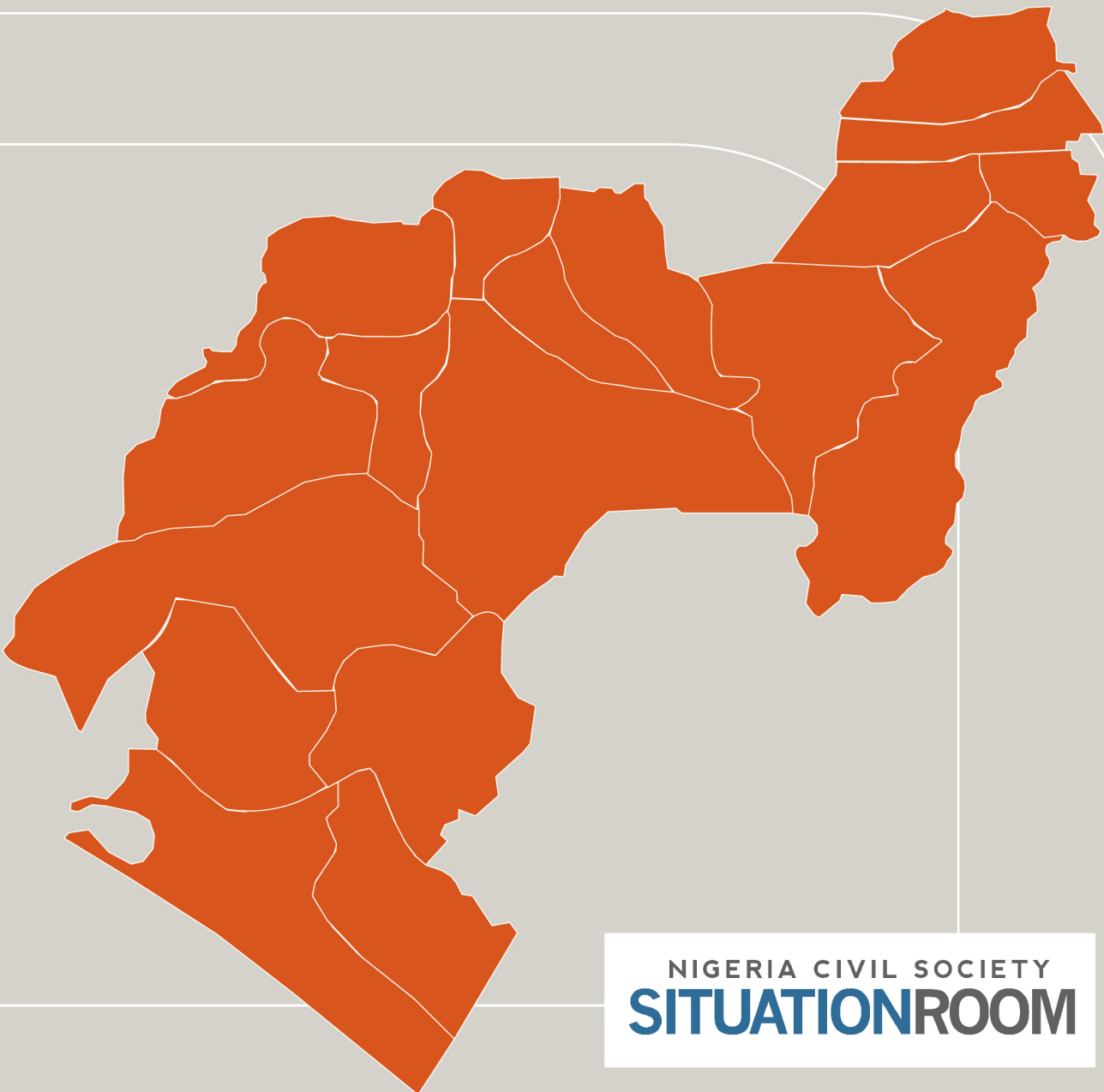


# ONDO STATE

2020 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION REPORT



NIGERIA CIVIL SOCIETY  
**SITUATIONROOM**





ONDO STATE 2020  
GOVERNORSHIP  
ELECTION REPORT

2020 Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room

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# INTRODUCTION

## Background Information on Ondo State

Ondo State was created out of the former Western State on 3rd February 1976, by the military regime of Major General Murtala Mohammed, with Akure as its capital city. It is bound by Ekiti State to the North, Kogi State to the North East, Edo State to the East, Delta State to the South East, Ogun State to the South West and Osun State to the North West.

Ondo State has 18 Local Government Areas, three Senatorial Districts, nine Federal Constituencies and 26 State Constituencies.

The State has a population of 3,460,877 citizens, according to data gathered from the national population census conducted in 2006.<sup>1</sup>

The Yoruba ethnic group is predominant in Ondo State. However, the Ijaw ethnic group is also found in the coastal areas of the State.

The incumbent governor of Ondo State is Oluwarotimi Akeredolu and the Deputy Governor is Agboola Ajayi. They were sworn into office on 24th February 2017.

<sup>1</sup> NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS: [https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary?queries\[search\]=Population](https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary?queries[search]=Population) Retrieved on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020



The first democratically elected governor of Ondo State was Adekunle Ajasin, who was elected in the Second Republic in 1979. At the onset of the Fourth Republic in 1999, Adebayo Adefarati was elected governor and served for one term. Olusegun Agagu took over and served as governor of the State from 2003 to 2007, after which he sought re-election. However, Olusegun Mimiko who was also vying for the office of Governor, challenged Agagu's re-election and gained victory at the Court of Appeal in 2008. He was declared the duly elected governor and his tenure commenced. This situation gave rise to the off-cycle governorship elections in Ondo State, with the last one conducted in November 2016.

## **Legal Framework for the 2020 Governorship Election**

Several laws and subsidiary legislation form the framework for the conduct of elections in Nigeria. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) and Rules, Regulations, Guidelines and Manuals made by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), all guide the conduct of elections in Nigeria.

Section 176 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution (as amended) creates the office of the Governor of a State. The Governor of a State shall be elected for a term of four years (section 180 of the Constitution). By the provisions of section 178 (1 & 2) of the Constitution and section 25 (7 & 8) of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended), election into the office of a State Governor shall be conducted not earlier than one hundred and fifty days and not later than thirty days to the date of the expiration of the tenure of the incumbent. In furtherance to these provisions, INEC scheduled the 2020 Ondo State governorship election for 10th October 2020. The tenure of the incumbent Governor, Oluwarotimi Akereolu expires on 24th February 2021.

## Electoral Statistics

Ondo State has a total of 1,822,346 registered voters out of which 1,478,460 voters have collected their permanent voter's card (PVC), leaving 343,886 PVCs uncollected.

