



**European Union Election Observation Mission
Federal Republic of Nigeria**

Presidential, Gubernatorial, National and State Assembly Elections
14/21 April 2007

Press release 23 April

Elections fail to meet hopes and expectations of the Nigerian people and fall far short of basic international standards

The 2007 State and Federal elections have fallen far short of basic international and regional standards for democratic elections. This is the conclusion of the 150 strong European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM).

“I am very disappointed”, said Max van den Berg, Chief Observer of the EU EOM. “These elections have not lived up to the hopes and expectations of the Nigerian people and the process cannot be considered to have been credible. This is all the more regrettable since they were held in an improved atmosphere in which freedoms of expression and assembly were broadly respected during campaigning, the courts played a generally positive and independent role and the people showed remarkable commitment to democracy, eagerly engaging in the electoral process and waiting patiently to vote in often very difficult circumstances”, he added

The EU EOM concluded that the elections were marred by poor organisation, lack of essential transparency, widespread procedural irregularities, significant evidence of fraud, particularly during the result collation process, voter disenfranchisement at different stages of the process, and lack of equal conditions for contestants. There were also numerous incidents of violence, although federal election day saw less violence than state election day.

“Two main features emerged on both election days”, added John Attard-Montalto and Vittorio Agnoletto, leaders of the European Parliament delegation which fully endorses the EU EOM statement, “the inability of INEC to handle the process efficiently and the determination of Nigerians to cast their vote”.

“In order for the citizens of Nigeria to have trust and confidence in the political and electoral process, urgent remedial action by the relevant authorities and stakeholders is necessary to restore the conditions for credible and transparent elections to be held. In particular, concrete steps need to be taken to establish a truly independent and capable election administration, the atmosphere of impunity for electoral violations must cease, executive immunity should be removed, and political will must be demonstrated by parties at both federal and state levels to end the practice of hiring thugs to perpetrate electoral violence”, said Max van den Berg.

A statement of the EU EOM’s preliminary assessment of the elections has been issued today. A final report, containing detailed recommendations for the future, will be published within three months of the completion of the entire process.

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