# Election Observation Hub

## Joint Final Statement on the 2025 Anambra State Governorship Election

Saturday, November 8, 2025

Delivered at the Radisson-Onyx Hotel, Awka, Anambra State

### Introduction

The Anambra Election Observation Hub was established by civil society organizations to provide a comprehensive and independent assessment of the quality, integrity, and inclusivity and media freedom of the 2025 Anambra Governorship elections. This novelle multi-stakeholder and multi-methodological approach enables citizens to provide oversight on the electoral process. Members of the Hub include Yiaga Africa, The Kukah Centre, International Press Centre (IPC), Centre for Media and Society (CEMESO), Nigeria Women Trust Fund (NWTF), ElectHER, and TAF Africa. These seven organizations jointly deployed 711 citizens observers across the 21 LGAs of Anambra State. Each organization leads on a specific thematic pillar, including election integrity, results verification, election security, disability inclusion, gender participation, peacebuilding, misinformation tracking, and media safety.

### Overall assessment

The election was largely peaceful with improved logistics compared to previous cycles. The visible professionalism of electoral and security officials, as well as the calm disposition of voters, contributed to the generally orderly conduct of the process. However, the fact that less than half of the polling units were operational at the official start time indicates INEC needs to continue to address the persistent logistical bottlenecks that plague Nigeria's elections. Despite the peaceful atmosphere, systematic vote-buying remained a pervasive electoral malpractice during the 2025 Anambra Governorship Election, with votes trading between N1,000 and N15,000. This menace erodes equality in election competition and weakens the legitimacy of electoral victory. Furthermore, the dismal voter turnout of 21.3%, although a 10% increase recorded in the 2021 governorship election, reinforces the urgency for a national conversation on the deepening crisis of low voter turnout, particularly among youth. The independent verification of the INEC official results by the Process and Results Verification for Transparency (PRVT) findings attests to the accuracy of the outcome of the election.

## Key Election Day Findings

### 1. Election logistics and processes

1. **Opening and commencement**
   INEC officials arrived at **49% of polling units by 7:30 am**, a marked improvement over the 28% recorded in 2017 and 17% in the 2021 governorship elections. Notwithstanding, it falls below the 80% arrival threshold. Some of the delays were caused by the unavailability of vehicles or security officials to accompany the materials to the polling units. Late openings were reported in the following LGAs, Awka North, Ogbaru, Ekwusigo, Idemili North, Onitsha South, Orumba North, Orumba South, Nnewi North and Ihiala.

2. **Deployment of Election Materials and Personnel:**
   We assessed the deployment of election materials like: the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), Register of Voters, voting cubicle, Indelible Ink, PWD Voter information and Statistics Form (Form EC 40H), PWD Poster (Form EC 30E), and Ballot boxes. These materials were present in 100% of polling units observed. However, election materials like the PWD Voter information and Statistics Form (Form EC 40H) were seen in 86% of polling units, and the PWD Poster (Form EC 30E) in 84% of polling units.

   At Umudimogo Primary School I Polling Unit (Code 04/12/01/004), Amanu I Ward, Ihiala LGA, the absence of the official Result Sheet (Form EC8A) was reported. Upon discovering that the form was missing, voters demanded its immediate provision before accreditation and voting could commence. When polling officials were unable to produce the result sheet, voters refused to proceed with the process and began leaving the polling unit**,** leading to a disruption of voting activities**.**

3. **Accreditation and Voting**
   By **8:30am**, accreditation and voting had commenced in **26%** of polling units observed across the state. This figure increased significantly to **85% by 9:30am**, reflecting gradual improvement as the morning progressed. A breakdown of the commencement by senatorial districts shows:

   - Anambra Central: 87% of polling units had commenced accreditation and voting by 9:30 a.m.
   - Anambra North: 82% of polling units were active by 9:30 a.m.
   - Anambra South: 84% of polling units had opened by the same time.

