



## **Pre-election Press Statement on the 2022 Ekiti Governorship Election**

Thursday, June 16th , 2022  
Delivered at the Delight Hotel,  
Ilawe Road Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

### **Introduction**

Yiaga Africa Watching The Vote (WTV) started its pre-election observation in March 2022 and has released four reports on the state of preparedness, political campaigns, and security threats in the 2022 Ekiti governorship elections. From a Yiaga Africa perspective, the forthcoming June 18th governorship election presents an opportunity to assess the operational implications of specific provisions of the Electoral Act 2022 and the newly issued Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) guidelines. The commitment of key election stakeholders, such as INEC and security agencies to credible and non-violence free elections will also be tested in this election. Based on these commitments made by INEC and security agencies, Yiaga Africa's expectation is that this election should not be defined by perennial challenges of election logistics, technological failures, inconsistent application of electoral laws and guidelines, electoral violence and vote buying. These challenges in previous elections have undermined public confidence in the electoral process and raised questions about the gains achieved in Nigeria's 23 years democracy journey.

Sixteen (16) out of the eighteen (18) political parties in Nigeria are on the ballot, having fulfilled all conditions for candidates' nomination. This election will be determined by 988,923 registered voters out of which 51% are women and 38.56% are youths (18-34). According to INEC, 76% of the registered voters have collected their permanent voters' cards (PVCs) as of June 14, 2022.

### **Summary of Key Findings from the Yiaga Africa's Pre-Election Observation**

1. **State of INEC's preparedness:** INEC demonstrated commitment and readiness in conducting the 2022 Ekiti governorship election. The Commission successfully implemented activities in the election timetable and schedule of activities. Across all the pre-election reporting periods, WTV long-term observers (LTOs) heard and witnessed preparatory activities carried out by INEC across all 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ekiti State. These activities include voter registration and display claims and objections, voter education, distribution of voter registers to political parties, recruitment and training of polling officials and distribution of election observation kits. Yiaga Africa also notes INEC's consistent engagement with stakeholders.
2. **Indicators of Voter Inducement and Electoral Offences:** Similar to the 2018 governorship election, Yiaga Africa's observers consistently reported voter inducement through the distribution of money and gift items, from the beginning of the pre-election in March 2022 to the days leading to the election. This is gradually becoming a permanent feature in Nigeria's elections and is capable of undermining the legitimacy of our electoral process.



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- 3. Violence during Political Campaigns and Attack on Political Party Supporters:** Yiaga Africa also tracked activities that could affect the peaceful conduct of the elections in Ekiti state. Reports of physical violence during political party rallies and campaigns were received from Oye and Ado-Ekiti LGAs. These incidents occurred on June 11, 2022. They claimed one life and resulted in heightened tension and reprisal attacks between different factions of the Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN). There was also a report of physical violence during a political rally in Efon LGA involving supporters of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Social Democratic Party (SDP.) Thugs unleashed violence and inflicted injuries on people using machetes and stones. In addition, a gun duel between thugs linked to the APC and SDP was reported in Old Garage in Ado Ekiti, owing to a clash between the APC and SDP supporters on June 12, 2022.

### **Matters Arising on the 2022 Ekiti Governorship Election**

- 1. New polling units and imbalance in the distribution of voters to polling units:** Yiaga Africa commends efforts by INEC to improve voter access to polling units by creating an additional 250 polling units in Ekiti State. Yiaga Africa is however concerned about the imbalance in the distribution of voters to polling units as INEC is yet to address concerns about oversized polling units. Based on INEC's final list of polling units there are 75 polling units with over 1000 registered voters, 11 with over 2000 voters and 1 polling unit with 3,429 registered voters. Yiaga Africa is also concerned about the lack of adequate public information on the new polling unit's location and the distribution of voters to these polling units.
- 2. Deployment of new technology to promote electoral integrity:** The decision to deploy the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) will no doubt improve the quality and transparency of elections. While the Commission conducted a mock exercise in a few polling units to test the functionality of the BVAS, we are worried about the low public participation in the exercise. Yiaga Africa hopes that the capacity gaps and technology challenges highlighted in our report on the Federal Capital Territory Council elections in February 2022 have been addressed, to ensure that eligible voters are able to vote on election day.
- 3. Data for collection rate of Permanent Voters Cards in determining the margin of lead in the election:** As enshrined in the INEC guidelines, the conclusiveness of the election will be determined by a comparison of the total number of voters who collected their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) and margin of lead between the first two candidates. To safeguard the transparency of election results, it is imperative for INEC to publish the disaggregated data of the number of PVCs collected per polling unit. While INEC has revealed that 76% of PVCs have been collected



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in Ekiti State, the collection will end on June 16, 2022. As soon as the PVC collection is suspended, Yiaga Africa urges INEC to provide updated figures of PVCs collected before election day and make this information available on its website.

