



CONTACT

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

Email: info@codeoghana.org

Website: www.codeoghana.org

PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, November 1, 2024

Accra, Ghana

CODEO identifies limited voter education in pre-election period - calls on stakeholders to increase engagement across constituencies: pre-election observation statement from October 1 - 25, 2024

Introduction

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), as part of its comprehensive observation of the December 7, 2024 presidential and parliamentary elections of Ghana, deployed 97 Long-Term Observers (LTOs) across the country from October 1, 2024. The observers were deployed to 97 purposively selected constituencies (*list of constituencies attached as an appendix*), which include a mix of constituencies considered stronghold or swing/competitive (of the two major political parties), hotspot constituencies, as well as some constituencies along border communities in the country. Since their deployment, CODEO's 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, security agencies, Civil Society/Community-based Organizations (CSOs/CBOs), and religious and traditional leaders. CODEO is pleased to share its first report from its observations of the pre-election environment covering the period, October 1 to October 25, 2024. This report is based on weekly observation reports submitted by CODEO's LTOs. The findings presented in this statement are based on a total of 388 reports filed by our LTOs from the 97 constituencies for the period observed.

Summary of Findings

- Limited voter/civic voter education: There was low visibility of voter and civic education in the constituencies observed.
- Uneven Campaign Visibility: The National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) dominated campaigning activities while other political parties and independent candidates had limited campaign presence.
- Low incidence of vote-buying and violence: Observers did not identify significant incidents of vote-buying in the observed constituencies. There were also no reports of election-related violence or intimidation specifically targeted at women during the reporting period.

Main Findings

Civic and Voter Education Activities

- CODEO observers found generally low levels of voter education activities by the Electoral Commission in the constituencies observed. Only 12% of CODEO observer reports noted voter education activities by the Electoral Commission in their assigned constituencies. Observers also noted other civic and voter education community meetings in some constituencies. The most frequently used media for these civic and voter education activities were community radio (noted in 42% of observer reports), posters (41%), and regular radio (39%), followed by street announcements (noted by 27% of observer reports) and peace rallies (25%). Most observers did not see nor hear about any CSO-led capacity-building training specifically targeted at candidates who were female or Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

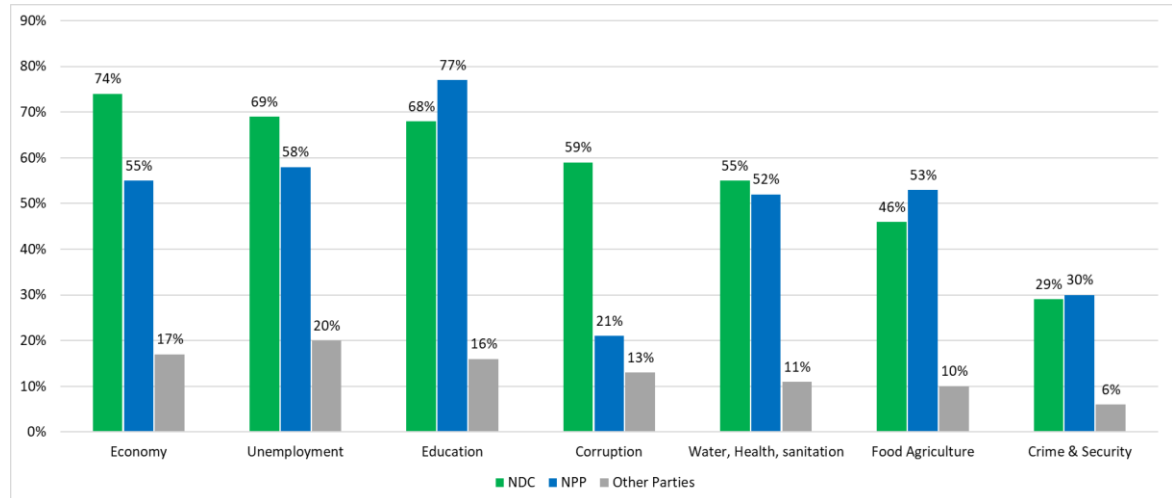
Political Party Campaigns at the Constituency Level

