



ELECTION SITUATION ROOM (ESR)

DECEMBER 7, 2024, PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN GHANA

PRELIMINARY DECLARATION

1. INTRODUCTION

On December 6th, 2024, the National Peace Council (NPC), the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), and their partners officially opened the Election Situation Room (ESR) at the Movenpick Ambassador Hotel in Accra. The ESR is an integral part of the Electoral Violence Monitoring, Analysis, and Mitigation (E-MAM) project, which is 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. It 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 the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), launched the National Election Response Group (NERG) and Regional Election Response Group (RERG). The NERG/RERG operated across 11 regions, namely, Upper East, Upper West, Northern, North-East, Savannah, Bono, Bono-East, Ashanti, Greater Accra, Western, and Volta, and focused on preventive actions nationwide. These 11 regions were selected based on our threat analysis conducted earlier in the year. 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. The ESR monitors, reports, analyses, and facilitates responses to violent threats to the peaceful conduct of the 2024 Presidential and Parliamentary elections.

From December 6th to 8th, 2024, Five Hundred and Ten (510) accredited observers, including 319 observers from WANEP, were deployed to 276 prioritised "very high-risk" to "medium risk" constituencies, and 191 observers were deployed by NPC across Ghana's 16 regions. Out of the 510 observers, 370 (72.55%) were males and 140 (27.45%) were females. These observers used a checklist comprising 63 questions, divided into six forms, to monitor voting processes within their assigned areas.

This Preliminary Declaration provides a summary of the observations of the electoral process and actions taken by eminent persons in the ESR.

2. SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS

Preparations for the Election

As part of its preparation for the December 7, 2024, Presidential and Parliamentary elections, the Electoral Commission (EC) compiled a Voters Register with 18,774,159 registered Ghanaians, comprising 9,689,980 (51.6%) females and 9,084,179 (48.4%) males. The EC accredited 13 candidates for the presidential election, consisting of two (2) females and eleven (11) males. For the parliamentary election, 801 candidates, of whom 119 (14.8%) were females and 682 (85.1%) males, were accredited to contest in 276 constituencies. The elections were conducted in all 40,976 polling stations across the country.

Opening of Polling Stations

The December 7 polls were expected to open at 7:00 a.m. across the country. However, out of 384 reports received from our observers, 66.2% (254 reports) indicated that polling stations observed opened on time, while 33.8% (130 reports) were delayed - reasons for the delay range from security to technical to logistical challenges. For example, in the Oti Region, the DA Primary School Ofosu 2 (Polling Station Code: L072602B) opened at 9:30 a.m. Also, at the Mur-Fatawu polling station (code R111007) in West Natinga, within the Bawku Central constituency in the Upper East Region, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Polling Agents were reportedly absent earlier due to threats of possible attacks linked to the Bawku conflict.

Despite some polling stations being unable to open on time, most EC officials observed all laid-out electoral procedures outlined by law. These include the presence of all polling officials and the display of empty ballot boxes in front of voters.

There was also a fair representation of females as EC officials, party agents and security personnel at the polling stations, which reflects women's active involvement in the electoral processes. Moreover, consideration was given to persons with disabilities, the elderly, pregnant and lactating mothers to vote. Domestic observers from WANEP, Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), NPC, National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) and the National Catholic Secretariat were visible in most polling stations. International organisations such as the African Union (AU), ECOWAS, and the Commonwealth also observed the elections.

Voting Process

Despite reported incidents in some polling stations, the voting process proceeded without major complaints and in accordance with the electoral process. Out of 1,952 reports on the voting process, 98.7% (1,927) indicated that voters on the electoral roll were verified using the Biometric Verification Device (BVD) or manually. Additionally, male and female security personnel were observed at the polling stations. Furthermore, 86.6% (1,690 reports) revealed mobile phone or electronic gadget usage was prevented in the voting booth.

Closing of Polls

The ESR observers reported that voting ended peacefully in most of the constituencies except for some isolated cases of physical and verbal attacks, including a confirmed shooting with two fatalities and injuries. Out of 348 reports recorded at the closing of the polls, 92% (320 reports) indicated that the voting process closed at 5:00 pm. In accordance with the electoral procedure, 96% (333 reports) of the ESR recordings revealed that counting began immediately after polls closed in the presence of all required actors and without major interruptions.