   However, in 5% of polling units, logistics challenges prompted delays in the commencement of accreditation and voting.

4. **Deployment and Functionality of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS)**

In line with the 2022 Electoral Act and INEC Regulations and Guidelines, INEC deployed the BVAS devices across all the polling units observed. The devices functioned optimally in 90% of polling units. However, BVAS malfunctioned in 8% of polling units, though these technical issues were resolved.

According to INEC's Regulations and Guidelines, polling officials are required to display the BVAS accreditation count for public viewing before accreditation commences. While this condition was fulfilled in most polling units, INEC officials failed to comply with this guideline in 3% of polling units. Similarly, in another 3% of polling units, voters were permitted to vote without BVAS verification. This procedural oversight, though isolated could undermine transparency and affect voter confidence in the integrity of the accreditation process.

5. **Secrecy of the ballots and attempts to influence polling officials**
In 18% of polling units, voters exposed marked ballot papers, thereby compromising the secrecy of the vote as guaranteed under Section 122, Electoral Act 2022. Voting cubicles were positioned in a manner that made it possible for party agents and bystanders to observe how ballots were marked. In 16% of polling units, party agents attempted to influence voters and polling officials during accreditation and voting.

6. **Election results management**
   - In **99% of polling units**, counting was conducted **at the same location where accreditation and voting took place**, consistent with the provisions of the **Electoral Act 2022** and **INEC's Regulations and Guidelines**.

   - By **4:00 pm**, counting had concluded in **86%** of polling units, and by **6:00 pm**, the process had been completed in all observed polling units. This is attributed to the low voter turnout for the election.

   - Incidents of **intimidation, harassment, or violence** during counting were reported in only **5% of polling units**.

   - Party agents for the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) were present and received result sheets in 100% of polling units, while All Progressives Congress (APC) agents were present in 95%**.** The Labour Party (LP) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) had agents in 45% and 17% of polling units, respectively, where they also received copies of the result sheets.

7. **Functionality of the INEC Election Results Viewing Portal (IReV)**
Uploads of polling unit-level results on the IReV were conducted promptly, and the portal functioned optimally throughout the election. By 7:00 pm on election day, 98% of the results were uploaded to the portal. There was a significant improvement in the speed, accuracy and quality of the scanned images of results sheets on the portal. However, accreditation data per polling unit and other results collation forms, such as Ward collation (EC 8B) and LGA collation (EC 8C), are still not uploaded on the IReV. For greater transparency, INEC should ensure that accreditation data on the

BVAS is automatically displayed on the IReV and results collation forms are uploaded as well.

However, certain transparency gaps remain. Accreditation data per polling unit and result collation, such as Ward (EC8B) and Local Government (EC8C) results, are still not uploaded to the portal. For greater transparency, INEC should ensure that accreditation data captured by the BVAS is automatically displayed on the IReV and that all collation forms are uploaded in real time.

## 2. Election Security and electoral offences

1. **Deployment and professionalism of Polling Officials and Security**:
   In 96% of polling units observed, security personnel were deployed. On average, three polling officials were deployed to the polling units observed. Of these polling officials, two were women. However, notable security gaps were reported. In some polling units, such as PU 014, Nkwelle Ezunaka, Oyi LGA, voting commenced without the presence of any security personnel. Such security gaps expose polling units to potential disputes, intimidation, or electoral malpractice, especially in politically tense or high-stakes areas. It also questions the deployment of the 55,000 security personnel deployed for the election, as reported by the security agencies.

2. **Conduct of Security Agencies:**
   The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and other sister agencies operating under the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) demonstrated commendable professionalism and coordination across the polling units observed. Their presence contributed to maintaining peace and order throughout the voting process. Notably, local security outfits in Anambra State, such as *Agu Ne Chemba* and *Ebube Agu,* were not observed at any polling unit. This is a welcome development, as their absence reflects improved adherence to legal and institutional protocols governing election security, strengthening both the neutrality and integrity of the electoral process.

