

**COMMUNIQUE AT THE END PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN  
TRANSITION MONITORING GROUP, HEDA RESOURCE CENTRE, POLICE SERVICE  
COMMISSION, INDEPENDENT CORRUPT PRACTICES AND OTHER RELATED OFFENCES  
COMMISSION, NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, WOMEN ADVOCATES RESEARCH  
AND DOCUMENTATION CENTRE ON PARTNERSHIP FOR MONITORING, DOCUMENTING,  
REPORTING AND PROSECUTING VOTE TRADING DURING THE FEBRUARY AND MARCH  
GENERAL ELECTIONS**

**INTRODUCTION**

With the forthcoming General Elections fast approaching; Transition Monitoring Group in collaboration with HEDA Resource Centre converged on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2019 at the Board Room, Yar'Adua Centre, One Memorial Drive, CBD, Abuja, to present to the public the partnership between the Police Service Commission (PSC), Independent Corrupt Practices And Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and Women Advocates Research And Documentation Centre (WARDC) on the monitoring, documenting, reporting and prosecuting vote trading during the February and March general elections.

The occasion was graced by eminent and revered members of the society inclusive; Adamu Mohammed (Mr.), Acting Inspector General of Police, Femi Falana (SAN) as the Chairman of the occasion, Suraju Olanrewaju (Mr.), Chair of HEDA, Dr. Akiode-Afolabi, Chair, Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), Prof. Shehu Abdullahi, Member of the National Information Centre Eminent Personalities (NICEP), media organisations and Civil Society Organisations and their representatives.

The public presentation received a welcome address by the Chair of HEDA Resource Centre on the need to prosecute perpetrators and beneficiaries of criminal activities during the electoral process; The Chair of Transition Monitoring Group gave a brief summary on the statement of objective and implementation plan of the partnership; the Chairman of the occasion also gave his statement in support on the need to look beyond vote trading and consider other areas ; whilst the Acting Inspector General gave the key note address on the preparedness, roles of the police towards the general elections and the security measures put in place. Statement in support were received by Tony Ojukwu (Mr.) Chair, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), (ably represented), Prof. Shehu Abdullahi, Member of the National Information Centre Eminent Personalities (NICEP).

**OBSERVATIONS**

- The essence of the partnership is to facilitate the reporting of election incidences, enhance the credibility of the electoral process and help build citizens confidence in election so as to have credible reports to serve a reference point for the nation to learn from in the future.
- Vote trading is not the only vice affecting our electoral process, the following are also inclusive; such as spending excessively beyond the stipulation of the Electoral Act 2011 (As Amended), financial inducement for decamping, money spent on the media manipulation to make phony projections to wage psychological warfare on voters, money spent on spiritual consultation to pray for candidates to win elections, money spent on unemployed people to attend rallies to give impression that some parties are popular, money spent on thugs to attack political opponents and disturb rallies, huge funds spent on bribing electoral officers and security personnel
- There are no recorded cases of investigation, prosecution of the preparators and their beneficiaries of criminal activities in the electoral process

- Continuous impediment of the discharge of the statutory mandate of the law enforcement agencies to prosecute either buying and selling of votes or even overspending during the electoral process
- The provisions of the law are stringent but our courts have repeatedly held that there has to be a nexus between the winner of an election and those who took money either from their agents or their political parties.
- The challenge that there might be no open distribution of money on the day of election which is likely to be done secretly before the election
- Filing of nolle prosequi by Attorneys General of states to discontinue instituted cases, because after the election the members of the public loose interest
- Citizens ought to get justice for offences committed during the elections but unfortunately the interest of tribunal judge is focused on who won the elections or otherwise and not the offences committed during the election whereas up till the second republic the tribunal recommended the prosecution of offenders.
- The culture of impunity makes it difficult to combat any form of criminality
- The greatest criminals and opponents in Nigeria are the elites
- Tribalizing the arrest of criminals, whereas the fundamental question is whether a crime was committed or not and not the ethnicity or otherwise of the offender"

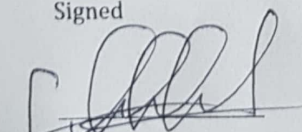
### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

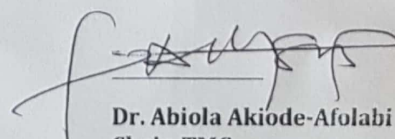
After the addresses, statements in support and observations the event was resolved as follows:

- The bringing to the light any Attorney General that attempts to file a nolle prosequi (to discontinue or withdraw) for promoting criminality
- Deployment of about 4000 observers across Nigeria to cover all the 774 Local government areas across the country to observe the voting process from the booth to the collation centre
- Toward a credible, transparent election, an Election geared situation room tagged the "Election Observation Platform" to hold in Lagos at Radisson Blu Hotel towards the realization of the mandate of the partnership to support processes that will contribute to the realization of free, fair and credible elections.
- Referral of incidences that the police need to respond to from the situation room to address the issue to take quick response
- Working hand in hand with other organizations that created their own situation room particularly Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) working with Nigeria Election Situation Room focusing majorly at the collation centre

- Deployment of eminent Nigerians to act as opinion leaders to add more credibility to the report that would sprung out of the Election Observation Platform situation room in response to the election process
- Assembling of a team of young patriotic lawyers in each of the states of the federation to handle the cases almost pro bono in ensuring those who are arrested for committing electoral offences are successfully prosecuted
- The police collaboration with the public in the implementation of the security strategies put in place to have free, fair and credible elections in the country.
- Inauguration of the Police Election Monitoring Investigation team to survey and take up cases identified by INEC as compromise or offence for investigation and prosecution of the case
- Partnership of the police with diverse communities to foster the principles of community policing to identify problems and work with the community to solve the problems.
- Professionalism of security personnel during and after the election exercise and the deployment of other security personnel to augment the shortage of police officers and the arresting of security personnel's that serve as VIP escorts to anyone to the polling booth
- Police officer and other security agents are prohibited from escorting public officers to polling units in uniforms and carrying weapons at the polling units. Anyone found violating the order will be arrested and prosecuted
- Command PROs are mandated to receive reports of incidences for compilation and appropriate actions. Observers and Citizens are to contact Command PROs or Force PROs to report violence or vote trading before and during elections.
- Advocacy of peace by spiritual leaders to the politician to convey to their followers to be law abiding citizens before, during and after the elections.
- Going beyond arresting and prosecuting offenders and Identification by people of party programs and ideologies will help curb the menace of vote trading and give them confidence to the people in the government
- Elites are to organize and mobilize people, to challenge the government who wins immediately after the election to take up every major problem confronting our country
- Waging war against security votes and collaboration between INEC and the Nigeria police force to ensure there is a follow up on the successful prosecution of these electoral offenders

Signed

  
**Olanrewaju Suraju**  
 Chair, HEDA

  
**Dr. Abiola Akiode-Afolabi**  
 Chair, TMG