



NIGERIA NATIONAL ELECTIONS

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Attention Communications Department
International Republican Institute
1225 Eye Street NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
info@iri.org

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INTRODUCTION

On March 28, 2015, Nigeria held its fifth presidential election since the end of military rule in 1999. The two main presidential candidates were incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan representing the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) and retired Major-General Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressives Congress (APC), a new party formed through the merger of three main opposition parties in 2013.¹ The APC won both the presidency and a majority of legislative and gubernatorial seats, marking the first democratic transfer of power from one party to another in Nigeria's history. While logistical challenges and delays, low turnout, incidents of violence, as well as more serious procedural irregularities in some states, present room for improvement in future elections, the 2015 elections were largely transparent and a credible expression of the will of the Nigerian people.

Building on more than 30 years of experience, and observation of 204 elections worldwide including Nigeria's last four presidential elections, the [International Republican Institute](#) (IRI) conducted an election mission to observe the March 28, 2015 presidential election. IRI's efforts consisted of three components: (1) a pre-election assessment mission conducted jointly with the [National Democratic Institute](#) (NDI); (2) a long-term citizen observation mission consisting of one local facilitator in each state; and (3) a short-term observation mission led jointly by former assistant secretary of state for African affairs Constance Berry Newman and IRI vice president for programs Thomas Garrett, consisting of 11 teams deployed to eight states (namely Adamawa, Anambra, Cross River, Ekiti, Kaduna, Kogi, Rivers and Sokoto) and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), covering all six geopolitical zones.

IRI worked in collaboration with other international and local observation missions and supported a gender-focused observation mission conducted by a local civil society organization, the [Nigerian Women's Trust Fund](#). IRI in country staff and partners also conducted an observation of party primaries in eight states and the FCT in the months before the election and provided comprehensive analysis during the pre- and post-election period on the political environment. This report draws upon the findings of all of these various efforts as well as IRI's [preliminary statement](#), [post-results statement](#) and [Election Snapshot](#).

¹ The APC was formed on February 6, 2013, from a merger of the Action Congress of Nigeria, the Congress for Progressive Change, the All Nigeria Peoples Party and a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance.

PRE-ELECTION ENVIRONMENT

In the lead up to Nigeria's 2015 election, a number of issues, initiatives and events influenced the pre-election environment, both for the better and sometimes for the worse.

Emergence of the All Progressives Congress

The merger of three main opposition parties in 2013 to form the APC meant that for the first time since the return to civilian rule in 1999, the ruling PDP faced a serious challenge to its hegemony over Nigerian politics. The presidential candidates who emerged from these two parties' primaries were the front-runners, by a significant margin, in a highly competitive presidential race. Multiple defections of high level politicians from both parties to join the other party in the months running up to the election constantly changed the political playing field and further intensified the polarization between the two parties as well as in the general political environment in Nigeria.

Party Primaries

IRI noted a marked improvement in the conduct of party primaries in the run up to the 2015 election. Participation of party members was high, parties held their primaries within the time limits prescribed by law, violence was minimal, the [Independent National Electoral Commission](#) (INEC) was present at nearly every voting center and disputes were generally directed through the proper channels. However, recurring allegations of vote-buying, violation of ballot secrecy, procedural irregularities disadvantaging aspirants, and instances of violence and intimidation indicate that Nigerian political parties need to improve their internal practices, and to strengthen their commitment to democratic procedures within party operations.

Furthermore, very few female candidates emerged from the party primaries (15 percent of House of Representatives candidates and 17 percent of Senate candidates) indicating that parties' affirmative action measures have not been effective and that party primaries remain a major barrier to women's participation in politics.

Party Agent Training

Following the 2011 elections, many international observation missions cited the lack of party agents at polling units and the lack of proper party agent training as obstacles to the electoral process. In advance of the 2015 elections, political parties recognized the need to recruit and train party agents and develop a deployment plan to ensure that party agents were represented at polling units across the country. The two leading political parties held workshops at various levels (federal, zonal, state and local government) to equip agents with the necessary skills and prepare them for deployments at the various polling units across Nigeria. INEC and various other nongovernmental organizations (NGO), including IRI, assisted all political parties to train tens of thousands of party agents who were deployed across the country on Election Day.²

² In the weeks leading to the March 28, 2015 elections, IRI trained approximately 14,000 political party polling agents on how to properly monitor the balloting process.

Voter Education

Many Nigerian civil society groups engaged in creative initiatives to educate voters about the electoral process, including initiatives such as: the “[9jaVoter](#)” project by the [West African NGO Network](#), which produced a mobile voter education app to increase youth participation; [Human Rights Monitor Nigeria](#), which distributed election information cards and posters; the Nigerian Women's Trust Fund, whose multimedia campaign and eligibility criteria focused on the benefits of increased women's political participation; the women's political education sessions conducted by the nonpartisan Women in Politics Forum to increase women's chances to run successful campaigns for office; the [Youth Alliance on Constitution and Electoral Reform](#) and its awareness campaign to educate northern youths on non-violence in electoral participation ahead of the 2015 polls; the “On the Road to 2015” voter education radio program conducted by the Partners for Electoral Reforms; and, the [Youth Power](#) weekly radio show by the [Youngstars Foundation](#) in partnership with IRI which urged youth to register to vote and provided a platform for youth to air their views on the election.

Insecurity in the Northeast

The ongoing Boko Haram insurgency in north eastern Nigeria was one of the most prominent issues affecting the pre-election environment. According to [Africa Check](#), over the past six years, the insurgency has claimed the lives of at least 9,000 people – and possibly thousands more – and displaced hundreds of thousands. In February 2015, when INEC postponed the election on account of security concerns, Boko Haram controlled 14 local government areas (LGA) across Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states. Soon after the postponement, Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau, declared the group's intention to violently disrupt the election. Accusations and counter-accusations relating to the insurgency were exchanged between political parties, and the question of how the various candidates would deal with insecurity in the country became a central part of their campaigns. By Election Day in March, the joint security forces of Nigeria and its four neighboring countries had made significant progress against Boko Haram having liberated 11 of the LGAs under its control, but fears remained the group would still try to disrupt the elections.

Internally Displaced Persons

The displacement of hundreds of thousands of people caused by the violence in the north east, in conjunction with a legal impediment that prohibited voters from casting ballots outside of their constituencies, created serious concerns regarding how INEC and the Nigerian government would ensure internally displaced persons (IDP) were not disenfranchised. In December 2014, after protracted debate on whether the electoral law needed to or should be amended to allow IDPs to vote outside of their constituency, INEC set up a task force to examine and provide recommendations regarding the legal, political, security and administrative challenges to achieving IDP voting during the election. Ultimately, INEC established voting locations in Yola, the capital of Adamawa, for IDPs from that state, and in liberated LGAs for IDPs from Borno and Yobe. IDPs who were displaced outside of their state of residence could not vote.

Pre-election Violence and Hate Speech

In addition to the threat of Boko Haram disrupting the election, many Nigerians were deeply concerned about election-related political violence. Nigeria has a history of violence in the pre- and post-election periods, most notably the 2011 elections in which more than 800 people were killed and tens of thousands displaced in post-election violence. There were, unfortunately, a number of instances of violence in the pre-election period. In February 2015, Nigeria's [National Human Rights Commission](#) published a [report](#) in which it documented more than 60 incidents of election-related violence in at least 22 states spread across all six geopolitical zones which had left at least 58 people dead and many more injured. The report also noted an increase of hate speech in the run-up to the election, including hate speech published in the media and during campaign rallies by parties' surrogates. An outgoing state governor was caught on video calling on party supporters to "crush" and "kill" "cockroaches," and there were other alleged incidences of high profile individuals calling for violence against anyone campaigning for change.

Non-violence Campaigns

Many prominent individuals and organizations from Nigeria's civil society contributed substantively to the promotion of peaceful participation in the electoral process, urging Nigerians to exercise their democratic rights and civic responsibility, and to ensure that their votes count. For example, the 2face Foundation, sponsored by the musician 2face Idibia, and Youngstars Foundation launched "[Vote Not Fight: Election no be war](#)," as a nationwide youth get-out-the-vote (GOTV) campaign. At GOTV events and concerts, youth signed a "Vote Not Fight" nonviolence pledge. Other initiatives included: [Enough is Enough Nigeria Coalition's](#) RSVP project, or Register, Select, Vote and Protect, a peaceful election participation campaign; [Open Society Initiative for West Africa's](#) Situation Room; IRI's [Dreams4Naija Campaign](#);³ the [CLEEN Foundation's](#) violence monitoring campaign; the [Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta's Partners for Peace project](#); and the National Bar Association's and Labor Union voter education and awareness series.

The Abuja Accords and the National Peace Committee

In January 2015, 12 of the 14 presidential candidates signed a high-profile peace agreement, named the Abuja Accord, in which candidates committed to run issue-based campaigns and shun the use of violence and hate speech. The agreement was brokered by the Office of Presidential Advisor on Inter and Intra Party Affairs, the former Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Anan and several NGOs. The National Peace Committee, led by former head of state General Abdulsalami Abubakar and composed of, among others, both Christian and Muslim religious leaders, was formed after the signing of the Abuja Accord to oversee implementation of the agreement. Similar non-violence agreements were subsequently signed by political party representatives in most Nigerian states. On March 26, two days

³ Dream4Naija was a youth-targeted initiative led by IRI that deployed one of Nigeria's foremost musical superstars, Olubankole "Banky W" Wellington and his team of artists at Empire Mates Entertainment, to deliver a message of political engagement and non-violence to Nigeria's 140,000,000 youth. Part of the Dream4Naija campaign was also a "rock the vote" effort attempting to urge political engagement in order to improve the quality of democracy through exercising the democratic process.

before the presidential poll, the peace agreement was renewed by the two leading presidential candidates.

INEC's Preparations

In preparation for the 2015 election INEC trained more than 150,000 election officials and introduced a number of technological innovations aimed at curbing electoral fraud and increasing voter confidence in the electoral process. Voters were issued permanent voter's cards (PVC) that store biometric information about the voter, including their fingerprint and facial image. The PVC was to be used to authenticate voters on Election Day using smart card readers (SCR), which are able to capture disaggregated data about the electorate as well as send information to a central server, which could then later be used to verify total numbers of accredited voters emerging from each polling station to guard against tampering. The adoption of technology was, however, controversial and not without problems. Several court cases were brought against INEC seeking to bar the election management body from using the PVC and SCR technology on the grounds that it was not in conformity with the electoral law which prohibits electronic voting. The courts ruled to allow INEC to use the technology, as the use of the technology did not involve electronic voting, since it related only to the accreditation stage. INEC planned to complete the distribution of PVCs to voters by August 2014, but delays in completing this process led to fears that millions of people would be disenfranchised and widespread debate around whether or not the election should be postponed.

Postponement Politics

On January 22, 2015, Nigeria's national security advisor publically called on INEC to postpone the elections to allow more time for the distribution of PVCs. INEC released a statement saying it was ready to conduct the elections, but then on February 8, just a week before the presidential and national legislative elections scheduled for February 14, INEC announced that it had postponed the elections until March 28, 2015. The reason given by INEC for the postponement was that the security chiefs stated that they could not guarantee security on Election Day due to instability in the northeast and had requested six weeks to curb the insurgency.

The postponement was highly contentious and took on political overtones, with opinions in Nigeria largely divided along political lines. Ultimately, however, the extra time to prepare for the election proved to be valuable. INEC was also able to distribute an extra 10 million PVCs, taking the total distribution rate from 66.58 percent before the postponement to 81.2 percent on the eve of the election. INEC also had an opportunity to conduct a test run with the PCVs and card readers in 225 polling units across 12 states prior to the elections, which helped the body prepare in advance for some of the issues with the card readers that emerged on Election Day.

Citizen Monitoring of Electoral Processes

Drawing upon lessons learned and best practices acquired over the last four elections, citizen monitoring groups continue to play a critical role in providing Nigerians with accurate information on the integrity of the electoral process. Their programs and activities deterred and detected irregularities during voter registration, in the pre-election period, on Election

Day, and in the post-election period. One civil society network, the [Transition Monitoring Group](#) – a coalition of more than 400 civil society organizations – used statistical random sampling methodology (called a Quick Count) to monitor election day processes and to verify the accuracy of official voting results.

ELECTION DAY FINDINGS

In total, IRI's Election Day observation teams made 141 visits to 114 different polling units.

