



Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO)

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CODEO Final Report on Observation of the Ayawaso West Wuogon Constituency By-Election

Introduction

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), on Thursday, January 31, 2019, deployed its observers for the Ayawaso West Wuogon Constituency in the Greater Accra Region by-election conducted by the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC). At the end of polls on the Election Day, CODEO shared its initial findings on the elections (Close-of-Polls Statement) with the general public. CODEO's Close-of-Polls Statement highlighted some security concerns, including the heavy presence of security personnel at several polling stations observed, the apparent lack of coordination around security deployment for the elections, and the conduct of some security operatives at polling stations observed.

CODEO is pleased to share with the Electoral Commission, key election stakeholders and the general public its overall findings from its observation of the Ayawaso West Wuogon by-election. This final report includes observations made during the set-up and opening, voting, counting, results declaration and results collation processes in the course of the Election Day. The report also touches on the conduct of electoral actors on the Election Day and highlights some incidents observed by CODEO in the course of the election. Based on its findings, CODEO makes recommendations to key election stakeholders aimed at improving the conduct of future elections.

Methodology and Deployment

Twenty-three (23) CODEO observers visited a randomly-selected list of polling stations scattered across the various electoral areas in the Ayawaso West Wuogon Constituency on the day of the polls. These observers embarked on roaming observation of polling stations, spending an average of two hours at each polling station visited before moving on to the next. The mode of observer deployment for the by-election was to obtain a representative picture of the conduct of the polls across the constituency. Overall, CODEO observers were able to visit a total of 82 out of the 137 polling stations in the constituency at some point in time during the polls. At these polling stations, they observed various aspects of the poll processes including set-up and opening, voter verification and voting, counting, and results declaration. CODEO also had one observer who observed proceedings at the constituency collation center. Observer data was captured using the CODEO observation checklist and incident forms. Data received from observers was analyzed and below are the main findings.

Summary of General Findings

- a) *Set-up, Opening of Polls and Voting Procedures*
 - All CODEO observers reported being admitted to polling stations by electoral officials. Most polling stations observed opened by 7:15A.M. Observers also noted that most polling stations were set-up in a manner that allowed for secrecy of ballots. Nevertheless, some observers noted that at a few polling stations, set-up of the voting booths was not conducive for ensuring secrecy of ballots.

- Observers indicated that, election officials generally adhered to the procedures for opening of polling stations, including showing ballot boxes to be empty, sealed and placed in the public view before commencing voting.
- Most polling stations visited were assessed by observers to be accessible to persons with disability and the elderly.
- Observers reported seeing political party agents at the various polling stations visited. Party agents from the New Patriotic Party (NPP) were seen at all (100%) polling stations observed while party agents from the National Democratic Congress (NDC) were seen at 94% of polling stations observed during the opening of polls. Party agents from other political parties and or candidates were only present at a few polling stations observed. In the course of the polling process, observers reported the withdrawal from some polling stations of party agents for the NDC though a few of them later returned to observe voting proceedings.
- Nearly all polling stations had stationed uniformed security personnel at the time of opening of polls.
- Observers also reported that most polling stations observed had the relevant electoral materials.
- CODEO observers noted that, generally, poll officials complied with voting and verification procedures before allowing voters to cast their ballots.
- CODEO observers noted a generally low voter turn-out as captured in the CODEO Close-of-Polls report. At most polling stations observed, few voters trickled in to polling stations from time to time. The Electoral Commission's official turn-out figure for the polls which was 19.83% corroborated CODEO's earlier observation.

