



Pre-Election Statement on the 2017 Anambra Gubernatorial Election Thursday, November 16, 2017 Delivered at Finotel Hotel, Awka

Protocols

Introduction

Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives us great pleasure to welcome you to the Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth & Advancement (YIAGA) **Watching The Vote (WTV) Pre-Election Press Briefing** on the 2017 governorship election in Anambra. This press briefing is the second in series of press conferences to be hosted by YIAGA WTV during the 2017 Anambra governorship election.

On November 18, 2017, the people of Anambra state will go to the polls to elect a governor that will lead the state for the next four years. This is the fifth governorship election the electoral commission will conduct since the 2015 general elections. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), a total number of 2,158,171 registered voters are expected to participate in the elections. 50.3% of registered voters are women while 49.6% are men signalling a high level of women participation in the electoral process. Students constitute the highest number of registered voters with 48% representation in the register. 37 candidates from 37 political parties are in the race for the governorship seat. This is the first time in the history of elections that a total number of 37 candidates will be contesting for the governorship seat in an election. The election promises to be a *high-stake* election that will further test the country's democratic credentials ahead of the 2019 general elections.

The WTV is “Driven by Data – For All Nigerians – Beholden to None!” As such for Election Day, WTV will employ the parallel vote tabulation (PVT) methodology – the gold standard for citizen observation. On Election Day, WTV will deploy **500 stationary observers to a representative statistical sample of 250 polling units** and 29 mobile observers in all 21 local government areas (LGAs) of Anambra state. This will enable YIAGA to provide **timely and accurate information on the conduct of accreditation, voting, and counting** as well as to **independently verify the official results for the Anambra gubernatorial election** as announced by the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC). If the announced results reflect the ballots cast at polling units then we will confirm the outcome. However, if the announced results have been manipulated and do not match the results posted at polling units then YIAGA will expose it.

About YIAGA

YIAGA is a non-governmental organization promoting democracy, constitutionalism and youth participation in Africa. YIAGA achieves its goal through research, capacity development and policy advocacy. YIAGA operates as a citizens' movement poised with the onerous mandate of enhancing the quality of democratic governance, public accountability and civic participation. YIAGA has been involved in election observation since 2007 and it is one of the leading organizations working on elections in Nigeria.

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The YIAGA **Watching The Vote (WTV)** 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 citizens observation of electoral activities in the electoral cycle. YIAGA is enhancing the quality of democracy in Nigeria using Watching The Vote as a platform for promoting cutting-edge electoral policies, credible elections, civic participation and democratic consolidation.

WTV PRE-ELECTION OBSERVATIONS

As part of our efforts to deepen electoral integrity, YIAGA launched the Pre-Election Observation (PREO) component of the WTV project in September 2017. Under the PREO, YIAGA collected pre-election environment data from citizen observers and shared reports on election day preparedness by key stakeholders and early warning signs for electoral violence. INEC has accredited YIAGA to observe election day activities.

The PREO initiative entailed deploying long-term observers (LTOs) in each of the 21 LGAs of Anambra state to gather systematic information about the pre-election environment, including early warning signs of electoral violence. To achieve this, WTV LTOs were equipped with a checklist to observe and report on the electoral and political environment in the state. All WTV LTOs reside within the LGAs where they observe activities relating to voter education, political campaigns, marginalized groups (youth, women, and people with disabilities) and election-related violence in the pre-election period. The observers report their observation findings on a bi-monthly basis via coded text messages to YIAGA's computer database. Within reporting timeframes, observers also report on early warning signs and critical incidents demanding urgent attention as soon as they happen. In addition to reports from the LTOs, YIAGA also deployed a team of electoral experts and researchers to assess the political environment for the election. The team conducted interviews and consultations with relevant electoral stakeholders about the process. PREO reports have been compiled and shared with relevant election stakeholders for needed response, including journalists in Anambra.

YIAGA WTV PREO observation findings are not statistically representative of the entire state but does provide an indication of emerging trends during the pre-election period. It is important to note that YIAGA does not rely on sample-based observation to carry out its PREO. Key findings from the PREO include:

1. Over the last two months, the level of INEC's preparations for the elections has increased. As of November 9, our WTV LTOs reported increased level of preparations by INEC in 92% of the 21 LGAs.
2. Voter education messages targeted at youth, women and persons with disability was minimal. INEC's effort to reach these target groups didn't enjoy sufficient collaboration from other stakeholders like the National Orientation Agency.
3. There are predominantly three major forms of hate speech in Anambra state; hate speech on the basis of gender, faith and age. Our finding reveals the following local governments are

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flashpoints of violence Anaocha, Aguata, Idemili North, Ekwusigo, Nnewi South and Orumba South LGA.

