



Process and Results Verification Statement on the November 2023 Off-Cycle Governorship Elections in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi States

Monday, November 13th, 2023

Delivered at the Treasure Suites Hotel, Abuja

Introduction

In the November 11 governorship elections, Yiaga Africa deployed the Process and Results Verification for Transparency (PRVT) methodology to observe the Imo and Kogi State elections. Six hundred (600) stationary observers were deployed to a representative random sample of 300 polling units for each of the states and 50 roving observers in the two states. With this methodology, Yiaga Africa can confidently assess the accreditation process, voting, and counting and independently verify the official results announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). In addition to the PRVT methodology, Yiaga Africa also deployed nine roving observers for the Bayelsa State governorship election to observe the process and results collation.

These are the first off-cycle governorship elections conducted after Nigeria's contentious and controversial 2023 general elections. The off-cycle elections test the commitment of key democratic institutions such as INEC, security agencies and the executive to restore public confidence in the electoral process. Yiaga Africa observed a marked improvement in the management of election logistics across the three states. The commission's prompt response to the report of pre-filled results sheets (EC8A) cases in Kogi state was equally impressive. Yiaga Africa hopes the commission will fulfil its commitment to ensuring the culprits face the full wrath of the law. Yiaga Africa also notes reduced cases of election day-related violence, especially in Kogi state, and commends the police and other security agencies. Yiaga Africa expects all the reports of election offences, complicity and unprofessional conduct of some police officers will be duly investigated and culprits properly punished.

On Sunday, November 12, Yiaga Africa issued a statement urging INEC to clarify the status of locations where elections were not held in some Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Imo State. The WTV data shows that elections were not conducted in 12% (36 of 300) of Yiaga Africa WTV sampled polling units in Imo state. Yiaga Africa received additional reports indicating polling units where elections were not held. These cases were prevalent in 9 polling units in Orsu LGA, eight polling units in Okigwe, eight polling units in Oru East, seven polling units in Orlu LGA, one polling unit each in Ideato North, Ikeduru, Oru West and Owerri West LGAs of the WTV sampled polling units. This data suggests that elections may not have held in designated polling unit locations in the identified LGAs, which questions the transparency of the process and violates the rights of the voters in the affected polling unit.

Yiaga Africa is concerned about the continuous decline in the quality of elections and the proclivity for lowering the integrity standards of elections irrespective of reforms introduced by INEC and reforms to the electoral legal framework. The November 11 elections were another missed opportunity to rebuild trust and confidence in the electoral process. The elections question the commitment of democratic institutions electoral integrity and credible elections.

As a result of missing data from the PRVT sample coupled with a high number of critical incidents recorded in Imo state, Yiaga Africa is not in a position to verify the credibility of the process and the outcome of the Imo State governorship elections. Yiaga Africa urgently calls on INEC to review and conduct a comprehensive audit of the Imo governorship election results to inspire confidence in the process and its outcome.

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Key Findings on the Election Day Process in Imo and Kogi States

The key findings are based on additional reports received from the WTV observed in Imo and Kogi states sampled polling units.

Deployment of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS)

- Yiaga Africa observed that the BVAS was deployed across all the polling units observed in the Imo and Kogi polling units.
- In **Imo** state, the BVAS Worked throughout the day in 94% of polling units. However, it malfunctioned and it was fixed in 3% of polling units. It malfunctioned and was not fixed or replaced in 2% of these polling units.
- Similarly, in **Kogi** state, the BVAS worked throughout the day in 94% of polling units. However, it malfunctioned and it was fixed in 5% of polling units. It malfunctioned and was not fixed or replaced in 1% of these polling units.

Secrecy of the Ballot

- In 15% and 6% of polling units in Imo and Kogi states, it was possible to see how a voter's ballot paper was marked.
- Voters crowded the polling officials during counting in 27% and 30% of polling units in Imo and Kogi, respectively.

Deployment and professionalism of Polling Officials and Security:

- Reports received from WTV Polling Unit observers revealed that INEC polling officials were unprofessional and partisan in over 15% and 14% of polling units in Imo and Kogi states, respectively.
- Security Personnel were present in 74% of the sampled polling units in Imo state, while in Kogi, security personnel were present in 94%.
- In addition, over 21% and 15% of polling units in Imo and Kogi reported that security personnel were unprofessional and partisan.

