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PRELIMINARY STATEMENT ON GHANA'S DECEMBER 7, 2024 PRESIDENTIAL AND GENERAL ELECTIONS

Introduction

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), a coalition of 42 professional, faith-based, and civil society groups, deployed 4,000 trained, accredited, independent, and non-partisan Rapid Response Observers (RROs) to all 276 constituencies in Ghana's 16 regions on Saturday, December 7, 2024. CODEO employed the parallel vote tabulation (PVT) to deploy 1,500 of these observers to a nationally representative sample of polling stations in all 276 constituencies across Ghana's 16 regions. CODEO observers are Ghanaians from every walk of life who volunteered their time to help ensure that every registered voter freely casts their ballot on election day and that Ghanaians receive independent, non-partisan information on the conduct of these elections. The PVT methodology uses statistical principles to allow CODEO to provide credible information on the quality of the polls across Ghana.

This preliminary statement presents CODEO's findings on the 2024 presidential and parliamentary elections. It updates the public on some of the information already shared in the "Situational and Close of Polls" statements on December 7, 2024. The statement is based on reports from all 1,500 PVT observers, covering every region and constituency. These reports detail the setup and opening of polls, voting, closing, and counting ballots.

Summary of CODEO Observer Findings

A preliminary analysis of the CODEO PVT observer reports reveal that the conduct of the December 7, 2024 presidential and parliamentary elections was guided by Ghana's electoral laws and procedures. The overall credibility of the election process was intact, notwithstanding isolated challenges.

Arrival at Polling Stations

- Upon arrival at 6:00 AM, the observers reported seeing election officials present in **85%** of polling stations. However, they did not see election officials when they

arrived at **12%** of polling stations. In **3%** of polling stations, observers arrived after 6:00 AM.

Opening of Polling Stations

- By 7:15 AM, only **66%** of the polling stations were open. Another **31%** of polling stations opened with a slight delay between 7:16 and 8:00 AM due to the late arrival of polling staff or the absence of electoral materials. Additionally, **4%** of polling stations opened between 8:01 and 10:00 AM. Regions where CODEO observed a relatively higher number of polling stations opening after 7:15 AM include Northern (**52%** of polling stations), Oti (**49%**), North East (**47%**), Greater Accra (**44%**), and Eastern (**42%**).
- Most polling stations (**90%**) had the minimum number of election officials (5). Another **10%** had one to four officials present at the time of set-up.
- In 93% of polling stations where CODEO observers were located, electoral officials respected the status of CODEO observers as Electoral Commission (EC) accredited election observers and permitted them to observe the polls upon arrival. The remaining **7%** were later allowed to observe.

Set-up for Polls

- Women were represented among EC officials in most of the polling stations: **1%** had five women officials, **12%** had 4 women, **63%** had two or three women, and **18%** had just one woman. However, at **6%** of polling stations, CODEO observers reported no women among the EC officials.
- Presiding officers in **86%** of polling stations were men. The remaining **14%** of polling stations had women as presiding officers.
- **98%** of polling stations were set up in a manner that allowed voters to mark their ballots in secret.
- **6%** of all polling stations were not accessible to persons with disabilities and older people.
- Polling agents of the two main political parties were present in almost all polling stations at the time of setup (NDC, **99%**; NPP, **99%**). One-third of polling stations had agents of independent candidates (**32%**) and other parties (**32%**) also present.
- All polling stations had presidential and parliamentary ballot boxes, presidential and parliamentary ballot papers, indelible ink, validating stamps, endorsement ink, ink pads, voting screens, and voter registers. **82%** had tactile ballot papers. However, in certain locations, materials arrived late, delaying the opening of polling stations.

- A majority of polling stations (94%) had the Absentee Voter List, **92%** had the Transfer Voters List, **74%** had the Exceptions List, **70%** had the Proxy Voters List, and **23%** had the Missing Voters List for registered voters whose details were not in the biometric register.
- **74%** of polling stations had at least the expected number of biometric devices (i.e., two), while **26%** had only one device.
- In all the polling stations (**100%**) where CODEO observers were present, the ballot booklets had serial numbers in numeric order.
- CODEO observers confirm that all the presidential and parliamentary ballot boxes (**100%**) were empty, sealed, and in plain view before the start of voting.
- CODEO observers reported seeing roaming and stationary security personnel at **98%** of the polling stations.
- CODEO observers report that **67%** of polling stations had one stationary security personnel present, **22%** had two, and **7%** had three to five stationed security personnel.
- The police (**60%**) topped the list of security officials deployed at polling stations, followed by uniformed personnel from other security services (**44%**), National Security (**4%**), and the Ghana Armed Forces (**3%**).
- CODEO Observers report that security personnel were unarmed in **78%** of polling stations. However, **20%** of the polling stations had armed security personnel.