The statistics of the Local Government Areas, Registration Areas (RAs)/Wards and Polling Units (PUs) in Ondo State are as follows:

S/N	LGA	NO of RAs	NO of PUs
1.	Akoko North East	13	135
2.	Akoko North West	10	166
3.	Akoko South East	11	76
4.	Akoko South West	15	168
5.	Akure North	12	106
6.	Akure South	11	302
7.	Ese Odo	10	126
8.	Idanre	10	112
9.	Ifedore	10	151
10.	Ilaje	12	271
11.	Ile Oluji/Okeigbo	10	157
12.	Irele	10	132
13.	Odigbo	11	210
14.	Okitipupa	13	246
15.	Ondo East	10	74
16.	Ondo West	12	233
17.	Ose	12	126
18.	Owo	11	218
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>3,009</b>

Source: INEC 2019 General Election Information kit

## Political Environment

Ahead of the October 10, 2020 Ondo State governorship election, the political tension in the State was mostly centred around the strained relationship between Governor Akeredolu and his deputy, Agboola Ajayi, on one hand, and contention among political parties, on the other hand.

The feud between Akeredolu and Ajayi had been long standing. It however began to manifest through several incidents as the governorship election approached. On 21st June 2020, it was reported that Ajayi's convoy was restrained from leaving his official quarters in the Government House by the Commissioner of Police in Ondo State, CP Bolaji Salami, fuelling speculations that the police was working on the orders of



Ajayi's principal, Governor Akeredolu. The governor however, distanced himself from the incident, describing the allegations as false. The Police Commissioner, on his part, also denied the allegation, explaining that he was at the Government House to intervene in the dispute between the aides of the Governor and Deputy Governor, which had proved difficult for the police personnel present at the time, to settle. Further, Ajayi raised alarm over the withdrawal of his police escort by CP Salami. At this time, it was public knowledge that the Deputy Governor was preparing to defect to the main opposition party in the State, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to clinch its ticket for the governorship election.

In July 2020, Governor Akeredolu tested positive for Coronavirus (COVID-19) and promptly went into isolation. The governor spent less than 21 days in isolation, which is the time specified in the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, after which a deputy governor can take over the affairs of government, in the event that a governor is incapacitated or absent. While Akeredolu was being treated for COVID-19, his deputy, Agboola Ajayi argued that the governor ought to have handed over to him. However, Akeredolu's recovery was announced soon afterwards.

Political intrigues in the State soon took a different turn as the Ondo State House of Assembly led by its Speaker, Rt. Hon. Bamidele Oleyelogun attempted to impeach the Deputy Governor, Agboola Ajayi. With 14 lawmakers signing an impeachment notice against Ajayi, the House directed the Chief Judge of the State, Justice Olarenwaju Akeredolu to set up a panel to investigate allegations of gross misconduct against the Deputy Governor, who had at this time, defected to the PDP. Agboola Ajayi on his part, proceeded to the court to file a suit seeking to stop the impeachment proceedings against him. Meanwhile, the Ondo House of Assembly was divided over the planned impeachment, as nine other lawmakers dissociated themselves from the move, in an official correspondence. Three, out of the nine lawmakers, including the Deputy Speaker of the House, Hon. Ogundeji Iroju took the heat for opposing the impeachment, as they were suspended for allegedly violating the standing rules of the House. The Majority Leader of the House, Hon. Sulaiman Maito who was also against the proposed impeachment, resigned from his House leadership position.

Responding to the letter of the House seeking to initiate investigative action against Ajayi, the Ondo State Chief Judge, Justice Olarenwaju Akeredolu identified lapses in the legislature's application of stipulated Constitutional provisions on the impeachment of a State executive, and therefore declined the request to set up an

investigative panel. This seemed to put the matter to rest, as no further impeachment attempt against the Deputy Governor was reported.

In the midst of all the events unfolding in the Ondo State government at this time, the Secretary to the Ondo State Government, Ifedayo Abegunde resigned. Insinuations grew around the development, with several observers stating that he was supporting the Deputy Governor to achieve his governorship ambition on the platform of the PDP, as he had also not had the best of relationships with Governor Akeredolu as the election approached.

As soon as the primaries of the two of the major political parties in the State, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the PDP were concluded, inter-party rivalries seemed to take a turn for the worse, characterised by destruction of campaign materials and violent clashes among party supporters.

Ajayi, who seemed determined to break away from his principal was predicted to become a formidable third force in the governorship race, capable of giving the candidates of the APC and PDP a run for their money.

On the eve of the election, the Governor of Oyo State, Seyi Makinde who was leading the campaign team of the PDP in the election, raised alarm that the Returning Officer for the election was an associate of the APC governorship candidate, incumbent Governor Rotimi Akeredolu, and hailed from the same Local Government as the candidate. However, INEC dismissed the allegation, stating that the Returning Officer was not a citizen of Ondo State.

# PRE-ELECTION ACTIVITIES

## Situation Room Pre-Election Activities

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room) organised a series of activities in preparation to observe the Ondo Governorship election. Situation Room held a Strategy Meeting with its partners organisations in Ondo State to discuss the political situation in the State. Situation Room also held a Dialogue Session with the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) of INEC in Ondo State, Professor Rufus Akeju on 10th September 2020, to garner information on INEC's preparedness for the election. According to the REC, several activities such as the delivery and distribution of non-sensitive election materials, configuration of Smart Card Readers, identification and assessment of Registration Area Centres, Collation Centres and polling units, training of INEC staff and security agents, engagement with election stakeholders, among others were either completed or on-going at the time. On election security, Professor Akeju stated that INEC had communicated its need to the police, who would be deploying a mix of their police personnel and security agents



from sister agencies. He further reiterated the Commission's efforts to achieving the conduct of a free and fair election, characterised by transparency, professionalism and credibility.

## Meeting with Police IGP

The Inspector General of Police, IGP Mohammed Adamu hosted an Interactive Session with Situation Room on 28th September 2020. The IGP committed to the conduct a better election in Ondo State, by ensuring that lapses recorded in the Edo State governorship election in terms of security, do not reoccur in the Ondo election.

## Governorship Debate

A governorship debate held on Wednesday, 7th October 2020, a few days to the election. The debate was organised with support from Situation Room. Although the candidates of the three main political parties in the Ondo State governorship election, Rotimi Akeredolu of the APC, Eytayo Jegede of the PDP and Agboola Ajayi of the Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) were billed to participate in the debate, only the candidates of the APC and PDP showed up for the event. Both candidates spoke on a series of topics, ranging from taxation and revenue, the State civil service, education, to power and healthcare, providing the electorate with their perspectives on several of these issues. The platform provided an opportunity for issue based campaign, which was largely absent in the lead up to the election.



Ondo State Governorship Election Candidates at the Governorship debate. Source: Channels TV

## **Training of Election Observers**

Situation Room held a two-day training session for its accredited observers on 5th and 6th October 2020 in Akure, Ondo State. In addition to reporting on polling unit election day activities, the training also focused on equipping observers to report on the ward collation process.

