EDO STATE 2016 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION OBSERVATION REPORT
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## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## APPENDIX : SITUATION ROOM STATEMENTS ON EDO STATE 2016 ELECTION OBSERVATION
Do you live in Edo State?

Are you registered to vote in Edo State?

#EdoSR2016
#EdoDecides

Please forward your reports on the Edo State Governorship election on 28th September 2016 to the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room.

www.situationroom.placng.org
situationroomnigeria
@situationroomng
09095050505, 09032999919
GENERAL
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information on the State

Edo State was formed in June 1963 from Benin and Delta provinces of the Western Region, and its capital was Benin City. The population of the entire state is approximately 4 million and made up of three major ethnic groups; namely the Binis, Esan and Afemai.

Edo State is made up of eighteen (18) Local Government Areas (LGAs) and has a total of 1,925,105 registered voters. There are 192 Registration Areas (RAs), 2,627 Polling Units (PUs) and 4,011 Voting Points (VPs).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>No. of RA's</th>
<th>No. of PUs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AKOKO-EDO</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EGOR</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESAN CENTRAL</td>
<td>03</td>
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<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESAN NORTH-EAST</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESAN SOUTH-EAST</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESAN WEST</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETSAKO CENTRAL</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETSAKO EAST</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETSAKO WEST</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGUEBEN</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IKPOBA-OKHA</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OREDO</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORHIONMWO</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>208</td>
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<td>OVIA SOUTH-WEST</td>
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<tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>160</td>
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<tr>
<td>OWAN WEST</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UHUNMWONDE</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL:** 18  192  2,627

Thus, the Edo State Governorship election did not hold during the General election of 2015 because the incumbent governor would complete his second term of four years on the midnight of 11th November 2016. The winner of the governorship election would to be sworn into office on 12th November 2016.
Below is the statistics for the Governorship Election in Edo State:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELECTION STATISTICS</th>
<th>#EDOSR2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STATE POPULATION</td>
<td>3,218,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO. OF REGISTERED VOTERS</td>
<td>1,925,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO. OF RAs/WARDSs</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO. OF POLLING UNITS</td>
<td>2,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO. OF VOTING POINTS</td>
<td>4,011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2 Legal Framework for the Election

The Constitutional and Legal Framework for Governorship Elections in Nigeria are encapsulated in the following documents:


b) The Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended).

c) Rules, Regulations, Guidelines and Manuals made by the Independent National Electoral Commission (see section 4 of the second schedule to the Constitution)

The Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) stipulates the procedure for the conduct of Elections in Nigeria. The procedure outlined covers the Presidential and Governorship Elections, as well as National and State-level legislative elections. The Electoral Act, 2010 also covers the registration of voters, nomination of candidates, conduct of political parties, and political campaigns, conduct of elections and return of candidates, electoral offences, and election petitions among other issues.

Section 176 of the 1999 Constitution creates the office of the Governor for each of the 36 States of Nigeria. The Governor of a State shall be the Chief Executive of that State and is elected for a four-year term (Section 180 of the Constitution). The four-year term begins to run from the date of taking the oath of office and oath of allegiance. Where a re-run takes place and the person earlier sworn in wins, the time spent in office before the date the election was annulled shall be taken into account - Section 180 (2A) of the Constitution.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) appoints the date of an election to the office of Governor. Election to the office of Governor must be held on a date 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 of the office.

In accordance with Section 46 of the Electoral Act, INEC issued the Notice of the Election on 1st June 2016, while the Notice of Polls was issued on 27th August 2016. The Edo State Governorship election was fixed for 10th September 2016.
1.3 Political Environment Before the Election

As expected, the Edo governorship election turned out to be a tough battle especially between the two major political parties in the State – PDP and APC. Reports of the huge role of money were rampant.

Political parties put out outreach programs, but little issues of interest to the citizenry. This lack of substance and issue-based campaigns meant that citizens were swooned more by the personalities rather than what issues the parties indicated as promises.

The State also witnessed a very tense and strained political environment leading up to the 2016 governorship election. The major parties had warring factions during the state primaries, which fuelled likelihood of violence and polarizing opinions by voters. The police consistently updated the public with risk assessments reports on the election. Citizens worried about increased presence of weapons on the streets incidents of armed robbery, and cult activities during the pre-election period.

In the lead up to the elections and to douse tension, the Commissioner of Police for Edo State, supervised the signing of a Peace Accord between all nineteen candidates of the governorship election committing the candidates to a peaceful atmosphere before, during and after the election. The Peace Accord signing had representation from senior officials at INEC, Department of State Services and other key stakeholders.

INEC also held a stakeholders meeting for all stakeholders on its level of preparedness leading up to the election to fortify the peace accord signed by candidates of political parties and provide a platform for stakeholders to engage with INEC.
2.1  Situation Room Pre-Election Activities

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room) which comprises more than 70 civic groups is a platform of CSOs that provides a melting pot of ideas, analyzing issues as well as proposing changes and reforms in response to key developments. In line with INEC’s guidelines for election observation, the Civil Society Situation Room with support from the British Department for International Development (DFID) deployed accredited and impartial observers to document and assess the conduct of the electoral process.

Situation Room collaborated with civil society organizations domiciled in Benin to deploy observers and better understand the terrain and issues around the elections. Situation Room, through its partners in Edo State, monitored the Continuous Voters Education (CVR) Exercise conducted by INEC in Edo State as well as the distribution of PVCs at the conclusion of the exercise.

