The Nigeria Electoral Early Warning System (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.

Rivers State

**Checklist Reports**

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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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attack on Rally</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of property</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inciting violence</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack on candidate or supporters</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hate speech based on origin</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hate speech based on religion</td>
<td>35%</td>
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The chart to the left depicts the % of LGA observers in Rivers state reporting that they directly witnessed or heard reports of incidents relating to six key early warning indicators of election-related violence across the seven reporting periods.

**Attacks on Rallies and Candidates or Supporters**

The number of TMG’s LGA observers in Rivers state who have reported attacks on or intimidation of candidates or their supporters has been consistently higher than the average seen across states during the pre-election period. The number of LGA observers having witnessed or heard reports of either attacks on rallies...
or candidates or supporters during the seventh reporting period (February 6—19) reached 52% of LGA observers (12 of 23 LGAs) for the second time in the pre-election period and have remained high for the remaining reporting period. Violence not only results in the loss of lives and property, but it also deters participation in the democratic process. 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.

High Indicators of Hate Speech

Observers in Rivers state have also reported high levels of hate speech, particularly targeting candidates or their supporters based on their religion and where they are from. Hate speech reached its peak in Period 7 (February 6-19), when over half of the LGA observers in Rivers state (12 of 23 LGAs) reported witnessing or hearing reports of hate speech based on where a candidate or supporter is from and 39% (9 of 23 LGAs) reported hate speech based on religion. Both indicators have remained high for the remaining reporting periods. Civil society groups, community leaders and other actors should counter these messages by promoting nonviolence and political parties and candidates should focus on issue-based campaigns rather than divisive identity or personality politics.

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 reports sent by TMG observers as of March 16, four of the critical incident reports came from observers in Rivers state. This included reports of gunshots fired in front of the government house during protests relating to the selection of the APC’s gubernatorial candidate; an attack on an INEC official during the continuous voter registration exercise in Opobo LGA; the destruction of billboards belonging to a PDP candidate in Gokana LGA on January 13; and the disruption of an APC rally in Okrika on February 17 that resulted in the death of a police officer.

In addition, six incidents of election-related violence were reported by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN). This includes three incidents of violence in Okrika LGA including an attack on an APC office on January 11, an attack on the venue where APC was to hold a rally on January 24, as well as the February 17 attack on the APC rally.

Other incidents include:

- Attack by unknown gunmen on APC supporters on...
their way to a rally on January 6 (NAN)

- Attack on the APC office in Ngor, Andoni LGA on January 16 (NAN)
- Gunfire in Abua during the visit of the PDP gubernatorial candidate on January 15 (non TMG citizen observer)

Violence not only results in the loss of lives and property, but it also deters participation in the democratic process. Political parties, candidates and their supporters should abide by the Abuja Accord signed by fourteen political parties, which commits the parties to peaceful campaigning and non-violent elections. Civil society actors and the media should continue to facilitate dialogue and spread messages about non-violence.

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.

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.

Find out more about NEEWS 2015 by:
Visiting our website: www.neews2015.org
Liking us on Facebook: SFCG Nigeria
Following us on Twitter: @NEEWS2015

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