## **Political Party Primaries**

According to INEC's schedule and timetable of activities for the election, political party primaries held between 2nd and 25th July 2020. APC's governorship election primary was scheduled to take place on 20th July 2020. Ahead of the primaries, one out of 12 aspirants was disqualified at the party's screening exercise. The mode of primaries created some contention among APC governorship aspirants, most of whom preferred direct primaries. However, the party adopted indirect primaries.

The APC governorship election primary held as scheduled, with three aspirants stepping down for Governor Akeredolu just before the exercise. Akeredolu emerged the party's flagbearer with 2,458 votes, defeating his closest challenger, Olusola Oke who received 262 votes, and other aspirants. Some of the aspirants expressed reservations over the manner in which the party's primary election committee handled the primaries and other related activities.

The PDP opted for indirect primaries and conducted the exercise on 23rd July 2020. It was a keenly contested exercise, particularly between Eyitayo Jegede, who was the party's candidate in the 2016 governorship election, and Agboola Ajayi, the Ondo State Deputy Governor. Jegede garnered 888 votes to defeat Ajayi, who scored 657 votes and six other aspirants who participated in the exercise.

Following the outcome of the PDP primaries, Agboola Ajayi defected to the ZLP in August 2020. The ZLP had concluded its primaries for the governorship election at the time. However, the party's governorship candidate, Rotimi Benjamin was swiftly replaced by Ajayi upon his defection, as he was adopted by the party as its new flagbearer for the election. This was Ajayi's third political party in less than two months.

Fourteen (14) other political parties in the State presented candidates for the election, bringing the total number of governorship candidates in the State to 17.

Civil society groups that observed the political party primaries in Ondo State described the process as relatively peaceful. However, while the PDP's outing was characterised by a few skirmishes, there were allegations of delegates being coerced to vote for a particular candidate at the APC's primaries.

## FINAL LIST OF CANDIDATES

### 2020 Governorship Election - Ondo State

**Saturday 10th October, 2020**



	POSITION	CANDIDATE	PWD	AGE	GENDER	QUALI.
1	GOVERNOR	ROTIMI ADELEYE AKINDEJOYE	X	40	M	FSLC, SSCE, BSc
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	AKINYEMI BIBIRESANMI	X	39	M	SSCE
2	GOVERNOR	JOSHUA OLUWAFEMI ADEWOLE	X	67	M	FSLC, MORDERN SCH., BSc
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	OGUNLEYE AGBOOLA WILLIAMS	X	60	M	FSLC, WAEC, DIPLOMA
3	GOVERNOR	ADELEYE ADEKUNLE PETER	X	57	M	FSLC, WAEC
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	SAMUEL TOPE OMOTOSO	X	35	M	FSLC, WASC, BSc
4	GOVERNOR	ADELEGAN ADEAPO OLUWASEYI	X	58	M	FSLC, WAEC/ GCE
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	OLAITAN OLADEINDE BOLAJI BOLANLE	X	42	F	FSLC, SSCE
5	GOVERNOR	MARTIN KUNLE OLATERU- OLAGBEGI	X	62	M	FSLC, WASC
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	AKINTOYE CORNELIUS	X	44	M	FSLC, NECO, ND
6	GOVERNOR	OLUWAROTIMI ODUNAYO AKEREDOLU	X	64	M	FSLC, GCE, LLB, BL
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	LUCKY ORIMISAN AIYEDATIWA	X	55	M	FSLC, GCE, NCE, ADVANCED DIPLOMA, MBA,
7	GOVERNOR	OLOWOLOB A DELE	X	41	M	FSLC, SSCE, B.Ed, M.Ed
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	BABALOLA ADEREMI	X	40	M	FSLC, WASSC, BA
8	GOVERNOR	AMINU AKEEM OLARENWAJU	X	55	M	FSLC, WAEC/GCE, DIPLOMA
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	OMOYENI TAIWO SEYI	X	58	M	SSCE, GCE
9	GOVERNOR	ADESANYA OLAOLUWA	X	52	M	FSLC, WAEC, ND
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	AKINRINLOLA ADEWALE STEPHEN	X	40	M	FSLC, SSCE, BSc
10	GOVERNOR	OKUNADE TAIWO	X	50	F	FSLC, WAEC
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	IBITOYE ADEBOWALE	X	43	M	FSLC, SSCE, HND
11	GOVERNOR	OJAJUNI JOSEPH ENIOLA	X	42	M	FSLC, NECO, LLB
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	AROG E BAYODE SUNDAY	X	37	M	FSLC, SSCE, ND
12	GOVERNOR	FUNMILAYO JENYO ATAUNOKO	X	47	M	FSLC, WASC/SSCE
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	MAFIMISEBI ADETUTU	X	35	F	FSLC, SSCE

	POSITION	CANDIDATE	PWD	AGE	GENDER	QUALI.
13	 GOVERNOR	EYITAYO OLAYINKA JEGEDE	X	59	M	FSLC, WASC, HSC, LLB, BL
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	GBOLUGA DELE IKENGBOJU	X	53	M	FSLC, GCE, B.PHARM, MA
14	 GOVERNOR	BABATUNDE FRANCIS ALLI	X	46	M	FSLC, SSCE, BSc
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	OLADELE PAUL OLUWASESAN	X	40	M	FSLC, SSCE, BSc
15	 GOVERNOR	FASUA PETER OYELEYE	X	59	M	FSLC, SSCE, BSc
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	AJAYI RACHAEL OLUFUNMILAYO	X	62	F	FSLC, WASC, B.Ed
16	 GOVERNOR	OJON DOTUN	X	38	M	FSLC,WASC, ND, HND
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	HAJARAT DUPE USMAN	X	48	F	FSLC, WASC, BSc
17	 GOVERNOR	AGBOOLA ALFRED AJAYI	X	52	M	WASC
	DEPUTY GOVERNOR	ADEGBENRO GBOYE EMMANUEL	X	49	M	B. ENG



## Election Campaign

Political party campaigns were devoid of references to real governance issues. Rather, political parties and candidates launched smear campaigns against their opponents, while their supporters engaged in clashes that were mostly violent.

The health protocols issued by INEC and the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), which both set out guidelines for several election activities, including political party campaigns were not adhered to. Crowds gathered at campaign venues without observing physical distancing or other safety measures, such as mandatory use of face masks and hand sanitisers, or temperature checks.

