

**AUGUST 2019**



**YIAGA AFRICA Presents the Watching the Vote 2019 Election Report, Decries Low Turnout, Poor Election Management, Undemocratic Primaries and Assault on Basic Rights**

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WTV team during an Advocacy visit to Bayelsa State Commissioner of Police.

**Bayelsa/Kogi Polls: YIAGA AFRICA Meets Stakeholders, Advocates for Credible, Peaceful Polls**

The November 16th Governorship elections in Bayelsa and Kogi states are fast approaching and it is becoming more imperative to advocate for peaceful and credible elections in both states. There is need for election stakeholders to put mechanisms in place to ensure a participatory, credible and peaceful elections in the states.

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## YIAGA AFRICA Meets Stakeholders, Advocates for Credible, Peaceful Polls

The November 16th Governorship elections in Bayelsa and Kogi states are fast approaching and it is becoming more imperative to advocate for peaceful and credible elections in both states. There is need for election stakeholders to put mechanisms in place to ensure a participatory, credible and peaceful elections in the states.

As the largest citizen movement committed to credible elections in Nigeria, YIAGA AFRICA's Watching the Vote (WTV) has commenced advocacy visits to election stakeholders in both Bayelsa and Kogi states. This is in a bid to share our election observation deployment plan, seek stakeholder partnership and explore areas of collaboration as well as provide information on the pre-election observation deployment for Bayelsa and Kogi states .

The Board and Management of WTV led by Project Director, Cynthia Mbamalu and Board member, Professor Nnamdi Aduba, met with the Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in Bayelsa State, Pastor Monday Udoh Tom and other officials of the commission in the state. The meeting provided an opportunity for YIAGA AFRICA to share the Watching The vote deployment plan for election observation in Bayelsa. The REC welcomed the team, commended YIAGA AFRICA for their work on elections and committed to partnering with YIAGA AFRICA and other credible CSO's to promote and achieve peaceful and credible elections in the state. The REC also shared some of INEC's plans for the Elections and informed the team that the Commission was ready for the commencement of the PVC collection exercise from 2nd September, 2019 in both Bayelsa and Kogi states.

Similarly, the team also met with the Commissioner of Police and the Commandant of National Security and Civil Defense Corps in Bayelsa state to discuss the WTV observation plan for the State and issues of Election Security. Credible elections can only be achieved in an atmosphere of peace and security which requires a collaborative effort from different stakeholders. Accordingly, YIAGA AFRICA shared its plan to commence violence monitoring in the State as part of its pre-election observation effort to help build an early warning system to mitigate electoral violence and also its critical incident tracking on election day. The visit enabled the discussion on how

YIAGA can partner with security agencies and maintain a strong communication channel to help report cases of violence and/or escalate incidents report in the election period.

While informed citizen participation is vital to a credible election, we believe that not only the electoral commission has a role to play in educating voters; Other stakeholders visited during the advocacy visits include the Traditional Rulers Council specially meeting with Pa Alfred Papapreye Diette-Spiff who expressed his delight, while urging the team to swing into action, report any wrong doings to the appropriate authority and help achieve a credible process. In addition, the team also met with the Ijaw Elders Forum who declared readiness to work for credible election as it has already commenced sensitization of the citizens to ensure violence-free elections. In their words, "we will monitor negative utterances and actions of political actors and follow-up to ensure they are prosecuted. Thus, we will be glad to receive credible information from your violence monitoring system, so that we can hold culprits accountable".

For the political parties, the team met with representatives of major political parties in Bayelsa state including the Chairman and Executive members of the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC). During the meeting with the political parties, we discussed the importance of conducting transparent and democratic political party primaries. YIAGA AFRICA also shared its plan to observe political party primaries in a bid to provide recommendations and sought the partnership of the political parties for peaceful and credible elections in the State. #WatchingTheVote is a comprehensive observation of the electoral process, which includes the observation of the political party primaries, pre-election environment in all Local government areas and the election day observation which deploys the Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT). These will be adopted for the observation of the 2019 Bayelsa State Governorship Election.



**YIAGA AFRICA Team with the Deputy Commandant - Ekon Andrew and key officials of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, Bayelsa State**

#WatchingTheVote is a citizen led election observation initiative aimed at enhancing the integrity of elections in Nigeria using technological tools like SMS and evidence-based research methodology tools for election observation. The initiative is designed to promote credible elections and boost citizens confidence in the electoral process through the provision of citizens' oversight on elections throughout the electoral cycle.

