



OBSERVATION REPORT

BAYELSA STATE 2019

GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

**SITUATION ROOM REPORT OF
OBSERVATION OF BAYELSA
STATE GOVERNORSHIP
ELECTION 2019**

2020 Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE STATE

The Bayelsa State Governorship election took place on Saturday, 16th November 2019, simultaneously with the governorship election in Kogi State. The two governorship elections were the first elections to be conducted by INEC, post-2019 general elections and against a tense electoral environment.

Bayelsa State, located in the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria, was carved out of neighbouring Rivers State and declared a State on 1st October 1996, under the military regime of late dictator, General Sani Abacha.

The State has 8 Local Government Areas, 3 Senatorial Districts and 5 Federal Constituencies. It is bounded by Rivers State on the West, Delta State on the North and by the Atlantic Ocean on the east and south. It has an area size of 10,773 (sq. km) and an estimated population of 2,277,961 people¹. The people of Bayelsa State commonly speak English and dialects of the Ijaw language/ the Izon, Nembe, Ogbia and Epie-Atissa languages across different communities.

The State, which is popular for its crude oil deposits, is home to Oloibiri, where oil was first discovered in Nigeria in 1956. Some tourist attractions in Bayelsa State include the Akassa Slave Transit Camp and Tunnel, Apoi Creek Forest, Ox-Bow Lake, Mangrove creeks.

Diepreye Alamieyeseigha was sworn in as the first civilian Governor of Bayelsa State on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on May 29, 1999. However, his Deputy Governor, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan succeeded him on December 9, 2005, following Alamieyeseigha's impeachment by the Bayelsa State House of Assembly.

1 *National Population Commission, 2016*

The incumbent Governor of Bayelsa State is Seriake Henry Dickson of the Peoples Democratic Party. The Deputy Governor of the State is Rear Admiral Gboribiogha John-Jonah. Seriake Dickson was sworn into office as Governor of the State on February 14, 2012 and re-elected for a second term in office in a supplementary election on January 9, 2016.

Bayelsa State has the APC and PDP as the dominant political parties. Since 1999, PDP has dominated the political scene, having won all gubernatorial elections and also controlled the House of Assembly. Similarly, the PDP has won nearly all seats into the Senate and House of Representatives since 1999. Presently in Bayelsa State, PDP is the party in power, and became an entrenched political force. Its control of all tiers of government in the State, and the multiple and numerous political offices its members occupy gave it an advantage in the mobilisation of support, particularly at the grassroots ahead of the election. The control of the state machinery and the access to state finances and institutions such as the media also gave it an advantage over other political parties. However, the emergence of the APC in the state in 2015 and the outcome of the 2019 elections whittled down the dominance of the PDP following the wining of one senatorial seat out of three, and two House of Representatives seats out of five by APC. APC also won four out of the 24 State House of Assembly seats.

1.2 OFFICIAL TIMETABLE AND SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE ELECTION

On April 9, 2019, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in compliance with the 1999 Constitution released the timetable and schedule for the Bayelsa State Governorship Election.² In the timetable, the notice of polls would be issued on August 1st, 2019 fixing the polls for November 2nd, 2019. However, The date was later changed by INEC to November 16th, 2019 on the appeals received by INEC from critical stakeholders from Bayelsa, demanding for a change in the earlier fixed date.³

2 BREAKING: INEC Confirms Kogi, Bayelsa Governorship Elections Will Hold November 2 - <http://saharareporters.com/2019/04/09/breaking-inec-confirms-kogi-bayelsa-governorship-elections-will-hold-november-2>

3 INEC releases timetable for Kogi, Bayelsa governorship elections <https://dailypost.ng/2019/05/16/inec-releases-timetable-kogi-bayelsa-governorship-elections/>



INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION

**TIMETABLE AND SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES FOR KOGI AND BAYELSA STATES
2019 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTIONS**

The tenure of the Governor of **Kogi State** will expire on the **26th day of January, 2020** while the tenure of the Governor of **Bayelsa State** will expire on the **13th day of February, 2020**. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 178(1) and (2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) and Section 25 (7) and (8) of the Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended), the earliest date for the election into the office of Governor, Kogi State, shall be the 31st day of August, 2019 and the latest date for the election shall be the 28th day of December, 2019. For Bayelsa State, the earliest date for the election to the office of Governor shall be the 17th day of September, 2019 and the latest date for the election shall be the 15th day of January, 2020.

By virtue of Section 178(2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) and Section 25(8) of the Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended), election into the Office of a State Governor shall hold not earlier than One Hundred and Fifty (150) days and not later than Thirty (30) days before the expiration of the term of office of the last holder. The Commission is, by virtue of Section 30(1) of the Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended), expected to issue Notice for the election not later than ninety (90) days before the date of the election.

In exercise of the powers conferred on the Independent National Electoral Commission (hereinafter referred to as "the Commission") by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) and the Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended) and of all other Powers enabling it in that behalf, the Commission hereby issues this Timetable and Schedule of Activities for Governorship Elections in Kogi and Bayelsa States:

S/N	ACTIVITY	DATE	REMARKS
1	Notice of election	1 st August, 2019	Section 30 (1) of the Electoral Act, 2010 provides not later than 90 days before the election.
2	Collection of Forms CF001, CF002 for the election by Political Parties at INEC Headquarters.	2 nd August, 2019	Collection by Political Parties to be issued to their candidates.
3	Conduct of Party Primaries including resolution of disputes arising from the Primaries.	2 nd August – 29 th August, 2019	To enable Political Parties democratically nominate candidates for the election as required by Section 87 of the Electoral Act, 2010
4	Commencement of campaign by Political Parties in public	2 nd August, 2019	Section 99(1) of the Electoral Act, 2010 provides 90 days before polling day.

1

5	Last day for submission of Forms CF001 and CF002 at the INEC Headquarters.	3 rd September, 2019	Section 31(1) of the Electoral Act, 2010 provides for not later than 60 days before the election.
6	Publication of Personal Particulars of candidates (CF001) and list of candidates.	10 th September, 2019	Section 31(3) of the Electoral Act, 2010 provides for publication within 7 days of the receipt of Form CF001
7	Last day for withdrawal by candidate(s)/replacement of withdrawn candidate(s) by Political Parties.	18 th September, 2019	Section 35 of the Electoral Act, 2010 provides not later than 45 days to the election.
8	Last day for the submission of Nomination forms by Political Parties.	2 nd October, 2019	To enable Political Parties comply with Section 32(1) of the Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended)
9	Publication of official Register of Voters for the election.	3 rd October, 2019	Section 20 of the Electoral Act, 2010 provides not later than 30 days before the election.
10	Publication of final list of nominated candidates.	3 rd October, 2019	Section 34 of the Electoral Act, 2010 provides at least 30 days before the day of election.
11	Publication of Notice of Poll	19 th October, 2019	Section 46 of the Electoral Act, 2010 provides not later than 14 days before the election.
12	Last day for submission of names of Party Agents for the Election to the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC)	19 th October, 2019	Section 45 of the Electoral Act, 2010 provides not later than 14 days before the election.
13	Last day for campaigns	31 st October, 2019	Section 99(1) of the Electoral Act, 2010 provides 90 days for commencement of campaigns by Political parties and end of same 24 hours before polling day.
14	Date of election	2 nd November, 2019	Section 178(1)&(2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) and Section 25(8) of the Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended) empower the Commission to appoint a date for the Governorship election not earlier than 150 days and not later than 30 days before the expiration of the term of office of the last holder of that office.

