



FIRST INTERIM STATEMENT ON THE JULY 16, 2022 OSUN STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION BY THE CDD ELECTION ANALYSIS CENTRE (CDD-EAC)

With voting in the 16 July 2022 Osun State Governorship election already underway across the 30 Local Government Areas of the state, the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) through its Election Analysis Centre (EAC) has been closely observing the election. CDD-EAC deployed 300 trained and accredited observers who are currently collecting data on key aspects of the day's voting and voting related process. The objective of the CDD-EAC doing this is to determine through evidence based analysis, the credibility of the election in meeting and satisfying canons of electoral integrity under Nigerian laws and international codes and standards.

The observations that follow are based on preliminary findings of the conducts and procedures on the election day.

General Environment of the Election

The CDD-EAC notes the signing of the peace accord by thirteen out of the fifteen political parties taking part in the election and other measures aimed at ensuring the election is hitch free. The decision by the political actors to commit to an agreement, which enjoins them to do their part in ensuring a violence-free election is laudable. Although pockets of disagreements between party agents and INEC officials were reported by our observers in a few polling units, these were largely resolved. CDD-EAC similarly notes that in the build up to today's governorship election, a number of consultations and strategy sessions involving the Election Management Body and the relevant security agencies were held under the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES). These consultations were observed to have happened at both national and state level; added to this is the deployment of 21,000 police officers to the state. We hope these measures contribute to the peaceful conduct of the election.

INEC Preparedness and Deployment

Data from the CDD-EAC observers indicate that 97 percent of INEC officials had arrived at their polling units by 8:30am. It further shows that 79 percent of INEC poll officials addressed voters before the 8:30am official time of poll opening. CDD-EAC data indicates that in at least 92 percent of polling units observed critical election materials like ballot papers, Biometric Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) devices, results sheets, ballot boxes and the voter register were available for the conduct of the election - a marked improvement over the 83 percent recorded in Ekiti.

CDD-EAC notes that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) took some steps to address some of the gaps identified in the Ekiti State governorship election last month. INEC has embedded officials of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) in the INEC situation room in Osogbo to help address issues around deployment of personnel and movement of voting materials. The Commission similarly conducted mock accreditation exercises in Osogbo, Borife, Ede, and Egbedore to test the preparedness of the trained staff and the efficiency of the BVAS.

Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS)

The mock accreditation exercise carried out by INEC to ensure the readiness of the 5,306 BVAS machines appears to have worked, with CDD-EAC officials noting that there was a BVAS machine and compliance in 99% of the polling units visited, with two pollings units in Ife Central and Irepodun reporting the absence of BVAS machines at 9:30am.

Electoral Offences

CDD-EAC observers reported cases of political party agents campaigning, and canvassing for votes near the polling unit in 14 LGAs, which represents 9.6 percent of the polling units observed. These acts which contravene the provisions of the Electoral Act 2022 were mostly reported by observers in Ife Central, Odo Otin, Osogbo, Oriade and Irepodun. CDD-EAC observers also reported seeing unremoved campaign posters at some polling units, just as political party agents openly canvassed for votes.

Fake News

CDD-EAC Fake News Hub for the July 16, Osun State Governorship election has been closely watching online and offline spaces with the objective of tracking and fact-checking fake news and misinformation. A number of fake news stories, misleading captions for images, and the sharing of dead online links are being used by partisan actors to mislead voters or to possibly depress the vote in areas in which the political opposition is perceived to have some strengths. CDD-EAC fact-checkers have also documented claims and counter-claims by political actors over allegations of vote buying.

Using online tools, and a range of verification techniques, CDD-EAC fact-checkers have been working to independently fact-check online and offline misinformation capable of undermining voter confidence. One of the major fake news stories, which began trending as voters headed to the polls this morning, is the claim that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidate, Ademola Adeleke had been sacked by a court. CDD-EAC fact checkers verified and found this claim to be false. CDD-EAC fact-checkers also spotted a claim that one of the major opposition parties' candidates was asking voters to swear an oath that voters voted for him before he would pay them. CDD-EAC fact-checkers found nothing on the circulated image to lend credence to the claim. Our fact-checkers also noted that the image, which was circulated to make the claim, was taken at the point the candidate was casting his vote.

Conclusion

CDD-EAC observers will continue to keep a close watch on the election up till when voting ends, and counting and collation of results begin. Further updates on findings will be provided at the end of voting.

Signed:

Professor Adele Jinadu, Chair, CDD-EAC

For Media Enquiries, contact:

Mr. Damien Ihekoronye

Coordinator, Election Analysis Centre (CDD-EAC)

(+2348087185684 | idamian@cddwestafrica.org)