Summary of Incidents

Generally, the elections were conducted in a conducive environment except for 42 incidents that were recorded, some of which are listed below:

- In the Assemblies of God polling station (Code: H010304A), in the Abromem electoral area in Asunafo South Constituency in Ahafo region, a former DCE was alleged to be moving around the polling station accompanied by five (5) police officers with face masks and guns.
- In the Ho Polytechnic Ho Have 2 (Code: D121207), at the Bosontoe electoral area in the Ho Central constituency, a voter was caught taking a shot of his ballot paper after voting. A security Officer deleted the pictures and returned the phone to the voter.
- At Presbyterian Upper Primary School Polling Station (Code: F357601) at the Effiduase Asokore Constituency in the Ashanti Region, an NDC representative alleged that a known NPP member had transported an EC ballot issuer to vote in another polling station. The NDC representative insisted he could not tell what transpired during the transportation and refused to allow the ballot issuer to work. This was resolved by re-assigning the ballot issuer to a different task.
- At the Martin Luther Junior School polling station (C261505B) in the Nii Komietey electoral area of the Ashaiman Constituency in the Greater Accra Region, EC officials in all eight (8) polling stations opened the poll without filling the statement of polls. An NDC party representative arrived at the polling station and insisted that the EC officials complete the statement of polls before the election continues. This halted the voting, but the EC officials complied, and the polls went smoothly afterwards.
- Within the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba Constituency in the Savannah Region, two Polling Stations (Codes: N020201 and N020402) identified parliamentary ballot papers were found to have faces of other parliamentary candidates belonging to another constituency.
- The Ghana Police Service reported an arrest of a polling station agent for double voting at Wassakropong-Appiahkrom polling station in the Western Region. The suspect was arrested, and he is assisting the Police with investigations.
- At the Mur-Fatawu polling station (code R111007) in West Natinga, within the Bawku Central constituency in the Upper East Region, the NDC Polling Agents were reportedly absent earlier due to threats of possible attacks linked to the Bawku conflict. However, the polls began around 9:40 am. Additional information indicated that voters have

refused to vote in the Parliamentary Elections, claiming that both candidates are from one ethnic group.

- The Ghana Police Service reported that an EC official in the Kintampo South Constituency of the Bono East Region was arrested for allegedly issuing about 15 ballot papers to voters that omitted the first Presidential candidate at the Ampesika-Bayere polling station.
- The Ghana Police Service confirmed a shooting incident at Nyankpala in the Northern Region, leading to one death and one person injured. Four suspects were arrested in connection with the shooting incident and are currently assisting the police with investigations.
- The ESR noted with concerns reports in the media depicting confrontations between some military personnel and some civilians.

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

1. At the STMA Primary School Polling station (Code: A071108) in Ntakonful 2 electoral Area, in the Essikado-ketan constituency in the Western Region, Six (6) NPP and three (3) NDC agents without accreditation disrupted the voting process by intimidating electoral officers and voters. The Ghana Police Service swiftly intervened to address the situation.
2. The Ghana Police Service confirmed a shooting incident at the Iron City in the Awutu Senya East Constituency in the Central Region. The incident resulted in the death of one person and the injury of another. Four (4) suspects were arrested, and an AK47 rifle with 69 rounds of ammunition was retrieved from the suspects.
3. Based on media reports, the ESR has noticed some post-election clashes, which have the potential to escalate into violence.

3. ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE EMINENT PERSONS IN THE DECISION ROOM

Since the beginning of the polls, the ESR Decision Room has been engaging the EC, the National Election Security Taskforce, political parties and other relevant stakeholders on these incidents, leading to the resolution of some of them while others are ongoing.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

1. Signing the Presidential and Parliamentary Peace Pacts is essential to committing political party candidates and their supporters to peaceful elections and acceptance of their outcomes.
2. Early concession of defeat by presidential and parliamentary candidates is vital to douse political tensions in the post-election period.
3. Timely and effective communication by the EC is essential in all phases of the electoral process to dispel rumours and suspicions among political parties and their supporters.

