



Election Situation Room (ESR)

A Coordinated Election Observation Platform for the 2024 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Ghana

Opening Statement

December 6, 2024 – Accra: The National Peace Council (NPC) and the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) is launching the Election Situation Room (ESR) and urges Ghanaians to have peaceful Presidential and Parliamentary elections on 7th December 2024. The ESR, supported by the European Union and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and with complementary funding from the Governments of Sweden, Austria and the United Kingdom. The ESR is an integral part of the Electoral violence Monitoring, Analysis, and Mitigation (E-MAM) project which is designed to mitigate election violence in 12 West African countries through National Early Warning Systems (NEWS).

Since May 2024, NPC and WANEP, in partnership with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC) and United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), launched the National Election Response Group (NERG) and Regional Election Response Group (RERG). The primary objective of NERG/RERG is to engage in discussions, develop response strategies, and recommend actions to address potential violent threats leading up to, during, and after the elections. NERG/RERG consists of prominent individuals representing key state and non-state institutions to prevent and mitigate violence associated with elections. This collaborative effort highlights NPC and WANEP's commitment to promoting peace, security, and successful elections in Ghana by providing timely information and strategic response mechanisms.



From December 6th to 8th, 2024, the NPC and WANEP will operate a centralised Election Situation Room at the Movenpick Ambassador Hotel in Accra. The ESR, with support from RERGs established in 11 regions, namely, Upper East, Upper West, Northern, North-East, Savannah, Bono, Bono-East, Ashanti, Greater Accra, Western, and Volta, will undertake preventive actions across the country. These 11 regions were selected on the basis of our threat analysis conducted earlier in the year. The ESR monitors, reports, analyses, and facilitates responses to violent threats to the peaceful conduct of the Presidential and Parliamentary elections.

Five Hundred and Ten (510) accredited observers, including 319 observers from WANEP, have been deployed mainly to 276 prioritised "very high-risk" to "Medium-risk" constituencies across Ghana's 16 regions (refer to the deployment map below), and 191 observers deployed by NPC across all the regions. Out of the 510 observers, 370 (72.55%) are males and 140 (27.45%) are females. These observers will use a checklist comprising 63 questions, divided into six forms, to monitor voting processes within their assigned areas. Reports will be submitted through a Geospatial Information System (GIS) designed for this purpose. Additional updates will be received via dedicated WhatsApp channels and phone calls between the situation room and field observers.

The ESR comprises five operational sections: the *Data Gathering Room*, *Analysis Room*, *Decision Room*, *Fact-checking Room* and *Communication Room* (refer to the ESR Explanatory Guide below). For the next three days (6th, 7th and 8th December 2024), 134 personnel, including youth, women, elections experts, and eminent persons have been mobilised to operationalise the ESR with the support of resource persons from other West African countries. In addition, a team of Fact-checkers from the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) and West Africa Fact-Space will support the ESR in validating sensitive incidents and other social media posts before being released to the public.

Pre-Elections Context

On Saturday, 7 December 2024, 18,774,159 registered Ghanaians, comprising 9,689,980 (51.6%) females and 9,084,179 (48.4%) males, are expected to go to the polls for the ninth presidential and parliamentary elections under the Fourth Republic. Out of 24 applicants for presidential candidate, 13 were accredited by the Electoral Commission to contest the elections. These include two females: Akua Donkor (Ghana Freedom Party), who is deceased, but her image will remain on the ballot,ⁱ and Nana Akosua Frimpomaa Sarpong Kumankuma of the Convention People's Party. In the parliamentary election, 801 aspirants, made up of 119 (14.8%) females and 682 (85.1%) males, will contest in 276 Constituencies. The elections will be held in all 40,976 polling stations across the country. The number of polling stations in Ghana has increased by approximately 22.81% compared to the 2020 elections. According to the Electoral Commission (EC), the increase is intended to reduce congestion at polling centres, ensuring accessibility and a more efficient voting process. This initiative is aligned with the EC's commitment to improving electoral efficiency and transparency.

