



**ELECTORAL VIOLENCE MONITORING, ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION (EMAM)  
ELECTION SITUATION ROOM**

**DECEMBER 7, 2020, PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS  
IN GHANA**

**PRELIMINARY DECLARATION**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2020, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), the National Peace Council (NPC) and their partners officially opened the Election Situation Room (ESR) in Accra and Satellite ESRs in Ho, Tamale and Kumasi simultaneously. This Preliminary Declaration provides a summary of the observations of the electoral process and actions taken by eminent persons in the decision rooms in the central and satellite ESRs, from the pre-to the post-election period.

WANEP and the NPC deployed 350 observers in 168 prioritised hotspots to gather data, utilising structured checklists across the 16 regions of the country. These were complemented by the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), which covered 2,341 polling stations in 275 constituencies across the 16 Regions of Ghana. These observers augmented by other credible channels resourced the ESR.

**The Election Situation Room**

The ESR is part of a broader project titled “Electoral violence Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation (EMAM)”, implemented by WANEP in partnership with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) with funding from the European Union (EU). The project is also designed to mitigate election violence in West Africa through the National Early Warning Systems (NEWS).

The focus of the ESR is to monitor, report, analyse and facilitate responses to incidents which may threaten the peaceful conduct of the December 7, 2020, Presidential and Parliamentary Elections. It

is made up of four operational sections, namely, *Data Gathering, Analysis, Decision, and Communication*. The central coordinating ESR was located in Accra (Movenpick Ambassador Hotel), while the three Satellite Situation Rooms were clustered in zones as follows: *Middle Cluster* in Kumasi (Miklin Hotel), the *Northern Cluster* in Tamale (Mariam Hotel) and the *Southern Cluster* in Ho (African Hill Hotel) to support response actions within the regions.

In the Central ESR, 27 young people were engaged to collate the data using Arc 123 Survey GIS tool and all other media channels available for data collection. The data gathered were analysed by seven (7) analysts and the results were subsequently submitted to the Eminent Persons for decision-making. The Central ESR Decision Room hosted 17 Eminent Persons drawn from the NPC, WANEP, NCCE, STAR-Ghana Foundation, Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC), and Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG). They used their good offices to resolve identified threats and mitigated their impacts through preventive diplomacy.

## **2. SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS**

### **Preparations for the Election**

As part of its preparation for the December 7, 2020, Presidential and Parliamentary elections, the EC compiled a new Voters Register. The final register consisted of 17,027,641 Ghanaians comprising 8,810,283 (51.7%) females and 8,217,358 (48.3%) males.

The EC accredited 12 candidates for the presidential election, comprising three (3) females and nine (9) males. For the parliamentary election, 914 candidates of whom 126 (13.7%) were females and 788 (86.2%) males were accredited to contest in 275 constituencies. The elections were conducted in all 38,622 polling stations.

### **Opening of Polling Stations**

The December 7 polls were expected to open at 7:00am across the country. However, reports received from 230 of our 350 observers indicated that at 8:30am, about 69.13% of the polling stations observed opened on time while 30.87% delayed. The 1,300 observers from the NCCE deployed across the country corroborated this report. In spite of the delays, most of the laid-out electoral procedures were adhered to by EC officials such as display of empty ballot boxes in front of voters and party agents; closure and sealing of ballot boxes; and validation of ballots by the ballot paper issuers.

According to the observers' check list, there was high compliance with COVID-19 protocols across the polling stations. There was also a fair representation of females as EC officials, party agents and security personnel at the polling stations, which is a reflection of the active involvement of women

in the electoral processes. Moreover, consideration was given to persons with disabilities, the elderly and pregnant and lactating mothers to vote early instead of joining the long queues. Domestic observers mainly from WANEP, Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), NPC, NCCE, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), IDEG and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) were visible in most of the polling stations. International organisations such as the African Union (AU), ECOWAS, Commonwealth and EU also observed the elections.