4. Stronger collaboration between the National Peace Council and the other key stakeholders such as NCCE, EC, WANEP, National Election Security Taskforce, and National Centre for the Coordination of Early Warning and Response Mechanism (NCCRM) is necessary to enhance information dissemination at all levels, especially at the community level.
5. Highly trained officials of the EC with requisite knowledge of the electoral procedures are imperative to effectively manage the voting process to enhance credibility and trust in the system.
6. Media professionalism and fact-checking are key in preventing information disorders.
7. The presence of international and domestic election observer missions enhances the credibility of the electoral process.
8. Enhanced civic awareness of the electoral process contributed to the inclusiveness, credibility and integrity of the elections.
9. Swift action on the part of the police to reported incidents of crime contributed to enhancing the credibility of the police and integrity of the process.

5. CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

1. Delays in the delivery of electoral materials in some polling stations affected the commencement of the voting process.
2. Massing up of party supporters at the collation centres disrupted the compilation process of the results.
3. Incidents of information disorders heighten tensions and violent confrontations among political parties.
4. Exposure of electoral officers and the media personnel to the risks of attacks by political party supporters

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We commend all Ghanaians for their patriotism and patience in the electoral process. We also applaud the efforts of the Electoral Commission of Ghana, the political parties, the National Election Security Taskforce, civil society organisations, women, youth groups and the media for their contribution towards the relatively peaceful presidential and parliamentary elections. We express appreciation to the international and domestic election observers for monitoring the electoral process.

We commend H.E Dr Mahamudu Bawumia for upholding his commitment to the Presidential Peace Pact in his concession speech this morning. This action has enhanced Ghana's democratic process and made our country proud and confirmed our position as the beacon of democracy in Africa.

We also congratulate H.E John Dramani Mahama for his social media acceptance of the concession by the NPP Presidential Candidate.

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

1. We encourage political parties to continue to cooperate with the Electoral Commission and the National Election Security Task Force and ensure a smooth running of the outstanding collation processes which are ongoing in some constituencies.
2. We implore political parties to encourage their supporters to be law-abiding and all Ghanaians to be peaceful during this post-election period.
3. The EC, political parties and other relevant governance institutions are encouraged to consider the implementation of recommendations from the reports of domestic and international Election Observation Missions (EOMs) to improve electoral processes in the country.
4. Political parties and their supporters are encouraged to avoid using abusive words to express their views, especially on social media.
5. The National Security Taskforce is encouraged to deploy timely and effective response mechanisms to address security concerns in this post-election period.
6. We entreat Ghanaians to celebrate victory in magnanimity, demonstrate patriotism and embrace civic responsibility in the interest of social cohesion and national unity.
7. With reference to the Elections Peace Pact signed, we encourage all stakeholders to utilise laid-down procedures to seek redress on any electoral grievances.
8. As we await the official declaration of results by the EC, the ESR encourages all parties and their supporters to remain calm and uphold the rule of law to preserve the peace of the country.

Appreciations

We use this opportunity to appreciate all our partners - European Union, USAID, Governments of Sweden, Austria, and the United Kingdom, ECOWAS, ECONEC and UNOWAS.