Ahead of the election, a training on election observation was organised on June 23rd and 24th 2016 to provide its partners organisations and CSOs in Edo State with the essential skills needed to observe, report and analyze elections and election day events. The training also aimed to build the capacity of participating organisations to engage with issues around the elections.

A key component of the methodology of the Situation Room’s election observation was the consistent interactions and collaborations with key stakeholders. This helped to achieve an objective assessment of pre-election and post-election activities with regards to the election being observed.

The Situation Room held a dialogue session with INEC officials and the police to understand and analyze their preparedness for the elections. The dialogue session enabled key stakeholders including civil society groups, INEC, the Police, other domestic and international observers to understand the issues at stake and what to look out for in order to achieve free, fair and credible election in the Edo State Governorship election.

The initial date set for the election was postponed from September 10th to September 28th 2016, in the light of the advice offered by the security agencies warning of looming security concerns. After the postponement of the election from September 10th to September 28th, the Situation Room held a strategy meeting with INEC and the Police to discuss and review the factors that led to the postponement of the initial date of the election as well as review the state of affairs regarding elections in Nigeria, especially ahead of the new date for Edo Governorship election. At the meeting, INEC assured the Situation Room of its readiness.
for the elections and that it had put things in motion for a smooth conduct of the election. The Police on its part insisted that the security threats it identified was real and that it acted in good faith when it requested that INEC should not proceed to conduct the election on Saturday, September 10th 2016.

The postponement of the elections further heightened fear that the election would be marred with irregularities and violence. Also that there would be a high degree of voter apathy which may result in low turnout of eligible voters. The Situation Room, working with the Conference of NGOs in Edo State (CONGOS), produced some radio jingles on peaceful political participation and elections for the voters in Edo State and these jingles were aired on various local radio stations in the State. This was aimed at educating the people on the importance of participating in election as well as to mobilize the people to come massively to vote for the candidate of their choice.

**Collaboration with CLEEN Foundation**

The Situation Room collaborated with CLEEN Foundation to carry out a Security Threat Assessment ahead of the elections. From the assessment done, it was noted that the political atmosphere in the State was very tense and that candidates of the major political parties were engaged in the use of inflammatory language and rhetoric. The key findings from the Security Threat Assessment for the LGAs were as follows:

- **RED:** Oredo, Egor, Igueben, Esan Central, Etsako West and Orhionwon.
- **AMBER:** Etsako East, Estako Central, Akoko Edo, Esan West, Esan South and Ovia South West.
- **GREEN:** Esan North-West, Owan East, Owan West, Ovia North East and Uhunmwode.

Red Signifies 30% to 100% violence, Amber signifies 10% to 29% while Green signifies 0% to 9%.

CLEEN Foundation’s call centre to observe and analyse information on the conduct of Security Agencies during the Edo State governorship election was located in the Situation Room. The call centre also received complaints and information about incidents that threaten security and transmitted these complaints to relevant security commands for immediate action.

2.2 **Nomination Process**

The process of nomination of candidates is the internal affairs of each political party and all are enjoined to ensure internal democracy prevails in the exercise. In the two major parties for the elections, the primaries were very contentious.

Godwin Obaseki emerged the governorship candidate in the All Progressives Congress, APC. With the full support of the outgoing governor and the majority of his government behind him, Obaseki had been in pole position to beat the 11 other aspirants in the contest to succeed the outgoing governor, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole. A total of 2,582 delegates were accredited to elect the APC’s flag bearer in the primary election, which held at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium Benin City. Obaseki, chairman of the Edo State Economic and Strategic Team, emerged winner with 1,618 votes. His closest rival, the deputy governor of the State, Dr. Pius Odubu polled 471 votes, Kenneth Imasuagbon polled 247 votes,
Dr. Chris Ogienwonyi - 137 votes, while Gen. Charles Airhiavbere polled 11 votes. Prof. Osarhiemien Osunbor - 9 votes, Tina Agbarha - 3 votes, Peter Esele - 8 votes, Austin Emuan - 7 votes, Emmanuel Arigbe Osula - 10 votes, Prof Ebegbue Amadasun- 8 votes and Blessing Agbomhere - 5 votes and 41 invalid votes. The results were declared by the chairman of the Election Committee and governor of Katsina State, Alhaji Aminu Masari.

In the primaries of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Osagie Ize-Iyamu won the primaries by a total of 584 votes to emerge winner, beating his closest rival, Matthew Iduoriyekwemwen, who scored 91 votes, to come a distant second. The other candidate, Mr Solomon Edebiri polled 38 votes to come third. The primaries was held at the Lawn Tennis Court of the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium. The PDP Primaries Election Committee was chaired by the Governor of Ebonyi State, Dave Umahi.

Controversially, a faction of the PDP, led by Ali Modu Sheriff, held another its own primaries where Matthew Iduoriyekwemwen emerged as the nominated candidate for the governorship election on the PDP platform.

The two rival factions of the divided Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) each submitted their respective Edo State gubernatorial candidates to INEC, however, INEC did not accept candidates from either faction. It was the intervention by a court order that declared Osagie Ize-Iyamu as the true and bonafide candidate for the PDP.