Electoral Commission Preparation

The Electoral Commission reportedly undertook the following key activities in preparation for the 7th December 2024 elections:

- Limited voter registration;
- Compilation of voter register, exhibition and voter transfer processes;
- Certification of candidates and production/posting of notices of polls;
- Printing and distribution of ballot papers;
- Distribution of voter registers to political parties and candidates;
- Distribution of Biometric Verification Devices (BVDs) and other electoral materials;

- Recruitment and training of polling station staff;
- Setting up of Constituency and Regional Collation Centres, and;
- Engagements with the political parties and independent candidates through the Inter-party Advisory Committee (IPAC) on all relevant issues.

Security Preparedness:

While the NPC and WANEP hotspot mapping reports identified 203 “Very-high to Medium Risk Areas nationwide based on our specific election security indicators, the EC has reportedly identified 7,250 flashpoints nationwide. The National Election Security Taskforce led by the Ghana Police Service has deployed personnel nationwide to ensure law and public order before, during and after the 7 December polls. The Election Security Taskforce is drawn from the Ghana Police Service, Ghana Armed Forces, Ghana Fire Service, Ghana Prisons Service, Ghana Immigration Service, Ghana Customs Division of the Ghana Revenue Authority and the National Intelligence Bureau, among others. The Inspector General of the Ghana Police Service, Dr George Akuffo Dampare, who chairs the Election Security Taskforce, has assured the general public of the commitment and professionalism of personnel throughout the electoral process.

Challenges and Concerns for the Peaceful Conduct of the Elections

The following are some of the identified concerns and challenges from the pre-election period:

- An environment of mistrust and suspicions of key state institutions by a section of the citizenry
- Mistrust and suspicions among political actors;
- Negative media reportage and social media vulnerabilities, including information disorders;
- Protests and demonstrations over socio-economic conditions in the country;
- Rising political intolerance across the country;

- Violent confrontations and clashes between and among political parties.
- Unresolved conflicts and its implications for the peaceful conduct of the elections.
- The disqualification of presidential and parliamentary candidates
- Disputes following the declaration of four vacant parliamentary seats
- Under representation of women and youth in politics
- The use of technology and the new media as tools for political mobilisation and spreading propaganda, hate speech, fake news, misinformation, disinformation, mal-information, accusations, counteraccusations, and violent communication by political parties

Recommendations

Given the challenges raised, the ESR recommends the following:

- The EC is encouraged to continue to maintain frequent communication with stakeholders and the general public throughout the electoral process.
- The National Election Security Taskforce is encouraged to continue to uphold the principles of neutrality, impartiality and professionalism in the discharge of their duties;
- The National Communication Authority, the Ghana Journalists Association and the National Media Commission should encourage their members to respect the ethics of the journalism profession and refrain from disseminating any information that could exacerbate tensions.
- The General Public should verify before sharing information on social media.
- Political actors should observe the provisions of the code of conduct of political parties and the 2024 Presidential and Parliamentary Peace Pacts.



- Civil society and other election observer missions are encouraged to coordinate their observations toward a peaceful election process;
- We call on all stakeholders, especially the youth and political parties, to be tolerant of each other throughout the electoral process.

True to the ideals of peace and social cohesion, the ESR is committed to observing the ethics, integrity and transparency of the electoral process to prevent violence and human rights violations.

The ESR will make opening and closing statements on election day, a preliminary statement to the public on Sunday, 8th December 2024, and a general report at the end of the electoral process. We also take this opportunity to invite stakeholders to visit and acquaint themselves with the ESR.

Finally, we appreciate the general support of our partners - the EU, USAID, the Swedish International Development Agency, Austrian Development Cooperation, Government Communication Service-UK, and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office via the British High Commission in Accra.

May God bless Ghana and make our nation great and strong.

Made in Accra, 6th December 2024
The Election Situation Room

ⁱ [Why Akua Donkor's image will remain on the presidential ballot on December 7 - EC clarifies](#) (Accessed 05-12-2024).