b) Performance of Biometric Verification Devices

- CODEO observers reported that all polling stations visited had back-up Biometric Verifications Devices (BVDs). The BVDs also generally performed quite well. Within the two hours that observers spent at the various polling stations visited, there were very few instances where the fingerprints of voters were rejected by the biometric verification devices. At 86% of polling stations, observers did not witness any rejection of fingerprints by biometric verification devices within the period that the observers visited those centers. In some instances where the biometric verification devices rejected voters' fingerprints, observers noted that, poll officials asked the voters to wait for some time and try again, and such voters were able to eventually go through the biometric verification. In some cases, voters with biometric verification challenges were allowed to go through manual verification processes to vote. However, a few of the voters with similar challenges at the Providence Baptist Church polling station at West Legon were not offered manual verification at the period the CODEO observer visited the polling station.
- At the end of voting and counting, observers noted generally few incidents of manual verification. At majority of polling stations where counting of ballots and results declaration was observed, the number of manual verifications recorded by poll officials at the end of counting was zero (0).

c) Closing, Counting and Results Declaration

- CODEO observers witnessed the closing of polls and counting of ballots and reported that, at the time of counting, there were party agents from the NPP at all polling stations observed by CODEO, while NDC party agents were seen at only 7% of polling stations observed. Agents from other political parties were also seen at 17% of polling stations observed. Eighty percent (80%) of polling stations had sufficient lighting during counting of ballots but twenty percent (20%) did not. Observers noted a generally low incidence of rejected ballots with many polling stations recording either zero or very few numbers. Observers did not observe any request for recounting of ballots by political party agents present at the polling stations observed. Nearly all CODEO observers said they agreed with the official vote counts at the observed polling stations. Observers reported seeing Presiding Officers endorse results declaration forms as required by the EC's procedures for declaring results.

d) Incidents Recorded

CODEO observers reported a number of incidents which they noted in the course of Election Day. These included the following:

1. The intimidating presence of masked security persons at some polling stations in the course of Election Day: In some cases, these masked security operatives who wore khaki and black attire loaded themselves in vehicles and hovered around polling stations for a while before leaving. Some observers noted that the mode of driving by some of these security operatives, even around such polling stations appeared quite reckless or dangerous. Some of the polling stations where these masked security operatives were sighted by observers included Opposite A & C Shopping Mall (East Legon), Restaurant C 23/29 (Okponglo), Meteorological Service Mpehuasem (Okponglo), Little Flowers Montessori Prim and JHS (Dzorwulu), Bawaleshie Primary School 1 & 2 and Akuafu Annex (Legon).
2. The heavy presence of security personnel at various polling stations observed: CODEO observers noted the high number of security personnel, including stationed uniformed personnel, mobile patrol teams, and non-uniformed personnel at polling stations visited. CODEO observers also noted that in some cases, mobile security operatives were fully-armed. Some mobile patrol teams came in pick-ups, and what seemed like private vehicles.
3. CODEO observers also noted that, some plain-clothed security operatives who wore identification tags with the inscription 'NSCS' did not appear to understand the electoral rules and processes and sought to intervene in electoral procedures. Some notable instances are as follows:
 - At the Presbyterian Church-Abelenkpe (1) polling station, some of these security operatives attempted to turn away some roaming accredited party agents from polling stations when indeed it was the main responsibility of the Presiding Officer to admit or deny access to a polling station;
 - At the Prisons JHS at Roman Ridge where there were three adjoining polling stations, some men in black attire, who identified themselves as National Security Officers and had accreditation tags with the inscription 'NSCS OPS Ayawaso West Wuogon,' positioned themselves close to poll officials. They were approached by uniformed police personnel who asked them to produce identification materials and to relocate from where they were – an instruction to which they obliged. Minutes later however, a pick-up with well-built men arrived at the polling station and these men rushed aggressively to the

police personnel and accosted him for questioning and directing the security operatives to relocate.

4. CODEO observers noted the chaos and violence which broke out at a location in the La Bawaleshie area of the constituency affected voting in a near-by polling station (La Bawaleshie Primary School 1) where voting was temporarily suspended till calm was restored.
5. Observers noted what seemed to be an uncoordinated security deployment for the elections which resulted in a situation where some polling stations had numerous visits by different categories of security personnel and patrol teams during the course of the polls.
6. Some CODEO observers noted instances of treating where political party representatives supplied food to voters and other persons (including poll officials) just around polling stations. At the Meteorological Service Mpehuasem, Mount of Holiness and Commonwealth Hall 2 polling stations for example, such treating was observed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on CODEO's overall observations, CODEO makes the following conclusions and recommendations:

- The actual conduct of the by-election, including the professional conduct of most poll officials, adherence to electoral rules and regulations, the availability of electoral materials and the performance of biometric verification, was generally consistent with electoral rules and regulations and were observed to be credible.
- Nevertheless, CODEO wishes to indicate that the security arrangements put in place for the conduct of the polls at various polling stations observed were not conducive for an electoral exercise.
- CODEO condemns the violent incident at the La Bawleshie area in the constituency on the day of the polls that affected voting at a nearby polling station.
- CODEO recommends that the security arrangement (Election Security Taskforce) which is typically put in place during general elections should apply during by-elections since it seems to be working for general elections.
- CODEO further recommends that all security personnel deployed to any polling station for electoral exercises must be adequately briefed about their specific roles at polling stations.
- CODEO entreats the EC to enhance the training and understanding of poll officials regarding the use of manual verification to help ensure that this aspect of the voting process is applied as and when necessary.

Signed:



Albert Arhin,
National Coordinator, CODEO

Dated: March, 29 2019

APPENDIX

List of Polling Stations Visited by CODEO Observers during Observation of the Ayawaso West Wuogon Constituency By-Election Held on January 31, 2019

S/N	CONSTITUENCY		ELECTORAL AREA		NAME OF POLLING STATION
1.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0612	ABELENKPE	C061201A	ACCRA CITY COUN PRIMARY SCHOOL 1
2.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0612	ABELENKPE	C061202	ACCRA CITY COUN PRIMARY SCHOOL 2
3.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0612	ABELENKPE	C061203	APOSTOLIC REVELATION SOCIETY ABELENKPE
4.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0612	ABELENKPE	C061204A	PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ABELENKPE 1
5.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0612	ABELENKPE	C061206	SOLID FOUNDATION PREP SCHOOL ABELENKPE
6.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0612	ABELENKPE	C061207A	METHODIST PRIMARY SCHOOL ABELENKPE
7.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0612	ABELENKPE	C061208	ACHIMOTA BUSINESS COLLEGE ABELENKPE
8.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0612	ABELENKPE	C061209B	PENTECOSTAL CHURCH ABELENKPE
9.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0612	ABELENKPE	C061210	BELMAR KINDERGATEN ABELENKPE
10.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0612	ABELENKPE	C061211A	ACCRA GIRLS VOCATIONAL INSTITUTE TESANO
11.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0612	ABELENKPE	C061212A	SANTANA VIDEO CENTRE TESANO
12.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0613	ROMAN RIDGE/ AIRPORT RES. AREA	C061301A	ECOLE FRANCAISE SCHOOL ROMAN RIDGE
13.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0613	ROMAN RIDGE/ AIRPORT RES. AREA	C061301B	ECOLE FRANCAISE SCHOOL ROMAN RIDGE
14.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0613	ROMAN RIDGE/ AIRPORT RES. AREA	C061303A	PRISONS 1and2 JHS ROMAN RIDGE
15.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0613	ROMAN RIDGE/ AIRPORT RES. AREA	C061303B	PRISONS 1and2 JHS ROMAN RIDGE
16.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0613	ROMAN RIDGE/ AIRPORT RES. AREA	C061306	PAN AFRICAN WRITERS ASSOCIATION
17.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0614	DZORWULU	C061401A	DZORWULU J H S 1
18.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0614	DZORWULU	C061402	DZORWULU J H S 2
19.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0614	DZORWULU	C061403	LITTLE FLOWERS MONTES SORI PRIM And JHS
20.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0614	DZORWULU	C061404A	METHODIST CHURCH DZORWULU
21.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0614	DZORWULU	C061404B	METHODIST CHURCH DZORWULU
22.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0614	DZORWULU	C061405A	KING OF KINGS INTERNATIONAL DZORWULU
23.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0614	DZORWULU	C061406B	DZORWULU PRIMARY SCHOOL
24.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0614	DZORWULU	C061407A	OPEN SPACE DZORWULU
25.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0614	DZORWULU	C061407B	OPEN SPACE DZORWULU

