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## EDITOR'S NOTE.

**P**ost election outcomes usually present issues that engage the attention of stakeholders until they are settled as lessons for future polls.

Thus, months after the 2019 Nigerian general election took place, critical legal, institutional and personnel issues that came up during the conduct of the polls became subject of assessment and recommendations.

The reports are eye-opening. That is what this edition is about: In the pages you are about to read through, we have presented the assessments and recommendations of some principal and consistent election observers and monitors in Nigeria since the rebirth of democracy in the country in 1999.

One is by the European Union Election Observer Monitor, EUEOM. The report is robust, intellectually engaging and mentally stimulating. It covers the relevant legal and constitutional procedural issues. Other reports are by the AU Observer Mission, the Commonwealth Electoral Observation Mission, the US based

National Democratic Institute, NDI and the International Republican Institute IRI. Other reports by local CSOs are also included for your delight.

In our interview segment, we bring you the views of

a veteran journalist, author, publisher and media trainer, the Director of International Press Centre, IPC, Mr Lanre Arogundade, whose centre made the 20-year milestone this year.

During the election, journalists walked through the minefield of insecurity and intimidation to file reports to their medium. We bring you details of their experience on pages 3&4

The picture pages sizzle and dazzle with photographs that confirm the maxim that pictures don't lie, they tell their own stories. They would spice the pages for your delight. Happy reading.

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### Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I think the newsletters are quite refreshing and largely error free which is the hallmark of any quarterly journal.

The presentation of the stories in different colour shades and the use of photographs makes for easy reading. But there should be some quotes from either participants and resource persons to spice up the journal.

Mr Tony Iyare, communication and development consultant is a former special adviser, media affairs to ex-governor Adams Oshiomhole of Edo State. He is also the editor of four national publications.

Please send your comments to  
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# Journalists Walked the Minefield to File Reports

All over the developed world, a robust media culture is desirable for balanced development. The media, it is widely believed, must function optimally to play vital roles of being the watchdog of the society. The media calls to account those in government and in acting as a market place of ideas sets agenda for development.

In Nigeria, journalists have played active role in nation building, civic education and electoral reforms right from the

threat, intimidation and detention of journalists in the course of their duties, by state and non- state actors. Instances abound where journalists, duly accredited by INEC to cover the elections, were restricted from moving to certain places during voting. Some were forced to delete incriminating materials in exchange of their freedom- perhaps lives!

A civic tech platform, *Press Attack Tracker*, claims that at least 36 Nigerian

The tightening of the noose was not just for journalists. Media organisations were not spared in this crackdown against freedom of expression.

Similarly, a US based group, Committee to Protect Journalists, CPJ, in a widely circulated report, urged the Nigerian government to take the safety of journalists on election coverage seriously by ensuring that they are protected in the performance of their lawful duties.

According to Angela Quintal, CPJ Africa Programme Coordinator: "Nigerian authorities should investigate and hold accountable those responsible for the detention, harassment, and assault of journalists nationwide during the March 9 gubernatorial and state assembly election. The freedom and fairness of any election requires that journalists are permitted to work unimpeded and without fear".

For Reporters Without Borders, also known as Reporters Sans Frontieres, the harassment and attack on journalists during the 2019 polls accounted for the country's drop in its global press freedom index for 2019.

In the publication involving 180 countries, Nigeria dropped one step from the 119<sup>th</sup> position it occupied in the previous year.

"Journalists are often threatened, subjected to physical violence or denied access to information by government officials, police and sometimes the public itself," the report read.

## How Broadcasting Organizations Branded Their Election Coverage

In a bid to have an extensive coverage of the 2019 general election in Nigeria, broadcast stations embarked on programmes to sensitize and objectively review issues pertaining to the election. For instance, BBC Africa in collaboration with Channels Television had a programme tagged "*The Gist*", a fact checking programme to counter claims during the election periods.

*Continues on pg 4*



emancipation from colonial rule through agenda setting and advocacy during military rule to the return of democracy in 1999.

Still, the media and journalists have found themselves at the receiving end of hostile working environment. Such include: abduction, obstruction from carrying out lawful duties, killing, detention, harassment and jailing for carrying out legitimate functions.

Though the return to civilian rule has lessened the burden of oppression of journalists and broadcasters in the country, democratic governance in Nigeria since 1999 has done pretty little to assuage the apprehensions of the media practitioners. It is worse during coverage of the electoral processes.

