



**Pan
African Women
Projects**

AN INTERIM REPORT

OF

PAN AFRICAN WOMEN PROJECTS

AN

**ACCREDITED FOREIGN OBSERVER GROUP
FOR NIGERIAN 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS**

HELD :

**25TH FEBRUARY, 2023
& 18TH MARCH, 2023**

PAWP... "ONE PEOPLE, ONE VISION, ONE GOAL"

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INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION

INEC - HEADQUARTERS

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E-mail: commsecretary@inec.gov.ng

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY



INEC/DEPM/AOG/463/144

9th January, 2023

The Coordinator
Pan African Women Projects

ACCREDITATION TO OBSERVE THE GENERAL ELECTION SCHEDULED FOR 25TH FEBRUARY AND 11TH MARCH, 2023

Further to your application requesting to be accredited to observe the above named Election, I am pleased to convey the Commission's approval of your request.

2. As an accredited Observer Group, you will be allowed access to observe all electoral processes as outlined in the Commission's Reviewed Regulations and Guidelines for the conduct of elections (available at INEC website: www.inecnigeria.org).
3. Your organization is required to process the online submission of your field observers on State by State basis by completing Form EC14A(ii) online <http://observergroups.org> between 9th to 20th January, 2023. To enable you complete Form EC14A(ii) online, accredited observer groups are required to visit Election and Party Monitoring (EPM) department, INEC Headquarters, Maitama Abuja – during official working hours or call 08037867338 to obtain access code (Accreditation Number) and number of field observers to be deployed.
4. The accreditation of your Organization to observe the elections is without Financial obligations on the Commission. The field observers uploaded by your organization would be given Identity Cards and Information Kit. However, your accreditation may be withdrawn at any stage it is determined that your organization is violating the Code of Conduct for observers as contained in the Guidelines for Election Observation available on INEC website.
5. Your organization is expected to submit both the Synopsis of Group Observation Form (EC14B(II)) 72 hours after the elections to icc@inec.gov.ng and comprehensive report in HARD and SOFT COPIES to the Commission on or before 31st March, 2023.
6. The release of accreditation letters to your organization is subject to the completion of Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims, Assumption of Risk and Indemnity Agreement Form.
7. Please accept the Commission's best wishes and regards.

Rose Oriaran-Anthony
Secretary to the Commission

PREAMBLE

The 2023 general elections will have regional implications for West Africa, as successful elections within Nigeria can provide a positive electoral template in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region. Since 2020, the West African region has faced democratic backsliding, with the ECOWAS governments of Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso toppled by military juntas. A successful election in Nigeria could counter negative perceptions of governance within the region. Successful elections in Nigeria will also set a positive example for the continent, given they will be the first and largest African elections in 2023.

The Nigerian General Elections is very important to the entire continent of Africa as the outcome of every election held in Nigeria contribute positively and negatively to the social economic development in the continent. The lessons learnt in this election will translate to the peace of the nations in Africa.

ORGANIZATION

Pan African Women Projects is an international non governmental organization of African women from the fifty four (54) nations of Africa and the Diaspora. Our head office is situated in Johannesburg, South Africa and regional offices in the five (5) regions including Nigeria as the hub for West Africa. Our primary mission amongst others is to promote good governance and sustainable democracy in Africa through our developmental projects for women, youths and persons with disabilities in Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Pan African Women Projects is one of the foreign Observer missions accredited by Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) for the 2023 Nigeria General elections.

We have observed several elections in about seventeen (17) countries of Africa including Nigeria in the past.

We have a mission team comprising mainly women from various African nations that are already deployed to various states of Nigeria including the federal capital territory for election and observations deployed to various areas for election observation assignments.

For the 2023 General Elections our organization observed both Presidential /National Assembly Elections held on the 25th of February, 2023 and the Governorship /State House of Assembly elections held on the 18th March,2023 in sixteen (16)States in Nigeria and our reports is based on the States our teams were physically present.

PREPARATION

As African Women, we are keenly interested in ensuring a credible successful 2023 Nigeria general election more especially because of the good relevance and the place of Nigeria in the leadership of Africa and its people.

It is a common knowledge that a good leadership and strong sustainable democracy in Nigeria will ensure good leadership for Africa as a whole. Hence, our observation mission.

- 1- In 2021, we carried out voters' registration drive throughout the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria with one state each in every of the geopolitical zones of Nigeria. This from our studies yielded incredible good results as we used the opportunity to assuage voters' apathy which was more of the cases among the citizens in various zones.
- 2- Also, in 2022, we carried out PVC COLLECTION DRIVE in two states each of the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria with Akwa Ibom and Rivers states respectively for the South-South zone, Ebonyi and Owerri states respectively for the South-East zone, Kano and Sokoto states respectively for the North -West zone, Adamawa and Bauchi states respectively for the North East and also Oyo and Lagos states respectively for the South West.

This also was a huge success as we observed great zeal and desire of Nigerians to participate in the 2023 general elections.

All these we did in partnership with the Independent national electoral commission (INEC) of Nigeria especially the gender and inclusivity department.

At this point, we want to sincerely and greatly appreciate the leadership of the Independent national electoral commission of Nigeria(INEC), Professor Mahmud Yakubu and the entire department of the commission especially the gender and inclusivity for the unwavering supports that made our work very easy. We also appreciate the various security agencies that worked tirelessly to ensure our safety by providing all the intelligence and protection needed to carry out our onerous duties.

