Published in Nigeria in 2023 by
Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development - CJID
53 Mambolo Street, Zone 2, Wuse, Abuja.
www.thecjid.org
info@thecjid.org

Copyright © Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted by the Nigerian Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorisation from Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development.

CJID Post-Election Incidence Report


For general information on The Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development, please contact us through: info@thecjid.org. An online version of this report is published on: https://thecjid.org/reports/

About CJID
The Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) is a West African media innovation and development think tank.

Founded in 2014 as a non-governmental organisation in Nigeria, the Centre has been a leader in investigative journalism, innovation, open data, verification, the promotion of journalist welfare and safety, elections and the freedom of information and expression. In 2020, the CJID expanded its footprints beyond Nigeria and moved into specific niches in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia and The Gambia.
Vision
Enable a media landscape that advances the values of democracy

Mission
Leverage journalism, innovation and open data to promote democratic accountability in the service of inclusive and sustainable development.

Our Mandate
- Build West Africa’s media capacity to provide an effective interface for civil society and governance institutions
- Incubate sustainable media franchises through technology and business model innovations for a digital age
- Deepen the development discourse in the media and tackle information disorder through investigative stories and policy research
- Advocate for freedom of information and expression, digital rights and other forms of human rights
- Support elections, judiciary, legislative institutions, and law enforcement as accountability mechanisms for democracy.
The Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) deployed fifty-six observers across thirty-one states in the country to observe election day events and keep the general public informed and engaged.

Apart from Anambra, Bayelsa, Edo, Ekiti, Imo, Kogi, Osun, and Ondo, only 28 of Nigeria’s 36 states held governorship elections, but all 36 states held elections for the state houses of assemblies. The principles of the Electoral Act of 2022 and INEC rules, which allow for the use of technology, adjusted timetables, etc., governed election activities.

The elections, which were initially scheduled to take place on March 11th, 2023, were moved to “allow for adequate timing to reconfigure the Bi-modal Voter Accreditation system ahead of the gubernatorial and state assembly polls”.

The CJID issued a mid-day statement on events from the field as the polls went on. It concentrated on a number of issues, including the polls opening at noon, press attacks, and information disorder. So, this report seeks to provide an overview of the major incidents that observers in significant thematic areas reported during the elections.
Data was sourced from the 56 roving observers deployed across 31 states by the CJID. The CJID trained its observers who were deployed in this election and tracked 8 types of incidents to inform its reportage. These include:

- **Vote Buying**: Catalogs incidents of unlawful acts during the voting process carried out by various actors. It also captures details of party’s involved and the nature of the inducement.
- **Malfunctioning BVAS**: Catalogs instances of the BVAS malfunctioning in the polling unit and the cause of the Malfunction.
- **Access denial**: Catalogs incidences of denial of access of observers, voters, and any other lawful party into the polling units or collation centres.
- **PWD Inaccess**: Catalogues of the provision of assistive materials in polling units and general accessibility.
- **Ballot snatching**: Catalogs incidences of ballot boxes being taken away from the Polling Units
- **P.U disruptions**: Catalogues incidents of disruptions to the voting process by any other actor other than INEC.
- **Delayed deployment**: Catalogues incidents of deployment of election officers and materials past the official time of 8:30am.
- **Election Malpractice**: Catalogues instances of illegal behavior committed by various actors during the voting process. This includes—but is not limited to—illegal parties assisting voters with disabilities, INEC staff not acting in accordance with the regulations, posting results that are not authorized by political parties, etc.
As of the time of publishing, the CJID incident tracker has recorded a total of 109 incidences; vote buying had the highest number of incidences (27 recorded cases) and Access denial has the lowest number of incidences (2 recorded cases).

Interested readers could find the state stratification of data here: https://lookerstudio.google.com/reporting/c38592a3-6045-48d9-bedd-43e0bbfb9913/page/p_46tc9j8a4c

Here is a summary of our findings:

Polling Time and Logistics

Data gathered across observed polling units in 18 states

18% A little above 18% of the Polling Units observed started election processes before 8:30 am

45% About 45% of the Polling Units started between 8:31 am-9:59am

36% About 36% of the Polling Units started after 10:00 am
The earliest time recorded for accreditation was 8:22 am at Ibadan North LG Ward 11 PU6 in Oyo State, and the latest time recorded was 1:11 pm at Kontagora LGA Ward Central-02 PU Kofar Gidan Madawaki-06 in Niger state. The average opening poll time from data gotten from these polling units is 9:58 am.

**Deployment**

The chart shows that about 5 per cent of the observed polling units (PUs) recorded delayed deployment of election materials. By counting, the observatory specifically highlights 5 incidents of delayed deployment recorded in the observed areas. These were all recorded in the North-East geo-political zone of Nigeria. This was most severe in the Waikato LGA’s Rafin Kada Ward of Taraba State, where it was reported that materials were not available in most polling units as of 8:30 am when the voting process was supposed to commence.

It was observed that there were no assistive materials for PWD deployed in 12 PUs, 9 of which were in Kwara state.
The presidential election witnessed a major setback in the BVAS working process, however from the observed polling units, we saw a decline in the issue of BVAS malfunction from the presidential election, but there were still cases of malfunction, affecting the voting process. For instance in Misau LGA of Bauchi State, PU 027 in Gundari, we observed that the voting didn’t start at the stipulated time due to some hitches (machine problems) beyond their control. This was also a common experience in 3 polling units in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council LGA of Borno State, where voters were experiencing problems with the BVAS. Most voters’ thumbprints don’t respond on the machine.