State	Accreditation	Opening of Voting	Voting	Closing of Voting	Duplicate Visits	Total
Abuja (FCT)	17	4	9	3	4	29
Cross River	8	1	4	1	3	11
Kogi	8	1	6	1	6	10
Anambra	10	1	4	0	1	14
Ekiti	9	1	4	1	3	12
Kaduna	11	1	5	1	4	14
Adamawa	5	1	2	1	1	8
Rivers	4	1	3	1	2	7
Sokoto	3	1	5	3	3	9
Total	75	12	42	12	27	114

IRI's Election Day observers reported the following findings:

Election Procedures⁴

Accreditation: Delayed Opening of Polling Units, Missing Materials and PVCs

Every one of IRI's election observation teams in each of eight states and the FCT witnessed difficulties with the accreditation process. A nearly ubiquitous occurrence was the late arrival of INEC officials, responsible for bringing all election materials and SCRs, at the polling stations. The tardiness of officials delayed accreditation in 60 percent of polling units that IRI observed. The worst delays were observed in Cross River, Kano and Rivers, where accreditation (scheduled to have begun at 8:00 a.m.) in some instances did not begin until 3:00 p.m. Furthermore, in some polling units, election materials such as results sheets, indelible ink and ballot papers were missing. However, it must also be noted that in 62 percent of polling units observed, INEC officials were following electoral procedures once the polling units were open. Of all the polling units visited during the accreditation period mandated in electoral law, 23 percent were either suspended or not open.

Despite a number of technical problems, and after some delay in polling officials becoming accustomed to the new systems, the SCR and PVC were successfully used during the accreditation process and INEC is commended for introducing this important mechanism for reducing voter fraud and increasing voter confidence in the electoral process. The problems relating to the use of the SCRs included failure to verify voters' fingerprints (reported in 34 percent of polling units observed) or failure to implement proper back up procedures if the SCR failed. There were numerous accounts being reported on Election Day of voter

⁴ IRI notes that as a result of complications during the accreditation and voting processes second day voting was conducted in specific polling units in Kano, Lagos and Rivers states.

identification processes being complicated by the failure of election officials at polling units to remove the protective sticker that was covering the fingerprint scanner before administering accreditation protocol. Inconsistent use of the incident report form across polling units (and states) also indicated a lack of effective communication or training by INEC regarding contingency procedures if the SCR failed.

However, despite these difficulties, the SCRs were by-and-large successfully deployed to accredit voters in the vast majority of polling units observed by IRI. IRI observers witnessed one polling unit in Rivers state where the presiding officer refused to use the SCR for accreditation at all, opting instead for manual accreditation, thus greatly increasing the risk of electoral fraud.

Voting

Despite the late start in the voting procedures caused by the delayed delivery of election materials and the slow process of accreditation, IRI delegates were able to observe voting in each of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones as well as in the FCT. Voting was generally conducted efficiently and according to procedures in 67 percent of polling units observed by IRI. Nevertheless, there were some irregularities noted by IRI observers at 34 percent of polling units examined, which included reports that procedures were not fully followed but were unlikely to have an effect on the outcome of the election (26 percent of polling units examined). IRI notes that in eight percent of polling units observed election procedures were violated to an extent that it was likely to affect the outcome of the vote. This was particularly true in Rivers state, where presiding officers seemed to lack appropriate training for proper electoral procedure.

The Institute also notes that ballot secrecy remains an issue. At some polling units, electoral officials were folding ballots on behalf of voters, and doing so incorrectly such that once votes were placed in the transparent ballot box the voters' ballot could be seen. At some polling units, party agents took an active role in voting procedures such as assisting voters to choose the right ballot box. Though these practices did not seem to be malicious, it nevertheless undermines the integrity of the vote.

Ballot secrecy is particularly important in light of allegations of vote buying in the Nigerian political systems. IRI's observers reported instances of suspicious activity that was redolent of vote buying, including one polling unit where it seemed someone was watching how voters voted and reporting back to an anonymous party. IRI's delegation also noted the widespread phenomenon of voters presenting their completed ballots to the assembled crowd of citizens waiting for their chance to vote. While this is the prerogative of citizens and seems to be the individuals' choice to display their support for their political party, in light of other accounts of vote recording, the Institute notes that this could perhaps be part of a vote-buying scheme and should be discouraged.

Sorting and Counting

Nigeria's ballot counting process is highly interactive and was done with full transparency in the majority of polling units observed by the IRI delegation – with the exception of Rivers state, where failure to follow proper counting procedure called into question the veracity of

the results. Despite the late hour at which counting began (as a result of the slow accreditation process), each team of observers witnessed both voters and party agents remaining at polling units to watch the sorting and counting of ballots, keeping election officials accountable for the correct sorting of ballots and ensuring that all numbers were tabulated correctly. IRI's teams did witness instances of election officials approving ballot stacks even if they lost count. The Institute notes that it would be less complicated to keep track if election officials had accurately recorded the number of voters accredited.

All observer teams reported that the ballot box did not appear to have been tampered with or left unsealed prior to counting and was opened and emptied in full view of all present at the polling unit. Ballots were sorted and counted in the presence of party agents and observers and rejected ballots were, generally, always shown to party agents and observers, with the exception of one polling unit in Rivers.

There were some isolated instances of party agents becoming frustrated with election officials regarding spoiled ballots during the counting process if they disagreed with the officials' decision that a particular ballot was inconclusive or invalid as a result of multiple thumbprints being reflected on the ballot. This generally did not result in violence, but increased the tension surrounding the counting process. This tension was mitigated when election officials demonstrated consistency when voiding ballots across parties and it became clear that no preferential treatment was being given to one party over another. However, IRI notes that INEC guidelines for voiding ballots did not clearly indicate whether a vote should be voided if the intention of the voter was clear (i.e. the majority of the thumbprint in the box next to one party), but a small part of the thumbprint went over the top or bottom lines the box.

Rivers state again presented its own set of issues as voters cast their ballots overwhelmingly in favor of the PDP. An IRI observer in Rivers witnessed that unused ballots were not being cancelled, that there were no results sheets for tabulating counted ballots and that there were no announcements of the number of accredited voters and the total number of ballots cast. When combined, these factors call into question the validity of the results and present the opportunity for ballot box stuffing at the polling unit level.

Collation

The Institute noted that the collation process is now the least transparent of the election procedure. As a result of the PVCs and SCRs ensuring that only accredited voters are able to cast ballots in the election as well as open voting and counting procedures being implemented, the electoral process up to that point is transparent. However, it seems that despite these safeguards there were still attempts to manipulate the results of the election at the collation stage. The collation process is the mechanism through which the results are tabulated by election officials and then forwarded to the next level for further tabulation, starting at the polling unit level, and passing through the ward level, the LGA level, the state level and then finally the national level. Although party agents and accredited observers are allowed to observe the collation process, irregularities and manipulation of results at the collation stage indicates the need for greater transparency at this stage of the electoral process.

While IRI's observers witnessed credible collation in several states, the observation team in Rivers state reported a number irregularities during collation. IRI observed a series of alterations and cancelations of figures by the returning officer (RO) on many of the results submitted from the local government areas. For some results, IRI observed that several ROs did not know the code of their local government area, which ought to have been written on the results sheet used to tabulate votes. At one collation center an RO was told to make corrections on an already-submitted result sheet.

These observations are corroborated by TMG's Quick Count data which indicates that the official turnout figures were inflated in Rivers and other South South states. TMG's Quick Count results for parallel vote tabulation were consistent with INEC's official turnout numbers for every geopolitical zone aside from South South, in which official turnout in every state but Cross River (i.e. Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo and Rivers) was nearly 20 percent higher than the estimated turnout based on TMG's Quick Count data. TMG reports that its Quick Count estimates "strongly suggest that turnout was inflated during the collation process in the South South ... by at least 10.8 percent." However, TMG notes that the irregularities did not affect the final election result.

Conduct of Key Stakeholders

Voters (Including Women, Youth, People with Disabilities and IDPs)

In the face of long delays and technical difficulties, the Nigerian people demonstrated exemplary patience and commitment to making the process work for everyone. IRI observation teams across the country noted the phenomenon of voters self-organizing through either alphabetization or simply queuing in an attempt to maintain order at polling units in the absence of tardy election officials. Sometimes this led to frustration when election officials arrived and had to reorganize queues that had already formed. Although the late start caused frustration among some voters, tensions generally eased once the accreditation process eventually begun.

Voters consistently allowed elderly persons, pregnant women and nursing mothers to go to the front of the line during accreditation and voting. Both women and youth were fairly well represented among voters at polling units IRI observed. IRI observers did see several persons with disabilities (PWD) exercising their right to vote. However, IRI notes that 53 percent of polling units observed were not wheelchair accessible or inadequately equipped for addressing the needs of PWDs.

IRI observers at IDP voting centers in Adamawa reported that voters were very enthusiastic about exercising their franchise and many voters had travelled a long way to make it to the IDP voting centers. However, observers noted that turnout was particularly low at IDP voting centers. This can likely be attributed to, among other challenges, the breakdown in communication between INEC and IDPs regarding where they would vote. Some voters expressed to IRI observers that other IDPs had travelled back to their home areas, which had been liberated from Boko Haram occupation, only to find that they were not able to vote there.

IRI observers were impressed by how many people stayed late, even well after dark, to watch the sorting and counting of ballots. Voters paid close attention during the process: counting along audibly or videoing the sorting and counting process; taking notes on results announced; and on several occasions when an election official made a mistake during the sorting of ballots, voters immediately brought this to the electoral official's attention in a lively but amiable manner. Interviews with those present revealed that many voters were anxious to ensure that their votes were counted correctly and that the election results remained credible. While this indicates that there remains a general distrust among voters that their mandate will be respected, it is also a testament to the deep commitment Nigerians have to the democratic process, such that they are willing to actively participate in protecting their mandate.

Party Agents

IRI observers reported that at the majority of polling units observed there were party agents present from both of the parties of the two leading contenders and usually others from several other smaller parties as well. However, in Rivers state many polling units had only PDP party agents present. Although there were some reports of disinterested party agents and party agents being improperly involved in the voting process, generally, party agents were attentive, well-behaved and respectful of election officials and their roles. Most party agents displayed their accreditation tags from INEC, however, at some polling units particularly in Rivers, party agents did not have INEC accredited tags but rather tags produced by a political party. Some polling units had so many voting points that it was difficult for party agents to observe all the voting points, thus reducing the effectiveness of their oversight role. Most party agents did take note of the results announced at their polling unit, often simply on a scrap of paper rather than a standardized form.

Election Officials

Overall, election officials played a positive role in administering the electoral process. While several polling units were understaffed, contributing to delays, the majority of polling units had all four required election officials present. Women were well represented among election officials: notably, a woman was the presiding officer at nearly half of the polling units where IRI was able to identify the gender of the presiding officer. Although election officials were reportedly stressed and flustered during the accreditation stage due to the late arrival of materials and the officials' lack of familiarity with the new equipment, election officials nevertheless exhibited patience, diligence and initiative to ensure that voters would not be disenfranchised.

In particular, IRI observers noted that members of the [National Youth Service Corps](#) (NYSC), who served as the election officials in Nigeria's more than 150,000 polling units and voting points across the country, were very professional and committed to ensuring the success of Nigeria's democratic process. IRI observers were impressed that this new generation of young democrats undertook the overall management of accreditation, voting and tabulation on Election Day. The dedication of the NYSC members is remarkable in light of the loss of life suffered by the NYSC during the post-election violence in 2011.

Security Services

The police and other security services played an overall positive role in providing security to polling units on Election Day without interfering in electoral processes. IRI observers reported security personnel were present at 81 percent of polling units observed. While civil society, voters and the media had raised important questions about the role that the police and military would play and concerns about the potential for intimidation, in the end, observers did not witness this. After long delays at polling units when tensions were high, police played a positive, critical role in maintaining calm and order in a professional manner. At one polling unit in Ekiti state, a police officer was involved in the distribution of election materials due to the understaffing of the polling unit. Aside from this minor incident, no reports were made of security personnel interfering in the electoral process in any way.

Other Challenges Observed

Low Voter Turn Out

IRI observers noted that while many polling units seemed to be busy, when observers compared the total number of registered voters for a particular polling unit with the number of voters accredited and the number of ballots cast at that polling unit while observing closing procedures, it appeared that turnout had been fairly low. These findings have subsequently been corroborated by the final results for the presidential election issued by INEC which indicates that voter turnout was 43.65 percent. The table below illustrates the drop-off in participation at the various stages of the electoral process in Nigeria, which meant that only 33.53 percent of eligible voters cast a ballot in the 2015 presidential election.

Category	Number of People	Percentage
Eligible voters	87,784,373	49.5% of total population
Total number of registered voters	67,422,005	76.8% of eligible voters
Total number of PVCs distributed	56,350,776	83.6% of registered voters
Total number of accredited voters	31,746,490	56.3% of voters with a PVC
Total number of votes cast	29,432,083	92.71% of accredited voters

Table 1: Drop-off in participation at various stages of electoral process⁵

Election Day Violence

The police had given the assurance of their readiness to provide adequate security coverage for election officials and materials, including voters, and local and foreign observers. In Rivers state, IRI observers witnessed a generally peaceful process; however, violence still marred the election in Rivers, with at least three election-related deaths reported. Other violent incidents were reported by IRI's observer team in Rivers state in the Eleme and Ubima areas of Ikwerre LGA.