- 4. Safety and deployment of sensitive materials:** We applaud the decision of INEC to refrain from storing sensitive materials at the Central Bank of Nigeria due to allegations of partisanship levelled against the Governor of the CBN. This shift in the protocol for managing the deployment of sensitive materials places a huge responsibility on INEC to ensure the safety and security of sensitive materials as well as effective deployment to LGAs and Registration Centres. Key stakeholders and the public should be adequately informed of INEC's new strategy for the deployment of sensitive materials. Additionally, the security agencies should support the quest for credible and peaceful polls by providing adequate security to INEC to guarantee the safety of sensitive materials and timely deployment to the polling units.
- 5. Logistics deployment:** Yiaga Africa is immensely worried about the perennial challenge of poor logistics plans in our elections. In recent times, the partnership with the NURTW was soured by sabotage and greed by the union. Yiaga Africa welcomes the intervention of the Ewi of Ekiti urging members of the NURTW to desist from sabotaging INEC's logistics plan. The Commission should consider alternative and viable options of ensuring effective and timely deployment of election materials to polling units in the event the NURTW defaults. Despite this challenge, Yiaga Africa notes INEC's commitments during the pre-election period to smooth logistics deployment during the Ekiti governorship election.
- 6. Election Day violence and effective security deployment:** Yiaga Africa is concerned with the increasing clashes among political parties and their supporters resulting in heightened tension in the state. These conflicts increase the threats of violence on Election Day. Yiaga Africa is worried about the disturbing reports of some known polling units in Ado-Ijigbo ward in Ado Ekiti that are prone to violence. In past elections, voters have been denied access and chased with machetes. While the contesting political parties and candidates have committed to a Peace Accord, the security agencies need to deploy with competence, professionalism, and neutrality on Election Day. Upholding these principles will prevent incidents of violence on Election Day and secure lives and properties.
- 7. The declining voter turnout in Ekiti State:** With voter turnout declining from 50% to 45% between the 2014 and 2018 governorship elections, coupled with low participation in the Continuous Voters Registration in Ekiti State, Yiaga Africa is concerned about a possible decline in citizens participation.



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**Recommendations**

**Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)**

1. Should ensure more consistent and harmonious coordination within the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) to ensure proper security of polling officials deployed in the Registration Area Centers ahead of the Election Day deployment.
2. Should ensure proper coordination with the security agencies to forestall incidences of violence and ensure the safety of voters and poll officials on election day.
3. Should ensure proper and consistent communication with the transport union and companies providing logistics support for Election Day deployment. This also includes the need for contingency plans in situations where respective transport unions /companies withdraw from the contract or fail to deploy.
4. Consistent with INEC's promise of expanding citizens' access to polling units, INEC should ensure Election Day voting materials and personnel are deployed to all polling units with registered voters in the state.

**Security Agencies**

5. Yiaga Africa calls on security agencies deployed for the election to respect the rights of citizens, media, and observers, including the right to freedom of movement on Election Day for duly accredited observers and media practitioners.
6. Security agencies should ensure protection for vulnerable voters, especially women and persons with disabilities.
7. Security personnel should enforce appropriate sanctions for any form of violation of the Electoral Act on Election Day, especially any threat to the right to vote or attempts to buy votes.
8. Security agencies should deploy monitoring mechanisms to checkmate and curtail personnel excesses on Election Day.

**Political Parties**

9. Political party candidates and supporters should ensure they promote peaceful elections, encourage citizens to collect their PVCs to vote and refrain from any form of physical or verbal attacks on opponents or their supporters.
10. Political party leaders, candidates and supporters should refrain from manipulating the insecurity in the state by creating mayhem and politically related attacks/crises.



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11. Political parties, candidates, and their supporters must refrain from vote-buying and the related practice of compromising the ballot's secrecy so that the voters of Ekiti state are free to vote their preference for governor.

### **CSOs**

12. CSOs should engage in building citizens' confidence ahead of the elections and encourage voters to turn out and vote.

### **Citizens**

13. Voting in elections is the legitimate means of making citizens' voices heard and of recruiting desirable leaders. Citizens should get involved in getting out the vote campaigns as Election Day approaches in order to increase participation and voter turnout.
14. Yiaga Africa urges voters to desist from selling their votes and to vote according to their preferences on June 18th.

