ELECTION MONITORING ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION IN WEST AFRICA
ELECTION MONITORING
ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION
IN WEST AFRICA
The conduct of elections and election monitoring in Africa got a boost from a number of legal instruments developed within the continent most especially since the 1980s when the rest of the developing world was democratizing by shaking off the toga of military rule one after the other. The first step was the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (1981) which built on the “African Convention on Human Rights” to give full effect to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Charter. The other normative frameworks are the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance; the Algiers Declaration (1999) which commits the people of Africa to “the protection and promotion of human rights; increased space for freedom and the establishment of democratic institutions that are representative of our peoples and receiving their active participation”. It gives vent to the promotion of “the rule of law, respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of the citizens and the democratic management of public affairs”.

There is also the “Lome Declaration on Unconstitutional Change of Governments (2000)” which upholds the conduct of democratic elections as the only acceptable methods for political transition in Africa. The AU Constitutive Act (2001) too rejects unconstitutional change of government. The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance of 2002 ties the attainment of sustainable development in Africa to ending unconstitutional changes of government and giving to support human rights protection and upholding the rule of law and good governance.

At the regional level, the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001) insists that regime change in the West African region must be based on free, fair and transparent elections. It opposes any effort at obtaining power or maintaining power by unconstitutional means. The OAU/AU Declaration on Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa (2002) provides a guideline as to what constitutes freeness and fairness in electoral democracy and underscores the responsibilities of member states to make this possible. Election monitors have since become direct and indirect enforcers of these instruments of electoral democracy in Africa. All of these have contributed significantly to a flurry of election activities now witnessed around the continent.

However, some of the elections are associated with so many irregularities, including violence, to the extent that they constitute no more than window-dressing rituals just to please the western donor communities basing development support to African leaders on it. In some parts of the continent, election seasons look much like a period of warfare when people fear for their lives. On election days in many countries across the continent, numerous complaints and evidence of ballot box stuffing are reported. In some cases, the ballot boxes are snatched from the polling stations while candidates subject one another to physical assaults. At the end of it all, political candidates that the electorates did not vote for emerge as the winners. To prevent this kind of situation becoming a popular tradition in Africa, a large body of domestic and international monitors and observers are deployed during elections in various parts of Africa. New election monitoring systems are also developing around the continent.

This publication focuses on the contribution of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) to this expanding tradition of monitoring elections in Africa. It particularly focuses on the Election Management, Analysis and Mitigation (EMAM) programme that WANEP runs in partnership with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) in West Africa. The study was commissioned in 2018 and among other things illustrates how a CSO could formally work together in dealing with a sensitive issue such as election violence monitoring. Other regional CSOs and IGOs in Africa have a lot to learn from the objectives, methodologies and outcomes of the EMAM programme.

WANEP appreciates the support and dedication of its Consultant, Professor Isaac O. Albert in leading the development of this publication. WANEP further acknowledges the contributions of Drs. Festus Aubyn and Samuel Odobor who helped to review some aspects of the work and assistance provided by Dr. Oluremi Albert and Mayowa Albert towards the completion of the work while Benson Eluma led in the proof-reading of the first draft of the work.

Chukwuemeka B. Eze PhD  
*Executive Director*
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Executive Summary

As a leading peacebuilding organization in West Africa, WANEP has been monitoring and analyzing election threats in ECOWAS member states for over a decade. In 2011, it published an Election Dispute Management Practice Guide for West Africa which is used for dealing with election-related problems in different parts of Africa. WANEP’s efforts in managing election disputes in the continent is further reinforced with the production of this publication particularly focusing on “Election Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation” (EMAM) which is WANEP’s contribution to the ECOWAS and AU’s effort in entrenching free, fair and credible elections in West Africa. The publication discusses the historical contexts, contents, implementation and outcomes of the programme. EMAM was particularly designed to strengthen the existing national early warning systems (NEWS) that WANEP had been running since 2002 in partnership with ECOWAS, focusing amongst other things on monitoring, reporting, analyzing and communicating threats to peaceful elections in West Africa. The programme is also aimed at enhancing the capacity of CSOs and relevant state institutions to promote human security, conflict prevention and peacebuilding to complement the broader framework of the ECOWAS Early Warning Mechanism (ECOWARN) and ECPF.

The publication consists of five chapters. The first provides the general framework for the study: the rationale for election monitoring, the global framework, definition of terms, types of and conditions for election monitoring, and the issues for monitoring. In the second chapter, the history of elections and election monitoring in Africa was discussed. The chapter was concluded with a critique of election monitoring in Africa. In the third chapter focusing on the structures and approaches of EMAM, the goal, purpose, planned activities and the intermediate results were discussed. This paved the way for the discussion of the implementation of EMAM in the fourth chapter. The manifestation of the programme in Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria was discussed. In the fifth and last chapter, some lessons from the programme were provided. In addition, some strategies for institutionalising EMAM was also discussed.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCORD</td>
<td>African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Conflicts</td>
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<td>ADA</td>
<td>Austria Development Agency</td>
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<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<td>AWANICH</td>
<td>African Women’s Active Nonviolence for Social Change</td>
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<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women</td>
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<td>CONEN</td>
<td>Coalition for Non-violence Elections in Nigeria</td>
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<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisations</td>
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<td>CUCG</td>
<td>Catholic University College of Ghana</td>
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<td>DANIDA</td>
<td>Danish International Development Agency</td>
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<td>ECOSOC</td>
<td>Economic and Social Council</td>
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<td>ECOWARN</td>
<td>ECOWAS Early Warning Mechanism</td>
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<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
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<td>ECPF</td>
<td>ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework</td>
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<td>EMAM</td>
<td>Election Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation</td>
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<td>EMBs</td>
<td>Election Management Bodies</td>
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<td>EW</td>
<td>Early Warning</td>
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<td>EWARDS</td>
<td>Early Warning and Response Design Support</td>
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<td>EWD</td>
<td>Early Warning Directorate</td>
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<td>GPPAC</td>
<td>Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communications Technology</td>
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<td>IR</td>
<td>Intermediate Result</td>
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<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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<td>J-PERM</td>
<td>Joint Party Election Results Monitoring</td>
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<td>M and E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<td>NALPS</td>
<td>Network Accountability, Learning and Planning System</td>
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<td>NAPs</td>
<td>National Action Plans</td>
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<td>NEWS</td>
<td>National Early Warning Systems</td>
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<td>NPC</td>
<td>National Peace Council</td>
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<td>NSAs</td>
<td>Non-State Actors</td>
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<td>P4P</td>
<td>Public-Private Partnership for Peacebuilding</td>
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# List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLA</td>
<td>Participatory Learning Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMC</td>
<td>Peace Monitoring Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>RFA</td>
<td>Request for Application</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCONPA</td>
<td>Strategic Conflict and Peace Assessments</td>
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<tr>
<td>SGBV</td>
<td>Sexual and Gender Based Violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>WA</td>
<td>West Africa</td>
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<td>WACA</td>
<td>West Africa Conflict Assessment</td>
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<td>WANEP</td>
<td>West Africa Network for Peacebuilding</td>
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<td>WARN</td>
<td>West Africa Early Warning and Response Network</td>
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<td>WIPNET</td>
<td>Women in Peacebuilding Network Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>WPP/IFOR</td>
<td>Women Peacemakers Programme of the International Fellowship for Reconciliation</td>
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<td>WSI</td>
<td>WANEP Sustainability Index</td>
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Chapter One
Introduction to Election Monitoring

INTRODUCTION

There are three main phases in a democratization process: (i) liberalization and ‘political opening’, (ii) transition, and (iii) consolidation. The prevailing situations in some African states have shown that it is easier for a nation to attain the first two phases than the third which has to do with the readiness to abide by the conditions for free and fair elections and for winners of elections to use political powers to protect the best interest of the people. Unfortunately, it has been difficult for democracy in Africa to reach the enviable state of consolidation. Elections are held around the continent, but they often leave behind different types of conflicts, with some of them leading to wanton loss of lives and properties. The cases around the continent in the past ten years took place in Zimbabwe (2007/2008), Kenya (2007/2008), Cote d’Ivoire (2010/2011), Nigeria (2007/2011), Gambia (2016/2017), Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Sierra Leone (2018). As more African countries organize elections in 2019 and the years to come, more disputes are anticipated even if not on the scale witnessed in the countries mentioned above. The problem is of nightmarish concern to stakeholders around the world. Hence, the growing interest in the use of election monitoring exercises in different parts of contemporary Africa.

Katy Collin has shown in an interesting article published in The Washington Post of October 28, 2016 that election monitoring could be done in any part of the world. It is not a tradition reserved for a developing part of the world such as Africa. She argued that it is done even in the United States of America, which is regarded as the most mature democracy in the world today. This practice, according to her, has been part of the American history for a long time. Before the country adopted secret ballots in the 1880s, it opened up all its voting processes to public scrutiny. Even now, the integrity of American elections is still ensured by making provisions for election monitoring most especially in communities where racial discrimination is most likely to be alleged. Hence Collin observed that “In most U.S. polling stations, Republicans and Democrats will have one or two observers who, typically, sit unobtrusively at a table near the voter check-in location”. She recalled additionally how Donald Trump, the Republican nominee for the 2016 US election made headlines by saying he might not accept the result of the election fearing that the election might be tainted by voter fraud. He invited his supporters to volunteer to be election observers during the election to “help me stop crooked Hillary from

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rigging this election\textsuperscript{4}. He was by this statement simply underscoring the relevance of election monitoring in a democratic process.

**A GLOBAL FRAMEWORK**

The history of election monitoring is closely related to the expansion of electoral democracy in the modern world. It started to have firm global justification with the reordering of the international community following World War II. The first normative framework for this new world order was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 which made democratic principles a fulcrum of the international system by positing that “The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of the government,” \textit{and that} “this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.”\textsuperscript{5} This position was strengthened when during the same year the Charter of the Organisation of American States listed as one of its essential purposes: “to promote and consolidate representative democracy”\textsuperscript{6}. The Council of Europe’s founding statute spoke in same spirit in 1949.

The need to promote electoral democracy and election monitoring was further given a boost with the end of the Cold War and collapse of Communism in the 1980s. It was needed for enthroning democratic values in the Eastern Europe and Latin America. In Africa, it was needed for ending military dictatorship. For greasing the system, western donors and development agencies started to make the conduct of free and fair elections preconditions for international development assistance. Commenting on this development, Chloe Bordewich, Avery Davis-Roberts & David Carrol observed that:

Between 1989 and 1992, many of the largest providers of foreign aid, including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United States, Great Britain, France, and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), had announced that funding decisions would tie good governance to capitalist reforms. Multi-party elections came to be seen as a pre-condition of economic liberalism. This approach led some critics to see financial and ideological aims in the decision of Western governments to fund observation missions\textsuperscript{7}.

The foregoing forced several developing countries around the world to start embracing electoral democracy. Election monitors stepped in as “evaluators” of the process. Their opinions mattered to those seeking international development assistance as well as the donor communities.

Election monitoring was formally adopted as a core function of the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1989. The Carter Center popularized the practice beginning in the 1980s, moving from one part of the world to the other with what looked like a certification system. Many others joined the system. The Carter Center later had to partner with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republic Institute (IRI), the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD) and some others to draft the \textit{Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation} and a model Code of Conduct\textsuperscript{8} for those doing election monitoring. The


\textsuperscript{5} U.N. General Assembly, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (New York: United Nations, 1948), art. 21(3).


\textsuperscript{8} See Appendix 1. The process of producing the document started informally in 2001 but the declaration was commemorated at the UN on Oct. 27, 2005, and is now endorsed by 55 intergovernmental and international organizations, which are engaged in the process of improving international election observation. Following these initiatives, election monitoring now a global strategy for ensuring
tradition of sending monitors to elections expanded in the late 1990s when some regional and non-Western actors mainstreamed election monitoring into their processes. The most active participants in this context include the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the South African Development Community (SADC), and the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (later known as the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA)).

The foregoing notwithstanding, election seasons have remained problematic in various parts of the world, most especially Africa. The elections in Africa are characterized by different types of malfeasance that include partisan and inefficient electoral commissions; pliant security agencies; politicians that are not truly committed to democratic ethos; a large concentration of unemployed youths willing to serve the violent interests of politicians; manipulation of the electoral processes in a manner that awards election victory to undeserved people; lack of press freedom and freedom of association, and several other problems. All these problems, which sometimes degenerate to violence, attract civil society organizations, international nongovernmental organizations, and intergovernmental organizations to the field of election monitoring in Africa today.

The present publication takes a critical look at this issue of election monitoring in Africa with a focus on the EMAM project of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and its bearing on the ECOWAS and AU election management architecture. In the pages that follow in the remainder of this chapter, the different theoretical aspects of election monitoring are discussed. In the second chapter, the history of election monitoring in Africa is provided. The context, structure and approach of EMAM is provided in the third chapter while the implementation of the programme in some West African countries is discussed in the fourth chapter. The fifth and last chapter discusses the lessons of the programme and how EMAM could be institutionalized.

**WHAT IS ELECTION MONITORING?**

Election monitoring has to do with impartial and professional collection of data about the conduct of an election with a view to ensuring that it complies with all relevant regulations. As Rindai Chipfunde observed, it has to do with “stationing of independent missions, officials or individuals representing international or local organizations for a specified time in a country which is in the process of organizing a national election with a mandate to closely observe and pronounce on the entire process and outcome”.

The objective of election monitoring is to detect and deter fraud and intimidation and increase trust in the electoral system; promote peaceful transfers of power and by so doing giving voters confidence about the democratic process. Election monitors are “designed to boost confidence in the fairness of the electoral process, to help deter fraud in the balloting and counting procedures, and to report to the country’s citizens and the international community on the overall integrity of the elections. In addition, if requested and if appropriate, observers can mediate disputes between competing political groups in an effort to reduce tensions before, during and after elections.”

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the integrity of democratic elections to the extent that since 1990s 80 to 85 per cent of elections in new democracies around the world are monitored and this has contributed significantly to these countries becoming gradually adjusted to the practice of electoral democracy.