List of Candidates for the Edo State Governorship election:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>NAME OF CANDIDATE</th>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>QUALIFICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>GOVERNOR</td>
<td>ISHAKA PAUL OFEMILE (COMRADE)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>HND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DEPUTY</td>
<td>EWEMADE NANCY OSAGIE</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>WASC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>GOVERNOR</td>
<td>ANDREW IGWEMOH</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>ACD</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>WASC, (Chart. Inst. of cost &amp; Mngt Accountants of Pakistan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DEPUTY</td>
<td>OSAGIE EGHAREVBA ANDREW</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>ACD</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>B.SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>GOVERNOR</td>
<td>COSMOS IRABOR</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>ACPN</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>LLB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DEPUTY</td>
<td>FREDRICK PARKER ODEGUA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>ACPN</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>WASC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>GOVERNOR</td>
<td>GODWIN NOGHEGHASE OBASEKI</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>APC</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>MBA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DEPUTY</td>
<td>PHILIP SHAIBU</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>GOVERNOR</td>
<td>ONAIWU OSAZE OSARO</td>
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<td>APGA</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>GOVERNOR</td>
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<td>NAME OF CANDIDATE</td>
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<td>AGE</td>
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<td>-----</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DEPUTY</td>
<td>EKPOROTOMWEN SMILE UYI</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>B.SC</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>GOVERNOR</td>
<td>TOBI ADENIYI</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>ID</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>LLB</td>
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<td>KOWA</td>
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<td>LP</td>
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<td>B.SC</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DEPUTY</td>
<td>JANE OSAGIE</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>LP</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>B.A (ED), MSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>GOVERNOR</td>
<td>ORONSAYE RICHARD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>MPPP</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>WASC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DEPUTY</td>
<td>OMIRIJE EHINOR</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>MPPP</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>GOVERNOR</td>
<td>PETERS OSARAWU OMORAGBON</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NCP</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>PGD</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DEPUTY</td>
<td>AHMED HARUNA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NCP</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>WAEC</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>GOVERNOR</td>
<td>UKONGA FRANK ONAIW</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NNPP</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>ITFA (MBA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DEPUTY</td>
<td>EMODOGO DORCAS EWEHA</td>
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<td>NNPP</td>
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<td>SSCE</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>GOVERNOR</td>
<td>AKHALAMHE AMIEMENOGHENA</td>
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<td>PDC</td>
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<td>B.SC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DEPUTY</td>
<td>AIYANATOR EFOSA OSAROBO</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>PDC</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>GOVERNOR</td>
<td>IZE-IYAMU OSAROBO</td>
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<td>JOHN EHIBHATOMAN YAKUBU</td>
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<td>GOVERNOR</td>
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<td>PPA</td>
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<td>SSCE</td>
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<td>DEPUTY</td>
<td>OSAYOMORE CLEMENT OSAZEE</td>
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<td>GOVERNOR</td>
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<td>B.SC</td>
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<td>DEPUTY</td>
<td>ISAAC P.E. OSHA</td>
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<td>SDP</td>
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<td>WAEC, DIPLOMA IN MKTG</td>
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<td>ADVISER SHADRACH NOWAMAGBE EFogie</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>UPP</td>
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<td>NECO</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2.3 Election Campaign

The election campaign of the political parties in Edo State was very heated. Inflammatory language, religious, ethnic and sectional sentiments were used and overshadowed issue-based campaigning. Violations of campaign regulations were reported in some parts of the State with complaints of the ruling party misusing the power of incumbency to stifle the opposition.

The Governorship candidates of the main political parties actively canvassed for votes all over the State, conducting grassroots campaigns and rallies at State and LGA level. However, there were reports of obstruction of opposition parties in their campaigning such as denial of venues and monopoly of choice locations for campaign banners and posters. For example in the capital, Benin City, the opposition parties claimed that public places were not made accessible to them as well as destruction of campaign posters and edifices.

The PDP candidate also alleged that the Governor denied the PDP campaign access to the state-owned Edo State Broadcasting Service (EBS) but the State Commissioner for information later denied the allegation. The Commissioner contended that the PDP had deliberately failed to invite the station to cover its programmes.

To douse the tension caused by the election campaigning of the parties, INEC organized an enlightenment workshop to remind party leaders of the sanctions applicable and the need to maintain decorum during the election campaign.

2.4 Preparation by INEC

After the issuance of the Notice of Poll, INEC began activities for Edo elections by conducting the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR), which was held 22nd June 2016 and ended 26th June 2016. Distribution of Permanent Voter Cards was held from 2nd September 2016 to 4th September 2016. INEC stated that 135, 877 voters were registered during the CVR, including transfer requests. Also, the Commission noted that over 400,000 PVCs remained uncollected in the days leading to the election.

Ahead of the election, INEC carried out distribution of sensitive materials to the various Local Government Areas in the State; the distribution was organized and swiftly done with the involvement of the police and party agents.

Distribution of election materials to polling officials at the various Registration Area Centres (RACs) commenced early on the eve of the elections. Some polling officials reported receiving materials after midnight while some others received their materials earlier. Some reports from the RACs stated that security personnel were not initially available to take materials to
some RACs in Oredo and Ikpoba-Okha LGAs.

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. The Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in Edo State, Sam Olumekun provided a detailed plan of INEC’s activities leading up to the elections and its commitment to sticking to the scheduled timeline. For the first time, voters in Edo State will get accredited and vote simultaneously.