- The NDC and the NPP were the most active political parties in respect of campaigning activities. The NDC showed strong campaign efforts, particularly with house-to-house campaigning, which was also noted as the most frequently observed campaign activity. This was followed by campaign rallies. This pattern of campaign activity was, however, not the same for all constituencies observed. In some instances, observers reported that there were no visible NDC campaign activities in their constituencies within the reporting period. This was particularly the case for some constituencies observed in the Bono, Oti, and Eastern regions.
- Similar observations were made in respect of campaigning by the New Patriotic Party (NPP), as most observers indicated significant campaigning efforts by the party and its agents. House-to-house campaigning was the leading medium of campaigning, followed by meetings and campaign rallies.
- In contrast to the highlight of visible campaigning efforts by the NDC and the NPP, independent candidates and other political parties had very limited campaign visibility in the constituencies, with most observers noting no significant activities from these political parties and related groups. Only 12% of observation reports pointed out campaigning activities by parties other than the NDC and the NPP. The minimal campaigning activities carried out by these independent candidates and other political parties took the form of party marches, campaign rallies, meetings, and house-to-house campaigns.
- In terms of substantive focus of the campaign messages, CODEO long-term observers reported that the NDC and NPP campaigns focused primarily on the

issues of education, the economy, and unemployment. In the case of the NDC, the most frequently discussed issues were the economy (noted in 74% of observation reports), unemployment (69%), and education (68%). Other significant topics discussed during the party's campaigning activities were corruption (noted in 59% of reports); water, health, and sanitation (55%); and food/agriculture (46%). Issues like crime and security were the least frequently discussed (only 29% of observer reports indicated so).

- The NPP's most discussed issues were like the NDC's, with more focus on education (as indicated in 77% of observation reports), followed by the economy (48%), and unemployment (52%). Water, health, and sanitation (44%) and food/agriculture (47%) were also notable campaign issues. Corruption received less attention at 18% of the weekly observation reports, while crime and security were captured in 28% of observation reports.
- Other political parties had significantly less focus on policy discussions, with education (reported in 14% of observer reports), unemployment (20%), and the economy (16%) being the most mentioned issues by these parties in their campaigning activities.

Figure 1: Focus of political parties' campaign messages: Policy issues



- Very few observer reports (6%) indicated the incidents of vote-buying (i.e. people being given money or valuables to influence their vote) in the observed constituencies. The few instances of vote buying were observed in some constituencies in the Ashanti, Western, Western North, Savannah, Greater Accra, Upper East, and Central regions.

Election Security

- Regarding election-related violence, observers did not report any instances of violence, intimidation, or harassment specifically targeting women in the areas observed. Similarly, no incidents were recorded of religious leaders using their influence to support political parties or candidates during the observation period.
- Observers did not note any instances of brutality by the police, military, or other security agencies against electoral candidates or their supporters. Additionally, there were no observations of the police denying permission to any party or candidate to hold rallies during the observation period under review.

Abuse of Incumbency

- CODEO observers reported some cases of potential abuse of incumbency by incumbent candidates or on their behalf by appointees of the government. For instance, in the Ejura Sekyedumase constituency, our observers reported that the NPP parliamentary candidate's flyers were posted on the earth-moving equipment (excavators and trucks) that were recently procured and distributed to MMDAs for road upgrading and rehabilitation works under the District Road Improvement Program (DRIP) project.
- There were other reports, including the use of government school buses (Senior High School buses) in Kintampo South, and Nkoranza South constituencies. In Asawase constituency, the state-owned BRT buses, popularly known as Ayalolo buses, were used to transport supporters to rally grounds.
- The DCE and Constituency Secretary of the Daboya-Mankarigu constituency were also observed to have used the District Assembly's pickups and motorcycles to aid the campaign of the NPP's parliamentary candidate.

Conclusion and Recommendations

CODEO's observations during the first month of October indicate a generally peaceful campaign environment, with very few reports of vote-buying, incumbency abuse, or election-related violence and a lot of policy issue-based campaign messaging. However, the findings highlight gaps in voter education and campaign presence, which may affect voter engagement and electorates' active participation in the upcoming election. CODEO is also very concerned about the recent October 27 shooting incident in the Agona West Constituency of the Central Region, which according to a Ghana Police Service statement occurred during campaign activities and affected some four individuals. CODEO expects the Police will do well to bring the perpetrator(s) to book as quickly as possible to deter other occurrences.

CODEO also entreats all election stakeholders, especially the Electoral Commission of Ghana, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), the media, and Civil Society Organizations to intensify civic and voter education across the country ahead of the elections. This will help promote responsible citizenship and a peaceful electoral process.