## Preparation by INEC

The notice of poll for the Ondo State Governorship election was issued by INEC on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020, Following the outbreak of the pandemic, INEC released a document - Policy On Conducting Elections in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic,<sup>2</sup> which was

<sup>2</sup> INEC; POLICY ON CONDUCTING ELECTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, policy number 01/2020, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020. Retrieved on 22 July 2020 from <https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/INEC-Elections-and-COVID19-Documents-1.pdf>

used to conduct a bye-election in Nasarawa State and the Edo State governorship election. The document essentially sets out guidelines to regulate the conduct of election stakeholders in their activities before and during the election. A similar document titled Guidelines for Conducting Elections During the COVID-19 Outbreak in Nigeria<sup>3</sup> was also released by the NCDC. In accordance with the health protocols set out in these documents, INEC was to provide safety materials such as face masks, hand sanitisers, hand washing buckets, infra-red hand-held thermometers for its election day staff. Methylated spirit and cotton wool were also required for disinfecting Smart Card Readers after use by each voter. As with preparations for the Edo election, INEC held mostly virtual meetings with stakeholders such as political parties, civil society groups, security agents, etc.

About one month to the election, INEC lost over 5,000 card readers in a fire incident at its Ondo State office on 10th September 2020. However, it soon announced that card readers had been mopped up from neighbouring States and was to be configured for the election. INEC reiterated its preparedness for the Ondo poll, dispelling speculations of possible postponement of the election, as a result of the challenge posed by the loss of the card readers.

## **Election Administration**

INEC announced that its Election Result Viewing Portal would be deployed for the election, for real-time upload of polling unit results. The Commission however, stressed that the Z-pads used for capturing images of the result sheet, Form EC8A and uploading same to the portal would be restricted to that use and not be used for voter authentication in addition to the card readers.

The change in the voting hours, from between 8:00am to 2pm, to 8:30am to 2:30pm was maintained for this election, to provide polling staff with adequate time to observe relevant safety protocols in setting up the polling units.

## **Registration of Voters and Collection of PVCs**

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, INEC suspended the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) that it usually carried out ahead of major elections. The last CVR

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<sup>3</sup> NCDC; GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING ELECTIONS DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK IN NIGERIA, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020. Retrieved on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 from <https://covid19.ncdc.gov.ng/media/files/ElectionsDuringCOVID-19July2020.pdf>



exercise was concluded in August 2018, in preparation for the 2019 general elections. By implication, any citizen who attained the age of 18 years since August 2018 did not have an opportunity to be registered to vote at the Ondo governorship election. Therefore, the Voters' Register used for the conduct of the 2019 elections was going to be used for this election. Collection of PVCs was equally affected by the outbreak of the pandemic. Again, only registered voters who had collected their PVCs ahead of the 2019 elections could vote at this election.

### **Recruitment and Training of Ad hoc Staff**

INEC recruited ad hoc staff for the election using a dedicated portal. The Commission had put in place additional measures to enhance the credibility of the recruitment process and forestall sabotage by political actors, and to ensure adequate welfare for staff. This was characterised by the issuance of an employment letter to each staff and the use of a centralised payment system for their allowances. It would seem that these efforts paid off in the Edo election, as such issues were significantly reduced. INEC announced that it would be deploying a total of 17,000 ad hoc staff for the election. This included 15,000 members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and undergraduates of federal higher education institutions, and 2,000 senior staff

of government institutions. In addition, the Commission provided a comprehensive insurance cover for the ad hoc staff.

## **Stakeholders' Meeting**

On 5th October 2020, INEC hosted a Stakeholders' meeting in Akure, the Ondo State capital, to brief stakeholders ahead of the governorship election in the State. INEC Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu gave assurances that all votes would count, with the outcome of the election determined by the choice of the people. With regard to election security, Mahmood stated that the Commission had been liaising with the Inter-Consultative Committee on Elections Security (ICCES) to secure the process and ensure a hitch-free election.

## **Distribution of Election Materials**

Non-sensitive materials were delivered to the 18 Local Government Areas of the State, at least two weeks before the election, while sensitive materials were scheduled to arrive at the Akure office of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) on 5th October 2020. The distribution of non-sensitive materials to the Local Governments and onward distribution to the RACs commenced on Thursday, 8th October 2020, with security agents escorting the materials to their respective destinations. Political party agents, accredited election observers and representatives of media houses were present to observe the process.

INEC also stated that it was deploying magnifying glasses, braille ballot guides, as





well as braille versions of its policy document on conducting election in the context of the pandemic and its Voters' Code of Conduct, for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) to ensure inclusivity and effective participation of all citizens in the electoral process.

INEC employed the service of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) for the transportation of staff and materials for the election.

### **Signing of The Peace Accord**

At a ceremony organised by the National Peace Committee on 6th October 2020, 11 political parties and their governorship candidates signed a Peace Accord, and committed to ensuring a peaceful election, characterised by professional, impartial and transparent conduct on their part. The ceremony was attended by the INEC Chairman, the representative of the Inspector General of Police, traditional rulers, religious leaders and civil society groups. The Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Abubakar Saa'd who was also at the event, tasked political actors to abide by the terms of the Peace Accord and restrain their supporters from engaging in acts of electoral violence. The Peace Committee has General Abdulsalami Abubakar, former Head of State as its Chairman, while the Bishop Matthew Kukar Centre hosts the secretariat of the Committee.

### **Preparation by Security Agents**

The Inspector General of Police, IGP Mohammed Adamu at INEC's Stakeholders'

meeting held in Akure on 5th October 2020, announced that the Force would be deploying 33,783 security personnel for election security duty. Adamu stated that the deployment would comprise 30,933 conventional police personnel and 2,850 personnel from special police units. He added that the police deployment would be complemented by an additional 3,500 personnel that will be drawn from other security agencies. The military also announced its deployment for the election, particularly in the coastal communities of the State within the Ondo South Senatorial District. The Public Relations Officer of 32 Artillery Brigade of the Nigeria Army, Akure, Captain Ayo Omojokun stated that between 200 and 300 military personnel will be deployed for the election.

Security agents were also trained using the Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement for Security Personnel on Election Duty developed by ICCES.

## **State of Security**

Several political clashes were reported weeks before the election, particularly between supporters of the APC and PDP. Some of these incidents took place in Oba Akoko in Akoko South-West LGA, Aiyede-Ogbese community in Akure North LGA, Ipele, Ijebu and Owo towns in Owo LGA. These incidents were often characterised by destruction of campaign vehicles, setting private residences of party members ablaze, shooting and infliction of severe injuries among the warring supporters.

A few days to the election, one of such incidents took place in Akure, the State capital on Sunday, October 4, 2020. A violent clash ensued between supporters of the two parties, with citizens scampering to safety, away from the violence which was characterised by sporadic shooting, with some reportedly injured. The incident was said to be retaliation for an attack on a supporter of one of the parties on the previous day. As with previous incidents, the campaign organisations of the two parties traded blame over the incident.

Riverine communities in Ondo South Senatorial District were identified as potential hotspots from previous elections by civil society groups working on election security.

