information on the election.

## Political Parties

- Yiaga Africa vehemently opposes any sort of voter bribery because it undermines the democratic process. Political parties are encouraged to run issues-based campaigns rather than tempting voters with unsustainable gifts that do not contribute to the state's economic development.
- Political parties and candidates should conduct issue-based campaigns rather than engage in voter inducement, and recruitment of thugs and cultists for violence.

# Methodology

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Yiaga Africa Watching the Vote recruited, trained, and deployed 31 long-term citizen observers (LTOs) and deployed them across the 30 LGAs of Osun State to systematically observe the pre-election environment in their various local governments. The observation also includes monitoring early warning signs of electoral violence that may influence the election outcome in the 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 the 31 LTOs were recruited from their LGAs of residence, where they are expected to monitor all the 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 whole state, thus indicating 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 Osun State.



# WATCHING THE VOTE

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