

ELOG PRESS RELEASE ON THE ON-GOING MVR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAIROBI 9th February, 2017. ELOG today released its preliminary report on the on-going second phase of Mass Voter Registration process.

1. Preliminaries - Methodology

ELOG has deployed 70 monitors in different constituencies (see attached list) to observe the on-going voter registration process. The Observers have been equipped with the requisite tools for capturing data that is then relayed to a centralized data analysis system and reports generated for public sharing.

This statement shares findings based on observation reports from the observed constituencies covering the last two week ending Feb 6th 2017.

2. Key findings

Accessibility of the Registration Centres

During the observation, ELOG observers recorded that 98% of the observed registration centres were easily accessible to persons with disabilities. However, 2% of the observed registration centres did not meet the threshold: Manyani Grounds centre in Jomvu constituency where the centre is in a sandy and rocky compound; At Lions Health Centre in Mathare Constituency is located upstairs.

The General Registration Atmosphere

In 97% of the areas covered, there was a generally friendly and conducive atmosphere in and around the registration centres. However, ELOG also observed a number of centers with signs and incidents of tension: Kangutu shopping centre in Tharaka constituency – there was some tension after an aspirant MCA faced off with members of a rival camp.; Mugurin Primary School in Eldama Ravine constituency – A group of rowdy young men was observed trying to dissuade new registrants from registering as voters.

Incidences of intimidation, tension, violence, bribery and insecurity

In 89% of the observed constituencies, the registration process went on smoothly without any cases of intimidation, tension, violence, or bribery at the registrations centers or areas around the centers. However, ELOG observers recorded some of these cases in 11% of the observed constituencies. At Uthiru Nursery School in Kabete constituency unhappy voters confronted the IEBC officials on the location of the centre. In Nairobi West Chiefs Camp

centre in Lang'ata Constituency observers noted voters being induced to transfer their votes creating tension in the area

A curious case of dishing money to voters once they had registered was observed in Homa-Bay county. In Migori County, our observers reported cases where members of a certain Boda Boda group were kicked out for not registering as voters.

ELOG also notes the media reports from across the country that are awash with cases of coercive methods being employed by politicians, business people, churches and other stakeholders to force eligible voters to register against their wishes. This is inimical to a free and fair electoral process.

Double Registration and duplicate Identification documents

ELOG's monitors have reported cases of double registration in a number of centers that were visited. IEBC on their part have come out and indicated 78,752 cases of double registration and 21,149 out of this, were cases where individuals shared the same ID numbers and names.

Recommendations

With less than a week to the closure of the MVR II, ELOG recommends the following steps and activities so as to improve the processes.

- a. On accessibility to the registration centers, ELOG urges the IEBC to take quick steps to ensure that all the registration centers in the country can be easily accessed especially by PWDs. Cases of registration centres in storeyed buildings should be in the past by now.
- b. ELOG wishes to remind all Kenyans that while it is the right of each eligible citizen to register and participate in the voter registration process and indeed the whole electoral process, voter inducement, intimidation, coercion and violence constitute serious electoral offences as provided in Articles 4 (*multiple registration*), 9 (*bribery*), 10 (*Undue influence*) & 11 (*use of violence*) of the Electoral Offences Act, 2016. ELOG therefore urges the IEBC and other responsible agencies such as security and policing to investigate these cases and ensure that such offenders are held accountable.
- c. It is important that the MVR exercise be conducted in a credible and accountable manner. ELOG is concerned with the numerous cases of double registrations including the issue of numerous IDs with identical serial numbers as they have the potential of putting the entire registration process into disrepute and eventually discrediting the voter register. While IEBC has openly admitted to such cases, a

continuous appraisal of how the issue is being dealt with should be shared with the public to boost confidence in the process.

- d. ELOG urges the Commission to work closely with the security agencies to ensure that the registration centers, especially those in the Northern Kenya and other volatile regions are well secured. The recent incidence in Mandera county where BVR kits were stolen underlines the importance of this issue. Insecurity will disenfranchise Kenyans if it is not addressed.
- e. ELOG urges all the stakeholders including CSOs to move in and step up voter sensitization drives. This will assist in addressing the issue of voter apathy.
- f. While it is laudable for the IEBC to enlist college students and prisoners who have attained the age of majority, ELOG urges the Commission to involve all the stakeholders in the planning and execution of this exercise for transparency and inclusivity
- g. As part of the open electoral data task force, ELOG would like to see the data that IEBC is sharing being more granular and detailed. Voter registration details should be disaggregated to the lowest possible levels and units. One sure way of doing this is to have data collection tools that provide for this disaggregation. The public need to know how many people registered, for instance, are PWDs, Youth, Women at every level etc.
- h. Lastly and of equal importance to all the above, ELOG notes that there has been delays in clearly defining the process, and timelines for the diaspora registration exercise. While we are aware of on-going consultations on the same, IEBC should address this matter as soon as possible since it will affect and be affected by the legal timelines that have been set for the voter registration and verification process. Any further delays and lack of clarity on this will invite public litigation which may further complicate and delay the process.

Conclusion

Elections are set up within the confines of a country's politico-economic and social context. In this regard therefore and being historically aware that Kenyans have the peculiar habit of rushing in at the last moment, ELOG urges IEBC to put in place mechanisms that will ensure all eligible voters that turn out to register during the last few days of the exercise are not disenfranchised. This should include adequate technical support to the BVR machines so that they do not fail.

We further appeal to all Kenyans to exercise their franchise by registering in big numbers over the remaining few days in order to effectively participate in the coming elections.