



The Coordinated Election Situation Room (ESR) for Ghana 2016 General Elections

Comprehensive Report

Acronyms

ESR	Election Situation Room
NPC	National Peace Council
CHRAJ	Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice
KAIPTC	Kofi Anan International Peacekeeping Training Centre
LECIAD	Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy
SMS	Short Message Service
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
NDI	National Democratic Institute
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
NEWS	National Early Warning System
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CUCG	Catholic University College of Ghana
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
J-PERM	Joint Party Election Results Monitoring
AU	African Union
UNOWAS	United Nations Office for West Africa and Sahel
OIF	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
REEWARG	Regional Election Early Warning and Response Group
EC	Electoral Commission

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1. Executive Summary

The Election Situation Room (ESR) is a situational analysis platform set up by WANEP and its partners to observe, report, analyze and facilitate responses to violent threats, voter corruption, compliance to electoral code and human rights abuses to the peaceful conduct of the Presidential and Parliamentary elections that were held on December 7, 2016. The ESR was coordinated by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding and its partners, the National Peace Council (NPC), the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), Transform Ghana, Trans4orm Network, Ghana and Blogging Ghana. The multi faceted observation effort was a departure from traditional election observation missions as it also included a component of preventive action to the reported threats.

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 divided into four sections to monitor the voting process in their allocated areas of assignment. The reports were sent to the Situation Room through online Short Message Service (SMS) platform specially designed for this purpose with digital development tools. Additional information was uploaded through dedicated Whatsapp platforms and telephone communications from the Situation Room to the observers in the field.

The operational set up of the ESR comprised a central coordinating ESR in Accra to cover Greater Accra and two satellite ESRs in Kumasi to cover Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions and Tamale to cover Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions of Ghana. A total of 75 personnel worked in the three ESR. The central ESR operated from December 6-10, 2016 while the satellite ESR were functional only on December 7, 2016, the day of the General Elections.

Various local and international Observer Missions including the African Union, National Democratic Institute (NDI), the U.S Ambassador, the Japanese Embassy and the Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and Sahel visited the ESR

Throughout the duration of the election period, seven (7) press briefings were held by the central ESR led by the National Peace Council while two (2) press briefings were held at each of the satellite ESR in Kumasi and Tamale to present preliminary findings in line with key areas of focus for the mission. Some of the findings included the late arrival of voting materials in some polling station; 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.

In response to the findings, a delegation of the ESR embarked on preventive diplomacy with key political leaders to encourage them to have faith in the EC to deliver credible electoral outcome. Also the press conferences provided opportunity for situational reports to the public in order, which contributed to douse tensions and management of post election environment.

The coordinated ESR was primarily supported by the United States Agency for International Development for West Africa (USAID/WA). Additional financial support was provided by Austrian Development Agency, Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA).

2. Introduction

2a. Country Risk Profile of Ghana:

For over two decades, Ghana has emerged as a beacon of democracy in Africa. Prior to the December 7 General Elections, it has conducted six (6) successive elections between 1992-2012. These political transitions have consolidated the interest of Ghanaians in elections as indispensable to democracy. However, despite the peaceful nature of Ghana's democratic transitions, none of the elections have been bereft of political tensions and threats of



Fig 1: Administrative map of Ghana

violence. There have been recorded manifestations of electoral violence at both intra-party and inter-party levels in the history of electioneering processes since 1992. For instance, the results of the 2008 presidential elections were declared after three rounds of voting with pockets of violence reported across the country. The 2012 election campaign was generally polarized along ethnic and regional lines. There were controversies over voter qualification and voting processes. According to the National Early Warning System (NEWS) reports from WANEP-Ghana, there was a public sense of complacency by some security personnel towards voter improprieties that almost degenerated into violence. The 2012 post-election petition and hearing took place with high anxiety and an uncertain security situation. Some youth members of political parties especially in 'zongo'¹ communities were allegedly being mobilized to engage in violence in the event of unfavorable adjudication process. The grievances and bitterness

¹ A predominantly Muslim settlement from northern region extraction found in most districts across the regions of Ghana.

created by 2012 election and subsequent judgment was expressed by opposition and therefore constituted a red flag for December general elections.

Additional worrisome development was the upsurge in the violent activities of “macho men”² from 2015 reportedly aided by political actors and parties. Reports of small arms proliferation also increased as well as hate speeches and high level of intolerance among political parties. In addition to this was the perception of bias by the Electoral Commission parties, which increased distrust and tensions around the electioneering process. The interaction of these issues escalated anticipation of wide scale violence in the 2016 general election with the potential to significantly disrupt the democratic stability of Ghana. As part of its contribution to support preventive action/response to these emerging threats, WANEP designed and implemented an election monitoring, analysis and mitigation project for Ghana 2016 elections.

2b. WANEP Experience in mitigating election violence Threats in Ghana and West Africa:

In the past 12 years, WANEP has been monitoring and analyzing electoral processes in West Africa. WANEP has come to realize that electoral dispute management mechanisms are a sine qua non in the overall maintenance and sustenance of peace and security in the region. Through its National Early Warning Systems (NEWS)³, WANEP contributes to the mitigation of electoral violence in political transitions of West Africa. WANEP has been one of the key players in the operationalization of Election Situation Room (ESR), which serves as one of the mitigating factors of electoral violence during and after the day of election. It has partnered with various State institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Intergovernmental Organizations and other Non-Governmental Organizations in establishing ESR and deploying elections

² Proscribed militia groups such as Azorka Boys, Bolgatanga Bulldogs e.t.c comprising youths who are often engaged by political actors for political violence.

³ NEWS provides qualitative and quantitative data for analysis and production of various early warning reports to levels of local and international stakeholders for response.

observers in
ECOWAS
Member States
and beyond
during
elections.
WANEP played
a key role
during the
Ghana 2012



The National Network Coordinator of WANEP in Niger debriefing the Head of UNOWAS, Dr. Ibn Chambas on the operations of the ESR in Niger

elections when it collaborated with the Catholic University College of Ghana (CUCG) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to create a joint monitoring platform tagged; the Joint Party Election Results Monitoring (J-PERM). The J-PERM objective was to provide a space for dispute resolution around elections and help reduce election-induced tensions and anxiety.⁴ WANEP provided leadership and coordination of the J-PERM Situation Room, while the Catholic University College of Ghana provided the software for data collation.⁵ As part of a broader project supported by USAID/WA titled, “Mitigating Election Violence in West Africa through National Early Warning System (NEWS)”, WANEP has successfully operated Election Situation Rooms in Cote d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Niger. Beyond this project it has also implemented ESRs in Benin, Togo, Guinea and Nigeria. These ESRs have serviced key domestic and international election observer groups such as ECOWAS, AU, OIF, NDI, UNOWAS as well as embassies and foreign missions in West Africa with critical information on various elections held in West Africa during the past decade.

The experiences and successes of these interventions informed the set up and operations of the coordinated Election Situation Room for the December 7 General Elections in Ghana. The Ghana ESR was part of the intervention of the WANEP/USAID NEWS project for five countries in West Africa. The Ghana

⁴ The J-PERM report, 2012

⁵ op cit

intervention, which was launched in May 2016 under the Election Situation Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation (EMAM) project, provided early warning analysis and reports to key stakeholders for informed responses across the 10 regions of Ghana under the platform of the National and Regional Election Early Warning Response Groups (NEEWARG and REEWARG). These stakeholders include Ministry of Interior, National Peace Council (NPC), Electoral Commission, Electoral Security Task Force, KAIPTC and LECIAD. This culminated into the set up and operations of the ESR designed to monitor prioritized medium and high-risk areas in the 10 regions of Ghana.

