

2019 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THE EYES OF AN OBSERVER IN KOGI STATE.

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BACKGROUND

Elections is a process and by provisions of the electoral Act 2010 as (Amended) and the constitution of federal republic of Nigeria 1999 as Amended and other relevant Laws mandated and give Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) power to conduct elections in Nigeria. Register and regulate the activities of political parties and other relevant stakeholders including Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations, Security Agencies working on Elections, are also regulated.

The 2019 General Elections which include the Presidential and National Assembly Elections, Governorship and State Assembly Elections, although the Governorship Elections was not held in Kogi State like any other state as that will be done at a date to be fix by INEC at a later date in November this year.

ACCREDITATION OF OBSERVERS

As it is the policy of INEC to accredit relevant Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Professional Associations, Foreign and Domestic Observers. The CHRCC, participated and was accredited through the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room and recruited observers for Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) in Kogi State with about 205 observers that observe across the 21 Local Government Areas in Kogi State.

OBSERVATIONS

- We observed and noted the postponement of Presidential and National Assembly elections by one week.
- And that Elections were held subsequently.
- Observers' kits were not made available as expected therefore increased the cost and logistics for the observers
- Electoral Process were disrupted by political parties and their supporters
- Security personnel compromise and display lack of professionalism in many instance.
- Political parties engaged in impunity and vote buying
- Fake security men were noticed,
- Fake political party observers were noticed contrary to the provisions of Electoral Act and rules and guidelines as provided by INEC.
- Inadequate publicity, information materials were not provided by INEC particularly training manuals for Elections stakeholders
- Inadequate training for Ad-hoc staff, Returning and Collation Officers.
- Lack of Synergy among security personnel and other relevant Elections stakeholders
- We observed lots of ignorance among electorates, on Electoral process.
- Interference by government officials in collaboration with security agents particularly on Election Day was noticed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We wish to make the following recommendations that will make elections more credible, fair, peaceful and acceptable.

- Adequate and timely enlightenment by INEC on Electoral Process to relevant stakeholders on Electoral process
- Adequate and timely Recruitment and training of Ad-hoc staff, Collation and Returning Officers should be improve upon.
- Printing of Accreditations Tags should be decentralise and all Party Agent Tags should carry names and individual photograph
- Elections Security Architecture should be re-organise and INEC should have its own Police, DSS and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence that will be train and be deploy to work on electoral process before, during and after the Elections
- Political Party structures and activities should be look into and all impunity such as pronouncement that aggravate electoral fraud, violence and other malpractice by political parties and their supporters should be properly sanction.
- While money cannot be taken away from politics and elections, effort should be made to discourage the current rate of Vote Buying and Selling
- The current trend where politicians and government officers recruit fake security men that allow them to disrupt Electoral Process, snatch and destroy Electoral materials in collaboration with security personnel should be properly look into.

- More Training on electoral process and election terminologies for the media practitioners should be intensified.
- INEC should continue to maintain permanent Radio and Television programmes at state level

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we wish to commend INEC for conducting Elections in 2019 in accordance with the provisions of the relevant laws. If all stakeholders works together, we shall continue to improve on our Electoral Process. We also commend the existing collaborations and partnership between INCE and relevant CSOs in making the electoral process better.

Long live Federal Republic of Nigeria!