



Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO)

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SECOND PRE-ELECTION ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION STATEMENT

Introduction

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) is pleased to release its second pre-election observation report, which captures key observations of the pre-election environment during the month of October 2020, ahead of the December 7, 2020 presidential and parliamentary elections of Ghana. The report is based on weekly reports filed by 65 Long-Term Observers (LTOs) deployed across 65 selected constituencies throughout the country. The observers have been monitoring the general electoral and political environment including the activities of key election stakeholders such as the Electoral Commission (EC), the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), political parties, the security agencies, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and religious and traditional leaders. Below are key findings from CODEO's observation during the period.

Summary of Findings:

- Similar to CODEO's observations in the month of September 2020, civic and voter education activities were generally low across the various constituencies.
- There continues to be generally low visibility of election support activities by CSOs, particularly those aimed at peace promotion.
- COVID-19 health and safety protocols were not adhered to during some political party activities.
- The National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) remain the most visible political parties in the constituencies observed as far as political and campaign-related activities are concerned.

Main Findings

Preparatory Activities by the Electoral Commission

Observer reports showed intensified preparatory activities by the EC towards the December 7, 2020 elections. Activities observed to have been undertaken by the EC include the exhibition of the voter register at district offices of the EC (for participants in the extended voter registration exercise¹), recruitment/training of election staff, nomination of candidates, and transfer of votes/receipt of applications for proxy voting.

During the votes transfer exercise, which was carried out by the Commission from October 20-23, 2020, observer reports showed a generally peaceful exercise across the constituencies observed. However, there were a few cases of disturbances at some centers during the exercise. For instance, there was tension between party agents at the Builsa South constituency in the Upper East region

¹ CODEO shared its findings on this registration exercise in the September pre-election observation report

over claims that some students who applied to transfer their votes to the constituency did not qualify to do so.

Civic/Voter Education Platforms/Modes, Actors and Targeted Audience

Observer reports showed a marginal increase in civic and voter education activities in the observed constituencies, compared to what was observed in the month of September 2020. The NCCE and the EC remain the leading institutions undertaking civic and voter education activities in the constituencies observed, followed by political parties and religious bodies. Very few civic/voter education and other election-related activities (such as peace promotion) by CSOs were noted in the constituencies observed.

Campaigning Activities by Political Parties

The NDC and the NPP intensified their campaign activities, such as rallies and party marches, over the period. At campaign activities observed, the main policy issues that were raised or discussed particularly by the NPP and the NDC were education, unemployment and the economy. There was little visibility of campaigning activities by the other political parties.

While observer reports indicated a generally-peaceful electoral environment during the period under review, there were a few reported incidents of the use of abusive or inflammatory language, destruction or removal of party/candidate paraphernalia, and election-related violence. For instance, there was a violent clash between supporters of the NDC and the NPP at the district office of the EC in the Pru West Constituency of the Bono East region during the voter transfer exercise by the EC. This clash allegedly resulted in five people being seriously injured. In another incident on October 5, 2020 at Adjaraja Beposo in the same Constituency (Pru West), some supporters of the NPP allegedly prevented the NDC from having a campaign activity in the town. This resulted in a clash between the supporters of the two parties, leaving some wounded.

On Sunday October 25, 2020, it was alleged that, a courtesy call on some chiefs and elders in the Banda constituency by the Banda NPP parliamentary candidate was hindered by some youth in Banda Ahenkro in the Bono region. In reaction to the incident, some youth believed to be affiliated with the NPP allegedly vowed not to allow the NDC to campaign in areas believed to be the stronghold of NPP in the Banda Constituency. At the Ododiodio Constituency in the Greater Accra Region, scores of persons were reported to have suffered varying degrees of injuries after a clash between supporters of the NDC and the NPP.

Adherence to COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols

With respect to COVID-19 health and safety protocols, CODEO observer reports indicate that few people adhered to the social distancing protocols and wore face masks during campaign activities and other activities by stakeholders. For instance, a rally organized on October 7, 2020 in Ahomahomasu in the Fantekwa North constituency of the Eastern region to welcome the vice-presidential aspirant of the NDC was very crowded with party supporters flouting the required social distancing protocol. During the voter transfer exercise at the Akwatia district office of the EC, social distancing was not observed among some applicants, and only few reportedly wore face masks.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

- CODEO once again condemns all reported acts of violence which took place during the period of observation. The Coalition again calls on the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) to take swift action against all perpetrators of such violent conduct.
- The Coalition reminds all political parties, party supporters, the Electoral Commission and all stakeholders to be mindful of the risks posed by the COVID-19 and ensure adherence to all relevant health and safety protocols to prevent the spread of the virus.
- CODEO further entreats CSOs and all stakeholders, including faith-based organizations, to intensify their election support activities particularly in support of peace promotion in respect of the elections.

CODEO continues to observe the pre-election environment and will share its findings with the public. CODEO's long-term observation is made possible with the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Signed:



**Albert Arhin,
National Coordinator, CODEO**

Dated: Tuesday, November 10, 2020

APPENDIX:

LIST OF CONSTITUENCIES FOR CODEO LONG-TERM OBSERVATION

S/N	Region	Constituency	34	Central	Cape Coast South
1.	Ashanti	Nsuta Kwamang	35.	Central	Assin North
2.	Ashanti	New Edubiase	36.	Central	Awutu Senya East
3.	Ashanti	Suame	37	Central	Effutu
4.	Ashanti	Sekyere Afram Plains	38	Central	Agona East
5.	Ashanti	Ahafo Ano South East	39	Central	Gomoa West
6.	Ashanti	Asawase	40	Eastern	Abuakwa North
7.	Ashanti	Bekwai	41	Eastern	Nkawkaw
8.	Ashanti	Manso Edubia	42	Eastern	Akwatia
9.	Ashanti	Offinso North	43	Eastern	New Juaben South
10.	Ashanti	Subin	44	Eastern	Asuogyaman
11.	Ahafo	Asunafo South	45	Eastern	Upper Manya Krobo
12.	Bono East	Techiman South	46	Eastern	Fanteakwa North
13.	Bono East	Pru West	47	Greater Accra	Weija/Gbawe
14.	Bono	Jaman North	48	Greater Accra	Dome/Kwabanya
15.	Bono	Sunyani West	49	Greater Accra	Ningo/Prampram
16.	Bono	Banda	50	Greater Accra	Odododiodio
17.	Bono	Dormaa West	51	Greater Accra	Ledzokuku
18.	Northern	Tamale Central	52	Greater Accra	Ayawaso East
19.	Northern	Savelugu	53	Greater Accra	Ablekuma South
20.	Northern	Karaga	54	Greater Accra	Ayawaso West Wuogon
21.	Northern	Tamale North	55	Volta	Adaklu
22.	Savannah	Salaga North	56	Volta	Ketu South
23.	North East	Walewale	57	Volta	Akatsi South
24.	North East	Yunyoo	58	Volta	South Dayi
25.	Upper East	Bongo	59	Volta	South Tongu
26.	Upper East	Builsa North	60	Oti	Buem
27.	Upper East	Builsa South	61	Oti	Nkwanta North
28.	Upper East	Zebilla (Bawku West)	62	Western	Jomoro
29.	Upper West	Sissala West	63	Western	Sekondi
30.	Upper West	Jirapa	64	Western	Ellembele
31.	Upper West	Wa East	65	Western	Essikadu-Ketan
32.	Western North	Bibiani-Anhwiaso Bekwai			
33.	Western North	Juabeso			