3. Scope of the Report:

This report focuses on the data, analysis and operations of the coordinated Election Situation Room (ESR) for the December 7, 2016 General Elections in Ghana. The data was derived from a checklist of 91 questions divided into four sections. These include:

- Form A: Opening of polling station
- Form B: Functioning of the polling station
- Form C: Closure of the poll and counting procedure
- Form D: General observation at the polling station

The checklist focused on violent threats, human rights violations, voter corruption and compliance to electoral code. *(Please refer to Annex 1 for additional information)* The reports were limited to the polling stations/districts of coverage by the 750 domestic observers deployed across the 10 regions of Ghana. The deployment was informed by categorized medium and high-risk areas as derived from the election focused National Early Warning System (NEWS) for Ghana. Additional information to justify deployment was provided by the Commission for Human Rights And Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) of categorized areas of human rights violations across the regions. Observers were deployed in 51 districts out of the 216 districts in Ghana. This represents approximately 23% of the districts in the country. *(Please refer to Annex 2 for additional information)*. The number of deployed observers to each region was also determined by the frequency of high risk incidences recorded in the region as well as the category of overall risk for the region as generated from the online

NEWS between August-December 2016. The deployed observers submitted additional information derived from information exchange with other observer groups in their region. The report covers the period December 7-10, 2016.

4. Operational Structure of the Election Situation Room

4a. ESR Framework:

Between December 6-10, 2016, WANEP and its partners operated coordinated Election Situation Rooms in Accra, Kumasi and Tamale. The central coordination situation room was located at the Golden Tulip Hotel in Accra (Greater Accra region) while satellite situation rooms were located in two key hotspot regions - Ashanti and Northern Region, supporting response actions within the cluster of Ashanti/Brong Ahafo regions, and Northern/upper East/Upper West regions respectively. The choice of the locations for the satellite rooms was informed by successive data collected and analyzed through NEWS that indicated high levels of electoral violence threats in these regions. A total of 75 personnel worked at the three situation rooms. The central coordinating room in Accra had total personnel of 55; the satellite situation room in Kumasi had 15 personnel while there were 10 personnel at the ESR in Tamale. WANEP, LECIAD, KAIPTC, CHRAJ, Blogging Ghana, Transform Ghana and Trans4orm Network, Ghana jointly organized the coordinated ESR. To ensure the effectiveness of data collation, analysis and response, the central ESR was divided into three sections: the “Data Gathering Room”, the “Analysis Room”, and the “Decision Room”.

The **Data Gathering Room** constituted the “technical room”, where data collectors were to directly communicate with 750 observers in the field. They collated all data through the online SMS system; Whatsapp platforms provided and also direct phone calls through dedicated phone numbers assigned to each personnel. A total of 30 persons worked in this room. Each was assigned a cluster of observers from a region to speed up the



A section of the Data Gathering Room

process of data generation. 5 line coordinators supervised a team of five (5) data gatherers to address logistical or technical challenges, which could mar the smooth operations of the section. An overall Coordinator was responsible for intermittently gathering all available data in line with the categorized checklist to submit to the “Analysis Room” for interpretation.

The **Analysis Room** is the second section and was responsible for interpreting the data received from the “Data Gathering Room” for informed and swift response actions by eminent persons in the “Decision Room”. It comprised of 10 experts drawn from leading



A section of the Analysis Room

academic and civil society institutions such as KAIPTC, University of Ghana, NPC, CHRAJ, LECIAD, WANEP and Transform Ghana. They provided various insights from various professional backgrounds of law, politics, gender, peace and security, and communication. Their diverse expertise and background ensured that the various thematic areas of the observation were distinctly captured, analyzed, reported, and disseminated to the eminent persons at the “Decision Room” for appropriate response. A Chief Analyst facilitated and coordinated the deliberations and reports arising from the group. His ability to keep the team focused on the emerging issues contributed to the quick turn out of reports/recommendations and response from the eminent persons.

The **Decision Room** comprised of 13 eminent persons of influence who used their good offices to influence positive responses to identified electoral threats as indicated in the submitted reports from the “Analysis Room”. Members of the group include board



A section of the Decision Room

members of the National Peace Council, Director of CHRAJ, Deputy Executive Director of WANEP, Director of LECIAD, former Commandant of KAIPTC, former Deputy Commandant of KAIPTC, the President of Ghana Journalist Association and the President of Ghana Mediation Association. They were responsible for all media debriefings on emerging issues around the election as well as receiving dignitaries/diplomats who paid a visit to the ESR. They also engaged in quiet/preventive diplomacy with key political actors as tensions mounted during the December 7 elections. Prof Emmanuel Asante of NPC led the “Decision Room”. He was also the overall Chair of the coordinated ESR.

The **Satellite Situation Rooms in Kumasi and Tamale** comprised of eminent persons from the Regional Election Early Warning and Response Group (REEWARG) from Ashanti and Northern regions. The Ashanti and Northern ESR were composite structures and were led by the Chair of the Ashanti Regional Peace Council and the Secretary of the Northern Regional Peace Council respectively. The satellite ESRs liaised directly with the central situation room through Skype and phone calls to deliberate and agree on appropriate responses to regional based issues that threatened the peaceful conduct of the December 7 polls in these regions.



The Satellite ESR in Tamale

The **Social Media Room** comprised of personnel from Blogging Ghana/Ghana Decides responsible for crowd sourcing and aggregating data from citizens on social media, namely twitter and Facebook. They also deployed 100 field observers and 30 monitors posted to selected situation rooms in Ghana. The data that they gathered was aggregated using AGGIE Social Media Aggregator. AGGIE crawls social media platforms (namely Facebook and twitter) and pulls out posts that contain specific keywords related to the election and as determined by the observation group to compliment the primary reports of the ESR from the field.

(Please see Annex 3 for additional information on the Organogram of the ESR)

4b. Operational Procedure:

As a central coordination unit, the ESR in Accra commenced its operations on December 6, 2016, with a pre-election training organized for all the key personnel. The training was held at Golden Tulip Hotel, Accra on December 6, 2016. The training covered the roles and responsibilities of personnel and sections of the ESR, the communication structure between the field observers and the ESR, the feedback mechanism between the satellite ESRs and the central ESR and the expected output from the ESR.

There was a simulated exercise of the online SMS platform that will be used for data gathering during the elections of December 7. Tablets and dedicated SIM cards were distributed to all 30 personnel in the “Data Gathering Room” while all ESR personnel received the branded jackets, T-shirts and caps. Following the training, a press conference was held to officially inform the public of the commencement of the ESR. This was led by the eminent persons in the “Decision Room” chaired by Prof Emmanuel Asante of the National Peace Council. A total of seven (7) media organizations from television, radio and print covered the press conference. All the three (3) ESRs were operational on December 7. This was stepped down to only the Coordinating ESR from December 8-10. A total of 10 press conferences were held from December 6-10 at the Election Situation Rooms. While the Election Day debriefings focused on the threats and emerging issues from the observed polling stations, the debriefings of December 8 focused on post election threats across the 10 regions of the country. The ESR was

originally designed to last from December 6-8, 2016. However due to the delay in the declaration of election results, it led to the extension of the coordinating ESR to December 10, 2016. A final press statement was issued on December 10 to commend various local and international stakeholders for their constitution to the success of the election.