⁵ All figures are based on official INEC results for the presidential election with the exception of the estimated voter age population taken from the [website](#) of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, and the number of PVCs distributed (as at March 17, 2015), which was announced by INEC.

There was also Election Day violence in the Birin Bolawa and Birin Fulani areas of Gombe state. These attacks were inflicted by Boko Haram and were not party-on-party violence as witnessed in the South South. Conflicting reports have been released that as many as 41 and as few as 11 were killed as a direct result of Boko Haram attempting to disrupt the successful conduct of the elections. Though it was feared that Boko Haram would seriously impact the peaceful and successful completion of the elections, the incidents that can be attributed to them on Election Day did not have a major impact on the overall election results and did not dissuade resilient citizens from continuing to their polling units to cast their votes.

Few Women Elected

IRI acknowledges the efforts of INEC and other stakeholders to promote gender equality in the electoral process. In particular, IRI commends INEC for its adoption of a gender policy in November 2014. Nevertheless, IRI notes with concern the lack of progress in the 2015 elections toward achieving the goal set out in the national gender policy of 35 percent female representation in elected positions in Nigeria. The table below, which tracks the number of female candidates and the number of women elected in the 2007, 2011 and 2015 elections, demonstrates the slow progress and in some instances, regression, in addressing the lack of women's participation in politics and election to public office in Nigeria.

Elected Offices	Female Candidates (2007)	Women Elected (2007)	Female Candidates (2011)	Women Elected (2011)	Female Candidates (2015)	Women Elected (2015)
Presidential	1 (25)	0	1 (20)	0	1 (14)	0
Vice Presidential	5 (25)	0	3 (20)	0	4 (14)	0
Governor	14 (474)	0	13 (353)	0(36)	23 (380)	0
Deputy Governor	21 (474)	6(36)	58 (347)	1(36)	64 (380)	4 (29)
Senate	59 (799)	9 (109)	90 (890)	7 (109)	128 (746)	8 (109)
House of Representatives	150 (2,342)	26 (360)	220 (2,408)	26 (360)	270 (1,772)	17 (360)

Table 2: [Number of elected women from 2007 – 2011 and 2011 – 2015](#)⁶

The Importance of International Cooperation in Monitoring the Elections

IRI notes that international election observation missions played a pivotal role in providing accurate and impartial assessments of the nature of electoral processes during this election cycle. Accurate and impartial international election observation requires cooperation among and between international and national authorities, national political competitors (political parties, candidates and supporters of positions on referenda), local election monitoring organizations and other credible international election observer organizations, among others.

As a direct result of the comprehensive efforts of election observers from both the international community and Nigeria itself, the credibility of the Nigerian elections was

⁶ Numbers within the brackets represent total number of candidates/elected officials.

confirmed and the results were justified via objective data. Furthermore, election monitoring efforts underscored the successes of INEC's distribution of the PVCs and SCRs for verifying voter data while also identifying potential weak points in election procedures (i.e., the lack of transparency during the collation process) that could call into question the legitimacy of election results in the future.

The Institute believes that while election observations missions are vitally important for ensuring a free, fair and credible exercise of the democratic process, what is equally important is cooperation between election monitoring bodies. Due to top-level coordination between election monitoring missions, the international community was able to distribute its observation teams across Nigeria's numerous voting districts to gain an accurate perspective of the election proceedings. Furthermore, cooperation has proven to be important for reinforcing international norms and standards for credible elections as well as applying pressure to the Nigerian government with a unified voice to present findings, highlight successes and identify issues still in need of further reforms. Lastly, cooperation among international election observation missions presents a unified commitment from the international community to assist Nigeria's fledgling democracy to take full flight through peacefully and credibly implementing the democratic process.

In addition to the election observation mission deployed by IRI, observation teams were also dispatched on behalf of NDI, the European Union, the Commonwealth of Nations, the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). A joint statement by the heads of these five international observation missions and the co-leader of IRI's observation mission, Constance Berry Newman, was released on April 1, 2015. In the spirit of collaboration, AU and ECOWAS released their statements during a joint press conference. IRI and NDI also coordinated to ensure that similar findings were reached before releasing their respective reports to the international community.

POST-ELECTION ENVIRONMENT

In a move unprecedented in Nigerian politics, incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan made a phone call to his opponent, President-elect Major-General Muhammadu Buhari on March 31 to congratulate him on his victory, thereby conceding defeat, as soon as the result of the presidential race became clear, and even before INEC had officially announced the winner. Both leaders urged their supporters to remain peaceful and President-elect Buhari called for “sober celebrations.” Following President Jonathan’s concession, many incumbent governors who lost in the gubernatorial elections made similar concessions of defeat. This broad acceptance of the results has undoubtedly contributed to a relatively peaceful post-election environment and President Jonathan, President-elect Buhari and other politicians should be commended for this approach.

There have, however, been some instances of violence since the completion of IRI’s international election observation mission. Violence has primarily been related to the gubernatorial elections held on April 11, particularly where results were inconclusive. A curfew was imposed in Taraba state after violence broke out in the wake of an inconclusive result. There were also reports of violent clashes between APC and PDP supporters in Rivers state in the run-up to and after the gubernatorial election.

The transfer of power from the Jonathan administration to the Buhari administration took place on May 29. As the first-ever transition from one democratically elected party to another, this was an important step for Nigeria’s democratic consolidation. Two transition committees, representing the incoming and outgoing presidential administrations, were set up to ensure the smooth transfer of power. Similarly, transition committees were established at the state level. Leading to May 29, the rhetoric of the both President Jonathan and President-elect Buhari was largely conciliatory. President Jonathan urged the international community to support President-elect Buhari who, in turn, emphasized that neither his transition committee nor his government would engage in a ‘witch-hunt’ or a fault-finding exercise. However, accusations were exchanged between representatives of the two administrations. The outgoing administration accused President-elect Buhari of running a parallel government, while the incoming administration accused the outgoing government of undertaking irregular actions that would harm the incoming government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IRI has formulated recommendations following every national electoral cycle in Nigeria since the 1999 transition to democracy. This set of recommendations builds on past recommendations as well as areas of weaknesses identified during the March 28 elections. These recommendations are offered respectfully to the National Assembly, INEC, political parties, civil society organizations and the citizens of Nigeria.

To the National Assembly

Promptly undertake reform of the electoral framework, taking into consideration the recommendations made by INEC in 2013, the recommendations made by the [Electoral Reform Commission Report 2008](#), which have not yet been adopted, and the views of the Nigerian public. In particular, IRI recommends the following reforms:

- Establish an Electoral Offences Commission with special prosecutorial powers to undertake timely prosecution of electoral offenders.
- Take steps to increase the number of women in legislative bodies in order to attain the goal of at least 35 percent representation of women in elected positions as set out in the National Gender Policy.
- Increase the amount of time in between the first and second rounds in the event of a presidential run-off election in order to provide INEC sufficient time to prepare.

To the Independent National Electoral Commission

- Based on the successful introduction of the SCR, INEC should consider real-time transmission of results from polling units to the central database in Abuja.
- Provide measures to avoid disenfranchisement of individuals who will be on public duty on Election Day including the military, police, NYSC members, INEC staff, party agents and local observers.
- Provide opportunities for Nigerians who turn 18 years old to immediately register to vote.
- INEC should be present at all gubernatorial, national assembly and presidential party primaries in order to certify that the primary was held in accordance with electoral law as well as collect the results on the same day.
- Plan for the creation of permanent voting sites and restrict voting to public places.
- INEC subsidiary institute, the Electoral Institute, should institutionalize educational platforms for poll workers in order to create a pool of trainers at the local government level in order to train the NYSC in election processes. This should be piloted in the first gubernatorial election after the 2015 general elections.
- Set limits on party nomination fees to expand access for marginalized constituencies such as women, youth and PWDs.
- Develop a long-term, inclusive policy on how to better include IDPs in elections.
- In order to improve the work of the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC), INEC should undertake a review of IPAC's organization and conduct of its activities to ensure a more effective inter-party forum.

To Political Parties

- Adopt provisions in party constitutions that require increased representation of women and PWDs in parties' executive committees.
- Encourage youth candidacy by free nomination, and adhere to the definition of youth provided in the [African Youth Charter](#).
- Conduct membership programs to encourage the recruitment and retention of marginalized groups, such as women, youth and PWDs.
- Maintain updated membership registers.
- Increase knowledge and skills on intra-party conflict management and mediation.
- Provide party agents with a standardized form for recording results from polling units.
- Adopt and/or enforce provisions requiring aspiring candidates to have been a member of a political party for not less than two years to address a high prevalence of defections before elections, which dilutes political party growth and development.
- Create a pool of trainers at the state level with capacity to train party agents.

To Citizens and Civil Society

- Responsibly use social media platforms to prevent violence and encourage the spread of accurate information.
- The National Peace Committee, which made commendable contributions to the peaceful conduct of the 2015 general elections, should be institutionalized and supported by donors in order to continue advocacy and mediation of inter-party conflict in the pre- and post-election periods. The committee should encourage participation of government, civil society, religious and traditional leaders.
- Civil society should play an active role in monitoring campaign finance and the pre- and post-election periods.

To the Media

- The Nigerian Broadcasting Commission and private and state-owned media outlets should strictly enforce and adhere to regulations on media neutrality and take steps against hate messaging and misinformation in the media.

APPENDIX A: IRI ELECTION OBSERVATION METHODOLOGY

IRI organized a 21-member delegation of short-term observers to witness the March 28 presidential election. Representatives from nine countries, including Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Uganda, the United States, Serbia, and Zimbabwe. The delegation was co-chaired by Constance Berry Newman (IRI board member, former U.S. assistant secretary of state for African affairs, and former USAID assistant administrator for Africa) and Thomas Garrett (IRI vice president for programs). IRI's observers also included:

- Gretchen Birkle, Africa director, IRI;
- Worku Gachou, African Affairs portfolio, U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee;
- Doug Heye, political consultant;
- Peter Mac Manu, vice chairman, International Democratic Union;
- Djingarey Maiga, president, *Femmes et Droits Humains* / Women and Human Rights
- Robina Namusisi, IRI Nigeria country director;
- Hon. Ronald Reagan Okumu, member of parliament, Uganda;
- Karin Alexander Neill, democratization expert; and
- Douglas Smith, program officer, United States Institute for Peace.

IRI staff from Washington, DC and various IRI field offices in sub-Saharan Africa and other regions included: Milica Panić, Bryan M. Sims, Emeka Diru, John Tomaszewski, Omoruyi Austin Aigbe, Lara Petričević, Husna Hassan, Alao Sunday Afolabi, Kathleen Schmermund, Stacie Brown, Carter Jones and Douglas Coltart. IRI's Election Day observers also included eight local facilitators who also served as long-term observers: Ndifon Ndeji Obi, Idris Miliki Abdul, Anothony Ubani, Bukolwa Idowu, James Laman, Ismaila Ibrahim, Chima Jeff Megwei, and Victor Mordi.

Prior to deployment to Nigeria, IRI's short-term observers participated in briefings in Washington, DC or via conference call and received extensive briefing materials in advance of their departure. IRI's short-term observers began arriving in Abuja on March 22—approximately six days before the presidential election—to attend a comprehensive series of briefings in country before deploying to their assigned locations on March 26. Delegates were briefed on the current political and electoral situation, Nigeria's voting system and voting and counting procedures. IRI delegates heard from representatives from the [International Foundation for Electoral Systems](#) which had worked closely with INEC in the run-up to the election, the inspector general of the police, civil society and academia.

IRI's 21 short-term observers were deployed in 11 teams covering eight states (namely Adamawa, Anambra, Cross River, Ekiti, Kaduna, Kogi, Rivers and Sokoto) and the FCT, with coverage of at least one state in each of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, and a mix of both urban and rural locations. Teams were generally comprised of one international delegate, one IRI staff member, one local facilitator/long-term observer and one security officer. Upon arrival in their deployment locations in Nigeria, short-term observers were briefed by long-term observers on their observations of the pre-electoral environment and on the political

dynamics specific to that location. Each team met with election stakeholders in their respective deployment locations in preparation for Election Day. These included meetings at the state and local level with INEC officials, political party representatives, candidates, civil society, security officers, local government administrators, the media and citizens. Interviews conducted the day before the election formed part of IRI's Election Snapshot.

On Election Day, IRI's observation teams made 141 visits to 114 polling units, many of which contained multiple voting points. IRI observers were present for the accreditation of voters, opening of polling units for voting, voting, closing of polling units, counting, and in some locations the vote tabulation and collation processes. Each team observed the accreditation process at multiple polling centers, voting (from 12:30 p.m. until all accredited voters had voted), the closing and vote counting process at each polling station and a portion of the vote tabulation at ward and/or local government level depending on that observer team's proximity.