Misconduct at the Polling Units

- In 6%, and 1% of polling units in Imo and Kogi respectively, voters were permitted to vote without accreditation with BVAS.
- At 14% and 4% of polling units in Imo and Kogi respectively, Yiaga Africa observers reported voter intimidation, harassment or assault during voting.
- At 28% and 18% of polling units in Imo and Kogi, respectively, party agents attempted to influence polling officials during counting.

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Inclusion of women and persons with disabilities

- An average of 2 polling officials were deployed in both Imo and Kogi states while an average of 2 out of the 4 officials were women. 47% and 28% of presiding officials in Imo and Kogi, respectively, were women.
- In 64% and 70% of polling units in Imo and Kogi where PWDs were present, they were allowed priority voting.

Counting

- At 2% of the polling units in Imo and 3% of polling units in Kogi, the counting of the ballot papers was **not** done in the same location as accreditation and voting.
- In **Imo** state, Party agents for APC were present during counting, they received the results sheets in 95% of polling units. Party agents for LP and PDP were present during counting, they received the results sheets in 87% of polling units.
- In **Kogi** state, Party agents for APC were present during counting, they signed and received the results sheets in 95% of polling units. Party agents for PDP were present during counting, they signed and received the results sheets in 79% of polling units and Party agents for SDP were present during counting, they signed and received the results sheets in 80%.

Critical Incident Reports

On election day, Yiaga Africa verified 101 critical incidents witnessed by Watching The Vote citizen observers. Eighty-seven (87) of these reports were received from Imo and 14 of the reports were received from Kogi. Some of these incidents relate to the polling units not opened as noted earlier, vote buying, non-use of the BVAS for accreditation amongst others. Notably, there were more reports on the disruption of the process leading to the counting of results in a different location or suspension of the voting process especially in Imo West Senatorial District. Vote buying was reported across eleven polling units in Imo, three polling units in Kogi. Voters displayed how they marked their ballots before dropping them in the ballot box.

1. **Ballot Box Snatching:** Yiaga Africa received reports of snatching of ballot boxes in the Umudike Hall Polling Unit in Dikenafair Ward of Ideato LGA, and Umucheke Village Hall Polling Unit of Amaifeke Ward in Orlu LGA. In Duruaku Village Square Polling Unit (002) of Isu-Njaba Ward in Isu LGA, the security officials stationed at the polling unit moved the ballot box and INEC officials during voting which impeded voters from casting their ballot.
2. **BVAS By-Pass:** Cases of non-use of BVAS for voter accreditation was received by Yiaga Africa. For instance in Town Hall Field/Alodo polling unit in Iboko/Efakwu Ward of Ofu LGA, Imo state and Polling Unit 005, in Ward 5, Lokoja LGA of Kogi State, the BVAS was not used to accredit voters before voting.
3. **Violence and Disruption of the Voting Process.** Yiaga Africa received reports of disruption of the voting process and suspension of election from 3 polling units in Imo state. The polling units affected are polling unit no 16/15/06/012 located at Nwafor Umulolo Hall, Nwangele LGA; polling unit no 16/20/05/003 located at Comm. School,

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Umuduru, Onuimo and polling unit 16/06/13/026 located at Ulonwa maternity (Akanu Ogologo), Ideato South LGA. Additional polling units where elections did not hold or were suspended: polling unit 16/17/06/012 located at Central Assembly Square Umushim II, Oguta LGA.

- 4. Intimidation and Harassment of Voters:** In 14% of polling units in Imo, Yiaga Africa received reports on intimidation and harassment of voters. Specifically, reports were received from Central School, Uboma, Okata ward, Ihitte/Uboma LGA, PU 002, Owerre Nkworji, Nkwere LGA LGA and PU 017 Ndiohi Ogii in Okigwe LGA. However, in Kogi cases of Intimidation and harassment of voters were received from 4% of polling units in Kogi. Notably, voters and polling officials were intimidated and harassed in Open Space by the Market Site Odokuro Polling Unit in Ijimu LGA.