INEC reported deploying about eighteen thousand, five hundred and eleven (18,511) personnel for the Governorship election in Edo State.

The Commission also stated that it deployed the following officials for the election:

a) One Returning Officer;

b) 18 Local Government Area Collation Officers;

c) 192 Registration Area Collation Officers;

d) 263 Supervisory Presiding Officers;

e) 2,627 Presiding Officers;

f) 12,036 Assistant Presiding Officers (APOs) I, II and III;

g) 2,530 Assistant Presiding Officers (VP);

h) 728 Reserve APOs;

i) 19 LGA Supervisors + 1 HQ Reserve; and

j) 97 RA Cluster Supervisors + HQ 1 Reserve (2RAs/Supervisor).

INEC commenced the recruitment of ad-hoc staff by June 2016 and the targets were mainly lecturers and students from higher learning institutions as well as youth corps members.

With respect to the Smart Card Readers, the Commission stated that the card readers had been reconfigured for the Edo State election which was to ensure a hitch-free accreditation process. The Commission also ensured that the deployment and configuration processes were transparent in order to convince the public of their readiness for the elections.

In response to ceaseless complaints about the state of the RACs and the inhumane treatment of corps members in previous elections (e.g. corps members slept on chairs or in dimly lit rooms without security or beds and exposed to dangerous situations), INEC provided tents for them in this election to protect the corps members from external elements.

Despite the arrangements made by INEC towards the September 10th 2016 date for the governorship elections, there were various calls from different quarters seeking the postponement of the election. Initially, some groups complained about the date of the election on the ground that the said date conflicted with the date for a West African Examinations Council’s exam (Physics Practical) slated for the same day. It was later reported that the examination body had agreed to make special arrangements for the candidates of the examination that were affected and hence the election could still go on.

Afterwards, the Police and the Department of State Security issued a statement that due to the impending Sallah Celebrations and the security threats received on some States in
Nigeria including Edo State, there were unable to deploy security for the election if it held. The DSS and Police therefore urged INEC to rethink the conduct of the polls on Saturday, September 10th 2016. INEC, in its official statement, had no option but to accept the security advice of the security agencies and the election was postponed to Wednesday, September 28th 2016. The postponement was highly contentious and took on political overtones, with many opining that the ruling party was not prepared for the elections.

The Situation Room also waded into the issue and released a statement on Thursday, 8th September 2016, expressing its disappointment at the postponement and the role of the Police and DSS in coercing INEC to postpone the election. The postponement undermined public confidence in the conduct of the Governorship poll as well as the independence of INEC to perform its constitutional duties.

2.5 Preparation by Security Agencies

INEC and the Nigerian Police through a collaborative effort are part of the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), which the Edo State Commissioner of Police serves as Chairman, and the INEC REC of Edo State serves as the Vice-Chairman. In its consultative meeting, the committee declared solid assurances that adequate logistic and security arrangements have been put in place for prospective voters to exercise their civic duties when the Edo State governorship election holds.

At the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security meeting held at the Commission’s headquarters in Abuja before the first scheduled date of the election, the Edo State Commissioner of Police said about 22,603 policemen will be deployed for the election. This will be separate from several officers to be deployed by other security agencies.

2.6 State of Security

The campaign environment was extremely competitive and tense, leading to security agencies highlighting issues surrounding a border breach and a barrage of weapons flooding the streets. Citizens reported incidents of violence by political operatives in some parts of the state leading to a loss of confidence in the ability of the security agencies to adequately provide protection during the elections.

There were reports of threats and counter-threats by traditional rulers during the campaign period. One instance was where a Monarch warned the voters in Ovia South-West LGA of Edo State that anyone who had intentions of voting against the APC candidate in the governorship elections should drop the idea. The traditional ruler further threatened that anybody who voted against the candidate, Godwin Obaseki will be visited with an ancestral curse.

2.7 Voter Education

In preparation for the elections, voters in Edo State expressed disappointment in the current communication processes and ineffective voter education campaign. They argued that voter education had now been inadvertently outsourced to Civil Society Organizations as there was an ineffective communication system for timely and reliable two-way information flow between the Commission and voters.
3.1 Structure & Observation Methodology

3.1.1 Structure & Set-up
On Election Day, the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room set-up the Election Day Situation Room as the hub of receiving field reports and providing analysis on the election being observed. The Election Day Situation Room is divided into three components for its Election Day observation, which include:

(a) Analyst Room;
(b) Technical Room; and
(c) Field Observers.

The reports received from the field first gets into the Situation Room through staff in the Technical Room, who are assigned to specific LGAs and Senatorial Districts. It is processed and then channeled to the room of expert analysts. The information from the field is disseminated to the public through the Situation Room’s social media platforms as well as pasted on the information board mounted on the walls.

All of the information received by experts are then discussed and analysed and where necessary follow-up actions are taken in matters requiring intervention with identified election stakeholders including the police and other security agencies, INEC etc. The analysis of the Situation Room was sometimes also followed-up by the issuing of press statements addressing specific concerns.

The reports that are received from the field observers across the State and escalated are based on specific categories to the relevant institutions. Issues relating to the electoral process were escalated to the Electoral Commission and security issues were escalated to the police.

3.1.2 Deployment of Observers
The Situation Room deployed its observers across the three senatorial districts of Edo State and eighteen local government areas (LGAs).