There were eyewitness observer reports recorded in Ekiti, Sokoto, Kogi, Kano, Bauchi, Nassarawa, Lagos, Ondo, Oyo, Niger, Taraba, Kaduna, Ogun and Borno.

Observers recorded that voters and INEC staff
The Press Attack Tracker has confirmed increased attacks on journalists during the gubernatorial and House of Assembly elections in the 28 states of Nigeria. For instance in Akwanga LGA, Akwanga west 9 PU Ngas Tsebe 10 of Nasarawa, violence erupted as voters started complaining that party agents are influencing votes for their party and following them to the cubicle in the name of assisting them. Also, it was reported that APC Agent was lobbying for votes from aged people in the guise of helping them to thumbprint properly.

Party agents and supporters were the perpetrators of most incidents recorded in this category. They were observed causing stirs and some others collaborating with thugs to disrupt the process. For example in Lagos Island LGA, ward: (07) Eiyekole, it was reported that APC supporters threatened voters who are not voting for the party to go back home or face violence. In IBI LGA’s Rimi Uku Ward PU2 in Taraba state, PDP supporters took away election materials since TIV people refused to vote for their candidate which led to elections being suspended.

This led to the transfer of the PU to another location for safety. An instance of this was recorded in the Wukari LGA’s Rimi Uku Ward in Taraba state where PU1 was moved to Wukari town at Ebenezer Primary school.

OTHER FINDINGS

Press Attack

The Press Attack Tracker has confirmed increased attacks on journalists during the gubernatorial and House of Assembly elections in the 28 states of Nigeria.
the country. The record of attacks at the elections was mostly carried out by political thugs, security operatives and INEC officials in various areas across Nigeria including Lagos, Rivers, Kano, Ogun, Borno, Edo, Benue, Abia, Akwa Ibom and Sokoto.

It is deeply disturbing by the reports of denial of access to polling units and collation centres and harassment of journalists by security operatives, INEC officials, and political thugs in several locations across the country, including Lagos, Ogun, Akwa Ibom, Kano, and Sokoto. Journalists play a crucial role in promoting transparency and accountability in the electoral process, and it is unacceptable that they should be prevented from doing their jobs.

These attacks were directly on journalists covering the irregularities at most polling units. In Lagos and Ogun states journalists were denied access to capture or record electoral processes; in PU 048 Ijaiye Lagos state journalists of the Independent.NG an online news platform were asked to stop recording as it was a “directive from above”, it was also confirmed that staff of African Independent Television were earlier denied access to record proceedings.

In Kano state, Ashiru Umar, a journalist with Premier radio, was attacked by political thugs and accused of serving as a political spy to the opposition party while covering the governorship and House of Assembly elections. The PAT records the physical attacks on journalists Abiodun Jamiu, Richard Obinna Ekeke, Eberechukwu Ezennaya, Taiwo Fatola, Ashiru Umar, Oche Akor and
Information Disorder

On Saturday, March 18, up till midday, Sunday, March 19, we spotted and received requests to fact-check over 50 claims. The majority of the claims appear in video formats while others are images and text. Major themes include election violence, voter suppression, confusion on the electoral process, false withdrawal of candidates, false endorsement of rival parties, and videos and comments ascribed to personalities among others.

Adejoke Adeleye, who were all simply carrying out their constitutional duties of reporting on the election process. We call on the authorities to investigate these incidents and bring those responsible to justice.

---

Data gathered across observed polling units on fact-checked claims

33% of Claims were True

4% of Claims were tagged Insufficient Evidence

Source: Field Observers
Vote Buying

Vote buying was reported to have been prevalent in various observed areas, and took on various forms.

For instance, in Calabar South LGA of Cross River State, Ward 10, PU 003, our observer reported that voters were writing down their account numbers for vote buying. In Owerri West LGA, Ihiagwa Ward Community School II PU of Imo State, it was observed that votes were bought through POS transfer. Also reports from Offa LGA of Kwara State, Ward 11 PU 003, disclosed that a man was collecting the names of those that voted for the APC party for payment afterwards.

Votes were purchased with food and other commodities rather than cash. In Nnewi North LGA,
Conclusion

The recent gubernatorial and state assembly elections confirmed that voter indifference and mistrust of the electoral system are at an all-time high. The voter turnout and fervor were lower than during the presidential elections and could be linked to some of the outcomes of the same.

By giving the youths the opportunity to actively lead the process via careful observation and reporting, the CJID has made it a point of duty to support the strengthening of democracy throughout Nigeria. Despite the unlawful attacks and threats, our observers that were officially accredited by the electoral umpire did not skimp on their reporting.

Though great strides have been made with the
introduction of the new electoral act and the laudable efforts of key stakeholders, it is clear that more need to be done to ensure that Nigeria is able to undertake elections that would be perceived by all to be ‘free and fair’. Electoral integrity mostly did not find an expression in the election as the process was marred by thuggery together with ethnic slug which led to the disenfranchisement of voters.

**Recommendations**

The CJID recommends the following for future elections:

1. An establishment of an independent panel to review the election conduct and all actors within the space.
2. An expedited action on the creation of an electoral offenses commission to handle all electoral misdemeanors in order to strengthen the electoral process.
3. INEC should be more proactive in the discharge of its functions especially as it relates to its technological process and oversight on political parties
4. Post-2023 general election amendment of the electoral act should make room for rerun in places where elections are canceled due to violence. We believe this will reduce the disruption of polling while not disenfranchising citizens in those areas.