Kogi State Result Verification

Based on reports from 278 of 286 (97.2%) sampled polling units, Yiaga Africa's statistical analysis shows that the All Progressives Congress (APC) should receive between 47.0% and 59.0% of the vote, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) should receive between 4.8% and 7.4% and Social Democratic Party (SDP) should receive between 31% and 42.4% of the vote. No other political party should receive more than 1.2% of the vote.

INEC's turnout and rejected ballots for the 21 LGAs as announced are consistent with Yiaga Africa WTV PRVT estimates. Yiaga Africa's turnout estimate is between 34.4% and 43.6% (39.0% ± 4.6%) while INEC's official turnout is 40%. Similarly, Yiaga Africa estimates rejected ballots are between 0.9% and 1.5% (1.2% ± 0.3%) while INEC's official rejected ballots number is 1.45%.

Comparison of INEC Official Results for the LGAs released with Yiaga Africa WTV PRVT Estimates for Select Political Parties for the 2023 Kogi Gubernatorial Election						
Party	INEC	Yiaga Africa WTV PRVT estimates				Match
	Official Result	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimated Range		
				Lower Limit	Upper Limit	
ADC	2.79%	3.0%	±1.1	1.9%	4.1%	✓
APC	57.04%	53.0%	±6.0%	47.0%	59.0%	✓
PDP	5.93%	6.1%	±1.3%	4.8%	7.4%	✓
SDP	33.11%	36.7%	±5.7%	31.0%	42.4%	✓

Note: No other party received more than 1.2% of the vote share

Source Yiaga Africa WTV November 2023

INEC official results for the 2023 Kogi State governorship election are consistent with Yiaga Africa's WTV estimate (specifically, it falls within Yiaga Africa's WTV estimated range). Had the official results been changed at the ward, LGA, or state collation centres, the official results

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would not have fallen within the Yiaga Africa WTV estimated ranges. However, the incidence of pre-filled results sheets before accreditation and voting in some wards in Ogori-Magongo, Okehi, Adavi, Okene and Ajaokuta, as reported by Yiaga Africa and other election observer groups, including the outcome of INEC's investigation, undermines the results from the affected LGAs.

Recommendations

1. INEC should thoroughly investigate all the allegations of malpractices and misapplication of election laws and guidelines and remediate all the flaws, including prosecuting its staff for complicity.
2. INEC should comprehensively audit the Imo governorship election results and make its findings public.
3. Security agencies, especially the Police, should investigate and prosecute cases of complicity and unprofessional conduct of some police officers.
4. The National Assembly should accelerate the electoral reform process, especially establishing the Electoral Offences Commission to promptly and diligently prosecute electoral offenders.
5. INEC should review its policy to ensure that eligible voters across all polling units are given equal voting opportunities. The review should ensure that voters in polling units where elections are suspended or cancelled for electoral malpractice or logistical challenges are allowed to vote.

Conclusion

The elections in Kogi and Imo reaffirm the lack of commitment to democratic principles and credible elections on the part of electoral stakeholders. The zero-sum attitude to electoral politics undermines electoral integrity and citizens' right to elect leaders. Yiaga Africa reiterates its earlier call that election administration requires fundamental reforms to inspire public confidence and enhance the legitimacy of election processes and outcomes. This includes fundamentally reforming the election management body, INEC, and the attitude of politicians to elections. Cases where electoral officials arrive at the polling units with pre-filled election results is unacceptable and highly condemnable.

The Watching The Vote project is “**Driven by Data – For All Nigerians – Beholden to None!**”

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Imo and Kogi**

Appendix I

The below table is a comparison of INEC official results with the Yiaga Africa WTV estimates for all 18 political parties contesting the 2023 Kogi governorship election.