In Edo State, observers spent a considerable amount of time at the polling unit and timeously reported incidents from the polling unit to the Situation Room in order to escalate the issues to the relevant institutions in real time on Election Day. Observers were also present at the State collation centres to observe accurate tracking and collation of the results. To ensure real-time dissemination and escalation of incidents, the observers sent in reports about the electoral process based on specific categories to the Situation Room in order for the team to map, verify and escalate. This process improved the conduct of the elections as INEC and the police easily deployed to the areas that had been flagged.
The breakdown of the Situation Room’s deployment of field observers in Edo State is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDO NORTH</th>
<th>EDO CENTRAL</th>
<th>EDO SOUTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LGA</td>
<td>NO.</td>
<td>LGA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Akoko Edo</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1. Esan Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Etsako East</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2. Esan North-East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Etsako West</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4. Esan West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Owan East</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5. Igueben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Owan West</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were also 30 roving observers from the Situation Room assigned to different LGA’s.

3.2 Accreditation/Voting Process

Election officials and materials arrived at 80% of the polling stations early, thus commencing the process in a timely fashion. Only few cases of rejection of PVCs by the card reader was noted by observers. However, there were instances of card readers not authenticating fingerprints of voters, and consequently the resort to incident forms. Some polling officials did not use the incident forms when the card readers could not authenticate fingerprints.

INEC commenced accreditation and voting on time in about 80% of the polling units across the state. Reports from observers in the field and voters indicated early arrival of electoral officials and materials. Officials had started setting up and providing instructions to voters on the queue by 8:30 am. However, there were some reports of delay in opening of polls in some units across the state with several polling units not commencing accreditation on time. These incidents were escalated to INEC by the team at the Situation Room.

The performance of the Smart Card Readers was marred by reports of widespread failure of verification of the fingerprints, which slowed down the process in some polling units. There were reports of collaboration between INEC personnel, party agents and facilitation by the police to encourage vote buying by setting polling stations in such a manner as to breach secrecy of the polls and encourage inducement.

3.3 Conduct of Voters

Voter turnout was generally low across polling units. With the wanton vote buying practice, more voters rushed to the polls. Vote buying fuelled turnout. However the voter turnout based on accredited voters was 32.73%, which is the recorded average in previous elections in Edo state. This low turnout could be traced to a steady apathetic nature of voters in Edo state.

3.4 Conduct of Party Agents

Most polling units visited had two or more party agents present. Out of the 19 political parties that fielded candidates for the elections, observers noticed only representation from APC, APGA, LP and PDP.
It was observed that a lot of the party agents at the various polling units acted inappropriately and were engaged in the "vote buying process". The Agents were engaged in this unlawful activity in the full glare of INEC officials, voters and the police. In some isolated instances, officers of the police force actively facilitated this practice and were complicit; they did nothing to stop the vote buying and shielded the agents distributing money to the voters.

Also, it was observed that some party agents at several polling units disrupted the election process during the setting up of polling cubicles/Ballot boxes. Rather than allow the Electoral Officers perform their statutory duties unhindered, they demanded that the cubicles & ballot boxes be positioned to enable them monitor ballot casting in their vote-buying scheme. The action of the agents greatly undermined the secrecy of voting during the election.

In a few polling units it was noted that agents were violent and aggressive either towards INEC officials who wanted to be impartial in their work, or voters who did not want to be influenced or observers accredited to observe the election process.

3.5 Collation Process
The polls closed early in most polling stations, which was credited to the simultaneous accreditation and voting process. Polling unit collation followed the close of polls, ward collation and LGA collation completed the electoral process.

Collation of results remained a problem in the electoral process. Despite the early close of polls, ward collated results were not released early which prompted speculation as to the reasons for the delay. Observers noted that security officials did not transport some polling officials to the collation centres, which disrupted the smooth operation of collation.

3.6 Election Day Environment/Security
In most polling units, security personnel arrived on time before accreditation and voting. There was heavy police presence in Edo State, especially Benin City, before the elections and on Election Day. However, despite the presence of security personnel at polling units they were unable to address vote buying in all locations visited. The security agents were nonchalant about vote buying and facilitated this act. There were reports of party agents and known members of political parties giving the security agents money and in turn, the police protected the party agents distributing money to voters. They acted as facilitators of this act and were complicit.

Several police officers complained about the lack of out of station allowances for services rendered, some blamed the facilitation of vote buying as a result of their lack of allowances.
4.1 Final Vote Tabulation and Declaration of Results

Before the declaration of the final result, there was palpable tension and anxiety among the political parties and their supporters. The final results were declared on 29th September 2016, a day after the election. The Chief Returning Officer Professor Kayode Soremekun declared the results, Vice-Chancellor of the Federal University of Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State.

There was a total of 55,322 vote cancellations in the State. The margin between the APC candidate and the PDP candidate was 66,310 votes. APC won the North and South Senatorial Districts while PDP won the central senatorial district.