What the election monitor is looking out for is called different names. It all depends on who is doing the labelling. To some, it is “electoral malpractices”. To some others, it is “electoral irregularities”, “electoral fraud”, or “electoral malfeasance”. Those using each of these terms do so emotionally and instrumentally, to call attention to what matters most to them. For example, Isabel Menchón López used the term “electoral fraud” in a 2014 publication. In the publication, electoral fraud was defined as:

…deliberate interference in the electoral process in order to alter the expression of voters’ individual or collective will. Fraud distorts citizens’ election preferences, denying voting rights to some and amplifying the voices of others… Fraud is more likely to occur in contexts of institutional fragility, where freedoms and fundamental rights are not sufficiently guaranteed. Accordingly, the severity and magnitude of the fraud is related to the effectiveness, or otherwise, of government, and of the international community and other social institutions in safeguarding these freedoms and fundamental rights.

The phrase “deliberate interference” is instructive. It shows that such electoral irregularities have strong human agency and indeed are avoidable if those responsible so wish. They are deliberate acts by those seeking to unduly influence the outcomes of the election. But this does not erode the fact that some electoral irregularities or seeming “fraud” could have occurred inadvertently from poor civic and electoral education, defective legal systems and the like. Whatever the source or type of the problem, the role of election monitors is to track down and manage cases of undue interferences in an electoral process.

**TYPES OF MONITORS**

There are three basic types of election monitors:

(i) domestic monitors

(ii) international non-partisan monitors, and

(iii) Others.

**The domestic monitors** are usually individuals and groups domiciled in the countries where the elections take place. They are either citizens of the country or foreigners working within the country on issues relating to conduct of elections. This category of observers can be broken into two types: the nonpartisan domestic monitors and the party affiliated monitors. The nonpartisan monitors are individuals that have been trained within a known group for monitoring elections. Such people are usually on the ground to monitor the three phases of the election: pre-election, election, and post-election and safeguard election integrity. Through their monitoring or observation processes, they ensure that the right kind of electoral laws are passed, the electoral bodies comply with all regulations leading to the elections; and voters are well prepared for the election. On the election day, they carefully monitor the processes noticing what was rightly or wrongly done: all of which they systematically document. As citizens they can intervene in the election not only during the casting of votes but even before and after the election dates.

The local party affiliated monitors are usually “party agents”. They are recruited by and work for specific political parties or candidates on the election day. Their key role is to look out for their principal’s main concerns, most especially ensuring that they are not cheated in any way. Such monitors report to those they work for and their reports could form the basis for post election disputations.

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International observers are usually deployed by international organisations (intergovernmental, governmental, international nongovernmental) for ensuring that the elections meet international standards. The team usually consists of experts and political leaders. While the professionals handle the technical aspects of the observation and give it procedural credibility, the political leaders confer both personal and institutional credibility on the mission by their towering reputations.

The monitors write and issue reports shortly before, during and shortly after the elections for the attention of the country where the elections take place and for the consideration of the international community. The organisations engaged in this kind of exercise in Africa include the Commonwealth Foundation, African Union, RECs, Carter Foundation etc. The international monitors are usually of two categories: the long-term and the short-term. The long-term monitors are expected to cover the periods before the election, come out on the election day to observe the proceedings, and even wait a few days after voting casting to record some post-election activities. Some embassies promote this kind of election observation. The short-term ones only participate in the election day activities.

The Others: This category includes visitors handpicked and sponsored by host governments or foreign governments; electoral tourists; political delegations (group of MPs); study visitors; and media houses. Those belonging to this category are often not as formally organised as the first two. Hence, their reports are usually an addendum to the ones written by the domestic and international monitors.

What unites all the different types of election monitors is the agenda of countering electoral irregularities. For producing the best results, the different categories of election monitors must work collaboratively. The time-bound monitors (namely those coming for just few days or weeks) need to work closely with the long-term monitors given the fact that the latter remains in the field on permanent basis and could provide the historical and political contexts for certain actions. The others might not have that kind of information. The permanent ones, namely those in the country, must also work closely with the outsiders most especially for ensuring that the reports of these people are later fed into the long-term election reform processes.

CONDITIONS FOR ELECTION MONITORING

For an election monitoring group to be considered to be legitimate and credible certain basic conditions must be met. These are clearly spelt out in the United Nations Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observers. Absence of these conditions therein may serve as justification for the mission to be discredited, challenged or withdrawn. The conditions include the following:

1. **Invitation.** The relevant government authority, usually the electoral management body (EMB) or ministry of foreign affairs, issues an official invitation to the observer group(s) it welcomes to observe sufficiently in advance of an electoral event so as to allow observers access to important parts of the process ahead of polling. An invitation demonstrates good will on the part of the host government and indicates responsibility to fulfill the other conditions. Most observer organizations also view as important the acceptance of their engagement from stakeholders across the political spectrum.

2. **Unimpeded access to electoral processes and technologies.** Observers must have access to all phases of the electoral process (including pre- and post-election) and to all technologies used, including electronic registration and voting, as well as to the certification processes for these technologies. Electoral authorities must not require observers to sign nondisclosure agreements regarding technologies used.

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14 Peter Novotny, “The backlash against election monitors: How the profession can respond”, p. 12
3. **Unimpeded access to stakeholders.** A comprehensive and impartial assessment requires that observers be able to speak with government supporters and critics of all kinds. Stakeholders to whom observers’ access must not be obstructed include electoral officials at all levels, legislators, relevant government and security officials, political parties, candidates (qualified and disqualified), media, and civil society. In the case of election officials and other government authorities, meetings should be granted upon “reasonable request.”

4. **Freedom of movement.** Security conditions are taken into careful consideration. Observers must not be banned from observing in or traveling to any part of the country as limits on observers’ movement preclude missions from knowing if findings are representative and can give the appearance of manipulation.

5. **Freedom to issue reports.** Observer missions must not be prevented from releasing statements or reports, no matter how critical their findings. As reports are the primary vehicle for providing information about electoral processes, the right to make them public, in full and uncensored, is a pre-condition of credible and effective observation.

6. **Absence of interference in mission composition.** Governmental authorities must guarantee that they will not attempt to influence the outcome of a mission by limiting its size or interfering in the selection of observers.

7. **Accreditation.** As long as election observation missions (EOMs) comply with reasonable and non-discriminatory requirements for observers, government authorities must ensure full, nationwide accreditation for all those submitted. Accreditation entails the issuance of any identification document needed to conduct observation. Observers should receive their accreditation in sufficient time to observe all relevant parts of the process.

8. **Absence of interference in observation.** Broadly, government authorities should not interfere with EOM activities. Access to the electoral process is of limited value if observers are pressured, antagonized, or forced to adapt to unreasonable requirements.

9. **Protection of interlocutors.** Authorities must not intimidate or punish anyone who works for, cooperates with, or shares information with an EOM.\(^{15}\)

Election monitors are best respected when they are found to be politically neutral and not tied to any of the sides in the electoral contest.

**ISSUES FOR MONITORING**

What do the monitors monitor? These can be broken into three categories: (i) pre-election or pre-voting activities (ii) election day activities and (iii) post election or post voting activities. The three phases of an election are given deeper explanation below:

1. **Pre-election or pre-voting:** During this phase, the structures and frameworks for the election are developed or reformed accordingly; election management bodies are constituted and the membership determined; voters’ eligibility are determined; polling booths are appropriately located; those responsible for conducting the elections are trained and mobilized as considered necessary; voter and

civic education are provided; political parties nominate their candidates; and the candidates stage their campaigns round the constituencies. All these issues must be monitored for appropriateness before the election day.

2. **Election day**: This involves three activities: vote casting, counting and verification. These issues and a few others are monitored on the election day.

3. **Post election or post voting**: At this stage, those not satisfied with the outcomes of the election could pursue election justice. The period also provides the opportunity for the election system to be reformed based on the complaints recorded during past elections. This phase eventually leads to another pre-election phase and the election cycle continues that way. All these issues are monitoring after the election day.

Figure 1 below provides a list of the types of problems that are associated with each of the phases.

**Fig 1: Electoral Fraud techniques at various stages of the electoral cycle**

The observation of the pre-election, election-day, and post election disputes, must be done according to the agreed observation plans which must be sensitive to the laws of the host country. In the pre-election phase of the exercise, they must visit the electoral commission to gather relevant information by taking a critical look at available official documents pertaining to the elections. They meet and interact with the political parties, encouraging them to act according to the dictates of the electoral laws. They meet other election monitors or civil society organisations with election-related responsibilities. This enables them to compare notes. On the election days, the monitors must be widely distributed round the polling booths in the country and towns. They carefully watch the proceedings and where necessary interview relevant stakeholders. In the post election phase, they carefully monitor the reaction of the electoral candidates, citizens and the EMBs with a view to following up issues relating to election petitions and how they are dealt with.

DATA ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION STYLES

Data analysis has to do with aggregating the information collected from various sources about the conduct of the elections and making specific meanings out of them. This is done by asking and answering the following questions: (i) what actually happened? (ii) when did it happen? (iii) where did it happen? (iv) who was responsible? (v) what kind of power was exercised by those responsible? (vi) how did the problem happen? (vii) why in your consideration did it happen? (viii) how serious was the problem? and (ix) what should be done about the problem?

The work of the analysts is easier where the above questions are already built into a form which the election observers are made to fill in the course of their work. In that case, what the analysts are simply expected to do is to collate the information according to the agreed sub-headings and start making meanings out of them. If for example, most of the election observers report election violence across many constituencies of the election, it simply leads to the conclusion that the process was marred by violence. However, the intensity of violence and those responsible for the problem could vary across the constituencies. The problem could be mild in some places and intense in some others. It could be youth perpetrated in some areas but instigated by leaders of the political parties in some others. The intensity of the problem could be tied to the indifference or even complicity of security agents. The problem could have arisen from the poor conduct or shortcomings of the election officials. The analysts must carefully comb through the data for reaching any of these conclusions. The conclusions arrived at matters a lot in shaping the mitigation work that has to be organised either by the election observers or the different stakeholders to whom they have to submit their reports.

The election monitors have five possible types of mitigation strategies. These are (i) avoidance (ii) strategic withdrawal (iii) consultation (iv) third party decision making and (v) joint problem solving. The choice they make would depend on the type of problem they encounter, where, when and what the law says on dealing with such an issue.

“Avoidance” has to do with not responding to the problem. This could be the situation if the problem is too mild and could be parsed to create room for dealing with more serious ones. The problem could also be too sensitive for a time-bound election monitor to handle.

The second response option, “strategic withdrawal”, refers to the situation where election monitors do not touch on the problem because there are already other stakeholders within the vicinity responsible for handling such cases. The problem could also be so sensitive that the election monitors need to step away from it before taking any action.

Consultation has to do with the engagement of stakeholders directly involved in electoral process through shuttle diplomacy and other third party interlocutors. Election observers could recommend this for dealing with some particular problems. However, they should not be part of the action. As part of their early response for example, they can alert the police to respond to some violent eruptions. Third party decision making involves inviting a third-party decision maker (such as the electoral body, security agents etc) to investigate an emerging problem. Joint problem solving comprise the use negotiation, mediation and other mutually agreed principles by parties to a conflict for dealing with their problems. The above have to do with the election-day responses. The final reports of election monitors could provide an expanded or more nuanced versions of each of them.
Chapter Two
History of Election Monitoring in Africa

BACKGROUND
The number of internationally monitored elections has remarkably increased since the late 1980s around the world. National governments, multilateral organizations and many international non-governmental organizations have become progressively involved in the processes as a way of strengthening the democratic process. While the African Union (AU) leads the continental initiative in this regard, regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), East African Community (EAC) and Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) are also contributing to stabilization efforts and advancement of democratic governance. The vital role elections play in the consolidation of democracy and promotion of peace and security in Africa has made the regional institutions to adopt election monitoring and other forms of electoral assistance as cardinal aspects of their mandates in support of democratic governance and political stability in member countries.

Despite its vital importance to democratic governance and stability, conducting elections in Africa remains a herculean task. Contentious elections are near-permanent features of the electoral scene in the continent. Elections are often beset by political intimidation, fraud and generally, an un-level playing field such that elections have not produced the desired democratic system of government in Africa. Also, while African institutions have assumed greater responsibility for election monitoring and other democratization initiatives in Africa, they are yet to overcome a number of challenges in the practice of election monitoring, which impacts on election quality and democratic governance. Despite the presence of observers from Africa and elsewhere, blatant and systematic electoral frauds are still being orchestrated by political actors. These have led to criticisms of not just the role of election in democracy consolidation but also, the relevance and credibility of election monitoring missions in Africa.

Notwithstanding the backlash against election monitoring in Africa, the practice remains fashionable. What then can be done to enhance its effectiveness and capacity to improve the integrity of elections and promote democratization and peacebuilding? Before addressing these issues, it is useful to first examine the historical trend in election monitoring in Africa, examine the existence of an African normative framework for election

monitoring practice, problems of election monitoring and then determine what adjustments are needed for effective and credible election monitoring in Africa.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ELECTION MONITORING IN AFRICA

From the colonial days, there have always been some sorts of election monitoring. Political parties often deployed their agents to monitor voting in polling centers in the areas where they fielded a candidate. The brief of security agencies during elections have always included ensuring that political actors adhere to electoral laws and election-related regulations. Even journalists often monitored and reported on election proceedings. However, what differentiates the past from present is that election monitoring in Africa, particularly since the late 1980s, has assumed a more institutionalized dimension. Its modern manifestation includes the rise of an international election monitoring industry populated by domestic and international players. It has become a mechanism through with international organizations; inter-governmental agencies, foreign governments and civil society organizations play a role in democratic consolidation in Africa. An explanation for the rise of international election monitoring in Africa could be found in the dramatic changes that took place in the political environment both within the continent and globally.

Globally, the end of the Cold War resulted in a strategic shift in the focus of international community. As the ideological war wound down and Africa’s strategic importance to the Cold War players diminished, issues of democracy, human rights and the peaceful management of regional conflicts occupied the front burner of international politics. The new reality not only coincided with, but was also partly in response to a wave of ethnic conflicts and political instability that befell the continent. In some African states, violent civil wars had succeeded in dislocating society, crippling state structures and ultimately leading to complete collapse of the state.20 These necessitated the intervention of the international community through peacekeeping operations and other political and diplomatic efforts aimed at restoring stability and finding peaceful resolution of the conflicts.

