

Open-Closed Letter to Electoral Stakeholders in Nigeria

- **Chairman of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)**
INEC National Headquarters, Plot 436 Zambezi Crescent
Maitama District, FCT, Abuja
Nigeria
- **President of Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**
Office of the Senate President
Red Chambers, the National Assembly Complex
Three-Arms-Zone, FCT, Abuja
Nigeria
- **Speaker of the House of Representatives of Nigeria**
Office of the House Speaker
Green Chambers, the National Assembly Complex
Three-Arms-Zone, FCT, Abuja
Nigeria
- **The Inspector General of Police**
The IGP's Office, Force Headquarters
Louis Edet House, Shehu Shagari Way
FCT, Abuja
Nigeria
- **The Attorney General of the Federation (AGF)**
Office of the AGF, Federal Secretariat Complex
Shehu Shagari Way, FCT, Abuja
Nigeria
- **The Chairman, Senate Committee on INEC**
Red Chambers, the National Assembly Complex
Three Arms Zone, FCT, Abuja
Nigeria
- **The Chairman, House Committee on INEC**
Green Chambers, the National Assembly Complex
Three Arms Zone, FCT, Abuja
Nigeria

Sirs,

(i) Electronic Voting And Balanced Voter Registration & PVC Distribution As Key Solutions To Low Turnout, Voter Militarization, Vote Rigging And Threats Of Election Boycott Facing 2019 General Polls In Nigeria(1)

(ii) A Study Of Anambra 2017 Governorship Election & Challenges It Generated

(Intersociety, Nigeria: 28th November 2017)-Our Organization-*Int'l Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law (Intersociety)* respectfully write your public offices as it concerns the above underlined subject. This letter of ours had arisen following challenges generated by the just concluded Anambra 2017 Governorship Election that took place on 18th November 2017 and the urgent need to address those challenges head long so as to ensure participatory, popular, free and credible General Elections in Nigeria in early 2019.

As globally known rights CSO based in the Southeast Nigeria, we played a leading role in the pre election and Election Day advocacy in the Anambra 2017 Governorship Election and in the course of same, the following challenges were identified: *(a) call and massive campaign for election boycott, (b) threats of violence by election boycott advocates against the Anambra voting population, (c) poor handling styles of the threats by security agencies leading to fears and apprehensions especially among independent and elite voters, (d) creation of psychological insecurity by way of militarization of Anambra State in the name of "election security", (e) election security corrupt practices by way of roadblock extortion, etc.*

Others are *(f) over-publicity regarding poll security deployment of war-like combatants and arsenal; thereby heightening and escalating fears and panics among already traumatized voting population, (g) over-spending of public funds on poll security deployment, (h) non issuance of permanent voters' cards (PVCs) to over 350, 000 registered voters in Anambra State, (i) indiscriminate sharing of cash and other inducements (voter procurement) to lure and influence voters; to the tune of estimated average of N500,000 spent in each of the State's 4,608 polling booths, (j) non participation in the voting exercise especially by larger population of independent and elite voters owing to generated fears and tensions including threats of violence by poll boycott exponents and voter militarization by security agencies.*

The rest are *(k) general and repetitive low participation by PVC armed voting population which had been a recurring decimal in Nigeria in general and Anambra State in particular, (l) possible scientific manipulation of figures or rigging of the poll by (i) alarming number of invalid or rejected votes to the tune of 26, 457 out of 448, 771 total votes cast, (ii) generation of 8, 540 accredited but un-voted voters or total number of those who were accredited but never voted; despite their acceptance by INEC Smart Card Readers and the Commission's policy of "simultaneous accreditation and voting", (iii)strongly suspected uploading of thousands, if not tens of thousands of names as "already voted voters" and their perfection using fate thumb printed ballot papers perfected during election hours.*

It is recalled that there were reported cases of “buying and selling” of PVCs especially in rural parts of Anambra State as well as forceful demand for their original or photocopies from some, if not many civil servants in Anambra State. Such cases were also reported in urban residential areas especially during weekends and weekdays (morning and evening hours). Vulnerable and immoral owners of PVCs are induced or forced to surrender their PVCs or allow their serial numbers to be copied; with their passports taken in many cases.

Others, particularly the civil servants were threatened with victimization if they refused to submit their PVCs or photocopies of same to “appropriate quarters” for undisclosed reasons. Through this criminal exercise, thousands, if not tens of thousands of PVCs and their sensitive serial numbers were collected. It is strongly suspected that the criminal activity was discretely coordinated and perfected by criminal syndicate operating from INEC’s National and Anambra ICT departments.