We are most grateful to the gentleman and ladies of the press for their immeasurable contributions too.

DEPLOYMENT OF PERSONEL

We had recruited about three hundred and eighty (380) non partisan Nigerians as short term observers and Twenty (20) long term observers across the sixteen (16) states of Nigeria and the federal capital territory.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS AT PRESIDENTIAL / NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS.

A. ARRIVAL OF MATERIALS

Generally across the country materials arrived late to many polling units during the Presidential/National Assembly Elections. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) still depends on the old method of deploying personnel and materials to polling units and this causes serious delay in the process. It would be great in future, if INEC could consider using ‘**drone**’ to deploy some key materials to centers and allow Presiding Officers/Assistant Presiding Officers to head straight to their respective centers ahead of time to commence accreditation on time.

I. LAGOS STATE

As of 10.20am, INEC officials had yet to arrive at some polling units in Ikorodu, Lagos. Several voters expressed frustration over the delayed commencement of the voting exercise.

Also, the inability of the road transporters to meet up with their contract in conveying election materials as reported by our observers delayed the arrival of INEC officials at polling unit 019, Ita Aro Square, Àga/Ijimu ward in Ikorodu, Lagos.

Also, many residents in the Lekki area of Lagos State trooped out in their numbers to cast their votes on Saturday but the late arrival of INEC officials and materials delayed the process. As of 11am, electoral officers and equipment were yet to arrive in the area.

II. IMO STATE

In Imo State, it was reported that INEC officials were yet to arrive at some polling units in the state even after the voting time.

As at 3.27pm, INEC officials were yet to arrive at all five voting wards in Egbema community in the Ohaji/Egbema Local Government Area of Imo State.

III. ENUGU STATE

Meanwhile, a large turnout of voters was recorded across Enugu, even as the late arrival of election materials characterized the election.

IV. AKWA IBOM STATE

Generally across the 31 LGA, materials arrived in many polling units we visited late between 930am and 1.30pm.

At Aka Community RAC centre in Uyo we observed that after materials were distributed to the Ad hoc staff the RAC technician had another training session with all the APO 1 in the hall on the BIVAS that took another 30 to 45minutes at this RAC centre .This also delayed the Ad-hoc staff from departing to their polling units on time. As at 1125am some vehicles were still seen waiting for the security personnel.

We also observed late departure of materials from RAC centers to polling units in OKOI ITA in Ibiono Ibom LGA, RAC centre at LGA council premises in Mkpatt Enin had the same issue .

V. BAUCHI STATE

Our observers also reported that materials didn't arrive many polling units early. In Alkaleri central primary school polling unit accreditation and voting started late.

Also, in Boogoro, Damban, Darazo LGA materials arrived polling units late.

VI. NASARRAWA STATE

Late arrival of materials characterized the election in some wards in local governments like Karu, Lafia, Awe and Akwanga. Thugs were used by politicians to stop INEC officials from moving materials to designated polling units at early hours .

J. Capacity of INEC Ad-hoc Staff:

The inability of some of the Corps members deployed as INEC Ad-Hoc Staff (Presiding Officers & Assistant Presiding Officers) at the polling units to effectively and efficiently manage the polling units and handle the BVAS is an area the Commission should look into for future elections. Observations in some centers shows that POs & APOs were struggling with the BVAS despites training.

I. RIVERS STATE

In Khana LGA ballot papers belonging to Ikwerre LGA was brought to Khana LGA' This incidence caused much unrest in the community among the youths as they took their complain to the INEC office delaying the entire voting process.

II. AKWA IBOM STATE

For example, at Ward 1, Unit 15, that is, Offot Jubilee Primary School in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, the PO and his team mistakenly took BVAS meant for Unit 16 to this polling unit and as such the system could not accredit the voters in the polling units and there was no election.

In Ikot Okoro Primary School in Essien Udim voters were voting without the senatorial ballot paper.

C. Vote Buying and Lobbying:

Sadly, some party members and their agents still engages in election day lobbying and vote buying by getting account details of some uninformed voters with the promise to make transfer. Inducement was done across party lines.

I. KADUNA STATE

In Tudan Wada, Zaria party agents induced female voters with N1,000 and even food items to vote for their parties and this activities caused so much distractions in the polling units and delayed the voting processes.

III. KANO STATE

Vote buying was recorded by different political parties in the areas of Kano Municipal, Gezawa, Nassarawa, Tarauni, Fagge, Kabo, Rano, Bunkure, Dambatta, Minjibir, Kura, Kiru, Gwale, Dala, Bebeji as reported by our observers deployed to the State.

The majority of the people induced were mostly women seen collecting wrappers, foodstuffs, detergents, sachet water, Awara and others items to cast their votes.

IV. FCT

Incidences of vote buying in FCT were recorded mostly by our observers in the area councils outside Abuja Municipal Area Council. For instance in Abaji, Kwali, Bwari and Gwagwalada party agents were seen sharing food items to women on the field. Many voted and went to write their names and account numbers for transfers.