ASEUN ST. OFF. OKEITEBU RD AKURE.  
STATE. TEL. 0800 75834003



REJECTED  
BALLOT

IPE PFP PDP NPM LP APP

INDEPENDENT NATIONAL  
ELECTORAL COMMISSION  
EC 18 12 68 56



PROC  
INEC EC 30 A  
INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION  
**POLLING STATION**

INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION  
NIGERIA CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION  
Working towards a better Nigeria

ASSISTANT OFFICER

KRAO  
D.B.  
P.

# ELECTION DAY OBSERVATION

## Structure and Observation Methodology

Situation Room's Election Day set up is broadly divided into two: an Analysts' Room and a Technical Room. The Technical Room is comprised of a Call Centre, a Social Media Desk and an Escalation Desk. The Call Centre communicates with field observers deployed across the State, to receive reports on the conduct of the election, and also receives reports from citizen observers using Situation Room's telephone lines and social media platforms. These reports are documented and then published on Situation Room's social media platforms, to provide real-time updates on the election. Reports of incidents are verified and escalated to relevant agencies for intervention, based on the nature of the incidents. The escalation process also involves follow up, to see how the issues are resolved.

The reports received are discussed by experts in the Analysts' Room, to assess the electoral process in general and more specifically, the role of each election stakeholder. Conclusions arrived at, form the basis for Situation Room's press statements on the election.



Situation Room's Election Day set up for this election was located in Akure, Ondo State, with a liaison hub set up at the Situation Room secretariat, Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) office in Abuja.

## **Ward Collation Observation**

Situation Room collaborated with one of its member organisations, the Stakeholders' Democracy Network (SDN) on a Ward Observation project for the election, with a view to observing the ward collation process. In addition to deployment to polling units, Situation Room observers were also deployed to the 203 Wards of Ondo State for the exercise.

## **Deployment of Observers**

Situation Room deployed 255 observers across all the Local Government Areas of the State. Before the commencement of the election, the observers set out to polling units within their Local Governments of deployment, where they observed the process till about noon, after which the Ward collation observers took some time out, to prepare to head to the Ward collation centres. Other observers deployed strictly to polling units continued to observe the electoral process at that level till the conclusion of voting and announcement of results at voting locations.

At polling unit level, observers were expected to look out for the following:

- Early Distribution of election materials and personnel
- Timely commencement of polls
- Use of Smart Card Readers
- Pasting of Form EC60E (poster result sheets) at polling units and use of Z-pads to upload images of Form EC8A (polling unit result sheets) to the INEC Result Viewing Portal
- Conduct of security agents
- Availability and use of assistive materials for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and other vulnerable groups
- Compliance with COVID-19 safety protocols

At Ward collation, observers were expected to look out for the following, among others:

- Accessibility of Ward collation centres

- Presence and conduct of security agents
- Presence of political party agents
- Arrival of polling unit result sheet (Form EC8A)
- Announcement of polling unit results by Presiding Officers
- Announcement of Ward collation results by Collation Officers
- Adherence to COVID-19 protocols

## Arrival of INEC Officials and Voting

Polling officials and materials arrived early in most polling units visited, with voting commencing at an average of 8:30am across voting locations, although there were a few instances of late commencement of polls, an example being Lipaye PU 004, Ward 6 in Ondo West Local Government Area. Unfavourable weather conditions also contributed to the late commencement of voting in some areas, as the process was halted, even when INEC ad hoc staff had set up the polling units. In some cases, this led to the relocation of polling units and materials to private residences in violation of the principle of neutrality as contained in the electoral laws and were not returned to their original locations even after weather conditions improved.

Smart Card Readers were widely deployed for accreditation of voters. However, there were a few cases of card reader malfunction. While the issues were promptly resolved in some cases, it led to manual accreditation in other cases, such as in PU



023, Ward 7 Idiagba in Akure South Local Government Area, where only 11 voters out of 148 voters were successfully accredited using the card reader, while the others whose fingerprint authentication failed, were allowed to vote. It was also observed that PWDs, elderly citizens, pregnant women and nursing mothers were given priority voting access.

## **Turnout and Conduct of Voters**

Voter turnout was below average. Out of 1,478,460 voters with PVCs in Ondo State, only 595,213 voters were accredited at the election, signifying 40.3% of eligible voters. In many polling units, voting was concluded well ahead of the close of polls slated for 2:30pm, with election officials waiting to sort and count the votes cast. However, it was observed that most of the voters who turned up waited for the rainfall to subside and for voting activities to resume, at voting locations where the process was disrupted by weather conditions.

**Compliance with COVID-19 Protocols:** Generally, there was a marginal improvement in adherence to relevant health protocols compared to the Edo State governorship election. However, enforcing physical distancing in polling queues and other safety measures posed challenges, especially where voters were not co-operative. Despite the directive of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, of "No Face mask, No Voting," many voters turned up at polling units without face masks.

**Vote Buying:** Reports of vote buying were rife in several polling units visited, with citizens selling their votes to political parties for amounts ranging from N4,000 to N7,000 per vote. Improper placement of voting cubicles aided vote trading activities, as political party agents could deduce voting patterns.

## **Presence and Conduct of Party Agents**

Political party agents were present in most polling units, especially those from the three leading parties in the election - APC, PDP and ZLP. They were observed to have been major enablers in the vote trading activities.

## **Election Day Security**

There was an average of 4 security agents per polling unit, comprising the Police and personnel of sister security agencies. Security agents deployed for the election conducted themselves properly and assisted the polling officials to ensure

compliance with COVID-19 protocols and crowd control. However, they did not intervene to tackle the incidents of vote trading reported in most polling units during the election.

In contrast to the tense political backdrop against which the election held, the exercise was largely peaceful with only a few violent incidents recorded. It is noteworthy to state that there was no report of ballot box snatching in the polling units visited.

## Collation Process

Ward Collation centres were accessible to observers and the collation process was concluded in an orderly manner, to a large extent. Security agents were present at these locations and may have been a major factor to the peaceful conduct of the exercise. However, collation continued late into the night in some areas.

The Z-pads deployed by INEC were used to upload polling unit results to the Result Viewing portal. However, the results seemed to trickle in, with 39% of results uploaded three hours after voting ended. This eventually increased to 94%, eight hours after the close of voting.