Recently, journalists covering the 2019 General Election had various degrees of unpalatable tales to tell. There were several cases of abduction, assault, arrest,

journalists were attacked between January and July 2019, with 30 of the attacks recorded during the 2019 general elections.

The Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism (PTCIJ) in collaboration with the Coalition for Whistleblowers Press Freedom (CWPPF) and Leaks.NG set up *Press Attack Tracker* in response to the unrelenting attacks on the press.

The platform noted that the attacks, which were perpetrated by both thugs and politicians took place mostly in the south-south, south-east, and north-central part of the country.

According to the Press Attack Tracker: "The Bayelsa government house photographer, Reginald Dei, was shot dead in his house on February 23 by gunmen in military uniform while waiting for the Presidential and National Assembly election results.

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Africa Independent Television, AIT, has a social media outing on Kakaaki, an early morning programme that presents a panorama of social and political events in the country. It was a popular hit with viewers. The programme was a critical review of social media contents on governance and societal issues. Others like TV Continental, Silverbird TV, Nigeria Television Authority, NTA had *Verdict*, *Meet the Presidential Candidates*, *Debate 2019 for Presidential Candidates*, *Debate 2019 for Governorship Candidates*. Radio stations such as the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, FRCN, Ray Power, Rhythm FM, Radio Gotel, had similar programmes beside promotional programmes like jingles on voter education.

Abuja-based Greetings 105.7 FM, for example, had a programme called *Talk Nigeria*.

*Issues around media content monitoring, particularly areas of hate and harmful speech on prominent broadcast stations*

Compared to the 2015 general election, instances of hate speeches during the 2019 election were minimal and they fizzled out as electioneering progressed,

according to Mr Lanre Arogundade, Director of International Press Centre, IPC in an interview with Media4DemocracyNG. This was as a result of measures put in place by the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC: It set up a team during the poll to monitor broadcast stations round the clock. Yet, there were instances of violations by some broadcast stations. The broadcast stations were sanctioned by NBC as a result of hate speeches originating from politicians during live coverage of political campaigns or inflammatory materials the carried in their political broadcasts. Prominent among the sanctioned stations were Africa Independent Television, AIT; Nigeria Television Authority, NTA; Channels Television and TV Continental, TVC.



mechanisms related to journalists' safety and reduce the risks journalists face in covering the news.

IPI Executive Board Member and World Press Freedom hero, Daoud Kuttab explained at whom the work on the Declaration is directed:

“We are looking at three groups of stakeholders: journalists, who should be aware that no story is worth their lives; media organisations, which should never send journalists on assignments if they are not entirely sure they are prepared for them; and state institutions, which should end impunity in crimes against journalists.”

The Declaration is intended to contribute to ongoing efforts to ensure implementation of international

mechanisms related to journalists' safety and reduce the risks journalists face in covering the news.

The declaration is in two parts:

The first is a declaration summarising international principles relating to the protection of journalists covering events in dangerous

environments and victims of human rights violations. The document focuses on the responsibilities of states and institutions involved in this field, including law enforcement and security forces, and judicial authorities.

It is based on existing international human rights and humanitarian laws and mechanisms related to the protection of journalists, including resolutions, declarations, treaties, conventions, general comments and other statements by international organisations.

The second is a document titled “Media Organisations' Best Practices”, which highlights steps and remedies that news media organisations and journalists should, on a voluntary basis, consider implementing in order to achieve greater safety.

## International best practices for protection of journalists particularly during elections

Due to the constant threats and attacks on Journalists, The International Press Institute (IPI), in cooperation with the Al Jazeera Media Network, the International News Safety Institute (INSI) and the Africa Media Initiative (AMI), led a global effort to promote a culture of safety within the media industry both by raising awareness among journalists about international standards in this area as well as by encouraging best practices in the newsroom for protecting journalists and media staff on dangerous assignments or working in hostile environments.

The effort led to the draft of an International Declaration on the Protection of Journalists. It summaries international principles related to the

protection of journalists operating in dangerous environments and emphasizes the responsibilities of states to guarantee journalist safety and combat impunity, and highlights steps and remedies that media organisations and journalists should consider in order to strive for greater safety.

The International Declaration was based on thorough research and analysis of existing international mechanisms in the area of journalist safety as well as on best practices among journalists and media organisations to ensure maximum safety.

