



## **NVDC PRESS STATEMENT ON VOTER APATHY AND 2023 NIGERIA GENERAL ELECTIONS**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

1. The National Voters' Drive Coalition (NVDC) is a non-partisan, non-governmental, citizen-led Coalition that was created to address voter apathy in Nigeria. Organizations within this Coalition are: The African Primary Healthcare Foundation (APHF), the Nigerian Physicians Advocacy Group (NPAG), The Compatriots, ReadytoleadAfrica (RTLA), Progressive Abia Youths (PAY), and Shift Nigeria.

### **WHAT WE HAVE DONE**

2. In line with our mission to help improve the electoral system and reduce voter apathy, we began to forge relationship with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). We began in Abia state where we were able to register 74,299 voters between February 1<sup>st</sup> and May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. We used free medical screening to encourage voter registration. We were able to medically screen over 50,000 Abians across the 17 Local Government Areas (LGAs).
3. We helped mobilize registered voters to pick up their Permanent Voters Card (PVC) in Abia and Lagos states in all 17 and 20 LGAs respectively while providing voter education through our media sensitization program. Free blood pressure screening and treatment was also utilized to enhance our impact. We conducted door to door sensitization encouraging voters to get out to vote in Abia, Lagos and Kano states. In all, we helped mobilize over 200,000 Nigerians to collect their PVCs in Abia and Lagos States and, reached over 5 million listeners through our media sensitization campaign.

### **2023 PRESIDENTIAL AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS**

4. The February 25th, 2023 election was widely anticipated given the unprecedented number of major contenders and the promise of more transparency with the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS). Specifically, Nigerians were excited about the possibility to follow election results in real time. Despite significant logistical challenges, election was held as scheduled. We applaud the work of INEC but are not blinded to the logistical challenges that other Civic Society Organizations (CSOs) and international observers have highlighted such as: the delayed arrival of INEC staff in over 75% of polling units (PUs), lack of preparedness such that electorates had to purchase ink and markers for INEC staff to utilize. Failure of Presiding officers

to upload polling unit results to BVAS in 100% of cases, delay in transmission of PU results to iREV and illegible results posted on iREV. We hope that there have been lessons learned and that necessary steps are in place to avoid repeat logistical shortcomings on March 18th, 2023.

## **WHY NIGERIANS MUST VOTE ON 18<sup>TH</sup> OF MARCH? PRACTICAL STEPS TO KEEP SAFE AND PROTECT YOUR VOTE**

5. The ability to affect change lies in the fingerprint of every eligible Nigerian electorate. Observations from February 25th reveal that polling units with massive turn out may have been less likely to be manipulated given the sheer number of people that may also have deterred a few violent actors. More educated electorate means more eyes on INEC's processes as well as more witnesses to record and report election irregularities. We must vote on the 18th because our well-being and our future depends on it. We must all participate to elect leaders that will be accountable to the people regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, physical abilities and socio-economic status.
6. While security at polling units remain a challenge, there may be some practical steps to protect yourself and members of your polling unit. Be vigilant! If you see something wrong, say something. Report to security officers posted at your PU. Be respectful! Ensure INEC officers are situated in a location that can not be easily accessed by disruptors. Come out in large numbers early and remain in the PUs until results are uploaded to BVAS. BVAS does not need network to upload results at the polling unit level. The BVAS will store the uploaded data and then upload to iREV once internet connection is established. In other words, make sure the presiding officer uploads the signed data on BVAS before leaving the polling unit. Also, make sure that the Presiding Officer at polling unit posts a copy of the polling unit result for public display. Record any irregularities observed.

## **CONCLUSION**

- 7. Having acknowledged the importance of technology in our electoral system, we call on INEC to fully utilize the BVAS (Accreditation and Transmission system) and ensure professional conduct of INEC staff in organization of the 2023 Governorship and States House of Assembly elections. INEC staff should endeavor** to arrive at the polling units ahead of time for an ontime start.
8. In polling units where disruption occurs, we advocate re-run of election in these locations instead of cancelation because by canceling elections in these PUs, INEC essentially disenfranchises the voters.
9. We appeal to security agencies (Police, Civil defense and others) saddled with the responsibility of ensuring a hitch free election to discharge their duties with

diligence and with honour. We truly appreciate the service of our security agencies in promoting democratic processes in Nigeria

Dear Nigerians, 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 gives us another opportunity to decide who leads us in our States. We must make the most of it. We must make the governorship and state house of assembly elections a reflection of the wishes of the Nigerian people. We must not give up on this key assignment. **Go out on Election Day, Cast your vote and Stay PEACEFUL. Let us all be part of rebuilding our Nation.**

**COALITION PARTNERS:**



**CC:**

INEC  
US Embassy Abuja  
The Police HQ Abuja  
The Nigerian Military