# Bayelsa/Kogi Polls: YIAGA AFRICA Trains, Deploys Observers for Political Parties Primary Elections Observation

According to the time table released by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the Bayelsa and Kogi elections, all political party parties must conduct primary elections between 18th August and 5th September, 2019 ahead of the Governorship elections holding on 16th November 2019. The conduct of party primaries remains a precursor to, and indeed a prerequisite for nominating candidates in an election. Political parties are the only association or platforms permitted by law to present candidates for elections. This is as part of efforts to deepen the integrity of the candidate selection process, YIAGA AFRICA Watching The Vote trained and deployed observers to observe the conduct of party primaries to assess their compliance with democratic principles, norms and standards enshrined in the legal framework for elections.

YIAGA AFRICA Watching the Vote will deploy direct observation of the party primaries, interviews and desk review of media reports. For the direct observation, YIAGA AFRICA WTV deploys its State Focal Points (SFPs) to observe party primaries of some of the political parties conducting primaries. The observers are equipped with specially designed checklist that gathers data on the conduct of the primary election in line with party constitutions and guidelines and INEC Regulation on Party Primaries. In addition, the checklist is designed to track inclusion, equality, equity and transparency of the process of the party primaries.

Party primaries play a key role in our elections as citizens are limited to the options provided by the political parties' primaries. As the largest citizen movement committed to credible elections, YIAGA AFRICA's Watching the Vote is concerned about the credibility and transparency of political party primaries as primaries is a major process that determines the credibility of the elections. Nigerian Citizens should as a matter of fact care more about how candidates emerged during political party primary elections.

YIAGA AFRICA Watching the Vote is a non-partisan, independent and Nigeria's largest citizens-led movement dedicated to promoting electoral integrity in Nigeria and Africa. WTV is a comprehensive observation of the electoral process which includes the observation of the political party primaries, pre-election environment in all Local government areas.

YIAGA AFRICA is a non-governmental organization that promotes democratic governance, accountability, human rights and youth civic participation. Our mission is to build, and support democracies anchored on the principles of inclusion, accountability and justice through research, advocacy and capacity development. Our thematic areas include elections, legislative engagement, youth, accountability & justice.



Political Party Primary Election Observation in Bayelsa and Kogi State.

## WTV Electoral Circle



## YIAGA AFRICA Presents the Watching the Vote 2019 Election Report, Decries Low Turnout, Poor Election Management, Undemocratic Primaries and Assault on Basic Rights



From Left: Paul James - Training Manager, Cynthia Mbamalu - Project Director, Dr Hussaini Abdul - Chair of WTV Working Group, Dr. Aisha Abdullahi - Co-Chair of WTV Working Group, Safiya Bichi PREO and M&E Manager

YIAGA AFRICA's Watching the Vote has released a comprehensive report of its observation of the 2019 General elections raising crucial relating to continuous decline in voter turnout, weak election results management, inadequate strategic communications amongst other critical issues. According to the report read by YIAGA AFRICA's Watching the Vote Co-chair Dr Hussaini Abdu, Nigeria lost an opportunity to consolidate on the gains of the 2015 elections and deepen her democratic transition.

The 2019 elections according to the report "were not the elections Nigerians wanted; they were not the elections Nigerians expected; and, most importantly, they were not the elections Nigerians deserved. Nigeria needs a national conversation on a new electoral design or framework that responds to prevailing socio-political and economic realities. INEC must improve its capacity to deliver credible elections and political parties must play according to the rules. Failure to do so could imperil Nigeria's 20 years democracy." While the report highlighted that the official results announced by INEC were consistent with YIAGA AFRICA's Parallel Vote Tabulation results estimates. Showing that the results reflect the votes cast at the polling units, it noted that the PVT findings revealed certain lapses and reports of malfeasance which impacted on the quality of the process in some polling units and states. However, unless the misconduct and malfeasance occurred in a statistically significant number of polling units across the states the PVT would have captured them as critical incidents which undermined the outcome. The report contains evidence which make makes it clear that a lot was less than desired, and that the overall outcome (however valid) is not necessarily vindication of the process.

According to the report, elections in Nigeria fail to meet standards or inspire confidence because of poor performance attributed to lack of effective planning. When election officials are not appointed in due time, when procurement processes are delayed, when ad-hoc officials are not recruited and trained early, elections will fail. Until December 7, 2017, INEC had only 50% of its leadership full constituted. 33 states of the federation had no Resident Electoral Commissioners Twenty-three months to the 2019 elections. It took over 1 year and 6 months for President Buhari to fully appoint National commissioners to the electoral commission. The delay in constituting the commission gravely impacted election planning and implementation.