The Declaration is intended to contribute to ongoing efforts to ensure implementation of international



# EU EOM Recommends Critical Reforms To Sustain Democratic Governance

*The systemic failings evident in this election, (2019 general election in Nigeria) and the low levels of voter participation show the need for fundamental reform. Without this, there is a risk of further democratic deterioration and unaccountable leadership.*

*Such reform requires principled political leadership committed to the rights of Nigerian citizens and an inclusive process of national dialogue involving state institutions, parties, civil society, the media and other experts. This needs to be urgently undertaken to allow time for debate, legislative changes and implementation well in advance of the next elections.*

On the basis of the above statement, the European Union Election Observation Mission, EU EOM, which was deployed by the EU to observe the

assess the extent to which the elections complied with regional and international commitments for elections, as well as with national legislation.

In this report, however, attention is focused on the 30 recommendations the EU EOM offered for improving elections in Nigeria, including seven priority recommendations.

Areas captured in the recommendations deal with Legal Framework; Election and Administration; Voter Registration, Parties, Primaries and the Registration of Candidates; Political Finance and Digital Communications and Electoral Security. Others are Media; Electoral Dispute Resolution; Electoral Offences, Civil Society and Electoral Observation; and Inclusion.

First, it observed that the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, penalized the voter with regard to cancellation of polling units where card readers were unused.

“However the Electoral Act refers to voters being able to vote if they are on the voter register with no reference to the smart card reader. Therefore cancellation of polling units based on the non-use of smart card readers may be subject to legal question. (p.12.),” observed the EU EOM.

It recommended suitable amendment in the Electoral Act by the legislature and the executive so that a “comprehensive legal regulation be established for the cancellation of voting in polling units, with clear grounds specified, timeframes elaborated, and requirements made for transparency.”

Similarly, it urged INEC to make available online and paper format the “consolidated official versions of amendments and legislation”, to avoid “legal confusion and uncertainty” that often arises among political parties, the judiciary and INEC during and after election so as to “improve public accessibility and awareness to avoid legal confusion”

## Election Administration

On election administration, the EU EOM cited INEC's failure to provide information on the status of its preparation for the presidential election before the commission announced its sudden postponement, leading to severe criticisms by political parties, civil society groups and other stakeholders.

**“Priority recommendation: Organisational and operational capacity within INEC be considerably strengthened. Improve planning, tracking, and the required human and material resources needed for timely and accountable operations. In addition, improve internal communication within INEC.”**

*Continues on pg 10*



Members of EU EOM Observer Mission for the 2019 Election in Nigeria

Nigerian 2019 general election following an invitation by the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, in May, issued a final report on the February 23, March 9 and the supplementary election held on March 23. The EU EOM was led by Ms. Maria Arena

The mission's mandate was to observe all aspects of the electoral process and

These recommendations are treated under context, suggested changes in legal framework, responsible institution and relevant international and regional principle governing them.

## Legal Framework:

Under legal framework, the EU EOM made two observations and recommendations.



# Personalities, Facilitators and Participants in Abuja and a courtesy visit by EU officials



L-R: EU Ambassador to Nigeria Ambassador Ketil Karlsen; President of the Senate, Senator Ahmed Lawan; Deputy President of the Senate, Senator Omo Ovie-Agege and the Deputy Chief Observer, European Union Election Observation Mission Hannah Roberts during a courtesy visit to the President of the Senate in Abuja.



Participants during a training session organised by ECES for ILM.



INEC officials during a training session organised by ECES in Abuja.



Officials and participants at ECONEC conference in Abuja.



Participants during a training on Media Monitoring organised by ECES in Abuja.



L-R: Ms. Monica Frasso Yakubu, EU Ambassador to Nigeria.



# nts at events organised by ECES/INEC ls to the President of the Senate in Abuja



Training on Media Monitoring  
INEC officials in Abuja.



Officials of INEC during a training on Media Monitoring  
organised by ECES in Abuja.



Training on Media Monitoring  
Abuja.



Civil Society SITUATION ROOM led by Mr. Clement Nwankwo, during a  
post-election press briefing in Abuja.



