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# Anambra Pre-election Assessment Report

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EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORT TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE  
IN NIGERIA (EU-SDGN) II

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>A</b>	Accord
<b>AAC</b>	African Action Congress
<b>ADC</b>	African Democratic Congress
<b>APC</b>	All Progressives Congress
<b>APGA</b>	All Progressives Grand Alliance
<b>APP</b>	Action People's Party
<b>BP</b>	Boot Party
<b>BVAS</b>	Biometric Voter Accreditation System
<b>CEMESO</b>	Centre for Media and Society
<b>CJID</b>	Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>CVR</b>	Continuous Voter Registration
<b>DSS</b>	Department of State Services
<b>ESN</b>	Eastern Security Network
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUAA</b>	European Union Agency for Asylum
<b>EU-SDGN</b>	European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria
<b>FOI</b>	Freedom of Information
<b>FRA</b>	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
<b>GOCOP</b>	Guild of Corporate Online Publishers
<b>HRW</b>	Human Rights Watch
<b>IPC</b>	International Press Centre

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>IPOB</b>	Indigenous People of Biafra
<b>IReV</b>	INEC Election Result Viewing Portal
<b>JONAPWD</b>	Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Area
<b>LP</b>	Labour Party
<b>NSCDC</b>	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps
<b>NUJ</b>	Nigeria Union of Journalists
<b>NRM</b>	National Rescue Movement
<b>NWTF</b>	Nigerian Women Trust Fund
<b>OPDs</b>	Organisations of Persons with Disabilities
<b>PFRAS</b>	Party Finance Reporting and Accounting System
<b>PDP</b>	People's Democratic Party
<b>PVC</b>	Permanent Voter Card
<b>PVT</b>	Parallel Vote Tabulation
<b>PwDs</b>	Persons with Disabilities
<b>TKC</b>	The Kukah Centre
<b>WTV</b>	Watching The Vote
<b>ZLP</b>	Zenith Labour Party

# Executive Summary

The Anambra State Governorship election scheduled for Saturday, 8th November 2025 represents a critical juncture for Nigeria's democratic development. The Anambra election will be held nearly one year before the next general election scheduled for February 2027, and in this context, it will serve as one of the critical dress rehearsals for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

This report summarises key findings from the Anambra pre-election assessment which the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) carried out between June and September 2025. The methodology for the pre-election assessment of the Anambra governorship election utilised a robust, mixed-methods approach based on four distinct and complementary analytical pathways, all contributing equally to a comprehensive view. These pathways included a Context Analysis, which leveraged desktop research and stakeholder validation to map critical risks and political-security dynamics. This was complemented by highly specialised assessments: a Media Landscape Analysis that tracked threats to journalists using key informant interviews and media freedom databases; a Gender Analysis which combined campaign messaging review with a stratified quantitative survey of 423 women across the 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs); and a Disability Inclusion Assessment that included a survey of 57 Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and on-ground accessibility spot-checks at polling centres by Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs).

The findings from these four parallel component assessments were synthesised and further enriched by a dedicated roundtable meeting with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and media partners. This inclusive methodology, which relied on both quantitative data collection and qualitative insights from key stakeholders, ensured a multifaceted and verifiable view of the key risks, challenges, and opportunities shaping the electoral process toward November 8, 2025.

The report is structured around six key themes on which the pre-election assessment dwells. Below are some of the key insights from the pre-election assessment.

## 1. Social Political Context

Anambra's sociopolitical context is characterised by entrenched political volatility, a significant risk of electoral disruption, and a crucial divide in voter sentiment between urban and rural areas. While the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) retains gubernatorial dominance, opposition parties like the People's Democratic Party (PDP), All Progressives Congress (APC), and Labour Party (LP) are actively contesting influence, navigating an environment where the strong, traditional influence of community elders and religious leaders is often compromised by financial inducements. This political landscape is defined by a history of electoral turbulence, highlighted by past

judicial interventions, political violence, and most recently, a troubling decline in voter turnout to a historic low of 10.2% in 2021, largely driven by insecurity and separatist-mandated sit-at-home orders. The August 2025 by-election, marred by violence and ballot snatching, underscores the persistent fragility of the electoral infrastructure and foreshadows significant security challenges for the upcoming governorship polls.

The upcoming election features a diverse array of candidates who are increasingly relying on personal credibility and traditional/religious networks over party machinery, a necessary strategy given internal party conflicts and shifting alliances. Campaign strategies are highly personalised, contrasting the incumbent's

focus on economic credentials with opposition efforts to consolidate base support and leverage regional or religious appeal. This environment fosters mudslinging and character attacks, often overshadowing substantive issue-based debates. Crucially, the youth demographic (over 50% of registered voters), which is highly mobilised through digital platforms, is a key determinant, yet this engagement is undercut by pervasive vote buying and disillusionment. Socio-economic disparities, high unemployment, and infrastructural deficits contribute to transactional voting and social unrest, further destabilising the electoral process.

The state's voter profile reveals a distinct geographical split: urban centres (like Onitsha and Awka) show higher engagement with opposition parties driven by aspirations and dissatisfaction, while rural areas tend to favour APGA, relying on traditional authorities and local leaders for continuity and stability. Despite a high literacy rate of 92%, which fosters entrepreneurial vibrancy, challenges like inconsistent power supply and climate vulnerabilities (such as flooding impacting electoral logistics) hinder sustainable development. Therefore, while INEC has a large, engaged, and youthful electorate to manage, the political outcome will be significantly shaped by candidates' ability to navigate the entrenched influence of traditional power brokers, manage regional violence in hotspots like Anambra Central and South, and overcome the pervasive cynicism and logistical fragility that have historically depressed voter participation.

