

Nairobi, Kenya, October 28 (Infosplusgabon) - Kenya's Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) was again hard pressed on Saturday to justify higher voter turnout than it had declared at the close of voting on Thursday, saying vote scrutiny was still continuing.

The Kenyan electoral body came under severe criticism after figures on display by local television stations put the figure of 7.3 million votes, way above the 6.5 million people believed to have voted initially.

IEBC Chairman Wafula Chebukati said Saturday the figures shown by the media did not come from the electoral body as it was still verifying the results.

Early results from Kenya's fresh election confirm that voter turnout was unusually low across the country, with the exception of regional strongholds for the ruling Jubilee party, the African Centre for Open Governance (AfriCoG) said in a statement.

According to AfriCoG, concerns have emerged on the conduct of the election, key among them, that there have been changes in the Register of Voters, and contradictions between results streamed and the Results Forms (34A) now available on the poll body's portal.

According to AfriCoG, a local group of election observers, deployed approximately 2,000 observers in 44 of the 47 counties around the country to observe election and human rights violations.

The observers are responsible for monitoring Election Day processes, and transmit photos of posted Forms 34A and Forms 34B.

Analysis of the October 26 election is based upon their findings.

Results began streaming very quickly after polling stations closed at 5pm. Within just an hour, the IEBC had posted 516 forms.

Within two hours, it had posted 8,830 forms – which is 22 percent of all the 40,883 results forms. At 8pm, three hours after the polls had closed, 16,264, or 40 percent of all forms had been posted.

When Chebukati spoke to the public at 9:12pm, he said that 27,134 forms had been posted.

This number, which represents 66 percent of all forms, did not match what was posted on the portal at that time, the election observers said.

In fact, the portal said that 18,090 forms had been posted at that moment. The discrepancy merits an explanation.

Chebukati said the earlier figures given by the electoral body which showed 48% turnout, before they were changed, were based on an examination of the electronic devices reporting voter turnout.

The civil society bodies said with Kenya's troubling history around the tallying and release of result, the speed raises concerns about the validity of the figures.

The files IEBC has posted online show that pictures were being taken of the forms within 15 minutes of closing.

That timeline implies that presiding officers were able to close their polling stations, complete the administrative procedures related to securing materials, count and tally votes, announce results and scan forms in 15 minutes.

"The speed of transmission was a key issue in the August election, raised by petitioners at the Supreme Court," the election observer group said.

The election observer group's initial analysis, as of 9:00pm on 26 October, showed that voter turnout was low across the country.

In fact, turnout only exceeded 50 percent in 35 percent of the stations included in preliminary analysis.

The IEBC's streamed results on television showed that opposition leader Raila Odinga, who withdrew from the race, had won 130 votes.

Based on the observers' photos of Forms 34A, he had garnered at least 3,093 votes by that time.

The total number of registered voters in Kenya has changed again.

When the Register of Voters was gazetted before the August 8 election, the total number of registered voters stood at 19,611,423.

On August 11, when the IEBC announced the final presidential results, it announced the number of registered voters as 19,637,061.

The IEBC Chairman announced that elections in Homa Bay, Siaya, Kisumu and Migori would be postponed until 28 Oct.

However, there are results forms from constituencies in Kisumu and Migori posted on the IEBC's public portal. The IEBC said some stations voted in those areas.

Chebukati said the election was postponed because none of the voting materials had been distributed.

If election in these areas was postponed, it follows that polling was not successfully completed, AfriCoG said.

As of 12:34am on 27 Oct, the IEBC portal contained a few Forms 34B, including one from Kisumu West, despite the fact election in Kisumu was postponed until Saturday.

Form 34B for Kisumu West indicates that the returning officer completed and signed the form

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with only 9 out of 142 Forms 34A from the constituency. The results contained on the form indicate that Raila received 0 votes and Uhuru won 50 votes.

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