President of ECES Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Boss Mustapha, Secretary to the Government of Nigeria, INEC Chairman, Mahmood  
to Nigeria, Ketil Karlsen, Vice President of ECONEC. Mrs. Finda Koroma at the ECONEC 6th biennial Conference in Abuja



# 'The Media Need to do More Investigative Reporting'

**Mr. Lanre Arogundade, Director of International Press Centre, IPC and Editor-in-Chief of its online news portal and media resource, Nigeria Democratic Report. In this interview with**

**Media4DemocracyNG, he X-rays the challenges, professional opportunities and duties of the media. Exerpts**



Lanre Arogundade

*IPC is 20 this year. One of its aims is to serve as resource center for the media. How far have you gone in achieving this objective?*

I think we have effectively played the role of a resource centre for journalists and other media professionals. As a matter of fact, when we started in 1999, technology was just catching up with the media. You wouldn't believe one of the things we were doing then was to help journalist create and check their mail. They would come to fill a form and we would create email and password for them. Even at that time, some journalists were reluctant to embrace the new technology because it appeared cumbersome. At a stage, we were serving some newspaper organizations. There was a time when the online platform of a national news paper collapsed, they had to come to IPC to do all their online stuff. Then, from that point, we had a library where journalists can come around to make use of the books.

We were having discussions around Press freedom issues and the issue of regulations. We hosted a series of meetings in those early days but subsequently, we have expanded, being a resource centre. We have also

published a number of resource books; I am sure within the past 20 years we couldn't have published less than ten of such

books. The books deal with different aspect of journalism, election reporting, investigative reporting and access to information. Journalists have found these resources quite useful. Apart from journalists, we have researchers from different backgrounds who come around and make use of some of these resources. One other resource we have provided is in the area of research and survey that we do periodically.

For example, we monitor media performance when it comes to the coverage of election, and we have also done media coverage of HIV/AIDS issues as well as covering of developmental issues. The outcome of these monitoring is in terms of providing evidence and information on performance of the media in crucial areas of development and democracy. I think it is also something that has contributed to the development of the media in Nigeria. In the sense that occasionally we go out there, meet with editors, let them have the performance indicators and they find it believable. We tell them the score card in the areas they have done well. We have had situations where by when we go to media houses, they will be excited because they are leading in those areas,

because of that, they are willing to do more. We do engagement, when we do monitoring, we move around to show them the outcome and I think it has created impact in the media industry.

*The media is sometimes accused of gender mainstreaming. From your experience would you say women are not the source of the problem?*

I think we have to accept that the blame should be shared. Yes the male politicians have their own issues, so too do the women. There is the fact that women don't vote for women even when they stand for election. The truth of the matter is that when men embrace the right gender consciousness, it will help the women a lot. Look at political parties, they are dominated by men. The position most political parties usually give to women is women leader. It is confining them to that gender section. The parties need to embrace affirmative action. They should have policies that say women would take 20% of position. If you see women in key leadership position of political parties, it will help to influence the choice of candidates. The parties, for instance, should insist that all their candidates are not just men but at least 30% would be female. That is the kind of things we practice in civil society; we do not just say it, we practice it here at IPC. Here, we are a gender conscious organization, when you look at our staff at every point in time, we do not have imbalance. Majority of our staff today are female, that is how it is supposed to be. Now, coming to the media, we shouldn't be looking at the shortcomings of women, we should see it as our duty to consciously help them. What we discovered is that there is the consciousness. Mainstream gender reporting is as basic as the fact that female voices should reflect in our stories, in our analysis because there is no sector of the economy that we do not have women.

*Continued from pg 9*



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There are women pilots, women engineers and women doctors. We see it in our monitoring: when stories break, the dominant voices are men. I can give you an example. When the controversy arose over the removal of the former CJN, (Walter Onnoghen) it was something that was unprecedented.

We had a lot of analysis almost every day and each of the major television stations had lawyers arguing for or against, quoting the Constitution and so on. For a period of two weeks, none of the stations invited a female lawyer, it is scandalous.

We need to accept that we have retired female judges, we have female Senior Advocate of Nigeria, SAN, who are free to talk but because that consciousness is not there, we see the image of the bar in the image of men. For me, we need to embrace gender consciousness. Any story you do, let the story of women reflect in it, that way we can help the cause of women, we don't have to wait till election time.

In our day to day reporting we must be conscious of the female gender, we should also report the challenges they face, no woman wants to lose her marriage or lose at all fronts so those challenges draw them back.