J. Technology:

The BIVAS is one of the landmark introductions by INEC into the election process in Nigeria. But it is without its own shortfalls. The speed at which BIVAS processes information and the challenges of network connectivity is what INEC should seriously look at. Across many of the polling units visited and observed, out of the registered voters, the BIVAS was only able to verify one third of the voters at most centers 3 hours after it has been deployed (9am -12noon). Also at this election between 12 noon and 3pm the speed of the BIVAS was very slow which made voters to vote into the night and many casted their votes the following day.

I. EKITI STATE

In ward 10, unit 004 IKESAN IJAN there was a BIVAS breakdown, inability of BIVAS to capture some voters caused rancour by impatient voters, some voters wanted to disrupt the process because, BIVAS could not capture their face & finger.

II. AKWA IBOM STATE

In ward 4 unit 13 in Ibiono LGA in Akwa Ibom State voters were disenfranchised because of the malfunctioned BIVAS.As at 415pm only 65 out of 800 registered voters were able to vote.

III. EBONYI STATE

Here the Presiding Officer in Ward 3, units 019 OHAUKWU LGA said he couldn't transmit result because the Commission didn't provide data for that purpose.

Again in Central School Ezzangbo IKWO LGA many voters were disenfranchised as the BIVAS couldn't recognize their PVCs and every attempt failed.

IV. RIVERS STATE

At the trailer park polling unit in ELEME LGA the materials arrived at 12:15pm . On our arrival at the unit at 1.30pm the voters were so upset with the functionality of the BIVAS as the Presiding Officer there was frustrated with the speed of the BIVAS and complained that the BIVAS was failing which provoked the voters that had started queuing as early as 8:00am.

Also In River State, voters in some polling units especially those around Wimpey Junction, Rumuepirikom, Port Harcourt, lamented as the BVAS failed to accredit them

V. DELTA STATE

At Ward 9, Unit 3, Okpanam, in the Oshimili North Local Government Area, there were complaints about the poor state of the BIVAS at the commencement of the accreditation.

A voter in the ward, Donatus Alabike, said, “There are some issues with BIVAS. The BVAS only recognised alphabets from A to N and didn’t recognise letters O to Z.

E. VIOLENCE /INTIMIDATIION

I. IMO STATE:

In Imo generally, there were voters intimidations, and violence across the 27 local government area of the state . The local government area with high record of voters intimidations and violence includes Ohaji-egbema, oguta, Orlu, Oru west, Oru East, Okigwe, Njaba, Orsu, Ideato north, Ideato south Ikeduru, Mbaitoli, Onimo, Ahaizu Mbasie, Abor Mbasie, Nwagele and Nkwere.

Most ward in this LGAs, voters were chased away from casting their votes in a bid to allow them manipulate the outcome which they succeeded in most of the local government areas mentioned.

II. AKWA IBOM

We observed here that violence and intimidations of voters were so rampant in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial Zone of the State as compared to other Senatorial Zones that were relatively peaceful.

In Urban ward 1 comprising ten (10) units thugs invaded the units armed with guns and chased away voters.

Same scenario played out in Urban 2 unit 001,004 and 005 thugs invaded the unit compelling INEC officials to allow only certain persons to vote.

In Odoro Ward 1 and 2 and Ito ward 1 and 2 same incidence happened.

III. IBIONO LGA

In ward 6 unit 5 the presidential result sheet was torn due to fighting by voters as thugs emerged at the polling unit to disrupt the voting processes.

In ward 11 and the entire units there were no elections as sensitive materials were burnt by thugs .

IV. OBOT AKARA

In Ward 1 unit 003 Ikot Osom in Ntoedido as at about 10:15am thugs invaded the polling unit and intimidated the Presiding Officers smashing away all the materials destroying the ballot boxes .Elections never took place again after the incidence.

In Ikot Abia Ward 1,unit 3 a

certain man arrived the polling unit armed with a gun, intimidated voters, collected their voters cards especially women with over 100 pieces and ran away shooting into the air.

V. ETIM EKPO

In Etim EKPO 1 two thugs rushed into the polling units in ward 3 unit 002 armed and carted away voting materials.

VI. IKONO

The violence recorded in this local government area was gruesome. Before the elections the entire Ward 11 was under a seige as thugs

invaded a home of a candidate and destroyed cars and properties and many persons sustaining injuries. During the election severe violence erupted in this ward and the situation brought the electoral process to a standstill making the elections inconclusive.

VII. RIVERS STATE

The Presidential /National Assembly elections in Rivers State was characterized with widespread violence and electoral malpractices.

At about 315pm when voting had been concluded and result announced and results sheets signed by party agents In Igwuruta, Abia/ Okpo ward 4 armed thugs invaded polling units in the ward shooting and snatching away all result sheets and voting materials accompanied by armed men in a van .

VIII. LAGOS STATE

It is a concern to our organisation observing that elections in Lagos State, are increasingly marred by high level violence and intimidation leading to several death which could deter future participation.

Nigeria's leading political parties have been accused of being culpable; they have failed to act and curb the excesses of their supporters and party members from engaging in violent acts.

For instance in Erinono Primary School, Johnson Bus Stop, the ballot boxes for the presidential election were smashed, while the boxes for the House of Representatives and Senate were carted away by political thugs and voters chased away.

Some political thugs, around 10 am, invaded polling units at Karounwin, Soyinka, and Jimoh Ojoku streets in Surulere where they shot sporadically into the air. As a result of the assault, those who were in the queue to vote ran away, including the Independent National Election Commission (INEC) ad-hoc staff.