The uniqueness of the ESR was its ability to respond to emerging threats in order to mitigate any negative impact to the peaceful conduct of the elections. This required direct field intervention and preventive action by members of Decision Room at the central coordinating room and selected members of the satellite ESR in Kumasi (Ashanti region) and Tamale (Northern region). Over 70 local and international dignitaries visited the ESR. These included the U.S Ambassador, the Danish Ambassador, the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations to West Africa and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the African Union Observer Mission, the Head of the EU delegation to Ghana, officials from the Japanese Embassies and officials from the British Council. *(Please refer to Annex 4 for detailed list of visitors to the ESR.*

4c- **Brief of Prioritized Political Hotspot Regions for 2016 Election**

- **Brong-Ahafo**

Prior to the December 2016 elections, Brong Ahafo was regarded as the most conflict prone region in Ghana. Since the return of democracy in 1992, the region has registered fierce political contestation between the two major political parties in Ghana- the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress. This is strongly linked to its status as a swing state based on the results from past six general elections of the country⁶. In the lead up to the December 2016 elections, a district in the region, Suyani Municipal recorded high level of violent threats to the peaceful conduct to the election which include physical violence, armed clashes between security groups and political groups, inter/intra party political disputes and militia clashes. Additional threats were observed

⁶ NEWS Situational Report: September 2016, "Rising Tensions Admist Campaign and Voter Transfer Exercise". Unpublished.

from high crime rate, protracted chieftaincy and land disputes.⁷ Out of the 16 districts in the region, seven were identified as high-risk areas. Others include Suyani West, Asunafo South, Techiman Municipal, Techiman North, Wenchi Municipal and Atebubu

- **Northern Region:**

The region is the largest in terms of geographic size in the country and holds 31 out of the 275 constituencies in the country. Beyond elections, the region has recorded protracted communal and chieftaincy conflicts that took many lives and destroyed properties. The peculiarity of the conflict in the region is its pattern of reoccurrence that continually threatened the security and stability of the region. Tensions surrounding these conflicts raised uncertainty in the region prior to the 2016 elections especially as the major political parties jostled for seats leading to intermittent clashes. Identified hotspot areas include Baku municipal, Tamale Metropolitan, Zabzugu-Tatale, Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo, Nанumba North, East Gonja and Savelugu-Nanton.

- **Greater Accra:**

Electorally, the Greater Accra region is a political hotspot. It is one of the four swing regions in the electoral politics of Ghana. The region has always voted for the winning party, meaning no candidate has ever been president without winning in Greater Accra. The region has the highest population in Ghana and has 34 of the 275 parliamentary seats in the country. The position and status of the region increases the pattern and rate of contestation by political parties jostling for control of seats. Ododiodo constituency has been an acclaimed hotspot for electoral violence in successive elections. Political violence especially during elections is a common feature in parts of the region⁸.

- **Ashanti:**

The region has a pattern of being associated with political violence in Ghana elections. It has a total of 33 out of the 275 constituencies in the country. Though predominantly dominated by a major political party, the

⁷ opcit

⁸ NEWS Situational Report: November 2016, "Moving Forward to Election 2016, But Looking Back". Unpublished

competition for parliamentary seats often leads to violent clashes especially among political party youth groups or militia groups with affiliations to political parties popularly referred to as 'macho men'. Identified hotspots in this region include Ejura, Offinso North, Ahafo Ano North, Kumasi Metropolitan, Ahafo Ano South, Obuasi municipal, Bekwai municipal etc.

5. Findings of the Election Observation:

5a. Format of the online data reporting

A total of 2,142 forms were submitted online by the observers throughout the mission on December 7. These forms, which consisted of a total of 91 checklists, were categorized and submitted via SMS to an online system calibrated for that purpose. To facilitate easy data interpretation and transmission for analysis, the checklists were clustered under 18 key thematic areas. These include timely opening of polling stations; neutrality and access to polling stations; vulnerability access to polling stations; observer's access to polling stations; presence of EC officials and party agents at polling stations; transparency of the accreditation process; security of polling stations; presence of polling agents; availability and transparency of voting materials; conduct of the voting process; presence of party symbols at polling stations; presence of small arms at polling stations; undue influence and corruption at polling stations; threats or intimidation of voters, candidates or EC officials; timely closure of polling stations; transparency and due process in ballot counting and result announcement; public safety and security at polling stations; positive relationship between EC officials, party agents and voters at polling station.

The 2,142 forms submitted represents 71.4% out of the total expected 3000 forms.

5b. Key findings of the observation:

- There was *late arrival of voting materials* culminating in the late commencement of the voting process in some polling stations. Instances included Akatore Junior High J051302 (Bolgatanga/Upper East Region), RC

Primary School-A H202301 and Kanvili RC-Primary School-B H2023013 (Tamale/Northern Region). In the case of Jaman North Constituency (Brong Ahafo region), it led to the suspension and de-suspension of the voting process. As a result, voting in this area was rescheduled for 8th December 2016.

- There were instances of the *late arrival and absence of security personnel* in some polling stations. This was of concern in areas/regions considered potential hotspots for election violence especially in Greater Accra, Ashanti, Brong Ahafo and Northern Regions. For example in Tubon Zongo-Ablekuma Central, Polling Station C08181408, there was fighting between party agents based on a perception that two lines created by EC officials was along party lines to favour one queue to move faster than the other. The fighting was facilitated by the absence of security personnel. In Temp Booth Titik-Bumpurungu Yoyo, Northern Region (polling station H261803) there was no security personnel as at 3.38pm on December 7, 2016. Also at Kpandai H072302 (Northern Region). Reports from the online data showed security personnel-related reports in 213 out of a total approved number of 4,762 polling stations in Greater Accra region while there were 156 reports out of the 2,688 polling stations in Northern region. This approximately represents a percentage of 4% and 6% respectively. Despite the higher percentage in Northern region, this represented a significantly low degree of threat to the conduct of the polls in these regions. However, when compared to the total number of reports of security incidents as captured in the online SMS election platform, Greater Accra region

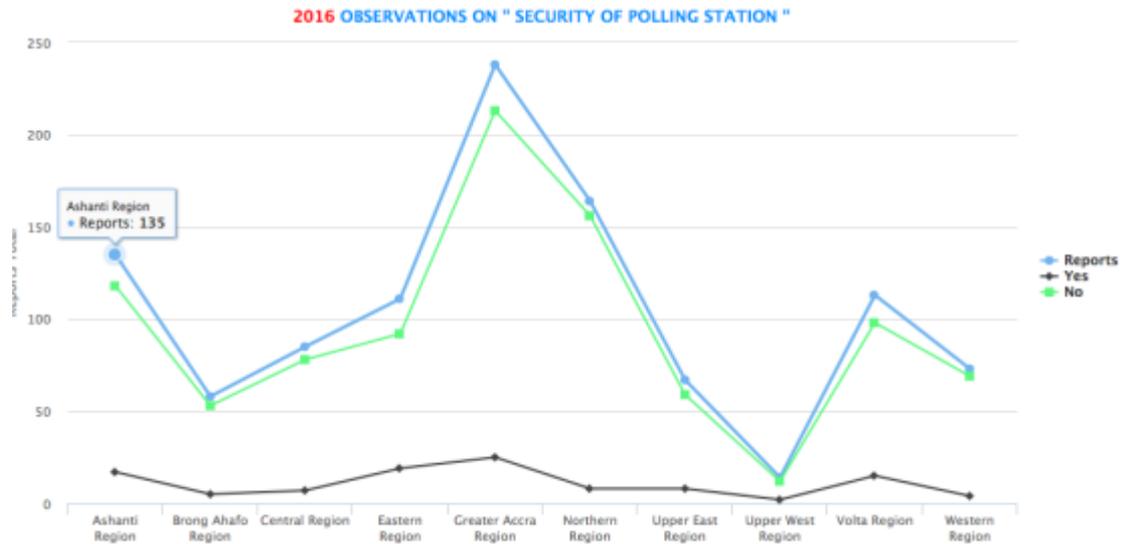


Fig 2: A graph representation of the security of polling stations

recorded the highest percentage of security concern with a total percentage of 97%. *(Please refer to Fig 2 on 'Security of Polling Stations')*

