

**FIRST PRELIMINARY STATEMENT BY NIGERIA CIVIL SOCIETY
SITUATION ROOM ON THE RESCHEDULED GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION
IN EDO STATE FOR WEDNESDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER 2016**

Issued: 11:00 am, Tuesday, 27th September 2016

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room) has deployed Observers for the Edo State Governorship election scheduled for Wednesday, September 28th 2016. More that 70 Civil Society Organizations are represented in the Situation Room and observers distributed across the 18 local government areas of the State.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has stated that it is ready for the election. The Situation Room will be holding INEC accountable for its state of preparedness and will look out for the following as INEC administers the elections:

1. Early distribution and deployment of personnel;
2. Timely opening of poll;
3. Knowledge of procedures by personnel;
4. Voting procedures particularly the efficacy of the Smart Card Readers; and
5. The Collation process, which has always been a concern for the Situation Room, will be a special area of focus especially the transparency of the process.

While the Situation Room welcomes INEC guidelines on simultaneous accreditation and voting, it will like to state that is the Constitutional right of voters to stay back and ensure their votes count and are counted. Accordingly, mandate protection is key to the success of the polls and should be guaranteed.

Where INEC leadership fails to keep an eye on their staff during the collation process, the Situation Room, will hold the Commission accountable.

Situation Room also notes the statement of the Nigeria Police that it is prepared for the elections and has deployed adequate personnel and materials for the exercise. We also note that other arms of the security services have indicated their preparedness for the election. Situation Room's observation of the performance of the security agencies will include:

1. The exercise of restraint in dealing with voters and avoidance of acts of intimidation, inappropriate use of force and other acts capable of undermining the electoral process;

2. Actual presence and deployment of personnel reflective of the 25,000 personnel said to be deployed by the security agencies for the election; and
3. That security personnel are well catered for before, during and after the elections.

In addition, the Situation Room will be observing the security agencies involved in the election and that actions of the security that threaten their non-partisanship is in focus.

Situation Room calls upon the political parties to conduct themselves in a manner that does not encourage violence by their supporters, as they will be held liable for their activities that trigger violence.

The Situation Room nonetheless urges the Edo State Government to assure the electorate of their personal safety and urges voters to go out and peacefully to cast their vote in exercise of their constitutional right to be part of the democratic process.

We reiterate that all elections must demonstrate the highest possible commitment from the security services to support INEC in completing its constitutional role of organising credible elections that can inspire continued public confidence.

The Situation Room on its part commits to the highest possible standards of election observation and support to the electoral process.

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 Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth & Advancement (YIAGA). Others are Development Dynamics, Stakeholders Democracy Network, Human Rights Monitor, Election Monitor, Reclaim Naija, Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, CITAD, Alliance for Credible Elections (ACE) CISLAC, EdoCSOs, CONGOs Edo State and several other CSOs numbering more than seventy.

Contact information:

Website: situationroom.placng.org

Email: situationroom@placng.org

Twitter: @situationroomng
#NigeriaSituationRoom

Facebook: [Facebook.com/situationroomnigeria](https://www.facebook.com/situationroomnigeria)

Hotlines: 09095050505, 09032999919