Note: (i) Run off election to the office of Governor of a State (if any) will be held within 21 days after the announcement of the result of the election in accordance with Section 179 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended -4th Alteration).

Dated thisday of April, 2019

Mrs. Rose Oriaran-Anthony
Secretary to the Commission

First Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the 2019 Bayelsa State Governorship election released by INEC



INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION

AMENDED TIMETABLE AND SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES FOR KOGI AND BAYELSA STATES 2019 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTIONS

The tenure of the Governor of Kogi State will expire on the 26th day of January, 2020 while the tenure of the Governor of Bayelsa State will expire on the 13th day of February, 2020. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 178(1) and (2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) and Section 25 (7) and (8) of the Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended), the earliest date for the election into the office of Governor, Kogi State, shall be the 31st day of August, 2019 and the latest date for the election shall be the 28th day of December, 2019. For Bayelsa State, the earliest date for the election to the office of Governor shall be the 17th day of September, 2019 and the latest date for the election shall be the 15th day of January, 2020.

By virtue of Section 178(2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) and Section 25(8) of the Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended), election into the office of a State Governor shall hold not earlier than One Hundred and Fifty (150) days and not later than Thirty (30) days before the expiration of the term of office of the last holder. The Commission is, by virtue of Section 30(1) of the Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended), expected to issue Notice for the election not later than ninety (90) days before the date of the election.

In exercise of the powers conferred on the Independent National Electoral Commission (hereinafter referred to as "the Commission") by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) and the Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended) and of all other Powers enabling it in that behalf, the Commission hereby issues this Timetable and Schedule of Activities for Governorship Elections in Kogi and Bayelsa States:

Table with 4 columns: S/N, ACTIVITY, DATE, REMARKS. Rows 1-4 detailing election activities from August 17th to September 5th, 2019.



Table with 4 columns: S/N, ACTIVITY, DATE, REMARKS. Rows 5-14 detailing election activities from September 9th to November 16th, 2019.

Note: (i) Run off election to the office of Governor of a State (if any) will be held within 21 days after the announcement of the result of the election in accordance with Section 179 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended -4th Alteration).

(ii) This Timetable and Schedule of Activities supersedes the one issued on 9th April, 2019.

Dated this 16th day of May, 2019

Mrs. Rose Oriaran-Anthony Secretary to the Commission



Amended Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the 2019 Bayelsa State Governorship election released by INEC

1.3 POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT BEFORE THE ELECTION

In the build up to the 2019 Governorship election, the political environment in Bayelsa state was characterised by intense and bitter political competition by party chieftains and supporters of the two major political parties, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC). The environment became violatate and vulnerable to violence for quite a number of reasons. Firstly, the unrelenting proliferation of arms and armed gangs/cult groups in the State. Secondly, the desperate struggle for power and the associated violence. Thirdly, the incentivisation of violence by programmes such as the Federal Government and State Government's Amnesty Programme for repentant cultists and commoditisation of violence in the electoral process.







PRE-ELECTION OBSERVATION

2.1 SITUATION ROOM PRE-ELECTION ACTIVITIES

Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room), towards the governorship election, carried out the following activities:

- (i) Peace Messaging advocacy and campaign in the state;
- (ii) Radio programme on election issues;
- (iii) Recruitment and training of volunteers for the field observation;
- (iv) Engagement with key stakeholders (i.e. INEC, Security agencies etc.) on their preparations for a free, fair and credible governorship election; and
- (v) Collaboration with Bayelsa state-based Civil Society organisations (CSOs) in the areas of the observation of the Continuous Voters Registration (CVR), political campaigns as well as Voters Education.

2.1.1 PEACE MESSAGING CAMPAIGN

The Situation Room convened a strategy meeting of critical stakeholders to strategize and work towards peaceful conduct of the forthcoming State Governorship election and to deliberate on a coordinated peace messaging approach with stakeholders in the State for the purpose of public sensitization and enlightenment ahead of the election. At the end of the meeting, all stakeholders agreed to the format and content of peace messages that should be promoted and disseminated in Bayelsa State. The Situation Room further supported this campaign by developing television and radio jingles on the agreed peace message, which was aired on popular TV and radio stations in the state.

2.1.2 VOTER EDUCATION AND RADIO PROGRAMME

As part of its activities to support peaceful election in Bayelsa State, the Situation Room supported a radio programme on voters' education. This radio programme called "CITIZEN OBSERVER" was aimed at sensitizing the electorate in Bayelsa

State on the need to have peaceful, credible and inclusive governorship election. The radio programme also aimed at drawing citizens' attention to the conduct of electioneering campaigns by politicians and political parties, election violence and vote buying.

The sessions of the programme comprised of an informative discussion session that focused on a single topic per week for a period of five (5) weeks as well as a call-in session for citizens to relay their observations from pre-election activities in the State, and ask questions with respect to the topics discussed. During the different sessions, citizens joined these conversations and gave their views on issues that posing problems during the elections and also narrated the challenges they encountered in previous elections.



2.1.3 TRAINING OF FIELD OBSERVERS

Furthermore, the Situation Room organized a training workshop on September 18, 2019 for the selected volunteers. These volunteers were selected from Bayelsa state based CSOs. The objective of the training was to provide observers with skills needed to properly and efficiently observe and report issues on Election Day. The training also ensured that deployed observers would understand the observation and analytical methodology of the Situation Room.

2.1.4 ENGAGEMENT WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

As part of its engagement towards the Governorship election, the Situation Room held a dialogue session with the Bayelsa State INEC Resident Electoral Commission (REC), Pastor Tom Akpan, and representatives of the Police and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps on their various level of preparedness for the governorship election. These Dialogue sessions enabled members of the Situation Room and other domestic and international observers to engage with INEC and the security agencies on the state of preparedness for the election. Also, it enabled all stakeholders discuss the issues at stake and what to look out for in order to achieve free, fair and credible election in the State. INEC Chairman and the Bayelsa State REC gave full assurances of the Commission's preparation for the governorship election in Bayelsa State and stated that the Commission had taken all necessary steps towards ensuring credible polls. It was further stated that INEC had learnt a number of lessons from the previous governorship elections and would ensure that the challenges of those elections would not re-occur.