## **Yiaga Africa Election Day Observation Methodology and Deployment Plan**

Yiaga Africa is deploying its Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) methodology for Saturday's election. The PVT is an advanced election observation methodology that employs well-established statistical principles and sophisticated information technologies in providing timely and accurate information on the conduct of accreditation, voting, and counting, and it independently verifies the official governorship results as announced by the INEC.

Yiaga Africa will deploy **500 stationary observers to a representative statistical sample of 250 polling units** and **25 mobile observers located in all 16 LGAs of Ekiti state**. WTV will also **deploy 16 collation centre observers** to each of the LGA Collation Centers. The sampled polling units were determined by established statistical principles to ensure the resulting information is representative of the state and unbiased. The PVT sample of polling units was drawn according to well-established statistical principles and is truly representative of all of the polling units because the percentage of sampled polling units for each LGA is similar to the percentage of all polling units for each LGA. Over the course of Election Day, Yiaga Africa's data centre in Ekiti will receive **4,500 text messages containing approximately 60,500 individual pieces of information** about the 2022 Ekiti governorship election. Once the text messages are received at Yiaga Africa's data centre, they will be processed and reviewed to ensure the information is complete, authentic and accurate.

Since Yiaga Africa is based on official results from a representative random sample of polling units, Yiaga Africa will be able to estimate the state-wide results for the governorship election within a narrow range based on well-established statistical principles. **If INEC's official results**



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fall within Yiaga Africa’s estimated range, then the public, political parties and candidates should have confidence that the official results reflect the ballots cast at polling units; however, if the announced results have been manipulated and do not match the polling units' results, **Yiaga Africa will expose it.** The PVT is a component of Yiaga Africa’s comprehensive election observation methodology spanning the electoral cycle. Therefore, in assessing whether the 2022 Ekiti governorship satisfies the electoral integrity test, Yiaga Africa will consider a range of issues such as shortcomings in the pre-election period, the quality of Election Day processes, and the scale and scope of critical incidents.

## **Conclusion**

Yiaga Africa appeals to INEC’s permanent and ad hoc staff, all security agents, political party candidates and their supporters as well as all Ekiti people to work together to ensure that the Ekiti governorship election is credible and peaceful. We wish to encourage all registered, PVC-holding voters of Ekiti to go out on Saturday, June 18, 2022, to vote for their choice in the Governorship election.

Thank you and God Bless the people of Ekiti State.

**Yiaga Africa’s Watching the Vote is “Driven by Data – For All Nigerians – Beholden to None!”**

**Samson Itodo**  
Executive Director  
Yiaga Africa

**Ezenwa Nwagwu**  
Board Member  
Yiaga Africa

**For media inquiries, please contact,  
Moshood Isah**  
Media Officer, Yiaga Africa

Tel. +234 (0) 703 666 9339, Email: [misah@yiaga.org](mailto:misah@yiaga.org) Learn more about #WatchingTheVote at [www.watchingthevote.org](http://www.watchingthevote.org) or on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/yiaga.org or on Twitter @YIAGA.



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**Appendix 1**

<b>Distribution of All Polling Units and PVT Sampled Polling Units for the 2022 Ekiti Gubernatorial Election</b>							
<b>S/No</b>	<b>LGA</b>	<b>Registered Voters</b>	<b>Polling Units</b>	<b>Percent of Total Polling Units</b>	<b>Sampled Polling Units</b>	<b>Percent of Total Sampled Polling Units</b>	<b>Observers</b>
1	ADO EKITI	179,070	344	14.1%	35	14.0%	70
2	EFON	30,076	119	4.9%	12	4.8%	24
3	EKITI EAST	61,357	112	4.6%	12	4.8%	24
4	EKITI SOUTH WEST	53,712	188	7.7%	18	7.2%	36
5	EKITI WEST	59,220	184	7.5%	20	8.0%	40
6	EMURE	37,122	94	3.8%	9	3.6%	18
7	GBONYIN	53,785	115	4.7%	12	4.8%	24
8	IDO / OSI	57,766	144	5.9%	16	6.4%	32
9	IJERO	64,524	145	5.9%	14	5.6%	28
10	IKERE	65,651	125	5.1%	12	4.8%	24
11	IKOLE	71,971	189	7.7%	19	7.6%	38
12	ILEJEMEJE	18,791	91	3.7%	9	3.6%	18
13	IREPODUN / IFELODUN	70,467	174	7.1%	18	7.2%	36
14	ISE / ORUN	46,696	114	4.7%	12	4.8%	24
15	MOBA	53,293	116	4.7%	12	4.8%	24
16	OYE	65,422	191	7.8%	20	8.0%	40
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>988,923</b>	<b>2,445</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>500</b>

Source: Yiaga Africa WTV Ekiti 2022