During the accreditation stage and voting stage, observer teams called in responses to an integrated voice response (IVR) for each polling unit. The purpose of the IVR system was to obtain real-time information during Election Day in order to spot trends in the voting process and advise teams of any widespread and overwhelming deficiencies or concerns. The responses were collected automatically using a phone and relayed to IRI's command center in Abuja. The observer team was also given the opportunity to leave additional information via voicemail in the IVR system. The data revealed by the IVR provided an immediate assessment tool and influenced IRI's preliminary press statement and March 30 press conference. The IVR responses also form a basis—along with the other information gathered and described in this section—for the content of this report and the recommendations contained within.

In addition to the IVR system, each IRI observer team also filled out paper questionnaires for each of the polling units visited. There were four different versions of the paper questionnaires that were used during the four primary stages of the electoral process that IRI observed: accreditation, opening for voting, voting and closing procedures. Some questions were repeated throughout the day, and some questions were specific to the different electoral processes. These paper questionnaires were collected from each team upon returning to the command center in Abuja on the day after the elections (March 29), transported to IRI headquarters in Washington, DC and analyzed by IRI program staff.

Lastly, more-detailed verbal reports were obtained from all of IRI's observers and documented. Each observer team called in at least three times during Election Day to provide a verbal update to command center staff to clarify or amplify observations reported in the IVR system and/or paper questionnaires. Upon returning to Abuja on Sunday, March 29—the day after the elections—each team was debriefed by IRI's command center staff and/or IRI's observation mission's co-leaders. This information was gathered verbally and documented immediately using a standardized template; it was utilized as a basis for the conclusions expressed in IRI's March 30 press conference and preliminary statement. All of these verbal sources also serve as a basis for IRI's final recommendations regarding the 2015 elections.


In addition to the sources cited above, IRI also examined INEC's actions and statements on the presidential election, and the days following, as reported by Nigerian media and/or INEC's official website.

APPENDIX B: ELECTION OBSERVATION CHECKLISTS

 Nigeria Election Observation Accreditation Questionnaire	
Please complete a new questionnaire for each Polling Unit you visit during the Accreditation Period (8am-1pm). Immediately after departing the polling Unit, call the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system at 202-540-9000 to submit responses to questions highlighted in grey.	
Team Number: _____	Arrival Time: _____
Ward Number: _____	
Polling Unit: _____	Departure Time: _____
A. OBSERVATIONS OUTSIDE THE POLLING UNIT	Y N
A1 Are there any campaign materials or campaign activities in the vicinity of the Polling Unit?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
A2 How would you describe the environment around the Polling Unit? (Choose one) <input type="checkbox"/> Calm, no crowding <input type="checkbox"/> Crowded, but peaceful <input type="checkbox"/> Tense <input type="checkbox"/> Violent <input type="checkbox"/> Deserted	
A3 Is the Polling Unit clearly marked?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
A4 Is the entrance to the Polling Unit accessible to persons with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
A5 Are security personnel present at the Polling Unit. If yes, are they interfering in the voting process? <input type="checkbox"/> No security personnel present <input type="checkbox"/> Security personnel present, not interfering in voting process <input type="checkbox"/> Security personnel present, interfering in voting process	
A6 Did you observe any problems in the vicinity of the Polling Unit? (If yes, please describe in Notes Section below)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
B. POLLING STATION PREPARATION	Y N
B1 Did the Polling Unit receive materials from INEC on time? If no, when were materials received? _____	
B2 Did the Polling Unit receive all necessary materials from INEC? If no, what materials is the Polling Unit missing? <input type="checkbox"/> Register of Voters <input type="checkbox"/> Indelible ink <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional Posters <input type="checkbox"/> Ballot box(es) <input type="checkbox"/> INEC Stamp <input type="checkbox"/> Card Readers <input type="checkbox"/> Ballots <input type="checkbox"/> Stamp Pad <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe)	
B3 How many ballots did this Polling Unit receive? _____	
B4 Are there any campaign materials inside the Polling Unit?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
B5 Did the electoral officials receive training or reference materials on Election Day procedures?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

C. ACCREDITATION PROCESS		Y	N
C1 What time did accreditation officially begin at this Polling Unit? <input type="checkbox"/> before 8:00 am (if selected, please indicate time _____) <input type="checkbox"/> At 8:00 am <input type="checkbox"/> After 8:00 am (if selected, please indicate time _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Accreditation has not started			
C2 Approximately how many voters were waiting to be accredited when you arrived? _____			
C3 How many voters are registered at this Polling Unit? _____			
C4 How many voters have been accredited so far in this Polling Unit? <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Zero to 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51 to 100 <input type="checkbox"/> 101 to 200 </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> 201 to 300 <input type="checkbox"/> 301 to 400 <input type="checkbox"/> More than 400 </div> </div>			
C5 Have observers filed any objections during the accreditation process? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
C6 Which voter card are most voters using? <input type="checkbox"/> Permanent Voter Card <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Voter Card <input type="checkbox"/> Other form of identification			
C7 How would you describe the environment inside the Polling Unit? (Choose one) <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Calm, no crowding <input type="checkbox"/> Violent </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Crowded, but peaceful <input type="checkbox"/> Polling Unit closed </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Tense </div> </div>			
C8 How many election officials are present in the Polling Unit? _____			
C9 How many of these election officials are women? _____			
C10 Is the Presiding Officer of the Polling Unit a woman? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
C11 In addition to election officials, are any other people present in the Polling Unit? (If yes, choose all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Security personnel (police and military) <input type="checkbox"/> Authorized domestic observers <input type="checkbox"/> Media </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Authorized party agents <input type="checkbox"/> Other international observers <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with unclear roles </div> </div>			
C12 Are youth (age 35 and under) being accredited in the Polling Unit? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
C13 Are women being accredited in the Polling Unit? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
C14 Are card readers being used to verify Permanent Voter Cards and voter finger prints? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
C15 Are the card readers working correctly? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, has accreditation been suspended at this polling station? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
C16 Are voters' personal information being confirmed on the Register of Voters? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			

C17 Did you see any voters seeking accreditation being turned away and not accredited? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please answer the following: a. Which reasons for voters not receiving accreditation did you observe? <input type="checkbox"/> Voters came to incorrect Polling Unit <input type="checkbox"/> Voters failed to present a Permanent Voters Card <input type="checkbox"/> Voters' finger prints cannot be read by Card Readers <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ b. How many voters have been turned away and not accredited so far? <input type="checkbox"/> 1-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51-75 <input type="checkbox"/> 76-100 <input type="checkbox"/> 101-150 <input type="checkbox"/> 151-200 <input type="checkbox"/> more than 200	
C18 Are voters having the cuticle of a finger on their left hand (or next appropriate digit) inked once verified? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
C19 Did the election officials appear to be following accreditation procedures? <input type="checkbox"/> Procedures being properly followed <input type="checkbox"/> Procedures not being fully followed, but unlikely to affect outcome <input type="checkbox"/> Procedures not being fully followed and likely to affect outcome <input type="checkbox"/> Procedures not being followed at all	
C20 Does anyone appear to be influencing the voting process in a way that is at odds with their role as prescribed under the election law? (If yes, choose as many as apply, and describe) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Security personnel (police and military) <input type="checkbox"/> Authorized party agents <input type="checkbox"/> Authorized domestic observers <input type="checkbox"/> Other international observers <input type="checkbox"/> Media <input type="checkbox"/> Election officials <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe)	
D. TRANSPARENCY	Y N
D1 Were you given full access to the Polling Unit?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
D2 Were all phases of the accreditation process visible to observers?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
NOTES:	

		Nigeria Election Observation Opening (for Voting) Questionnaire	
Please fill out this questionnaire for the Polling Unit where you observe <u>opening procedures for voting</u> (prior to 1:30 pm start of voting).			
Team Number: _____		Arrival Time: _____	
Ward Number: _____		Departure Time: _____	
Polling Unit Number: _____		Departure Time: _____	
A. OPENING PROCESS			Y N
A1 Are there any campaign materials inside the Polling Unit?			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
A2 How would you describe the atmosphere inside the Polling Unit? <input type="checkbox"/> Calm, no crowding <input type="checkbox"/> Crowded, but peaceful <input type="checkbox"/> Tense <input type="checkbox"/> Violent <input type="checkbox"/> Deserted <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe)			
A3 Approximately how many voters were waiting to vote when you arrived? _____			
A4 Are the following electoral officials are present for the opening of the Polling Unit <input type="checkbox"/> Presiding Officer <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Presiding Officer I (Overseer) <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Presiding Officer II (Ballot Paper Issuance and Inking) <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Presiding Officer III (Queuing) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____			
A5 How many of these election officials are women? _____			
A6 In addition to election officials, are any other people present in the Polling Unit? (If yes, choose all that apply)			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Security personnel (police and military) <input type="checkbox"/> Authorized domestic observers <input type="checkbox"/> Media <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with unclear roles			<input type="checkbox"/> Authorized party agents <input type="checkbox"/> Other international observers <input type="checkbox"/> Voters
A7 What time did opening procedures begin? _____			
A8 Did the Presiding Officer explain the voting procedures to voters present?			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
A9 Did the Presiding Officer open the ballot box in full view of persons present at the Polling Unit to show it was empty?			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
A10 Did the Presiding Officer lock the ballot box with the seal provided?			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
A11 How many ballots did the Polling Unit receive? _____			
A12 How many voters were accredited at this Polling Unit? <input type="checkbox"/> Zero to 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 201 to 300 <input type="checkbox"/> 51 to 100 <input type="checkbox"/> 301 to 400 <input type="checkbox"/> 101 to 200 <input type="checkbox"/> More than 400			
A13 Did the Polling Unit receive all necessary materials from INEC?			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

If no, what materials is the Polling Unit missing?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Register of Voters	<input type="checkbox"/> Indelible ink	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructional Posters
<input type="checkbox"/> Ballot box(es)	<input type="checkbox"/> INEC Stamp	<input type="checkbox"/> Card Readers
<input type="checkbox"/> Ballots	<input type="checkbox"/> Stamp Pad	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe)
A14 Did any party agents/observers lodge a formal complaint about the opening procedures? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
A15 Does anyone appear to be influencing the voting process in a way that is at odds with their role as prescribed under the election law? (If yes, choose as many as apply, and describe) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Security personnel (police and military)	<input type="checkbox"/> Authorized party agents	
<input type="checkbox"/> Authorized domestic observers	<input type="checkbox"/> Other international observers	
<input type="checkbox"/> Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Election officials	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe)		
A16 Did you observe anything that makes you suspect some form of election irregularity? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
B. TRANSPARENCY		Y N
B1 Were you given full access to the PU/VP?		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
B2 Were all phases of the voting process visible to observers?		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
NOTES:		



Nigeria Election Observation Voting Questionnaire

Please complete a new questionnaire for each Polling Unit you visit during the Voting Period (after 1:30).

Immediately after departing the Polling Unit, call the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system at 202-540-9000 to submit responses to questions highlighted in grey.

Team Number: _____ **Arrival Time:** _____
Ward Number: _____
Polling Unit Number: _____ **Departure Time:** _____

A. OBSERVATIONS OUTSIDE THE POLLING UNIT Y N

A1 Are there any campaign materials or campaign activities in the vicinity of the Polling Unit? ☐ ☐

A2 How would you describe the environment around the Polling Unit? (Choose one)

- ☐ Calm, no crowding ☐ Crowded, but peaceful ☐ Tense
☐ Violent ☐ Deserted

A3 Is the Polling Unit clearly marked? ☐ ☐

A4 Is the entrance to the Polling Unit accessible to persons with disabilities? ☐ ☐

A5 Are security personnel present at the Polling Unit, and if so, are they interfering in the voting process?

- ☐ No security personnel present
☐ Security personnel present, not interfering in voting process
☐ Security personnel present, interfering in voting process

A6 Did you observe any problems in the vicinity of the Polling Unit? (If yes, please describe in Notes Section below) ☐ ☐

B. POLLING STATION PREPARATION Y N

B1 Did the Polling Unit receive materials from INEC on time? ☐ ☐
If no, when were materials received? _____

B2 Did the Polling Unit receive all necessary materials from INEC? ☐ ☐
If no, what materials is the Polling Unit missing?

