



**ELECTORAL COMMISSION
GHANA**

FINAL PRE-ELECTION ADDRESS TO THE NATION

Good Evening Fellow Ghanaians,

The time has come once again for you to exercise your franchise to choose your leaders in our 7th Presidential and Parliamentary elections of the fourth republic.

As the institution responsible for managing the elections, it is important for me, on behalf of the Commission, to engage you the electorate on what you must know before you get to the polling stations tomorrow. We would also like to take you very briefly through the electoral process, the arrangements in place for tomorrow and the integrity mechanisms within the process.

But before then, the Commission would like to place on record, acknowledgement of the contributions and immeasurable support we have enjoyed from the following institutions towards the success of this year's elections. They include the:

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) & the UN office in Ghana
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Commonwealth Secretariat
- Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK
- Ford Foundation
- The Canadian Government
- National Peace Council
- National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE)
- Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)
- National Media Commission (NMC)



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- Ghana Journalists' Association (GJA)
- Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)
- Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO)
- Traditional rulers and heads of faith based organisations and
- The ladies and gentlemen of the media

Your support has been vital in getting us to where we are today. For that we are extremely grateful.

We also want to appreciate our hardworking staff and electoral officials across the country. On behalf of the Commission, thank you for the long hours, personal sacrifices, and commitment to work.

As we get to the final lap, we encourage you to keep up the good work. Follow the law. Let us all do our very best for our country.

Special Voting

Over the last few days, there were complaints from security personnel about their inability to locate their names on the special voting lists. It is important to clarify that special voting is for staff of the electoral commission, security agencies or journalists who are to be deployed outside their usual places of residence on election day. Special voting is not for all officers of the security agencies, or electoral officers or journalists. Accordingly the EC works with the list provided by the institutions.

As we have stated repeatedly, the challenges were occasioned by a number of factors:



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1. Persons who did not transfer their votes when the transfer window opened earlier, wanted to use the Special Voting as an opportunity to transfer into a constituency other than where they are registered to vote.
2. Some security agencies did not submit any list at all, and some of those who submitted provided incomplete data on their officers. So it was difficult to assign them to their polling stations.
3. Not all officers were going to be deployed for polling station duties on election day and so were not intended for special voting, but a lot of people turned up to vote when their names were not included in the special voters list. Special voting is not for all election officials, media or security personnel.
4. As a listening Commission and in consultation with the political parties and hierarchy of the security agencies, we set aside a second day for the continuation of the special voting exercise for officials whose names were not on the special voting list. For this category of persons, we have engaged the security hierarchy and it has been agreed that they would be deployed close to the polling stations where they registered so they can vote. They would have priority in the voting queues.
5. As a Commission, it is our job to run elections and to get people to vote. We are not interested in denying anyone his or her right to vote. The challenges encountered by some of the officers could have been avoided. However, the reasons for those challenges were not within the



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control of the Commission. So it was not a deliberate effort on our part to prevent anyone from voting.

We are happy to announce that there was an 80% turnout in the Special Voting on December 1 and 4. This is consistent with the turn out numbers we are expecting in this year's election.

Now to the elections tomorrow:

- We are expecting a total voting population of **15,712,499**.
- Voting will take place at **28,992** Polling Stations in **275** constituencies across the country.
- We have deployed about **148,000** election officials to conduct the polls.
- We are receiving support from about **64,000** security personnel to ensure a safe and peaceful environment for all voters to exercise their franchise.
- We have deployed **70,709 BVDs**. There will be **2 BVDs** per polling station with sufficient backups to deal with any unexpected challenges with any of the devices at the polling stations.
- We have **4 technicians** on standby in each of our district offices to respond rapidly to any technical challenges at any polling station.
- We also have **20 technical staff** manning our 24-hour Operations Centre to provide rapid response to any issues from across the country.
- We have accredited over **12,400** Foreign and Local Observers. They include the Commonwealth Observer Mission led by His Excellency Thabo Mbeki, Former President of South Africa; African Union Observers led by His Excellency Pohamba, the former President of Namibia; ECOWAS Observers led by His Excellency Professor Amos Sawyer; European Union



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Observers; Coalition of Domestic Election Observers; International Republican Institute; National Democratic Institute; United Nations Association Ghana; among others.

Are We Set?

The Electoral Commission is ready for tomorrow. All the 97 items required for each Polling Station for this year's elections have been distributed to all 216 districts of the country. Voters Register, Supplementary Lists and Polling Station Lists, have all been given to the parties and candidates. It is untrue that we have split Polling Stations on the blind side of any political party. All the parties are aware of Polling Station locations and have registers for all the Polling Stations.

Polling Station list and locations have also been shared with security agencies and observers. All Officers required on Election Day have been recruited, rigorously trained and assigned to all the 28,992 polling stations and are expected to be on duty tomorrow.

Our National Collation Centre is ready. Each Presidential Candidate is entitled to 2 representatives at the Centre at all material times during the collation process until the final results are declared. There will be representatives of the main observer groups, as well as the NMC, NCCE, GJA, and the Women's Situation Room.