- Challenges with Biometric Verification Machines as well as the non-availability of and insufficient manual verification forms** in some polling stations were reported. This was recorded in Domfa-Adotima C050105A (Greater Accra) and Kumsuntu Mosque H261901 (Northern Region). However these challenges were insignificant when compared to the number of submitted cases in the online system. Reports under the categorized graph, "Availability and transparency of voting materials" shows an overall low risk in hotspot areas and across all regions. A percentage of the reported incidence in comparison to the total submitted data shows the following: Greater Accra-9%, Ashanti-9% and Northern-6%. When compared to the overall polling stations in these regions, the percentages of risk highlighted the following: Greater Accra-appx.3%, Ashanti-1% and Northern-appx.3%. *(Please refer to Fig 3 on 'Availability and Transparency of Voting Materials')*

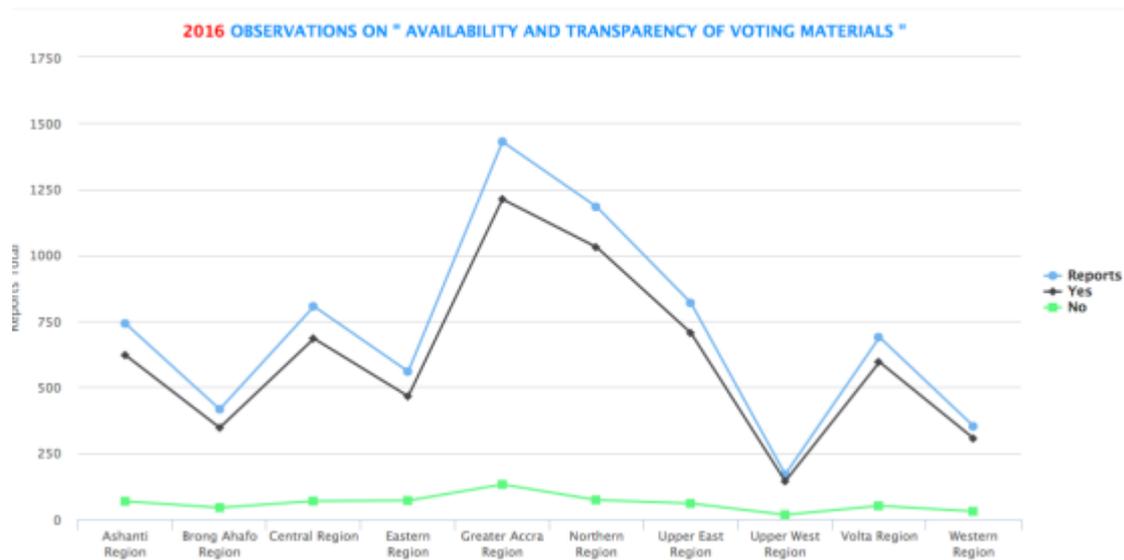


Fig 3: graph representation of Availability and Transparency of Voting Materials

- The use of party agents as polling officials in the absence of assigned EC officials for a period in a polling station.*** In the online data, this issue is integrated under the thematic graph on “presence of EC officials and party agents at polling stations”. The graph represents five (5) checklists including the presence of EC officials and political party agents at the polling stations and the presence of local and international observers at the polling stations. From the data, four regions recorded the highest incidence of absence as at the time of the visit by the observers to the polling stations within their assigned districts and regions. Greater Accra had a total of 141 incidences representing 29% of total data for the region. Northern region was 25%, Eastern region-33% and Volta region-34%. When the data is compared to the overall EC approved polling stations for each region, Greater Accra was approximately 3%, Northern region 3%, Eastern region 2% and Volta region 3%. The data shows an overall low risk when compared to the voting process in the polling stations across the regions. This is in addition to the fact that the data does not exclusively represent the action of the EC officials only. *(Please*

refer to fig 4 on 'Presence of EC officials and Party Agents at Polling Stations')

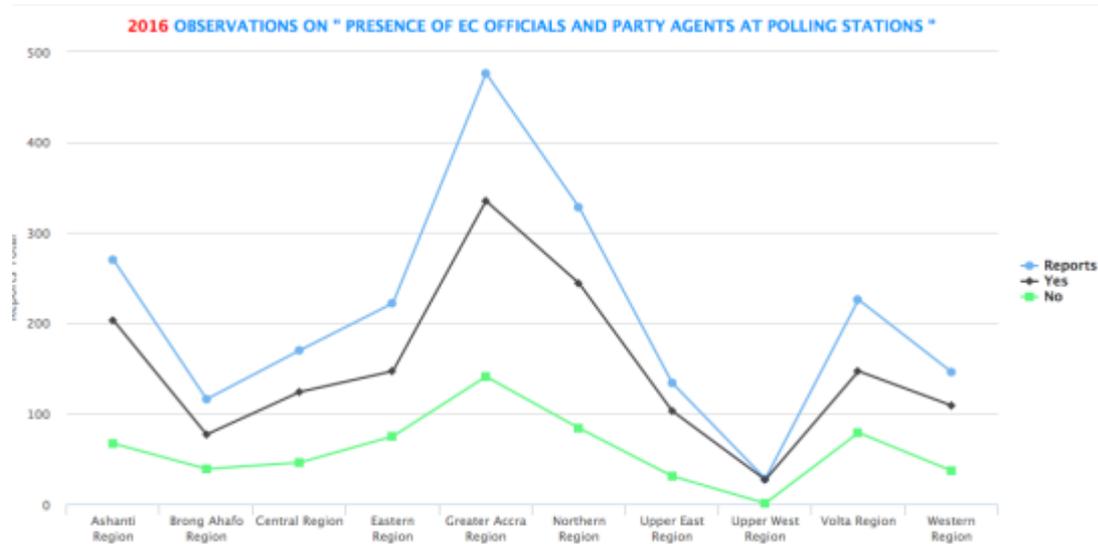


Fig 4: A graph representation of "Presence of EC officials and party agents at polling Stations"

- Wearing of party paraphernalia by some voters and political representatives** contrary to the electoral code of conduct was recorded in some polling stations. Such instances were recorded in Okaikoi South-Polling station C070501B (Greater Accra region) and were strongly linked to the thematic graph on "Neutrality and access to the polling station" on the NEWS system which captures the three (3) observation checklists. These include the presence of campaign materials (banner, poster, badges etc. of political parties) around the polling station; politically motivated groupings around the polling station; accessibility of the polling station to all. The data in the system recorded 65% against the total submitted data for Ashanti; Eastern region recorded 69%; Greater Accra-66%; Northern region-68%; and Volta region-71%. When compared to the total number of polling stations per region, Ashanti region-5%; Eastern region-7%; Greater Accra-approx.-10%; Northern region-12%; Volta region-approx.-

10%. When compared to other data, the issue of party paraphernalia and politically motivated groupings raised concern especially in the identified hotspot areas with potentials of violence that could mar peaceful conduct of voting in these areas. *(Please refer to Fig 5: on 'Neutrality and Access to Polling Station')*

