

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

Issued: 4:00pm, Saturday 16 November 2019

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

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

Conclusion

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

SIGNED:

Esther Uzoma

Alternate Chair, Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room

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, Centre for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD), Nigeria Women Trust Fund, 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), RECHDI, WREP, CISLAC and several other CSOs numbering more than seventy.

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