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# The Orderly Society Trust

## Election Observation Report Lagos State Local Government Elections

**22 October 2011**

Report By

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## CONTENT

Background

Election Day:

i. Opening

ii. Voting

iii. Counting and Computation

Results

Major issues of concern

Other Observers/Media encountered

Suggestion

The Orderly Society Trust (OST) is a non-governmental organisation founded by Professor Yemi Osinbajo, SAN and his wife Oludolapo. The trust is focused on implementing interventions which nurture and support institutions, ideas, values, practices and conventions which support 'order' in the society. In its continuous effort to foster good governance at the local government level, OST developed a voter education programme, which includes the observation of elections at the local government level.

The Orderly Society Trust deployed observers to polling stations for elections in Local Government Areas (LGAs) and Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs) across Lagos State on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2011 which was conducted by The Lagos State Independent Electoral Commission (LASIEC).

Generally, the view is that the last general elections conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was rated as an improvement on previous elections held in the country since the return to democratic rule in 1999. Although various domestic and international observers still noted some incidences affecting the transparency and credibility of the elections that calls for improvement. INEC showed a sign of independence and determination to conduct credible elections in the country.

Having regard to the fact that the local government is the level of governance which is closest to the people and affecting their daily lives the most, it was expected that the various states Independent Electoral Commissions will take up of the task of conducting free and fair elections in the local council areas even more seriously than INEC.

#### PRE \_ELECTION

The Orderly Society Trust deployed observers across the 20 LGAs and some LCDAs to ensure even spread across the state. Members of community Development Committees



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as observers also so that their capacity to participate ed.

The date for the election was properly publicized and there were radio jingles sponsored by LASIEC encouraging persons to vote. However, it seems that the political parties, LASIEC and civil society organisations did not do as much as possible in sensitizing the public to participate and the details of how the elections will take place

The LASIEC had prior the election day communicated its readiness to conduct the elections. Movement was restricted on the day of election between 8.00 am and 4.00 pm.

#### ELECTION DAY

The areas observed include Badagry LGA, Olorunda LCDA, Iba LCDA, Ojo LGA, Badagry West LCDA, Badagry Central LCDA, Oto-Awori LCDA, Ajeromi/Ifelodun LGA, Ifelodun LCDA, Somolu LGA, Lagos Island LGA, Iru/Victoria Island LCDA, Yaba LCDA, Somolu LCDA, Kosofe LGA, Apapa Iganmu LCDA, Agege LGA, Surulere LGA and Isolo LCDA.

Elections were conducted in all of the 20 LGAs and 37 LCDAs for 57 chairmanship and 379 councillorship positions. 28 political parties participated in the elections, 250 candidates contested for the office of the council chairman while there were 1145 candidates vieing for the office of councilor.

On election day, activities started around 8.30 am in most places. It was observed that at the opening stage, accreditation and voting did not start simultaneously as directed by LASIEC, apparently due to non- availability of necessary electoral materials within the first three hours of commencement. This had a negative impact on the ability of the electoral Commission to commence the electoral procedure as there were initial signs of confusion by the presiding officers and voters.

A major improvement was noted in the area of voter's education. It was observed that in almost all the polling units posters were displayed to educate the voters on guidelines

markable reduction in number of invalid votes.

in a peaceful manner in most places there were instances of violence in some other places. Contrary to expectations, this election did not achieve much significant improvement in terms of credibility and therefore fell short of improving on the lapses of the last general elections. It was seriously affected by voter apathy, lack of polling booths in many polling stations and cases of interference by party loyalists.

## ELECTION DAY

On the day election our observers were positioned in strategic places to cover substantial part of the state. Most of the observers were stationed in one polling unit where they observed the whole process from the opening to counting. Team leaders were allowed to shuttle between more than one polling station in order to observe the general atmosphere and to measure the quality of the election in different polling stations.

## OPENING

At most polling units visited by our observers, LASIEC officials arrived before 8.30 am. Despite this early arrival, voting did not start as early as envisioned by LASIEC. It was noticed that the LASIEC officials did not come to polling booths with most of the necessary electoral materials. Except the voters' registers, there were no polling booths, ballot boxes, ballot papers and result sheets in most polling stations at this stage.

Voting and accreditation did not commence simultaneously in many places as was expected. Within these first few hours accreditation was done separately up till when the other voting materials were delivered. At UPS Primary School in Ikorodu voting was seriously delayed because the voters' register delivered to the station belonged to another polling station. This was not resolved until 11.30 am.

In Somolu Local Government, names of voters could not be found on at the wards they had registered at and where they had voted in previous elections. The confusion caused

doubt on the ability of the commission to correct its the opening period was the most organized. The LASIEC officials in all the places visited demonstrated sufficient knowledge of the procedure which was well explained to the voters. In all the stations visited, there were posters explaining the procedures. We believe that this yielded a positive result as the percentage of invalid votes dropped.