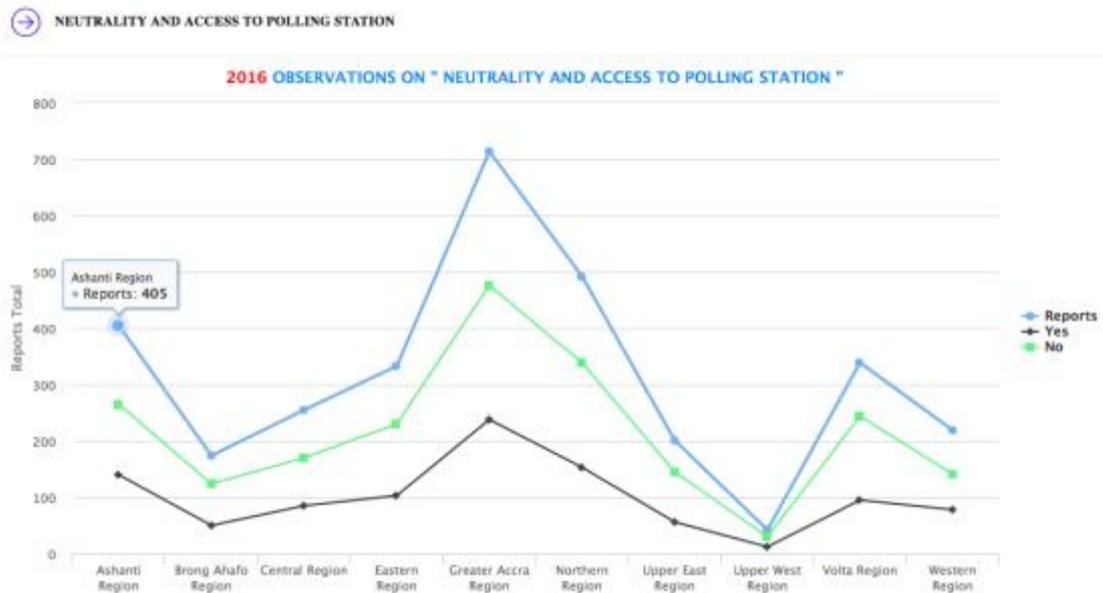


Fig 5: Graphic representation of 'Neutrality and access to polling station

- Incidence of provision of food and water to EC officials by some interested parties in some polling stations.*** An instance was at the polling station located at Mensah Sarbah Hall of the University of Ghana. This violates the electoral code with implication of voter corruption and non-compliance to electoral code. The data was captured under the thematic graph of “undue influence and corruption of voting at polling stations”. The checklists categorized in this section include treating of voters; vote buying; and transporting of voters from a polling station to another. When data was assessed in relation to number of reports submitted, there was low incidence/threat across the ten (10) regions. The highest being Northern region -5%; Central region-6%; and Volta region-approx.-7%. When compared to EC approved polling stations in

these regions the data highlights the following: Northern region-0.5%; Central region-0.4%; Volta region-0.4%.

- There was also a reported incident of printing of fake accreditation cards at a printing house located at Aseda in Adum (Brong Ahafo region) that led to the arrest of three (3) suspects by the police. *(Please refer to Fig 6 on, 'Undue influence and corruption of voting at polling station')*

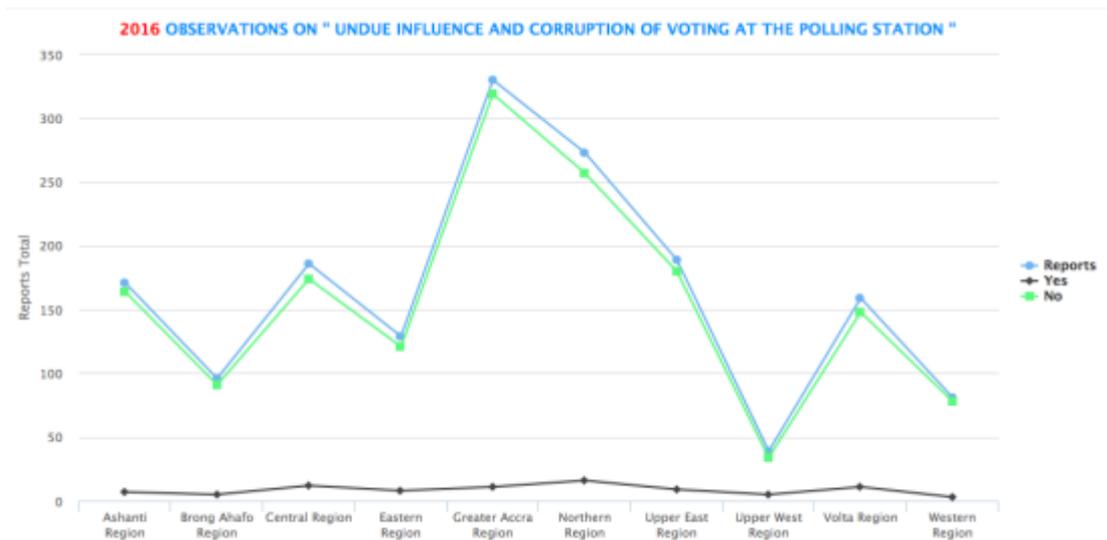


Fig 6: Graph representation of 'undue influence and corruption of voting at the polling station'

6. Responses:

The uniqueness of the coordinated ESR was the response component, which facilitated rapid response to threats identified in order to prevent or mitigate conflicts that could affect the peaceful conduct and outcome of the elections. The eminent persons in the “Decision Room” led by the Board Chair of the National Peace Council at the central coordinating room and the members of the satellite situation rooms in Kumasi and Tamale, responded to the key findings indicated above as follows:

- Visit to some polling stations in Accra, Kumasi and Tamale to assess the general conduct of the elections;
- Visit to the headquarters of the Electoral Commission in Accra. This was first to assess the collation, certification and declaration

of the results of the elections. Secondly, it was to engage the EC in respect of the perceived delay in the declaration of results and encourage them to expedite action;

- A number of press conferences to provide situational reports on the elections and to generally appeal for calm and contribute to the management of the post election environment;
- Preventive diplomacy with key political leaders and stakeholders to encourage them to have faith in the Electoral Commission in delivering a credible electoral outcome;
- Informed the Northern Police command of the need to maintain vigilance in Cheroponi (Northern region) in the light of tensions and possible outbreak of violence during the election following the controversy around the death of two persons on December 5, 2016;
- The Northern EC was informed of non availability of parliamentary ballot papers in Choggu-Yapalsi regional council;
- The satellite situation room in Kumasi contacted the Regional Peace Council in Brong Ahafo to verify the authenticity of the printing of fake accreditation cards. This was subsequently added to their press briefing to dispel rumors and reduce tensions capable of disrupting the voting process;
- The satellite situation room in Kumasi worked closely with the Regional Peace Council in Brong Ahafo to engage in preventive diplomacy with the Brong Ahafo EC to calm tension over the postponement of voting in Jaman North;

7. Challenges

7a. External:

Despite the relative success and peaceful conduct of the December 7 General Elections in Ghana, the arising tensions and threats were caused by the following observed challenges:

- The initial lack of media update and communication by the EC to the citizens to dispel rumors and perception of malpractices, which created tensions and violent conduct in some polling stations;
- The limited oversight by party leaderships at the regional and district levels to party agents at polling stations to reduce the contravention of electoral code at some polling stations;
- The inadequate understanding of voters of the provision for vulnerable voters such as lactating mothers, the sick and aged which led to resistance and altercation with the EC officials at some polling stations;
- Inadequate contingency plan by the EC to address failing Biometric Verification Machines and limited number of manual verification forms which affected the opportunity of some voters to vote in some polling stations;
- The limited number of security to adequately secure all the 28,992 polling stations across the country;
- The perception of bias of the EC by opposition which led to violent communications and escalation of disorderly conduct in some polling stations;

7b. Internal:

Internal Challenges to the operations of the ESR included the following:

- Initial communication gap between the field observers and the data gathering room due to poor interface between SMS data and the online NEWS system which delayed the receipt of data into the ESR;
- Lack of dedicated communication desk to deal with the traffic of interested stakeholders such as international observer missions and embassies calling into the ESR to request for situational update on the election;
- Limited financial resources to deploy the 750 observers beyond the December 7 election to monitor emerging post election threats.