The report also highlighted issues related to lapses in the design, communication and lack of uniformity in the implementation of the guidelines issued by the electoral commission. There was no clarity on who reserves the authority to cancel ballots and the levels where cancellation will take place. In 97% of sampled polling units in the Presidential elections, no individual was permitted to vote if their names did not appear on the register of voters while in 7% of polling units the Smart Card Readers was not used throughout for the accreditation of voters. Of most concern was the failure to publicly post the presidential election results at the end of counting in 19% of polling units.

The report also reiterated that for the presidential elections, YIAGA AFRICA WTV findings indicate that INEC Presiding Officers electronically transmitted the Presidential election results using the Smart Card Reader in 65% of polling units. Collation officers exercised excessive discretionary powers in cancelling results and declared winners where the total number of registered voters in cancelled polling

units will affect the margin of lead between candidates in flagrant violation of Section 26 and 53 of the 2010 Electoral Act as amended. Overall, the percentage of cancelled ballots announced by INEC was 3.3% of all registered voters. This is four times higher than the rate from 2015 when registered voters in cancelled polling units was less than 1% of all registered votes. INEC to undertake a public investigation into the cancellation of ballots and to take appropriate legal actions should it be discovered that any INEC staff or collation officer cancelled ballots with intent to affect the election outcome.

### **Undemocratic Party Primaries**

Political parties were also not left out as the report highlighted that Political parties deliberately flouted their guidelines, constitutions, INEC Guidelines on Party Primaries as well as the Electoral Act. The party primaries were signposted by financial inducement and horse-trading. WTV observers reported inducement of delegates with local and foreign currencies during direct and indirect primaries. WTV observed deliberate substitution of candidates who won in primaries with supposed “anointed choices” of party leaders. This runs contrary to the provisions of the electoral act and recent judicial decisions on nomination of candidates. Most parties failed to submit the list of delegates to INEC prior to the conduct of primary elections. Others conducted parallel primaries in contravention of laid down rules. This led to violence and disruption especially in Benue, Delta, Zamfara and Imo states.

### **Election Security**

In the build-up to the election, YIAGA AFRICA and Nigerians received assurances from security agencies on their non-partisanship and professionalism in the management of election security operations. INEC also informed stakeholders of assurances from security agencies to collaborate and ensure effective deployment for the elections. Despite these assurances, there were reported cases of violence leading to loss of lives and property in pre-election period and election day. In some cases, security agencies especially officers of the Nigeria army disrupted elections in some polling units and restricted the movement of election observers on election day contrary to the provision of Section 29 of the 2015 Electoral Amendment Act which limits the role of the military to the provision of security support for deployment and safety of election materials and personnel. These incidents were mainly reported in Akwa Ibom, Rivers and Bayelsa states. A YIAGA AFRICA WTV observer was also arrested and detained in Kafanchan, Kaduna state during the Presidential elections.

### **Declining Voter turnout**

YIAGA AFRICA's PVT estimates indicated that turnout for the national presidential election will be less than the voter turnout rate for the 2015 Presidential elections based on official turnout figures collected from the PVT's representative statistical sample of polling units across the 774 LGAs and 36 states plus the FCT. INEC's official turnout rate of 35% indicates a decline in voter turnout. This reflects a growing sense of disconnect between the Nigerian people and the political elite. It also raises questions on the credibility of Nigeria's voter registration figures.

### **Assault on basic rights and freedoms especially press freedom and civil society**

YIAGA AFRICA notes a budding trend of voter intimidation and assault against unsuspecting individuals, press and civil society during elections. Voters were intimidated, harassed or assaulted in 9% of polling units during accreditation and voting. INEC polling officials were also intimidated, harassed or assaulted in 7% of polling units during accreditation and voting. In 11% of polling units, political party agents attempted to influence voters or INEC officials. YIAGA AFRICA received verified critical incidents reports of APC and PDP agents or supporters attacking observers, polling staff or voters; snatching ballot boxes; and destroying election materials. These incidents though isolated - are examples of egregious misconduct that undermine the electoral process. If Nigerian democracy is to move forward, party leaders must ensure that they encourage and model peaceful engagement with the electoral process and urge their supporters to act in accordance with the electoral guidelines and the law.

