

## **SITUATION ROOM GUBERNATORIAL AND STATE HOUSES OF ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS**

**Issued: Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> April 2015**

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room is observing the State-level elections for the Governorships and the State Houses of Assembly. The successful conclusion of these elections is crucial to the consolidation of democracy in the country and should complement the already concluded Presidential and National Assembly elections on March 28<sup>th</sup> 2015.

Reports reaching the Situation Room indicate that electoral officials arrived on time in most parts of the country. Commencement of accreditation also started on time. The Situation Room notes a number of issues of serious concern as the current elections unfold:

### **Process violation:**

We note that in many polling units, INEC's electoral regulations were being flagrantly flouted. In most polling units, accreditation started on time. In Akwa Ibom State, there are reports of the accreditation of voters without valid PVCs. In Wadata Polling Unit (011) in Taraba State, voting commenced without accreditation, while in Rogo Ward in the same State, accreditation and voting are taking place simultaneously. In Nasarawa State, there are reports of the inability of INEC ad hoc staff to operate the card readers. In a limited number of polling units, we have also received reports of mass ballot thumb printing, attempts to bribe electoral officials, and the use of security officials to subvert the electoral process.

### **Deaths & Violence:**

We have reports of election-related murders in Lagos, Delta, Rivers, Ebonyi, Katsina, and Akwa Ibom States. These killings form part of a wider pattern of politically-motivated violence, arson, and hijacking of electoral materials that our observers have noted. The resort to violence may not be unrelated to the higher interests at stake in these State level elections. In Owerri North of Imo State, there are reports of rival party clashes and violence.

### **General:**

We are concerned in particular about the deteriorating situation, such as the increasing use of violence in Imo, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Lagos, and southern Kaduna States. We call on INEC to redouble its efforts at protecting the integrity of the electoral process by upholding its regulations. Where failures are established we call on INEC to seriously consider cancelling results from the affected polling units.

We call on the security forces to uphold their professional ethics, avoid partisanship, and protect lives and property. We call on all Nigerians to take advantage of these elections to choose leaders of their choice to conduct affairs in the states. We urge everyone to resist efforts at inflaming local passions with a view to instigating violence or perverting the electoral process.

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