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Accra, Ghana

CODEO CONDEMNS ACTS OF VIOLENCE AND VOTE BUYING DURING ABLEKUMA NORTH CONSTITUENCY ELECTION RERUN AND CALLS FOR SWIFT INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTION

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) expresses grave concern over developments during the Ablekuma North Constituency election rerun held last Friday, July 11, 2025.

Although the Coalition did not deploy observers to any of the 19 polling stations, our keen observation of proceedings through reports on traditional and social media revealed that while election officials and logistics were duly present, and the commencement of polls was timely, the voting process was marred by incidences of vote buying, serious lapses in security, intimidation and violence at some polling stations.

The Coalition condemns the incidence of violence and intimidation against poll workers, voters, journalists and two female politicians. The Ghana Police Service is however commended for immediately interdicting the officer allegedly involved in the assault of a journalist. The Coalition urges the police to move with alacrity to apprehend and prosecute all persons involved in the acts of violence. Perpetrators must face the full force of the law to deter others from engaging in such undemocratic practices during elections and clamp down on impunity. CODEO encourages all Ghanaians and the media who captured various angles of the incidents to make their videos and photos available to the Ghana Police Service to aid in their work.

The Coalition also notes and condemns the use of incendiary and provocative language by leading members of the National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party in the aftermath of the violent incidents. It is clear that political party actors are unwilling to learn from the many years of election violent outcomes and the many victims it has produced in the Fourth Republic. This behavior is even more egregious given that the country is recovering from a difficult 2024 elections and transition, partly marred by electoral violence. This toxic political culture must be stamped out of competitive politics otherwise it will one day overwhelm all of us and destabilize Ghana's young democracy.

Further, the security lapses observed during this election re-run and in spite of the heavy deployment of security personnel raises very serious questions about the state of the Ghana Police Service. Given the high-stakes nature of this exercise in a densely populated area, it was shocking that unauthorized persons (who looked like party

vigilantes) were allowed to roam around in vehicles, some unlicensed and enter polling station areas without any interception. Groups of individuals were also allowed to mass up creating an intimidating atmosphere for poll workers, voters and the general citizenry. The most worrying observation was the actions of police officers guarding the gate to the St. Peter's Society Polling Station in Odokor, who basically stepped aside as thugs forced their way into the polling station to assault agents and two politicians. This posture of the police was observed during the 2024 elections and transition. The emasculation of the Police Service is a clear and present danger that must be fully addressed by all stakeholders. CODEO calls on President John Mahama and the Police Council under the Article 202 (2) of the Constitution, to exercise its powers of Control and Direction of the Inspector General of Police to institute an inquiry into the recent action of police officers in the handling of police duties involving political actors. This must be done urgently to ensure clear remedial actions are taken ahead of the bye-election in Akwatia.

We call on all stakeholders particularly political actors, security agencies, the Electoral Commission, and the judiciary to reflect on these developments, implement the necessary reforms, and take decisive action to address the problem of election violence, political vigilantism and the independence of the Ghana Police Service.

CODEO will also continue to monitor the elections space, contribute to constructive discourse and advocate for electoral standards that ensure a peaceful, transparent and inclusive elections.

End

Signed: **Joseph Oti Frimpong**
Coordinator, CODEO Secretariat
(For and on behalf of CODEO)
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About CODEO

CODEO is an independent and non-partisan network of civil society groups, faith-based organizations and professional bodies which observe Ghanaian elections. It was established in 2000 under the auspices of the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) to mobilize citizens of Ghana to participate in the electoral process actively and to complement the efforts of Ghana's Electoral Commission in ensuring transparent, free, fair and peaceful elections. The Coalition of 41-member organizations has grown to become the largest and most credible domestic election observer body in Ghana which mobilizes citizens and groups to participate in Ghana's electoral processes.