Recommendations abound as YIAGA AFRICA urges INEC to undertake a comprehensive post-election review of the 2019 electoral timeline to identify gaps in its preparations and to clearly communicate with the public plans to address the structural or other issues that have resulted in three successive national elections marred by logistics challenges. While also urging INEC to be proactive, YIAGA AFRICA suggests INEC review its training procedures for ad hoc polling staff in view of failures to consistently adhere to counting procedures such as counting the number of unused ballot papers, counting the number of spoilt presidential ballot papers, counting the number of counterfoils for the presidential ballot papers and sorting the presidential ballot papers into piles with a pile for each party and another pile for rejected ballots.



## YIAGA AFRICA Concludes Parallel Vote Tabulation Academy 5 for Bayelsa, Kogi Election

For YIAGA AFRICA's Watching the Vote Master Trainers, the journey began in 2017 in preparation for the 2017 Governorship elections in Anambra Elections where they were deployed as trainers to all 21 Local Government Areas in the state to train over 500 citizen observers who successfully observed the election in the state. The team who are now Master Trainers have subsequently trained over 1200 polling unit (PU) election observers, mobile observers and collation observers in Ekiti, Osun and the 3,906 Polling Units and Local Government supervisors who served as mobile observers during the 2019 general elections.

Ahead of the November 16 Governorship elections in Bayelsa and Kogi State, YIAGA AFRICA's under its Watching The Vote project has concluded the training of its Master Trainers tagged the Parallel Vote Tabulation Academy 5, (PVT Academy 5). The training which was held on the 28th and 29th of August, 2019 in Abuja is to prepare the team for the observation of both the pre-election environment and the election day procedure in both Kogi and Bayelsa state.

Leading the training session is the WTV Training Manager, Paul James who emphasized the importance of increased public knowledge of the Parallel Vote Tabulation election observation methodology even as the team plans to deploy for Bayelsa and Kogi state. According to Paul James, WTV Master Trainers have a role to play in ensuring election stakeholders understand the PVT to avoid misinterpretation of the methodology.

The PVT academy 5 according to Paul James is aimed to prepare Master Trainers for pre-election environment and election day observation training across all Local Government Areas in both Kogi and Bayelsa states. He said, YIAGA AFRICA is determined to maintain the highest standard of election observation in Africa and this has necessitated the consistent training of Master Trainers especially ahead of major elections in the country.

He said the training further refresh participants knowledge on importance of Information technology which has aided election observation overtime and provides a platform of making impact positive

impact on Nigeria. While timely and accurate information remains the crux of the PVT project, participants were also urged to follow all protocols, rules and procedures governing election observation in Nigeria as instituted by the Independent National Electoral Commission.

Participants also went through practical sessions on how to draw PVT samples. Other calculations include the margin of error which determines the precision of data received by Polling Units observers which is usually based on sample size, response rate and homogeneity of data.



## Kogi/Bayelsa Polls: YIAGA AFRICA to Engage Citizens on Prime FM, Peoples FM



In a bid to continue to increase citizen participation in the electoral process, YIAGA AFRICA's WatchingTheVote is set to commence a citizen engagement radio program on Prime FM and Peoples FM in Kogi and Bayelsa states respectively. The Radio program tagged "Watching The Vote hour" kicks off in September on Prime FM 98.1 Kogi state every Thursday by 10am and also on Peoples FM 93.1 Bayelsa, 11am on Wednesday.

WTV Hour is designed to engage citizens and election stakeholders ahead of the upcoming Governorship elections in both Kogi and Bayelsa state. The Live Radio show will provide a platform for citizens in the states to engage election stakeholders while discussing critical issues related to the upcoming elections.

WTV hour will provide timely information on both the pre-election environment and the election day activities to promote active and informed participation and counter misinformation. During the WTV Hour, officials from the Independent National Electoral Commission will be invited guest to provide information on how best citizens can engage the electoral process from an informed perspective. The platform will also provide an avenue for INEC to tell the people of Bayelsa and Kogi their level of preparedness to conduct a credible poll. Considering it is a live program, citizens are encouraged to call in and ask questions relating to the elections and also make their comments on WTV findings in the electoral process. Other Stakeholders like the security agency will also have opportunity to share security tips and other information to citizens to promote peaceful elections.

Watching the Vote hour is brought to you by YIAGA AFRICA and her Technical Partner, National Democratic Institute (NDI) with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the British Department for International Development (DFID).

# COLLECTION OF PERMANENT VOTERS' CARDS (PVCs)

Preparation for Bayelsa & Kogi Governorship Elections



The exercise will commence on  
**2nd September, 2019**



and will end on  
**30th September, 2019**



Time/Days for collection  
**9am - 3pm**  
**Monday - Friday**



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