The same scenario happened in Muyiwa Opaleye and Aguda areas where the voting process was disrupted, but security officers later restored sanity for voting to continue.

IX. KANO

It was observed by our observers in Kano State that despite the Police Force Kano State Command cancellation of all political rallies in the state

after clashes between supporters of the All Progressive Congress, APC, and the New Nigeria Peoples Party, NNPP days before the election, the Presidential election was marred with severe violence in many polling units we visited.

In Dambatta L.G.A .results from 13 polling units were cancelled due to violence and ballot snatching and attack on Adhoc staff .

Also, ballot boxes were snatched at poling unit 034 at Yankaba ward in Nasarawa local government immediately votes were counted by hoodlums.

F. TURN OUT

There were huge turnout and excitement at this election as so many voters were seen at 6.54am waiting anxiously at the polling unit for election to commence.

G. SECURITY

It was observed that security personnel were not deployed to some polling units in the Presidential /National Assemvly elections and that gave room for the miscreants to perpetrate violence. It was also observed that in most of the polling units where there was severe violence, there was no security personnel on duty at the time the disruption happened.

H. ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION OF RESULTS

The commission severally had told Nigerians that results of the 2023 general elections will be transmitted electronically.

It clarified that it has not jettisoned electronic transmission of results for manual process.

National Commissioner (Information and Voter Education Committee), Festus Okoye, who made the clarification in a statement, said the procedure for results transmission in 2023 polls will remain the same as obtained in the recent governorship elections in Ekiti and Osun states. Surprisingly, we observed in all the Local Government visited that there were no transmission of votes recorded at the just concluded election .

I. WOMEN PARTICIPATION OVERVIEW

After INECs release of the final list of presidential and national assembly candidates for the 2023 general election, several women groups lamented the low number of female candidates contesting the 2023 general election.

According to an analysis from a report by the Forum titled 'Research on Interrogating the Policy Interventions to Increase Women's Participation in Governance in Nigeria,' there were only 381 women among the total of 4,259 contestants for the presidential and the National Assembly seat in next year's polls.

Out of the 18 political parties in the country, only the Allied People's Movement (APM) fielded a female presidential candidate.

For the senate, we observed that out of the 1,101 candidates vying for 109 Senatorial seats, 92 were women, representing 8.35 per cent while 288 women contesting for House of Representatives out of the total 3,122 candidates.

A state-by-state analysis shows that of the 36 states of Nigeria, including the Federal Capital Territory, five states did not field any woman as a candidate for the Senate while one State did not field any woman as a candidate for the House of Representatives.

This States include Kano, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe and Zamfara for senate and Jigawa for the House of Representatives.

Pan African Women Projects is challenged at the state of women participation in politics in Nigeria and the overall representation of women at the forth coming 10th Assembly in Nigeria .We urge Political Parties in Nigeria to ensure that they provide a window in their party space to promote the cause of an inclusive democracy to ensure that women, youths and People With Disabilities are included in governance and leadership .

SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL COLLATION OF PRESIDENTIAL RESULTS FROM 36 STATES/FCT:

The Returning Officers Prof. Mahmood Yakubu INEC Chairman having collated all the Presidential results (forms EC8E) from the thirty six (36) States/FCT presented the detailed summary as follows:

TOTAL REGISTERED VOTERS: 93,469,108

TOTAL ACCREDITED VOTERS: 25,286,616

VOTES SCORED BY PARTY CONTESTANTS:

A:	61,014
AA:	14,542
AAC:	14,608
ADC:	81,919
ADP:	43,924
APC:	8,794,726
APGA:	61,966
APM:	25,961
APP:	12,839
BP:	16,156
LP:	6,101,533
NNPP:	1,496,687
NRM:	24,869
PDP:	6,984,520
PRP:	72,144
SDP:	80,267
YPP:	60,600

ZLP: 77665

TOTAL VALID VOTES: 24,025,940
TOTAL REJECTED VOTES: 939,278
TOTAL VOTES CAST: 24,244,965,218

CANCELLED VOTES: Due to violence intimidation, snatching of the electoral materials and over voting, votes affected were cancelled in compliance with the Electoral ACT 2010 (As amended 2022).

DECLARATION OF RESULT

The Returning Officer, Prof Mahmood Yakubu, (INEC Chairman) for the national collation of the Presidential election having collated the results from the thirty six (36) states /FCT announced votes scored by the party contestants while the National result sheet “EC8E” was duly signed by all required stakeholders, declared APC candidate, Chief Bola Ahmed Tinubu winner having scored the highest votes of **Eight Million Seven Hundred And Ninety Four Thousand, Seven Hundred And Twenty Six (8,794,726)** votes and met all the Electoral requirements was returned

elected President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The state by state presentation of results and the collation of results for the Presidential Election was brought to a close at 1:03 AM on Wednesday 1st March, 2023.

THE PRESENTATION OF THE CERTIFICATE OF RETURN:

On 1st March , 2023 at International Conference Centre –ICC Abuja at 3.40pm ,the Certificate Of Return was presented by INEC Chairman Prof. Mahmood Yakubu (The Returning Officer Of The Presidential Results Collation) to the President Elect , Chief Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the elected Vice President Kashim Shettima of APC.