3. **Status of the Election Offences:**
   Overall, 41 verified incidents of electoral offences were recorded across 13 Local Government Areas under the Election Offences Tracking System (EOTS). Among these, vote-buying emerged as the most prevalent violation, highlighting the persistence of monetary inducement as a major threat to electoral integrity. Other violations include violence, which led to the death of one person in Owerre Ezukala Community in Orumba South LGA.

4. **Vote-Buying and Electoral Inducement:**
   Despite the peaceful atmosphere, systematic vote-buying remained a pervasive electoral malpractice during the 2025 Anambra Governorship Election. Verified reports indicate that monetary inducements ranged between ₦3,000 and ₦15,000 per voter, depending on the local government area and the competitiveness of the political parties involved. For instance, in Anambra East (Abata Nsugbe, PU 002), observers

documented extensive vote trading, with APGA offering ₦3,000 and APC offering ₦5,000 to voters. Similarly, in Awka North (Ebenebe Ward 1, Central School PU 001), inducements escalated to ₦10,000 from APGA and ₦15,000 from APC per voter.

This pattern reflects a deepening commercialization of the electoral process, where financial incentives increasingly overshadow civic responsibility as the primary motivator for voter behaviour. The prevalence of such practices undermines electoral integrity and weakens public trust in democratic institutions. It also signals an urgent need for stronger enforcement of Sections 121–127 of the Electoral Act 2022, which prohibit bribery, corruption, and undue influence in elections.

## 3. Inclusivity and accessibility

*Person with disability inclusion*

1. **Physical Accessibility:**
   Physical accessibility was found to be adequate in 89% of polling units where PWDs were observed, indicating notable improvements in the siting of polling stations, the provision of makeshift accessibility adjustments in some locations, and reasonable queue management practices. However, assistive tools such as braille ballot guides, magnifying glasses, and tactile jackets were available in only 32% of these polling units, limiting independent participation for many voters with visual impairments and those with albinism.

2. **Awareness and Use of INEC Forms:**
   INEC's PWD Voter Information and Statistics Form (Form EC40H)—designed to improve disability-disaggregated data—was present in several polling units but used inconsistently due to inadequate staff training and awareness. This inconsistency affected the accurate documentation of PWD participation and the tailored provision of support services.

3. **Priority Voting and Assistive Devices:**
   PWDs were granted priority voting in 74.8% of polling units where they were present. Nevertheless, the absence of braille guides and magnifying glasses hindered independent voting for persons who are blind and persons with albinism. For instance, in Awka Ward 1 (Ayom Na Okpala Square II), Nando Ward II (Anambra East LGA), and Mgbakwu Ward I (Awka North), voters with albinism faced challenges in identifying ballot choices due to the unavailability of magnifying aids.

4. **Deployment of Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs):**
   A total of 25 trained Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs) were strategically deployed across polling units identified to have the presence of deaf voters. This pilot deployment represented a groundbreaking step toward inclusive electoral participation, ensuring that deaf voters could communicate effectively with polling

officials and exercise their voting rights independently. The presence of SLIs significantly enhanced comprehension, reduced communication barriers, and served as a game changer in promoting inclusive and accessible voting for the deaf community.

*Women inclusion*

5. **Women's Political and Electoral Participation:** Data from *Gender and Election Watch* and *Hernalytics* indicates that while there was general voter apathy, turnout of women was higher than that of men in most polling units observed. Notably, many women remained present until the counting stage, reflecting a high level of civic commitment.

6. Gender representation among election officials and security personnel showed gradual improvement. Across observed polling units, 61.2% of polling officials and 45% of security personnel deployed were women.

7. Women's political representation as candidates remained disproportionately low, with only two female contestants in the governorship race, collectively securing less than 1% of total votes cast.