2.2 NOMINATION PROCESS

As common with the nomination process of political parties in Nigeria, the nomination process to pick candidates for the Bayelsa State governorship election was bedevilled by controversy, internal fighting and disagreements within the parties. The two major political parties nominated their candidates through different means. While the APC employed the direct primary system, the PDP nominated their candidate through the indirect primary system. The nominations were largely peaceful although some of the candidates in the two major political parties who were aggrieved with the outcome of the primaries complained about its conducts. Indeed, dissatisfied with the outcome, Senator Heineken Lokpobiri of the APC approached the Court to seek its cancellation stating that the primaries were conducted outside the rules of the party. A position the Federal High Court sitting in Yenegoa agreed with, although the Court of Appeal, later put a stay on the execution of the judgment pending the appeal. A decision, which ensured that the APC was able to field a candidate in the election. On the part of the PDP, Mr. Timi Alaibe unsuccessfully approached the Court to seek the cancellation of the primary election that produced party's flag bearer.

The nomination and primaries of all the political parties took place between 22nd August 2019 and 5th September 2019. Out of the 60 political parties that conducted primaries to nominate its candidates, only 45 Political Parties were shortlisted to contest the election. Additionally, as at the time of the publication of the list of

nominated candidates by INEC, there were no cases of changes to the nomination of any candidate by the parties. Notably, it was observed that the leadership of the different parties had deployed internal mechanisms to address any crisis that emerged from their respective primaries promptly.

2.3 WOMEN REPRESENTATION

With respect to the participation of women in the governorship election, it should be noted that only 3 of the 45 candidates contesting for the governorship position were women. Also, of the 45 deputy governorship candidates, 12 were women. This meant that women made up 6% and 12% of total number of candidates vying for governorship and deputy governorship positions respectively. None of the major political parties had a female candidate for any of the positions.



2.4 ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

Election campaigning for the Bayelsa State Governorship election took place in a tense environment due to the volatile nature of politics in Bayelsa state and the unending violence of local militias/cult groups in the state. There were reports of attacks on the members and supporters of the both political parties on the days of political rallies or campaign events. The political campaigns in Bayelsa was characterized with violence as no less than 5 people were killed and several others injured in the political rally of the PDP in Nembe Local Government in Bayelsa State on 13th of November 2019.

The campaigns were largely not issue-based as politicians and their supporters expended more energy attacking their opponents for cheap political points instead of addressing the issues that affected the day-to-day life of the citizens in the State. The use of hates speech, fake news, blackmail and intemperate language has fast become a common feature of political campaigns in Nigeria and the electioneering campaign in Bayelsa offered no exception.

2.5 PREPARATIONS BY INEC

INEC issued a formal timetable for the election on April 9, 2019, which was later amended on May 16, 2019. The timetable also contained the schedule of activities for the election. Notice of the election would be issued on the August 17, 2019 while the Notice of Poll would be issued on November 2, 2019. Official campaign by political parties was expected to commence from August 18, 2019.

In the lead up to the election, INEC assured all stakeholders and the public of its commitment to ensuring a free, fair and credible poll. INEC reiterated its preparedness for the elections at various stakeholder engagements. Pastor Monday Udoh, Bayelsa REC, provided detailed plans of INEC's activities leading up to the elections and its commitment to sticking to the scheduled timeline. Just like the 2019 general elections, accreditation and voting would be done simultaneously in the Bayelsa State Governorship election.

He also informed stakeholders that it would be deploying its Election Management System (EMS) and Electoral Risk Management (ERM) Tools for the election. While the EMS tool was expected to assist the Commission track key electoral activities such as deployment of non-sensitive and sensitive materials, etc., the ERM tool was to ensure that the election was peaceful and credible through proper data analysis and mitigation of electoral risk.

He, furthermore, reiterated the extent of INEC's improved training modules of ad-hoc election staff and returning officers, and that the personnel had undergone more than one training sessions to enable them fully grasp their responsibilities and duties on election day. INEC also introduced new trainings for the LGA Election Officers on Campaign Finance Tracking (CFT) and reporting.

Another new initiative by INEC ahead of the governorship election was targeted trainings for political parties. These trainings includes: (i) Sensitization workshop for Political Parties Chairmen and Governorship Candidate on CFT, (ii) Training of Financial Secretaries of Political Parties on CFT reporting, and (iii) Training of Political Parties Agents of the political parties contesting the Governorship Election.

2.5.1 ELECTION PERSONNEL

With respect to personnel, INEC stated that it would deploy about 10,063 ad-hoc staff in the conduct of the governorship election. As part of arrangements for the poll, the commission said it would organize four levels of training programme for all its personnel that would take part in the election. Furthermore, INEC stated that it had made contingency plans of recruiting more ad-hoc personnel from neighbouring states, if the need arose.

INEC, in collaboration with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES), organised training sessions for INEC staff on voter education and public enlightenment. Also, Electoral officers, Assistant Electoral officers on polling, effective planning for election and management of ad-hoc staff were trained ahead of the elections too.

2.5.2 SMART CARD READERS

INEC made various assurances that it would deploy some of the best Smart card readers' machines to Bayelsa State for the governorship election to ensure that the accreditation process is hitch-free. According to the Bayelsa State REC, the Commission intends to deploy about 4,581 Smart Card Readers (SCR) for the election (2,337 from the Bayelsa State INEC and 2,444 from Rivers State INEC). He further noted that all the SCRs had been configured, tested and charged in preparation for the Election Day.

Furthermore, he stated that INEC had organized various trainings for the election officials on the use of the Smart Card Readers so as to reduce the technical challenges that occurs on Election Day.

Also, he noted that INEC would further deploy a team of Technical Support staff to the field on Election Day and that the Technical Support staff will provide technical assistance at the various Polling Units with regards to challenges to the Smart Card Readers (SCRs).

Finally, INEC stated that it was not contemplating the electronic transmission of voting results in the Bayelsa State governorship election. Therefore, voting on Election Day would be done manually and results would be collated according to the extant provisions of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) and the 2019 INEC Guidelines.



2.4.3 VOTERS REGISTRATION

Ahead of the election, INEC did not conduct the Continuous Voters' Registration exercise in the State for this Governorship election, which could be owing to the fact that the election was coming 8 months after the 2019 general elections, prior to which it had conducted a Continuous Voters' Registration exercise. However, the Commission embarked on an aggressive distribution of uncollected Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs) from the last general election. As at 1st November 2019, only 10,334 PVCs were collected from the 170,900 uncollected PVCs, leaving about 160,522 PVCs uncollected.