It led to the downsizing of the observers to 100 on December 8 and 9, 2016;

- The limited number of observers to cover the expected number of areas in each region
- The short time dedicated to the preparatory stage, which included the period allocated for training of the observers. This led to communication challenges with the observers and also delays in the reports from some of the observers during the election;
- Limited feedback between the Decision Room, Analysis Room and Data Gathering Room which affected quick turn around time for responses and impact;
- The challenge with skype faced by the eminent persons with the satellite situation rooms that impacted on slow response of to emerging issues in Ashanti, Brong Ahafo and Northern regions;

8. Recommendations:

8a. External:

- There is need for review of the communication strategy of the EC to ensure it adequately addresses the gaps in publicity and enlightenment of the electorate in an election year;
- The need for EC to enhance the effectiveness of its internal dispute resolution mechanisms to manage and resolve grievances between it and political parties;
- Improved strategy by NCCE for civic education on the electoral code to prevent or mitigate poor understanding of the electorate of the voting process;
- Adequate contingency plan by EC to forestall the risk of disenfranchisement of qualified voters;
- Learning lessons from the challenges of security and improvement on security strategies by the Election Security Task force to ensure all polling stations are adequately covered;
- Improvement in the training and oversight functions of political parties to party agents during elections;

8b. Internal:

- For subsequent ESRs, there is the need to set up a dedicated communication desk responsible for information management and dissemination between interested stakeholders and the ESR;
- The importance of developing tracking tools to monitor and evaluate impact of responses made by the eminent persons;
- The need to develop stronger communication platforms and options between the Data Gathering Room, Analysis Room and Decision room;
- The development of dedicated lines as 'help lines' to provide additional support to field observers;
- Additional trainings and increase of number of accredited field observers deployed to prioritized risk areas to increase the significance of data submitted, analyzed and used for informed responses;
- Improved joint approach between the ESR and other election situation rooms to improve networking and information turn over.

9. Conclusion:

The ESR has been become an integral component of WANEP's strategic contribution and intervention to peaceful political transitions and stronger democratic systems in West Africa. This has translated into direct and indirect benefits to state and non-state actors as they deepen their appreciation of the strong link between early warning and early response. It has also enhanced collaboration between civil society organizations and state agencies leading to complementary approach to political stability and human security for the region. The Ghana experience has further reinforced the need to reassess the existing peace architecture to ensure proper integration of analysis to responses, which will further improve peaceful conduct of subsequent elections.

Annex 1: Form for observing the December 7 elections in Ghana

Name of the Monitor/Observer	
Region	
Metropolitan/ Municipal/ District	
Constituency	
Number of the polling station	
Name of the polling station	
Arrival Time/Hour at the Polling Station	
Number of registered voters	
Departure time from the polling station	

FORM A - Opening of polling station (PS)

1	Were there campaign materials (banner, poster, badges etc of political parties) around the polling station? (Yes / no)
2	Were there politically motivated groupings around the polling station? (yes / no)
3	Was the polling station accessible to all? (Yes No)
	Was special provision made for the vulnerable at the polling station?
4	- Sick (Yes No)
5	- Aged (Yes No)
6	- Pregnant women (Yes No)
7	- Lactating mothers (Yes No)
	- Persons with disability (PWD)
8	• Persons with full or partial impairment (Yes No)
9	• Those using wheel chairs/calipers (Yes No)
10	• Persons with hearing impairment (Yes No)
11	• Persons living with albinism (Yes No)
12	• Any other categories of disabilities (Yes No)
13	Did you face any obstructions in carrying out your observation duties? (Yes No)
	If yes, indicate nature of obstruction
14	*Were all EC officials present at the polling station? Yes No

15	Were there agents of political parties present at the Polling Station? (Yes No)	(Yes No)
16	Were there other observers (local or International) present or visiting the polling station? (Yes No)	(Yes No)
17	Did the voting booth guarantee the secrecy of vote for the voters? (Yes No)	(Yes No)
18	Were the ballot boxes shown empty before the polling process commenced? (Yes No)	(Yes No)
19	Were the ballot boxes appropriately sealed with the code numbers before voting commenced? (Yes No)	(Yes No)
20	Were the ballot boxes placed in a visible location for voters? (Yes No)	(Yes No)
21	Did the polling station open at 07.00 A.M? (Yes No) If no, at what time?	(Yes No)
	If the polling station is not opened on time, please tell the reason for the delay	
22	Late Arrival of electoral materials (Yes No)	(Yes No)
23	Absence of EC official (Yes No)	(Yes No)
24	Absence of political party agents (Yes No)	(Yes No)
25	Security issues (please specify) Others (please specify) (Yes No)	(Yes No)
26	Was there orderly conduct of EC personnel, agents and voters at the Polling Station? (Yes No) If no, please specify the situation.	(Yes No)
27	Were there complaints by voters over the verification process at the polling station? (Yes No) If Yes, please specify	(Yes No)

FORM B- Functioning of the polling station (PS)

Presence of polling officials/agents

28	Was the Presiding Officer available at the time of your visit to the polling station? (Yes No)	(Yes No)
29	*Were the Polling Assistants present at the time of your visit to the polling station? (Yes No)	(Yes No)
30	Were the party agents present at the time of your visit to the polling station? (Yes No)	(Yes No)

Polling materials

31	How many ballot boxes were available?	
	Were all the voting materials available?	
32	- Voting booth (Yes No)	(Yes No)
33	- Voters register (Yes No)	(Yes No)
34	- Indelible ink (Yes No)	(Yes No)
35	- EC stamp (Yes No)	(Yes No)
36	- Tactile ballot (for visually impaired) - Ballot papers (Yes No)	(Yes No)

37	• Presidential (Yes No)
38	• Parliamentary (Yes No)
39	Did the Biometric Verification Device (BVD) work properly? (Yes No)
40	Were People verified manually? (Yes No)
41	Was the Result Form of the vote counting available? (Yes No)
42	Were inviolable envelopes for damaged or spoilt ballot papers available? (Yes No)
43	Were there posters showing the various steps/stages of the voting placed visibly at the polling station? (Yes No)

Conduct of the Voting Process

44	Did voters present their voter ID card, registration slip to the polling station in order to facilitate their identification? (Yes No)
45	Did the Verification Officer apply indelible ink on the finger of voters before voting? (Yes No)
46	Were the ballot paper validated or stamped at the back before given to voters? (Yes No)
47	Were Transferred Voters allowed to cast their votes? (Yes No) If No please specify
48	Were voters with visual impairment or other physical challenges assisted to cast their vote? (Yes No)
49	Were elderly persons, lactating mothers and pregnant women given priority to cast their vote? (Yes No)
50	Were there party emblems, symbols, flags or dresses, campaigns or a sort of gathering to influence voters at polling station?(Yes No)
51	Were there availability of small arms or dangerous weapons by voters at the polling station? (Yes No)
52	Was any voter "treated ⁹ "? (Yes No)
	If yes, indicate the nature
53	Was there vote buying ¹⁰ ? (Yes No)

⁹ Treating includes (a) corruptly either himself or through another person before, during or after an election giving or providing or paying wholly or in part the expenses of giving or proving meat drink, entertainment or provision to or for any person during or after an election for the purpose of corruptly influencing that person or another person to vote or refrain from voting ; or on account of that person or another person having voted or refrained from voting or being about to vote or refrain from voting; (b) corruptly accepting or taking any meat , drink , entertainment or provision offered in the circumstances and for the purposes mentioned in paragraph (a)

¹⁰ Buying is any reward given to a person for voting in a particular way or for not voting

