



Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO)

CONTACT

Mr. Albert Arhin, CODEO National Coordinator

+233 (0) 24 474 6791 / (0) 20 822 1068

Secretariat: +233 (0)244 350 266/ 0277 744 777

Email:info@codeoghana.org; Website: www.codeoghana.org

CODEO's Post-Election Environment Observation Statement (December 20th, 2016 – January 31st, 2017)

Introduction

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) is pleased to release its post-election observation statement. This statement is based on CODEO's findings from the analysis of 90 observation reports received bi-weekly from December 22nd 2016 to January 31st, 2017 from its Post-election Observers, as well as the CODEO secretariat's analysis of media reports on the post-election environment.

CODEO, as part of its broader election 2016 civil society intervention for credible and peaceful elections outcome, deployed 30 trained post-election observers from December 22nd, 2016 to observe the general post-election environment, particularly the activities of political parties and key governance stakeholders, in the immediate aftermath of the December 7th, 2016 elections. The observers were deployed to 30 purposefully-selected constituencies throughout the country. The constituencies were selected using the following criteria:

- constituencies where the outcomes of the parliamentary election results were contested;
- constituencies where the margin of victory was slim;
- constituencies that experienced/recorded immediate post-election violence; and
- constituencies with a history of election related violence and had been identified as flashpoints by the Electoral Commission of Ghana

(See Appendix A for the list of constituencies and reasons for their selection).

In addition to the deployment of observers to these constituencies, the CODEO secretariat also observed with keen interest, media reports of the actions and inactions of key political actors during the post-election period.

Summary of Findings:

- Over a month after the December 7th, 2016 polls, the post-election political environment in the constituencies observed is generally peaceful.
- Isolated reports of acts of violence allegedly perpetrated by some supporters of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) against some supporters of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) as well as the unlawful and forceful seizure of public and private property in some constituencies.
- Election results declared at the constituency level by the Electoral Commission (EC) were generally accepted by political parties and their supporters.
- Generally few reports of post-election disputes over the conduct and outcome of the December 7th polls in the constituencies observed.
- The EC is yet to update the presidential election results declared, as well as publish the results per polling station on its website.

Main Findings

1. *The Post-election Political Environment*

More than a month after the December 7th, 2016 polls, the post-election political environment in the observed constituencies has generally been peaceful. Contrary to early post-election reports of disturbances reported in the media, CODEO Post-election Observers report of very little incidents of election-related disturbances and threat to peace and security in many of the constituencies observed during the period of observation.

2. *Incidence of Post-election Violence, Disturbances and Attacks on Public Property*

CODEO has noted with worry media reportage of alleged violent actions and the forceful seizure of public and private property by some NPP supporters in the immediate aftermath of the transition process. In particular, there have been a number of media reports of the unlawful seizure of public installations and services such as toll booths and illegal entry and seizure of state properties in the custody of former government functionaries and political party opponents. Although CODEO Post-election Observers reported that they did not observe or hear about election-related assault on people and property of any political party, or observe or hear any person or group of persons vandalizing public property in the 30 selected constituencies observed, they, however, reported incidents such as seizure of public places of convenience. An example was a case recorded in Asokre market in the New Juaben North constituency of the Eastern region and another in Changni in the Tamale Central constituency of the Northern region.

Also, on January 9th, 2017 a youth group suspected to be NPP supporters stormed the offices of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) and the Non-Formal Education Division (NFED) in Juabeso in the Western region and the Tamale Metro NHIS office in the Northern region and demanded that the managers vacate their post. It took the presence of the police to restore sanity to the NHIS Metro office in Tamale. Additionally, some NPP supporters marched to the Bodi District Assembly in the Bodi Constituency of the Western Region and demanded the resignation of the District Chief Executive (DCE) explaining that the DCE's party is no longer in power. The group also demanded the car keys to the DCE's official vehicle.

3. *Acceptance of the outcome of the December 7th polls*

Majority (78%) of the reports received from the CODEO Post-election Observers indicate that election results declared at the constituency level by the EC were generally-accepted by the political parties and their supporters. However, observers reported that there were reservations and protests over election results in some observed constituencies, such as: Pru West in the Brong-Ahafo region, Suaman, Amenfi Central, and Juaboso in the Western region, Lawra in the Upper West region, Upper West Akim in the Eastern region, and Talensi in the Upper East region. CODEO post-election observers listed the NPP as the party that mostly protested the declared results in these constituencies.