Percentage received by APC per senatorial district:
- Edo North- 36%
- Edo South- 48%
- Edo Central- 16%

Percentage received by PDP per senatorial district:
- Edo North- 27%
- Edo South- 49%
- Edo Central- 24%

The following are the LGAs and number of polling units within the LGAs that were affected by cancellations:
- Akoko Edo (4 PUs)
- Egor (1 PU)
- Esan Central (3 PUs)
- Esan North East (3 PUs)
- Esan South East (9 PUs)
- Esan West (2 PUs)
- Etsako Central (1 PU)
- Etsako East (6 PUs)
- Etsako West (14 PUs)
- Igueben (2 PUs)
- Ikpoba Okha (4 PUs)
- Oredo (8 PUs)
- Ohionmwon (11 PUs)
- Ovia North East (3 PUs)
- Owan East (5 PUs)
- Owan West (3 PUs)
- Uhunmwode (3 PUs)

The following were the reasons for cancellation of the results and the LGAs affected:
- Over voting- Akoko Edo, Etsako East, Etsako West, Esan Central, Esan West, Esan North East, Esan South East, Igueben, Ikpoba Okha, Ohionmwon, Uhunmwode
- Violence- Etsako West, Esan West, Ikpoba Okha, Oredo, Ohionmwon, Ovia North
East, Uhunmwode
• Non usage of card readers- Esan North East, Egor, Uhunmwode
• Ballot box snatching- Esan South East
• Damaged election materials- Igubeen

CANCELLATIONS PER SENATORIAL DISTRICT:
• Edo North- 22,968
• Edo Central- 14,390
• Edo South- 17,964

INVALID VOTES:
All the LGAs were affected by invalid votes during the electoral process. Below is the number of invalid votes per senatorial district:
• Edo North- 7,951
• Edo South- 17,695
• Edo Central- 5,299

4.2 Reactions of Candidates/Parties
The PDP rejected the result before it was announced following information from its agents. While INEC announced the full result about 3.30pm, the PDP pronounced their rejection about 11am. Rejecting the result at a media briefing, Edo State PDP chairman, Chief Dan Orbih, and Ize-Iyamu expressed surprise at the turnout, saying the results did not reflect the figures collated at the polling centres and wards.

On APC’s part, it applauded the outcome of the election and declared that the governorship election was free and fair. It also stated that INEC had one of its finest outings in the Edo governorship election as it was not declared inconclusive.

Nevertheless, in some part of the States especially in Benin-City, there were series of protests by PDP supporters, who took to the streets of Benin City to condemn the result of the election which they said did not reflect the wishes of Edo voters. The protest started at the Ize-Iyamu campaign office on Akpakpava Road and moved to several parts of the Benin metropolis, such as First East Circular Road, Second East Circular Road, Dawson Road and New Benin, before returning to the campaign office, where the protesters regrouped. The protesters carried placards with inscriptions such as “INEC is biased, not independent”, “Return our stolen mandate”, “Police conspired with INEC to rig the election”, and “Return our stolen mandate to Ize-Iyamu”.

4.3 Resolution of Conflicts
Notwithstanding the claims and counter claims, the PDP said it had resolved to challenge the outcome of the Edo State governorship election at the election petitions tribunal, describing it as a fraud. The party accused INEC of complicity.

The 2016 Edo State Governorship election was held against the background of a postponement that had cited security as a concern. The postponement fuelled perception in the public mind of a likelihood of bias. However, the atmosphere surrounding the election was largely peaceful and devoid of any major acts of violence, which was a concern for several citizens of Edo State and election observers.
While the process and conduct of the elections went smoothly, a major weak link in the conduct of elections in Nigeria again manifested – the collation of results – and this raised questions over the transparency of this particular process in the election.
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following from Situation Room’s observations, the following recommendations are being made:

**INEC:**
While generally poll opened early there were still instances of delayed poll opening, INEC will need to ensure that polls open early and at uniform times across all polling units in future stand alone or general elections. Election personnel who fail to comply with times set for opening of polls should be held to account and disciplined by INEC.

The performance of the Smart Card Readers was restricted to the verification of the Permanent Voters Card as there were reports of widespread failure of authentication of the fingerprints, which seemed to slow down the process in some polling units. There were reports of seeming collaboration between INEC personnel, security agents and parties to encourage vote buying by setting polling stations in such a manner as to breach secrecy of the polls and encourage inducement.

Generally, there were large crowds of voters around the polling units who were able to vote without fear or intimidation, although incidents of vote buying by both major contending political parties cast a shadow of interference with the exercise of free will by voters.

**COLLATION OF VOTES**
Collation of votes was a major weak link in the conduct of the Edo State Governorship elections and marred the credibility of what was a well-organised election by INEC. Although voting ended early, the collation process was very slow and had to be suspended during the late evening, resuming the next morning. In the interval, there was no way of confirming or verifying the integrity of election materials, ballots and results. The gaps and challenges with collation of results certainly raises issues of transparency and integrity of the ballot and elections that INEC will need to resolve if elections in Nigeria is to be accepted as credible.

INEC needs to introduce a more effective network of collating votes and timeously too in order to avoid questions about the integrity of its collation process. Expanding the use of technology in this regard may prove to be helpful.
SECURITY:
The synergy and collaboration between the different security agencies through ICCES needs to be strengthened. INEC needs to take the lead in determining security needs and deployment of security personnel for the election. If needed, legal authority for this should be established or created. In addition welfare of security personnel needs to be adequately provided.

POLITICAL PARTIES:
There were concerns of widespread inducement and vote buying in which two of the major contending parties were cited. The vote buying also led to 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.

Candidates and their agents will need to be held to account for breach of election guidelines and laws, particularly on the question of vote buying, violence and other election day malfeasances.
Worries over Vote Buying: Agents monitoring Voting?