The President Elect, Chief Bola Ahmed Tinubu expressed his appreciation to all Nigerians for their reposed confidence in him and assured the Nation of his commitment to the upliftment of Nigeria and solicited for the cooperation of all for the social, economic and political development of Nigeria.

The British High Commissioner, European Union Representative and other Eminent Personalities, wished the President Elect, good tenure of office while the ceremony was brought to a close at 4.07pm.

NASS RESULTS:

The National Assembly – NASS results were announced at the State Collation Centers and the various winners emerged.

PRESENTATION OF THE CERTIFICATES OF RETURN TO THE ELECTED SENATORS AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE (ICC), ABUJA

The elected Honourable Members of the NASS on Tuesday 7th March, 2023 were presented with their Certificates of Return by INEC Chairman Prof. Mahmood Yakubu under the supervision of INEC National Commissioners and it was a successful presentation.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS AT GOVERNORSHIP / STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS.

A. Arrival of materials:

Materials arrived many polling units across the Country at these election early between the hours of 7.01am and 9.00am .This exercise was smooth and highly professional by the electoral body as compared to our experience in the Presidential Elections .

From all the RAC centers we visited we observed so much improvement by the electoral body INEC regarding the prompt distribution of materials to Adhoc staff, the availability and professionalism of the transporters and security personnel that made the exercise smooth.

B. Turnout of Voters

Generally across the State the voter turnout was very poor. Outside polling units where candidates voted the other polling units we visited had a low voter participation as compared to previous election. Low voter turnout has been witnessed across Nigeria as 28 states conduct their 2023 governorship and state house of assembly elections.

Out of the total 93.47 million registered voters, only 24.9 million persons, representing 26.72 percent, voted in the February 25 presidential and National Assembly elections.

Several reasons have been cited for the poor voter turnout being experienced. We observed through our several interactions with voters that the postponement of the election by a week dampened the spirits of the electorate.

Also, INEC's performance at the Presidential elections especially as results were seen not to be transmitted to the IREV across the State had altered people's trust in the electoral system, noting that with a poor perception of INEC's credibility citizens now doubted that their votes would not count.

C. Security:

Many polling units we observed in this election had no security personnel on duty which was very unprofessional of the security agencies despite

the assurances that the security agencies repeatedly gave to the electoral body and the government and citizens regarding the safety and peace during the election. We also observed in some polling units Police men / women collaborating with party agents to aide voters in voting.

D. Logistics:

The Electoral Commission would have to look for an alternative to Road Transport Workers in the movement of election materials and personnel. Continuous reliance on the old method of deploying personnel and materials to polling units is no longer effective and causes a serious delay in the process. We suggest that it would be great in future if INEC could consider using ‘**drones**’ to deploy some key materials to centers and allow Presiding Officers/Assistant Presiding Officers to head straight to their respective centers ahead of time to commence accreditation on time. INEC should look beyond Road Transport Workers for transport services as they are usually and often manipulated by corrupt politicians to sabotage the effort of INEC. The fact that most of them are not well-lettered also underlines why they are easily influenced and bought over.

E. INEC Ad-hoc Staff:

The Commission should look into the quality of the personnel they sent out to the field for election duty as young and hungry NYSC members are easily induced by corrupt politicians and party people. We suggest that disciplined religious bodies and organizations with a pedigree like priests, reverend sisters, pastors, Islamic scholars, lawyers, and Directors of Federal and State Ministries as well as NGOs, who would not be able to compromise their position and retirement benefits should be considered over young fragile corps members.

F. Technology

The BIVAS is one of the landmark introductions by INEC into the election process in Nigeria. But it is without its own shortfalls. The BIVAS should be upgraded to include electronic voting where accreditation and voting are processed from the same device. This will greatly cut down on paper production and eliminate ballot papers and significantly reduce the huge budget line of INEC during elections.

At this election we observed improvement in the functionality of the BIVAS even though some BIVAS still function below expectation at some polling

units at this election.. About 79 percent of result were transmitted to the IREV at this election compared to our observations at the Presidential elections were results were not transmitted to the IREV across the Country.

I. EBONYI STATE

In Central School Ezzangbo IKWO LGA many voters were disenfranchised as the BIVAS couldn't recognized their PVCs and every attempt failed.

I. RIVERS STATE

In ward 20, unit 21 in Abuloma in Obia/ Akpo the BIVAS was not functioning and even at 2.30pm the young PO was yet to receive attention from the RAC technician and many voters were disenfranchised.

G. Vote Buying and Lobbying:

There was serious vote buying and influencing of voters' choice during the governorship election by party members at some of the polling units we visited. They cohesively cause people to vote for their party at the voting booth.

I. EBONYI STATE

In Afigbo South, unit 1 Ifuogo Village Hall, unit 10, Nguzu Primary School, unit 13 Okpugbagha Playground, unit 2 Ezechi Primary School, and unit 17 Ifuogo Amaiyi Village Hall experienced massive vote buying.

H. Violence / Intimidation

The Governorship / State House of Assembly Elections had pockets of violence and intimidation observed in the three Senatorial zones of each State we observed.

I. EBONYI STATE

We observed so much violence and intimidations at the just concluded Ebonyi State Governorship / State House of Assembly Elections.

In EZZA NORTH LGA armed thugs invaded some polling units and went away with ballot boxes.