We further suspect strongly that the 8, 540 “accredited voters” who never voted in the just concluded Anambra 2017 Governorship Election are part of “the uploaded voted voters” who never neared polling booths on Election Day but were scientifically counted as “successful voters”. This large number (8,540) may most likely have been declared as “accredited un-voted voters” because time ran out of those who were hired to fake them and level their numbers using fake thumb printed ballot papers.

It is also a general knowledge that it is more difficult to be manually and electronically (via card reader) accredited than to vote. The clear implication of this is that, if the above is true, then only the INEC’s ICT syndicate and its favored political party and its candidate know the actual number of “successfully uploaded” fake voted voters perfected with fake thumb printed ballot papers on Election Day. If true, it may most likely be in tens of thousands.

It is further recalled that the authorities of INEC had during the announcement of the result of the Anambra 2017 Governorship Election on 19th November 2017, declared as follows: (a) total registered voters in Anambra -2, 064, 134 (two million, sixty four thousand, one hundred & thirty four), (b) total accredited voters-457, 311, (c) total votes cast-448, 771, (d) total valid votes-422, 314 and (e) total invalid or rejected votes-26, 457. This clearly shows that out of 457, 311 citizens that were accredited who ought to have voted immediately after accreditation, only 448, 771 voted while 8, 540 never voted despite being accredited.

Non Issuance Of PVCs & Low Voter Turnout In Anambra Elections

Low voter turnout especially in governorship poll has become a recurring decimal in Anambra State. This had been on since 2003 when Peter Obi presumably won with 235,000 popular votes out of the total registered population of 1.9m but was rigged out. Obi’s popular votes were rigged and replaced with intimidating figures of fake votes. The Justice Garuba Nabaruma led Tribunal later in 2005 recounted the presumed winner’s valid votes using original copies of filled and duly signed FormEC8As of accredited party agents and independent observers; leading to declaration of the presumed winner as the substantive winner in August 2005. The Enugu Division of the Court of Appeal later in March 2006 upheld the decision of the Tribunal leading to his swearing in on 17th March 2006.

In the February 6, 2010 governorship poll out of a total registered voting population of 1.84m, only 301, 232 (16.3%) voted; out of which Peter Obi of then APGA won his second term with only 97, 833 valid votes, followed by Dr. Chris Ngige of ACN with 60, 240 and Prof Charlie Soludo of PDP with 59, 355 votes.

In the November 16th and 30th 2013 governorship election in the State, out of a total registered voting population of 1,776, 167; only 442, 242 voted (25%) and 16, 988 were invalid while 425, 254 were declared valid; out of which Mr. William Obiano of APGA won with 180,173 valid votes; followed by Anthony Nwoye of PDP with 97, 700 and Chris Ngige of APC with 95, 963 valid votes.

In the just concluded November 18, 2017 Anambra Governorship Poll, out of total registered voters of 2, 064, 134; only 448, 771 (21%) voted; 26, 457 were declared invalid and 422, 314 were declared valid votes cast; out of which incumbent Governor William Obiano of APGA scored 234, 071 valid votes, followed by Anthony Nwoye of APC with 98, 752 and Henry Oseloka Obaze with 70, 293 votes. A total of 457, 311 were accredited to vote and 8, 540 of the accredited voters never voted.

It was also discovered that over 350, 000 registered voters have not received their PVCs in Anambra State out of the State's total registered voting population of 2, 064, 134. Specifically, prior to the March 28th and April 11 General Elections of 2015 in Nigeria, out of 1,963, 173 registered voting population in Anambra State only 1, 658, 967 were issued with their permanent voters' cards (PVCs) as at 12th March 2015, leaving behind 304, 203 registered voters without PVCs. Also out of 100, 961 registered voters since 2015, only 50% had received their PVCs; indicating that over 350, 000 have not been issued with PVCs till date and did not participate in both 2015 General Elections in Nigeria and 2017 Governorship Poll in Anambra State.

It further indicates that a total of 1, 708, 967 registered voters out of 2,064, 134 registered voting population are issued with PVCs in the State out of which 448, 771 (26%) voted in the just concluded Governorship Poll. It is also credibly estimated that between 500, 000 and 1m citizens are eligible to vote but yet to be captured as registered voters in Anambra State. That is to say between 900, 000 and 1.4m citizens are disenfranchised and denied their rights to participate or vote in the voting process in Anambra State.

