



CENTRE FOR TRANSPARENCY ADVOCACY (CTA)

ONDO STATE GUBERNATORIAL 2024 ELECTION:

ELECTION READINESS ASSESSMENT BY CENTRE FOR TRANSPARENCY ADVOCACY (CTA)

Akure

15/10/2024

The Ondo state Gubernatorial election, the second in the round of off-season elections in 2024 is slated to hold on Saturday, November 16th 2024.

Ahead of the Governorship Election, stakeholders are gearing up for a credible, free, and fair electoral process. Key players, including Observer groups, the security agencies, the citizens and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), have intensified preparations to ensure a smooth and successful election

Centre for Transparency Advocacy's Preparedness

The Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) before now engaged stakeholders through well-attended Stakeholders' Round-table that attracted security chiefs, the media, professional associations, and the civil society. The CTA round-table extracted commitments from the stakeholders who pledged to ensure that the election is conducted without hitches and within the confines of the law. In addition, CTA recruited and trained 70 observers that will be deployed across the 18 Local Government Areas of the state to observe the conduct of the election including the conduct of INEC officials, the security agencies, political parties and citizens.

CTA observed the arrival of sensitive material to Akure. We also inspected the material at the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and observed the distribution to LGA and to Registration Area Centres (RACs) also known as Political Wards.

Also, the CTA equally opened its Situation Room in Akure where real time reports from our observers deployed will be collated, analyzed, and cascaded in real time.

This statement is our preliminary assessment report:

Statistics

According to INEC, there are 3,933 Polling Units in Ondo State and 2,053,061 registered voters. The Commission also accredited 111 domestic and international organisations deploying 3,554 observers for the election and accredited over 100 radio, television, newspaper and online media organisations which have deployed about 700 personnel, including 129 female journalists, across the 18 LGAs.

INEC Preparedness

The CTA acknowledges INEC's preparedness ahead of the election, especially the early deployment of materials to RACs. We acknowledge the tremendous importance and the reforms in our electoral process though with challenges, we commend the willingness to overcome them, especially sticking religiously to the timetable released about a year ago.

However, CTA is concerned about the deployable state of some of the RACS such as the one at Oda Road RA 006, Akure South LGA and its implication for early deployment and opening of polls. We call on the Election Management Body (EMB) to address this in future elections. Nonetheless, the Election body has another chance to conduct a free, fair, and credible election.

While briefing observer groups, the Resident Electoral Commissioner for Ondo State, represented by the HOD Election and Parting Monitoring (EPM) assured Nigerians that INEC is fully prepared to conduct a free, fair and credible election on November 16, 2024.

Security

The Nigeria Police Force has promised a well-coordinated security for lives and properties during the election. The Police are to be assisted by sister agencies during the election. Equally, this will be complimented by the marine unit that will be deployed to riverine areas to handle security challenges that may arise along the waterways in collaboration with marine officers from contiguous states and assisted by the Nigerian Navy.

CTA is however, worried about the conflicting figures being put by the police concerning the exact number of personnel that will be deployed for

Saturday's election. In one instance, the police authorities said it will deploy 22, 239 personnel, and in another instance, it said it will be deploying 35, 000. While on Friday morning, it again said it will deploy 36, 000 personnel. These conflicting figures are worrisome.

CTA notes the peaceful atmosphere in Akure and environs and hopes that such atmosphere is maintained, during and after the election.

Events of the past and Matters Arising

Despite the preparations, events in recent past in Ondo State political landscape has left much to be desired. There were reported violence among some supporters of political parties which left about seven persons seriously injured in Idanre LGA. This is in addition to reported acts of destruction of campaign billboards and other publicity materials by supporters of rival parties.

The CTA strongly denounces these violent acts and urges all parties involved to stop forthwith, show restraint, eschew violence in all its ramifications while calling on the security agencies to act with firmness to stop the situation from disrupting the election.

As the people of Ondo State prepare to go to the polls to elect their next governor, the Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) urges all stakeholders to ensure a peaceful, credible, free and fair electoral process.

We call on all political parties and their supporters to shun violence and any form of electoral malpractice. The election should be a contest of ideas, policies, and visions for the future of Ondo State, not a battle of might and intimidation.

Political Parties Preparedness/ Stakeholders

CTA notes the absence of some political parties' agents during inspection and the deployment of sensitive materials. We are concerned with this nonchalant attitude of politicians/political parties towards ensuring the credibility of the process. The critical importance of deploying party agents by political parties to monitor the electoral process, especially deployment of materials and result collation is important in our collective effort to boost

electoral transparency. Political parties must play their part to ensure that we improve our electoral process.

Call to Action

CTA urges all stakeholders to remain committed to the principles of democracy and fairness. We call on the electorate to exercise their right to vote, and on electoral officials to conduct the election with integrity.

The Centre for Transparency Advocacy therefore, implores:

1. Political parties and their supporters to respect opponents' rights and adopt nonviolent strategies.
2. Security agencies to be fair, even-handed, professional, and be proactive in responding to potential threat.
3. That proactive steps should be taken by the (ICCESS) and a renewed commitment by the Inspector General of Police to guarantee fairness and election integrity during the election as the outcome of the election will be another litmus test for Nigeria's democracy.
4. The people of Ondo to come out enmasse and perform their civic duties by voting who becomes the next governor of the state
5. The citizens, to shun vote buying. We implore young voters not to allow politicians or anybody else to induce or use them for unwelcome purposes that could disrupt the peace of Ondo State's or the electoral process.
6. INEC to ensure that all trained adhoc staff and materials are deployed on time for early commencement of the polls, as logistics have been the bane of conduct of successful election.

The CTA will continue to monitor the situation closely and hold stakeholders accountable for their actions. We call on all Nigerians to stand with us in advocating for peaceful elections and defending democratic values devoid of violence.

Conclusion

The Ondo State Governorship Election presents an opportunity for the people to shape their future. We are confident that with the preparations underway, stakeholders will ensure a credible and successful election.

Faith Nwadishi (JP, mpi)
Executive Director

For Further Information Contact
Centre for Transparency Advocacy
House A
No 28 A, plot 696/8
Ubiaja Crescent, Garki 2, FCT, Abuja
Tel: 07044414414
SMS/WhatsApp: 08055082255
Email: info@cta.org.ng
Website: www.cta.org.ng