## VOTING

Voting and accreditation started simultaneously in a few polling stations because the necessary materials arrived late in most polling stations. However voting started in most places before noon and accreditation and voting went on simultaneously as soon as the materials arrived. Generally the exercise was peaceful and orderly, however in some other places, there were serious violation of voters secrecy and interference by party activists.

There was a very low turn out in most of the areas. Some of the people questioned in the areas said that majority of the voters were disillusioned about the local government system because they do not make impact in their communities. Others were simply not interested because they did not know the candidates or what they stood for. At unit 006, Ward E, Lawanson, Surulere, only 111 voters were recorded against 661 registered voters; also at Odoginyan farm settlement in Ikorodu, 1020 were on the register but only 108 persons voted. At St. Finbarrs College, Yaba, only 2 people had voted at 12.00pm.

There was commendable effort to provide security at the polling stations; in 80% of the places visited, there were at least two security officials drawn mostly from the police. The presence of security personnel did not sustain orderliness throughout the voting period. It was observed that most polling stations became rowdy midway during voting. In some places there was unauthorized interference from party activists. At Bamgbopa in Yaba, the polling station was rowdy as group of boys were seen drinking and smoking around the polling area; at Iponri in Surulere, the voters were intimidated, the atmosphere was

Some group of men snatched the ballot box at the  
voters ran for dear life.

In several places it was observed that polling booths were absent. Secrecy of ballot was violated as a result of this. In some polling units, party activists clustered around the ballot box and watched voters while they cast their votes.

In some places it was observed that voters without voters' cards were allowed to vote, complaints were also received from party agents who accused LASIEC officials of allowing unregistered persons to vote in favour of another party. In some places, LASIEC officials lost control of the polling station to party activists who directed and also led voters to the polling box to ensure they voted for their parties.

#### COMPUTATION AND COUNTING

It was observed that the process of counting and the eventual announcements of result were done transparently and peacefully. LASIEC officials tried their best to follow the rules and procedure with regards to announcing the results loudly, having the result sheets countersigned by party agents and distributing copies to party agents. It was however noticed in some places that efforts were not made to properly account for unused ballot papers as well as invalidating them accordingly. At Iponri Junior and Senior High school, collation was terminated because the ballot box was snatched.

#### RESULTS

The final result released by LASIEC shows that only 3 parties won at least one position in both the chairmanship and councillorship elections. The results are as follows:

##### Chairman

ACN                      57

PDP                        0

Councillor

ACN	355
PDP	18
CPC	2

MAJOR ISSUES OF CONCERN

- ❖ Instances of untidy /tardy logistics resulting in lack of uniformity at the opening stages
- ❖ General voter apathy
- ❖ Unavailability of polling booths in most polling stations
- ❖ Unauthorized interference by party activists , touts and other unauthorized persons at the polling units
- ❖ Violation of secrecy of ballot
- ❖ Improper verification/invalidation of unused ballot papers
- ❖ Crowd control difficulties
- ❖ In most places there were no other observers present

Violence: Apart from the ballot box snatching in Iponri, the atmosphere in some places in period following the end of election and final release of results was charged. In Badagry violence erupted after it was rumored that the result from LASIEC was in favour of the CAN Some protesters alleged that the people in Badagry were dismayed by this development as it was widely believed that the majority voted in favor of the PDP . Attempts were made by some people in the community to attack the local government. At Obalende/Ikoyi area as well as Somolu, there are wide criticisms against the result announced by LASIEC.

Civil Society Coalition (CSC)

Anthony Village News (AVN)

Unilag FM

Channels Television

#### SUGGESTIONS

- ❖ Voter education: There is a need to continually engage voters to participate in the process. This is not the job of LASIEC alone. Civil Society groups and the political parties themselves have to do more in ensuring that people understand the need for participating in elections . Voters at the grass root level should be mobilized. The various government orientation and public enlightenment agencies, the media, LASIEC and Community based organization have a daunting task in this regard. The level of participation at the local government election has to be increased in view of the fact that the local government is the closest to the ordinary citizens.
- ❖ Assessment of preparedness: A mechanism should be established to forestall logistics snags that usually characterize the opening stages of elections. The opening stage is very important; it encourages the voters and assures all parties of fair play.
- ❖ Simultaneous accreditation and voting: This is necessary to reduce delays and overcrowding at the polling booths, however its effectiveness is tied to proper logistics management.
- ❖ Continuous training of election officials should be pursued to reduce inefficiency, inability to be in control and connivance with party activists.
- ❖ Serious commitment should be made by the government to apprehend and punish electoral offenders. There were a lot of impunity and disregard to electoral



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This is because electoral offenders get away with this

- ❖ The electoral commission should publish them along with the final results, results from the polling units as announced and given to the party agents. This will guaranty transparency. The results should also be published on the commission's website according to polling units.

Thank you.

The Orderly Society Trust

October 2011