Either through force or threat of economic sanctions, conflict parties are ultimately compelled to seek alternative, non-violent means of resolving their dispute. In most cases, the peace agreements that were signed included the conduct of peaceful election to be monitored by international observers. A neutral third-party international election monitoring was considered a valuable tool of improving election quality and dousing tensions. Also, the presence of election monitors would inspire confidence in the integrity of the election, promote and protect the political rights of participants in the election and deter those with the intention of breaching electoral rules. Such was the success recorded by the UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia in 1989 that it strongly influenced how the international community managed similar situations in South Africa, Angola, Liberia and Mozambique.21

Another circumstance that influenced the growth and institutionalization of international election monitoring was the need to support states that were transiting from single-party or military rule to democracy. In what has been described as the “second liberation of Africa,” many African societies had challenged the old order and insisted on political accountability and a liberal political space conducive to political participation. African leaders who had acquired political power through a variety of techniques that were anything but democratic and who had basically restricted the political space were confronted with widespread popular insistence on democratic governance.

The changes that widespread popular revolt triggered made it more conducive for the growth of international participation in national elections. These were further helped by the economic and financial crisis of the late 1970s and 1980s that threatened to bankrupt most African states. Consequently, these countries undertook structural adjustment programs as part of the requirements for receiving financial and economic help from the world’s economic powers and international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. A careful analysis of the experience convinced the financial institutions and the economic powers from which the African states sought intervention that Africa's problem was not necessarily because of bad economic policies. Rather, it was largely caused by a crisis of governance. They had established a nexus between political legitimacy and stability to sustainable development. Thus, it became part of the conditions that African governments that wished to get financial and development help from the financial institutions and the donor community must first reform their political and governance system before they can be eligible for such assistance. Combined with popular dissatisfaction and protest of the people against their leaders, it opened the floodgates of political reforms particularly the adoption of multi-party constitutions and competitive elections.

Consequently, the Africa states embraced the principle of multi-party elections as the standard norm of legitimizing political choices. To show that elections were demonstrably democratic and honest, international election monitors were to observe such elections and give their seal of approval, particularly where the country was conducting its first multi-party elections. The presence of election monitors was used to show that the process was free and fair while also conferring a seal of international legitimacy on the elected government.

From the 1990s therefore, the presence of international election observers came to be viewed as a necessary requirement for legitimizing both the conduct and outcome of elections in Africa. Thus, after the Zimbabwean independence election of 1980 where the first contemporary election monitoring was carried out, others soon followed—Namibia in 1989 and South Africa in 1994. In these elections, international election monitors came from the UN, the Commonwealth, Organization of African Unity (now AU) and the European Union. Smaller monitoring missions from individual countries and NGOs also participated.

Following the democratization boom of the 1990s, which saw many African countries conduct both “reconciliation” and “transitional elections,” the quality of international election monitoring began to experience a decline. A number of African leaders developed reticence towards international election monitors. Partly, the idea of international monitoring of African elections was viewed as a breach of sovereignty and an attempt for foreigners to dictate to Africans on how they should conduct their affairs. But a more plausible motive for the resentment of international election monitoring was the inability of many of the political leaders to win democratic elections fairly and squarely. Thus, they did not want external observers prying too closely into the conduct of elections because the only way they could retain or regain power was through techniques that verged on illegality, which could not be deemed free and fair. However controversial the admission of election monitors was, African leaders recognized the advantage of allowing international election monitoring, if only to avoid international isolation or attract foreign aid. Yet, African leaders often found a way to orchestrate fraud in the presence of international election observers.

The fact that little in terms of democratic consolidation had occurred over the period since the 1990s created doubt even within the international community as to the efficacy of international monitoring in promoting free and fair elections. Although a number of African states had witnessed a change in government through election (Nigeria, South Africa, Mali, Madagascar), a considerable number of incumbent heads of state and political parties from the order had also managed to retain power in the new dispensation (as in the case of Togo, Kenya, Cameroon, Gabon); while dictators who had lost out in democratic elections managed to return to power through incredulous and foul means.25

All these made a mockery of international monitoring, leading some analysts to question the adoption of strict international standards in conducting elections under peculiar African conditions.26 By and large, actors in the election monitoring industry drew two major conclusions from the experience of election monitoring in Africa.

(i) The first is that there is the need to widen the scope of involvement of election monitors in the electoral process. Rather than focusing mainly on Election Day, the entire gamut of the electoral process need to be monitored as there is more to elections than what happens on the day voters go to the polls.

(ii) The second conclusion drawn was that election monitoring must be viewed from a broader perspective. Though election is considered the heart and soul of democracy, democracy involves much more than elections. Democratic governance is critical to political stability and peacebuilding. Thus, actors in the democracy promotion industry need to extend their focus to other areas such as developing an efficient judiciary, effective civil service, security sector reform, promotion of human rights and political freedom, vibrant civil society and so on. These constitute some of the vital elements for measuring democratic governance.

NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR ELECTION MONITORING IN AFRICA

The African Union has leveraged on its continental reach and wider membership to lead a continental initiative in establishing norms for democratic governance in Africa. Its role in this regard has been complimented by similar initiatives by the regional institutions such as ECOWAS. These regional organizations have also been involved in crafting rules that guide political reforms and democratization at the sub-regional level. On the AU’s part, it has over the years developed frameworks for democratic conduct through several instruments that have become norms that guide election monitoring and democratic practices in Africa. The AU has built on its predecessor—OAU’s commitment to move beyond the decolonization rhetoric and towards democratization of Africa. The adoption of the AU Constitutive Act clearly shows the organization’s commitment to promotion of democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance in Africa.

The normative basis for election observation and monitoring in Africa developed from what could be described as the OAU/AU declarations or pronouncements that have become institutionalized norms guiding election monitoring and democratic governance in Africa. However, it was not until 2002 that the AU developed a recognizable framework with which election standards were measured on the continent. The Durban


Declaration [27] on Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa was more specific and election-focused. Among its key principles was that democratic elections are the basis of the authority of any representative government and that democratic elections must be conducted freely and fairly. Their key principles on the conduct of free and fair elections have become the yardstick with which the Union observes elections. The adoption of the African Union Guidelines for Elections Observation and Monitoring Missions [28] further cemented the importance of election monitoring. It states that one way of improving the integrity of electoral processes is by involving local and international observers and monitors, and that electoral observation and monitoring have become an integral part of the democratic and electoral processes in Africa. The document further provides the criteria for determining the nature and scope of AU electoral observation and monitoring, the mandate, rights and responsibilities of AU observation and monitoring missions as well as the code of conduct guiding AU election observers and monitors.

However, more profound documents and binding regimes that give considerable normative power to the AU in election monitoring and advocacy for democratic governance can be found in the AU Peace and Security Council Protocol of 2002 [29] and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG 2007). [30] Unlike the other declarations, the Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance makes the continental commitment to democratic governance legally binding on member states. Nonetheless, the AU’s norm-building mechanisms remain encumbered by weak implementation, inadequate commitment by member states and lack of effective leadership. As argued by Khadiagala in 2018, the AU’s legitimacy and effectiveness is still being affected by the disposition of some of its members who are yet to fully subscribe to the ideals of the Union. [31] Yet, the AU’s response to the political situation in Egypt and subsequent suspension of its membership in 2013 as well as its resolve against unconstitutional change of government in Madagascar in line with article 25(4) of the ACDEG point to a modest commitment in implementing and popularizing its norms.

The involvement of regional bodies in conflict management and efforts towards institutionalizing norms for democracy and governance in the sub-regions has recorded success in varying degrees. ECOWAS appears to be far ahead of the other regional organizations in terms of developing and operationalizing mechanisms for conflict management and democratic governance. Under Nigeria’s leadership, ECOWAS has led in enunciating and applying practical institutional frameworks for security and political cooperation in West Africa. It embraced the democratization wave early in the 1990s when it pronounced through its 1991 ECOWAS Declaration of Political Principles that political governance in West Africa would be guided by the shared values of democratic accountability and respect for human rights. Propelled by its conflict intervention experiences in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, ECOWAS in 1999, launched its foundational sub-regional security architecture—the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security—through which it hoped to promote regional stability, peace and development.

To strengthen the 1999 Mechanism, ECOWAS signed a supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in 2001. The Protocol explains a set of constitutional principles shared by member states. These include separation of powers, independence of the judiciary, zero tolerance for unconstitutional ascension of power, free, fair and transparent elections, popular participation in decision-making, strict adherence to

democratic principles and decentralization of power at all levels of governance. In the event of violation of any of the principles by member states, the Protocol authorizes a range of sanctions against such members including suspension from any or all aspects of ECOWAS activities. Furthermore, the Protocol establishes the major ground for ECOWAS work on electoral assistance and democratic governance in the sub-region. Section III of the protocol provides for ECOWAS election monitoring and electoral assistance at the request of any member state. In essence, the Democracy Protocol, alongside the other instruments, gives the ECOWAS normative power in promoting and enforcing stability and electoral democracy norms in the sub-region. Under these instruments, ECOWAS has imposed sanctions against erring members and has intervened in restoring constitutional order as in the case of Togo, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, and the Gambia.

Other regional institutions such as the SADC, EAC and IGAD have also made efforts in developing institutional mechanisms and norms for conflict management and democratic governance. In the case of IGAD, though it was originally designed in 1986 to combat drought and natural disasters in the Horn of Africa, it later expanded its areas of intervention to include conflict management. The organization set up its Political Affairs Programme (PAP) in 2008 in recognition of the nexus between credible elections, good governance and sustainable peace and stability. Building on this, it initiated the Protocol on Democracy, Governance and Elections as part of its efforts to foster democracy and good governance in the region. However, IGAD’s ability to improve on the initiative and deepen democratic governance in the Horn has been largely affected by multiple, interconnected internecine conflicts within the region. Thus, it has largely concentrated its effort on conflict diplomacy and stabilization issues in its neighbourhood.

Related challenges confront the EAC in East Africa partly because of the overlapping membership it shares with IGAD. Countries like Kenya, Uganda, Sudan and South Sudan are members of both organizations. Nonetheless, the EAC has established instruments for democratization, peace and security. The promotion of these ideals is embedded in the treaty setting up the Community. Article 6 of the treaty lists the promotion of good governance, adherence to the principles of democracy, the rule of law, accountability, protection of human rights as part of the fundamental principles of the community. The establishment of the EAC Forum of National Electoral Commissions (EFNEC) buttresses the organization’s commitment to democratic consolidation in the region and an attempt to develop common principles and standards for measuring the legitimacy and integrity of electoral processes. However, like IGAD, the EAC has concentrated much of its efforts on regional conflict management as the region is affected by the conflict systems from all East Africa, Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region.

Like the other regional institutions, the SADC also links the realization of regional peace and security to promotion of democracy, good governance and development. Article 5 of its Treaty obligates member states to promote “common political values, political systems…which are democratic, legitimate and effective.” The Principles for Election Management, Monitoring, and Observation in the SADC Region (PEMMO) adopted by member states in 2003 provides the principles and guidelines governing democratic elections in the area, with the aim of deepening democratic practice, particularly “free and fair, credible, and legitimate elections.” However, the other regional institutions have been relatively weaker and less successful not only in conflict intervention but also application of the norms for election monitoring and democratization compared to

ECOWAS. Political vulnerabilities, cultural cleavages and absence of strong, credible leadership are some of the challenges that have undermined these institutions.36 Nevertheless, a case could be made that there is a consciousness and clear effort by the AU and the regional institutions to collaborate and harmonize their workings and to promote a common front on issues of democracy, constitutional governance, peace and security in Africa. This reflects in the memorandum of understanding (MOU) that was signed by the AU and the regional institutions in 2008 to jointly promote the shared values and principles that the African states have committed to. The MOU also called for coordination of the various initiatives of the AU and the regional bodies on democratization, peace and security.37 These efforts have helped in developing and popularizing an African norm on issues of constitutionalism, democratization, peace and security. While the AU regularly concedes major decisions to the regional bodies in the areas where they have comparative advantage, they have often found a way of working together in maintaining peace and security and in the enforcement of shared principles on constitutionalism, democratic governance and respect for rule of law. This unity of purpose was demonstrated in the interventions in CAR (2003), Togo (2005), Madagascar (2009), Egypt (2013), Burkina Faso (2015) and the Gambia (2017). While the regional bodies spearheaded the interventions, the AU backed it up by providing expertise and continental legitimacy to the efforts.

Furthermore, one common strand that cuts across the African Union and regional mechanisms is a trend towards establishing shared rules of political governance, conflict management and democratization. The various instruments and stabilization interventions of the AU and the regional organizations have deliberately or inadvertently transformed and tilted towards democracy promotion and democratic consolidation, to which election monitoring and observation has become a core element. To achieve the objective of democratizing Africa, the nuances and methodologies of election monitoring must be clear enough, precise and geared towards improving electoral integrity and democratic governance.

METHODOLOGIES IN ELECTION MONITORING

The election observation and monitoring frameworks of all the major African institutions engaged in election monitoring practice have always involved both diplomatic and technical components. The rational for this is that election monitoring is not just a technical activity of assessing the conduct of elections, considering the African situation; there is also the need for such missions to manage the political tensions. Accordingly, there is always a preventive diplomacy strategy in most of these missions with a view to averting potential election-related conflict outbreak. Hence, in the initial period, election-monitoring missions organized by major African regional institutions usually comprised mainly actors from the diplomatic community with political and diplomatic experience in election matters. Until 2008 when the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit (DEAU) was operationalized, the African Union lacked adequate technical expertise in election monitoring with conflict prevention prioritized over technical observation.38 However, the approach has since shifted towards independent technical election monitoring.

The methodological approach to election monitoring in Africa has also evolved over time, but not without significant challenges. From 1989 when the OAU began continental election monitoring, it adopted the short-term observation model. Observation missions were deployed close to Election Day and departed

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shortly after vote counting. The same is true for the regional institutions. The mission task basically involved
checking whether polling conformed to good election practices. But the teams lacked adequate knowledge
about election observation procedures and were relatively small with inadequate manpower to cover large
areas of the observed country. The method also exposed the inability of the missions to deeply assess the
critical events prior to polling day such as gerrymandering, voter registration, media freedom and practice,
advertising, campaigns and post-election issues. Though the method recorded modest success in terms of
inducing improved organization on Election Days, its limitations were all too obvious for election contestants,
particularly incumbents and ruling political parties to exploit. The critical events and actions in the pre and
post-election phases left unmonitored had significant impact on the integrity of election outcomes. Especially,
the preceding electioneering campaigns and the post-election phase of vote collation, counting, verification
and announcement of election results often fell below the threshold of peaceful, fair and honest elections. The
criticisms of short-term election monitoring led to calls from both domestic and international stakeholders for
the adoption of the long-term election observation model.