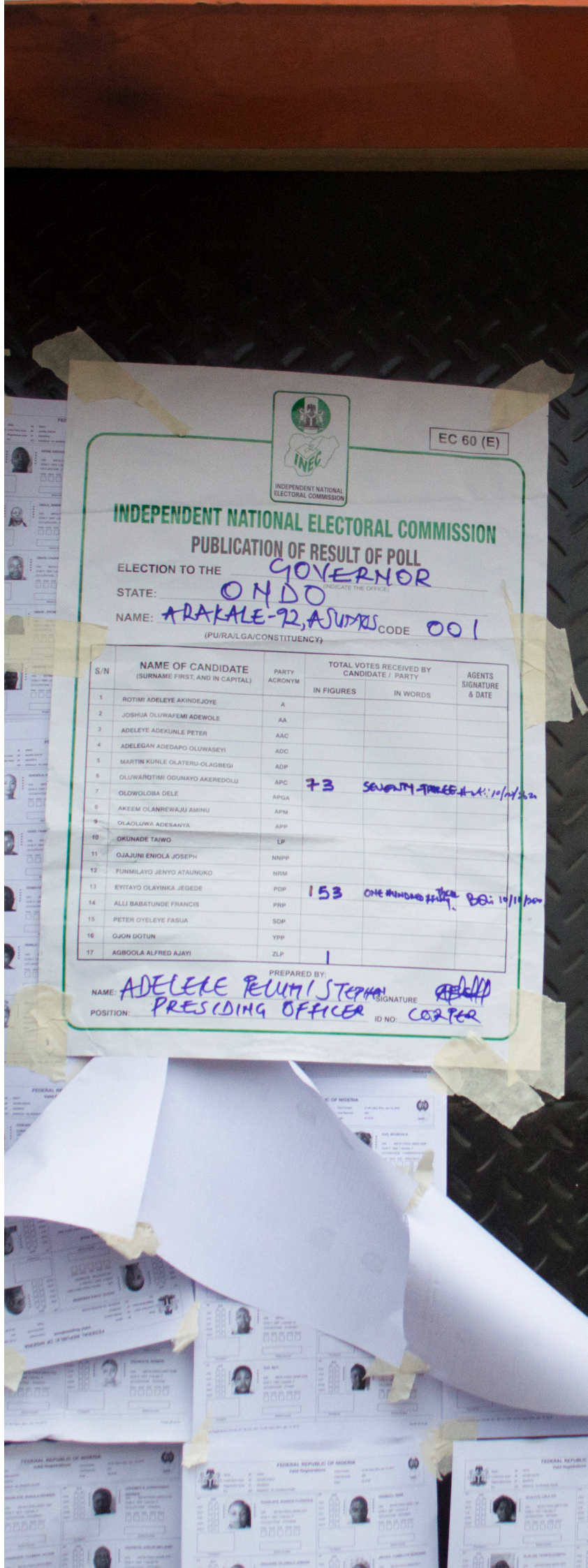


# POST ELECTION OBSERVATION

## Vote tabulation and Declaration of Results

The final results of the Ondo State governorship election were announced on 11th October 2020. The Returning Officer for the election and Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, Professor Abel Idowu Olayinka declared the incumbent governor, Rotimi Akeredolu of the APC winner of the election, after he scored the highest number of votes in the election – 292,830 votes. His closest rival, Eytayo Jegede of the PDP received 195,791 votes while Agboola Ajayi of the ZLP came in at third place with 69,127 votes.

The results released by INEC indicates that there was a total of 595,213 accredited voters at the election. With a total of 591,193 votes cast, 572,745 votes were valid while 18,448 votes were rejected.<sup>4</sup> As with the Edo State governorship election, it is unclear why the total votes cast were 4,020 less than the number of accredited voters.



<sup>4</sup> INEC Twitter Page: Retrieved on Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020 from <https://twitter.com/inecnigeria/status/1315322918604345344?s=20>

## Reactions of Political Parties and Candidates

Following the declaration of Rotimi Akeredolu as winner of the election, the Publicity Secretary of the PDP in Ondo State, Kennedy Peretei stated that the party would study the election results to decipher the appropriate action to take. The PDP also accused the APC of attacks on its members and supporters, as well as its secretariat and campaign office in Ijare, Ifedore Local Government Area, in the guise of celebrating their victory. The Ondo State Chairman of the APC, Ade Adetimehim, however, dismissed the allegations, describing them as baseless.

The APC on its part, expelled its member, Hon. Tomomewo Favour, the only female member of the Ondo State House of Assembly, for alleged anti-party activities. According to the party, Tomomewo galvanised support for the ZLP candidate, Agboola Ajayi in the governorship election.

## Resolution of Conflicts

The PDP and its candidate, Eyitayo Jegede have filed a petition at the Ondo State governorship Election Petition Tribunal to challenge the re-election of Rotimi Akeredolu as governor of Ondo State. Jegede alleges that the election was marred by irregularities, violence and intimidation, while also faulting the the APC governorship primaries, from which Akeredolu emerged flagbearer of the party.



# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ondo State governorship election was indicative of sustained efforts on the gains recorded in previous elections, including the Edo State governorship election that was conducted in September 2020. The election management body, INEC improved on its processes and general administration of the election. Further, Situation Room commends the security services for the professionalism exhibited throughout the duration of the election. Situation Room commends all stakeholders, including the people of Ondo State for their efforts, which culminated in a peaceful and largely credible election.

Situation Room makes the following recommendations following its observation of the election:

## GENERAL

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Situation Room calls on security agents, INEC and other stakeholders to seek out more practical ways of enforcing punitive measures against offenders, to serve as a deterrent to political actors and the electorate, moving forward.

Situation Room urges all stakeholders to utilise the time before the next off-cycle governorship election to make significant progress on Constitutional and electoral reform efforts towards enhancing the legal framework governing elections in Nigeria.



## **INEC**

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- INEC should collaborate with political parties and civil society organisations to develop and adopt innovative measures, including civic education, in order to reduce voter apathy and drive voter turnout.
- The Electoral Commission should ensure stricter adherence to COVID-19 prevention protocols in future elections.

## **SECURITY**

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- Security agencies should investigate pre-election violence and bring perpetrators to book.

## **POLITICAL PARTIES**

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- Situation Room urges on political parties to restrain their supporters from perpetrating havoc before, during and after elections. Political parties should focus on delivering issued campaigns and voter education programmes.

# APPENDICES

## STATEMENTS ISSUED BY THE SITUATION ROOM ON THE 2020 ONDO GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION



### PRELIMINARY STATEMENT BY NIGERIA CIVIL SOCIETY SITUATION ROOM ON ONDO STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY, 10<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2020

**Issued: 1:00pm, Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room) is in Akure to observe the Ondo State Governorship election scheduled for Saturday, 10 October 2020. Situation Room has deployed accredited observers across the 18 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the State to provide information from the field on all stages of the election.

Coming on the heels of the recently held Edo State governorship election, which was largely adjudged peaceful by several observers and stakeholders, it is expected that the gains recorded in Edo State will be improved upon in the Ondo State governorship poll.

#### **Pre-election Environment**

In the lead up to the elections, the political environment in Ondo State is tense with reports of isolated political clashes between supporters of rival parties, especially with campaigns reaching fever pitch. There have been several reports of violent clashes between supporters of the two leading parties in the State, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), with the most recent incident reported in Akure, the State capital on Sunday, October 4, 2020. Also, the peculiar circumstance of the Deputy Governor, Agboola Ajayi, contesting for the office of Governor currently occupied by his principal, on the platform of the Zenith Labour Party contributes to the tenuous political environment in the State. There are concerns on how these incidents and the overall state of affairs among the political parties may affect the conduct of the election.

