



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

ABUSE OF INCUMBENCY AND ELECTORAL CORRUPTION:

MONITORING THE INHERENT INCUMBENT POWER

Rarely has the outcome of any general election in Ghana been accepted by the losing candidate or political party without some form of protest or contest: mention can be made of ‘the stolen verdict in 1992’, NDC’s attempted court suit in 2004 and the eight month-drama dubbed the 2012 election petition.

The seeming tension around elections roll and the interpretation or misinterpretation of the Supreme Court order in the Abu Ramadam vs. the Electoral Commission case, the contemplated shutting-down of social media by the IGP and the many reported cases of violence during the limited registration exercises points to one thing: the lack of faith in the integrity of the polling process and a potential misunderstanding with whatever the outcome of the 2016 elections may be.

The recent public outcry over the President’s Accounting to the People Tour is a wake-up call that Ghanaians are wide awake to secure and protect the 2016 elections and its outcome.

To this end, the Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) led Coalition comprising: Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC), Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD- Ghana) and Citizens Movement against Corruption (CMAc) launched a project titled ‘*Promoting a level Political Playing Field: Reducing Abuse of Incumbency and Electoral Corruption*’ to monitor the 2016 Elections with funding support from STAR-Ghana.

The project constitutes civil society’s contribution towards a free, fair and credible 2016 elections. The key objectives are to reduce incidences of abuse of incumbency and electoral corruption, and thereby create a level playing field in the 2016 Elections. The project also seeks to advocate for the enforcement of existing laws as well as the possible introduction of new laws, policies and guidelines pertaining to regulating abuse of incumbency and electoral corruption in future elections.

In 2012, the GII led a similar Coalition to monitor abuse of incumbency and electoral corruption. The outcome of the 2012 project is manifesting in the consciousness that Ghanaians have developed and the concerns they raised about the President’s Accounting to the People Tour.

The credibility of the 2016 elections depends on the extent to which the political playing field will be levelled. The project has trained twenty (20) Abuse of Incumbency Observers and Media Practitioners (drawn from various constituencies across the country where the project is being

implemented) who will be monitoring and reporting the conduct of all incumbent candidates of the upcoming elections from the 1st of June to the end of the campaigning season.

This project has a set of defined indicators against which Ghanaians will judge the incumbent as we collect, analyse and report to the public on whether or not their leaders are people of integrity. The following are some of the indicators;

ABUSE OF INCUMBENCY INDICATORS	
Categories and types of Abuse	Possible manifestations (instances) during political campaigning
A) Institutional Resources	
Abuse of Public Functions and Platforms	1) Promoting of the incumbent party by state officials in their capacity as officials
	<i>There is an instance of abuse of incumbency when a state official acting in an official capacity touts the achievements of the ruling party and solicits for votes using any of the following:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public speeches (by President, Ministers, DCEs, DCDs, other Public Officials) • Banners, bill boards and posters (paid by the state) • Leaflets (paid by the state) • Media advertisements (paid by the state) • Media interviews (granted by public officials) • Attendance of state officials at social events in their official capacity such as funerals, festivals, marriages, outdoorings, church harvest among others. At such events state official presents a gift, campaigns for the incumbent party and makes pledges and promises.
	2) Use of official public, state-supported or state-organized events of any kind for campaigning
	<i>An abuse of incumbency has occurred if an official event has been turned into a political campaign event. These include the following instances:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government representative takes the opportunity to urge the audience to re-elect him/her at an event paid by the public. • The government representative takes the opportunity to speak about the beneficence of his/her party and/or the malfeasance of his/her opposition at an event paid by the public. • The government representative takes the opportunity to introduce Parliamentary candidate of one party but not the others during an event paid by the state. • Opposition party representatives not invited or not allowed to participate in national, state-supported or state-organized events that traditionally include the participation of all political leaders like Independence Day, Republic Day, etc.
	3) Campaigning by officials in favour of incumbent party in the

	<p>course of public office-related working visits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaigning by state officials in favour of incumbent party during meetings with citizens • Campaigning by state officials in favour of incumbent party during meetings with community leaders
Access to public facilities	<p>4) Use of public (state and local) premises for campaign purposes on unequal basis for incumbent and opposition parties</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Generally, there is an instance of abuse of incumbency when some candidates or parties are denied access to public facilities while others are not. The denial can be explicit but it is more likely to be implicit therefore a fair policy on usage is not enough. There must also be fairness in practice. In same vein, when some candidates or parties are given privilege access to public facilities while others are not, including the reduction of rental fees, securing most prized days and timeslots. This applies to the following:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town halls • Community centres • Market squares • Schools buildings/parks • Stadia • District assembly hall • Other Public premises • Use of Public address system • Security officers • Furniture/buntings
	<p>5) Running for elected office without resigning a position as a civil servant. <i>Civil and public servants have abused incumbency if they do not resign or where applicable take a temporary leave of absence from their position before they start campaigning for office.</i></p>
	<p>6) Engagement of public office employees in campaign activities during business hours in favor of incumbent party</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working as members of campaign staff for a political party or candidate • Distribution of campaign materials • Using public officers to organize campaign events
	<p>7) Use of public (state or local) vehicles free of charge or at discount rates for campaigning for or on behalf of incumbent party</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For incumbent candidates' short-distance travel