Finally, CODEO calls on all political parties and candidates to eschew all forms of vote buying and voter inducements. To ensure an even playing field for all candidates in the upcoming election, CODEO also wishes to remind all government appointees who have a stake in the upcoming election of the prohibition against conflict of interest under Article 284 of the 1992 Constitution and urge them to desist from using state resources, including vehicles, for their private political campaign activities.

End

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.

APPENDIX
LIST OF CONSTITUENCIES FOR CODEO LONG-TERM OBSERVATION

S/N	Region	Constituency	S/ N	Region	Constituency
1.	Ashanti	Afigya Kwabre South	51.	Eastern	Asawam Adoagyiri
2.	Ashanti	Asawase	52.	Eastern	Akwatia
3.	Ashanti	Asokwa	53.	Eastern	Asene Akroso manso
4.	Ashanti	Atwima Nwabiagya North	54.	Eastern	Asougyaman
5.	Ashanti	Atwima Nwabiagya South	55.	Eastern	Atiwa East
6.	Ashanti	Bekwai	56.	Eastern	Atiwa West
7.	Ashanti	Bosome-Freho	57.	Eastern	Ayensuano
8.	Ashanti	Bosomtwe	58.	Volta	South Dayi
9.	Ashanti	Ejisu	59.	Volta	Adaklu
10.	Ashanti	Ejura Sekyedumase	60.	Volta	Ho Central
11.	Ashanti	Kwabre East	61.	Volta	Ho West
12.	Ashanti	Manso Nkwanta	62.	Volta	Ketu North
13.	Ashanti	New Edubiase	63.	Volta	Ketu South
14.	Ashanti	Nsuta Kwamang Beposo	64.	Volta	North Dayi
15.	Ashanti	Odotobri	65.	Oti	Nkwanta North
16.	Ashanti	Offinso North	66.	Oti	Biakoye
17.	Ashanti	Offinso South	67.	Oti	Buem
18.	Ashanti	Sekyere Afram Plains	68.	Ahafo	Asutifi North
19.	Greater Accra	Ablekuma Central	69.	Ahafo	Asunafo North
20.	Greater Accra	Ablekuma North	70.	Bono	Tain
21.	Greater Accra	Ablekuma West	71.	Bono	Berekum West
22.	Greater Accra	Adenta	72.	Bono	Dormaa East
23.	Greater Accra	Ayawaso North	73.	Bono	Jaman North
24.	Greater Accra	Ayawaso West Wugon	74.	Bono	Sunyani East
25.	Greater Accra	Dome/Kwabenya	75.	Bono East	Sene East
26.	Greater Accra	Ningo/Prampram	76.	Bono East	Kintampo South

27.	Greater Accra	Sege	77.	Bono East	Nkoranza South
28.	Greater Accra	Shai Osudoku	78.	Bono East	Pru West
29.	Greater Accra	Weija/Gbawe	79.	Savannah	Yapei/Kusawgu
30.	Central	Assin Central	80.	Savannah	Bole Bamboi
31.	Central	Awutu Senya East	81.	Savannah	Daboya Mankarigu
32.	Central	Awutu Senya West	82.	Northern	Tolon
33.	Central	Effutu	83.	Northern	Mion
34.	Central	Ekumfi	84.	Northern	Bimbilla
35.	Central	Gomoa East	85.	Northern	Tamale Central
36.	Central	Komenda/Edina/Eguafo/ Abirem	86.	Northern	Tamale North
37.	Central	Mfantseman	87.	Northern	Tatale Sanguli
38.	Western	Amenfi East	88.	North East	Yunyoo
39.	Western	Amenfi West	89.	North East	Bunkpurugu
40.	Western	Effia	90.	North East	Walewale
41.	Western	Essikadu-Ketan	91.	Upper East	Zebilla (Bawku West)
42.	Western	Jomoro	92.	Upper East	Bawku Central
43.	Western	Kwesimintsim	93.	Upper East	Bongo
44.	Western	Shama	94.	Upper East	Chiana/Paga
45.	Western North	Bia West	95.	Upper East	Tempane
46.	Western North	Juabeso	96.	Upper West	Nadowli Kaleo
47.	Western North	Sefwi Wiawso	97.	Upper West	Wa East
48.	Eastern	Abetifi			
49.	Eastern	Afram Plains North			
50.	Eastern	Akwapim South			