

SITUATION ROOM INTERIM STATEMENT ON THE KOGI STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION 2019

Issued in Lokoja, Kogi State at 4:00pm: Saturday, 16th November 2019

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room is continuing to closely observe the ongoing Governorship and Senatorial elections in Kogi State holding today, Saturday 16 November 2019 and at this time will like to state as follows:

Logistics and commencement of poll: Reports from the field show that materials were deployed on time in several of the polling units across the State, with polls commencing at about 8.30am in about 80% of the polling units that we observed in Kogi State. There were however a few reports of delays in delivering of voting materials and consequent delay in voter turnout.

Situation Room commends INEC for their sensitivity towards People Living with Disability (PWDs), the elderly, pregnant and the nursing mothers. However, there was difficulty in accessing the voting point by the PWDs in Yagba East LGA PU 08 Unit 01.

Situation Room observed that INEC deployed 2015 Election Stamp Pads and Ballot Papers to PU 001-008, Dekina township in Dekina LGA of the State.

Attack on Electoral Observers: There are reports of attack on some observers. For instance, some observers with an International Non-Governmental Organization, Search for Common Ground, were attacked at Ganaja village in Ajaokuta LGA. There was also an attack by thugs in Lokogoma, Lokoja metropolis, during which an observer's phone was seized. It is observable that there seems to be unrestricted movement of political thugs in many parts of the State.

Conduct of security officials: At this time, Situation Room notes that there is a good presence of security officials at most of the polling units we observed in State. The conduct of the security officials in many PUs is commendable.

Vote Buying: Situation Room is receiving at this time, incidents of vote buying across the state, with a systematic approach by politicians. These occurred in about 60% of the polling stations where the Situation Room observed in the State. For instance, in Olomaboro LGA Ward ogugu polling unit 004 and 001, it was visible seeing politicians distributing N6,000 per person and in Ankpa LGA, Ward Abache in LGEA, polling unit 002, a person putting on a black T-shirt and a face cap with a candidate emblem, was seen sharing money to voters. In addition, in Adavi LGA, ward Kuroko polling unit 16, the party agent was seen thumb printing for some electorates, and they were given coupons to redeem their cash.

Electoral violence: The large presence of security officials, has not deterred thugs from instigating and perpetrating violence. In Ayetoro 1, PU 004 Ijimu LGA, there was incidents of ballot box snatching, whereby a politician came in with masked thugs who instantly snatched the ballot boxes. Furthermore, In Anyingba Dekina LGA, PU 003, 005, 009, 025, 026 etc, ballot boxes were snatched and some outrightly destroyed. In Ofu LGA Ochadamu ward, PU 008, 009, 010, 018 etc, ballot boxes were taken away by thugs. Similarly, in Ijumu LGA in Aiyetoroward 1, PU 004, thugs were seen snatching ballot boxes and a voter was shot.

In addition, in Lokoja LGA, ward A, PU 007, there was sporadic shooting behind Adankolo. There were also shootings at Aiyetoro in Ijimu LGA, Nagazi Farmland ward in Adavi, in Anyingba in Dekina LGA, and in Ochadamu ward in Ofu etc.

Conclusion: - Situation Room is calling on political parties and their representatives to exercise restraint and respect the Non-Violence Pact that they signed earlier this week. As the polls come to an end, and collation processes commence, we call on the INEC and the security personnel to be more vigilant and ensure that the process is transparent and not marred with violence.

SIGNED:

Dudu Manuga and Celestine Odo

For: 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, JDPC and YIAGA Africa. Others are Development Dynamics, Centre for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD), Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN), Stakeholder Democracy Network, Human Rights Monitor, Reclaim Naija, CITAD, Nigerian Women Trust Fund, Alliance for Credible Elections (ACE), CISLAC, and several other CSOs numbering more than seventy.