	If yes, indicate the nature
54	Were voters being transported from other locations to the polling station? (Yes No)
55	Was any voter: Threatened (Yes No)
56	Intimidated (Yes No)
57	Assaulted (Yes No) Other (specify)
58	Was any candidate: Threatened (Yes No)
59	Intimidated (Yes No)
60	Assaulted (Yes No) Other (specify)
61	Was any election official: Threatened (Yes No)
62	Intimidated (Yes No)
63	Assaulted (Yes No) Other (specify)

FORM C - Closure of the Poll and counting procedure:

64	Did the voting officially close by 5.00pm? (Yes No) If No, please specify
65	Were the ballot boxes opened for counting after 5.00pm?(Yes No) If no , Please specify
66	Were the following at the table where the ballot count took place?
67	- Polling assistants (Yes No)
68	- Candidates and their spouses (Yes No)
69	- Polling/counting agents (Yes No)
70	- Observers and journalists authorized by the commission (Yes No) - Commissioners and officers of the electoral commission (Yes No)
71	Was there any reported incident during the vote counting? Yes No If yes, explain
72	Were the sealed ballot boxes shown to people present in the polling station before the vote counting commenced? Yes No
73	Did the decision to cancel or validate a ballot paper follow due procedure in accordance with EC regulations? Yes No
74	Were the results announced and displayed after the ballot papers had been counted? Yes No
75	Was the Declaration of Result Form completed and countersigned by the counting agent present? Yes No If no please specify?
76	Did party agents present and the Presiding officer endorse the carbonized result form E.L. 21/22B? Yes No? If No, please specify

77	Did the party agents present at the polling station receive a copy of the Result Sheet? Yes No
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**Details/Demographics at Polling Station observed
Presidential election**

78	Number of registered voters
79	Number of voters on the additional list (special, transferred voters)
80	Number of persons who voted
81	Number of valid votes cast
82	Number of blank or spoiled votes

Parliamentary election

83	Number of persons who voted
84	Number of valid votes cast
85	Number of blank or spoiled votes

FORM D - general observation at the polling station (PS)

FORM TO BE FILLED BY OBSERVERS AT THE END OF THE OBSERVATION

86	Were security and public safety ensured throughout the voting process? Yes No
87	Was there cordial relationship between EC officials and party agents? Yes No
88	Were voters generally aware of the voting process? Yes No
89	Did any violent incident occur at the polling Station? Yes No If yes, please specify
90	What actions were taken by the Presiding officer and security personnel to address the issue?
91	How will you rate the conduct of the voting process in the polling stations you observed? - Excellent (6) - Satisfactory (5) - Good (4) - Fair (3) - Unsatisfactory (2)
	Any other comment? Please provide detail

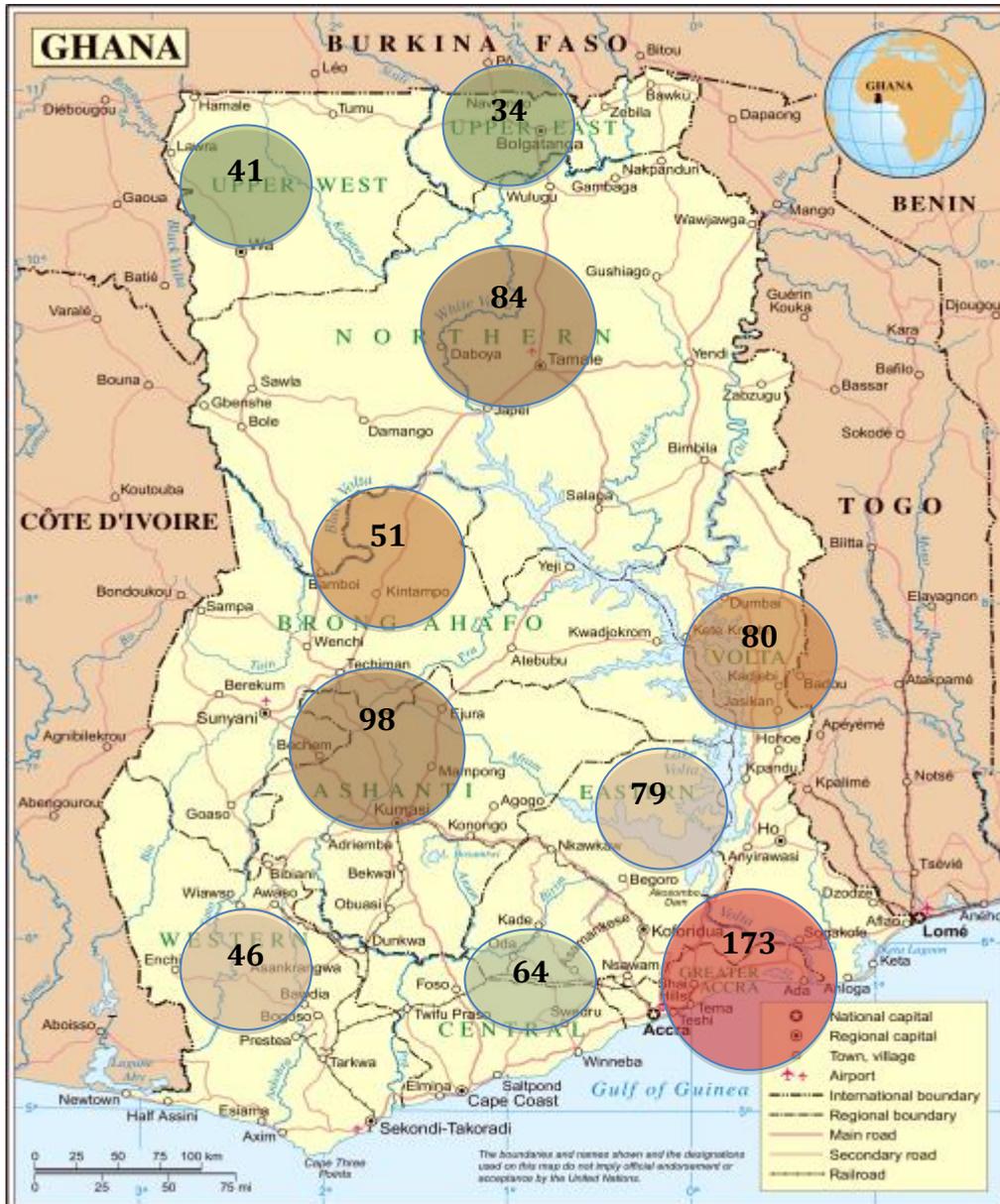
***EC Polling Officials**

- Names Reference List Officer
- The Biometric Verification Officer/Inker
- The Presidential Ballot Issuer
- The Parliamentary Ballot Issuer

***Special Voters**

- Election Officials, Security Personnel and Media personnel

Annex 2: Map distribution of Observers for Coordinated ESR for Ghana Election – December 7, 2016



s/n	REGIONS	Districts Deployed	NO. OF OBSERVERS	Total No. of Polling Stations
1	Greater Accra	Accra Metropolitan, Ga East municipal, Adentan municipal, Ga Central municipal, Weija municipal, Ledzekulu-Krowor municipal	173	4,762
2	Northern	Baku municipal, Tamale Metropolitan, East Gonja, Nanumba North, Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo, Zabzugu-Tatale, Savelugu-Nanton	84	2,688
3	Ashanti	Ejura, Offinso North, Ahafo Ano North, Kumasi Metropolitan, Ahafo	98	5,190

