Introduction
This is the mid-day report of the elections held on February 25, 2023. Palace of Priests Assembly deployed a total of 613 election observers in 25 states (Benue, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Bauchi, Akwa-Ibom, Borno, Rivers, Nassarawa, Niger, Enugu, Adamawa, Ondo, Lagos, Taraba, Gombe, Kano, Kaduna, Plateau, Imo, Kogi, Oyo, Edo, Kwara and the Federal Capital Territory) Palace of Priests Assembly (PPA), one of the accredited observer organizations based in Abuja, observed the elections in collaboration with the Priests Peace and Justice Initiative (PPJ)- the social arm of PPA and the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD). The general impression about the observation is captured below:

Voter Turnout
In most of the polling units visited across the 25 states and the FCT where PPA deployed observers, there was high voter turn out with young men and women, the aged, nursing mothers expressing eagerness to cast their votes. Voter apathy is low compared with other elections in the past.

INEC Logistics arrangement
INEC logistics arrangement had mixed reactions from across the states where our observers were deployed. From the late arrival of INEC officials and late commencement of the voting process to the inadequacies in the number of
BIVAS in most of the polling units especially where there are a high number of voters, the logistics arrangements are generally poor. Kits and non-sensitive materials were properly arranged when the officials arrived but INEC officials and voting materials did not get to all the polling units visited early. Reports across the 25 states indicated that the average time of arrival of INEC officials was about 10:30am while the average time of commencement of voting was 11:15 am.

The voters register was not pasted on the walls of most of the polling units observed when voters arrived early in the morning before the arrival of the INEC officials, and this caused some level of agitation. Our observers reported across the states that voters were already present in most of the polling units as early as 6:30 am. Special arrangements were made for persons with disability (PWDs) within the FCT

**Accreditation and Voting Process**

Set up was not concluded before 8.30 am when voting was supposed to commence in 90% of the polling units visited across the 25 states. The Polling Officials were visibly absent in most of the polling units visited at 8:30 am. Although the electoral body had said the accreditation and voting will commence by 8:30 am, most of the polling units did not open even at 9:30 am. The exercise was scheduled to end once the last person in the queue was accredited, but some polling units had no INEC official present at 2:41 pm in some polling units in Nassarawa LGA of Nassarawa State. Elderly people, pregnant women, and nursing mothers were given consideration during the accreditation and voting process. However, in some polling units in Sunny Vale Estate and Garki modal market Abuja, our observers reported that the process for accreditation and voting was not done simultaneously and did not follow the INEC guideline as the process was meant to be carried out simultaneously. Voters were accredited and asked to join another queue where a second stage of verification was carried out.
**Vote Buying**

Our observers did not report the physical buying of votes at the time of reporting. However, some observers in 4 polling units reported a few incidents where some party agents were seen collecting phone numbers and account details of voters. Also, our observers reported generally that Voters were not prevented from going into the voting cubicle with their phones.

**Security of the process**

The Nigeria Police Force had initially reported a massive deployment of their personnel to maintain law and order across the country, there was an average of 3 police officers in most of the polling units visited alongside other security agents while a good number of them were seen at the checkpoints within the state capitals. Beyond this, as the voting processes progressed in some of the locations, armed men in security outfits moved from polling unit to polling unit ensuring law and order. Voters have been reported to be conducting themselves peacefully.

**Functionality of the BIVAS**

The BIVAS in most of the polling units worked perfectly and without challenge. The INEC officials were knowledgeable in the operation of the BIVAS and were able to manage the process. However, there were pockets of reports from across the states in a few polling units where the BIVAS did not work perfectly. In Polling unit 18 Akinwunmi Street, Ifako PU 034 it was reported that the BIVAS thumb verification did not work but the facials identification and verification were used. This was the situation in other polling units across the states where our observers reported.

**Challenges**

Splitting the polling units was a big challenge for many voters. Observers reported that voters had difficulty in identifying their polling units despite the
sensitization by INEC for voters to identify and know their polling units before the day of the elections. This led to the overcrowding of some of the polling units.

**Recommendation**

The challenges that lead to the delay in the arrival of officials and the delay of commencement of voting reported in many states across the country must be identified and dealt with before the next elections. INEC should mandate their officials to paste the voters register in all polling units a day before the elections. There is a need for more sensitization of the electorate about how to locate their polling units before election day.

**Conclusion**

Overall, voter turnout was impressive. INEC deserves commendation for making improvements in certain areas, particularly in the deployment of technology (BIVAS) and the observance of priority voting for PWDs, the aged, pregnant, and nursing mothers. Also, availability and the distribution of kits and non-sensitive materials were impressive. However, the commission should make efforts to address the challenges mentioned above, especially the late arrival of INEC staff, the late commencement of accreditation, and the non-compliance of some INEC staff with the regulation to conduct accreditation and issuance of ballot papers simultaneously.