The long-term observation model requires that all phases of the election be fully and effectively monitored.
The crucial importance of monitoring the pre and post-election phases is now more widely recognized based
on the discovery that Election Day procedures are not the main sources of electoral malfeasance in Africa. Rather, manipulation occurs long before polling day and more increasingly, after balloting. Thus, long-term
missions now survey the pre-election context to determine, for example if there is an equal playing field;
whether it meets basic guarantees for an electoral campaign such as the freedom of association, expression
and movement; and if the indices of competitive elections are present. Election observers are also expected to
closely scrutinize the post-election stages of vote counting, result aggregation, verification and announcement.

Modern observation has also witnessed increased scrutiny of Election Day procedures. Of particular note is the
use of Election Day checklist—a basic observer tool for recording findings at the polling centers monitored.
The checklist is an indicator of good election practices. Common elements in the checklist include determining
how ballot boxes are managed, cases of voter intimidation, distance of unauthorized from polling centers,
secrecy of votes, provisions for the elderly and the physically-challenged. The robust presence of independent
election monitors on Election Day has helped to deter election fraud and improve the conduct of balloting.

Another feature of modern observation is the spreading out of a sizeable number of election monitors to
observe the electoral processes on a wider basis. Although the coverage is broader, observers tend to avoid
volatile terrains for their safety even though studies have shown such insecure areas are actually in need of
greater scrutiny because of the possibility of election manipulators having a field day in such places. The lack
of coverage of difficult terrains could also impact on the comprehensiveness and factuality of mission reports,
as they could be deemed not fully evidence-based.

Furthermore, long-term election observation places a premium on the timing of arrival and dispersal of election monitors to the different areas in the country. Ideally, long-term election missions comprising a team of experts in electoral, constitutional and political affairs arriving in the country and being dispersed to the various points of observation at least four weeks before Election Day. Observers are also provided adequate training and appropriate data collection methodology for effective monitoring and analysis of the electoral process. Such election missions are expected to adapt to the prevailing socio-political and cultural conditions of the country and appropriately briefed on what to look out for in scrutinizing the electoral process. Reason is that, focus has to also be on the local conditions instead of too often deferring to “international standards” for measuring election integrity. Most long-term missions are expected to produce synthesized weekly reports of their findings in their areas of responsibility, including identification of potential flashpoints in the electoral process and possible mitigation strategies. Reports and analysis of the long-term observers help to establish the electoral context.

The African Union, following the recommendations of the AU Panel of the Wise Report (2010), embraced the long-term election observation model and first operationalized it in the March 4, 2013 Kenyan elections. Its long-term observer team arrived in the country on January 15 and departed March 15 2013. The AU has since deployed similar missions in Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Malawi, and more recently in Cameroon and Democratic Republic of Congo in 2018. Similarly, ECOWAS started deploying long-term missions from 2014 and since then has deployed more than 120 long-term election observers to monitor elections in Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria, Togo, Guinea, Cote d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin, Cape Verde and Ghana (ECOWAS, 2017). It is the practice of AU and the regional institutions to deploy both long and short-term election missions. The former is usually sent four to six weeks before Election Day while the latter arrives few days before polling. While the short-term observers focus on activities on Election Days, the long-term missions have an extended period of time to perform critical observation of the important segments of the electoral processes preceding polling and post-election days. Despite the evolution, in practice, efforts at monitoring continue to be criticized, particularly the rational, methodological rigor and the overall evaluation of the process.

European Union observers take notes during gubernatorial and local assembly elections in Lagos, Nigeria on April 11, 2015.

ELECTION ‘SITUATION ROOM’

A recent addition to the tradition of election monitoring in Africa is what it now known as “Situation Room”. This has to do with setting up a central special room, most especially on election days, where select election experts, representatives of intergovernmental organisations such as the Africa Union and ECOWAS) and other relevant actors receive and analyse information about the performance of the EMB, voters, agents of political parties, security agencies and other stakeholders in the conduct of the democratic elections. According to Udo Jude Ilo, this model of election monitoring “aims to bring civil society groups together for the period of the election, sharing information and resources, anticipating problems, and responding rapidly when they occur”\(^45\).

The use of the system for monitoring elections in West Africa is said by Udo Jude Ilo to have been popularised in Nigeria, Liberia and Senegal with the funding support of the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA). It was effectively used by the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) during the 2011 elections in Nigeria. In the same year, it was used by Civil Society Organisations National Committee for Election Monitors (CSO-NEC) and the National Coalition Monitors (NACEM) to monitor the 2011 elections in Liberia under a system that was dubbed the ‘Election Coordinating Committee’ (ECC). The Situation Room model was also used in February 2012 to monitor the presidential election in Senegal jointly facilitated by the Réseau des Observateurs Citoyens (RESOCIT), bringing together the Collectif des Organisations de la Société Civile pour les Elections (COSCE) and the Gorée Institute\(^46\).

Under this system, the situation room is fed with information from trained election monitors across the country armed with telephones and other means of communication. As the information relating to the conduct of the election is filed in, they are formally recorded, coded and analysed by experts for measuring whether the situations are going rightly or wrongly. At the end of it all, the situation room would issue official statements about what they have observed and how such issues should be dealt with by different stakeholders. The advantage of this model of election monitoring is that it enables the CSOs monitoring the elections to aggregate and harmonise their conclusions rather than speaking individually and in the process making contradicting statements.

A CRITIQUE OF ELECTION MONITORING IN AFRICA

The most radical of criticisms dismisses the entire practice of election monitoring in Africa as unneeded and liberalism’s neo-colonial instrument of command. It borders on sovereignty and an attempt to foist an unsuitable model of liberal democracy on Africa. This category of critics also questions the uneven application of the idea of monitoring. They question why African societies are viewed as incapable of managing their affairs in an organized fashion, whereas, elections elsewhere (West) entail no violation of sovereignty in the form of external scrutiny. This view however, is more conducive to those with the ambition of corrupting the democratic process in their quest for political power. They however tolerate the process because of the democracy-contingent benefits—economic\(^47\) and to avoid sanctions and isolation globally; yet find a way to circumvent the process.

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\(^46\) Ibid. pp. 5-7

Despite the recognition of the need to monitor the entire electoral cycle, systematic examination of the pre-election phase is repeatedly neglected. The conclusions of observation teams have often focused on polling day election procedure, with little efforts to provide a conclusion about the entire electoral process. The repeated pattern has been to applaud the “freeness” of polling day with little effort to probe into the “fairness” of the pre-election phase. In the 2017 Rwanda election for instance, the verdict of the AU observation team was that the balloting process was conducted in a “peaceful, orderly and transparent manner.”48 Though the mission identified flaws and provided technical recommendations for improving subsequent elections, it failed to provide a final evaluation of the entire electoral process. Similarly, the 2017 Kenyan election was rated by observers to be credible but same election was voided by the country’s high court for being deeply problematic. In response, the observers admitted that they only endorsed the polling process and not the entire election.49

The competence of African monitoring teams to effectively and consistently evaluate electoral processes is subject to criticism for several other reasons also. Despite the support of foreign partners, there is still lack of professionalism of some observers. The challenge partly stems from the inability of the regional institutions to fully translate the long-term observation methodology into practical action.50 In addition, the size of observers continues to be a subject of debate. With thousands of polling units to monitor and several kilometres of distance to cover, added to a limited budget, deploying a totally credible monitoring mission with the competence to determine impartially, the character of the electoral process remains a challenge. Though no general consensus exists as to the ideal number of observers that could be deployed in an election, election missions often have relatively lean human resources. Lack of proper funding also affects the length of time the mission stays in the country being observed.

Of note is that no consensus exists for determining the credibility of an election process. Varying standards have mostly been applied by the different organizations for measuring “freeness” and “fairness” of an election. The African observer missions are particularly constrained by a conflict of interest and consideration of African solidarity. The duality of role (as mediators and election observers) that these regional institutions play have often limited their objective assessment of election quality. ECOWAS was roundly criticized for giving a thumb up to the 2005 Togo election results in a bid to protect political stability in that country.51 In fact, the majority of African elections monitoring missions have rarely condemned even those highly (and glaringly) fraudulent elections. They are all too reluctant openly to pronounce a highly flawed election flawed. Questions over their level of professional competence and objectiveness compelled Kelley (2012)52 to label the African institutions “low quality” election monitoring organizations. They fall within what Kelley described as low quality institutions that rarely criticize problematic, fraudulent elections—less than 50% of the time.

Another criticism sees election monitoring efforts not to be deep enough to capture all the problems they seek to solve. Calling attention to one of the core issues in this respect, Chan argued “The age of dictators stuffing

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ballots and winning with an implausible 90% vote share is over. Today, when elections are stolen, much of the work is done after votes are cast and in sophisticated ways that deliberately mirror real voting patterns\textsuperscript{53}. The way undemocratic leaders control elections today is beyond the gaze and capacity of foreign observers to detect. Advancements in electronic voting and computation of results have made it possible for manipulators to be able to fabricate vote counts centrally and almost perfectly outside the views of observers. Even when these are targeted, monitoring missions lack the technical ability to systematically scrutinize operations at the central collation centers. In the 2017 Kenyan election, election monitors did not see how polling results were transmitted but accepted the electoral commission's assurance that the results would be verified. The foregoing does not suggest a discontinuity of election monitoring but to further strengthen or adapt the situation. The EMAM programme of WANEP, ECOWAS and the AU provides a case study in such possible adaptations.

Chapter Three
Structures and Approaches of EMAM

INTRODUCTION

West Africa remains one of the most volatile regions in Africa due to the frequent incidence of violence and political instability in the countries in the sub-region, most especially since the late 1990s. Although the roots of these violent incidents are multifaceted in nature, a few of them are election-related and connected to weak political structures, politicized state institutions and contested democratic transitions. These violent eruptions have far-reaching implications for democratic consolidation, regional stability and human security in West Africa. To address these acts of violence during elections, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, and the Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) of 2001. Despite the implementation of these and other ECOWAS frameworks, violence is still a commonplace during the elections conducted in the region. Having a structured and operationalized conflict early warning and response system around elections has therefore been widely recognized as a critical conflict mitigation mechanism that can help Governments to promote stability and reduce the potential for future electoral conflicts. However, the responsibility for developing these systems does not rest with Governments and ECOWAS alone. Civil society organizations (CSOs) also have a role to play in engaging with the ugly situations.

WANEP is a global brand in early warning system. At the initial stage of the early warning system that the organization runs in partnership with ECOWAS (ECOWARN) the focus was generally on the reduction of armed conflicts in West Africa. However, the reports from WANEP's National Early Warning Systems show that most recent intra-state conflicts in West Africa are directly or indirectly linked to election-related issues such as lack of transparency by election management bodies (EMBs), abuse of power by autocratic regimes, militaristic dispensations or manipulation of the electioneering process. The early response mechanism of WANEP and ECOWAS soon started to respond to the issues at national level in terms of increased activities around the prevention and management of election violence. In 2011, WANEP developed a Practice Guide and Manual under a USAID/WA funded project (EWARDS) for getting better informed on how to prevent and manage electoral disputes and violence. Yet, people continue to live in fear during elections in many parts of the region as some of the election disputes lead to deaths even before any quick interventions could be organized. This situation informed the need to invest more on election monitoring as a form of preventive diplomacy.

The foregoing informed the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) on February 20, 2015 to sign a $2.5 million contract with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) West Africa for the implementation of a five-year project titled: “Mitigating Election Violence through National Early Warning Systems” (NEWS). The project forms part of the broader Election Management, Analysis and Mitigation (EMAM)
programme concept of WANEP. In addition to the support from USAID, WANEP also received support from the Open Society Institute for West Africa (OSIWA), the Governments of Sweden, Austria and Denmark in some of the countries where EMAM was implemented. In all, the programme seeks to enhance the capacity of civil society and relevant state institutions for the promotion of human security, conflict prevention and peacebuilding in West Africa (2015-2020). It helps to strengthen WANEP National Early Warning Systems with special focus on monitoring, analyzing and reporting electoral violence indicators within the broader framework of the ECOWAS Early Warning Mechanism (ECOWARN) and the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, (ECPF).

The project enables ECOWAS and WANEP to gain access to real-time community-based conflict information which were hitherto uncollected and unreported but highly needed for the purposes of conflict prevention especially in electoral processes. The theoretical underpinning of this approach to election monitoring is that if local capacity is developed and harnessed for timely election violence monitoring, analysis and reporting, there will be proactive and timely response to the indicators and this will avert electoral violence and ensure stability in the West African region. The pilot phase of the project started in five ECOWAS Member States of (Niger, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Cote d’Ivoire and Ghana) in view of ongoing and envisaged electoral violence there. The participating countries have since been increased with lessons from the above pilot countries informing the design and implementation of the project in the other countries. In Nigeria for example, WANEP partnered with ECOWAS as well as the African Union Commission as part of its obligation as contained in the MoU with AU Commission to provide support to the Commission’s Peace and Security Department in the implementation of the AU Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The MoU also includes issues relating to the mitigation of electoral violence and the gender mainstreaming of the architecture.

**STRUCTURES OF EMAM**

This refers to the different components, parts and elements of the programme. This has to do with WANEP and its CSO partners working with local communities in providing quality early warning data that inform early response through intra and inter-community dialogue and reconciliation processes at different levels on election related issues. The milestones to be achieved on this programme, as defined by the scheduled activities include but are not limited to the following: enhancing capacity for electoral dispute monitoring, analyzing and reporting; improving linkages between NEWS and ECOWARN and timely mitigation of electoral violence. The programme impacts and improves on the operations of ECOWAS Early Warning Directorate through the provision of data on contextualized electoral violence indicators and support the Electoral Unit of the Commission through analyzed early warning products. The design and implementation of the programme ensures that the participating ECOWAS member states have an enhanced capacity and improved readiness to prevent violent election conflict. This would result in the creation of a secure and peaceful environment and the necessary human security preconditions that support sustained socio-economic development and improvement in living standards.
Designed Activities Guiding the Implementation of the USAID funded E-MAM and Expected Outcomes

Intermediate Result 1: National Early Warning Systems (NEWS) functioning in targeted countries: The requirement here is for all the participating countries in EMAM to have the human and material resources for collecting, analyzing and disseminating real time security alerts relating to the conduct of elections. The responsibility includes ensuring that the national offices of WANEP have the needed financial resources and competent staff for the different tasks.