Appendix II Comparison of INEC Official Results with Yiaga Africa WTV Estimates for All Political Parties In the 2023 Kogi Governorship Election						
Party	INEC	Yiaga Africa WTV				Match
	Official	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimated Range		
				Lower Limit	Upper Limit	
A	0.16%	0.2%	+/- 0.3%	0.1%	0.5%	
AA	0.18%	0.1%	+/- 0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	
AAC	0.05%	0.1%	+/- 0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	
ADC	2.76%	3.0%	+/- 1.1%	1.9%	4.1%	
ADP	0.14%	0.4%	+/- 0.4%	0.0%	0.8%	
APC	57.04%	53.0%	+/- 6.0%	47.0%	59.0%	
APGA	0.06%	0.0%	+/- 0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
APM	0.02%	0.1%	+/- 0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	
APP	0.15%	0.2%	+/- 0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	
BP	0.01%	0.1%	+/- 0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	
LP	0.07%	0.1%	+/- 0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	
NNPP	0.02%	0.1%	+/- 0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	
NRM	0.03%	0.0%	+/- 0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
PDP	5.93%	6.1%	+/- 1.3%	4.8%	7.4%	
PRP	0.10%	0.1%	+/- 0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	
SDP	33.11%	36.5%	+/- 5.7%	30.8%	42.2%	
YPP	0.11%	0.2%	+/- 0.2%	0.0%	0.4%	
ZLP	0.03%	0.0%	+/- 0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	

Source: Yiaga Africa WTV Kogi 2023



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Representativeness of #WatchingTheVote (WTV) Process & Results Verification for Transparency (PRVT) Statistical Sample of Polling Units by State (and LGAs) in Kogi										
LGAs	All Polling Units (PUs)				Statistical Sample of Polling Units (PUs)				%_Diff_PU	%Diff_RVs
	PUs	%PUs	RVs	%RVs	PUs	%PUs	RVs	%RVs		
ADAVI	217	6.19%	114,663	5.93%	19	6.33%	9,830	5.95%	-0.15%	-0.02%
AJAOKUTA	146	4.16%	96,504	4.99%	12	4.00%	5,824	3.52%	0.16%	1.47%
ANKPA	292	8.32%	180,095	9.32%	25	8.33%	15,423	9.33%	-0.01%	-0.02%
BASSA	130	3.71%	69,376	3.59%	12	4.00%	6,107	3.70%	-0.29%	-0.11%
DEKINA	352	10.03%	187,881	9.72%	30	10.00%	16,436	9.95%	0.03%	-0.23%
IBAJI	174	4.96%	90,556	4.69%	15	5.00%	8,370	5.07%	-0.04%	-0.38%
IDAH	120	3.42%	64,519	3.34%	10	3.33%	4,808	2.91%	0.09%	0.43%
IGALAMELA/ODOLU	140	3.99%	77,577	4.01%	11	3.67%	6,474	3.92%	0.32%	0.10%
IJUMU	121	3.45%	66,482	3.44%	11	3.67%	7,182	4.35%	-0.22%	-0.91%
KABBA/BUNU	156	4.45%	87,162	4.51%	14	4.67%	6,898	4.17%	-0.22%	0.34%
KOGI . K. K.	105	2.99%	63,342	3.28%	9	3.00%	4,471	2.71%	-0.01%	0.57%
LOKOJA	273	7.78%	157,248	8.14%	23	7.67%	14,710	8.90%	0.12%	-0.77%
MOPA MORO	53	1.51%	26,827	1.39%	4	1.33%	1,933	1.17%	0.18%	0.22%
OFU	184	5.25%	101,964	5.28%	16	5.33%	8,675	5.25%	-0.09%	0.03%
OGORI MANGOGO	67	1.91%	17,688	0.92%	6	2.00%	1,705	1.03%	-0.09%	-0.12%
OKEHI	188	5.36%	94,456	4.89%	16	5.33%	7,260	4.39%	0.03%	0.49%
OKENE	284	8.10%	151,243	7.83%	24	8.00%	14,244	8.62%	0.10%	-0.80%
OLAMABORO	174	4.96%	105,864	5.48%	15	5.00%	9,256	5.60%	-0.04%	-0.12%
OMALA	148	4.22%	74,537	3.86%	12	4.00%	6,831	4.13%	0.22%	-0.28%
YAGBA EAST	82	2.34%	53,436	2.76%	7	2.33%	4,789	2.90%	0.00%	-0.13%
YAGBA WEST	102	2.91%	51,234	2.65%	9	3.00%	4,002	2.42%	-0.09%	0.23%