Voting Process

According to CODEO observers:

- Election officials validated (i.e., stamped) ballot papers before issuing them to voters in **all** polling stations.
- In **95%** of polling stations, no unauthorized person was allowed to be present during voting.
- The biometric verification devices (BVDs) worked perfectly in **87%** of polling stations. However, in **13%** of polling stations, BVDs malfunctioned at some point but were later repaired or replaced.
- There were no significant incidents of harassment or intimidation of voters or polling officials at **97%** of polling stations.
- In a majority of polling stations (**98%**), voters gave priority to the elderly, pregnant women, nursing mothers, and persons with disabilities.

- In **32%** of polling stations, voters were allowed to vote after successfully going through manual verification.
- No voter was allowed to vote without going through either biometric (fingerprint or facial) or manual verification.
- Voters had their fingers marked with indelible ink in almost all polling stations (**97%**).
- Voters were permitted to have people of their choice assist them in voting in **97%** of polling stations.
- Biometric verification devices rejected more than 5 voters in **10%** of polling stations.

Closing and Counting

According to CODEO observers:

- No harassment or intimidation of polling officials, agents, or observers during counting in **98%** of polling stations.
- In nearly all polling stations, party or independent candidates' agents were permitted to observe the count, while in **99%** of polling stations, unauthorized individuals were not permitted into the inner perimeter during the vote count.
- There was sufficient light in **87%** of polling stations during the counting process.
- In **94%** of polling stations, no party's candidate agent, including those of independent candidates, requested a ballot recount.
- There were no mistakes in the presiding officers' in **90%** of polling stations. However, in the remaining 10% of polling stations where errors had occurred, the presiding officers either countersigned or corrected the results sheets on separate sheets.
- The presiding officers consistently endorsed the presidential result declaration forms.
- **99%** of political party agents at polling stations and **all** presiding officers at the polling stations signed the parliamentary results declaration forms.
- In **98%** of polling stations, presiding officers gave copies of the signed results sheets to party/candidate agents.
- In most polling stations (**89%**), election officials posted the presidential election results announced at visible places for the public to see.

- From the foregoing, CODEO confidently confirms that the EC's arrangements, from set-up to counting ballots at polling stations, were generally adequate and credible.

Selected PVT Projections

As at midnight on December 7, 2024, CODEO had received results from **all PVT** nationally representative sample of polling stations (i.e., 1,500) located in every region and constituency of Ghana. Thus, CODEO's data collection was stabilized, making it possible to have PVT estimates for the presidential election. However, CODEO will release its PVT estimates after the Electoral Commission (EC) has completed its constitutional duty by announcing the official results of the presidential election. The PVT will therefore provide an independent verification of the official presidential election results announced by the EC.

Meanwhile, from our PVT provisional estimates, CODEO projects voter turnout at **63.9% +/-0.5%** and rejected ballot rates at **2.1% +/-0.1%**, respectively.

Reported Incidents/Fact-checking of Misinformation

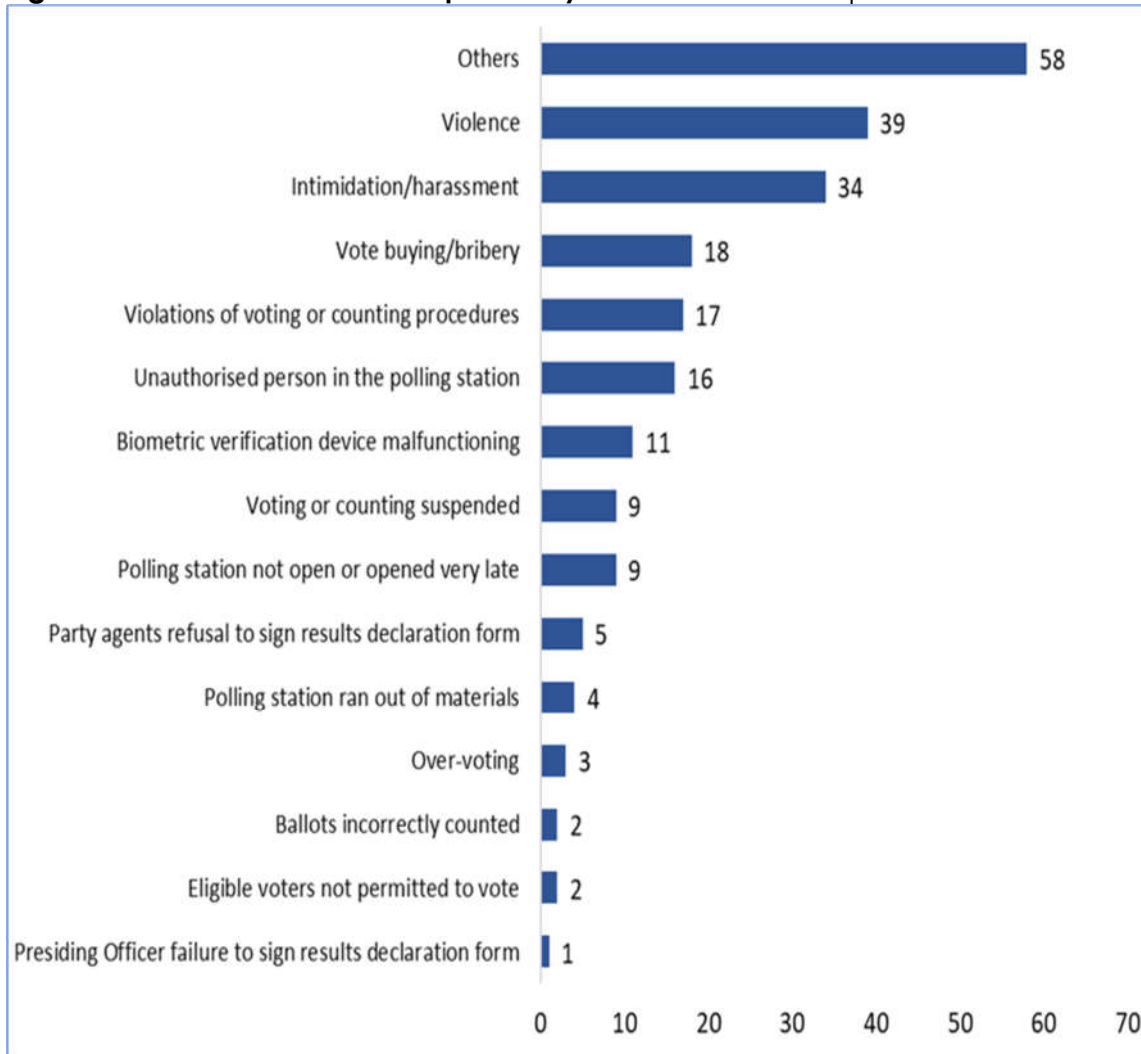
As of 10:00 AM today, CODEO observers had reported and confirmed 228 incidents during the opening, voting, and counting stages of the polling process across the country. The most common incidents were intimidation or harassment, violence, vote-buying/bribery, unauthorized presence of people at polling stations, and violation of voting/counting procedures. The CODEO Mid-Day Situational Report and Close-of-Polls Statements issued yesterday, December 7, 2024, captured some of these incidents.