Intermediate Result 2: NEWS data collection and reporting standardized and improved: The focus here is on ensuring that the WANEP offices in all the 10 countries participating in EMAM have uniform methodologies for collecting, processing and reporting their election-related data. This makes it possible to make generalizations about the happenings in the West African region: what is happening, where, how, with what implications and for which kinds of interventions. A great deal of trainings is needed for attaining this goal. Based on WANEP’s gender policy, the various levels of the training and standardization process reflect gender dimensions.

Intermediate Result 3: Enhanced Capacity for Conflict/Situation Analysis, Recommendations and Sensitive Interventions in target countries: The emphasis here is on building the capacity for the kind of scientific data analysis of warning signs that ensures informed responses to the structural causes and triggers of election violence. Special attention is given to gender-specific indicators in each of the countries. As part of the strategies for providing adequate and timely information to policy makers, WANEP provides periodic debriefing to a National Steering Committee who evaluate the response strategies in tandem with the electoral laws, policies of the targeted countries and in line with best practices. Members of such a Steering Committee are drawn from those associated with the National Infrastructures for Peace, Election Management Bodies, Security Agents, CSOs, and International Development Partners. This aspect of EMAM depends on the existing knowledge and resources within WANEP for NEWS in support of ECOWARN. Policy briefs and situation analyses provide documented experiential sharing and learning opportunities in a manner beneficial to the countries in the region that have related issues in elections and electoral processes. Figure 2 below provides further information on the associated activities.
Chapter Three: Structures and Approaches of EMAM

**Functional National Early Warning Systems that contributes to the reduction of electoral violence in target Countries**

- National Early Warning Systems functioning in targeted countries
- NEWS Data Collection and Reporting Standardized and Improved
- Enhanced Capacity for Conflict/Situation Analyses, Recommendations and Sensitive Interventions in Targeted Countries

- Early warning products including context specific policy briefs (with guidance on response option) developed
- Well-developed election violence interventions that integrates analysis of contextual conflict dynamics as well as relevant policies and best practices
- Decision making tools developed in a participatory, accountable and transparent manner by NEWS Steering Committee and stakeholders
- Synergy between NEWS and actions of security agents in elections
- NEWS Steering Committees established in target countries

**Source: WANEP**

**APPROACHES**

What the public notices as a process of election monitoring is the familiar tradition of some election monitors often in branded attire moving around during the conduct of elections. They observe the conduct of various stakeholders, ask questions where necessary, and then issue their reports. This is often a small part of the election monitoring process: most especially under the EMAM programme. The system involves three key sets of stakeholders: (i) those who collect the information from the public by moving round the communities before the election day, on the election day and also after the conduct of the elections; (ii) those who receive the information and analyze them, and (iii) those who decide on what to do with the alerts from the field and analysts.

EMAM differs from any other election monitoring systems in the sense that it is a long-term process supported by intergovernmental organisations (IGOs): the election monitoring starts long before the conduct of any elections. Hence it enables WANEP, ECOWAS and the AU to build up a large body of data for understanding the contexts of whatever problems that manifest on the election day. In other words, the WANEP’s community monitors are engaged long before an election. They start to monitor the processes even before the election time tables are released. They monitor the electoral laws, nomination of candidates by the political parties, election campaigns and several other things leading to what manifests on the election day. To this extent,
those involved in EMAM often have more information than the conventional election monitors that surface few weeks to an election. Hence, they are well familiar with the contexts of any problems that occur on the election day. These attributes of EMAM result from the fact that the programme is closely tied to the NEWS, already existing in WANEP since 2002.

The CSOs used in the programme are usually those already trained locally and regionally by WANEP and indeed are often members of the national networks of the organization. The pre-election day tasks include the collection of data at local level. The information is then transmitted to the national headquarters of WANEP where these are carefully analyzed by experts. Where the information suggests the need for urgent steps to avert the escalation of the conflict issues, WANEP (national or regional) would step in immediately with some remediating interventions. This could include advocacy visit to the affected organizations or communities. It could involve having to organize roundtables, seminars or civic education workshops or even training programmes for enabling relevant stakeholders to recognize the problems and contribute to solving them timeously.

The information generated by the conflict monitors at the community level in many instances is used to produce warning alerts, situation reports and policy briefs to be circulated to all relevant stakeholders: most especially those responsible for responding to such problems. Such responders include election management bodies (EMBs), security agencies, political parties and other relevant stakeholders. Such information transmitted to the WANEP Liaison Coordinator at ECOWAS Headquarters is also transmitted to appropriate authorities within the intergovernmental organization. They are used for writing policy briefs and producing written alerts. When cumulated, the warning alerts and policy briefs produced by WANEP at national level and the Liaison Coordinator of the organization in ECOWAS is usually a handy tool to the international election monitors visiting the country during elections. They help to put the election day and post election events in the right historical contexts. The Figure below showcases some of the network of relationships in the collection and dissemination of the warning alerts:

Source: WANEP

Electoral Violence Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation (E-MAM) in West Africa
The election monitoring and data analysis is done within the blue box and the information is sent to the national election response institutions such as Electoral Commissions, security agencies, political parties and the regional response groups through the WANEP Network Coordinator and WANEP Regional Secretariat for necessary response activities. Across these wide thresholds, civic education, and media sensitization are organized as part of the strategies for building the capacity of those to respond to the conflict issues. Community members also benefit from some of the workshops as part of the strategies of getting them to be part of whatever solutions that are packaged.

The collection and processing of the information needed for mitigation is collected and analyzed by the stakeholders in the shaded blue colour box above. These consists of four critical stakeholders: (i) Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), (ii) National Expert Cluster Group, (iii) Early Warning and Response Manager, (iv) National Election Response Group/Steering Committees and the WANEP Liaison Coordinator based at the Headquarters of ECOWAS. WANEP facilitates the engagement of these stakeholders and the effective functioning of this structure to ensure quality control and impact of the architecture in targeted ECOWAS Member States. Hence, whatever goes out from them in terms of conflict alerts must have met the best global standards in the collection, analysis and possible use of early warning signals.

**ELECTION SITUATION ROOM (ESR)**

The most celebrated aspect of EMAM is the Election Situation Room set up by WANEP in each of the countries conducting elections for monitoring the exercises. The system consists of an assemblage of domestic and international election monitors (usually eminent persons) working collaboratively to monitor, analyze and facilitate response to violent threats to the peaceful conduct of the elections. They are usually broken into four task-based sections: the “Data Gathering Room”, the “Analysis Room”, the “Decision Room” and the “Communication Room”. They work for about four days: a day before the election and few days after the election for enabling the results to be released and then official statements issued by the monitors.

Before the election, the election monitors are expected to have been formally registered with the EMB in the country and therefore provided accreditation tags that enable them to move from the ESR to the election points and back. A day to the main election, orientation is provided to the various categories of observers with emphasis on the nature of their assignments and how to respond to emergencies. The press also must be briefed about the mission before and after the elections. On the election day, the different categories of people in the ESR take their positions: collecting, analyzing and making decisions of the information obtained from different points.
Chapter Four
Implementation of EMAM: Country Case Studies

This section presents issues relating to the implementation of EMAM in the target countries. It discusses briefly the context of the project implementation and the various activities undertaken in the pre-election, voting day and post-election periods. It is necessary to observe here that the programme is a continuation of the NEWS of WANEP in the participating countries. Those who later feature as election monitors under the project are those responsible for feeding data into the existing early warning system of WANEP. The only difference is the special training and empowerment they get for doing election duties as provided for by the EMAM project.

In practice, EMAM is broken into three phases: (i) monitoring of threats to election, analysis of the data, and response to the security alerts. These tasks are carried out not only on the election day(s) but also before and after the conduct of the elections. Several of the problems that could threaten the election day activities are dealt with before the date through the early warning and response systems. As the elections draw closer, the monitors (working in the communities) keep track of some agreed conflict indicators. They transmit their information to WANEP which analyses them and then use the data for producing “Weekly Alerts on Peace and Security in West Africa”. This shows the daily occurrences of threats to the coming elections. The alerts show the scale of the incident; the date of the occurrence of the problem; the nature of the conflict issues; the location, the affected population, and the coping mechanisms so far. The scale of the incident is usually broken into the following categories:

(1) **High:** (i) high potential for political destabilization/instability (ii) high number of deaths (above 20)/ major properties damaged (iii) high number of population affected (inability of the population to cope) (iv) low capacity of the state to respond to it.

(2) **Medium:** (i) significant effect on political destabilization (ii) significant reported cases of loss of life (5-20) and property (iii) moderate capacity of the state to respond to it

(3) **Low:** (i) low effect of political destabilization (ii) loss of life (0 to 5) and property destruction not significant (iii) high capacity of the state to respond.

Responders to the warning signals are expected to take immediate actions against the high and medium incidents. The weekly alerts released by WANEP call attention to all essential information that could guide possible interveners in their decision making. The recommendations are usually made through two channels. The first is the Monthly Election Situation Reports which feature the standard indicators for the WANEP NEWS for the particular country. The indicator sub-headings for reporting the data using the Nigeria example include armed attacks, rights abuse by security officials, arms proliferation, internal party crisis, protests, arson, hate speeches, incitement on the social media, and physical attacks. The data is computed into statistical formats.
showing the case of each of the problems. Recommendations are then made on how to respond to the issues by state and non-state actors55.

Recommendations are also made on how to engage with the threat alerts in the WARN Policy Briefs focusing on the particular country. For example, the Brief for the 2019 elections in Nigeria is entitled “Ahead of Nigeria’s 2019 General Elections: Dynamics, Vulnerability and Resilience”. It was produced in January 2019: few weeks to the Presidential and Gubernatorial elections of February and March 2019 respectively. The issues raised in the Policy Briefs based on trend analysis from weekly and situation reports in the lead up to the elections in Nigeria. It paints the picture of the prevailing political climate in the count down to the 2019 elections; their implications; the steps taken so far to ease the tension in different parts of the country and the gaps to be filled by ECOWAS, AU, UN and the rest of the international community on the one hand and state and non state actors in Nigeria: most especially the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), political parties, security agencies, the judiciary, and CSOs56.

The above are largely pre-election day activities. The election day activities unfold in the form of Election Situation Room (ESR) format where different groups of election monitors meet at a central location to track the conduct of all stakeholders in the particular election, analyse the data and then decide on what information to release to the public and relevant institutions on the performance of the elections. The election monitoring activities are usually terminated two to three days after the elections most especially after the results have been released and decisions taken on how to confront whatever disputes that could have arisen from them. How these manifested in the different West African countries where elections took place is discussed below.

COTE D’IVOIRE

Cote d’Ivoire has experienced civil wars from 2002-2007 and 2010 that caused several deaths and displacement of people. The last of these civil wars was in 2010 following the refusal of President Laurent Gbagbo to accept President Alassane Ouattara’s election victory. Subsequent interventions led to the assumption of power by President Ouattara. However, deep sentiments and distrusts continued to polarize the country along ethnic and political lines despite efforts towards reconciliation and rebuilding the divides caused by the civil war. Therefore, the 25 October 2015 presidential election represented a key political transition in the history of the country recovering from the 2010 violence. As part of its support to the peaceful conduct of elections, WANEP led a coalition of 21 civil society organizations under the platform PEACE- Cote d’Ivoire to implement the EMAM project in Cote d’Ivoire.

Pre-election Activities: The EMAM project commenced in July 2015 following an official launch at Tiama Hotel, Abidjan on 2 June 2015. Thereafter, the structures necessary for the proper operations and impact of NEWS for the peaceful conduct of elections were established. For instance, the NEWS Steering Committee (NSC) 57 which comprised high profile stakeholders was inaugurated in August 2015 as a platform to review the NEWS reports and discuss response strategies to inform the responses of stakeholders such as Ministry of Interior on threats to the election process. About 22 indicators were developed to guide the daily monitoring, analysis and reporting of actions related to the election. This was done to identify risks or threats to support response options from state and non-state actors in the country. Communities with elevated risk of violence were also identified for closer monitoring to prevent or mitigate the violence similar to the 2010 crisis. These

57 Made up of CEI, PNCS, ECOWAS, IFES, NDI, Ministry of Interior, AFJCI, UNDP, OSIWA, local and international institutions and stakeholders
areas included Abobo, Yopougon, Duekoue, Korhogo, Divo, Dabou, Bouake, Man, Ferkessedougou, Tabou/Grabo, Gagnoa, Bonon, Boua, Tai/Toulepleu/Guiglo/Blolequin and Yamoussokro. Community monitors numbering 26 were identified, trained and deployed to these flashpoints to monitor emerging risks or threats and report to through an online specific early warning platform developed for that purpose and managed by WANEP- Cote d’Ivoire and the WANEP Regional early warning team at Accra. Through the platform, analysis and production of reports to inform the work of the NEWS steering committee was actualized.

**Voting day and Post-Election Activities:** WANEP trained and deployed over 2,000 monitors and observers across the country to provide real time incidence reports at polling centers during the elections to support the response of institutions such as the Ministry of Interior to ensure peaceful elections. The 15 priority areas of high risk (hotspots) identified were closely monitored before and during the election. The data gathered by the election monitors was sent to the Election Situation Room (ESR) which started its operations on 23rd October 2015 at Tiama Hotel in Abidjan. The situation room, which was funded by OSIWA, supported the ECOWAS Observation Mission and the US embassy situation rooms and provided coordination with other institutions such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The ESR served as an information management center to disseminate incidence and situation reports to the Ministry of Interior and others stakeholders through constant briefings during the 25 October elections. This provided the Government with civil society perspectives on prevailing conditions within communities in the country especially flashpoint areas. The NEWS Steering Committee (NSC) led the efforts in recommending strategies for responding to the risks of violence related to the presidential elections through advocacy actions, lobbying, regular exchanges with the media to conduct civic education and influence interventions of state institutions to prevent or mitigate the risk of electoral violence.