VOTING STATISTICS

- No. of Polling Units (P.U): 1,804
- No. of Registration Areas (R.A): 105
- No. of Local Government Areas (L.G.As): 8
- No. of Registered Voters: 923,182
- No. of PVCs Collected as at 1st Nov. 2019
- No. of PVCs uncollected as at 1st Nov. 2019

GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF VOTER POPULATION



498,790 (54.03%)



424,392 (45.97%)

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WITH NUMBER OF REGISTRATION AREAS AND POLLING UNITS IN BAYELSA STATE

S/N	LGA	HQRTS	RAs/ WARDs	PUs
1.	Brass	Twon Brass	10	159
2.	Ekeremor	Ekeremor Town	142	198
3.	Kolokuma/Opo- kuma	Kaiama	11	144
4.	Nembe	Ogbolomabiri	13	202
5.	Ogbia	Ogbia Town	123	259
6.	Sagbama	Sagbama Town	14	198
7.	Southern Ijaw	Oporoma	17	425
8.	Yenegoa	Yenagoa	15	219
	TOTAL		105	1804

DISTRIBUTION OF VOTERS PER LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

S/N	LGA	No. of Registered Voters	No. of Registered Voters with PVCs
1.	Brass	67,804	65,900
2.	Ekeremor	125,189	123,562
3.	Kolokuma/Opokuma	52,765	50,477
4.	Nembe	92,717	89,866
5.	Ogbia	109,903	108,691
6.	Sagbama	109,460	105,705
7.	Southern Ijaw	165,449	164,844
8.	Yenagoa	199,895	180,263

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ACCORDING TO SENATORIAL ZONES

BAYELSA CENTRAL	BAYELSA EAST	BAYELSA WEST
1. KOLOKUMA/OPOKUMA 2. SOUTHERN IJAW 3. YENAGOA	1. BRASS 2. NEMBE 3. OGBIA	1. EKEREMOR 2. SAGBAMA

2.4.4 DISPLAY OF LIST OF VOTERS AND CANDIDATES

INEC, in line with Section 31(3) of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended), published and displayed the personal particulars of the nominated candidates on October 17th, 2019. INEC also published and presented the final voters' register on October 3rd, 2019 as required under Section 20 of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended), though it was the electronic version that was made available to the political parties. Forty-five (45) political parties nominated candidates for the 2019 Bayelsa State Governorship Election, as shown below:

S/N	PARTY	GOVERNORSHIP AND DEPUTY GOVERNORSHIP CANDIDATES	GEN- DER	AGE
1	A	Ebizimo Diriyai	M	49
		Dangosu Maca	M	62
2	AAC	Kalango Stanley Davies	M	39
		Nathaniel Ereguadei Abule	M	40
3	AD	Owei-Tongu Woneiwei	M	49
		Ikeinka Genesis Doikumo	M	45
4	ADP	Felagha Adika Patrick	M	35
		Tubo Ebitiene	F	35
5	AGAP	Fayeofori T. Bob-Manuel	M	42
		Ebimene Solomon Shanker	M	40
6	ANP	Kunde Noah	M	56

		Turo Tautogu Kemmer	M	42
7	APA	Abbey E. Daniel	M	43
		Weleke Enebiwaikumo S.	M	42
8	APC	Lyon David Pereworomini	M	49
		Biobarakuma Degi-Eremienyo	M	60
9	APGA	Daniel Tonworio Benwari	M	44
		Agbe Rose Pamela	F	59
10	APM	Eres Aseimiegba Oruama	M	67
		Anthony Oyinbrakemi	M	52
11	APP	Samuel Izibeyamadu Dandy Job	M	37
		Ogoniba Rufus Wisazia	M	48
12	ASD	Awotu Oniekpe	M	39
		Akanga Ebikibibo Davies	M	37
13	BNPP	Joseph P. Gerebo	M	44
		Okadu Kenneth	M	40
14	CAP	Oweifabo Felix Ebikemefa	M	38
		Victory Izibedueniya Ishie	F	39
15	CNP	George Onume	M	47
		Denson A. Ojigbare	M	45
16	DA	Osele Anthony	M	42
		Isula Eburuku	M	47
17	DPC	Seiyefa Fetepigi Eches	F	47

		Moses Felix Boloukuromo	M	58
18	DPP	Oguara Nengimonyo	F	37
		Egule Kamesuo Roland	M	37
19	FJP	Akusi Pius	M	40
		Imomotimi Werede	M	40
20	FRESH PARTY	Preye Benson	M	43
		Keremah Eneni Mercy-George	F	44
21	GPN	Zidougha Gideon Roland Eneyi	M	47
		Talbort Johnne Maclean	M	52
22	HDP	Timipa Jenkins Okponipere	M	45
		Ato Alfreder Alajiki	F	38
23	KP	Owebor Freedom	M	40
		Golden Maxson Agagowei	M	43
24	LM	Vijah Eldred Opuama	M	38
		Ide Franklin Bokolo	M	37
25	LP	Numofe Ebiowei	M	45
		Godfrey Friday Opuene	M	51
26	MMN	Okiah Jones Daminola	M	54
		James Geoffrey Mieseyefa	M	66
27	MPN	Clement Blessing Azibanagbal	F	43
		Kpou Sergeant Thomas	M	66

28	NCP	Miebaikedo Ebipade	M	42
		Franklin Pabapa Ebisindei	M	35
29	NDLP	Kalas Agai	M	45
		Gbomoh Amaebi	M	41
30	NNPP	Namatebe Inko Abraham	M	70
		Inko Laye	M	39
31	NPC	Alex Akpoebi Bufumoh	M	47
		Inenegha Amade	F	37
32	NRM	Francois O. Tuamokumo	M	68
		Micah Akeems	M	42
33	NUP	Augusts Ebiumone Ogoun	M	44
		Etotaziba Omieworo	M	63
34	PDM	Akali Tasamana Wayman	M	57
		Bipeledei Ayibaketekeme	F	39
35	PDP	Diri Duoye	M	60
		Lawrende Oborawharievwo Ewhrudjakpo	M	54
36	PPA	Alexander Peretu Beke-Areredo	M	37
		Abraham Didekere	M	44
37	PPP	Akiki Aprala	M	53
		Alokpa Memmiegha	F	43
38	PRP	Okala Azibola	M	39
		Obuma Enuma	F	35

39	SNC	Gwegwe Righteous Okoebi	M	61
		Eniyon Jonathan	M	51
40	UDP	Ikimi Inibaranye Silas	M	48
		Paul Frankebona	F	44
41	UP	Kenny Justice Sotonye Fiseye	M	37
		Okporu Bofede Torusou	M	44
42	UPC	Ibiene Stephen Krobah	M	35
		Millicent Zidegha Brian	F	35
43	UPN	Samuel J. Adaga	M	35
		Zuokemefa Woyengibarakemi	M	35
44	UPP	Williams Woyinkuro Berezi	M	54
		Seibokuro Tonye James	F	41
45	ZLP	Simeon Imomotimi Karioru	M	43
		Agala Collins Azibabhom	M	43

2.4.5 ELECTION LOGISTICS

At various stakeholders meetings including the Situation Room Dialogue Session with INEC State REC, Pastor Monday Udoh, stated that to forestall any logistics challenge, all non-sensitive materials had been earlier deployed to the various INEC LGA offices and the materials would be further distributed to the Registration Area Centres (RACs) within the LGA from November 11th to November 13th 2019. The Distribution of election materials to polling officials at the various RACs would commence early on the eve of the elections.

While it was observed that the difficult terrain of the state added to the logistics challenges faced by INEC, the State REC assured that the distribution of sensitive materials to the various Local Government Areas in the State would be done 48 hours to the elections and that all party agents were welcome to observe the distribution at the INEC State Office.