Non Issuance Of PVCs & Low Voter Turnout In Nigerian General Elections

According to recent media reports quoting the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 61% of Nigeria's estimated population of 175m-180m or 110m are eligible to vote in Nigeria; out of which only 68, 834, 252 were registered voters as at 2015, leaving behind 41m others unregistered or as ghost voting population in Nigeria. Also out of 68, 834, 252 registered voters in the country as at 2015; only 56, 768, 406 received their Permanent Voters' Cards (PVCs); leaving behind 12, 065, 406 registered voters without PVCs. In the 2015 Presidential Election, only 28, 587, 564 registered voters voted; leaving behind 40, 246, 688 as registered voters who did not vote; in addition to 41m unregistered voting population; totaling 81, 246, 688 who excluded themselves or were excluded in the electoral or voting process in Nigeria till date.

Geopolitically speaking or going by geopolitical breakdown of registered voters in Nigeria as at 12th March 2015, Southwest Zone had a total registered voting population of 13, 731, 866; out of which 8, 965, 126 were issued with PVCs, leaving 3, 766, 740 without PVCs. The South-south Zone had a total of 10, 059, 765 as registered voters, out of which 8, 365, 765 had their PVCs leaving 1, 653, 582 without PVCs. Southeast Zone had 7, 665, 859 as registered voters out of which 6, 614, 934 were issued with PVCs leaving 1, 050, 925 without PVCs. That is to say that the entire Southern Nigeria had a total of 31, 457, 072 as registered voters out of which 24, 985, 825 were issued with PVCs leaving 6, 471, 247 without PVCs.

In the Northwest Zone of Northern Nigeria, total of 17, 620, 436 were registered to vote out of which 16, 096, 060 had their PVCs, leaving only 1, 524, 376 without PVCs. North-central had 9, 767, 411 registered voting population, out of which 7, 651, 505 were issued with PVCs leaving 2, 115, 906 without PVCs; while the Northeast Zone ravaged by Boko Haram insurgency had a total of 9, 107, 861 registered voters, out of which 7, 722, 653 were issued with PVCs leaving only 1, 385, 208 without PVCs. That is to say that entire Northern Nigeria excluding the FCT (Abuja) had a total of 36, 495, 708 registered voters out of which 31, 470, 218 were issued with PVCs leaving only 5, 025, 490 without PVCs.

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) as part of Northern Nigeria had a total registered voters of 881, 472 out of which 569, 109 had their PVCs as at 12th March 2015 leaving 312, 363 without PVCs. That is to say that the entire registered voting population in the North as at 12th March 2015 was 37, 377, 180 as against the South's 31, 457, 072; totaling 68, 834, 252 registered voting population; out of which 56, 768, 406 were issued with PVCs leaving 12, 065, 846 without PVCs in Nigeria till date. It is also important to remind that there had never been major voter registration, updating, revalidation and issuance of PVC exercises in Nigeria since those of 2011 and 2015.

The issue as to the ethno-religious identities of members of registered voting population and issuance of PVCs especially in the North is also important to be revisited; whereby members of Muslim population in the North including hundreds of thousands of under-age citizens and the psychically challenged turned out to be the largest registered voting population and recipients of PVCs while non Muslim population including the 'guest citizens' were disproportionately captured and issued with PVCs.

The referenced disproportionately treated voting population also constitutes largest percentage of the unregistered voting population in Northern Nigeria till date. In other words, the least registered voting population and recipients of PVCs in Northern Nigeria including the FCT are members of 'guest and minority' or non Muslim populations. The largest percentage of the NBS estimated 41m unregistered eligible voters in Nigeria and the non recipients of the undistributed 6, 471, 247 PVCs in the country are also made up of citizens of Southern Nigeria especially those of Southeast and South-south including those resident in Lagos and other parts of the Southwest Zone. We challenge INEC to prove us wrong by publishing the names of the owners of the 12, 065, 846 undistributed PVCs and their State of origin or residency in Nigeria.

Also, the largest segment of the unregistered 41m voting population in Nigeria comprising citizens of Southeast and South-south in Southern Nigeria and 'guest' and 'minority' non Muslim population in Northern Nigeria was not captured or registered not because they did not want to be registered but because of deliberately created tedious and frustrating processes and procedures put in place by INEC so as to scare them away; whereas in Northern Nigeria especially among Muslim population, voter registration and issuance of PVCs were and still done using proximities and proxies such as polling units, Emirs, Imams and ward and family heads, etc.

Yours Faithfully,

For: Int'l Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law (Intersociety)

Emeka Umeagbalasi, Board Chairman

Mobile Line: +2348174090052

Email: botchairman@intersociety-ng.org, emekaumeagbalasi69@gmail.com

Chinwe Umeche, Esq.

Head, Democracy & Good Governance Program

Email: chinwe.inglewood@gmail.com

Obianuju Joy Igboeli, Esq.

Head, Civil Liberties & Rule of Law Program

Email: igboeliobianuju@gmail.com