**BURKINA FASO**

Since the forced exit of former President Blaise Compaore through a citizen uprising in October 2014 against his failed bid for tenure extension, the political tensions in Burkina Faso escalated. The transitional government established to restore constitutional order was removed on 16th September 2015, through a coup by the Presidential Security Regiment (RSP). The RSP seized power and dissolved the transitional government. This action led to countrywide demonstrations and civil disobedience, particularly following the Constitutional Court’s decision to exclude Compaore’s allies from contesting the October 2015 elections despite being
validated by the ECOWAS Court of Justice. A peace deal brokered by International Follow-up and Support Group for the Transition in Burkina Faso (GISAT-BF) and the ECOWAS Heads of Government later led to the restoration of the Transitional Government and the disbandment of the RSP. However, the situation continued to be volatile due to incidences of abuse of incumbency powers, corruption, increasing poverty levels, and growing inequalities which posed serious threats to the peaceful conduct of elections in November 29, 2015. The WANEP EMAM project was implemented to strengthen the existing WANEP National Early Warning Systems (NEWS) with special focus on monitoring, reporting, analyzing and communicating threats to peaceful elections in Burkina Faso as well as enhance preventive responses to identified threats by relevant stakeholders.

**Pre-Election Activities:** During the pre-election phase, the project was officially launched and the indicators for monitoring the threats or risk factors to the elections were developed. The flash points where the risks of violence were high were also identified to be monitored closely due to their potential for political violence. These areas included the Central, Central Plateau, South West, Northern and North-Central as well as the Mouhoun areas. The NEWS Steering Committee (NSC) was formed. Election monitors and observers were selected and trained on their responsibilities during the elections. Key membership of the Steering Committee includes a Director at the Ministry of Territorial Administration, the Mogho Naba Baongo II, an influential traditional ruler of Ouagadougou and Cardinal Philippe Ouedraogo, the Archbishop of Ouagadougou Catholic Diocese. These figures played a key role in the mediation process after the failed coup of September 16, 2015 that returned President Michel Kafando as the Head of the Transitional Government of Burkina Faso.

![Members of Steering Committee in Burkina Faso](image1)

![Participants at Community Monitors Training in Burkina Faso](image2)

**Voting Day and Post-Election Activities Indicators:** The Election Situation room (ESR) operated before and during the elections at the Bravia Hotel, Ouagadougou. The situation room, which was funded by USAID West Africa, supported the ECOWAS situation room, and the CODEL election observation across the country. The WANEP election observers were sent to the 45 provinces and selected communities across the country to report on incidences and threats to the peaceful conduct of the elections. The data gathering room of the ESR received the reports from the observers and monitors through dedicated platforms. The team at the Analysis Room then interpreted and analyzed the data received for the use of the eminent persons at the Decision Room. The NEWS Steering Committee (NSC) reviewed the reports and recommended strategies for responding to the risks of violence through advocacy actions, and regular exchanges with the media, Ministry of Territorial Administration, CENI, ECOWAS, and the international observer groups to prevent or mitigate the risk of electoral violence. Press conferences and interactive media meetings were held to publicize the early warning recommendations /reports.
GHANA

Compared to most Africa countries, Ghana is seen to be relatively peaceful with commendable democratic governance. Prior to the 2016 election, the country had conducted six (6) successive elections with power alternating from incumbent governments to opposition parties since 1992. However, despite the peaceful nature of Ghana's democratic transitions, all the elections were fraught with political tensions and violence at both the intra-party and inter-party levels. The atmosphere leading to the 7th December, 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections was not different from the earlier elections. WANEP NEWS analysis and reports indicated increasing risk of possible violence with implications for social and economic conditions. The EMAM project was therefore designed to systematically monitor the electoral landscape with the aim of providing timely and reliable information towards preventing and mitigating dispute before, during and after the 2016 elections. WANEP leveraged on the existing peace architecture led by the National Peace Council (NPC) and other strategic partners to implement the project.

Pre-Election Activities: During the pre-election phase, about 39 indicators for monitoring the elections were developed. Periodic Stakeholders debriefing/media-roundtable were also organized to enable WANEP engage the relevant stakeholders and present the risk factors of electoral violence to the public with the aim of facilitating timely response to prevent violence. The most important activities that occurred during this period was the formation of the National and Regional Election Response Groups led by the National Peace Council at the Greater Accra Region and the Ashanti and Northern Region Election Response Groups led by the Regional Peace Councils and operating at Kumasi to coordinate responses to threats at Ashanti and Brong Ahafo Region while the Northern Election Response Group coordinated responses at the Northern, Upper East and West Regions. At the National level, the National Election Response Group also included key institutions such as Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), Transform Ghana, Ghana Union of Journalists, and Blogging Ghana. The operations of this group culminated in the set up of Central and Satellite Situation Rooms at Accra, Kumasi and Tamale respectively. This multi-faceted observation effort was novel because unlike the traditional election observation missions, this included a component of preventive action to the reported threats. The operational set up of the ESR comprised a central coordinating secretariat in Accra to cover Greater Accra and two satellite Centres in Kumasi to cover Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions and Tamale to cover Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions of Ghana. Prior to the December 7 elections, trainings and orientations were also organized for all the key personnel of the ESR and Observers at the Golden Tulip Hotel, Accra.

Voting Day and Post-Election Activities: WANEP and the ESR partners deployed a total of 750 accredited local observers in prioritized risk areas based on hot spot mapping analysis across the 10 regions of Ghana. The observers used a checklist of 91 questions to monitor the voting process. The reports were sent to the ESR for analysis. A total of 75 personnel worked in the three ESR during and after the elections. The central ESR in Accra operated from December 6-10, 2016 while the satellite ESR in Kumasi and Tamale were functional only on the day of the general elections. During the election day, the team in the "Data Gathering Room" collated data from the 750 observers deployed through an online SMS system; WhatsApp platforms and direct phone calls. The data was subsequently sent to the "Analysis Room" for interpretation to ensure an informed and swift response actions by eminent persons in the "Decision Room". Based on the reports received, seven (7) press briefings were held by the eminent persons in the central ESR led by the National Peace Council, while two (2) press briefings were held at each of the satellite ESR to present preliminary findings. Some of the findings identified included late arrival of voting materials and absence or late arrival of security personnel in some polling stations; wearing and use of party paraphernalia by some voters and political representatives; provision of food and water to Electoral Commission officials at polling stations by some political party agents and candidates.
Chapter Four: Implementation of EMAM: Country Case Studies

The press conferences provided opportunity for situational reports to the public which contributed to douse political tensions. A delegation from the “Decision Room” also embarked on preventive diplomacy with key political leaders to encourage them to have faith in the Electoral Commission (EC) to deliver credible electoral outcome. Various local and international observer missions including the African Union, National Democratic Institute (NDI), the U.S Ambassador, the Japanese Embassy, the head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and Sahel visited the ESR in Accra.

NIGER

Niger held its presidential and parliamentary elections on 21 February 2016. Fifteen (15) candidates contested for the presidential election including the incumbent President Mahamadou Issoufou. A total number of 171 candidates also contested for various Parliamentary seats across the country. The period prior to the elections was marred by various acts of violence mainly arising from accusations of repression, intimidation of opposition leaders and disagreements over identification documents between the Government and the opposition parties. There was also fears of jihadist attacks by groups based in neighbouring Nigeria, Mali and Libya. However, after the first-round of elections, none of the presidential candidates gained 50 percent of the votes. Hence, a runoff election was held between the Incumbent President Issoufou who won 48.4 percent of the votes and the main opposition leader, Hama Amadou of the Nigerien Democratic Movement who was imprisoned prior to the election. President Mahamadou Issoufou received more than 92 percent of the runoff
vote after the opposition boycotted the elections. This was the context within which the EMAM project of WANEP was implemented in Niger.

- Pre-Election Activities

The official launch of the EMAM project in Niger took place at Sahel Hotel, Niamey on 12th November 2015. The official commencement of the programme led to the training of design of a specific online platform with specific indicators to monitor threats to the peaceful conduct of elections in Niger. It also led to the training of over 20 monitors who were provided tablets to facilitate their reporting into the system. The formation of the NEWS Steering Committee ensured that analysed reports from the data submitted by the monitors guide the deliberation of the Group, which informs responses through advocacy and preventive diplomacy. The National Human Rights Commission of Niger chaired NERG. The NEWS Steering Committee held several meetings and discussions to review the NEWS Election Situation Brief reports on possible threats to the elections and the possible intervention strategies.

Just like the other countries where the EMAM project was implemented, WANEP and its partners established an Election Situation Room (ESR) to specifically monitor, report, analyze and respond to violent threats to the peaceful conduct of the presidential and parliamentary elections held on 21 February 2018 and the run-off election held on 20th March 2016. The ESR in Niger provided a platform for WANEP and its partners to monitor and report on voter corruption, and compliance to the Niger Electoral Code at polling stations using online data gathering portal and social media tracking. Before the first round of elections, WANEP recruited and trained election monitors and observers and deployed them to eight (8) regions across the country with more emphasis on hotspot areas to report on the threats that could threaten the peaceful conduct of the elections. Some of the hotspots identified for specific monitoring included Niamey, Zinder, Tillabery, Diffa and Agadez.

- Voting Day and Post-Election Activities

WANEP and its partners including YALI, Timidra, NDI, ONDPH operated the ESR in the Hotel Soluxe. A total of 456 observers were deployed to different regions in the country as represented on the map below showing the distribution of Observers by WANEP and its partners.

Map distribution of Observers for WANEP and its Partners

Data received by the team in the Data Gathering Room from the observers deployed to the field was transferred for further analysis and interpretation by the team in the “Analysis Room” to ensure an informed and swift response actions by eminent persons in the “Decision Room.” Based on the reports received, press briefings were held to present preliminary findings on the conduct of the elections. Some of the findings...
identified included delays in opening of polling stations in some regions such as Zinder Tahoua, Diffa, Agadez, and Tillabéry; inability to open polling stations due to delays in the transport of election materials; and the absence as well as insufficiency of election materials such as ballot papers, stamps, indelible ink and lamps. These findings were communicated to the Independent Electoral Commission of Niger (CENI) and other critical stakeholders for immediate response. Actions were taken by CENI to correct some of the challenges. For example, the CENI President authorized the decentralized CENIs to continue voting for the localities that could not vote on 22 February 2016. For those who experienced delays due to logistical problems at the opening, arrangements were made to allow voters to fulfill their civic duty. The recommendations from the ESR reports were also shared with international partners such as ECOWAS, AU, UEMOA, the Organisation International de la Francophonie (IOF) observer missions and United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and European Union. In some instances, the reports informed the engagement of these international partners with the CENI, political parties and other stakeholders to ensure the success of the 21 February, 2016 polls.

- Runoff Elections Activities

During the runoff election on 20 March 2016 supported by USAID Reacting to Early Warning and Response Data (REWARD), WANEP and its partners operated an ESR at Solux Hotel from March 19-21, 2016, which provided situation analysis and reports for the elections. The ESR situation tracking reports prior to the runoff elections was shared with ECOWAS, African Union, Organisation international de la Francophonie (OIF) and UNOWAS. The NEWS Steering Committee also met to review strategies to respond to the recommendations from the Election Situation Brief and situation tracking reports. The National Chief Imam and the Archbishop of the Catholic Church were also contacted to use their good office to facilitate dialogue among the main political actors and other stakeholders to ensure peaceful conduct of elections. They also engaged the media for sensitization of the public on non-violence.

What did not work well

- The limited communication between the decision room and appropriate stakeholders to facilitate response to identified threats
- The lack of activity reports from each of the partners despite request from WANEP and USAID
- Limited training for members of Decision Room which affected the ability to meet up to expectation

What needs to work better

- Effective planning with all partners to reduce logistical challenges that mar communication during election
- Training and orientation for members of the decision room on the pre-election day to ensure they work better in subsequent elections
- An appraisal of the members of the decision room to determine their commitment to the process and possible replacement/addition to improve their function before election day.
- The need to ensure the availability of multi-media projectors to enable all partners to showcase their services effectively.
LIBERIA

After 14 years of civil war, Liberians elected the first woman president and Africa first Female President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2005. She ruled the country for 12 years, maintaining peace and stability with the support of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). The general election on 10th October 2017 was crucial for the stability of Liberia due to the exit of UNMIL which had assisted in previous elections. The political tensions were also high because President Sirleaf Johnson was not contesting this time around but rather her vice president Joseph Boakai contested against George Weah who had contested for the presidency since 2005. Election violence in previous elections motivated the need to put in place measures to secure the credibility of the elections to promote peace and stability. The experiences and successes of WANEP’s EMAM project in other West African countries informed its implementation in Liberia for the 11 October 2017 Presidential and Legislative elections.

Pre-election Activities: The intervention in Liberia kicked off in April 2017 with the validation of elections monitoring indicators and mapping of hot spot communities across Liberia. In July 2017, 30 community & county monitors were trained to provide early warning situation analysis reports on elections to inform response across the 15-sub political division of Liberia. The EMAM project was also officially lunched and the Liberia Elections Early Warning & Response Network (LEEWARG) was also inauguration in September 2017. The Election Situation Room (ESR) was equally established. Unlike other countries, the ESR of Liberia was hosted twice, thus first between October 9 – 13, 2017 for the Presidential and Legislative elections, and the second phase was from December 25 – 29, 2017 for the Presidential Run-off election. Training and orientation sessions were conducted for all the key members of the ESR and the observers to familiarize themselves with the activities of the ESR and their respective roles. An official press statement introducing activities of the ESR to the general public was released before the voting day.

Voting Day and Post-Election Period: WANEP-Liberia and its partners operated the ESR in Monrovia at the ECOWAS Commission office with a total of 15 personnel in October and 25 personnel in December. WANEP was supported by the Peace Building Office (PBO), National Security Council Secretariat (NSCSL), Office of the Peace Ambassador (ONPA), National Traditional Council of Liberia (NTCL), ECOWAS Commission in Liberia, the National Center for the Coordination of Response Mechanism (NCCRM), and the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia (IRCL). Early warning monitors and election observers were deployed in at least 87% of the 73 Electoral Districts (ED) in Liberia, taking into consideration medium and high-risk areas. The monitors provided data on election early warning threats to the Data Gathering room of the ESR through dedicated experts on social media who operated the online SMS system, Twitter, and the LEEWARG WhatsApp platforms. Data received was later submitted to the “Analysis Room” for analysis and interpretation. The team at the “Analysis Room”, made up of people with diverse expertise and background, ensured that the various thematic areas of the observation were distinctly captured, analyzed, reported, and disseminated to the eminent persons in the “Decision Room” for appropriate response actions.