4. Reports on violent physical or verbal attacks on political party rallies and meetings remains relatively few. However, there were few reports of vandalism and disruption of property belonging to candidates or supporters. This was observed in 14% of the 21 LGAs.
5. Political campaigns have been dominated by four political parties. They are: All Progressives Congress (APC); All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), and United Progressive Party (UPP).
6. Women and youth turnout for voter registration is high. However, the level of youth and women candidacy in the Anambra election is abysmally poor. 5 out of 37 candidates are women and 4 out of 37 candidates fall within the youth bracket of 35 years.

EMERGING CONCERNS ON ELECTORAL INTEGRITY

YIAGA WTV is concerned about the following issues, which are capable of undermining the credibility of the elections if not addressed:

1. **Election Security:** There are public concerns with the level and extent of cooperation between INEC and security agencies, particularly the Nigerian Police. The integrity of the elections could be compromised if the security and safety of citizens, election officials, observers, journalists, as well as the deployment of sensitive and non-sensitive materials to the polling units is not guaranteed. The Police has announced it will conduct raids on '*black spots*' and enforce a 'stop and search' order during the elections. We expect the security agencies will perform their duties with a high sense of responsibility, civility, professionalism and transparency.
2. **Compliance with Results Counting and Announcement Guidelines:** Based on the INEC guidelines, polling unit results shall be posted at the polling unit using FORM EC 60 E. The Chairman of INEC, Professor Mahmood Yakubu reiterated the need for posting of results at the polling unit during the INEC stakeholders meeting on Tuesday 14th November, 2017 in Awka. Judging from history, we are concerned polling officials will not adhere to this directive or comply with the guideline. We would like to reiterate that posting results at the polling unit will enhance the integrity of the elections therefore Supervising Polling Officers (SPOs) and INEC monitors should ensure Presiding Officers post the polling unit results at the polling units using FORM EC 60 E.
3. **Access to Collation Centres:** According to INEC, collation centres are accessible to accredited observers, party agents and media. Experience has shown that duly accredited observers and journalists are often times denied access to collation centres at the ward and local government level by security agencies. Observers have indicated interest to observe the collation of results at all levels. YIAGA WTV is concerned that duly accredited observers may be prevented from observing results collation in some centres particularly in centres

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with a large number of register voters and polling units otherwise called ‘swing wards or polling units.

WTV ELECTION DAY OBSERVATION

YIAGA’s WTV Election Day deployment is based on the Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) methodology – the gold standard for citizen observation. The PVT is an advanced observation methodology that employs well-established statistical principles and utilizes sophisticated information technologies. YIAGA’s WTV provides timely and accurate information on the conduct of accreditation, voting, and counting as well as independently verifies the official governorship results as announced by the INEC. YIAGA deployed the methodology in last year’s governorship election in Ondo state and verified the official results.

For the 2017 Anambra gubernatorial election the WTV 500 stationary observers are deployed to a representative statistical sample of 250 polling units located in all 21 LGAs. 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 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 unit for each LGA. For example, Aguata LGA has 6.5% of all the polling units in Anambra (300 of 4,608) and 6.8% (17 of 250) of the sampled polling units in Aguata LGA. While not identical, the percentages for every LGA are very close clearly demonstrating that the PVT sample is representative of the entire state (Appendix I demonstrates the representativeness of sampled polling units).

YIAGA’s WTV 500 stationary observers and 29 mobile observers were carefully recruited according to established criteria to ensure that they are non-partisan. All YIAGA citizen observers had to sign a pledge of neutrality and were given a code of conduct to which they have to adhere when observing. Every YIAGA citizen observer attended an initial training and subsequently participated in Election Day simulation exercises. The trainings covered INEC Election Day procedures, how to observe the process and how to submit observer reports via coded text messages.

On Election Day, WTV observers will report to their assigned polling unit at 7:00am and remain there throughout setup, accreditation and voting, counting and the announcement and posting of the official results. Throughout the day, every citizen observer at sampled polling units will send in ten coded text messages to the data centre located here at Finotel Hotel, Awka, Anambra.

Coded text messages sent by WTV citizen observers will provide detailed information on the conduct of the process as well as the official results for the polling unit as announced by the poll officials. Over the course of Election Day, YIAGA’s data centre will receive 5,000 text messages containing approximately 57,000 individual pieces of information about the 2017 Anambra governorship election. Once the text messages are received at YIAGA’s data centre, they will be processed and reviewed to ensure the information is complete, authentic and accurate. this will provide YIAGA a comprehensive and representative understanding of the quality of the electoral process on Election Day.

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On Election Day, YIAGA's data centre will open at 6:00 am and will remain open until counting has finished at all sampled polling units and all WTV citizen observers have sent all ten of their observation reports. YIAGA's data centre is open to the public and media at all times.

Throughout Election Day, YIAGA will provide as appropriate updates on the conduct of the election based on the near real-time reports from its observers. These will be released at the data centre and posted on social media at YIAGA's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/yiaga.org) and YIAGA's Twitter page (@YIAGA). On Sunday, November 19, 2017 at 10am at Finotel Hotel, Awka, YIAGA will share its preliminary WTV findings on the conduct of set-up, accreditation, voting and counting. This preliminary statement will contain detailed information on every facet of the Election Day process.