8. **Priority Voting for Vulnerable Groups:** At 90% of polling units observed across the 21 LGAs**,** pregnant women, nursing mothers, the elderly, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) were accorded priority voting**,** in compliance with the Electoral Act 2022 and INEC's Regulations and Guidelines**.**

9. There were isolated cases of violence against women, primarily concentrated in Anaocha and Anambra East LGAs. Specifically, 0.8% of observers recorded incidents of physical attacks, verbal abuse and hate speech targeted against women.

## 4. Media coverage, disinformation and media safety

1. **Media Deployment and Coverage Quality**
   The election period witnessed robust media deployment across all 21 LGAs. The strong field presence of accredited journalists improved accountability among electoral stakeholders. Several television stations provided live coverage throughout election day, integrating voter-education messages that encouraged participation—an effort believed to have contributed to improved turnout, particularly in Awka, Onitsha, and Nnewi.

2. **Security, Media Safety and Freedom of Expression:**

Security presence was robust and largely non-intrusive across polling locations. Journalist-observers confirmed they operated freely, with 115 respondents affirming freedom to report. There were no attacks on journalists, except for one isolated incident of obstruction of duty, which was promptly resolved through the intervention of security personnel.

3. **Misinformation and Disinformation:**
Journalist-observers monitoring social and local media observed sporadic instances of false turnout figures and premature result declarations, especially circulating via WhatsApp and Facebook community groups. These narratives were traced to non-verified pages in Onitsha North and Awka South, highlighting the need for strengthened fact-checking collaboration. False information that surfaced during the election was promptly debunked on the Nigeria Democracy Report (NDR) Fact-Check platform and via reports on HaltFake.org. These timely interventions helped contain misinformation and sustain voter confidence in the process. Joint monitoring by broadcast, print, and online media showed commendable professionalism. Outlets avoided speculative or inflammatory coverage, focusing instead on verifiable information. This responsible reporting helped maintain calm and prevented the spread of tension-inducing narratives.

## 5. Results Verification

Based on reports from 242 of 250 (97%) sampled polling units, Watching The Vote statistical analysis shows that the All Progressives Congress (APC) should receive between 15.1% and 18.5% of the vote, All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) 71.2% and 75.4%, Labour Party 0.9% and 1.7%, and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) 0.1% and 0.3%, and no other political party should receive more than 2.3% of the vote.

**Comparison of INEC Official Results for the 21 LGAs released with Yiaga Africa WTV PRVT Estimates for Select Political Parties for the 2025 Anambra Gubernatorial Election**

| Party | INEC | Yiaga Africa WTV PRVT estimates | | | | Verified |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Official Result | Estimate | Margin of Error | Estimated Range | | |
| | | | | Lower Limit | Upper Limit | |
| APC | 17.03% | 16.8% | ±1.7% | 15.1% | 18.5% | ✔ |
| APGA | 72.37% | 73.3% | ±2.1% | 71.2% | 75.4% | ✔ |
| LP | 1.81% | 1.3% | ±0.4 | 0.9% | 1.7% | ✔ |
| PDP | 0.24% | 0.2% | ±0.1 | 0.1% | 0.3% | ✔ |
| YPP | 6.46% | 6.1% | ±1.1 | 5.0% | 7.2% | ✔ |

*Note: No other party received more than 2.3% of the vote share* *Source: Yiaga Africa WTV November 2025*

Therefore, the PRVT findings reveal that the results announced by INEC for all 21 LGAs are consistent with the PRVT estimates for the governorship election in Anambra State. Had the official results been changed at the ward, LGA, or state collation centers, they would not have fallen within the WTV estimated ranges. Because the official results fall within the estimated ranges, governorship contestants, parties, and voters should have confidence that the official results for the 2025 Anambra governorship election reflect the ballots cast at polling units.