2.6 PREPARATION BY SECURITY AGENCIES

One of the most recurring challenges to the conduct of elections in Bayelsa State wa the harsh and difficult terrain of the State. Poor or decaying basic social infrastructure and amenities such as roads, communication facilities, etc. makes access difficult for security operatives to engage in their law enforcement activities and consequently hampers their efficiency in dealing with crime and criminality.it easy for political thugs to engage in electoral malpractices and violence.

To forestall election violence and security breaches, the various security agencies made plans to ensure adequate security before, during and after the election. The Police had announced that it would deploy 32,000 police personnel for the governorship election. Also, Police helicopters would be deployed for aerial surveillance and patrol as well as three gunboats for watch of the waterways throughout the period of the election.

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) also stated that a total of 1,000 personnel would be deployed for the poll, while the Military and the Department of State Services (DSS) did not make public pronouncement of the number of personnel that they intend to deploy for the election.



2.7 STATE OF SECURITY PRIOR TO THE ELECTION

The security situation in Bayelsa worsened as a result of the actions of some politicians and their supporters. There were cases of harassment and intimidation of political opponents, which were sometimes sponsored by State actors and in extreme, cases the violence led to death. In one instance, not less than 5 people died when armed militia attacked the PDP political rally in Nembe.

The worsening security situation in the State prior to the elections led to the tightening of security in the State with the police deploying over 35,000 officers for the election. The deployment of security officials to the State led to a reduction in the spate of violence recorded with the State Governor still accusing the Federal Government of using security officials to intimidate the voters in the state. These series of event translated into a general state of unease amongst voters in the State.

Nevertheless, following recent tradition in Nigeria, a **"Peace Accord"** was signed by some of the governorship candidates at the INEC Stakeholders meeting on November 8, 2019 in the bid to commit the political parties to peaceful conduct before, during and after the November 16 governorship election.⁴ Under the peace accord, they were to refrain from any provocative acts that could trigger either violence on or after Election Day. Besides the peace accord agreement signed at the INEC stakeholders meeting, parties signed another peace accord agreement in a meeting organized and supervised by the National Peace Committee in collaboration with the Niger Delta Dialogue on Peaceful 2019 Governorship Election. It was agreed that parties and supporters should refrain from actions or behaviours that would breed violent as well as undermine the credibility of the governorship election.

2.8 VOTER EDUCATION

INEC carried out voter education and enlightenment, particularly encouraging voters to come forward to collect their PVCs, as well as, speaking against vote buying and other forms of electoral malpractices. This was achieved through

4 Parties, candidates sign peace accord - <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/11/parties-candidates-sign-peace-accord/>

various media briefings, market outreaches, distribution of pamphlets and posters, visits to places of worship, television and radio programmes.

The Commission appealed to various stakeholders, which included security agencies, Traditional Rulers, Persons Living With Disabilities (PWDs), Religious leaders, youth groups, students, Leaders and Candidates of Political parties, soliciting their co-operation for the successful conduct of the election. INEC also had partnerships with CSOs who took the message to all the LGAs of the State.

Additionally, CSOs also played their part in the voters' education through various voters outreach programmes, road shows, workshops/dialogue sessions with voters as well as appearing on personality programmes on television and radio stations. The Situation Room, through its radio programme "Citizen Observer", urged the people of Bayelsa State to participate in the forthcoming election stating that its part of their right in the democratic shaping of the country.





ELECTION DAY OBSERVATION

3.1 STRUCTURE AND SET-UP

On Election Day, the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room set-up the “Election Day Situation Room” which is the hub for receiving field reports and providing analysis on the election being observed. The Election Day Situation Room is divided into three components, which include:

- (a) Analyst Room;
- (b) Technical Room;
- (c) Field Observers

Situation Room also partnered with the Police Service Commission to monitor the conduct of all Police Officers engaged in election duty. Members of the public were enjoined to report improper and unprofessional conducts of police officers on election duty to the Situation Room or the Police Service Commission.

3.2 DEPLOYMENT OF OBSERVERS

Situation Room deployed its observers across the three senatorial districts of Bayelsa State and Nine (9) local government areas (LGAs).

On Election Day, Situation Room deployed **59 field observers**, **16 Roving observers** and **7 Personnel** operating the Technical room. Situation Room observers visited **144 polling units** and **15 ward collation centres** in the 9 Local Government Areas of the State.

The breakdown of Situation Room's deployment of field observers in Bayelsa State was as follows:

S/N	LGA	NO. OF OBSERVERS DE- PLOYED	NO. OF POLLING UNITS OBSERVED
1.	Brass	6	14
2.	Ekeremor	11	18
3.	Kolokuma/Opo- kuma	6	16
4.	Nembe	6	20
5.	Ogbia	6	13
6.	Sagbama	7	19
7.	Southern Ijaw	7	16
8.	Yenegoa	11	28
	TOTAL	59	144

Field observers observed the process at the polling unit and reported incidents/ challenges from the polling unit to Situation Room in order to escalate the issues to the relevant institutions.

Observers were also present at the State LGAs collation centres to observe accurate tracking and collation of the results.

3.3 KEY FINDINGS/OBSERVATIONS

3.3.1 PRE-ELECTION DAY OBSERVATION

Situation Room undertook a pre-election observation of about 9 LGAs on Thursday 14th November 2019 and Friday, 15th November 2019 to assess the preparedness of INEC for the election. The following observations were noted:

1. Continued signs of preparation for violence by political actors and their supporters;
2. Late deployment of sensitive election materials to the LGAs and RACs contrary to the assurances made by INEC;
3. Tense political environment which may affect the turnout of voters on election day; and

4. Violence during the electioneering campaign of PDP in Nembe LGA, which resulted to the death of 3 persons.

3.3.2 ACCREDITATION/VOTING PROCESS

1. There were delays in the deployment of some ad-hoc personnel and election materials to their Polling Units. Only few polling units commenced the voting by 8.00am.
2. There were indications of logistics challenges at various RACs, such as (a) Inadequate transportation arrangements for the transportation of election officials and materials; and (b) absence of police escorts. In Ward 5, Southern Ijaw, election did not hold in all the 23 polling units of Ward 5 due to the fact that election materials were not distributed at the RAC Centre and the INEC officials (i.e. Presiding Officers (POs) and Assistant Presiding Officers (APOs) did not show up at the polling units.
3. Some of the INEC ad-hoc staff displayed high degree of professionalism and knowledge during the accreditation and voting process. However, at some Polling Units, the officials were not complying with the proper procedures for accreditation with the Smart Card Readers (SCR) and resorted to manual accreditation. In Ward 1 (Ogbia) in Ogbia LGA, some of the Presiding Officers refused to use the smart card readers but instead proceeded on manual accreditation even where the card readers were present.
4. There were few incidents of hitches with the use of the SCR in some polling units. Most of the problems associated with the SCR include:
 - a) Damaged or Faulty Devices; and
 - b) High failure rates for finger print authentication.
5. Voting cubicles in most of the polling units were positioned in ways that compromised the secrecy of voting. There was no standard or consistency with regards to setting up of the polling units. This resulted to the increased act of vote buying in various polling units where situation room observed in the State.
6. There were also reports of seizing and disappearing with ballot papers by unknown gunmen in quite a number of polling units. This is a worrisome trend and in most of the instances, there was no reaction from the security agencies. There were a few other reports of skirmishes around some election vicinity and also of political thugs snatching and destroying election materials in Oporoma 1, Ward 01 (Polling Units 29, 30 and 31) and Koluama, Ward 17 of Southern Ijaw LGA.