- ☐ Register of Voters ☐ Indelible ink ☐ Instructional Posters
☐ Ballot box(es) ☐ INEC Stamp ☐ Card Reader
☐ Ballots ☐ Stamp Pad ☐ Other (describe)

B3 How many ballots did this Polling Unit receive? _____


B4 Are there any campaign materials inside the Polling Unit? ☐ ☐

B5 Did the electoral officials receive training or reference materials on Election Day procedures? ☐ ☐

B6 Is the Polling Unit equipped to address the needs of persons with disabilities (for example, assistive tactile facilities for use by visually impaired voters)? ☐ ☐

C. VOTING PROCESS		Y	N
C1 What time did voting officially begin at this Polling Unit? <input type="checkbox"/> before 1:30pm (if selected, please indicate time _____) <input type="checkbox"/> At 1:30 pm <input type="checkbox"/> After 1:30 pm (if selected, please indicate time _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Voting has not started			
C2 Approximately how many voters were waiting to vote when you arrived? _____			
C3 How many voters are registered at this Polling Unit? _____			
C4 How many voters were accredited at this Polling Unit? _____			
C5 How many ballots have been cast so far in this Polling Unit? <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Zero to 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51 to 100 <input type="checkbox"/> 101 to 200 </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> 201 to 300 <input type="checkbox"/> 301 to 400 <input type="checkbox"/> More than 400 </div> </div>			
C6 How would you describe the environment inside the Polling Unit? (Choose one) <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Calm, no crowding <input type="checkbox"/> Violent </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Crowded, but peaceful <input type="checkbox"/> Polling Unit closed </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Tense </div> </div>			
C7 How many election officials are present in the Polling Unit? _____			
C8 How many of these election officials are women? _____			
C9 Is the Presiding Officer of the Polling Unit a woman? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
C10 In addition to election officials, are any other people present in the Polling Unit? (If yes, choose all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Security personnel (police and military) <input type="checkbox"/> Authorized domestic observers <input type="checkbox"/> Media </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Authorized party agents <input type="checkbox"/> Other international observers <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with unclear roles </div> </div>			
C11 Are youth (age 35 and under) voting in the Polling Unit? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
C12 Are women voting in the Polling Unit? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
C13 Is the Assistant Presiding Officer checking the finger (cuticle) of the voter to confirm he/she was accredited? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
C14 Did you see any voters being turned away? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, because they weren't accredited <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, because they were not in line to vote when the end of the line was marked with security personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, other: _____			
C15 Was anyone allowed to vote who did not have their finger print verified by a card reader? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, did the Presiding Officer complete an Incidence Form?			
C16 Are voters having the cuticle of their left thumb (or next appropriate digit) inked prior to voting? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			

C17 Do the electoral officials appear to be following voting procedures?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Procedures being properly followed <input type="checkbox"/> Procedures not being fully followed, but unlikely to affect outcome <input type="checkbox"/> Procedures not being fully followed and likely to affect outcome <input type="checkbox"/> Procedures not being followed at all	
C18 Does anyone appear to be influencing the voting process in a way that is at odds with their role as prescribed under the election law? (If yes, choose as many as apply, and describe)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Security personnel (police and military) <input type="checkbox"/> Authorized party agents <input type="checkbox"/> Authorized domestic observers <input type="checkbox"/> Other international observers <input type="checkbox"/> Media <input type="checkbox"/> Election officials <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe)	
D. TRANSPARENCY	Y N
D1 Were you given full access to the Polling Unit?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
D2 Were all phases of the voting process visible to observers?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
NOTES:	

 Nigeria Election Observation Closing Questionnaire	
Please complete this questionnaire for the Polling Unit where you observe closing procedures.	
Team Number: _____	Arrival Time: _____
Ward Number: _____	
Polling Unit Number: _____	Departure Time: _____
A. INSIDE THE POLLING UNIT	Y N
A1 Are there any campaign materials inside the Polling Unit?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
A2 How would you describe the atmosphere inside the Polling Unit? <input type="checkbox"/> Calm, no crowding <input type="checkbox"/> Crowded, but peaceful <input type="checkbox"/> Tense <input type="checkbox"/> Violent <input type="checkbox"/> Deserted <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe)	
A3 How many election officials are present for closing procedures? ____	
A4 How many of the election officials are women? ____	
A5 In addition to election officials, are any other people present in the polling unit? (If yes, choose all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Security personnel (police and military) <input type="checkbox"/> Authorized party agents <input type="checkbox"/> Authorized domestic observers <input type="checkbox"/> Other international observers <input type="checkbox"/> Media <input type="checkbox"/> Voters <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with unclear roles	
B. CLOSING PROCEDURES	Y N
B1 At what time did the Presiding Officer declare voting closed? _____	
B2 Does the ballot box show any signs of being improperly sealed or tampered with? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
B3 Are all voters in the Polling Units or queues allowed to finish voting? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
B4 How many voters are registered at this Polling Unit? _____	
B5 How many ballots did the Polling Unit receive? _____	
B6 How many ballots were unused? _____	
B7 How many ballots were spoilt? _____	
B8 Was the ballot box unlocked and emptied in the view of all present in Polling Unit? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
B9 Were the ballots sorted and counted in the presence of polling agents and observers? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
B10 How many ballots were rejected? _____	
B11 Were rejected ballots shown to polling agents and observers? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
B12 How many ballots were used (spoilt + rejected + valid) _____	
B13 Did the number of ballots counted (unused + spoilt+ rejected + valid) exceed the number of ballots issued to the Polling Unit <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	

B14 Did the total number of votes cast exceed the number of registered voters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B15 Did the Presiding Officer record the results on the Result Form?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B16 Did the Presiding Officer loudly announce the result of the poll at the Polling Unit to those present?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B17 Did the Presiding Officer post the result of the poll at a conspicuous place in the Polling Unit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B18 Does anyone appear to have been influencing the closing procedures in a way that is at odds with roles prescribed under the Election Law? (If yes, choose as many as apply, and describe.) <input type="checkbox"/> Security personnel (police and military) <input type="checkbox"/> Authorized party agents <input type="checkbox"/> Authorized domestic observers <input type="checkbox"/> Other international observers <input type="checkbox"/> Media <input type="checkbox"/> Voters <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with unclear roles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B19 Did you observe anything that makes you suspect some form of election irregularity? (If yes, describe)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B20 At what time did the counting process conclude?_____		
C. TRANSPARENCY	Y	N
C1 Were you given full access to the PU/VP?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C2 Were all phases of the voting process visible to the PO and observers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NOTES:		

APPENDIX C: STATEMENTS ON THE NIGERIA 2015 ELECTION

[IRI's Preliminary Statement](#) (March 30, 2015)

[IRI's Statement Following the Announcement of the Results](#) (April 1, 2015)

[IRI's Election Snapshot](#) (March 30, 2015)

[Statement of the Joint NDI/IRI Pre-Election Assessment Mission to Nigeria](#) (January 20, 2015)

[Preliminary Statement of the National Democratic Institute](#) (March 30, 2015)

[Preliminary Statement of the African Union](#) (March 29, 2015)

[Preliminary Statement of the Commonwealth Observer Group](#) (March 30, 2015)

[Preliminary Statement of the European Union](#) (March 30, 2015)

[Joint Statement by the Heads of the International Election Observation Missions](#) (April 1, 2015)

APPENDIX D: NIGERIAN WOMEN'S TRUST FUNDS' GENDER-BASED ASSESSMENT OF THE ELECTIONS



GENDER ASSESSMENT OF THE 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA



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ACRONYMS

ACPN	Allied Congress Party of Nigeria
APA	African Peoples Alliance
APC	All Progressive Congress
APO	Assistant Presiding Officers
CPP	Citizens Popular Party
PPN	Peoples Party of Nigeria
CVR	Continuous Voters Registration
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FMWASD	The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
FRSC	Federal Road Safety Commission
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IRI	International Republican Institute
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PU	Polling Station
PVC	Permanent Voters Card
SHoA	States Houses of Assembly
SPO	Senior Presiding Officer
TMG	Transition Monitoring Group
TVC	Temporary Voters Card
Women Fund	The Nigerian Women Trust Fund

GENDER DISPARITY IN NIGERIA'S GENERAL ELECTIONS 1999 - 2015¹

Some will say that the 2015 elections were an improvement on the 2011 elections and the 2011 elections were an improvement on those in 2003. In as much as this is true for logistics, transparency and reduced violence, this is not true for women's representation in government.

Women Elected into the National Assembly

Nigeria had only three women in the Senate in 1999, a doleful 2.8 percent. There was a slight improvement in 2003 when four women made it to the Senate, 3.7 percent; a further increase to nine (8.3 percent) in 2007. Conversely, there was a slight decline in 2011 when only seven women made it to the Senate (6.4 percent) despite increase in gender advocacy among civil society organizations. In 2015, we are still at 7.3 percent, only eight women made were elected to the Senate.

At the inception of Nigeria's democracy in 1999, 12 women were elected into the House of Representatives out of the 360 seats. This is only 3.3 percent in a country where women make almost 50 percent of the population. We had 5.8 percent in 2003 when 21 women were elected. In 2007, it improved with an increase to 25 women being elected (6.9 percent) while in 2011 we had women representation at 7.2 percent; 26 women made it to the House. Disappointingly, there was a drop in 2015 as only 14 women were elected to the House of Reps; representing 3.8 percent.²

Women Elected into the State Houses of Assembly

The State Houses of Assembly Elections have seen a steady improvement unlike the National Assembly. In 1999, out of the 991 members of the State Houses of Assembly 24 were women; making up only 2.4 percent of the State Houses of Assembly (SHoA) across Nigeria. In 2003, we had 40 (3.9 percent). In 2011, women's representation in the SHoA was 5.8 percent (57 women). In 2007 and 2011, we had 68 women out of the 991 SHoA legislators across Nigeria, a meager 6.8 percent. In 2015, according to the analysis of the results published by INEC, out of the 919 seats contested, women won only about 46 seats, bringing their total representation to only 4.6 percent. Some states do not have a single female in the State Houses of Assembly. This figure could change, though, as election tribunals are ongoing.

The state with the highest number of women in the SHoA is Abia state. The reason for this may be that the South East is more gender responsive. However, this may not be entirely true as some states in the East – Edo, Delta and Imo – have only one female legislator each in the SHoA. Unfortunately, most of the states where there are no female legislators at all are in the North East, North West and North Central – these states include Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Gombe, Kebbi, Benue and Kogi. One begins to wonder if the bills that will be passed in these men-only SHoA will be gender sensitive.

¹ Ugwuegede Patience Nwabunkeonye, Challenges to Women Active Participation in Politics in Nigeria. Sociology and Anthropology 2(7), Horizon and Research Publishing, 2014, pg 2. <http://www.hrpub.org>.

² <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/05/elective-positions-why-nigeria-records-more-women-losers-than-winners/>.

Table 1: Gender disparity in State Houses of Assembly

Female Legislators in State Houses Of Assembly 2015					
S/N	State	Name of Female SHoA member	No. of Females	No. of Seats	Percent
1	Abia State	Hon. Blessing Okwuchi Nwagba	5	24	20.83%
		Hon. Blessing N. Iheasimod			
		Onuoha, Uloma Chijindu			
		Ngozi Nnenna Nwangwa			
		Dr. Kate Ijeoma Maduako			
2	Adamawa	Mrs. Justina Obadiah	2	25	8.00%
		Mrs. Sodom Tayedi			
3	Akwa Ibom	Hon. Alice Ekpeyong	3	26	11.54%
		Hon. Ekaette Okon			
		Hon. Sarah S. Elijah			
4	Anambra	Beverly Nkemdiche	4	25	16.00%
		Rita Maduagwuna			
		Vivian Akpangbo-Okadigbo			
		Nikky Ugochukwu			
5	Bauchi	Maryam Garba Bagel	1	31	3.23%
6	Bayelsa	Mrs. Koku Ebiuwou	4	24	16.7%
		Kate Owoko			
		Naomi Ogoli			
		Ingo Iwowari			
7	Benue		0	30	0.00%
8	Borno		0	22	0.00%
9	Cross River	Lady Elizabeth Edem Ironbar	3	25	12.00%
		Dr. Itam Virginia Abang			
		Mrs Regina Leonard Anyogo			
10	Delta	Erhiateke Ibori	1	28	
11	Ebonyi	Okpo Franca Chinyere	2	18	11.11%
		Ude Augusta Chika			
12	Edo	Ativie Elizabeth Uyinmwun	1	24	4.17%
13	Ekiti	Titlayo Owolabi-Akerele	2	26	7.69%
		Cecilia Bosede Dada			
14	Enugu	Anikwe Emmanuella Nkechi	3	24	12.50%

2015 Nigeria National Elections

		Mrs. Mary Benneth Uche O.			
		Ugwu Uchenna Deborah			
15	Gombe		0	23	0.00%
16	Imo	Uche Ejiogu (Mrs.)	1	27	3.70%
17	Jigawa		0	27	0.00%
18	Kaduna		0	11	0.00%
19	Kano		0	40	0.00%
20	Katsina		0	33	0.00%
21	Kebbi		0	24	0.00%
22	Kogi		0	25	0.00%
23	Kwara	Hon. Mrs. Felicia Ebun Owolabi	4	24	16.67%
		Ibrahim Bodunrin Aishat			
		Hon. Sikirat Sanni Anako			
		Abdulkadir Segilola Ramat			
24	Lagos	Mrs. Mosunmola Sangodara-Rotimi	2	19	10.53%
		Hon. Funmilayo Tejuosho			
25	Nassarawa		0	24	0.00%
26	Niger		0	25	0.00%
27	Ogun	Sogbein Yetunde Adekanbi	3	26	11.54%
		Lanre-Balogun Abimbola Catherine			
		Mojisola Adesola-Salami			
28	Ondo	Adesanya Kemi	2	26	7.69%
		Akindele Jumoke Y.			