## Recommendations

### Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

1. INEC, under its new leadership, should prioritize and enhance the efficiency of Election Day operations, particularly the timely deployment of election materials and personnel to ensure a credible voting process.
2. Strengthen measures that ensure the secrecy of the ballot, thereby upholding the integrity and confidentiality of the voting process.
3. INEC should increase targeted voter education and public awareness campaigns highlighting the importance of women's full participation, while also enforcing the Electoral Act provisions against vote buying and intimidation that disproportionately affect female voters.
4. Promote Gender-Inclusive Practices: INEC should increase the number of female electoral officials, especially at senior levels.
5. Consolidate Logistics and Technological Gains: Maintain and expand robust deployment strategies, staff training, and contingency plans to ensure reliable BVAS functionality.
6. Strengthen Disability Data Validation and Support Services: INEC should periodically update and verify disability-disaggregated voter data to ensure the accurate provision of assistive tools and materials such as braille ballot guides, magnifying glasses, and tactile jackets. Additionally, INEC should institutionalize the deployment of trained Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs) in polling units with registered deaf voters to ensure full accessibility and inclusion for the hearing-impaired community.
7. Improve on proactive disclosure of information and sustain periodic engagement with the media.

### Security agencies

8. Sustained enforcement of electoral laws and institutional reforms to strengthen accountability, voter education, and the deterrence of election-related offences in future polls.
9. Security personnel under the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) should maintain a continuous and visible presence at polling units, from the start of accreditation through the conclusion of voting and results collation. Security deployment strategies should prioritize high-risk locations to prevent potential disruptions, voter intimidation, or disputes.
10. Ensure continuous journalist-safety protocols and media-friendly security engagements.

11. Ensure that female officers are adequately represented and visible in election deployments, as their presence promotes confidence among women voters and contributes to a safer, more inclusive polling environment.
12. Increase Presence and Responsiveness: Strengthen security presence in and around polling units to deter voter inducement, especially where vulnerable groups like PWDs are targeted.
13. Protect the Integrity of the Process: Act promptly on reports of vote trading, intimidation, or exploitation of persons with disabilities to preserve electoral fairness.

**Political Parties**

14. Eradicate the unlawful monetization of electoral activities and instead invest in practices that promote transparency, issue-based campaigns, and inclusive political and electoral participation. Eliminating vote-buying and other forms of electoral commercialization is essential to restoring public trust and ensuring credible, democratic elections.
15. Adopt and implement gender inclusion quotas to ensure that more women are supported and nominated as candidates and strengthen internal democracy processes that enable equitable participation at all party levels.
16. Mainstream disability inclusion in party structures and campaign processes, ensuring accessibility during rallies and equitable representation of PWDs as candidates, party agents, and mobilizers.
17. The political parties of female candidates are encouraged to ensure the deployment of party agents to monitor and protect their interests at all levels of the electoral process.

**National Assembly**

18. Fulfil its commitment to electoral reform by amending the Electoral Act to mandate electronic transmission of election results alongside the manual process. This reform is essential to improving the transparency, accuracy, and credibility of the results collation process.
19. Establish an Electoral Offences Commission with the mandate to investigate, prosecute, and deter violations of electoral laws will enhance accountability, curb impunity, and bolster public confidence in Nigeria's electoral process by ensuring timely and impartial justice for offenders

**Media**

20. Need to sustain Fact-Checking Integration and continue partnerships with NDR and HaltFake.org for real-time corrections.
21. Institutionalize of Election-Watch Media Hub: Establish permanent broadcast monitoring rooms for election-day coordination.

**Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)**

22. Continue to hold democratic institutions to high standards of integrity, transparency and accountability through collaborative approaches in election observation throughout the

electoral cycles, extending beyond election day to include post-election audits, review and electoral advocacy

23. Expand community-based mentorship and training programmes for women interested in politics, focusing on campaign strategy, fundraising, and public engagement to close the representation gap.
24. Sustain advocacy and voter education targeting both PWDs and the general electorate on the importance of inclusive participation and accessible voting environments.
25. Strengthen media monitoring and public accountability efforts to expose and deter voter manipulation or exploitation of PWDs.

Signed.

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