The loss of over 5,000 Smart Card Readers from a fire outbreak in the Ondo State office of the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) also raised concerns over preparations for the election. INEC has however reassured that it has replaced the lost card readers from supplies in neighbouring States and is fully prepared for the conduct of the election.

### **Election Administration**

Situation Room having closely followed the preparations of INEC for the election, is satisfied that the Commission has reiterated its commitment to enhancing its processes for the election. At INEC's Stakeholders' meeting convened in Akure earlier this week, INEC Chairman, Prof. Mahmoud Yakubu stated 16 areas of improvement to be implemented in the election, with particular references made to prompt response to card reader malfunctions, stricter compliance with COVID-19 safety protocols and improved logistical deployment of election personnel and materials. It also announced its engagement with security agencies to deal decisively with the menace of vote buying. In addition, the Commission stated that it will also be deploying the Z-pad technology for uploading polling unit results to its Result Viewing (I-Rev) portal.

Situation Room will be looking out for the implementation of these identified areas of improvement and in particular, compliance with the directive of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, of "No Face mask, No Voting."

Situation Room therefore calls on INEC to ensure that all its logistics arrangements for the election will be deployed optimally and timely, and will take into consideration, provisions for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and other vulnerable groups.

### **Election Security**

The Inspector General of Police, IGP Mohammed Adamu announced that 33,783 security personnel will be deployed for the election and assured of optimal security for all stakeholders involved in the election. The military also announced the deployment of between 200 to 300 of its personnel, particularly in the coastal areas of the Ondo South Senatorial District. Situation Room reiterates that all sister security agencies deployed on election duty should adhere to the directives of the Nigeria Police, as the lead agency on election security, and abide by the Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement for Security Personnel on Election Duty.

Situation Room will also be on the look-out for hotspots identified by Civil Society groups working in the area, such as Akoko North East, Akure South and Idanre.

### **Political Parties**

Situation Room is concerned about the inflammatory statements that have pervaded the political space in Ondo State, particularly in the last days of the campaigns, and calls on political parties to restrain from making inciteful comments that will push their supporters to disrupt the electoral process or engage in acts of violence. Situation Room condemns the clash between supporters of the APC and the PDP that occurred in the State capital, Akure on Sunday, October 4, 2020. Political parties and their candidates are enjoined to uphold their commitment to peaceful elections as expressed in the signing of the Peace Accord.

### **Conclusion**

Given the assurances by INEC and the Nigeria Police Force of their adequate preparations for the election, Situation Room is calling on all stakeholders to effectively engage in the electoral process with a view to delivering a free, fair, credible and peaceful election in Ondo State. Situation Room also appeals to all election stakeholders to abide by the safety protocols issued by relevant authorities to curtail the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, and enjoins the people of Ondo State to come out and exercise their franchise.

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**SIGNED:**

*Esther Uzoma*

*Alternate Chair*

*For: Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room*

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**Resolution (CHRCR), Young Innovators and Vocational Training Initiative, EdoCSOs, CONGOs Edo State, Brave Heart Initiative, Partners West Africa and several other CSOs numbering more than seventy.**

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## **INTERIM STATEMENT BY NIGERIA CIVIL SOCIETY SITUATION ROOM ON THE OCTOBER 10, 2020 ONDO STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION**

**Issued in Akure: 3:10pm, Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2020**

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room has been observing closely the ongoing Governorship Election in Ondo State, Saturday, October 10, 2020. The following are our observations:

### **LOGISTICS AND OPENING OF POLLS**

Reports from our network of observers across the 18 LGAs in the State indicate both voting materials and electoral officials arrived early in most polling units while opening of polls commenced at an average time of 8.30am in the polling units observed. However, there were a few reported hitches in the arrival of materials and officials notably in Lipaye, PU 004, ward 6, Ondo West where electoral officials arrived at 11.15am. There were also reported cases of malfunctioning of smart card readers in some polling units visited. These were in PUs-001, 006, 011, and 019 in ward 02, Akure South. Of particular interest was the situation at PU-023, ward 007, Idiagba, Akure South LGA where out of 148 accredited voters, only 11 of them were successfully authenticated by the card readers while 137 failed the fingerprint authentication but were however allowed to vote.

### **COMPLIANCE WITH COVID-19 PROTOCOLS**

Situation Room observers noticed poor adherence to the laid down INEC guidelines on COVID-19 on election. For instance, while INEC made adequate provision for hand sanitizers and infra-red thermometers which were used in the polling units visited. However, there was a breach in the adherence to the social distancing principle of the protocol while in many instances, voters were seen not putting on their face masks.

### **CONDUCT OF SECURITY OFFICIALS**

Situation Room observed the presence of security officials in the polling units visited, and major roads/intersections across the State. The conduct of security operatives has been courteous and professional so far. We commend the prompt response of security officials in intervening in the violent uproar recorded at Ijumo, PU-004, ward

4, Akure South where a PDP loyalist was shot by an APC thug by rushing the victim to the hospital as well as arresting the suspect.

### **VOTE BUYING**

Situation Room noticed with dismay the continuous cases of vote trading among frontline political parties in the polling units observed. There were reported incidences of vote buying in PU-004, ward 1, Ondo East LGA; and Only Jesus Can Save, ward 5, Akure South LGA where voters were seen selling their votes in exchange for cash ranging from five to seven thousand naira depending on the purchasing power of the political party.

### **FAKE NEWS**

Situation Room also noticed that there were quite a number of fake reports on Social Media. The report of the Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) candidate pulling out of the race is an example of one of such fake news.

### **CONCLUSION**

As election enters the critical stage of vote collation, announcement and uploading of results on the INEC's viewing portal, Situation Room urges all stakeholders to continue to conduct themselves peacefully to ensure the conducive atmosphere recorded so far is sustained. We further call on the security operatives to be vigilant in mitigating incidences of electoral violence which normally characterizes the collation process. INEC should ensure the remaining phases of the election process proceeds in a transparent manner.

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**SIGNED:**

*Esther Uzoma*

*Alternate Chair*

*For: Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room*

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## **SECOND INTERIM STATEMENT BY NIGERIA CIVIL SOCIETY SITUATION ROOM ON SATURDAY OCTOBER 10, 2020 ONDO STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION**

**Issued in Akure: 9:30 am, Sunday, 11th October 2020**

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room) is issuing this statement following its observation of the Saturday, 10th October 2020 Ondo State Governorship Election.