26.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0614	DZORWULU	C061408	PRESBY CHURCH (ALSVD ACADEMY)
27.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061501A	MENSAH SARBAH HALL 1
28.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061502A	MENSAH SARBAH HALL 2
29.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061503A	AKUAFFO HALL 1
30.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061504A	AKUAFFO HALL 2
31.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061505	AKUAFFO ANNEX
32.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061506A	VOLTA HALL
33.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061507B	LEGON HALL 1
34.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061508B	LEGON HALL 2
35.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061509A	LEGON HALL 3
36.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061510	LEGON HALL ANNEX
37.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061511A	COMMONWEALTH HALL 1
38.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061512	COMMONWEALTH HALL 2
39.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061513B	GIMPA
40.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061514A	PRESBY CHURCH OF GHANA WEST LEGON
41.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061515B	MT. HOLINESS CHURCH WEST LEGON
42.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061516A	CLINIC WEST LEGON
43.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061517A	WESTLAND GARDENS JUNCTION WEST LEGON
44.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061520	PROVIDENCE BAPTIST CHURCH WEST LEGON
45.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0615	LEGON	C061522B	GHANA HOSTELS LTD FLATS PENTAGON
46.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061601A	METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE MPEHUASEM 1
47.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061601B	METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE MPEHUASEM 1
48.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061601C	METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE MPEHUASEM 1
49.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061603	EXT JUNCTION 440/ 29 MPEHUNSEM
50.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061605A	AKPLAGA VILL EAST LEGON EXT 1
51.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061605B	AKPLAGA VILL EAST LEGON EXT 1
52.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061606A	AKPLAGA VILL EAST LEGON EXT 2
53.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061608	UNIVERSITY STAFF MARKET LEGON
54.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061609	UNIVERSITY STAFF PRIM SCHOOL LEGON
55.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061610A	BAWALESHIE PRIMARY SCHOOL 1

56.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061610B	BAWALESHIE PRIMARY SCHOOL 1
57.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061612	CHURCH OF PENTECOST BAWALESHE
58.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061613	AYATULA'S HOUSE
59.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061614	S' ROCK OUTREACH CHURCH
60.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061615	EXT DOWN NEAR ADOFIO GUEST HSE MPEHUASEM
61.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061616	EAST LEGON VETENARY CENTRE OKPONGLO
62.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061617A	RESTAURANT C 23/ 29 OKPONGLO
63.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0616	OKPONGLO	C061617B	RESTAURANT C 23/ 29 OKPONGLO
64.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061701A	PRESBY J H S ABOTSIMAN
65.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061701B	PRESBY J H S ABOTSIMAN
66.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061702B	BLUE KIOSK SHIASHIE
67.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061703A	TIMBER MARKET EAST LEGON
68.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061704A	MENSAH WOOD ST EAST LEGON
69.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061704B	MENSAH WOOD ST EAST LEGON
70.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061705A	CHRISTIAN BOOK CENTRE EAST LEGON
71.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061705B	CHRISTIAN BOOK CENTRE EAST LEGON
72.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061706A	AMERICAN HOUSE EAST LEGON
73.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061708	ADJACENT AMPOMAH GUEST HOUSE NEAR THE DRAIN
74.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061709A	DAY CARE CENTRE SHIASHIE
75.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061709B	DAY CARE CENTRE SHIASHIE
76.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061710A	EMMANUEL EYE CLINIC SHIASHIE
77.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061710B	EMMANUEL EYE CLINIC SHIASHIE
78.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061711A	OPPOSITE A AND C SHOPPING MALL EAST LEGON
79.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061711B	OPPOSITE A AND C SHOPPING MALL EAST LEGON
80.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061712	THE WORD OF GOD MINISTRY INTERNATIONAL
81.	AYAWASO WEST WUOGON	C0617	EAST LEGON	C061713	OPEN SPACE NEAR ERATA HOTEL