29	Osun		0	26	0.00%
30	Oyo	Agbaje Bolanle Olufunke (Mrs.)	1	33	3.03%
31	Plateau		0	26	0.00%
32	Rivers	Hon. (Barr.) Benibo Fredrick Anabraba	2	25	8.00%
		Irene M. Inimgba (Hon.) Mrs.			
33	Sokoto		0	30	0.00%
34	Taraba		0	24	0.00%
35	Yobe		0	24	0.00%
36	Zamfara		0	24	0.00%
Total			46	991	4.6%

Local Government Chairperson and Councillorship, Historical Perspective

There are 774 local governments in Nigeria. Unfortunately, women's representation at the local government is the worst of all the arms of government. In 1999, we had only 13 women out of the 774 local government seats which were at 1.8 percent with slight improvements in 2003 with 15 women (1.9 percent) and 27 women (3.6 percent) in 2007. Unfortunately, in 2011, no woman was elected into the office of the local government chairperson.

Women's representation at the ward councillorship level is as poor as the local government. There are 6,368 councilors in Nigeria. In 1999, only 69 of the elected councilors were women; a pathetic 1.1 percent. In 2003, we saw a considerable improvement as women's representation increased to 267 (4.2 percent) in 2003 although it reduced to 235 (3.7 percent) in 2007. While in 2011 elections no woman was elected into the office of the councilor,³⁴⁵ the Nigerian Women's Trust Fund has not been able to obtain the final results for local chairperson and councillorship.

Women Elected into the Offices of the Governor

No woman has ever been elected as governor in the history of Nigeria. The only female governor Nigeria has ever had was Dame Virginia Etiaba who was appointed governor of Anambra from November 2006 to February 2007 when the then Governor Peter Obi was

³ Eyeh, S. O. "From Myth to Consciousness: The Novel as Mimetic Mode of Women's Sociocultural and political transformation in Nigeria." *Journal of the Nigeria English \ Studies Association*, 2010, 13(2), 137-150.

⁴ Irabor, F. O. Review of Women's Participation and Performance at the 2011 General Elections in Nigeria. 2011 www.baobwomen.org.

⁵ Okoronkwo-Chukwu, U. (2013). "Female Representation in Nigeria: The Case of 2011 General Elections and the Fallacy of 35 percent Affirmative Action." *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(2), 39-46.

impeached for three months and then re-instated. However, a handful of women have been elected as deputy governors. There was one deputy governor in 1999, two in 2003, six in 2007, one in 2011 (two other women became deputy governors between 2011 and 2015); so before the 2015 elections, Nigeria had three female governors. 2015 saw the emergence of four deputy governors: Hon. Cecilia Ezeilo for Enugu State, Mrs. Yetunde Onanuga for Ogun State, Dr. Oluranti Adebule for Lagos State and Dr. (Mrs.) Ipalibo Banigo for Rivers State.

Assessing the Presidential Election

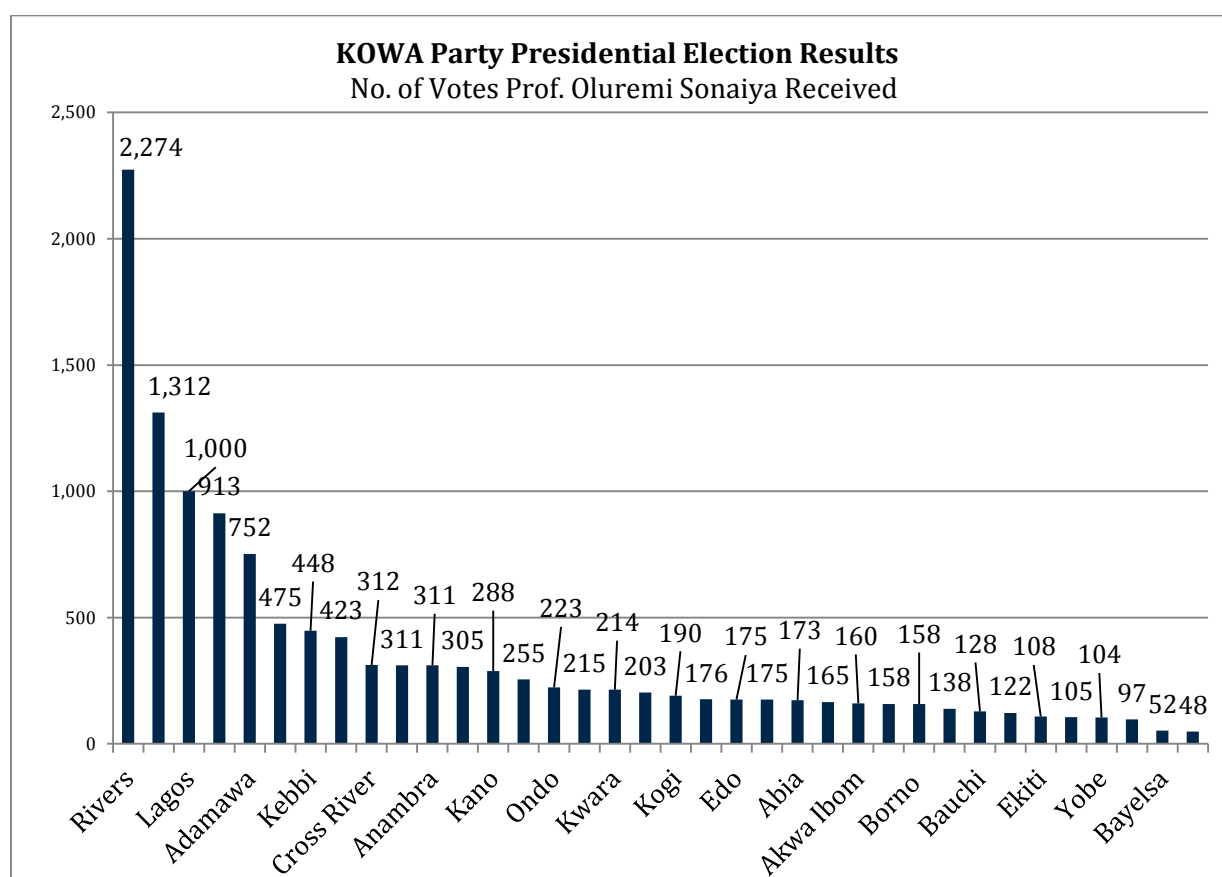
Only one woman contested for the presidential election in 2015 general elections on the platform of KOWA party. It is the first time a woman contested for the presidency in Nigeria. Previously, women never emerged from presidential primaries.

Table 2: Performance of KOWA Party in states

The sole female presidential candidate contested on the platform of KOWA

KOWA Party Results in States	
STATE	Total Votes Received
Rivers	2,274
Oyo	1,312
Lagos	1,000
Ebonyi	913
Adamawa	752
Sokoto	475
Kebbi	448
Jigawa	423
Cross River	312
Delta	311
Anambra	311
Niger	305
Kano	288
Osun	255
Ondo	223
Katsina	215
Kwara	214
Enugu	203
Kogi	190
Kaduna	176
Edo	175
Taraba	175
Abia	173
FCT	165
Akwa Ibom	160
Imo	158
Borno	158

Plateau	138
Bauchi	128
Zamfara	122
Ekiti	108
Benue	105
Yobe	104
Gombe	97
Bayelsa	52
Nasarawa	48
Total	12,666



ASSESSING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION THE PRIMARIES

In line with the election timetable of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the primaries for the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressive Congress (APC) took place⁶ between November 29 and December 11, 2014. The announcements for the party primaries were accompanied with various incentives for female aspirants in the

⁶ <http://jide-salu.com/2014/11/15/2015-elections-dates-for-pdp-and-apc-primaries-for-elective-posts/>.

form of waivers for the fees for the nomination and expression of interest forms.⁷ The PDP, through the Office of the National Woman Leader, the UNDP and Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, held a two-day National Conference on Women and Elections with the theme: “Enhancing opportunities for women candidates” where First Lady Dame Jonathan was in attendance.

The aspirations of female politicians were not as audibly and visibly captured in the media compared to the men. However a few female aspirants were in the media for a range of reasons. One reason was the uniqueness of their aspirations, e.g. Senator Jummai Aisha Al-Hassan of Taraba and Senator Chris Anyanwu of Imo State, who were serving senators vying for the tickets of major parties, APC and PDP respectively.⁸ While Senator Anyanwu lost to Deputy Speaker Emeka Ihedioha, Senator Al-Hassan won to the delight of gender advocates and political trend watchers.⁹ Typically the second reason was tied to controversy. In the case of Zainab Duke (from?) Abiola, despite paying the PDP the sum of Two Million (N2,000,000) for the presidential nomination form, she, along with Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Abdul Jelili were reportedly not given any forms because President Jonathan was the party’s sole candidate for president.¹⁰

While INEC is expected under the provisions of the Electoral Act to observe party primaries, records on the total number of women who participated in the primaries within all the political parties are not readily available. However, from the number of women who emerged as candidates after the primaries, it is relatively safe to presume that an increasing number of women were taking part in party primaries with a view to contesting the elections.

These numbers do not reflect the number of women who were encouraged or allegedly threatened¹¹ into abandoning their ambitions either for the sake of the parties presenting a consensus candidate or for other alleged irregularities with the process. The latter was the case with Irete Kingibe, who on the eve of the PDP primaries quit the race for the ticket to represent the Federal Capital Territory in the Senate.¹²

⁷ In the APC both the forms for nomination and expression of interest were free while for the PDP, only the expression of interest form was free.

⁸ Other popular female governorship aspirants who did not win their party tickets were Senator Gbemisola Saraki, (Kwara State PDP); Ngozi Olejeme, (Delta State PDP); and Senator Helen Esuene, (Akwa Ibom State PDP); <http://www.punchng.com/politics/primaries-female-aspirants-missing-from-2015-gov-show/> (accessed May 16 2015).

⁹ <http://www.punchng.com/news/female-senator-wins-taraba-apc-gov-ticket/> (accessed May 16 2015); <http://slankydiva.blogspot.com/2014/12/apc-primaries-produce-first-woman-in.html> (accessed May 16 2015); <http://naijapolitica.com/2014/12/05/first-female-apc-governorship-candidate-emerges-in-taraba/> (accessed May 16 2015).

¹⁰ <http://www.naij.com/314246-2015-why-pdp-refuses-abiolas-wife-nomination-form.html> (accessed May 16 2015).

¹¹ Lagos State Deputy Governor, Adejoke Orelope-Adefulure and Kemi Obasa, who had initially indicated their interest in the Lagos West Senatorial District, withdrew from the race 3 days before the APC primary. <http://www.punchng.com/politics/primaries-female-aspirants-missing-from-2015-gov-show/> (accessed May 16 2015).

¹² <http://leadership.ng/news/393424/ireti-kingibe-quits-race-senate-dumps-pdp>.

Female Candidates for the 2015 General Elections

The results of the primaries across the country and the analysis of the party platforms where women won their tickets were a strong indication that women would not fare well at the 2015 general elections.¹³ There were a total of 14 presidential candidates and only one, Prof Remi Sonaiya of KOWA party, was female. Four parties,¹⁴ the Allied Congress Party of Nigeria (ACPN), the African Peoples Alliance (APA), the Citizens Popular Party (CPP), and the Peoples Party of Nigeria (PPN) nominated female vice presidential candidates.

The results for the other positions were not much better. The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development (FMWASD) reported that there was no female candidate in Jigawa state.¹⁵ Overall, for the 760 gubernatorial candidates for governor and deputy governor, women were only 87 (24.16 percent); women were only 122 of the 747 senatorial candidates. Percentage of female candidates for the House of Reps was not better, out of 1774 candidates, only 269 were women (16.33 percent).

Table 3: Gender Disparity in Winners of Primaries

Position	Total No. of candidates	Total No. of female candidates	Gender ratio
Governors & Deputies	760	87	11.45%
Senator	747	122	16.33%
House of Reps	1,774	269	15.16%

Analysis of the results from the primaries of the 26¹⁶ parties indicated that women would not fare better than the previous general elections in 2011. It was highly probable that the number of women in the National Assembly would drop. This was because the major parties – APC and PDP and to a lesser extent Labour and APGA – did not have a significant number of women emerging as candidates for the elections. For the Senate, APC and PDP had only seven female candidates each while MPPP, a party without any elected representatives in the current and past administrations, had 16 women. The trend was the same for all the other positions.