In EBONYI AND ABAK ALIKE LGA experienced high level intimidations of voters.

Also, we observed from polling units 13 Edda _ Agbo village square that materials meant for the polling unit was hijacked to Ekule Primary School by thugs.

In Ivo LGA OBINAGU unit 1 BIVAS were hijacked by thugs as reported by our Observer on the spot and chased away voters and some aged women got injured in the process.

In Abakaliki LGA at IZZI UNUHU POLLING unit 4 voters were intimidated by some agents and their supporters chasing away voters who were not standing in the queue they created to vote for their party.

II. ABIA STATE

In Abia State there were few places where we observed voters intimidations and violence as the election was relatively peaceful in many Local Government Area.

Nevertheless from report from our Observation team deployed there were voters intimidations and violence in the following local governments: Ohofia, Bende, Obingwa, Osisioma, Ukwu East, Ugwuagbo, ABA, Isiala Ngwa south and north.

III. AKWA IBOM STATE

Akwa Ibom State Governorship /State Assembly Election was relatively peaceful except few pocket of violence. For instance in Ward 11, unit 7 in Ikot Ekong Village in Ika LGA thugs invaded this polling unit and destroyed materials and election did not take place.

Also, in Ward 8, unit 3 in Ibeno LGA there was an unrest when the APO 1 could not transmit the result to the IREV for poor network, the angry voters destroyed the ballot papers and blocked the Adhoc staff from leaving the polling unit but an intervention came from the security agency.

Also, due to violence that marred ward 11 in Ikono LG A elections were put on hold.

IV. LAGOS STATE

Despite the security architecture the Lagos State Police Command and other sister agencies put in place,

hoodlums overran the state as they unleashed violence on voters and officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

From Surulere to Oshodi, Mile 12, Ejigbo, Bucknor, Oke-Afa, Bolade Oshodi, Surulere, Amuwo Odofin, Berger, Ojo, Agiliti, Ago Palace Way, Okota, Mushin, Igando, Ibeju Lekki, Alimosho, Ijegun, Ijesha, Ikeja, Magodo, Elegushi, Fadeyi, and many other areas, these thugs ran amok unchecked.

Also, thugs in large numbers invaded Adejare Polling Unit in Ilesa, Oshodi/Isole Local Government Area of Lagos State to disperse voters who were waiting for officials and ad hoc staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission to begin voting for the ongoing governorship and state assembly election.

Our observer at the scene reported that these thugs who came into the polling unit were seen with daggers, guns and other dangerous weapons.

V. RIVERS STATE

We observed that the Rivers State Governorship elections was marred with violence in so many Local Government Areas we visited. One of our observers at Bori in Khana LGA also observed a terrible scene where thugs were shot after attempting to snatch away sensitive election materials.

VI. TARABA STATE

The Governorship election was characterized by several violence and intimidation at many polling units we visited. Our team that were in Taraba reported intimidation and vote buying by party agents at this election.

VII. ADAMAWA STATE

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), declared the governorship poll inconclusive after the process was disrupted by several violence and irregularities at various polling areas especially in Fufore Local Government Area as our team had observed.

The supplementary election was fixed for 15th April, 2023.

VIII. CROSS RIVERS STATE

In Cross River state outside a report of an ad-hoc staff member of INEC, Miss Glory Effiom Essien, who was hit by a stray bullet after some gunmen opened fire while she was in a boat heading for Bakassi on election duty our team did not physically observe any violence scenes as experienced in other States.

I. WOMEN PARTICIPATION OVERVIEW.

This reviews women's representation in national and subnational elections in Nigeria. In particular, it focuses on attrition in political parties' primary elections, which concluded in September 2022, and seeks to identify factors that contributed to poor outcomes for women aspirants and candidates. It explores women's candidacies across regions, positions, and parties. It finds that four main factors contributed to high attrition rates for women during party primaries: political party gatekeeping; conservative norms and culture; the variation of competitiveness in executive versus legislative offices; and the combined effect of novice candidature (large number of political newcomers) and low persistence (staying power) of women candidates who lose elections. The therefore highlights how macro-level and institutional, or systemic, factors interact with individual factors to limit women's access to elected offices in Nigeria.

Women's representation in Nigerian politics has been on a downward slide since 2011, and the 2023 elections in Africa's largest economy confirmed the expectations of poor outcomes for women. The number of women in Nigeria's National Assembly has fallen by 19 percent compared to the last assembly, with women now occupying 3 percent of seats in the Senate and 4 percent in the House of Representatives.

To understand why Nigerian women performed so poorly in the recent elections, the 2022 primary elections provided insight into the challenges and barriers faced by women aspirants and candidates. The results of the various parties' primary elections highlight enduring limitations to women's representation in competitive politics in Nigeria. The country ranks in the bottom ten globally in women's representation in national parliaments, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).² This challenge of representation persists in spite of the near parity of voter registration between men and women in past election cycles.

We also analyze six political parties, categorized here as small, medium, and large based on the party's representation in federal and state electoral offices as well as their relative longevity in Nigerian politics. We rank the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and the main opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) as large parties; All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) and Labour Party (LP) as medium; and African Democratic Congress (ADC) and Action Democratic Party (ADP) as small.