### **GENERAL**

The conduct of the Ondo State Governorship Election appears to have built on the gains of the recently conducted Edo State governorship election and is a marked improvement in recent previously conducted elections. Again, INEC's processes improved and was mostly hitch-free. This was also evident in the relatively smooth Ward Collation process. On the positive side also, the reports indicate professional conduct of security personnel. There was however, isolated incidents of logistical challenges.

The menace of vote-buying is still prevalent in the electoral process, with several reports of the trend worsening. Although there are concerns over observance of COVID-19 prevention protocols, there was marked improvement from the most recently conducted governorship elections.

Voter turnout was generally low across the State, which raises questions about decreasing citizens participation in elections in Nigeria, and what needs to be done to address the problem, going forward.

### **ELECTION ADMINISTRATION**

Situation Room commends INEC for improving on timely commencement of polls - a marked improvement from the earlier conducted Edo State Governorship election. Situation Room observed early commencement of polls in most voting locations across the State. Smart Card Readers were widely used to accredit voters and in several instances of card reader failure, technical support was provided to rectify the situation.

The introduction and use of the Z-pad for uploading of collated polling results is a major improvement of the election process, because of the heightened transparency that this has brought to our elections. Upon completion of the voting process, Situation Room observed a 100% complete upload of results to the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV) in 11 of the 18 LGAs in Ondo State, after about eight hours of close of polls. Although the use of this platform is still relatively new, Situation Room urges INEC to continue to improve on the technology and practice, in order to assure citizens of the increased transparency in our electoral system and as a tool for overseeing the results collation process.

The overall negative weather conditions as well as the heavy rain downpour, experienced in parts of the State on the election day was a restraining factor to the effective participation of voters in the process. This resulted in some instances to the emergency relocation of polling units and materials to private residences, which is a clear violation of the principle of neutrality as contained in the electoral laws. It must also be noted that even after the rains stopped and weather conditions improved, polling units that were moved to private residences, were not returned to their original locations.

A notable observation was the preference given to persons with disabilities, the elderly, pregnant women and nursing mothers in the voting process. While acknowledging the laudable efforts of INEC to make special provisions for the peculiarities of PWDs, Situation Room observed that some polling units were inaccessible to this class of voters owing to such impediments as difficult topography, and drainages. The following polling units fall under this category; PU-001, ward 2, Adomu, Akure South; PU-018, ward 2, Aje-Bamidele, Akure South, and PU-035, ward 2, Owonifari, Isikan West, Akure South LGA.

Situation Room deployed Ward Collation observers across the State. It was observed that Ward Collation centres were accessible and the collation process concluded in an orderly manner, to a large extent. It would appear that INEC made strides in implementing the areas of improvement identified by the INEC Chairman, prior to the conduct of the election. There is however, always room for further improvement.

## **ELECTION SECURITY**

In spite of the tense political environment and threats of violence that preceded the election, the exercise was largely peaceful, with only very few violent incidents recorded. Reports received by Situation Room indicate that security agents deployed for election duty conducted themselves properly. They intervened in some cases to settle altercations that arose at polling units and assisted the polling officials to ensure compliance with COVID-19 protocols and crowd control. Situation Room believes that the relatively general calm atmosphere that attended the conduct of the election was as a result of the deliberate intervention of the security services, the efforts of civil society in helping build peace, as well as the resolve of the people of Ondo State to have a peaceful election. Situation Room commends the security services for the professionalism exhibited throughout the duration of the election. A major drawback however, was the inability of security operatives to intervene in the blatant cases of vote buying and selling, reported in most polling units during the election. Situation Room's observers also noted the presence of security personnel during the collation process, which contributed to the generally peaceful conclusion of the process. It is significant to note that there was no report of ballot box snatching throughout the election in polling units visited.

## **VOTER TURNOUT**

Voter turnout was very low compared to the number of registered voters who collected their Permanent Voters' Cards (PVCs). In many polling units, voting was concluded well ahead of the close of polls slated for 2:30pm, with election officials waiting to sort and count the votes cast. It is unclear what all the factors are, that contributed to the low voter turnout. Situation Room notes however, that a lot of work needs to be done by INEC, the political parties and civil society organisations to find innovative ways of reducing voter apathy, including civic education, and drive turn out by voters.

## **VOTE BUYING**

Vote buying has sadly, become a staple in the electoral process in Nigeria. Despite INEC stating that it was liaising with security agents to arrest the situation, the incidents of this trend increased in the Ondo State Governorship election. Reports received by Situation Room showed that vote buying was evident in a number of polling units and largely went unchecked. Voters were seen selling their votes for sums ranging from ₦4,000 and ₦5,000, to ₦7,000, depending on the political parties or location. The improper positioning of voting cubicles and ballot boxes in some polling units observed, made it easier for party agents to deduce patterns of voting as the

secrecy of the ballot was not observed. Situation Room calls on INEC, security agents and other stakeholders to seek out more practical ways of enforcing punitive measures against offenders, to serve as a deterrent to political actors and the electorate, moving forward.

### **ADHERENCE TO COVID19 PROTOCOLS**

Situation Room observed a marginal improvement in the adherence to COVID-19 guidelines issued by health authorities, compared to the recently held Edo State Governorship election. In particular, the “No Face Mask, No Voting” directive was observed to have been breached in some instances. Although, the necessary safety materials, such as hand sanitisers and infrared thermometers were provided by INEC, there was the inability to manage polling queues and safety protocols, especially as this required the cooperation of voters, who were at most times unmanageable and could not be bothered to use face masks or observe social distancing.

### **CONCLUSION**

INEC improved over their performance in the recently held Edo State Governorship Election, the voting process was relatively successful and would seem to indicate a growing consistency of relatively successfully conducted elections by INEC. Obviously, there are still lapses observed that should be improved upon by the electoral body. Some of these observations have been highlighted above.

The Ondo State Governorship election was relatively violence free, despite the political tension created and earlier signs of likely threats to peaceful elections and the campaigns reaching fever pitch.

Situation Room commends INEC for its general administration of the election with improvements recorded in the compliance with COVID-19 protocols, logistical arrangements and commencement of polls. With the incidence of vote buying continuing to prevail, Situation Room renews its call for more effective enforcement of election laws that prohibit vote buying and other electoral offences and for quick legislative action to be taken on the passage of the Electoral Offences Commission Bill. Situation Room applauds the continued use of the Election Result Viewing Portal and calls on INEC to build on its gains for increased transparency in the electoral process. Lastly, Situation Room calls on all stakeholders to utilise the time before the next off-cycle governorship election to make significant progress on Constitutional and electoral reform efforts towards enhancing the legal framework governing elections in Nigeria.

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*Alternate Chair*

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# GALLERY



Situation Room Training of Election Observers



Situation Room Training of Election Observers



Situation Room Election Day Setup



Situation Room Election Day Field Observation



Situation Room Election Day Field Observation



Situation Room Election Day Field Observation

Situation Room Election Day Setup



## ABOUT

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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