All the **275 Constituency Collation Centres** are ready. Parliamentary candidates are entitled to 2 agents at the Constituency Collation Centres. There is also a Media Centre for regular press briefings on election day and until the final results are declared.



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The toll free line for our technical staff and linked to the national operations room is ready. The shortcode **#6363** for the public to contact us speedily on E-Day is active. You can also use that number to check where you will be voting tomorrow. Text your voter ID number to 6363 and you will get a response telling you your registration status and polling station details.

The Media Team of the Commission can also be contacted on the toll-free number **0800-818-818** or **0303968750** or **0303976568**.

The Process

Before polling begins, the Presiding Officer will show the empty ballot boxes to everyone present at the Polling Station.

As a voter the first place you go to is the Name Reference Table. The Officer will assist you to identify your name in the list and in the voters register for the polling station. The officer will examine your finger to ensure you have not already voted.

Once your name is found, the Name Reference Officer will refer you to the Verification Officer (Desk 2) who will provide the page number and column in the Voters' register and other lists where your details can be found.

At the Verification Table (Desk 2), your biometric barcode in the Voters' Register will be scanned. Your picture and biographic details would appear. After that, you will be requested to put any of your fingers on the scanner of the BVD.

If verification is successful, the BVD will show a green light and a voice message **"Verified"** will be heard if your fingerprint matches what we have for you in the database. If there is no match, a red light will be shown with a voice message "rejected". If further efforts to verify you by the BVD fail, then you may be



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verified manually. The Manual Verification will be done if the BVD fails to verify all your 10 fingers. In this case, the Presiding Office will inform agents of all political parties present at the polling station about the failure of biometric verification. He will then fill the manual verification form as provided in C.I. 94. Thereafter, your barcode will be deactivated in the Voters' Register and the indelible ink will be applied to your left index finger.

The next step is the Ballot table (Desk 3). Here, the ballot paper is detached from the booklet and validated by a unique stamp provided by the Commission to all polling stations. The ballot paper will be folded vertically first, and then horizontally, and you will then proceed to the voting screen to thumbprint for your preferred candidate for the Presidential election. After dropping the presidential ballot into the presidential ballot box, you have to proceed to the 4th Desk for the parliamentary ballot to be issued to you. Once you have thumb printed for your preferred parliamentary candidate, you drop the ballot into the parliamentary ballot box and that's it. You are done. Please go home and return at 5pm to observe the counting and declaration if you so wish.

Special arrangements for PWDs:

We have made provision for tactile jackets for ballot papers for voters with visual impairment. This is to enable them vote independently person's. For all persons with disability and vulnerable voters such as pregnant women and the aged, we have advised all our officers to give them priority to vote. So we would like to urge all voters to be patient at the polling stations and allow such persons to be assisted to vote before you.



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Integrity Mechanisms

1. Every voter is required to be biometrically or manually verified before they can vote. Where manual verification is going to be used, the Presiding Officer must fill the Manual Verification Form signed by him and the voter, and endorsed by agents at the polling station.
2. The ballot paper given to the voter must be validated by the unique stamp provided by the Commission to the polling station. After that, the ballot issuer is required to hold up the ballot to the scrutiny of everyone present at the polling station to ensure that not more than one ballot paper is issued at a time. And that the ballot paper has been validated.
3. The voter's biometric barcode is deactivated after verification and marking of the index finger with the indelible ink to prevent double voting.
4. Every register is unique to the Polling Station and a voter's name only appears on one register. This prevents double voting at different polling stations. If you try it, you will be arrested and dealt with in accordance with the law.
5. No voter will be permitted to enter the voting screen with a bag or a purse. No mobile phone will be allowed into the voting screen. No pen will be allowed. No food or drinks will be allowed. You enter only with the ballot paper that will be issued to you.
6. The law prohibits the sale of alcohol within 500 meters of a Polling Station.



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7. Motorbikes are not permitted within 400 metres of a Polling Station.
8. Use of motorbikes between 5pm tomorrow and 6 am on December 8 is prohibited.
9. The Polls are conducted in open public places.
10. At the end of the polls, officials and agents will check to ensure that the number of people ticked on the register tallies with the number of voters biometrically and manually verified. This is to ensure that there is no discrepancy.
11. At the end of the polls, the sorting of the ballot will be done in the full view of the public. Counting will take place in public. The declaration will done in public. The recording of the results declared will done publicly.
12. We have a standardized set up for all polling stations to minimize security threats and protect the secrecy of the ballot. This would be circulated to all presiding officers.
13. All Presiding Officers have been issued with gloves which must be worn before sorting of ballots and during counting. This will prevent allegations of ballots being stained and consequently rejected.
14. Results Collation Sheets (RSC) are serialized and customized to each Polling Station. Replacement sheets in the event of damage to RSC are also serially numbered and differentiated by colour.