Also, access to primary elections data, including the number of aspirants and the gender distribution of aspirants and party delegates, but political parties do not collate accessible data of this type. This highlights a larger issue of Nigerian electoral analysis, which is impeded by the lack of reliable data, particularly in the primary phase. Measuring the exact attrition rate for women aspirants—that is, measuring the failure rate for women who stand for primary elections—is difficult due to poor data preservation by political parties. For popular offices, such as president, news reports allow for such calculations. For executive positions, including president, vice president, and governor, Nigerian women have had a nearly 100 percent attrition rate since the country returned to democracy in 1999. The next best option is to analyze candidates' attrition rates after elections have concluded. Yet, it is important to understand why Africa's largest economy proves to be such a difficult space for women's participants.

J. Our Recommendations:

Internal Contract Personnel

In the build-up to and during the 2023 elections, the Commission's staff were overloaded and seriously stressed which therefore exposed the Commission in some key areas of the electioneering process despite long preparation, especially concerning personnel and operations. Some had to be redeployed to other departments and states to cushion the shortfall in this regard, thereby creating technical and administrative holes, which in turn impacted negatively on the Commission's response to the elections demands.

In view of this, the Commission should consider the need to engage key professionals and technocrats as '**Contract Staff**' at least a year before the election for a year. Even multinationals do employ contract staff to

help them get more jobs done in a short space of time. With this, the challenges of sorting, arranging, transferring, and allotting as well as managing thousands and millions of materials associated with the election would be completely eased and eliminated.

I. The Capacity of Ad-Hoc Staff

The Commission should review the quality of Ad-Hoc staff engaged for future elections as the capacity of National Youth Corps Members deployed for the last elections left a lot of questions unanswered. These young, hungry and unemployed NYSC members are easily induced by corrupt politicians and party loyalists. And this could seriously compromise the election. We suggest that disciplined religious bodies and organizations with a pedigree like priests, reverend sisters, pastors, Islamic scholars, lawyers, senior service men, and Directors of Federal and State Ministries as well as NGOs Directors, who would not be able to compromise their position and retirement benefits should be considered over young fragile corps members.

II. Technology

We at Pan African Women Projects (PAWP) sincerely commend INEC for the introduction of the Bimodal Voters Authentication System – BIVAS into the election in Nigeria. The BIVAS is designed to primarily verify, authenticate, accredited and upload results to INEC IREV Portal. A unique device with the capability to effectively improve the election process in Nigeria if it is managed sincerely. However, the BIVAS is not without its own defects. Our observations across the country show that the BIVAS struggled to process information quickly and optimally and was able to process between $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ of the registered voters in a given polling unit, where up to 90% of the registered voters came out. Even where there were 2 to 3 BIVAS at a Polling Unit, it could not still capture all the voters who came out as witnessed during the presidential election which had a large turnout of voters.

We recommend **an upgrade and or reconfiguration of the BIVAS to enable it to scan the unique Barcode/Voters' Identification Number (VIN) on the back of the Permanent Voter's Card (PVC)** after biometric fingerprint or face scanning as a faster way of verifying and accrediting people for voting at polling units. This, if considered, will reduce the dangers and physical stress of long hours and long queues associated

with accreditation and the voting process which the people have to stand and wait before voting.

III. INEC Should Phase-out Manual Registration and Voting System

We recommend that a system should be put in place to automatically register people as soon as they turn 18 years or once they request or renew their driver's license. Similarly, voters' registration should be made a prerequisite condition for admission into the university in Nigeria for those who are 18 years and above. This is possible and could be achieved through special software to handle this process instead of the pathetic ugly scene witnessed during the continuous voter registration exercise. This method too is cost-effective and can also boost the rate of voter registration when compared to the population of the country.

IV. Introduction of E-Voting: Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)

We noticed during our election monitoring and observation that INEC still struggle to deal with the excesses of corrupt politicians and political parties who want to win an election at all cost. This is so because the process of voting, counting and collating votes in Nigeria elections is still manually done and this causes significant problems and often compromises the integrity and credibility of the entire election process.

Before the 2023 elections, news of politicians collecting people's PVC dominated social media. This was done to disenfranchise innocent voters as well as the stronghold of their perceived opposition. We believe strongly that this could be stopped if INEC considers introducing E-VOTING. With the introduction of E-Voting, INEC will save costs and eliminate completely ballots paper. The Electronic Voting Machine (EVM), will end the paper ballots method which is widely criticized because of its fraudulent voting and booths capturing by political thugs and party loyalists. It is important to note that several countries like the UK, the US, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Malaysia, and even Namibia in Africa had since switched to e-voting system.

V. Eliminate Disenfranchise of Essential Workers

Over the years, elections in Nigeria do not take into consideration the voting right of various essential workers in the country. Service providers like the police, the army, other paramilitary groups – customs service,

immigration service, civil defense, the journalist, newscasters, the nurses, medical doctors, the INEC staff and Ad-Hoc Staff, as well as the NURTW drivers that move materials and personnel to and from polling units are completely disenfranchised from the election. We humbly suggest that INEC should consider giving them the opportunity to vote ahead of the actual day of the election at the various INEC offices across the country.

VI. Introduction of Universal Permanent Voters Card

INEC should consider the introduction of a Universal Permanent Voters' Card as an alternative for the sets of people mentioned above. This type of PVC is to enable these essential workers to exercise their franchise at their respective duty posts (polling units) where they are serving during the day of the election.

