



POLLING DAY OBSERVATION: CLOSE OF POLLS STATEMENT

CONTACT

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Introduction

In the mid-day situational report, CODEO presented to the general public its findings on the set-up, the opening of polling stations, and few incidences received from **1,499** out of the **1,502** PVT Observers (i.e., **99.8%**) located in all 275 constituencies in the 16 regions of the country as of **1:00 PM today** (i.e., Election Day). Based on these findings, CODEO confidently confirmed that the arrangements put in place by the EC for the setup and opening of polls were adequate for most polling stations.

This close of polls statement focuses mainly on the voting process, and a number of incidents received from **1,486** out of the **1,502** PVT Observers (i.e., **98.9%**) located in all 275 constituencies in the 16 regions of the country as at **7:00PM** today (i.e., Election Day).

Voting Process

- CODEO observers in **99.9%** of polling stations reported that election officials validated (i.e. stamped) ballot papers before they were issued to voters.
- At **92.4%** of polling stations, no unauthorized persons were allowed to be present during voting.
- The biometric verification machines worked perfectly in **89.9%** of polling stations. However, the machines failed to function properly at some point in time in **10.1%** of polling stations.
- No major incident of harassment and intimidation of voters or polling officials was recorded at **97.2%** of polling stations.
- Social distancing and handwashing were strictly enforced in **74.5%** and **92.9%**, respectively, of the polling stations.
- In almost all polling stations (**96.0%**), the fingers of voters were systematically marked with indelible ink.
- At **45.3%** of polling stations, a few (1 to 5), some (6 to 15) or many (16 or more) voters did not wear face masks. CODEO observers in **54.7%** of polling stations, however, reported that voters

wore face masks. Indeed, election officials in **16.4%** of polling stations turned away a few (1 to 5), some (6 to 15) or many (16 or more) voters who were not wearing face masks.

- Overall, **47.3%** of CODEO observers described problems that may have occurred during the voting process as minor, **0.6%** describe such problems as major, while **52.2%** did not witness any problem at their assigned polling stations.

Reported Incidents

As at 7:00PM, CODEO had recorded 235 cases of various incidents from all the 4,000 polling stations where it deployed observers. The top five of these reported incidents are intimidation/harassment; violation of COVID-19 health and safety protocols; violence of various kinds; unauthorized persons at polling stations; and malfunctioning of biometric devices.

Types of incidents	No. of cases
Intimidation or harassment	43
Violation of COVID-19 health and safety protocols	40
Violence	25
Unauthorised person in polling station	24
Biometric verification device not functioning properly	21
Voting or counting suspended	16
Polling station did not open or opened very late	9
Polling station ran out of materials	8
Violations of voting or counting procedures	6
Destruction or stealing of election materials	4
Eligible voters not permitted to vote	4
Vote buying/bribery	4
Ineligible persons allowed to vote	2
Ballot box stuffing	1
Over-voting	1
Polling station closed before 5:00 pm	1
Other incidents	26
Total	235

Examples of incidents reported are as follows:

Violence and arrest of CODEO observer

- **Ahafo**
 - At the Open Space Cocoa Shed Polling Station in Kassem in the Asutifi South Constituency in the Ahafo Region, unauthorized persons burnt the ballot papers just before counting began around 6:00PM. The security agency was called in and they made some arrest. Unfortunately, the CODEO observer stationed at that polling station got arrested and is currently in Police custody at Goaso Police Command.
- **Ashanti**
 - At Temp Booth Anomangye Pole Ase, Suame, a reported brawl between a supporter of the incumbent MP and that of the independent candidate resulted in a fight, which disrupted electoral process for some minutes. The issue was resolved by security reinforcement.

- **Central**
 - Steps to Christ Polling station, Awutu Senya East Constituency: Confirmed gun shots at polling station resulting in a journalist being injured.

Intimidation/Harassment

- **Ashanti**
 - In Just Love International School, Abankrom 1, in Obuasi West constituency, the NDC observers intimidated the Presiding Officer in the quest to interrogate why the polling officer made the party agents stand at a far distance. They threatened the officer and there was an argument for some minutes. However, the polling officer called for reinforcement from the security taskforce and they came in to resolve the issue. The voting process was halted for a few minutes and resumed.

Violation of Covid-19 Protocols

- **Eastern, Greater Accra, Savannah, & North East**
 - Voters at Anglican Church, Ogome 1, at Yilo Krobo Constituency, L/A Primary School, Mamekrobo East 2 at Afram Plains South Constituency, Accra High Secondary School (Station A) at Klottey Korle Constituency, Almanara Primary School 1 at Damongo Constituency, and M/A Primary School Kpatinga at Nalerigu / Gambaga Constituency were not adhering to the social distancing protocols.

Other Incidents

- **Ahafo**
 - At Temporal Booth Yamfo 1, Tano North, at 11:47AM the ballot issuer (who happens to be a lady) was caught hiding three stamped ballot papers. The voters present broke into the cordoned area the EC has created and beat her up. The incident lasted for about 30 minutes, disrupting the voting process. About 15 voters were present in the queue when this incident occurred. The ballot issuer was arrested alongside a voter who was harassing a soldier.
- **Ashanti**
 - At Baaba Latif Polling station at new Zongo, Asawase Constituency in the Ashanti a young man in possession of thumb printed ballot papers was caught by the EC officials and handed over to the police.
- **Greater Accra**
 - At Orion Cinema, Klottey Korle Constituency in the Greater Accra Region, the EC officials caught a lady, with thumb printed ballot papers hidden in her underwear, and handed her over to the Police.

Conclusion

CODEO is continuing to observe the counting of ballots at polling stations, constituency and national collation centers. CODEO continues to receive information on vote count from its nationally deployed observers and will update the public on new and additional information it receives from its PVT observers. Also, CODEO will be releasing a more detailed preliminary statement on the conduct of the elections as occurred on Monday, December 7, 2020.

In the meantime, CODEO urgently calls on the Election Security Taskforce, particularly the Ahafo Regional Command to facilitate the speedy processing of the CODEO observer so he can quickly be released to complete his observation assignment.

CODEO also appeals to all Ghanaians to continue to remain calm, be law-abiding, continue to respect the COVID-19 safety protocols, and be measured in their reaction to results being announced from the polling stations, constituency and the national collation centers. Ghana needs each and everyone alive.

Thank you

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(For and on Behalf of the Advisory Board)

CODEO Secretariat, Monday, December 7, 2020