*Do you think it is limited to the Nigerian media or its general?*

I do think in some instances the foreign media perform better than us. I don't think there is a week you watch CNN and you don't see them speaking to a female professional on topical issues. I am not saying that it is totally bad here, there are some stations that invite women once a while but we should consciously do it and do it regularly.

*Twenty years since the birth of IPC coincided with 20 years of democratization, in Nigeria. From your experience as a media outfit, would you say the media has delivered on its mandate to hold the government accountable to the people?*

I don't think the media have fully delivered on that mandate. We have sections of the media that have tried to hold government accountable, sometimes they face repercussion like attacks, sometimes closure. We have seen it happen to *Daily Trust*, *Premium Times*, *The Punch*, and some individual reporters. I think we cannot say that the effort is lacking when it comes to holding government accountable to the people, the problem is with fast news media, and we are not doing enough in terms of Freedom of Information Act. For example, the Act is supposed to be a tool to do our work and every now and then analyses show that the media is not using the FOI as much as some other sectors. When you look at the civil society and some organizations like SERAP, every now and then they file FOI request, they make it public whether their request has been granted or not. Sometimes they go to court. We want to see more media organizations making more efforts in using the FOI and where requests are refused, using



**Arogundade**

the instrumentality of the law to ask questions because FOI Act allows you to go to court if you are not satisfied with the explanation given as to why requests are not granted.

If you look at our accountability responsibility, it extends even to issues of election like we always say when we look at the Electoral Act of 2011 as amended. It has a whole lot of transparency provisions. Sections of it require political parties to file their annual returns to Independent National

Electoral Commission, INEC; their statements of asset, their statements of expenditure on election. To what extent have the media gone to INEC to ask whether political parties fulfil all these requirements? As we speak today, can we confidently say that the media can answer the question as to how many political parties have filed their returns for 2017 or 2018 and when is the deadline for them to do this? For me, these are critical accountability questions. We need to raise issues for example about the fact that we have a procurement law in Nigeria, we have the Bureau of Public Procurement and the Public Procurement Act requires that there must be a council that is supposed to approve projects and contracts but over time, the Federal Executive Council has turned itself to that procurement council by awarding contracts and so on.

There is no oversight, the supervisors are the ones awarding contract. I think there is a contradiction there, apart from that, we have the Fiscal Responsibility Act that gives guidelines about how government needs to go about the budget. So for me, what I don't see in the media is that we do not make use of these legislations to report the issues of accountability. We tend to report more on the aspects that have to do with prosecution by the EFCC, a lot of celebrity reporting. The media make it look like it is a celebration and when it comes to the aspect of Independent Corrupt Practices Commission, ICPC, or EFCC prosecuting, we can say the media has done a lot of robust reporting.

When it comes to the preventive side, the factors that fuel corruption, the non-compliance with transparency laws in the country, even the critical questions like whether you can fight corruption when security votes are not known, are areas. I feel the media has to come in using investigative journalism. We must accept the verdict by the public that we are not doing enough investigative reporting as we should be doing.

*Continued from pg 5*

The EU EOM also advised INEC to make its website accessible so that the public can assess materials “such as election officials’ manuals, voter registration guidelines, voter registration data, or results of previous elections, manuals for officials, PVC distribution”, which it observed were unavailable during the election, adding that such crucial information can “enhance its integrity and transparency” with the people.

Still, it urged INEC to “increase consultation with stakeholders, including more frequent meetings with political parties centrally and at state level, especially during the election period. In addition, press conferences be regularly and consistently held, particularly before and after election day.

The Commission, it suggested, should embark on capacity training for both ad-hoc and permanent staff, spread location of polling units for increased accessibility to voters, considering the increasing population and movements of people.

Considering issues surrounding the use of card reader during the poll, it recommended that, “Information about smart card readers and data from their use in polling units be made public at the time of results

on results forms, and data put on INEC’s website.”

It called for an amendment to the relevant portions of the Electoral Act to be undertaken jointly by the lawmakers, the President and INEC.

To avoid issues dealing with legitimacy and integrity of declared results, the EU EOM made a Priority recommendation: “Legal requirements be established for full results transparency, with data easily accessible to the public. All results, including those from lower levels, be immediately displayed at collation centres. Results forms from all collation centres be scanned and published on the INEC website by the time of the declaration of final results. Results forms from all polling units be published before the deadline for submission of petitions against declared results.”