3.3.2 VOTERS

1. Situation Room noted that voters' turnout was satisfactory and voters were confident that the process would be peaceful without any rancor. Furthermore, Situation Room observed that voters conducted themselves in an orderly manner and were very receptive to both INEC officials, security agents and accredited observers. Nonetheless, there are pockets of votes buying and selling at Ogbia town, ward 1, PU 1-8.
2. Positively, Situation Room observed that INEC had made provisions for the various vulnerable groups such as giving priority access to nursing mothers, pregnant women and PWDs.

3.3.3 PARTY AGENTS

1. Most of the polling units visited had the presence of party agents from at least 3 of the major political parties, except in Nembe where agents from the PDP were chased away by thugs in some of the polling units.
2. The election witnessed numerous blatant incidents of vote buying across the State, involving the major political parties. Observers reported blatant incidents of vote buying across the State, involving the major political parties. Party agents stationed themselves at polling units paying voters sums ranging from N1,500 to N6,000 to get them to vote in favour of their candidates. This was very prominent in the following Polling Units: PU 6 –

Ward 1 and PUs 12/13 – Ward 6, Yenagoa LGA, PU06/08/07/015 Gbarain 1, Yenagoa LGA, etc.

3.3.4 COLLATION PROCESS

Situation Room observers observed that sorting and counting of votes commenced quite early in polling units where voting started on time. By 2:30pm several of the polling units had begun counting of the votes.

3.3.5 ELECTION DAY SECURITY

Security concerns ahead of the election was major. This had prompted fears of violence, voter apathy and low turnout. Hence, the Police and other law enforcement agencies had made assurances that there would be adequate deployment of security officers to maintain law and order in the State. However, Situation Room made the following observations:

1. **Patrol by Security Agents:** There were indications, and corroborated by observers, of sustained visibility policing by security agencies, especially the police and the military. The Federal Road Safety Corp (FRSC) and the NSCDC also maintained visible level of ground patrol. We also noted that the Police had patrol teams that visited some polling units to ensure that orderliness were restored.
2. **Deployment of Security Agents:** Situation Room noted some weakness of the deployment of the Nigeria Police and security agents to the rural areas of Bayelsa State. Notably, the inadequate and inefficient deployment of police personnel created its own challenges, with INEC unable to deploy its personnel and election materials in time for polling to commence at the stipulated time of 8:00am in some of the Wards across the state, notably in Ekeremor LGA.
3. **Conduct of Security Agents:** Sufficient demonstration of neutrality and impartiality by security agents across most polling units visited. The security agents conducted themselves in civil and professional manner in their dealings with the electorates. However, there was an unfortunate incident where some observers were harassed and detained by some security agents, including observers from the Situation Room and YIAGA. Aside these issues, observers did not however report any unsavoury incidents of Police unprofessionalism.
4. **Inter-Agency Collaboration:** There was discernible improvement in the level of inter-agency collaboration among security agencies during the elections. The Police, Civil Defence, FRSC and others were seen working

together harmoniously at the polling units, along the road and at the collation centres.

5. **Security Incident Response:** The timely identification and execution of proper response to acts or events that are capable of disrupting or undermining the peaceful conduct of polls is of crucial importance in elections security management. Security agents were quick to respond and resolve cases of dragging of positions in voting queues, disagreements between party agents, and complaints by voters.
6. **Protection of Election Integrity:** Election security management is critical to the preservation of the integrity of the election. The actions or inactions of security agents do have consequences for the integrity of the election. Observers reported brazen cases of vote buying and voter inducement, involving the major political parties, in most of the polling units. These illegal acts took place often in the full glare of security agent who appeared unable or unwilling to deter such electoral offences. In most cases, security agents appeared uninterested in the act. In some cases, they made feeble attempt to drive the party agents behind the vote buying away from polling station. In few cases where they mustered courage to arrest the suspects, community leaders or youth usually intervene for the release of the suspects.
7. **Harassment of Election Observers by Security and Party Agents:** Different forms of threats, harassment, intimidation and assault against election observers were reported during the election. However, this took a new dimension whereby some party agents and security agents intentionally targeted election observers to either frustrate or disrupt their observation of election process. For instance, operatives of the Department of State Services (DSS) and the Police, on the prompting of a party agent, arrested a Situation Room observer in Ekeremor and his mobile phone seized, while he was recording the hijacking of materials by thugs at the RAC in Ward 5. This incident was reported to the Police Service Commission and the State Police Command. These harassments were aimed at undermining the election to favour the perpetrators.
8. **Destruction of Election Materials:** There were reports of destruction of election materials at numerous polling units across the State. This is becoming a re-occurring issue and getting very worrisome. For instance, at Ward 5, PU 07, Ayama, Ballot papers were thrown into the river by political party agents, while in Yenagoa, ward 10, all 4 polling units' materials were hijacked at Bumoundi, community. The number of thugs or gunmen that are used to execute these acts usually outnumber security agents.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Following from Situation Room's observations, the following recommendations was made:

4.1.1 ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

1. INEC should evaluate the use of card reader technology in election with a view to improving on its efficiency and effectiveness.

4.1.2 ELECTION INCLUSIVITY

1. Political parties should continue working to enhance the inclusion of women. Though the number of female candidates for the governorship election increased from the 2015 general election, parties should continue to work hard towards increasing women participation in their parties to ensure a balanced and democratic environment.
2. INEC and other relevant institutions need to work together to ensure that polling stations continue to be accessible to disabled or mobility challenged citizens who wish to vote. Further efforts should be made to ensure that all polling stations are accessible to persons with disabilities and necessary aids are in place to assist them exercise their franchise.

4.1.3 VOTE BUYING/TRADING

1. There were widespread inducement and vote buying observed in the election. The vote buying also involved the monitoring of the votes that were cast by officials of the said parties, apparently in a bid to ensure that voters who were paid voted as agreed. This monitoring was aided by the placement of the voting cubicles in a manner that enabled the party agents to monitor the ballots cast, thus violating the principle of secrecy of vote.

2. Going forward, candidates and their agents should be held to account for breach of election guidelines and laws, particularly on the question of vote buying, violence and other Election Day malfeasances. Going forward, Political parties should refrain from extending direct material benefits to citizens in exchange for their vote.
3. Additionally, INEC should establish strict polling unit perimeters to limit the proximity of Election Day campaigning or vote buying by party agents.
4. The Media and civil society organisations should further deepen public enlightenment on the dangers of vote trading on the credibility of elections and prospect of good governance.
5. Security agents and presiding officers should show more commitment in curbing vote trading and voter inducement at the polling unit.