INEC official on election duty directing Voters
Cross section of voters waiting to cast their votes in Edo State.

Analysis time at the Situation Room in Edo State.
The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room) comprising more than seventy Civil Society Organisations, is in Benin-City to observe the Edo Governorship Election.

Situation Room expresses disappointment at reports that the Nigeria Police and Directorate of State Security (DSS) have advised INEC to postpone the Edo Governorship election scheduled for Saturday, 10th September 2016.

Situation Room considers this advice as a gratuitous and unconstitutional interference in the independence of INEC. The advice is in clear violation of S.160 (2) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), which forbids any person or authority from giving directives or seeking to control INEC – it being an independent body.

It is surprising that the Police and DSS who are part of the Inter Agency Consultative Committee on Elections Security (ICCES) together with INEC, did not formally brief INEC before issuing this contentious statement, to enable all key stakeholders review whatever security challenges the security services may claim to have arisen. The “advice” by these security agencies has undermined public confidence in the conduct of the Edo State Governorship poll. INEC now faces a more challenging task of assuring all parties that a revised poll can be properly organized within a constitutionally stipulated time frame.

We call on the Police, DSS, and all security agencies to take note of their role and limitations within elections and the inter-agency co-ordination arrangements that have been developed over several years. All elections must demonstrate the highest possible commitment from security services to support INEC in completing its constitutional role of organising credible
elections that can inspire continued public confidence.

Situation Room expresses its disappointment at the inability of security agencies to take charge and provide security to citizens and to INEC to enable it conduct free and fair elections. The present situation appears contrived and threatens to truncate the democratic process in Nigeria.

Additionally, the huge material resources committed to the preparations for the elections by INEC, CSOS and other stakeholders, appears to have been flushed down the drain by the action of the Police and the DSS.

Situation Room believes that INEC has the Constitutional powers to proceed with its plans to conduct the Edo State Governorship elections as scheduled and calls on President Muhammadu BUHARI to call the Police and security services to order, as well as to give their support to INEC to deliver on its mandate of conducting free and fair Governorship elections in Edo State as scheduled. Situation room implores INEC to be guided by the provisions of the Electoral Act in relation to postponement, which states that all reasons must be cogent and verifiable.

Finally, Situation Room calls on the people of Edo State to remain calm and vigilant and be ready to protect their constitutional rights to vote!

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), Enough is Enough Nigeria, WANGONET, Partners for Electoral Reform, JDPC and Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth & Advancement (YIAGA). Others are Development Dynamics, Human Rights Monitor, Election Monitor, Reclaim Naija, Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, CITAD, CISLAC and several other CSOs numbering more than seventy.

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SITUATION ROOM EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER EDO GOVERNORSHIP ELECTIONS

Issued: Thursday, 8th September 2016 – 10:00PM

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room) is deeply dismayed at the Statement made by INEC postponing the Gubernatorial election in Edo State. We join the pain of the good people of Edo State over this unwarranted assault on democracy. This is part of a disturbing trend in the erosion of public trust in our public officers, public institutions as well a growing skepticism about the general direction of our democracy under this administration.

In its Statement, INEC said that it finally received late Thursday evening (8th September), official communication from the Police and the DSS drawing its attention on the need to postpone the election citing threats of terrorist activities in Edo State and States of the Federation. INEC therefore, based on this fait accompli from security agencies felt compelled to postpone the elections to Wednesday, 28th September 2016.

This unfortunate chain of events raises some serious questions about a possible breach of the constitutionally guaranteed independence of INEC, the growing over-reach of Security Apparatchiks who effectively in this election have forced their own electoral timetable on INEC, the good people of Edo State and by extension citizens of this country.

The Situation Room believes that at the heart of this unfortunate episode is the issue of impunity and a growing disdain by public officials for due process and rule of law as well as contempt for democratic processes, based on the near certainty that there will be no consequences for their actions.

In an earlier statement, the Situation Room called on President Buhari to investigate this incident by ordering a credible investigation of the Police and the DSS action in this matter, and bring into account all persons responsible for the violation of the laws and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The Situation Room still maintains that there is no cogent and verifiable reason for the gratuitous ‘advice’ issued by the Police and DSS to INEC. INEC was thus put into an impossible catch 22: go ahead with the elections and be blamed for the consequences of possibly contrived violence, or as is the present situation, postpone the elections and dash the hope of millions of Edo citizens primed and ready to cast their votes and fulfill their rights as democratic citizens.

This Situation Room believes that this postponement for whatever reasons, sends foreboding signs that our democratic principles and electoral practice is again under threat from non-democratic forces that are at once familiar and yet new. We can argue that since the hard fought elections of last year, we have simply had a change in government but not a change in the conduct of public officials, which sometimes border on impunity and recklessness.
We call on all actors and stakeholders to understand that the independence of INEC is not negotiable and it is at the core of our democratic existence, peace and order. We call on all the political parties in Edo State to prepare for the new date for elections and to conduct themselves in a peace and orderly manner.

We also appeal to the good people of Edo state to be calm and law abiding ahead of the new date now fixed by INEC. The Situation Room also calls on the people of Edo State to remain vigilant and be ready to protect their constitutional rights to vote!

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), Enough is Enough Nigeria, WANGONET, Partners for Electoral Reform, JDPC, Stakeholders Democracy Network (SDN) and Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth & Advancement (YIAGA). Others are Development Dynamics, Human Rights Monitor, Election Monitor, Reclaim Naija, Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, CITAD, CISLAC and several other CSOs numbering more than seventy.

