



INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION IN DEMOCRACY

"Peaceful Positive Change"

PRESS RELEASE

STATEMENT ON THE OBSERVATION OF BY-ELECTIONS IN BOMACHOGE AND SHINYALU CONSTITUENCIES

About IED

The Institute for Education in Democracy (IED) is a Non-Governmental Organisation providing non-partisan leadership in the democratisation and governance process in Kenya and Africa through programmes in the Electoral Process, Civic/Voter Education, Research and Dissemination, and provision of technical assistance and support. IED's focuses on provision of non-partisan and gender balanced information and skills to empower citizens especially those from the marginalized areas including women and youth, to enable them participate effectively and efficiently in governance and democratic processes and to contribute towards the creation of positive political behaviour and culture.

IED's vision is: *'Empowered citizens and institutions engaged in democratic elections'*

Our mission is: *'to promote democratic elections in Kenya and the Africa region through monitoring and observation of all aspects of the electoral and democratic processes; provision of civic/voter education; technical support to key institutions of governance; and research and advocacy'*

IED has monitored and observed all general elections and most by-elections in Kenya since 1993 when it was founded. IED is therefore the only organization in Kenya that has consistently monitored and observed general elections and by-elections in Kenya. In addition, IED coordinated and hosted the observation of the 2005 Referendum on the Proposed New Constitution of Kenya. In 2007, we co-chaired the Kenya Elections Domestic Observation Forum (KEDOF). Further, IED participates in election observation and offers technical expertise in the region and the world. This has enabled IED to understand the application of different electoral systems, laws and the structures of Elections Management Bodies (EMBs). We have worked with Electoral Management Bodies since 2001 in capacity strengthened, training, election observation and development of electoral materials. Further, between 2003 and 2004, IED in coalition with other civil society organisations implemented a project on *Safeguarding Women's Gains in the Draft Constitution*, aimed at gender mainstreaming the draft constitution. In 2005, IED serialized the draft Constitution of Kenya through the print media. Moreover, IED collaborates with the Kenya Law Reform Commission the Attorney General and the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs in reviewing and consolidating electoral laws in Kenya.

Preparations for observation of the by-elections in Shinyalu and Bomachoge Constituencies

As part of IED's mandate, IED is monitoring and observing elections in Shinyalu and Bomachoge Constituencies, which will take place on 27th August 2009.

As part of our preparations, IED has recruited two Constituency Monitors in each of the two Constituencies. The Constituency Monitors were trained and deployed on 1st-2nd July 2009 to monitor, observe and report on the pre-election environment including the registration process in the two Constituencies.

As is our practice in observing elections, we have recruited 160 Poll watchers in Bomachoge and 108 in Shinyalu. The recruited Poll Watchers were trained and deployed on the 24-25th August 2009 in the two Constituencies. The Poll Watchers have been deployed to all the polling stations/streams to observe and report on the polling day events and activities in the two Constituencies. In addition, IED staff, Board of Directors and Members will observe and coordinate activities in the Constituencies on the polling day. We also held a briefing session for our development partners, collaborators on 19th August 2009 and 21st August 2009 at IED offices.

Based on the findings, observations and conclusions from the observation of the two by-elections we will compile a preliminary observation report within a week after observation. The preliminary observation report will be disseminated to various media houses, partners and collaborators. The final comprehensive report on the by-elections will be finalized and disseminated within one-month after the by-elections. The report will contain the comprehensive analysis of the findings, observation our verdict and concrete recommendations.

In order to enhance and improve the electoral process in Kenya, IED has developed an SMS system that will be used to among other things, transmit the provisional statistical elections results from all the polling stations around the country to a central data processing centre and thus enable IED to provide Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT). It involves observation of the voting and counting of ballots at the polling stations, collection of official polling station results and independent tabulation of these results, parallel to election authorities. We will utilize this system for the by-elections. The poll watchers will be responsible for recording the official count of the polling station after having observed voting, counting and announcement of result. This information is then sent to IED via a short message using a mobile phone. The information will be processed, analyzed and posted to IED's website i.e. www.iedafrica.org. It is important to note that electoral results remain provisional until they are finally and officially announced by the Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC).

The SMS system will also support the civic engagement through interaction with citizens by disseminating voter education messages; support research through conducting opinion polls and strengthen interaction with citizen through receiving feedback from the public.

At this stage, we would like to thank the Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC) for accrediting us to observe the by-elections. We also congratulate the IIEC for the efforts it has put in place towards the preparation of management and conducting the by-elections. We would like to urge the Shinyalu and Bomachoge constituent, politicians candidates and their supporters to remain calm, exercise restraint and tolerance during the campaign and the by-elections. As observers, we would like to urge all stakeholders in the by-elections to shun violence, corrupt practices and other electoral malpractice. We would like to see the campaigns and the by-elections taking place in a peaceful and conducive environment that will enable the people of Shinyalu and Bomachoge to freely express their political will.

The IED observer team in Shinyalu will be led by the Executive Director, Peter Aling'o, and will include a Board Member Mr. Jacob Macharia and other IED staff members while the observer team in Bomachoge will be led by IED chairperson, Rev. Jephthah Gathaka and will include Ms. Koki Muli who is an internationally renowned expert in elections, and other IED staff members.

Peter Aling'o
Executive Director

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