4.1.4 POLITICAL PARTIES AND CANDIDATES

1. Political parties should engage in a peaceful, respectful and cooperative election environment. All parties must respect each other's campaign events and materials, and avoid engaging in confrontational rhetoric or behaviour. Party leaders should take positive steps to prevent further disruptions of their opponents' right of assembly.

4.1.5 ELECTION SECURITY

1. The level of inter-agency collaboration observed in the election should be sustained and improved upon in future elections.
2. The Nigeria Police to ensure that in future elections all of the personnel that it indicates to deploy for elections are fully mobilized and efficiently and effectively deployed across the areas of election coverage.
3. There should be increased security and protection for election observers and media personnel by security agencies as result of the increase in harassment and attacks on election observers and media persons by political and party thugs as well as rogue security officials.





APPENDIX

APPENDIX ONE: STATEMENTS BY THE SITUATION ROOM

SITUATION ROOM'S PRELIMINARY STATEMENT ON THE BAYELSA STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTIONS 2019

Issued in Yenagoa, Bayelsa at 2.00pm: Friday, 15th November 2019

On Saturday 16th November 2019, residents of Bayelsa State will vote in the state Governorship Election. The Nigeria Civil society Situation Room has reconvened for the observation of the 2019 Governorship election in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. The Situation Room has deployed over 90 election observers across the 8 LGAs in the State ahead of the governorship poll on Saturday, 16th of November, 2019.

This election along with the Kogi State Governorship Election are the first major elections since the 2019 General Elections and against a tense electoral environment. The Situation Room expects that INEC and other major election stakeholders including security agencies will make every effort to improve on the credibility of the Governorship election.

Accordingly, Situation Room hereby outlines its expectations for Bayelsa State Governorship Election 2019 as follows:

1. POLITICAL PARTIES

Situation Room calls on the political actors and citizens of Bayelsa state to participate in the Governorship election and avoid violence, vote buying or other electoral malpractices. Situation Room further calls on the parties to make sure their party agents are represented at every level of the elections.

With respect to the ugly incidents in the past few days in Bayelsa State, Situation Room unequivocally condemns the activities that led to the unfortunate death of 3 persons during the electioneering campaign of one of the contesting political parties in Nembe Local Government of the State. Situation Room calls on Security

Agencies to fully investigate the incident and bring all those responsible to account. Furthermore, the Situation Room is concerned that there may be likelihood of violence in Nembe and Brass Local Government Areas of the State due to activities of cult groups, political party thugs and militants.

Despite repeated warnings, Situation Room observes continued signs of preparation for violence by political actors. We call for accountability for sponsored violence particularly violence affecting election officials and ad-hoc staff. Situation Room equally calls for non-partisan sanctions of political parties that do not take active steps mobilization for violence in their ranks.

2. INEC AND ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Situation Room expects an improved administration and management of the 16th November Governorship Election in Bayelsa State and calls on INEC to take steps to hold election officials to account for any partisan activities or behavior. Situation Room observed that the deployment of sensitive election materials has proceeded despite the late start in a few areas. Situation Room calls on INEC to ensure that all materials are adequately deployed for the Saturday elections.

INEC had committed not to yield to pressure from all external body or interests. Situation Room urges INEC to resist pressure from partisan political interests that could derogate on the conduct of free and fair elections. With respect to the collation process, Situation Room urges INEC ensure that the process is effective and transparent, and that accredited observers have unfettered access to the designated collation centres. We also urge INEC to abide by the Electoral Act and its guidelines for collation of results.

Situation also calls on Security agencies to provide adequate security for INEC officials, party agents and observers rather than become active participants in collation and undermined the process.

3. SECURITY AGENCIES

Situation Room commends the Nigeria Police Force deploying an Operational Guidelines for Police Officers on Election Duty. We expect that all Police officers engaged in the Governorship Elections should abide by these Operational Guidelines. Situation Room will watch out for the level of enforcement of these guidelines.

The Situation Room is presently partnering with the Police Service Commission to monitor the conduct of all Police Officers engaged in election duty. Members of the public are enjoined to report any erring police officer to the Situation Room or the Police Service Commission through the numbers provided.

Security agents are urged to put measures in place for the protection of the electorate especially women, and ensure that all perpetrators of violence are apprehended and duly prosecuted in order to deter further occurrence.

Finally, Situation Room calls on the security services to demonstrate their commitment to non-partisan support to electoral security, and ensure that it provides adequate security for the elections, in a manner that does not allow or encourage violence to be used as a tool for vote suppression.

CONCLUSION

Situation Room urges all registered voters in Bayelsa State to come out and vote in the election on Saturday. We also enjoin other persons who are not registered to vote not to disrupt the voting process or cluster the polling units. Bayelsa State deserves a peaceful and credible election.

SIGNED:

Esther Uzoma

Alternate Chair, Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room

The Situation Room is made up of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working in support of credible and transparent elections in Nigeria and includes such groups as Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC), CLEEN Foundation, Action Aid Nigeria, Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), Proactive Gender Initiative (PGI) Enough is Enough Nigeria, WANGONET, Partners for Electoral Reform, JDPC and YIAGA Africa. Others are Development Dynamics, Centre for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD), Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN), Stakeholder Democracy Network, Human Rights Monitor, Reclaim Naija, CITAD, Nigerian Women Trust Fund, Alliance for Credible Elections (ACE), CISLAC, and several other CSOs numbering more than seventy.

INTERIM STATEMENT BY NIGERIA CIVIL SOCIETY SITUATION ROOM ON THE 2019 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION IN BAYELSA STATE

Issued: 4:00pm, Saturday 16 November 2019

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room) is observing the November 16, 2019 Bayelsa State Governorship election and will like to make the following initial statements:

- The elections are taking place in several polling units (PUs) across the State with reports of late commencement in some of the polling units meaning that the Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) commitment to early commencement of polls have not been fully met. In PUs in Ward 6, Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA, officials did not arrive until well after 8:30am. In some areas, distribution of election materials from Registration Area Centre (RAC) did not start till 11am (e.g. Epie II, Ward 5, Yenagoa).
- In addition to reported cases on late commencement of polls, logistics challenges appear to have manifested in some areas, where inadequacy of transportation and poor communication between INEC and the Police delayed conveying of election materials and personnel to polling units.
- The commencement of polls, accreditation and voting faced challenges and hitches with card reader malfunction in a few reported cases.
- We are receiving reports of actual voting commencing with violence already creeping into the process. Situation Room is worried the rising violence levels may pose a challenge to the credibility of the entire elections.
- Also the electoral abuse of vote buying appears to be rearing its head in the elections.
- The deployment of security personnel also appears to be suffering the challenge of inefficient deployment of police personnel, which has acted INEC's ability to move voting materials and personnel from one location to another owing to the absence of security personnel.

Conclusion

- There is huge enthusiasm amongst the citizens of the State to exercise their vote. Situation Room hereby calls on citizens to come out en masse to exercise their franchise.
- And calls on political parties and all stakeholders to eschew violence and conduct themselves in a peaceful manner.

