Nigeria Electoral Early Warning System

The Nigeria Electoral Early Warning System or NEEWS 2015 is a mechanism set up to monitor early warning signs and incidents of electoral violence in the run-up to the 2015 elections. The system includes information collected from crowd sourced citizen observers, media reports from the News Agency of Nigeria, and trained observers deployed in every local government area as part of the Transition Monitoring Group’s (TMG) Quick Count 2015. This document contains Search for Common Ground’s own analysis and does not necessarily represent the views of TMG.

Borno State

TMG Observers deployed to each LGA in the country send reports every two weeks answering a checklist of questions about the pre-election environment in their LGA. Observers submitted nine reports covering the period between November 14 and March 16. The data, while not statistically representative, provides some information on key indicators and early warning signs of election-related violence.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attack on rally</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Destruction of property</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inciting violence</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attack on candidate or supporters</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hate speech based on origin</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hate speech based on religion</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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The chart above depicts the % of LGA observers in Borno state reporting that they directly witnessed or heard reports of incidents relating to six key early warning indicators of election-related violence across the nine reporting periods.

Low Election-Related Violence

Compared to the average across states, TMG’s LGA observers in Borno state have reported relatively low levels of election-related violence across key indicators such as attacks on rallies, destruction of property, candidates inciting violence, attacks on candidates and voters, and hate speech and violence directed towards individuals based on their identity, such as their religion or where they come from. Since the Independent National Election Commission (INEC) announced the postponement of the polls in early February, there has been a slight increase in the number of LGA observers reporting witnessing or hearing reports of destruction of property including posters, billboards or party offices (37% - 10 of 27 LGAs in Period 8) and attacks on candidates or their supporters (26% - 7 of 27 LGAs in Period 7). Political parties, candidates and their supporters should abide by the Abuja Accord signed by fourteen political parties, which commits the parties to peaceful campaigns and non-violent elections. Civil society actors and the media should continue to facilitate dialogues and spread messages about non-violence.
Movement of People In and Out of LGAs

TMG’s observers from a large percentage of LGAs have reported both movement by a large number of people (100 or more) both in and out of the LGAs. Observers in 21 of the 27 LGAs in Borno state have reported directly witnessing movement of people out of their LGAs at some point in the last three months. These movements are most likely related to the movement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who are moving to other areas of the state or to neighboring states. While INEC has made provision for distributing permanent voters cards (PVCs) and establishing polling units within IDP camps, more voter education is needed to ensure these individuals are aware where and how they are able to vote.

Critical Incident Reports

In addition to sending reports every two weeks, TMG’s Quick Count Observers send text message reports when an incident of election-related violence or an indication of tension occurs. Search for Common Ground is also monitoring media reports of violent incidents related to the elections from the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN). These reports are then mapped. View the full map and more details about the incidents at https://neews2015.crowdmap.com/

Of the 227 verified critical incident reports sent by TMG observers as of March 16, thirteen of the reports came from observers in Borno state. Two of the reports recounted the disruption of the work of election officials, one on November 14 during the voter registration exercise in Askira-Uba LGA and one on January 16 during the distribution of permanent voters card (PVCs) in Kala-Balge LGA. Following the campaign visit by the APC candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, on February 17, NAN reported vandalisation of PDP offices and posters within Maiduguri.

In addition, TMG observers reported attacks perpetrated by Boko Haram in Magumeri LGA (December 16), Damboa LGA (December 20, February 13), Hawul (January 12), Mafa
About Search for Common Ground

We are an international non-governmental organization that works in 35 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the United States to transform the way the world deals with conflict, away from adversarial approaches and towards collaborative solutions. We have worked in Nigeria since 2004 and currently have offices in Abuja, Jos, Maiduguri and Port Harcourt. Find out more about us at www.sfcg.org and www.sfcg.org/nigeria.

LGA (January 14), and Shani LGA (March 5). NAN also confirmed deadly explosions in Maiduguri on November 25, January 10 and March 7, as well as the attacks on Baga and its surroundings in early January. While this list of attacks is not necessarily comprehensive, it does demonstrate a precarious security environment that could deter or prevent people remaining in these areas from participating in the polls. This further emphasizes the need for increased efforts to educate displaced voters on where they can collect their voters card and where and how they will be able to vote on election day.

Help us track and prevent election-related violence

The NEEWS 2015 system collects information from a number of sources including trained election observers, media sources and citizen observers like you. As stakeholders in the peace process, it is our collective responsibility to work together to promote peaceful elections. You too can contribute by reporting early warning signs or incidents of election-related violence.

What should you report?

You should report any warning signs – such as threats, rumors, inflammatory language, or tensions – or incidents of violence related to the election such as:

- Attacks or threats of violence against election officials, election observers or voters including voter intimidation;
- Attacks or threats of violence committed by or against political party agents, candidates, their supporters, or their property;
- Increased tensions between or attacks on groups and communities related to communal conflict that may be influenced by or influence the elections; or
- The use of inflammatory language or hate speech, especially directed at candidates or their supporters based on their gender, age, disability, where they are from or their religion.

How do you report?

Send an SMS to one of the following numbers:

- MTN – 09035419841
- GLO – 08155529646
- Airtel – 07083648546
- Etisalat – 09098385657

or

Tweet about it using the hashtag #NEEWS2015report

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