



## CONTACT

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

Email: [info@codeoghana.org](mailto:info@codeoghana.org)

Website: [www.codeoghana.org](http://www.codeoghana.org)

## PRESS STATEMENT

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### **CODEO OBSERVES MINIMAL PRESENCE OF PARTY AGENTS AT EXHIBITION CENTERS AND CALLS ON POLITICAL PARTIES AND ASPIRANTS TO USE IPAC TO RESOLVE ISSUES ARISING FROM THE EXHIBITION OF THE PROVISIONAL VOTER REGISTER**

#### **Introduction**

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), as part of its mandate to mobilize citizens of Ghana to participate in the electoral process actively and to complement the efforts of Ghana's Electoral Commission in ensuring transparent, free, fair, and peaceful elections on August 20, 2024 trained and deployed 45 independent, non-partisan observers to 45 purposefully selected constituencies to observe the voter exhibition exercise. These observers observed three (3) out of the seven (7) days the Electoral Commission used for the exercise. During this period, CODEO observers visited a total of 405 exhibition centers in 45 constituencies in 8 regions to observe various aspects of the exhibition process, including arrival, setup, exhibition and closing stages of the exhibition exercise.

This report highlights CODEO's voter exhibition observation findings relating to the exhibition exercise from August 20, 2024 to August 27, 2024 and recommendation as well as comments on significant post exhibition issues.

#### ***Arrival, Set-up and Commencement of voters register exhibition exercise***

- All centers visited by CODEO observers granted full permission for observation of the voter exhibition process.
- The exhibition exercise commenced early, before or slightly after the official 7:00 AM start time, at most of the centers observed by CODEO. Our observation revealed that majority of the exhibition centers (74%) commenced exhibition between 6:45 AM and 7:30 AM. An additional 23% began between 7:30 and 10:00 AM, 2% opened before 6:45 AM, and 1% of centers opened after 10:00 AM. Notably, no centers visited by CODEO observers failed to open for exhibition.

- A vast majority (95%) of the exhibition centers were physically accessible to persons with disabilities and the elderly. However, 5% of centers were not disability-friendly.
- CODEO observers confirmed the availability of essential materials for the exhibition exercise at all centers observed. These include the Provisional Voters Register, Objection Forms, Correction Forms, and Inclusion Forms.

### ***Representation of Political Party Agents and Uniformed Security Personnel at Exhibition Centers***

- CODEO observers also noted the minimal presence of party agents at exhibition centers visited for the two most dominant political parties in Ghana, New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC). For instance, party agents from the NDC were seen at only 15% of the centers visited by CODEO observers, while agents from the NPP were present at just about 10% of exhibition centers observed. No agents were observed for any other party.
- There was however visible presence of uniformed security personnel at exhibition centers. Observers sighted personnel at most (80%) exhibition centers visited, a situation which fostered a sense of order and safety.

### ***Voters Register Exhibition Process***

- At 80% of the centers visited by CODEO observers, the EC officials provided instructions to registered voters on how to verify their details on the register, ensuring a smooth exhibition process.
- During the voter exhibition exercise, our observers reported inconsistencies in the provision of instructions by EC officials regarding how registered voters could make claims or objections to the voter register. While many centers ensured that voters were informed about the process, a number of centers did not consistently offer such guidance to voters.
- All centers allowed registered voters to check their names on the register, demonstrating transparency and inclusivity.

At all the centers visited by CODEO observers, there were no reported incidents of harassment or intimidation directed at EC officials, party agents, observers, or registered voters during the exhibition exercise.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

CODEO's observation of the 2024 Voters Register Exhibition Exercise highlights a generally well-organized process at the exhibition centers by officials of the Electoral Commission of Ghana, with most centers opening on time and providing necessary guidance to voters. However, the limited presence of party agents at exhibition centers

and other minor issues demand attention to ensure a more comprehensive and credible process.

On the low representation of party agents at the exhibition centers, the Coalition calls on all political parties to improve the deployment of party agents to subsequent voter exhibition exercises as it provides the opportunity for their grievances to be addressed thereby boosting confidence and trust in the voters' register.

On the inconsistent communication of the right of challenge to voters, the Electoral Commission should prioritize training and supervision of officials at exhibition centers to consistently provide clear instructions to registered voters on making claims and objections on the voters' register. This is critical for maintaining the accuracy of the voter register and ensuring that all eligible voters have the opportunity to correct errors or raise concerns about the register.

Looking ahead, CODEO also urges the EC to intensify public awareness on future exhibition exercises to rid the register of ineligible persons such as deceased individuals and other unqualified individuals,

CODEO will encourage the EC to have a focal person communication specialist to improve consistency and coordination in its engagement with the public as we enter the busy period of the elections.

Lastly, CODEO has taken note of reports regarding the illegal transfer of voters and the resulting call by the NDC for a forensic audit of the register and the responses from the EC. The utility of the exhibition exercise is meant to expose and correct discrepancies, inaccuracies and any issues with the register. This is the reason all stakeholders are encouraged to take the exhibition seriously including the political parties, aspiring candidates and the public. IPAC has always offered a good platform for engaging substantively and pragmatically to resolve these matters. CODEO calls on all stakeholders to continue to use the platform to resolve all grievances. Going forward on this issue, we entreat the EC to effectively and transparently address the concerns of all stakeholders to boost their confidence and trust in the voter register.

CODEO will continue to monitor electoral processes and provide recommendations to enhance the credibility and effectiveness of electoral activities in Ghana.

**Signed:**

**Albert Kofi Arhin**

CODEO National Coordinator

## **About CODEO**

CODEO is an independent and non-partisan network of civil society groups, faith-based organizations and professional bodies which observe Ghanaian elections. It was established in 2000 under the auspices of the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) to mobilize citizens of Ghana to participate in the electoral process actively and to complement the efforts of Ghana's Electoral Commission in ensuring transparent, free, fair and peaceful elections. The Coalition of 42-member organizations has grown to become the largest and most credible domestic election observer body in Ghana which mobilizes citizens and groups to participate in Ghana's electoral processes.