### **Summary of Incidents**

Generally, the elections were conducted in a conducive environment except for few incidents, some of which are listed below:

1. It was recorded at Alhaji Salam Grinding Mill in the Bawku Central constituency, Upper East Region and DA JHS Twimine (B110104A), Awutu Senya West constituency in the Central Region, that there were improper detachments of some presidential ballot papers which led to the exclusion of one of the candidates' name and party logo. Both EC officials involved in these incidents were identified and detained by the Police.
2. There were recorded cases of some verification machine failure in polling stations such as the Methodist Primary 1A Polling Station in Shama Abuesi constituency.
3. In Suburi Naa Palace polling station in the Bimbilla constituency of the Northern Region, the Presiding Officer was unable to account for a ballot paper. This led to the refusal of the political parties' agents to endorse the result.
4. In some areas, voting was stopped temporarily due to rainfall. The affected areas included Adidome Farm Institute in the Volta region, Dadeaso in the Western region, and some parts of the Eastern and Ashanti regions. However, upon consultation among party agents and EC officials, alternative venues were located for voting and counting to resume.
5. There were reported cases of power outages in some polling stations which affected the counting process. Some of these areas included Sefwi Juaboso in the Western North Region, Collation Centres in the Domeabra and Ayawaso East Constituencies in the Greater Accra Region.
6. In Obrakyere in the Awutu Senya West constituency, two persons attempted to snatch a ballot box during the counting. The people involved were arrested and detained by the Police.
7. There were reported gun shots outside a polling station at Kasoa in the Awutu Senya West Constituency injuring a journalist and a polling agent.

8. In the Ododiodio Constituency, one person was arrested for attempting to vote twice.
9. In the Asokore Mampong District of the Asawase Constituency, the Police arrested and seized the mobile phone of a voter for taking picture of his or her thumbprinted ballot paper.
10. There were incidents of physical and verbal abuse among voters in queues and around polling stations. For example, in Sibi North Jato Kparekpare of the Nkwanta North District, there was a recorded incident of physical violence and verbal exchanges between voters in queue which temporarily disrupted the voting process.
11. In the D.A. Junior High School (JHS) Kyekyewere 1 (F031603) and Dadwen Kyekyewere in Adanse North of the Fomena Constituency of the Ashanti Region, five strong muscular men also known as “macho men” armed with knives disrupted voting proceedings for about 30 minutes. The Military intervened and arrested the perpetrators.
12. Security officials arrested a lady at Forestry ‘A’ polling station in Juaboso of Western North region for impersonating an agent of another political party.
13. During the opening of polls, there was an allegation of printing of ballot papers at the Georgia Hotel in Kumasi. Decision Room members of the satellite Situation Room in Kumasi followed up by calling the regional office of the Bureau of National Investigation (BNI) and also visited the Georgia Hotel. At the Georgia Hotel the group found out that it was a collation centre of one of the political parties and there were no printing of ballot papers as reported.
14. An audio recording circulating on social media had it that heavy military equipment was being sent to the Volta region.

**Following the close of polls, counting and collation, the following incidents were recorded:**

1. There was a disagreements between EC officials and a parliamentary candidate of the Asawase Constituency in the Ashanti Region over the methodology used in tallying results.
2. Allegations of vote buying were reported in some constituencies including Akwatia in the Eastern region, Pru West in Bono East, as well as Bankyem and Bonyere in the Jomoro District of the Western Region.
3. In the Fomena Constituency, some party supporters allegedly stopped the EC Presiding Officer from declaring the result in favour of the independent candidate. In a related development, the EC office in Fomena was burnt down. No arrest had been made at the time of reporting.
4. There was alleged riotous jubilation by party supporters in Korle Wokon in the Ododiodio Constituency which resulted in a fracas, leading to a shooting incident. Two persons were reported dead and one said to be in critical condition.

5. In Asawinso Community Center, Diaso, Sefwi Wiawso Constituency of the Western North region, there was an impasse over the acceptance and declaration of the parliamentary election results. The matter was subsequently referred to the EC headquarters in Accra for redress.
6. The premature declaration of presidential and parliamentary elections by the two dominant parties, NPP and NDC at various press conferences has heightened tension across the country.

### 3. ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE EMINENT PERSONS IN THE DECISION ROOMS

#### ESR- Accra

1. **Gun shot in the Kasoa Area:** The Eminent persons spoke to the Parliamentary candidate to remain calm as they followed up on the matter. Also, they spoke to the Police Commander of the area who promised to search for the alleged perpetrators and bring them to justice.
2. **Odododiodio Constituency:** Eminent persons spoke to the Police Commander who assured them of police presence in the area. They asked him to enhance further police presence by the end of the day to ensure law and order after voting.
3. **Tampering of Presidential Ballot Papers:** Two incidents were reported in Awutu Senya East Constituency and Upper West Region. The Eminent Persons spoke to the EC and were informed that the officials involved had been replaced and the EC had officially issued a press release on the matter.
4. **Bongo Community:** The citizens refusal to vote due to lack of development in their area was reported to the EC. The EC promised to give them opportunity to vote should they change their mind within the stipulated time.