Considering INEC’s Constitutional duty to delimit constituencies at intervals of not less than ten years, subject to approval by the National Assembly, the EU EOM recommended an amendment of relevant sections of the Constitution and the Electoral Act to be jointly undertaken by the lawmakers, the President and INEC.

“The last delimitation exercise dates to 1996 based on the 1991 census whereas the 2006 census show that, “Nigeria’s population has substantially increased and changed with

inclusiveness, improving fingerprint, recording and recognition, the removal of the names of the deceased as well as duplicate entries across the country, and the management of transfers of registration subject to stronger INEC supervisory checks and internal audits, with greater scrutiny from agents, observers and the media” were the part of recommendation under voter education

Moreover, “Improve the system of collection of permanent voter cards, with more local distribution points and stricter adherence to distribution procedures. Regular public updates be provided on collection rates, ultimately with a breakdown by polling unit. In order to improve biometric functionality, the collection of cards be combined with on-the-spot biometric testing of the registrants’ cards and fingerprints.”

Party, Primaries and Registration of Candidates

On parties, primaries and the registration of candidates, the EU EOM observed that in the absence of law on independent candidacy and inability of INEC to disqualify a candidate even if he/she fails to meet the requirement of law for nomination and contesting elections, the Electoral Act could be amended; “... to strengthen legal requirements for integrity and transparency in party primaries as well as internal party dispute procedures. The law also be amended to give INEC powers to reject nominations for candidacies if primaries are not conducted in line with legal requirements.

Political Finance:

It recommended an amendment to the Electoral Act to give INEC the capacity, administrative sanctioning powers and enabling environment to effectively execute its Constitutional mandate on oversight over political parties’ finances, set legal limits for campaign donations and expenditures of political parties, and introduce a legal obligation for individual candidates to report on contributions and spending.

Media:

To enhance editorial independence of government-owned broadcast stations such as the Nigeria Television Authority,

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Ms. Maria Arena, Head of the EU EOM Observer Mission for the 2019 Election in Nigeria (middle) and other members of the group

announcement. This includes the number of voters accredited, as verified through permanent voter cards and those biometrically verified through fingerprint authentication. This information be announced, recorded

n and there are profound inequalities in the size of constituencies.”

Voter Registration:

“Maintaining the register in order to provide for its accuracy and



*Continued from pg 10*

NTA whose management is appointed by the President, the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, whose D-G is appointed by the President and that of the FRCN, which is appointed by the Minister of Information and Culture subject to the President's approval, the EU EOM urged the supervising Minister, the NTA and FRCN management to collaborate on the repeal of the NTA and FRCN Act and on an improved legal framework for the agencies.

This, it states would, "transform the federal government-owned media, the NTA and FRCN, into genuine public service broadcasters. This includes provisions for editorial independence, financial autonomy, clear separation from any government institution, and an open and competitive selection process of the management." For the NBC, it called for a joint action by the President, the National Assembly Ministry and the NBC working in collaboration to amend the NBC Act and National Broadcasting code. This would "transform the National Broadcasting Commission into a genuinely independent media regulatory body. Establish institutional transparency and accountability requirements, and the selection of the board and director through an open, inclusive and competitive system, with a cross-party approval mechanism and/or participation of industry professionals."

**Priority recommendation:** Reform the licensing system for broadcast media to provide for pluralism and diversity in all states

"Ownership structures be publicised, powers to grant licences be vested in the NBC without presidential approval, and licence fees be tailored to the economic circumstances in each state

**Digital Communication:**

On Digital Communications, it recommended: "Remove or revise vague legislative provisions that have been used to overly restrict freedom of expression in the media and online. In particular, the vague definitions of "cyberstalking" in the 2015 Cybercrimes Act and "classified matters" included in article 9 of the Official Secrets Act.

It urged the President and legislature to amend the Cybercrime Act and Official Secrets Act and enact law to protect citizens' right to privacy

**Electoral Security**

Given the hue and cry that attended intimidation and violence by armed gangs and security personnel during the election, particularly in some states such as Rivers, Kano, Kaduna, Lagos and Sokoto, the EU EOM made the following Priority recommendation: "The inter-agency body responsible for electoral security (The Inter-agency Consultative Committee on Election Security, chaired by INEC, including all of the responsible security agencies), works more transparently and inclusively with regular consultations



**Ms. Maria Arena**

with political parties and civil society. Security arrangements, general principles for rules of engagement, updates, and complaints mechanisms be made public. Clear delineation of the operational roles of different security agencies be established, with the military only involved at the request of INEC.