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For incumbent candidates' long-distance travel
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For incumbent party staff members travel
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For transportation of citizens and/or party supporters to meetings and rallies of the incumbent party
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For distribution of party campaign materials
Access to services of state-controlled entities	8) Engagement of state companies, institutes, state enterprises and state-supported non-profit organizations in campaign activities on unequal basis for incumbent and opposition parties
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsoring a particular political party or candidate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting electoral research for one particular party or candidate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polling for one particular party or candidate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of campaign materials
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of campaign materials
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of campaign materials
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of campaign events
	9) Organization of campaign events in favor of incumbent party with compulsory attendance of employees of state companies, institutes, state enterprises and other publicly funded entities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence from memos and other documented directives
Distribution of public posts	10) Sudden appointments (or releases) to (from) state and public offices of any level in period of electoral campaign
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotions of persons related to the incumbent party
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfers of persons related to the opposition party
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointments of the persons related to the incumbent party
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dismissal of persons perceived to be sympathetic to opposition parties.
Use of government development projects	11) Introduction of the sudden (not pre-planned, pre-discussed and/or not sufficiently justified) development projects by incumbent candidates in period of electoral campaign
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction projects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure & utilities projects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural projects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care projects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education projects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social projects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Others
B) Budget Resources	
Hidden allocations for projects not budgeted for	1. Direct distribution of public funds (cash) allocated in budget to other purposes to voters
	2. Direct distribution to voters of goods and services paid for from public funds

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food • Household items • Others
	3. Sudden (not pre-planned, pre-discussed and/or not sufficiently justified) budget allocations in the course of the election campaign
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in salaries in public employees • Increase in transport compensation • Discounts on transport services • Discounts on housing services • Discounts on electricity, heating, etc.
	4. Sudden (not pre-planned, pre-discussed and/or not sufficiently justified) increase of social payments in the course of electoral campaign
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare payments • Maternity payments • Pension payments • Hospital fee payments • Others
C) Media resources	
Biasing information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unequal distribution of time and space to parties or candidates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of appearance and duration of incumbent candidates and parties in news programs or materials • Appearance of candidates in capacity of expert in analytical programs • Frequent mentioning of candidates in news programs and materials 2. Hidden advertisement for/against a candidate or party <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadcasting of programs/publication of articles with content of a positive/negative nature for a particular candidate or party • Disproportionate focus on participation of a candidate in social, cultural and sports events • Disproportionate negative coverage of candidate or party in news programs or article • Criticisms of a party or candidate in analytical programs • Broadcasting of analytical programs with criticism or other negative content
Advertising	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of the advertisement in the state-controlled media on unequal financial conditions for incumbent and opposition candidates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free of charge • Same price for all • Discounted fees • Staggered payment of fees 2. Unequal access of the opposition candidates to the advertisement possibilities in the state-controlled media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refusal of access

- Different financial conditions

ELECTORAL CORRUPTION INDICATORS	
Categories and types	Possible manifestations (instances)
Electoral fraud	Engaging in any illegal act that has the potential to increase the vote share of a favoured candidate/s or decrease the vote share of a rival candidate/s
	<i>An illegal interference with the process of an election impacting either negatively or positively on an election results can constitute an act of corruption</i>
Registration malpractices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimidation at registration centres • Buying/bribing of registration officers • Double registration • Registration of underage people • Registration of foreigners • Bussing of voters • Impersonation • Misinformation of times and dates of registration
Voting malpractices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forging of ballot papers • Bussing of electorates • Stuffing of ballot boxes • Change and breaking of ballot boxes seals • Intimidation at polling stations (security agencies, macho men) • Absence/inadequate presence of security personnel at polling stations • Buying/bribing of electoral officers • Camping of electoral officers • Voting twice or more • Impersonating another voter • Improper vote counting • Exchanging legal ballot boxes with already filled ballot boxes
Vote buying	The act of/offering of an inducement by a party, a candidate or a candidate's agent with the clear intention of harvesting the recipient's vote. It is a routine aspect of electoral corruption. It may include the following manifestations:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paying voters to vote in favour or against a particular candidate or party
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paying Voters to abstain from voting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing last minute infrastructure, construction materials, agricultural inputs and the provision of other services to communities aimed at securing votes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering voters food, clothes, household goods, medicine etc
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering voters short-term jobs and public contracts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatening voters with deprivation of benefits if they do not vote as 'commissioned' and if a particular party wins the election
Gerrymandering	Refers to the act of redrawing of voting districts/constituencies to favor a certain party, usually the ruling party
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of new districts to favour a particular party
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making political appointment/transfers to enhance chances of winning



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