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

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

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, Centre for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD), 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.

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INTERIM STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE NIGERIA CIVIL SOCIETY SITUATION ROOM ON THE EDO STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER 2016

Issued: Thursday, 29th September 2016 – 2:00pm

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room) observed the Edo State Governorship election held Wednesday, 28th September 2016 and received field reports from its deployed observers and other election observer networks.

Accordingly, the Situation Room would like to make the following observations:

GENERAL OBSERVATION:

The election was held against the background of a postponement that had cited security as a concern. The postponement fuelled perception in the public mind of a likelihood of bias. However, the atmosphere surrounding the election was largely peaceful and devoid of any major acts of violence, which was a concern for several citizens of Edo State and election observers.

While the process and conduct of the elections went smoothly, a major weak link in the conduct of elections in Nigeria again manifested – the collation of results – and this raised questions over the transparency of this particular process in the election.

Turn out at the polls was impressive and voters generally were able to vote without fear or intimidation, although incidents of vote buying by both major contending political parties cast a shadow of interference with the exercise of free will by voters.

INEC:

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) made good effort to commence accreditation and voting early in most polling units across the State. Reports indicate early arrival of electoral officials and materials in most of the polling units in the State (as at 8:30 am officials had taken position in most polling units). However, there were reports of delay in opening of polls in some units across the State with several polling units not opening polls even up till about 9am and 10am. Electoral staff was generally professional and exhibited willingness to do their work.

The performance of the smart card readers was restricted to the authentication of the Permanent Voters Card as there were reports of widespread failure of verification of the fingerprints, which seemed to slow down the process in some polling units. However, there were reports of seeming collaboration between INEC personnel, security agents and parties to encourage vote buying by setting polling stations in such a manner as to breach secrecy of the polls and encourage inducement.

COLLABORATION OF VOTES:

Collation of votes was a major weak link in the conduct of the Edo State Governorship elections and marred the credibility of what was a well-organised election by INEC. Although voting ended early, the collation process was very slow and had to be suspended during
the late evening, resuming the next morning. In the interval, there was no way of confirming or verifying the integrity of election materials, ballots and results. The gaps and challenges with collation of results certainly raises issues of transparency and integrity of the ballot and elections that INEC will need to resolve if elections in Nigeria is to be accepted as credible.

The delays resulted in reports emanating from some Registration Area Centres and local governments of tampering with the votes. In Esan Central LGA, the Situation Room received reports of attempts to fiddle with the collation process by the inflation of voting figures in favour of a particular political party, after the process was concluded. In Oredo LGA – a largely urban area, the collation also progressed very slowly.

In addition to slow collation and the attendant challenges, there were reports from several local governments of security personnel not being available to protect ballot materials and to accompany electoral officials from the polling units to the Ward Collation Centres and of their being absent at the different Collation Centres. This led to incidents of political party thugs attacking electoral officials and destroying materials as was reported in Ikpoba-Oka LGA, which has about 340 polling units.

SECURITY:
Security agencies were present and commendably deployed personnel during accreditation and voting. Up to the point of arrival of materials, security personnel were very professional and courteous. However, there was lack of coordination among the different arms of security agencies and inability to caution vote buying at the polling units.

There seemed to have been a failure in the synergy between the security personnel and INEC and among security personnel on the field. This lack of synergy led to conflicting activities and as well, the absence of security at critical times of the election especially during the collation of results. Before the election, there were reports of materials that were unescorted in a few local governments areas particularly in Ward 6 in Orhionwon L.G.A.

Welfare of security agencies was also a huge concern for the Situation Room, as most security personnel who interacted with our observers mentioned that they had not be provided with payment of allowances or given logistics support to enable them effectively carry out their roles.

POLITICAL PARTIES:
There were concerns of widespread inducement and vote buying in which two of the major contending parties were cited. The vote buying also led to 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.

ELECTORATE:
Reports from observers indicate good turn out of voters in most of the polling units visited. Generally, voters were very patient and queued up to cast their votes. The atmosphere
surrounding the elections was largely peaceful with only few incidents of skirmishes reported. This was in contrast to fears created before the election that violence would be more prevalent.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**
Following from its observation of the Edo Governorship election, Situation Room will like to make the following preliminary recommendations:

1. **INEC:**
   a. Situation Room calls on INEC to show a greater determination to improve on the electoral process by better managing the collation of results. A situation where voting concludes at the polling units early during the day and collation begins so much late at night does not allow for transparency and credibility of the electoral process.
   
   b. In addition, INEC will need to take proactive steps to ensure that the secrecy of voting is protected and that political parties who buy votes are not placed in a position that they can verify the thumb printing of ballot papers.

2. **SECURITY SERVICES:**
There is an important need for revitalization of the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security to ensure synergy and delivery on results by the agencies. The deployment of security personnel also needs to be better handled. Most of the security personnel deployed for the elections complained of not being paid their allowances leading to their personally paying their way to attend to the important national duty of elections. Although they report of assurances of their allowances being paid, this situation is not good enough and should be avoided so that security personnel do not become even more prone to inducement by political interests.

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, Centre for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD), 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, Edo CSOs, CONGOs Edo State and several other CSOs numbering more than seventy.

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