4. *Post Election Disputes and Adjudication*

Reports of post-election disputes over the conduct and outcome of the December 7th, 2016 polls in the constituencies are generally few. Majority (59%) of the reports from the CODEO post-election observers suggest that there was no election petition filed at the courts or at the EC in the constituencies. Only 20% of observers said they heard or observed candidates filing an election petition at the courts or at the EC. These observations were made in Tain, Asutifi South, and Pru West Constituencies in the Brong-Ahafo region, Lawra and Jirapa Constituencies in the Upper West region, Salaga South Constituency in the Northern region, Asawase Constituency in the Ashanti region, Komenda/Edina/Eguafo/Abrem (KEEA) Constituency in the Central region, Suaman Constituency in the Western region, and Upper West Akim Constituency in the Eastern region. The leading

complaints/petitions filed are: charges of over-voting (15%); electoral irregularities (8%); intimidation and corrupt/illegal practice (3%). Candidates of the NPP were listed by observers as those who petitioned the courts most, followed by parliamentary candidates of the NDC. For instance, in the Upper West Akim Constituency, the NPP parliamentary candidate petitioned the High Court about over-voting in some polling stations; and is praying the court to cancel the results.

CODEO Observers also reported that some courts have commenced hearing the complaints filed. Most complainants in these cases are asking the courts to among others, order the recount of the ballots, cancel the official results and re-run of the elections.

5. Updating the EC Website with Polling Station Results

CODEO has also observed that as at January 31st, 2017, the EC is yet to update its website with the full presidential results covering the 275 constituencies as well as publish details of the polling station results of all the 28,992 polling stations.

Condemnation:

CODEO condemns in no uncertain terms the reported unlawful, unrestrained actions of alleged NPP political party supporters in vandalizing, intimidating and seizing public property in the immediate aftermath of the 2016 elections. Their actions, in the view of CODEO, has the potential to mar the peaceful transition for which Ghana has been praised.

Recommendation:

- CODEO calls on political parties to at all times forcefully condemn the unlawful, violent actions of political party supporters/footsoldiers;
- Further, CODEO urges the Police to arrest and prosecute persons or groups of persons involved in violent post-election activities that threaten the country's peace and security;
- While CODEO is encouraged by the generally-peaceful post-election political environment in the constituencies under observation, it is urging the media and civil society organizations to intensify public/civic education on democracy, good governance best practices and democratic citizenship;
- CODEO calls on the EC to as a matter of necessity update its website with the complete presidential election results as well as detailed polling station results as it promised to undertake as part of the implementation of the electoral reforms.

Conclusion:

CODEO assures the public that it will continue to observe the post-election environment and will duly share its findings with the public when necessary. CODEO will organize post-election review workshops to draw lessons from the 2016 elections to inform the conduct of improved elections in the future. CODEO's post-election observation exercise 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: Monday, February 13, 2017

**For further information on the statement please speak to CODEO National Coordinator:
Mr. Albert Arhin, National Coordinator – 0208 221 068**

APPENDIX A: List of Constituencies Covered by CODEO for Post-election Observation in the Reporting Period

S/No.	Region	Constituency	Criteria for Selection
1	Ashanti	Asawase	Result Contestations
2	Ashanti	Mampong	Violence
3	Ashanti	Oforikrom	Violence
4	Brong Ahafo	Asutifi South	Violence
5	Brong Ahafo	Pru West	Marginal Wins
6	Brong Ahafo	Tain	Marginal Wins
7	Central	Ekumfi	Violence & Result Contestations
8	Central	KEEA	Result Contestations
9	Central	Upper Denkyira	Violence
10	Eastern	New Juaben North	Violence
11	Eastern	Upper West Akim	Result Contestations
12	Greater Accra	Ashaiman	Violence
13	Greater Accra	Odododiodio	Violence
14	Northern	Salaga South	Marginal Wins
15	Northern	Talensi	Violence
16	Northern	Tamale Central	Result Contestations
17	Northern	Zabzugu	Marginal Wins
18	Upper East	Bawku Central	Result Contestations
19	Upper East	Zebilla	Marginal Wins
20	Upper West	Jirapa	Violence
21	Upper West	Lawra	Violence
22	Upper West	Wa Central	Violence
23	Volta	Agotime-Ziope	Violence
24	Volta	Ketu North	Violence
25	Volta	Nkwanta South	Violence
26	Western	Amenfi Central	Result Contestations
27	Western	Aowin	Result Contestations
28	Western	Ellembelle	Result Contestations
29	Western	Juaboso	Result Contestations
30	Western	Suaman	Marginal Wins & Result Contestations