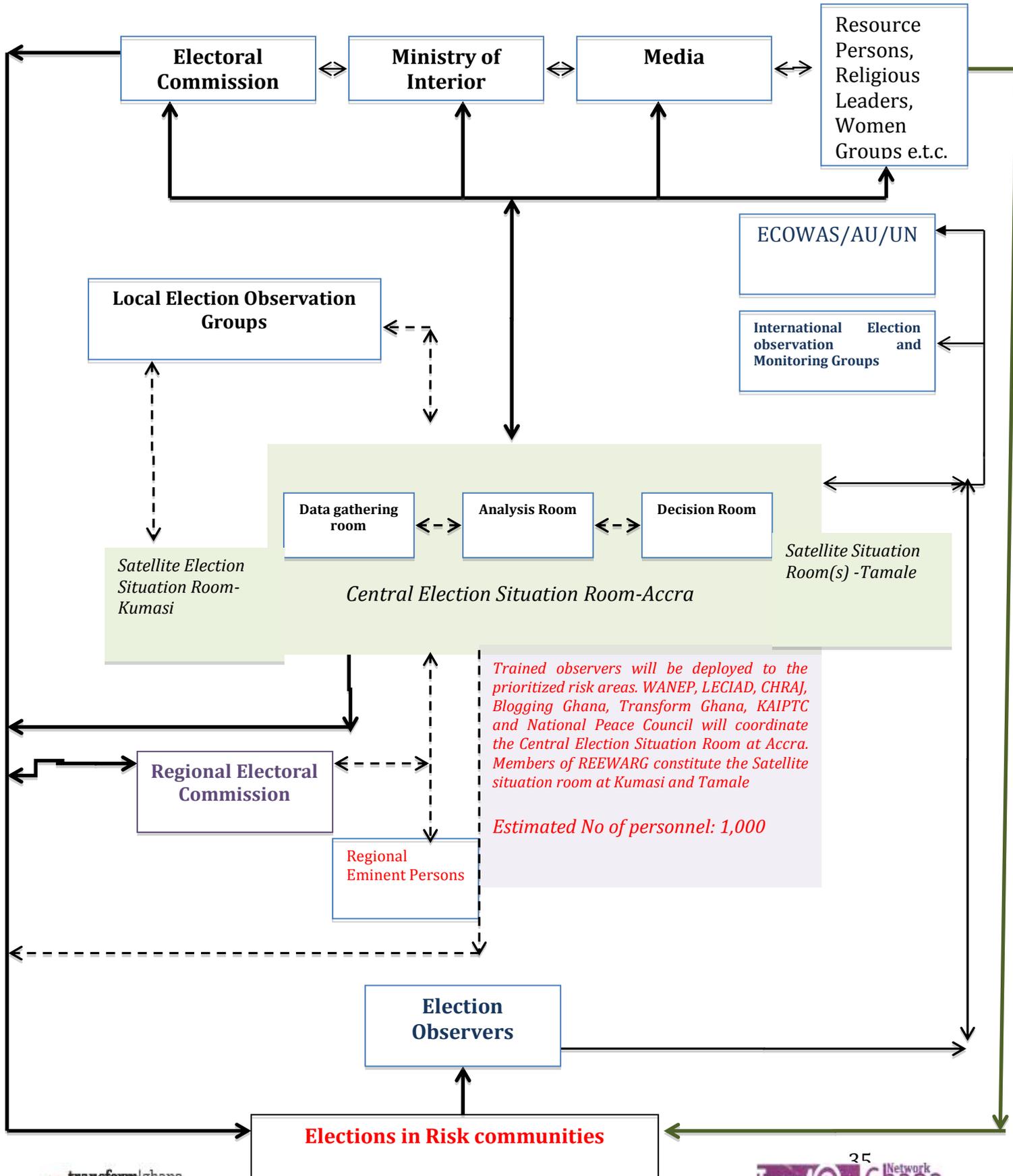
		Ano South, Obuasi municipal, Bekwai municipal		
4	Volta	Ketu south municipal, Agotime Ziope, Ho municipal, Krachi East Hohoe municipal, Nkwanta South	80	2,506
5	Brong Ahafo	Suyani Municipal, Techiman municipal, Atebubu, Asunafo south, Suyani West,	51	2,963
6	Eastern	Suhum/Kraboa/Coaltar, New, Afran Plains south, New Juaben municipal, Kwahu West municipal	79	3,243
7	Western		46	2,941
8	Central	Agona West Municipal, Cape Coast Metropolitan, Mfantseman municipal, Ajumako-Enyan-Esiam	64	2,482
9	Upper East	Bolgatanga Municipal, Builsa, Bongo, Bawku Municipal, Kassena/Nankana	34	1,226
10	Upper West	Wa Municipal, Lawra, Nadowli, Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan, Wassa Amenfi West, Mpohor/Wassa East, Bibiani-Anhwiaso-Bekwai	41	991
	Total Number of Observers		750	



NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL



Annex 3: Operational Organogram of the Election Situation Room for Ghana Election



Annex 4: List of visitors to the coordinating ESR at Accra:

S/n	Name	Organization/Institution	Designation
1.	H.E Dan Nana Aicha	Niger Embassy	Ambassador
2.	Babara Revene	RPOD Office	
3.	Mirian Juan –Tores Gonzales	Yale/LECIAD	Researcher
4.	MC Colemah (Major Gen. Rtd)	Civic Forum Initiative	Chairman
5.	A. Conchiglia		
6.	Yaki Zalunashi	Japan Embassy	Observer
7.	Noriaki Sadamoto	Japan Embassy	Observer
8.	Toshih Hizuki	Japan Embassy	Observer
9.	Tomi Longoborcee		
10.	Abdou Adamou		
11.	Mabel Viviey	STAR-Ghana	
12.	Tove Degnbol	Embassy of Denmark in Ghana	Ambassador
13.	Salima Buzhanne	European Union	Governance
14.	William Hana	European Union	Ambassador
15.	Linda Thomas–Greenfield	United States Government	Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs
16.	Robert P.Jackson	US Embassy in Ghana	Ambassador
17.	M. Noa	Embassy of Japan	
18.	S- Kitami	Embassy of Japan	
19.	Elizabeth Lewis	International Republican Institute	Deputy Director, Africa
20.	Edem Hini	“	
21.	Sayuri Shimotani	Japanese International Cooperation Agency	
22.	Nori Yonebayashi	“	
23.	Nicolas Mout		
24.	Cecilia Wiggers	Netherlands Embassy	Deputy Head of Mission
25.	Felix Lomans	“	Second Secretary
26.	Daniel Atchebro	UN Human Rights Office	
27.	Glen Asli	Austria High Commission in Ghana	
28.	Dan Kimmon	Canadian High Commission	
29.	Afi Yakubu	FOSDA	Member of the Women Situation Room
30.	Mohammed Ibn Chambas	United Nations Office for West Africa and he Sahel	Special Representative and Head

31.	Roswithe Kremser	“	
32.	Shinji Taguchi	-Japanese International Cooperation Agency	
33.	Peter E. Olesen	Embassy of Denmark	
34.	Roswithe Wremser	UNOWAS	
35.	Olivier Yoro	Journalist Association of Cote d'Ivoire	Chairman
36.	Dimitri Avraam	Consulate of Belgium	
37.	Dominic Sam	United Nations Development Program	Country Representative
38.	Osaro Odemwingie	British Council election observation mission	
39.	Jonnie Carson	National Democratic Institute Election Observation Mission	Head of delegation

Notable Comments from visitors to the ESR

“Thank you for your excellent work” ...Linda Thomas-Greenfield, U.S.
Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs.

“Thank you for an initiative in favour of peaceful elections”...Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)

“Very active and enthusiastic group. Thank you for working for peace”...Afi Yakubu, Women Situation Room, Ghana

“Impressive set up and excellent briefing. Thank you for the good and important work you are doing”...Peter E. Olesen,
Embassy of Denmark

“Excellent briefing and good work done!”...Dimitri Avraam, Consulate of Belgium

“Felt the great future of Africa in secured peace”...Shinji Taguchi, Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

“Great job! Keep up the great work”...Elizabeth Lewis, Deputy Director, Africa, International Republican Institute