The Decision Room was headed by the Special Representative of the President of ECOWAS, H. E. Ambassador Babatunde Olanrewaju Ajisomo. He was assisted by the Liberia Peace Ambassador Rev. Dr. William Richard Tolbert III. Based on the early warning reports received, the Decision Room frequently conducted shuttle or preventive diplomacy with relevant political party leaders, the National Election Commission (NEC), political party leaders and other key actors. They also released press statements though organized press conferences on the ESR perspective of the electoral process based on data gathered from the monitors, observers and the WANEP-Liberia NEWS Portal. Additionally, the eminent members made prompt visits to communities, which had challenges with the electoral process to avert possible violence.
SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone, just like most ECOWAS countries is not immune to election violence. Past elections in the country especially the 2012 elections witnessed high incidence of intra and inter party disputes that created public anxiety and uncertainty. The period leading to the March 7, 2018 presidential and parliamentary elections was also characterized by violence and political tensions. The violence that characterized the political landscape justified the need for a collective effort through strategic partnerships to promote transparency, societal confidence, dispute management and trust that reinforces legitimacy of the electoral outcome. This was the context within which the EMAM was implemented in line with the broader goal of a USAID funded five-year project.

Pre-Election Activities: An assessment was carried out in April 2017 to identify the stakeholders of influence across the districts of Sierra Leone that could contribute to the prevention or mitigation of identified threats during the elections. The findings were later validated during a workshop in Freetown on May 2, 2017. About 33 indicators for monitoring, and reporting election violence threats were developed and six districts namely Kono, Kailahun, Kenema, Bo, Western Urban and Western Rural were also marked as potential hotspots to monitor during the workshop. A functional online system to facilitate real time reporting and analysis was later developed. About 55 monitors were also trained to monitor and report data into the Specially Designed Election System. Subsequently, the National Election Early Warning and Response Group (NEEWARG) made up of key state and non-state actors was set up with the mandate to respond to identified threats from the NEWS situational reports. The NEEWARG worked closely with the Office of the National Security and the Integrated Security Task Force Committee and the District Security Committees (DISEC). The ESR was also set up to coordinate rapid response to mitigate threats to the successful conduct of the elections from March 6-9, 2018 at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Aberdeen, Freetown. To enable the team at the ESR to perform effectively, an orientation session on preventive diplomacy was conducted for the Eminent Persons in the Decision room as well as the Analysts in the Analysis Room.

Voting Day and Post-Election Activities: About 500 observers were deployed to prioritised risk areas across the 14 districts of Sierra Leone to monitor the voting process using 54 checklists of questions. Reports from the observers were sent to the ESR through online SMS, direct calls and Whatsapp platforms for analysis to facilitate timely response to emerging threats. The central coordinating situation room was located at Freetown, while a satellite situation room was located in Kono District to support response actions within the cluster of Eastern Regions. A total of 75 personnel worked at the ESR in Freetown and the Satellite ESR in Kono.
Throughout the four days of the operation of the ESR, the Eminent Persons in the Decision Room presented a total of five press statements to the media bordering on key observations and reported incidents. Based on the observations, they also had closed-door discussions with the Political Parties Registration Commission over the threat by the Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP) to declare themselves ‘winners’ of the Presidential elections. Through shuttle diplomacy they were able to persuade SLPP leadership to refrain from any provocative press statements. The Eminent Persons followed with further ‘quiet’ diplomacy with the main political parties especially on the backdrop of emerging concerns of post-election violence. This included the presidential candidate of SLPP, Rtd. Brig. Gen. Julius Maada Bio, the Chief Spokesperson of the National Grand Coalition (NGC), Dr. Julius Spencer and the Spokesperson of the All Peoples Congress (APC), Alpha Kanu. The discussions bordered on persuasion of the key political actors to remain committed to the peaceful conduct of the election and to accept the electoral outcome as announced by National Electoral Commission (NEC). The Eminent Persons also worked with the Office of National Security to address certain threats that could have marred the elections.

NIGERIA

The 2015 elections in Nigeria was a milestone in the history of the country. This was the very first time in the history of electoral democracy in the country when a ruling political party (PDP) would be defeated by the opposition (APC). Before the results of the presidential election was announced, President Goodluck Jonathan congratulated the winning, General Muhammadu Buhari. Nigerians and members of the international community saw this as evidence that electoral democracy was getting consolidated in the country. However, as the country moves towards the 2019 elections in 2018, the political climate has been quite disturbing to the extent that both domestic and international observers of the situation fear the 2019 elections could be marred by violence. All over the country, supporters of the ruling and opposition political parties engage in hate speeches, different forms of unhealthy name calling and dissemination of fake news. It is also feared, most especially by the opposition party, that the security agencies in the country and the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) could compromise the integrity of the election given their performance in the elections conducted in some states of the federation in 2018.

All of these made different stakeholder, including the United States Government, the US-based National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the United States Institute for Peace to anticipate violence in the 2019 elections. The US and the United Kingdom had to issue a joint statement in which they threatened a visa ban on the perpetrators of violence during the elections. This crisis of confidence also ignited widespread interest of election monitors in the coverage of the 2019 elections. It particularly led to the development of an expanded version of EMAM for Nigeria, involving the African Union and not just ECOWAS. This was launched by WANEP on October 30-31, 2018 with the objective of facilitating and supporting local and national response architectures that link early warning with informed response to prevent or mitigate identified threats capable of affecting the peaceful conduct of the 2019 elections in the country.

The launch of the programme was witnessed by representatives of all the partners (WANEP, ECOWAS and the AU) as well as the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC). To Professor Mahmood Yakubu, the Chairman of

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), who was represented at the occasion by Dr. Muhammed Mustafa Leki, the EMAM project is not only timely but appropriately structured to help INEC achieve its goal of free and fair elections in Nigeria. According to him, “The EMAM project cannot be any more timely based on experiences in the country and across the West African sub-region, and more so as we approach major elections in the Nigeria 2019 elections…This project is clearly placed into the requirement for peaceful elections, giving us the intelligence to be able to anticipate and take mitigating actions before things get out of hand. We are pleased with WANEP”.

The launch of EMAM Project in Abuja, Nigeria

The Director of Early Warning, ECOWAS, Dr. Abdoulaye Gueye, was equally enthralled by the objectives of EMAM. He observed that “the EMAM project designed to monitor, report, analyze and facilitate response to violent threats for the conduct of peaceful elections, including tracking social postings and compliance to electoral code of conduct at the polling stations will further enhance the support of ECOWAS to the 2019 electoral process in Nigeria.” In his own statement, Ambassador Fred Ngoga, the Head of Early Warning Division, Africa Union Commission, called attention to normative framework underpinning the EMAM project. According to him, “The launching of this project, which is complemented by the validation of specific indicators for the monitoring of electoral developments in Nigeria is in tandem with the mandate of the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), one of the five pillars of the African Union’s Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The collaboration between AU, ECOWAS and WANEP is anchored on the symbiotic relationship between AU and ECOWAS as contained in the framework of collaboration between AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on one hand; and the MOU between AU and WANEP, which have enabled the Secondment of a WANEP capacity building officer to AU-PSD as well as regular information sharing on the other hand.” All of these show that EMAM is of mutual benefit to all those participating in it.

The launch of the project doubled as a forum for the validation of specific election-violence indicators for the monitoring of electoral developments in Nigeria is in tandem with the mandate of the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), one of the five pillars of the African Union’s Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The collaboration between AU, ECOWAS and WANEP is anchored on the symbiotic relationship between AU and ECOWAS as contained in the framework of collaboration between AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on one hand; and the MOU between AU and WANEP, which have enabled the Secondment of a WANEP capacity building officer to AU-PSD as well as regular information sharing on the other hand.” All of these show that EMAM is of mutual benefit to all those participating in it.

The launch of the project doubled as a forum for the validation of specific election-violence indicators for the monitoring of electoral developments in Nigeria and hotspots mapping of potential risk areas across all 36 States in the country. Like the other countries earlier discussed, the implementation of the project was in three phases: pre-election, election-day activities, and post election. The following organogram of EMAM in Nigeria calls attention to the different aspects of the programme:
Chapter Four: Implementation of EMAM: Country Case Studies
Lieu : Soluxe Hotel, Niamey
Date : 20-22 Février 2016

Proposition d’organigramme opérationnel de la salle de Veille électorale de WANEP Niger


Estimation du nombre entre 80 et 100 personnes.
Chapter Four: Implementation of EMAM: Country Case Studies

Electoral violence Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation (E-MAM)

Anexo: Gráfico Operacional da Célula de Observação Eleitoral no Guiné-Bissau

Comissão Nacional Eleitoral
Ministério do Interior
Conselho Nacional de Comunicação Social

CEDEAO – UNOWAS – UE/FPI
Missones Internacionais de Observadores, Outros Grupos de Monitoramento

Colecionadores de dados
Analisadores
Makers

Coordenação da célula de observação eleitoral

209 monitores mobilizados e treinados e implantação em regiões / setores "em risco" para atender à coordenação da célula de Observatório Eleitoral.
45 outras pessoas mobilizadas e coordenação do Rhombo

Monitoros e Supervisores
Eleições em áreas de risco

Partners de implementação: O Grupo das Organizações da Sociedade Civil para as Eleições, GOSCE, (TINSJENA; LGDH; Voz di Paz; REMSECAO; CNJ; PPM; RENAJ; DDCC; NADEL; MNSC.)

Financiado pela União Europeia
Chapter Four: Implementation of EMAM: Country Case Studies
Chapter Four: Implementation of EMAM: Country Case Studies

Suggested Operational Organogram of the WANEP Situation Room for Ghana Election

- **Electoral Commission**
- **Ministry of Interior**
- **Media**
- **Resource Persons, Religious Leaders, Women Groups e.t.c.**
- **ECOWAS/AU/UN**
- **International observation and Monitoring Groups**

**Local Election Observation Groups**

**Regional Eminent Persons**

**Data gathering room**

**Analysis Room**

**Decision Room**

**WANEP Election Situation Room-Accra**

**Satellite Situation Rooms-Kumasi and Tamale**

**Regional Electoral Commission**

**WANEP Election Observers**

**Elections in communities**

WANEP and LECIAD. Trained NEWS monitors and volunteers will operate election Situation Room and Observation mission across the regions in Ghana. Selected NEEWARG members will form part of the decision at the central WANEP situation room at Accra while members of REDWARG will be part of the Satellite situation room at Kumasi and Tamale.

Estimated No of personnel: 135
PRE-ELECTION ACTIVITIES

Following the launch of EMAM, WANEP started to further develop its monitoring tools and empowering the field monitors to use them. In partnership with ECOWAS and the AU, WANEP developed 42 indicators to monitor potential hotspots and election violence in Nigeria. The stakeholders also developed a contextualized online system for monitoring and reporting alerts. On November 29-30, 2018, training was organised for 74 Election Conflict Monitors selected across the States of the federation to support strategic response through reporting and analysis using specific indicators. The election monitors were particularly trained on the use of ArcGIS online mobile application and WANEP’s online election portal for reporting of election related threats. Further work also continued on the development of the electoral indicators/Hotspot mapping and operationalization of the Early Warning System. These helped WANEP to yield more qualitative data that were used in generating the organisation’s Weekly Highlights, Monthly Situational Reports, Quick Updates and Policy brief. The most significant outcome of WANEP Nigeria’s efforts in this respect is probably the production of its Policy Brief titled “Ahead of Nigeria’s 2019 General Elections: Dynamics, Vulnerability and Resilience” in January 2019. The document is very instructive for all interested stakeholders to the 2019 elections in Nigeria. It highlighted the possible conflict scenarios in the build up to the elections and how best to respond to them before the elections, on the election days and far beyond.

WANEP was guided by three main objectives in its engagement with the EMAM project. The first is to gather and disseminate early warning signals that relevant governmental, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations could use to prevent possible violence in the 2019 elections. The second is for WANEP to be equipped with the right kind of information for organising its own interventions. The third objective is to build the capacity of those to be used for collecting and analysing conflict data during the 2019 election elections.

Six states of the federation emerged as the most volatile parts for the elections. Apart from the Borno and Yobe states where the Boko Haram terrorists regularly threaten safety of lives and property, the other volatile states61 were Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Kaduna, Kano, Plateau and Adamawa. The limited financial resources at the disposal of WANEP restrained its preventive projects in all these volatile states. Hence, it restricted itself to some special interventions in Plateau State in the context of a few other ongoing WANEP projects in the state. Several other intervention projects were organised around the country most especially on issues relating to conflict prevention and management.

WANEP also took time out to debrief the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network/Department of Political Affairs (DPA), The UNSRSG, the African Union’s Continental Early Warning System) on priority risks and hotspots in Nigeria. This contributed significantly to a number of preventive diplomacy and dispute management activities at Track 1 (state) level. Such state-centric interventions include meeting with political actors that have influence in case of emergencies during elections; pre-election stakeholders’ consultative meetings to assess the state of preparedness of the INEC, security agencies, political parties and other stakeholders towards the peaceful conduct of elections. Those leading these interventions took a great deal of lessons from the various reports produced by WANEP Nigeria, including the Policy Brief on the elections.

ELECTION DAY ACTIVITIES

The most significant of the Nigeria’s 2019 elections is the presidential election that took place on February 16, 2019. As done in a few other countries in the EMAM project, the election monitoring process for the day was coordinated from an Election Situation Room put together by WANEP Bon Hotel Stratton, Asokoro, Abuja in

partnership with the ECOWAS, the AU and other partners. The ESR consisted of a Data Gathering Room, an Analysis Room, Decision Room, and the Communication Room.

The field observers consisted of 114 personnel deployed in all the senatorial zones of the 36 States including the Federal Capital Territory. They fed the data gathering room through the Arc GIS online mobile application with sets of checklists focused on possible incidents that can mar the conduct of voting across the polling units in Nigeria. A team of 12 eminent persons of good office responded to the emerging threats that could mar the peaceful conduct of the elections. They received, deliberated and acted on incident reports from the States submitted to the ESR. The eminent persons were selected based on their knowledge, societal influence, credibility and non-partisanship. These eminent citizens decide on possible responses to the alerts. In addition, they debriefed and updated the media on the findings of the ESR throughout the period of election. On a few cases they also engaged in preventive diplomacy with key political actors to influence response to a threat that could significantly affect the peaceful conduct of the elections.