Immediately after INEC announces the official results for the gubernatorial election, YIAGA will hold its own press conference and issue its election results verification statement. Verification of the election results will be based on the INEC official results as announced by poll officials at the 250 sampled polling stations. **WTV is NOT an exit poll. No voter is asked for whom he/she voted.**

Since WTV is based on official results from a representative random sample of polling units, YIAGA 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 fall within YIAGA's estimated range, then the public, political parties and candidates should have confidence that the official results reflect the ballots cast at polling units; if the announced official results do not reflect the ballot cast, YIAGA will expose it.**

Conclusion

YIAGA is ready to observe the 2017 Anambra gubernatorial elections. To demonstrate our readiness, YIAGA is conducting full simulation exercise today Thursday, November 16 at Finotel, Nnamdi Azikiwe Avenue, Opp. Nwa Uzu Junction Agu Awka, Anambra state involving all 500 WTV citizen observers sending in practice coded text messages to YIAGA's computer database. This will test every aspect of WTV to ensure that all citizen observers are prepared and that all reporting systems function properly on Election Day.

YIAGA calls on Anambra voters to go to the polls confident that their votes will count. WTV will provide independent verification of the election results as announced by INEC. YIAGA's WTV appeals to INEC permanent and ad hoc staff, all security agents, political party candidates and their supporters as well as all Anambra people to work together to ensure that the Anambra gubernatorial election is credible and peaceful. Election Day is expected to be long for voters who will spend hours at the polling unit queuing for accreditation and voting. It is likely to be hot and tempers may rise. We urge the electorate to remain calm even in the face of challenges that may arise even as every Anambra voter has the right to participate irrespective of party affiliation. In the interest of transparency and accountability, we recommend that INEC to make polling unit results publicly available. This would enhance the confidence of political parties, contestants and the public in the accuracy of the official results.

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YIAGA wishes to encourage all registered, PVC-holding voters of Anambra to go out on Saturday, 18th November, 2017 to vote their choice in the Governorship election.

Long live Anambra state, long live Nigeria.
Thank you.

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Learn more about #WatchingTheVote at www.watchingthevote.org or on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/yiaga.org or on Twitter @YIAGA.

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Appendix I

YIAGA's WTV PVT is able to provide timely and accurate information on accreditation, voting, and counting as well as to independently verify the official election results because observers are deployed to a representative statistical sample. The sample is carefully constructed according to well test and long established statistical principles.

For the 2017 Anambra gubernatorial election 500 stationary observers are deployed to a representative statistical sample of 250 polling units located in all 21 local government areas (LGAs). The PVT sample of polling units 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 unit for each LGA. For example, Aguata LGA has 6.5% of all the polling units in Anambra (300 of 4,608) and 6.8% (17 of 250) of the sampled polling units in Aguata LGA. While not identical, the percentages for every LGA are very close clearly demonstrating that the PVT sample is representative of the entire state.

Appendix I: Distribution of All Polling Units and PVT Sampled Polling Units for 2017 Anambra Gubernatorial Election							
S/N	LGA	Registered Voters	Polling Units	Percent Polling Units	Sampled Polling Units	Percent Sampled Polling Units	Observers
1.	Aguata	122,326	300	6.5%	17	6.8%	34
2.	Anambra East	84,702	200	4.3%	10	4.0%	20
3.	Anambra West	51,086	158	3.4%	9	3.6%	18
4.	Anaocha	96,105	310	6.7%	17	6.8%	34
5.	Awka North	56,284	130	2.8%	7	2.8%	14
6.	Awka South	151,599	255	5.5%	14	5.6%	28
7.	Ayamelum	69,022	173	3.8%	9	3.6%	18
8.	Dunukofia	64,164	146	3.2%	8	3.2%	16
9.	Ekwusigo	75,437	175	3.8%	10	4.0%	20
10.	Idemili North	189,249	306	6.6%	16	6.4%	32
11.	Idemili South	101,501	200	4.3%	11	4.4%	22
12.	Ihala	126,668	278	6.0%	15	6.0%	30
13.	Njikoka	88,793	201	4.4%	11	4.4%	22
14.	Nnewi North	127,975	198	4.3%	11	4.4%	22
15.	Nnewi South	75,392	295	6.4%	16	6.4%	32
16.	Ogbaru	157,664	293	6.4%	16	6.4%	32
17.	Onitsha North	145,921	201	4.4%	11	4.4%	22
18.	Onitsha South	140,381	200	4.3%	10	4.0%	20
19.	Orumba North	63,517	231	5.0%	13	5.2%	26
20.	Orumba South	80,829	192	4.2%	10	4.0%	20
21.	Oyi	89,556	166	3.6%	9	3.6%	18
	Total	2,158,171	4,608	100.0%	250	100.0%	500