CODEO particularly notes the worrying incidents that took place at some polling stations in a number of constituencies, including Awutu Senya East, Obuasi East, and Odododiodio, Okaikoi South, Ahafo Ano, Damango, and Awutu Senya East. At the GPRTU Office 3 Polling Station in Odododiodio, for instance, some individuals physically assaulted a CODEO Youth Observer performing his duties at a polling station. Other violent incidents also reportedly took place at Collation Centers in Constituencies such as the Awutu Senya East, Ahafo Ano North, Ablekuma West, Okaikoi South, Ahafo Ano, and Damango.

CODEO noted other violations at Constituency Collation Centers, such as assaults on poll officials and destruction of electoral materials. Some of these incidents took place in the Akwatia, Jaman North, Daboya/Mankarigu, Okaikoi Central, Tano South, Karachi West, and Ellembelle Constituencies.

Below is a summary of the various incidents reported by CODEO observers.

Figure 1: Number of incidents reported by CODEO observers | Ghana 2024 elections



CODEO notes that EC officials and security agents were able to swiftly resolve some of these reported incidents, while investigations were commenced in others.

Commendation and Acknowledgement

CODEO commends the Electoral Commission, the Election Security Task Force (ESTF), the media, the political parties and candidates, domestic and international observers, including CODEO observers, and all Ghanaians for the generally peaceful polls. CODEO further commends the early concession of defeat by the presidential candidate of the New Patriotic Party.

CODEO, however, reminds all election stakeholders that the process is still ongoing. Therefore, we should allow the Electoral Commission to conclude and formally declare results for both the presidential and parliamentary elections.

While the election-day procedures were in line with the laid-down legal framework, CODEO remains deeply concerned with the heightened trend in voter inducement observed during the campaign period and on election day. It undermines the ability of Ghanaians to freely express their choice at the ballot box.

CODEO appreciates the support international observer groups have given to the Ghanaian electoral and democratic processes, including those that visited the CODEO National Information Center (NIC). We commend the National Peace Council (NPC), the media, the political parties, voters, and citizens for their respective complementary roles in the exercise.

Finally, CODEO acknowledges the generous support of its partners, including the American people, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) of the UK government, the European Union (EU), and ECOWAS.

Conclusion

CODEO continues to observe the post-election vote counting and results collation processes, with observers deployed to all 276 constituency Collation Centers, all 16 regional collation centers, and the National Results Collation Center (NRCC) in Accra.

In addition, CODEO has received data from **all 276** constituencies that voted on Saturday, December 7, 2024, completed the analysis, and has its PVT estimates for the presidential election results ready. In keeping with our protocols, CODEO will release its PVT estimates for the presidential election results following the official announcement by the EC to provide independent verification of the latter's accuracy. Thus, the CODEO PVT is a powerful tool that helps to ensure that the presidential results announced by the EC truly reflect the ballots cast at polling stations across Ghana.

CODEO expresses sincere gratitude to the thousands of volunteers who dedicated their time to ensure that Ghana, once again, successfully and peacefully went through a democratic exercise of electing leaders to govern the country in the next four years.

End

Signed: *(For and on behalf of the Advisory Board)*
CODEO Secretariat, Saturday, December 7, 2024

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.