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Grand Total	3,508	100.00%	1,932,654	100.00%	300	100.00%	165,228	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Representativeness of #WatchingTheVote (WTV) Process & Results Verification for Transparency (PRVT) Statistical Sample of Polling Units by State (and LGAs) in Imo State										
LGAs	All Polling Units (PUs)				Statistical Sample of Polling Units (PUs)				%_Diff_PU	%Diff_RVs
	PUs	%PUs	RVs	%RVs	PUs	%PUs	RVs	%RVs		
ABOH MBAISE	208	4.41%	111,207	4.60%	13	4.33%	6,579	4.34%	0.07%	0.25%
AHIAZU MBAISE	184	3.90%	98,887	4.09%	12	4.00%	7,162	4.73%	-0.10%	-0.64%
EHIME MBANO	154	3.26%	79,212	3.27%	9	3.00%	4,447	2.93%	0.26%	0.34%
EZINIHITE	174	3.69%	91,595	3.79%	11	3.67%	5,598	3.69%	0.02%	0.09%
IDEATO NORTH	194	4.11%	86,905	3.59%	13	4.33%	5,352	3.53%	-0.22%	0.06%
IDEATO SOUTH	152	3.22%	79,310	3.28%	9	3.00%	4,540	3.00%	0.22%	0.28%
IHITE UBOMA	117	2.48%	52,108	2.15%	8	2.67%	3,885	2.56%	-0.19%	-0.41%
IKEDURU	227	4.81%	119,987	4.96%	14	4.67%	7,702	5.08%	0.14%	-0.12%
ISIALA MBANO	195	4.13%	99,149	4.10%	12	4.00%	5,814	3.84%	0.13%	0.26%
ISU	122	2.58%	55,203	2.28%	8	2.67%	3,727	2.46%	-0.08%	-0.18%
MBAITOLI	287	6.08%	153,283	6.33%	18	6.00%	9,718	6.41%	0.08%	-0.08%
NGOR OKPALA	193	4.09%	102,048	4.22%	13	4.33%	6,608	4.36%	-0.24%	-0.14%
NJABA	133	2.82%	64,068	2.65%	8	2.67%	4,016	2.65%	0.15%	0.00%
NKWERRE	131	2.78%	59,899	2.48%	9	3.00%	4,431	2.92%	-0.22%	-0.45%
NWANGELE	113	2.39%	55,808	2.31%	6	2.00%	3,223	2.13%	0.39%	0.18%
OBOWO	128	2.71%	68,690	2.84%	8	2.67%	4,068	2.68%	0.05%	0.15%
OGUTA	184	3.90%	95,287	3.94%	13	4.33%	6,682	4.41%	-0.44%	-0.47%
OHAJI EGBEMA	205	4.34%	107,456	4.44%	12	4.00%	6,228	4.11%	0.34%	0.33%
OKIGWE	154	3.26%	76,250	3.15%	10	3.33%	5,325	3.51%	-0.07%	-0.36%
ONUIMO	97	2.06%	36,548	1.51%	7	2.33%	2,868	1.89%	-0.28%	-0.38%
ORLU	204	4.32%	103,223	4.27%	12	4.00%	5,494	3.62%	0.32%	0.64%
ORSU	130	2.75%	57,721	2.39%	9	3.00%	4,250	2.80%	-0.25%	-0.42%

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ORU EAST	165	3.50%	85,902	3.55%	10	3.33%	5,020	3.31%	0.16%	0.24%
ORU WEST	147	3.11%	71,183	2.94%	9	3.00%	4,096	2.70%	0.11%	0.24%
OWERRI MUNICIPAL	238	5.04%	134,194	5.55%	16	5.33%	8,383	5.53%	-0.29%	0.01%
OWERRI NORTH	233	4.94%	134,557	5.56%	15	5.00%	8,407	5.55%	-0.06%	0.01%
OWERRI WEST	251	5.32%	140,242	5.80%	16	5.33%	7,940	5.24%	-0.02%	0.56%
Grand Total	4,720	100.00%	2,419,922	100.00%	300	100.00%	151,563	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%