**Electoral Dispute Resolution:**

Here EU EOM recommended for the strengthening of the mechanism for the prosecution of offences in the Electoral Act with responsibility for investigation and prosecution transferred to a separate institution as envisaged in the National Electoral Offences Commission Bill, 2017.

The requirements, it suggested, can be made for prompt public statistical information on investigations, prosecutions and convictions.

**Civil Society and Electoral**

It urged joint citizen observation, donors, the legislature and President participation to amend the Electoral Act so that its "observation Legal provisions be made for the right of observers to access all stages of the election process, and to make it an offence to obstruct or intimidate observers. The legal provisions, it recommended, should "include requirements for timely, accessible and clear accreditation arrangements.

"Citizen observers be encouraged to undertake observation of many different aspects of the election, including voter registration activities, the primaries, electoral dispute resolution, election offence prosecutions and media monitoring.

**Inclusion:**

This area involved the participation in politics by disadvantaged groups such as women, persons with disability, PWDs and the internally displaced persons. For women and PWDs, it recommended, "Given that it is only possible to run for office through a party, a legal requirement for political parties to have a minimum representation of women among candidates should be introduced. "Non-compliance be sanctioned with proportionate and deterrent penalties. Parties be required to have policies and provide regular information on the promotion of women's political participation within parties, as candidates, and more widely.

For PWDs, it recommended that "Parties be legally required to have policies on the political participation of persons with disabilities, including within the party and as candidates

On internally displaced persons, it urged INEC to publish a framework for the electoral participation of internally displaced persons before the start of any voter registration exercise and ensure its full and consistent implementation. Also, it urged INEC to undertake regular consultation with displaced persons and provide updates on plans for their inclusion.

# AU, Commonwealth, NDI, IRI Urge Nigeria To Improve On 2019 Polls

Election observation missions which participated in the 2019 Nigerian election, namely, the AU Election Observation Mission, AUEOM, the Commonwealth Observer Group, the joint Nigeria International Election Observation Mission of the National Democratic Institute, NDI, and the International Republican Institute, IRI, released their final reports in June with a call on the authorities to improve on grey areas ahead of the next general elections in 2023.

The NDI/IRI in its final report, an in-depth study of the country's electoral process before, during and after the election, "concluded that the 2019 elections did not meet the expectations of many Nigerians."

"The 2019 general elections fell significantly short of standards set in 2015. Citizens' confidence in elections was shaken," said Dr. Daniel Twining, IRI President.

He continued: "Election stakeholders should take concrete steps to address the concerns of citizens with regards to the polls in order to rekindle their faith in the power and possibility of credible elections."

In his reaction, Ambassador Derek Mitchell, NDI President, said: "The 2019 elections highlighted for many Nigerians the need for a national conversation about the country's democratization since the 1999 transition to civilian rule. We hope this report may both spur and

contribute to enriching that national conversation."

The final report provides "recommendations to enhance the credibility of elections in Nigeria going forward, including areas of improvement for political party conduct, civic engagement, election security, and legal frameworks around election disputes.

"In previous years suggestions for improvements by reputable citizen and international observation missions went unheeded. The IRI/NDI mission urges Nigerian stakeholders to seriously consider these and other recommendations to improve the electoral process.

In its final report, the Commonwealth Observation Group led by Jakaya Kikwete, former president of Tanzania, concluded that the process was transparent and the result was credible:

"While the environment was tense and there were instances of violence, overall, fundamental freedoms of association, expression, assembly and movement were generally respected. Our overall conclusion is that the voting, closing and counting processes at polling units were transparent, and offered

Nigerians, for the most part, the opportunity to express their will and exercise their franchise," the report stated.

The Group underscored several positive aspects of the elections, including better youth participation and an increase in the number of women presidential candidates.

In its report, the AU Observation Mission, AUEOM, led by Hallemariam Desalegn Boshe, ex-PM of Ethiopia, said the elections took place in a generally peaceful environment and noted that the collaborative relationship between INEC and the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) contributed to the generally peaceful elections. It observed that though the media played a critical role during the election as a platform for candidates to communicate their political agendas and educate the electorate, the misuse of social media in propagating misinformation about the electoral process and the contestants has implications for the country's democracy, peace and stability.



IRI/NDI election observer team

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