

INEC & UN WOMEN CONDUCT WORKSHOP FOR SECURITY AGENCIES ON PREVENTION AND MITIGATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN ELECTIONS

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in collaboration with United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN) on Monday 16th and Tuesday 17th January, 2023, organized a two-day workshop on Prevention and Mitigation of Electoral Violence against women ahead of 2023 General Election for staff of Security Sector agencies in select states across the six geo-political zones.

The aim of the workshop is to provide Gender Desk Officers of security agencies, specifically, the Nigeria Police Force and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in seven states and the FCT, with a general understanding of the electoral process, election related offences, and the application of human rights, as well as gender-based approaches to violence against women in elections. It also would provide a platform to develop clear strategies for enhancing effective and non-violent electoral participation for all eligible voters especially women. Participants were drawn from Gender Units of State Commands in **Borno, Ekiti, Ebonyi, Kwara, Kaduna, Plateau, Cross River and the FCT.**

The workshop was timely and critical to the conduct of elections in peaceful and safe environment for all. It became necessary in view of the fact that violence against women in elections has been identified as one of the major destructive tools deployed to deter and dissuade the vulnerable from active participation in the electoral process, be it as election administrators, candidates and voters. This, unarguably has a critical implication for the integrity of the electoral process. Hence, the workshop on Prevention and Mitigation of Violence against Women in the 2023 General Election, is one of the strategies for actualizing the collective mandate of both INEC and the UN Women in ensuring that elections are safe for all eligible citizens to participate in. Therefore, the success of conducting a safe and inclusive election, will largely depend on the knowledgeability and professional conduct of both election officials and security personnel deployed for the elections.



Present at the commencement of the workshop were the Hon. Minister of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen; Prof. Kunle Ajayi, National Commissioner and Chairman Outreach and Partnership Committee; Mr. Lansana Wonneh, UN Women Deputy Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS; AIG Aisha Mohammed Bajju; Prof. Joy Ezeilo (SAN); Mr. Emmanuel Ojukwu, CP (Rtd); Dr. Asabe Vilita Bashir, Director-General, National Centre for Women Development; Mr. Lebari Nduh, Director Security, INEC; Mrs Lakunuya Dorothy Bello, Ag. Director Gender and Inclusivity INEC, among others.



Other facilitators of the workshop from INEC include Mrs. Toyin Babalola, Director Legal Drafting & Clearance Department; Babatunde Ojedokun,

Ag. Administrative Secretary, The Electoral Institute; and Victoria Eta-Messi, Deputy Director Gender Relations.