VII. Mobile Polling Units

The Commission should look into creating mobile polling units for millions of people who happen to be in the hospital and at correctional facilities during the period of the general election. These sets of people should be enrolled into the 'Universal PVC' so that they can vote anywhere without necessarily having to go to the polling unit they registered.

VIII. Transportation Logistics

The Commission's overreliance on the services of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) drivers for the movement of materials and personnel seriously undermined the smooth efforts of the Commission to deliver on its promise. INEC should look beyond Road Transport Workers for transport services as they are usually and often manipulated by corrupt politicians to sabotage the effort of INEC. The fact that most of them are not well-lettered also underlines why they are easily influenced and bought over. In the future, INEC should consider using '**drones**' to deploy some key materials to centers and allow Presiding Officers/Assistant Presiding Officers to head straight to their respective centers ahead of time to commence accreditation early. In addition to the deployment of drones, military and paramilitary vehicles outside the police force should be engaged to handle election logistics across the country. This will eliminate delays in opening the polling unit on schedule.

IX. Strict Compliance to Electoral Laws

The Federal Government should consider a holistic review of the nation's electoral laws to facilitate and regulate proper and strict compliance with the election guidelines specified by the elections umpire in the country. A situation where INEC preach a different thing to the people but yet does a different thing is totally unacceptable and could seriously damage the trust and confidence the citizens have in the Commission. The participation of the electorates in the rescheduled election of 18 March 2023 compared to the presidential election of 25 February is a clear testament to what could happen when the role of the game is changed in the middle of the game.

X. Voters' Education and Sensitization

Much is still desired in the area of voters' education and sensitization across the country. We sincerely urged INEC to do more in this area as millions of Nigerians are without the voter's card while millions too who have it either use it only for purposes of identification for official matters. Available data and statistics show that about 10% of the registered votes are what the winning party used to win the last presidential election. INEC should take the campaign to markets, churches, mosques, schools, village councils, etc in order to effectively penetrate the rural people who are the easiest prey for vote buying during the elections.

XI. We recommend that in subsequent elections INEC should partner with Local vigilantes in different community to curb thuggery and intimidations at polling units.

When each community is in control of their security it will be difficult for politicians to sponsor and import thugs to invade other people's communities for their selfish interest.

CONCLUSION

Like other African countries, such as Ghana, Kenya, and Senegal, Nigeria's young democracy faces multiple domestic challenges but remains resilient. Despite recent democratic reversals, including military coups, in neighboring states, the outlook for Nigeria's democracy remains positive. Having successfully passed the

two-turnover test of democratic consolidation in 2015, Nigeria's democracy has been further enhanced by the competitiveness of the 2023 elections, bolstered by heightened youth participation.

Nigeria has a presidential system with a bicameral parliament, and it is a federal state, meaning its electoral politics are significantly decentralized. It is divided into thirty-six states and the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, which together make up the six geopolitical zones. According to INEC, roughly half of the country's estimated 200 million people are registered to vote. The voter distribution shows a slightly higher representation for men (52.5 percent) than women (47.5 percent). Furthermore, about 40 percent of registered voters are between the ages of eighteen and thirty-four. The densely populated states of Kano and Lagos play a pivotal role in electoral outcomes, with 5.9 million and 7.1 million registered voters, respectively.

Despite this vibrant democracy and the relative parity in voter distribution by gender, women's representation in electoral politics is remarkably low. According to 2023 data from IPU, Nigeria lacks behind many other similarly positioned states in sub-Saharan Africa, falling far short of the 26 percent regional average of women in national parliaments.

For us in the Pan African Women Projects, the 2023 Nigerian General Elections has left the Nigerian women at the back row despite all their contributions towards a sustainable and peaceful democracy in Nigeria. Our organization in partnership with other democratic institutions, Gender and Inclusivity Department of INEC, the Civil Society Organizations across the nations of Africa will strategize to see that the Nigerian women

will fully be integrated into the political stream in Nigeria and be funded to contest and win a political office in the next election session in Nigeria.

We remain grateful to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the opportunity to serve as an International Observer Group at the Nigeria 2023 General Elections and look forward to the commission adopting some of our recommendations and paying attention to some grey areas for more improvements in electoral procedures.

Our organisation also appreciate the commission for the ability to manage such a huge election network in our continent despite the many challenges.

Thank you.

SIGNATORIES

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Head of Mission

PAN AFRICAN WOMEN PROJECTS



2. MS CANDICE SOLOMON

POLICY/ STRATEGY

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OBSERVATIONS ON PHOTOS



PRE ELECTION PRESS BRIEFING



HUGE TURN OUT IN ADAMAWA ELECTION



VOTING IN PROGRESS IN ENUGU



COUNTING IN PROGRESS IN LAGOS



VOTING IN PROGRESS IN FCT



VOTING IN PROGRESS IN JALINGO



ACCREDITATION IN A GLANCE, CALABAR



VOTING IN PROGRESS AT UGH ELLI, DELTA



VOTING IN PROGRESS IN IKWO LG A, EBONYI



COUNTING AT IBESIKPO, AKWA IBOM



BALLOT BOX / VIOLENCE SCENE IN BORI, RIVERS STATE



OBSERVATION AT A GLANCE IN ABA



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