INEC and Conditions for Voting

One of the central issues around the 2015 general elections was the eligibility to vote i.e., only with an INEC-issued permanent voters card (PVC). The issue was covered extensively

¹³ Using the National Gender Policy (2006) recommendation of a representation of a minimum of 35 percent women in decision making boards, organizations and institutions and one of the goals under the Millennium Development Goals i.e., that Nigeria would have 30 percent women in the National Assembly by 2015.

¹⁴ Source: Statement of the National Democratic Institute's international observer mission to Nigeria's March 28 2015 presidential and legislative elections <https://www.ndi.org/nigeria-election-observation-statement-march-2015> (accessed May 16 2015).

¹⁵ Election Observation Report by the FMWASD, p21.

¹⁶ AA, Accord, ACD, ACPN, AD, ADC, APA, APC, APGA, CPP, DPP, ID, KOWA, LP, MPPP, NCP, NNPP, PDC, PDM, PDP, PPA, PPN, SDP, UDP, UPP, UPN.

by the media with INEC¹⁷ providing the nation with constant updates on the numbers. Despite the extension of the election dates by six weeks, millions of Nigerians were still unable to get their PVCs. The continuous voter registration exercise was also by media accounts problematic with millions also unable to register within the timelines for the exercise.

Prior to the Ekiti and Osun gubernatorial elections, INEC released the breakdown of voters with PVCs. In Ekiti out of 371,925 PVCs collected from a total of 657,256 PVCs, 47.14 percent were men and 194,620 were women representing 52.86 percent. In Osun, it was the same with more women collecting PVCs at a rate of 53.1 percent to 46.9 percent. There was some anticipation that this level of information would also be provided for the general elections, however, when INEC announced¹⁸ the total number of PVCs collected just before the March 28 and April 11 elections the breakdown for the collection of PVCs was only done by state.

Gender disaggregated data for the CVR exercise has also not been shared by INEC yet. Despite persistent calls to INEC to collate and share voter data on the number of female and male voters, only observers made it a goal to collect this data.

There is little data to say definitively that there were more or less female voters during the elections. However the Nigerian Women's Trust Fund's Election Day observer mission within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja shows that during the balloting for the presidential election, 36 percent of voters were women. Organizations which carried out nationwide observation put the percentage at 40 percent.

Successful Female Candidates

The results of the general elections proved the earlier prediction that the numbers of successful women will be lower. This was based on the number of female candidates who won their party tickets in major political parties i.e., parties with past or current representation in the National Assembly.

The Eighth National Assembly will have seven female senators and 14 members of the House of Representatives while three female deputy governors were elected,¹⁹ to join the female deputy governor in Osun who was elected in 2014, bringing the total to four.

Reports from the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD) show that 'there were very few women candidates in the North Central zone'. Only two women candidates emerged winners in the House of Representatives – one from Kwara State (APC) and one from Plateau State (PDP).

¹⁷<http://www.naij.com/383429-inec-chairman-revealed-pvc-distribution-figures.html>;
<http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/178271-pvc-collection-rate-hits-80-inec.html>;
<http://www.naij.com/402457-inec-releases-official-report-on-pvc-collection-in-nigeria.html>.

¹⁸<http://www.nigerianbulletin.com/threads/inec-releases-statistics-of-pvc-collected-in-all-36-states-see-list.109263/>.

¹⁹ <http://www.nairaland.com/2252772/meet-4-new-female-deputy>.

Unsuccessful Female Candidates

The gubernatorial election in Taraba where Senator Aisha Alhassan contested was controversial. Initial results indicated that Senator Aisha Alhassan had won but after a supplementary election on April 28, it was announced that she lost the Taraba gubernatorial elections.²⁰ Unless Senator Alhassan is successful at the election tribunal that has commenced, Nigeria will have to wait a little longer to swear in its first elected female governor. The sole female presidential candidate out of 14 contestants polled higher than the candidates of Hope Party and UDP with 13,076 votes. The highest vote for the sole female presidential candidate came from Rivers state and the lowest for Prof. Oluremi Sonaiya came from Nasarawa state.

Another high profile candidate who did not win her re-election is the majority leader of the House of Representatives, Hon. Mulikat Akande²¹ who has joined 35 other politicians in Oyo State challenging the results of the elections at the tribunal. Unfortunately, while the media²² is reporting on the number of petitions received in each state, there is no detailed information on who filed petitions and so far there is no single site or news article which analyses the total number of petitions nationwide. There is also no information on the election tribunals on INEC's website. This makes it difficult to determine how many female candidates are using the tribunals and to assess their experiences and successes.

GENDER PARITY IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY ELECTIONS

The following are the findings by the Nigerian Women's Trust Fund from its election observation reports of the national elections in the FCT. The findings might reflect gender disparity in other states.

Women's Fund observes took the effort to count the number of women as they were accredited. This figure was then used to obtain the number of men accredited when the final number of voters accredited was announced by the SPO. After the final analysis, women comprise 37.15 percent of the accredited voters.



Fig 1: Female electoral officer at a PU in Apo

Women's Fund observers took time to count the number of men and women that voted as they cast their ballot. This was easier in less crowded polling units (PU). The collated data shows that women formed 36 percent of the

²⁰<http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/181412-update-mama-taraba-still-in-race-as-inec-declares-taraba-governorship-poll-inconclusive.html>.

²¹<http://leadership.ng/news/430975/oyo-election-tribunal-gets-36-petitions>.

²²[http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/2015/05/2015-elections-tribunal-receives-5-petitions-in-sokoto/;](http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/2015/05/2015-elections-tribunal-receives-5-petitions-in-sokoto/)
[http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/2015/05/abia-election-tribunal-receives-30-petitions/;](http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/2015/05/abia-election-tribunal-receives-30-petitions/)
[http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/04/rivers-election-petition-tribunal-receives-17-petitions/.](http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/04/rivers-election-petition-tribunal-receives-17-petitions/)

voters who came out to vote in the PUs observed; this is about one percent less than the number that was accredited.

The electoral officers deployed by INEC to the polling units observed consisted of 35 percent women. This meets the gender affirmative action. However, because of the large number of women who come out to vote, there should be an increase in the number of women deployed.

Women formed 21 percent of voters who waited to observe the counting of votes. In comparison with the percentage of those who voted, this is low. As earlier emphasized in this report, poor time management led to the counting of votes into the later nights and early morning. Consequently, the number of women who waited to observe the counting of votes in most areas was low.



Fig 2: Women voting into the night at Karu Village, Abuja

The lowest gender disparity was recorded among the party agents representing the various parties. Women formed only 29.81 percent of the party agents deployed. This reflects the gender insensitivity of political parties in Nigeria. A relevant factor for this could be the prevalence of violence in party campaign activities which is off-putting for women. FMWASD corroborated in its report that the percentage of female electoral officials was at 30 percent.²³

Observation in the PUs also looked at the gender disparity in the number of voters who encountered problems during the accreditation process. The percentage of women in this category is 35 percent. Considering the percentage of women who voted we can infer here that men and women are at par in terms of voter education.

Security personnel deployed to the polling units observed consist of 33.48 percent women. This percentage more or less reflects the gender disparity in the security agencies in Nigeria. The female security personnel were very active in the coordination of the electoral process.

²³ Election Observation Report by the FMWASD, p43.



Fig 3: Female security personnel at Karu Health Center

FMWASD report on the general representation of women in security agents puts it about 20 percent.²⁴

WOMEN AND THE VOTING PROCESS

Voter Turn Out

From Women's Fund findings, during the national election in the FCT, voter turnout was 38.80 percent. Out of the 886,573 registered voters, only 344,056 were accredited and 316,015 eventually voted. Despite the low turnout, most of the PUs were over-crowded. Nationwide, FMWASD reports show that women made up 45 percent of voters who turned out to vote in the North Central.



Fig 4: An overcrowded PU at Karu spills unto the major road

There was great improvement in overall voter turnout nationwide. Voter turnout in 2011 was 28.66 percent; in 2015 it increased to 43.65 percent. See Table 3 below.

²⁴ Election Observation by the FMWASD, p4.

A woman from Tambuwal LGA was reported to have delivered a baby girl shortly after casting her vote; she went into labor, not minding her state of health, insisted on exercising her civic rights.²⁵

It was generally corroborated that the turn out for the presidential election was higher than that of the gubernatorial elections. Some reasons for this was that it was obvious who the winner of the elections will be in some states.²⁶

Table 3: Voter turnout by year²⁷

Parliamentary

Year	Voter Turnout	Total vote	Registration	VAP Turnout	Voting age population	Population
2015	43.65%	29,432,083	67,422,005	32.11%	91,669,312	181,562,056
2011	28.66%	21,074,621	73,528,040	25.80%	81,691,751	155,215,573
2007			61,567,036		71,004,507	131,859,731
2003	49.32%	29,995,171	60,823,022	46.63%	64,319,246	129,934,911
1999	40.69%	23,573,407	57,938,945	44.65%	52,792,781	108,258,359
1983	38.90%	25,400,000	65,300,000	58.23%	43,620,780	89,022,000
1979	32.34%	15,686,514	48,499,091	41.13%	38,142,090	77,841,000
1959	79.52%	7,185,555	9,036,083	43.46%	16,532,640	34,443,000

Presidential

Year	Voter Turnout	Total vote	Registration	VAP Turnout	Voting age population	Population
2015	43.65%	29,432,083	67,422,005	32.11%	91,669,312	181,562,056
2011	53.68%	39,469,484	73,528,040	48.32%	81,691,751	155,215,573
2007	57.49%	35,397,517	61,567,036	49.85%	71,004,507	131,859,731
2003	69.08%	42,018,735	60,823,022	65.33%	64,319,246	129,934,911
1999	52.26%	30,280,052	57,938,945	57.36%	52,792,781	108,258,359
1993		14,039,486		27.79%	50,526,720	105,264,000
1979	35.25%	17,098,267	48,499,091	44.83%	38,142,090	77,841,000

Voters' Conduct

Before voting commenced in most of the polling centers in Women's Fund election observation in the FCT, the environment was generally calm, lively and peaceful. Although some of the polling centers were densely crowded, there was no record of violence in all the polling centers. Voters conducted themselves properly in 97 percent of the polling centers,

²⁵ Woman Delivers Baby after Voting in Tambuwal <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/04/woman-delivers-baby-after-voting-in-tambuwal/>.

²⁶ Election Observation Report by the FMWASD, p42.

²⁷ <http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=NG>, (Accessed May 18, 2015).

inappropriate behaviors was recorded in three percent of the centers. During the voting exercise 50 percent of the polling centers were crowded and calm, 10 percent lively and peaceful, 30 percent was tense. While 10 percent was rowdy. In 90 percent of the polling centers there were no queries or protests made but in 10 percent of the centers there were queries and protest because of disruption of the established queues by some individuals and party agents. Particularly, there was a report of hoodlums trying to disrupt the process at Jabi and Bwari.^{28,29} However, after the voting exercise voters in all the polling units conducted themselves properly.

Time Management

The Women's Fund observation report shows that in almost 70 percent of the polling centers, INEC officials arrived late while 30 percent of the polling centers recorded early arrival of the officials. Opening procedures commenced early in about 40 percent of the polling centers between 8am and 8:30am, while there was late commencement in about 60 percent of the centers – polling units where opening procedures commenced later than 9am. In 30 percent of the polling centers, voting commenced on time while 70 percent of the centers voting commenced late. Voting started late in the PUs where INEC officials arrived later; late voting being later than 1:00pm. In most polling units, counting officially stopped between 5:00pm on the voting day while a few completed their counting the next day.

The Women's Fund report on arrival of INEC officials to PUs in the FCT is similar to other reports. TMG reported that INEC officials arrived at 7:30am at 43 percent of polling units INEC. It also reported that INEC poll officials arrived at more PUs in North Central, North East, and North West than in South East, South South, and South West.³⁰ The report of late arrival was corroborated by the FMWASD election observation report. However, according to the FMWASD, INEC officials arrived earlier in the North East Zone compared to other zones.

²⁸ "Two arrested for electoral violence in Abuja," <http://www.news24.com.ng/Elections/News/Two-arrested-for-electoral-violence-in-Abuja-20150329-2>.

²⁹ Election Observation Report by FMWASD, p12.