SIGNED:

Esther Uzoma

Alternate Chair, Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room

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SECOND INTERIM STATEMENT BY THE NIGERIA CIVIL SOCIETY SITUATION ROOM ON ITS OBSERVATION OF THE KOGI AND BAYELSA STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTIONS

Issued: 3:00pm, Sunday, 17 November 2019

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room) is issuing this statement following its observation of the Kogi and Bayelsa States Governorship Elections held on 16 November 2019.

General

The levels of violence witnessed in the two State governorship elections are unprecedented, alarming and raises questions about the credibility of the elections. Nigerians had expected that lessons learnt from the 2019 General elections by stakeholders especially by political parties, the Police and other security services would be taken to improve on the conduct of these elections. Unfortunately, this was not the case and both elections have proved to be a disappointment. The governorship elections conducted in Kogi and Bayelsa States represent a major setback for Nigeria's electoral democracy.

Commencement of Polls

Situation Room received reports of late commencement of polls in several polling units across the two States of Kogi and Bayelsa. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) raised concern that the security services attached to support the elections did not provide back up to enable some of its staff start out at the stipulated time and this caused several of the delays. It is noteworthy though that in several of the cases where polls commenced late, INEC Guidelines provided for polling to continue until everyone on queue voted.

Logistics

There are also few reports of polling materials and personnel not arriving on time. INEC again put the responsibility for these failings on the security services who did not report on time or failed to provide security for transportation of election materials to their destinations.

Use of Smart Card Readers

The elections saw improved use of the Smart Card Readers. Situation Room

observed that Smart Card Readers were widely deployed and utilised in both States. There were however isolated cases of Card Reader malfunctions. In most of the instances, these were rectified in line with INEC guidelines. In other cases, there was a resort to manual accreditation. In Bayelsa, this was observed in Southern Ijaw, Ward 4, PU 12; Ogbia Local Government, Ward 9, PU 8 and Otakeme Ward, PU 1. Also in Kogi State, this was seen in Idah Local government, Ede Ward, PU 002.

Voter Turnout

Situation Room's impression on Voter turnout in the two governorship elections is that of enthusiasm. Voters were not deterred by pre-election day anxiety, threats of violence and turned out in their numbers. Election day turnout was however marred by violence and activities of political parties and security agents leading to disruption of polls in several areas. The violence made it difficult for voters to observe the usual practice of staying back after voting to observe counting and collation. This is worsened by reports of voters and observers being chased out from the vicinity, and political parties colluding with election officials and dealing with the ballots as they pleased.

Security

Situation Room received many reports of security surrounding the elections including lapses that had far-reaching consequences on the elections. The Nigerian police had stated before the elections that it was deploying 35, 200 police personnel to Kogi State and 31, 041 police personnel to Bayelsa State.

In addition, other security agencies deployed personnel for the elections including the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Customs Service, Federal Road Safety Commission, Army, Navy and Air Force. The claimed overwhelming numbers of the deployments by security officials should ordinarily provide enough security for the elections. In spite of these, security gaps and lapses remained manifest throughout the elections in the two States. Security forces failed to provide details of names of its personnel that it deployed for the elections, raising questions about the claims on the numbers deployed.

Situation Room received reports of security personnel standing by and watching incidents of ballot box snatching, violence and abuse of the electoral process. For instance, in Kogi State this was observed in Ajaokuta Local Government, Ganaja Ward; Dekina Local Government, Anyigba Ward, PUs 003,005, 009, 018, 025 and 026 and Ankpa Local Government, Agodo Ward, PU 006. Whereas in Bayelsa State

this was observed in Kolokuma/ Opokuma Local Government, Ward 1, PU 003 and Nembe Local Government, Igbeta-Ewoama Ward, PU 002. In several polling units, police personnel who were unarmed were overwhelmed by political parties, thugs and supporters. These security personnel, as was the case in most instances, did not receive back up support from roving security personnel as planned. There were also reports of armed security personnel shooting, dispersing voters and carting away election materials and even destroying them.

Vote Trading

The commercialisation of Nigeria's elections appears to have reached unprecedented heights. Political parties and their agents operated openly and with impunity distributing money in purchase of votes and it appeared that they were no efforts to stop them. Sums paid at polling units ranged from N500 to N6,000.

Report on Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

From various field reports, the following observations were made:

- There was low voter turnout of PWDs in both States.
- The issue of availability of electoral materials like Braille, magnifying glasses and tactiles hindered participation of PWDs. For instance, in Kogi State, Anyigba Local government, PU 001, 7 persons with albinism were told not to vote because of non-availability of magnifying glasses. This clearly indicates that electoral officers have less knowledge or awareness on INEC Guidelines for PWDs.
- Open exploitation of PWDs by politicians who cash-in on the level of poverty of PWDs to buy their votes.

Conclusion

- Situation Room is disappointed with the conduct of the two governorship elections that held in Kogi and Bayelsa States and worries that the elections fall below the standards expected for a free, fair and credible elections.
- With particular reference to the elections in Kogi State, the levels of violence perpetrated by the two major political parties and politicians, evident sometimes in the collusion with security personnel, seriously undermined the elections, deterred voters and made the exercise a farce. Accordingly, Situation Room is calling for the cancellation of the entirety of the Kogi State elections conducted on 16 November 2019.
- The Kogi State election represents a major dent to Nigeria's democratic process.
- The governorship elections in Bayelsa State has also witnesses serious lapses, with high levels of violence perpetrated by political parties again

in collusion with security personnel and reports of “community voting”- a practice whereby political parties controlling particular areas compel overwhelming votes in favour of their party.

- Situation Room calls on INEC to fully interrogate the elections in Bayelsa State with a view to identifying the high incidences of malpractice that took place and reflect the genuine vote of the people.
- In the light of the security failures, violence, thuggery and general abuse witnessed in the elections, Situation Room calls for an urgent passage and implementation of an Electoral Offences Commission law to address all issues related to electoral abuse.

SIGNED:

Clement Nwankwo

Convener, Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room

The Situation Room is made up of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working in support of credible and transparent elections in Nigeria and includes such groups as Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC), CLEEN Foundation, Action Aid Nigeria, Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), Proactive Gender Initiative (PGI) Enough is Enough Nigeria, WANGONET, Partners for Electoral Reform, JDPC and YIAGA Africa. Others are Development Dynamics, Centre for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD), Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN), Stakeholder Democracy Network, Human Rights Monitor, Reclaim Naija, CITAD, Nigerian Women Trust Fund, Alliance for Credible Elections (ACE), CISLAC, and several other CSOs numbering more than seventy.

PLAC hosts the secretariat of the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room and is a member of its steering committee. The Situation Room provides a co-ordinating platform for civil society engagement on governance issues. It is also a platform for information sharing among civil society groups working on elections and topical national issues. It intervenes in the electoral process by promoting collaboration, proactive advocacy and rapid response to crisis in the electoral process. The Situation Room provides a forum of advance planning, scenario building, evidence based analysis, constructive engagement with various stakeholders in the electoral process and observation of elections.

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