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15. The entire process is closely observed by political party agents, candidate's agents, observers, journalists and members of the public.
16. Transportation of the declared polling station results and ballot papers to the CCC will be monitored by agents and security personnel.
17. At the CCC, before the collation begins, agents from the polling stations will first confirm that the results being collated are exactly the same results declared at the polling station.
18. Party agents will be given signed copies of the results declared at the PS, CCC and NCC.
19. The collation will be done in front of parliamentary candidates, their agents, spouses, journalists, observers, and security personnel. At the end of the collation, the constituency results will be declared in the presence of all.
20. At the NCC, candidates' agents will first confirm the figures before the Commission commences collation.
21. This year, we are adding electronic transmission as another layer of integrity to the process. Electronic Results Transmission System was successfully demonstrated to the political parties and observers on Saturday 26th November, 2016. The results from the polling station will be captured into an electronic system projected at the CCC for confirmation by agents and transmitted to the NCC. All Polling Station results will also be scanned and electronically transmitted to the NCC. The system is



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encrypted end-to-end. So it is not possible for anyone to interfere or manipulate the results during the transmission process.

It is untrue that the EC has imported erasable pens for use in the collation process. The EC needs the results just like all the candidates and parties. Even if it were possible for the EC to use erasable ink to change the results on the EC copies, the EC cannot change copies of the results given to the agents of candidates and parties.

22. More importantly, this year, each region will have a different colour for their validation stamp. This is to prevent any possible importation of fake ballot papers into the electoral process. Strange ballots would be easily identified and isolated during the sorting and counting process. Again, the EC has not printed ballot papers in collusion with any political party. Any fake ballot papers would be easily identified by the absence of genuine validation stamps and the serial numbers.

With these numerous integrity mechanisms, we believe that our system is secure, it is credible and it is transparent. It is impossible for a person or group to interfere or manipulate the electoral outcome in favour of any candidate.

Rejected Ballots

We have also taken a few steps to minimize the incidence of rejected ballots.

- The colour of the indelible ink used to mark a voter's finger will be different from the ink on the thumbprint pad. This is to help reduce the confusion caused by finger stains on the ballot paper resulting in the rejection of the ballot.



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- The ballot paper design has also been improved. The boxes are larger and the black lines in between the candidate's pictures are thicker to minimize incidents of thumb prints appearing in more than one box and causing the rejection of the ballot.
- Having said that, let me now turn my attention to the important role of the political party agents and what they are not allowed to do on E-Day

Party Agents

The agents also serve as another mechanism to support the integrity of the elections.

The agents are allowed to position themselves in a way that they can clearly see or hear whatever is going on and move freely at the polling station at all times. They are allowed to call the attention of the Presiding Officer to anything that they consider to be irregular and if possible, fill an irregularity form or give a written account of the alleged irregularity to the Presiding Officer.

The agent is allowed to assist the Presiding Officer at his/her request to establish the true identity of a prospective voter whose identity is in doubt. They are required to pay close attention to the ballots that are rejected; closely observe the counting of the votes, making sure that each ballot is counted in favour of the candidate for whom it was cast.

The agents are permitted to ask for a recount if they genuinely believe that the votes have not been counted correctly. They are required to sign the Declaration of Results Form, making sure that the total number of votes



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obtained by the candidates have been recorded properly and obtain a copy of the declaration form. They may refuse to sign the declaration form, but must provide in writing, the reasons for such refusal. But their refusal to sign does not invalidate the results declared.

The agents are not allowed to wear colours or items that identify them with a party or candidate at the polling station. Agents are not allowed to interfere with election administration such as counting of the votes after the polls have closed. They have no business inspecting the ID cards of voters in the queue and they cannot directly confront any person at the polling station. They must respect the right of voters at all times.

The party agents cannot assist a voter who needs help to vote. That is the job of the Presiding Officer. The agents have no right to give orders to the election staff or in anyway interfere with or disrupt their work. They must not attempt to find out how someone is going to vote or has voted. They are not allowed to handle any election material without the permission of the Presiding Officer. Finally, it is not in their right to attempt to supervise the work of the polling staff. The Presiding Officer has a right to remove any party agent whose behaviour or conduct is disruptive of the work of polling officials at the polling station.

Finally, I would like to say that the results collation process will be broadcast live on all television stations and on our Facebook page. Additionally, our mobile results application **ThumbsApp** is ready and available on the android market. You can download the app free of charge, install it on your mobile phone and once the results begin to come, you will be able to follow it in real-time until we make the final declaration.



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Fellow Ghanaians, barring any unforeseen circumstances, we expect election materials to arrive early at all polling stations, and we expect the polls to open at exactly 7:00am.

We commit our officials, our staff, all candidates, journalists, security personnel, observers, voters and all persons involved in the elections into the care of God.

We take the opportunity call on the media to support the process by reporting responsibly, and educating people where necessary about the process. We also urge you to closely monitor the process and bring anything untoward to our attention for speedy resolution.

Now it is time for us to do what is necessary to secure the peace and stability of our country.

Thank you everyone for listening. If you are on the register, please go out tomorrow and vote. Vote lawfully. Vote peacefully.

God bless our homeland Ghana and may God make Ghana greater and stronger.

Thank you.

December 6, 2016