#### ESR-Kumasi

1. The team contacted the EC on the delay of the opening of the polls in some polling stations in the *middle cluster* and they responded that some officials had come late for the electoral materials.
2. The team spoke to the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) and National Security on the alleged printing of ballot papers. The team followed up by going to the Georgia Hotel to investigate the issue, which proved to be false. The hotel was found to be a collation centre for the NPP.
3. The team visited the Ashanti Regional EC Director to investigate the issue of few accreditations for agents. The EC explained that the major political parties were given accreditation of two party agents per polling station.

4. A member of the Eminent group was deployed to Fomena to monitor issues in the area for the whole day due to the reported tension. His advice to party executives mitigated the electoral tension.

#### **ESR-Ho**

1. The team contacted the Military Command to find out the truth concerning the audio recording circulating on social media indicating that heavy military equipment was being sent to the Volta region. The Military Command denied any such development. The Military High Command in Accra was also contacted on the same matter, leading to the issuing of a press statement to deny the social media report.
2. The team briefed the media about the concerns of voters in many polling centers regarding the use of yellow ink for thumb printing and requested them to use their platforms to educate the public on the reasons behind the use of that color by the EC. The media did its best to educate the public and this appeared to have calmed down the apprehension of people.
3. During the start of the polls, some polling stations did not have security presence. The attention of the Police hierarchy was drawn to the situation and the requisite action taken

#### **ESR-Tamale**

1. The refusal of a Presiding Officer to allow an accredited WANEP Observer to monitor proceedings at a polling center in Binduri, Upper East Region was resolved by the Satellite ESR through a phone call to the Regional EC Boss.
2. In view of the confusion on the use of yellow ink for thumb printing, phone calls were made to the Regional EC Officer to address the concerns of citizens in the region.
3. The Regional EC Officer was contacted upon delay in announcing the Parliamentary results in Savelugu.

#### **4. LESSONS LEARNED**

1. Timely and effective communication by the EC is essential in all phases of the electoral process to dispel rumors and suspicions among political parties and their supporters.
2. Stronger collaboration between the NCCE and the EC is necessary to enhance information dissemination at all levels especially at the community level.
3. Highly trained officials of the EC with requisite knowledge of the electoral procedures is imperative to effective management of voting process to enhance credibility and trust in the system.
4. Media professionalism is key in preventing misinformation among the general populace.
5. The presence of election observers enhances credibility of the electoral process.

6. Incidents of vigilante presence and attacks reduced. This may be due to concerns raised by major stakeholders and the promulgation of the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999)

## 5. CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

1. Lack of effective communication between the EC and citizens. This led to suspicions and circulation of false information about some electoral procedures.
2. Delay in the delivery of electoral materials in some polling stations affected commencement of the voting process.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We commend all Ghanaians for their patriotism and patience in the post-voting activities. We also applaud the efforts of the Electoral Commission of Ghana, the political parties, the security services, civil society organisations, women and youth groups for their contribution towards the relatively peaceful presidential and parliamentary elections. We express appreciation to the international and domestic election observers for monitoring the electoral process. We encourage all stakeholders to utilize laid-down procedures to seek redress on any electoral grievance.

Based on our observations of the electoral process, we offer the following *recommendations* to the various stakeholders for consideration:

1. We urge political parties to show maturity and leadership in the acceptance of the outcome of the elections.
2. We appeal to political parties to ensure that future elections are more focused on issues rather than personalities.
3. Political parties are urged to build national cohesion and refrain from rhetorics that deepen divisiveness in the country.
4. We implore political parties to encourage their supporters to be law abiding and all Ghanaians to be peaceful.
5. The EC, political parties and other relevant governance institutions should ensure implementation of recommendations from the reports of domestic and international Election Observation Missions (EOMs) to improve electoral processes in the country.
6. Presidential debates in Ghana should be encouraged and legislated as a means of engaging and enlightening the citizenry on the manifestos of political parties. This will enable citizens make informed choices.

7. Political parties and their supporters are encouraged to desist from using abusive words in expressing their views. They must exercise patience while waiting for the EC to declare the results.
8. The security operatives should intensify timely and effective response mechanism to address security concerns in the electoral period.
9. We encourage Ghanaians to cultivate patriotism and embrace civic responsibility in the interest of national peace and security.

The ESR will release a general report at the end of the electoral process.

Compiled in Accra, December 9, 2020

The Election Situation Room