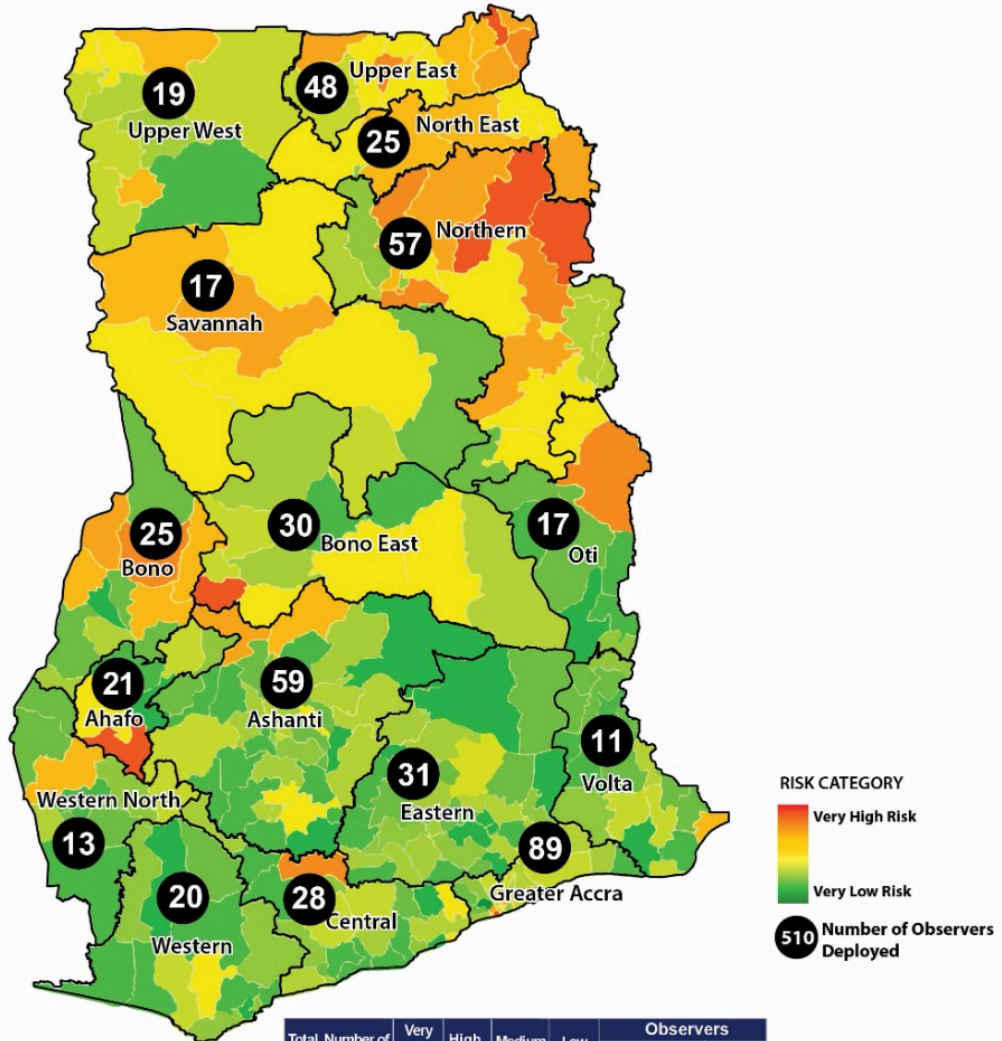
We also thank the Members of the Governing Board of the NPC, National and Regional Election Response Groups (N/REREG), NCCRM, WANEP, CJID, and the young men and women who served as Observers, Analysts, Fact-checkers, Data Gatherers, Communicators and Coordination team as well as the media

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



Ghana, General Elections 2024

Deployment plan for 510 observers by WANEP / NPC in Hotspot Constituencies



	Total Number of Constituencies	Very High Risk	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Observers			
						WANEP	NPC	Total	
1	AHAFO REGION	6	1	1	2	2	9	12	21
2	ASHANTI REGION	47	4	2	23	18	40	19	59
3	BONO EAST REGION	11	1	2	6	2	15	15	30
4	BONO REGION	12	3	2	5	2	17	8	25
5	CENTRAL REGION	23	1	2	11	9	19	9	28
6	EASTERN REGION	33	0	0	17	16	17	14	31
7	GREATER ACCRA REGION	34	5	3	23	3	49	40	89
8	NORTH EAST REGION	6	3	3	0	0	12	13	25
9	NORTHERN REGION	18	9	4	5	0	46	11	57
10	OTI REGION	9	1	1	2	5	8	9	17
11	SAVANNA REGION	7	2	3	1	1	11	6	17
12	UPPER EAST REGION	15	8	3	4	0	38	10	48
13	UPPER WEST REGION	11	0	2	8	1	12	7	19
14	VOLTA REGION	18	1	9	8	0	11	0	11
15	WESTERN NORTH REGION	9	0	1	3	5	5	8	13
16	WESTERN REGION	17	0	2	6	9	10	10	20
		276	39	40	124	73	319	191	510