³⁰ <http://tmgng.org>

Arrival of INEC polling officials at polling units by 7:30am 1,349 of 1,507 (90%) polling units reporting as of 7:30am

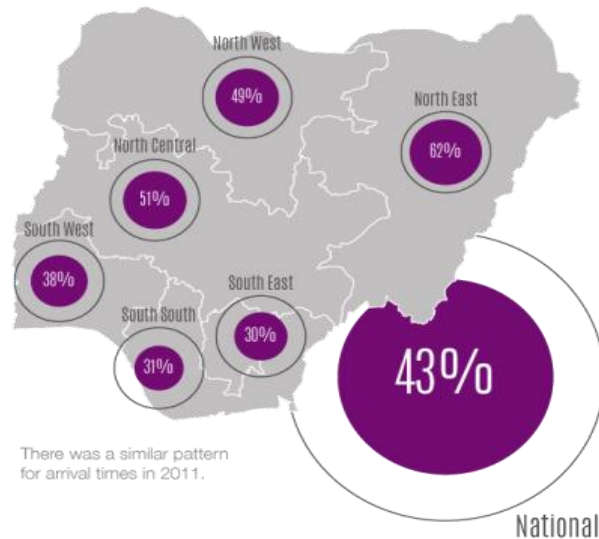


Fig 5: Arrival of polling officials³¹

In corroboration, FMWASD reported that the INEC officials arrived in most polling units by 9am – which is an hour late. In Abraka 123 in Akwa Ibom INEC officials did not arrive till 12:55pm. According to FMWASD report some women were in the wrong polling units and it took a while for them find the correct polling units because they had not been told on time as the INEC official arrived late.

The Accreditation Process in the FCT

Accreditation commenced around 8am in at least 40 percent of the PUs. Late arrival of INEC officials is the reason for late commencement of accreditation. There were some initial hitches encountered in most of the polling centers due to card reader failure, although, this was eventually overcome. In some polling units the electoral officials alternated between the card reader and the voters register. Card readers worked well in 40 percent of the centers without any hitch. There weren't many cases of the anticipated dirty or oily thumbs preventing the card reader from identifying voters – voter education in this area seems to have been effective.

Generally, FMWASD reported that 'Card reader malfunction was visible in many polling booths, resulting to manual voting and subsequent delay in the election process in all parts of the country. However, the card reader can be rated medium performance.³²

³¹ Ibid.

³² Election Observation Report by the FMWASD, p11.

Poor crowd control also slowed down accreditation. There was no report of omission of names from the voters register, except few cases of voters who were in the wrong polling unit. Reports from the PUs where the observers were deployed show that officials ensured the forefingers of the voters were marked with indelible ink after casting their votes.



Fig 6: Women wait to vote at Jikwoyi, Abuja hours after accreditation was concluded



Fig 7: Women wait at a PU in Karu before the arrival of electoral officers, nursing mothers among them



However, TMG reported that at 21 percent of polling units there were voters accredited during voting.³³ This is actually prohibited by the Electoral Act but Women Fund other women organisations actually propose that accreditation and voting should be done at the same time.

Fig 8: A nursing mother is accredited at Apo village

Sensitivity to Women Needs

In 96 percent of the polling centers in the FCT, pregnant women and nursing mothers were given special attention. This was not the case in about four percent of the polling centers as everybody was treated equally. In 80 percent of the polling centers, INEC officials gave preference to female voters – women had a different queue and some reports show that during voting two women vote before one man votes. The provision of different queues for women was also reported by the FMWASD in its nationwide election observation.

However, in 20 percent of polling centers, there was no special consideration for women – both men and women joined the same queue. At most of the PUs, priority was given to pregnant women except in six PUs where voters were joined the same queue as other women. Some few cases of women having to join the same queue as men was also reported by FMWASD.³⁴

³³ 2015 TMG Election Observation Report. <http://www.tmgto2015.org/index.html>.

³⁴ Monitoring And Evaluation of Women's Participation in the 2015 Electoral Process, Organized by the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development in collaboration with 100 Women Lobby Group & Zonal Women Political Empowerment Offices & State Ministries Of Women Affairs And Social Development, pg. 8.



Fig 9: A pregnant woman joins the same queue as others at a PU in Aleyta.

In 60 percent of the centers, both men and women were equally assisted as needed by officials. In 20 percent of the centers, nobody was assisted, while in the remaining 20 percent women were particularly given attention. In general, FMWASD reported that priority was given to women, pregnant women and nursing mothers. This was much improved from the 2011 elections.

Poor time management recorded during the elections could inhibit women's election participation as they need several hours to carry out domestic responsibilities, especially feeding the children. Voting taking place late into the night and counting into the early mornings is definitely a deterrent for women.

Persons and Women with Disabilities and the Aged

The Women's Fund observation report in the FCT shows that persons and women with disabilities were given special attention in almost all the polling centers except in five centers where no special attention was given to them. Aged people were also given special attention in about 90 percent of the polling centers. They were however not given any special preferences in 10 percent of the polling centers.



Fig 10: A woman with disability waits on the queue with others.

Political Party Activities

In all the polling centers party agents were actively engaged in monitoring the voting process. However, in all the PUs there was no report of campaign activities. However, the presence of party agents who sometimes went close to the ballot box area may influence voters. The party agents also had good rapport with voters. In as much as these voters may be party members, this could influence the voter's choice. From reports, most of the party agents conversed more with women and in some cases, a subtle reminder about who they should vote for. The presence of party agents at the polling units do compromise voters emotional; especially women.

TMG Reported that on average there were four party agents present during the counting process at polling units. Most of them men.

Election Related Violence

Historically, elections in Nigeria have been violent. The 2011 post-election violence was the worst since the return to democracy in 1999.³⁵ In 2015, there were expectations that violence would erupt, with some analysts even predicting the elections would lead to the breakup of the country. The potential for violence, amongst other things, resulted in a 'non-violence pact' between the major presidential candidates, President Goodluck Jonathan and

³⁵ The Sheik Lemu Report confirmed the deaths of close to eight hundred people and sixty five thousand displaced <http://www.channelstv.com/2013/04/25/jonathan-shares-n5-7-billion-to-victims-of-2011-post-election-violence/>.

his primary rival, Muhammadu Buhari³⁶. This did not do much to allay the fears of many who temporary relocated to their states of origin prior to the elections. It is not clear how many were disenfranchised by this temporary relocation and how many in this group were women.

According to the FMWASD Election Observation Report,³⁷ the election was generally peaceful, although tension was palpable and there were incidents of election-related violence. This apprehension led to many families travelling from big cities to their communities or out of the country. Despite this huge movement, the turn out for the presidential election was quite impressive. FMWASD reported that volatile states like Borno and Gombe did not heavy violence as predicted.

In the run-up to elections, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) reported that as early as February 2015, 58 people had already been killed.³⁸ On the eve of the elections, the NHRC raised alarm over the escalation of violence.³⁹ While many investigations continue, episode of violence were particularly bad in Rivers state; the NHRC set up a commission of inquiry to look into the killings⁴⁰. In Gombe, Adamawa, Yobe Anambra and Enugu⁴¹ states there were reports of bomb blasts at polling units with up to seven killed in Gombe alone.

Unfortunately without details of the dead it is not possible to say how women were affected directly by the violence. However, across the country, particularly in places like Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Lagos where voter turnout was extremely poor, there are indications that the threat of violence kept many voters away, particularly women with young children.

So far, specifically on the NHRC inquiry in Rivers State there is no indication that women were perpetrators of violence and no specific reports that women were among the victims of violence.⁴² However, there will be indirect impact i.e., as wives, mothers, sisters of the men, young boys killed. One such case is Ijeoma Mbamalu who lost her husband who was reportedly shot for being a member of the APC.⁴³

Rivers was also the site for alleged police brutality against over 2000 APC female members who were protesting the March 28 presidential and National Assembly elections. The report

³⁶<http://www.punchng.com/opinion/viewpoint/reasons-for-low-voter-turnout/>.

³⁷ Election Observation report by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs on the 2015 Election Observation, shared with the Women Fund

³⁸<http://www.punchng.com/news/58-killed-in-pre-election-violence-in-60-days-nhrc/>.

³⁹<http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/nhrc-raises-the-alarm-over-escalation-of-election-related-violence/205194/>.

⁴⁰[http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/03/millions-nigerians-vote-crunch-poll-150328122844145.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/03/millions-nigerians-vote-crunch-poll-150328122844145.html;);
<http://www.wsj.com/articles/nigeria-votes-in-presidential-election-1427531592>.

⁴¹<http://www.news24.com.ng/Elections/News/2015-Elections-38-killed-in-Gombe-Borno-Rivers-20150329>.

⁴²<http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/182977-rivers-inquiry-%E2%80%8Bhow-demanding-election-result-sheets-left-me-%E2%80%8Bhalf-blind%E2%80%8Bwitness.html>.

⁴³<http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/182997-rivers-2015-election-violence-probe-day-4-live-updates-riversinquiry-2.html>.

said the women were tear-gassed even while led by the state Commissioner of Women Affairs.⁴⁴ According to FMWASD report:

Rivers State elections were characterized by a lot of violence, the most the country recorded thus far in the 2015 Gubernatorial and State Assembly elections. The Home of the Commissioner of Women Affairs Mrs. Joeba West, in Buguma, Rivers State was set ablaze, along with Registration Area Centers in Kalabari National College and a police patrol vehicle at the 24 hours before the Saturday elections by unknown thugs. It was reported that the thugs suspected that election materials were being kept in her residence.⁴⁵

TMG noted that at 96 percent of PUs did not report incidents of harassment against voters, poll officials, party agents or observers. We can indeed infer that there was decrease in election violence in the 2015 elections.

IDP Camps and Women Voters

One of the contested issues in the run-up to elections centered on INEC's arrangements to enable voting take place in IDP camps. It was important for the Women's Fund because IDP camps consist mostly of women. UNHCR reported that women and children make up 75 percent of persons in IDP camps in Nigeria.⁴⁶ FMWASD reported that voting took place in IDP camps in Damaturu, Tarmuwa and Dapchi local government areas in Yobe state.

At the instance of the state government some voters with their PVC were conveyed from their IDP camps to voting centers and returned to their camps after voting at no cost to them in order for them to exercise their civic rights. For instance some local government areas in Borno state- Damboa, Bama, Gashua and some LGAs in Adamawa recorded such movements of IDP voters most of which were women.⁴⁷

Women's Tenacity

A very large number of people came out to cast their votes in all the polling units where observers were deployed. Their tenacity was not just seen in their readiness to get accredited but also a willingness to endure long waits to cast their votes and ensure that their votes counted, especially pregnant women and nursing mothers. A woman, Malama Aishatu Abubakar of Anjannaje ward in Tambuwal LGA, was reported to have delivered a

⁴⁴ <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/03/police-fire-tear-gas-at-apc-women-protesters-in-rivers/>.

⁴⁵ Election Observation Report by the FMWASD, p. 47-48.

⁴⁶ UNHCR, 2015 Report, <http://healthreporters.info/2015/06/04/unhcr-says-women-and-children-contribute-75-of-idps-in-nigeria>.

⁴⁷ Election Observation Report – FMWASD, p.17.

baby girl shortly after casting her vote; she went into labor, not minding her state of health, and insisted on exercising her civic rights.⁴⁸

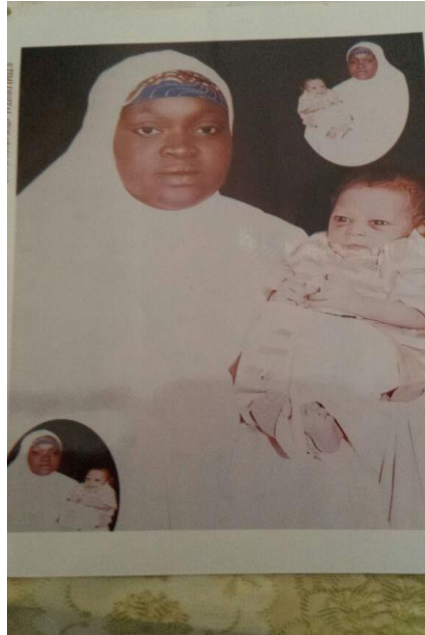


Fig 11: Aishatu and baby (Buhari)

CONCLUSION

Compared to the 2011 elections we can say there were reasonable improvements in the conduct of the elections by INEC. Election and post-election violence was minimal compared to the previous elections. However, there was no improvement in women representation in elective offices even though there was improvement in women's political participation.

Poor time management of the elections remained an issue among Nigerian women. This was corroborated by the FMWASD. Most women have children to fend for and the late arrival of electoral officials and voting into the late nights and early morning is obviously off-putting for women. We can deduce from this situation that some female voters failed to vote after being accredited judging by the percentage difference in accredited voters and voters who voted. As earlier mentioned, challenges with the card reader contributed to the late conclusion of the elections.

The controversy surrounding the loss of the female gubernatorial candidate in Taraba questions the integrity of the State Independent Electoral Commission. This is because the PUs where the elections were cancelled and re-scheduled favored her in the first election but did not favor her in the re-run.

⁴⁸ "Woman Delivers Baby after Voting in Tambuwal," <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/04/woman-delivers-baby-after-voting-in-tambuwal/>.

Violence and murder recorded during the state elections is a huge deterrent for women. Until Election Day violence is further reduced, many women will still stay away from competing in political contests and casting their ballot.

We are encouraged by the improvements in 2015, we believe this will be an impetus for women's political participation in 2019.



INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE
(202) 408-9450 PHONE
(202) 408-9452 FAX
INFOR@IRI.ORG
WWW.IRI.ORG | @IRIGLOBAL