**POST-ELECTION**

The post election activities respond to the matters arising from the election. The most salient activity is that WANEP provide mediation services for dealing with some of the election disputes. It debriefs stakeholders about the outcomes of the elections and document the lessons learnt for referral and advocacy.
Chapter Five
The Lessons and Prospects of Institutionalizing EMAM

Introduction
The last chapter looks at how the EMAM programme was implemented in Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria. The issues raised in the chapter graphically illustrates that the programme has provided another model of how to consolidate electoral democracy in Africa. What is left for us to do now is to call attention to the main lessons in the programme. This is done in terms of the following indicators: (i) local ownership (ii) how the programme links local and global issues in election monitoring (iii) respect for national sovereignty (iv) critical role of CSOs in election monitoring (v) collaborative problem solving, and (vi) funding issues. The concluding part of the chapter is committed to a reflection on how to institutionalize EMAM.

LESSONS LEARNT FROM EMAM

Local Ownership: The goal of EMAM is basically to ensure the fidelity of elections in West Africa. The direct beneficiaries are the countries where the programme takes place and the West African region which experiences sustainable peace as a result of the interventions. Though what the public notices of the programme is a group of good-looking individuals moving round on the election day in special colour codes, EMAM is a bottom-up kind of intervention. It is based on the principle of local ownership of election monitoring and response mechanism. This is a key factor in international election monitoring. In each of the countries where the programme takes place, the people determine the indicators to be monitored, when, where and how. These are not imposed from outside. In other words, the domestic observers and the CSOs that produced them in working relationship with WANEP are embedded within the structures of the local communities and are therefore better informed of what should constitute success in an election process. In all the countries, validation workshops were organized to critically reflect on the agreed indicators: with more people invited than those that designed the indicators. The data collection on the election days is also done by citizens with the international observers merely playing complementary roles in terms of ensuring that the best international standards are adhered to in the processes.

Local Peace Infrastructure: It was clearly evident in the course of doing this study that EMAM would produce better results in countries already having formal national peace infrastructures. A good example is Ghana that is already having a National Peace Council (NPC). All that is needed in such a setting is for WANEP to work directly with the existing peace architectures in the land for attaining its larger goal of ensuring orderly elections and prevent election violence. This was done in Ghana and would be done in other future elections. The implementation of EMAM also benefitted from the goodwill of the National Peace Committee headed by General Abdulsalami Abubakar during the 2019 elections in Nigeria. Indeed, one of the recommendations made by the Eminent Persons in charge of WANEP’s Election Situation Room (ESR) for the February 23 2019
elections in Nigeria is that the Head of Mission of the African Union Observer Group, HE Hailemariam Desalegn, the former Prime Minister of Ethiopia, should maintain a close touch with the Abdulsalami group for addressing any disagreements that might result from the declaration of results of the presidential elections. Several other observers maintained a close touch with the group.

**Linking Local and Global:** Another major lesson from EMAM is that it clearly provides the pathway for understanding of how the domestic need of the African people for free and fair elections are linked to the global, continental and regional frameworks for the promotion of transparent electoral democracy. In other words, the ECOWAS and the African Union partnered with WANEP on EMAM largely to attain all the ideals reflected in their normative frameworks for international peace and security. These include the AU’s zero tolerance for forceful seizure of power and the ECOWAS Protocol on good governance. EMAM provides the opportunity for the ECOWAS and AU to actually walk the talk of making Africa become a better member of the civilized world. Without the support of WANEP, it would have been difficult for both ECOWAS and the African Union to take their developmental agendas to the grassroots people. Without the two IGOs, it would have equally been difficult for WANEP to raise the needed resources for positively transforming the lives of the grassroots people. In other words, EMAM has been of mutual benefit across board: to the grassroots people, WANEP, ECOWAS and the African Union.

**Government Endorsement:** Election monitoring is not possible where the host governments are opposed to it. An interesting lesson from EMAM is that there was no country where any government and election management bodies denied access to its implementers. Indeed, the INEC Chairman in Nigeria, Mahmood Yakubu, was formally represented at the launch of EMAM in Abuja in October 2018. He considered the programme to be a timely intervention for attaining his agenda of giving Nigeria a free and fair election in 2019.

**Respect for Sovereignty:** The UN Charter (Article 2/7) prohibits “any interference in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state”. To this extent, those engaged in election monitoring are expected to be guided by the national legislation of the place where the exercise is taking place in addition to having proven knowledge of the electoral procedures in the country. The implementation of EMAM took this into deep consideration. Hence, the international observers, did not in any way erode the countries sovereignty in terms of how they came into the countries and how they conducted themselves throughout the monitoring exercises. They were neutral and refrained from participating in any exercises or activities that could make them to be interfering unduly in the internal affairs of the countries.

**Independence:** It was observed that the election monitors in all the countries exercised their freedom. They experienced no government interference in their affairs. This contradicted what was witnessed in the past around the continent, most especially when the military regimes across the continent were returning power to the civilians. A good case for illustrating issue is a 1993 experience when the military administration of President Ibrahim Babangida in Nigeria set up the Nigerian Election Monitoring Group (NEMG) made up of civil society groups to monitor the 1993 elections. The government requested that domestic and international groups to monitor the 1993 elections must be collapsed into the official observation group. Political parties were invited to nominate representatives to join the “election monitors” but they bluntly refused to do so doubting the credibility of the group.

Some of the civil society organizations invited to join the group also refused to oblige. They opted to establish their own independent monitoring group. The Civil Liberties Organisation, CLO, in particular rejected the

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invitation on the grounds of regarding election monitoring a non-governmental affair. It therefore established its own Election Monitoring Programme, (EMP)63. The sense in the decision taken by CLO became clearly evident when the results of the 1993 presidential election was annulled by the military regime that conducted it. NEMG dissolved immediately but the EMP became one of the vocal groups in the country insisting that the election was free and fair and ought not to have been annulled. It soon lost its voice on electoral matters as the military ruled Nigeria from 1994 to 1999. Institutions such as The Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), a key election-monitoring group in Nigeria must have taken its root from this historic experience of the EMP. It was established in 1998 as a non-profit organization with 400-member organizations committed to the entrenchment of democracy in Nigeria64.

Critical Role of CSOs: EMAM owes its success in all the countries to the critical roles of WANEP and its associated CSOs. ECOWAS and the African Union remained in the background until the point of ESR where their roles became clearly evident, most especially at the points of data analysis and decision making on how to respond to the conflict issues. Many months before each of the elections, WANEP and its partner CSOs mobilised citizens for different levels of civic engagement, built their capacity to do what is expected of them, provided civic and political education, and positioned them for different roles on the election day. All of these activities show that the conduct of elections actually goes beyond the election commission alone. CSOs are active players in the system. Those funding election related activities, including national governments, need to take this issue into consideration in their strategic plans. CSOs link different stakeholders in the election monitoring continuum and would always be there even when an election had been concluded and there was the need to address the matters arising from its conduct.

Collaborative Problem Solving: EMAM owes its success to the methodology of collaborative problem solving (CPS). This has to do with different individuals or organisations agreeing to work together based on the principle of complementarity: each of them have to contribute to the attainment of a collective goal. This issue manifests in three major ways. First and foremost, it is a matter of WANEP, ECOWAS and AU agreeing to form a partnership for the monitoring of election in the countries. The second level of collaboration is between WANEP and its National Networks. The networks work with CSOs spread round the countries. The CSOs collect data which are forwarded to the national networks, the regional headquarters of WANEP, and the ECOWAS and the AU. The third level of collaboration under the Election Situation Room (election day). It is at this point that the domestic and international observers work directly together in three or four groups: the data gathering room, the analysis room, the decision room and the communication rooms. They all pool their resources together to produce the reports that eventually get to the public about the conduct of the election.

Funding: In all of the countries, WANEP sought to do more but was limited by the available funding from the EMAM project. In Nigeria for example, 114 monitors were deployed across the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Such a number is grossly inadequate for a good coverage of the country. But that was what the resources at the disposal of WANEP could do. WANEP conducted pre-election training for just a few of the security agencies expected to feature in the elections. The pre-election report of the International Crisis Group identified seven problematic states in the country. WANEP could only work with the stakeholders in Plateau state. What all these shows is that EMAM has the capacity do perform better if more resources could be committed to it.

In Ghana, like a few other places, the inadequacy of the observers deployed to the various regions due to limited financial resources affected the monitoring of post-election threats. Furthermore, in some of the

64 See https://tmgnigeria.wordpress.com/about/
countries, there was limited training time for election monitors and observers in understanding elections day reporting and related procedures and managing the expectations of members of the ESR. There was also limited financial resources to establish satellite stations of the ERS in other hotspots in countries such as Liberia, Burkina Faso and Cote d’Ivoire. In all the countries where EMAM was implemented, there was no tracking tools to monitor and evaluate the impact of responses made by the eminent persons in the Decision Room of the ESR. This makes it difficult to scientifically assess the outcomes of the interventions although in some situations the outcome was visible for all to see.

INSTITUTIONALISING EMAM

The foregoing shows that EMAM is an African success story. There is the need to institutionalise it. What does it mean to institutionalise anything? It generally has to do with making an institution of a practice, norm, value system or mode of behaviour. In the context of this publication, “institutionalising” means three things. First and foremost, it refers to the process of making a practice, norm, value system or mode of behaviour become a permanent feature of an establishment or organisation. Secondly, it means enabling some others to join the practice. Does EMAM merit any of these? Yes, it is worth the two. The roles consistently played by EMAM in strengthening electoral democracy in West Africa recommends it for institutionalisation. By this is meant that it should become part of our electoral processes on a long-term basis.

Quantitative Institutionalisation

The successes recorded by EMAM in all the West African countries where it was implemented suggest that it should become a permanent feature of WANEP’s activities. First and foremost, it should be extended to the other member states of ECOWAS under ECOWARN. It should also be extended to the rest of Africa Union, championed by the African Union with the support of the other RECs in the continent. All that is simply needed is for the methodologies and implementation strategies adopted by the countries reported in this publication to be adopted in and appropriately adapted to the other countries. The system could simply link up with the prevailing African Peer Review Mechanisms of the African Union in terms of helping to gauge and guide the commitment of African states to transparency and accountability in election processes.

For Africa, election monitoring is not just for promoting democracy but also reducing the intensity of ethnic and religious violence and enabling the peaceful management of natural resource conflicts around the continent. In other words, whatever is committed to EMAM would have a ripple effect on the larger governance system in various parts of Africa. Free and fair elections help African states to have in power the leaders they wish and deserve. The political legitimacy enjoyed by these leaders would give them better leverage to peacefully manage the crises in their respective countries.

In addition to the foregoing, the fact remains that several African conflicts resulted from election disputes. Hence, a programme such as EMAM is by itself an exercise in preventive diplomacy. It reduces the basis for violent election-related disputes. In 2010, the presidential elections in Guinea led to the outbreak of ethnicity-reinforced violence that threatened to escalate into a civil war. Neighboring countries such as Côte d’Ivoire felt some of the effects of the conflict in Guinea. They also had an election dispute of their own over the outcome of the 28 November 2010 presidential elections, which was designed to help bring closure to the country’s peace and security challenges. The refusal of Laurent Gbagbo and his cronies to leave office, even despite a UN certification of results in favor of Alassane Ouattara, led to a four-month outbreak of widespread violence that was mostly suffered by the civil populace. There were genuine reasons to be worried that the development in Cote D’Ivoire would unravel into full-scale civil war, with a possible domino effect on neighboring countries, like Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. Political violence erupted in Burkina Faso in 2015 during a protest against
the parliamentarians who were making necessary moves to amend Article 37 of their Constitution. This act of parliament was a plot that would have paved the way for President Compaoré to contest the 2015 elections. But for the timely intervention of ECOWAS and other members of the international community, the December 2016 election in The Gambia would have led to a large-scale violence in the country. President Yayah Jameh had to be forced into exile to give the country a peace.

West Africa is amongst the most politically unstable regions of the world due to high levels of abuse of state powers, corruption, increasing poverty levels, growing inequality, rising levels of religiosity and associated intolerance, urbanization and the growth of informal settlements among others. A lot of resources for human and economic development that are not quite easy to accrue have been diverted to peacekeeping efforts. In spite of the provisions of the ECOWAS protocols on Democracy and Good Governance, Conflict Prevention Mechanism and emphasis on the early detection/mitigation of conflicts, violent conflicts are still rife from autocratic regimes to democratic rule in the region. EMAM has a great role in preventing such violent conflicts if the programme could be institutionalized on a long-term basis.

Two things are important here. The first is for ECOWAS and AU to institutionalise its partnership with WANEP on EMAM. The second is to commit more time to the engagement. For now, EMAM runs for about three to four months in an election season. It should run for longer time to enable WANEP follow up on the implementation of the various recommendations left behind by election monitors during elections as part of the larger efforts at promoting electoral and political reforms in Africa.

**Qualitative Institutionalisation**

The institutionalisation of EMAM should not just be limited to making more African countries to adopt the election monitoring system. There is the need to expand the scope of the issues covered by the mechanism. Though EMAM differs from other election monitoring mechanisms by capturing some of the issues connected with the pre-election and post election periods, it still remains more of an election-day affair. This is why the ESR is the most essential aspect of the programme. That is when all the eminent persons gather to make the best of their inputs into the process. The ESR would continue to enjoy this pride of place in the system but there is the need for EMAM to start considering throwing more resources into the monitoring and responding to the pre-election and post election matters.

The fact remains that most African elections are rigged many years and months before the days when the people are lined up to cast their votes. This issue is evident in the figure below showing the problems at the three levels of the election cycle:
The pre-election and post election issues can be interlinked in the sense that the beginning of a post election season is also the beginning of a pre-election period. As one election ends, it is expected that the preparations for the future elections start in earnest. Hence, the two periods could entail having to reform the political and electoral processes: ensuring that the snags in the electoral laws are removed and that the laws are made to respond to the critical issues raised by election monitors during the election. The issues could include ensuring that the EMB is truly independent and is led by appropriate individuals and sufficiently equipped for success. These issues are further elucidated in the figure above.

What is the implication of the foregoing for the institutionalisation of EMAM? It is that WANEP should be provided the all-year-round financial support to be able to rigorously engage with issues relating to the conduct of free and fair elections across the continent. The responsibility of the organisation at the conclusion of an election is to start working with appropriate stakeholders for implementing the recommendation of those engaged in EMAM. This would help to ensure that the problems noticed during an election would not be repeated at any future elections. Through this kind of incremental effort, Africa would be on the path to sustainable practice of electoral democracy. The continent has a lot to derive from this most especially in terms of witnessing less violent conflicts relating to the conduct of elections.