## 2. Security Dynamics and Risk Assessment

The security dynamics in Anambra State reveal a critically volatile pre-election environment characterised by a convergence of traditional communal conflicts, pervasive political thuggery, and a significant erosion of institutional trust across all three Senatorial Zones. Anambra South has emerged as the clear epicentre of this insecurity, plagued by cult killings, kidnappings, and clashes fuelled by intense political and communal toxicity, particularly

in hotspots like Ihiala and Orumba South. The zone is dominated by the problematic involvement of local vigilante groups and is susceptible to both ethnic and denominational tensions. While Anambra North faces violence driven by perennial land disputes, resource control, and the disruptive impact of flooding in areas like Ogbaru, Anambra Central, encompassing the state capital, remains the key theatre of elite political competition, where incidents of cultism, youth gang violence, and targeted disinformation campaigns quickly escalate into broader political crises, underscoring systemic institutional mistrust.

Across the state, electoral integrity is fundamentally undermined by rampant electoral offences that override adherence to the Peace Accord. Vote trading is a significant reported offense, often facilitated by informal local networks and supported by cult or vigilante groups that distribute cash and inducements to distort the electorate's choice. This is closely tied to political thuggery, where cult groups and paramilitary vigilante outfits are allegedly patronised by political elites to harass opponents and forcibly disperse rallies, particularly in contested wards like Awka South and Ihiala. These tactics create an environment of fear that restricts free political activity, further compounded by sophisticated disinformation campaigns aimed at fabricating scandals, circulating fake result sheets, and delegitimising INEC to deepen voter cynicism.

The cumulative effect of these dynamics is a serious vulnerability to targeted violence against political actors, exemplified by incidents such as the shooting of a PDP candidate. Such attacks demonstrate the operational freedom of informal political actors and local militias outside institutional safeguards, making candidate protection a critical election security concern. Overall, the security landscape in Anambra is defined by the politicisation of local conflicts and security outfits, the use of money to sway both traditional leaders and youth, and the failure of enforcement mechanisms to bridge the widening gap

between the rhetorical commitment to peace and the violent reality of its electoral process.

### 3. Electoral Preparedness and INEC Performance

INEC in Anambra State has demonstrated a clear intent to expand electoral participation and institutional responsiveness, notably through the recent Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise which successfully captured over 168,000 new voters, with women and youth constituting the majority. Furthermore, the Commission has concluded key preparatory phases, including the display of the new voter register. Despite these efforts, effective participation is persistently challenged by significant operational and infrastructural deficits. Logistical arrangements are plagued by recurring issues such as the late opening of polling units—a major historical problem with 73% of units still closed past 9:30 a.m. in the 2021 election, underscoring the necessity for robust planning and contingency measures across the state's 5,720 polling units.



**5,720**  
POLLING UNITS

These technical weaknesses are compounded by gaps in transparency and voter confidence. While INEC has adopted technology like INEC Election Result Viewing Portal (IREV) for result transmission and launched inclusive education campaigns, voter trust remains moderate due to poor information dissemination, logistical delays in Permanent Voter Card

(PVC) distribution (affecting 14% of PwDs registrants), and perceived opacity concerning procedural inconsistencies. The limited initial CVR window and security challenges, including past attacks on INEC facilities, highlight a need for stronger supply chain resilience and security measures. Moreover, incidents of access restrictions and harassment of journalists at INEC offices further undermine institutional credibility and transparency, suggesting that proactive disclosure and strengthened media engagement are essential to bolster public confidence.

Ultimately, while the State Resident Electoral Commissioner has declared readiness, the success of the November election hinges on INEC's ability to translate its technical commitments into seamless, on-the-ground execution. This requires scaling logistical capacity—including adequate staffing beyond 2021 levels and ensuring the sufficiency of the 300 configured Biometric Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) scanners—and strengthening security and infrastructure to minimise delays and access issues across the state's challenging terrain. Building trust through consistent, accessible, and culturally-sensitive information, particularly through targeted digital voter education, will be critical to addressing voter fear and overcoming historical logistical bottlenecks to ensure high and informed participation.

### 4. Media Landscape and Threat Assessment

Journalists covering elections, governance, and security in Anambra State face a hostile environment marked by persistent threats and documented attacks from both state and non-state actors. Incidents of media freedom violations, which include physical violence, kidnappings, equipment destruction, and legal harassment, are frequently perpetrated by security forces like the Police and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), officials from INEC, and various criminal elements and armed militants. These threats are particularly concentrated in hotspots such

as Awka, Onitsha, and Ihiala, intensifying during election periods and protests. This pattern of intimidation significantly undermines the ability of the media to report on sensitive public issues accurately and freely.

Compounding the physical risks, media professionals in Anambra are increasingly vulnerable to digital surveillance and online harassment, especially when reporting on human rights or governance issues. Instances of journalists' phones being seized or monitored highlight a growing digital threat. Unfortunately, the lack of dedicated state-level mechanisms to protect journalists exacerbates this crisis. Law enforcement agencies are often complicit in attacks or fail to respond effectively when journalists seek protection. The slow, costly nature of judicial intervention, combined with the fear of reprisals, effectively discourages most journalists from pursuing legal redress, ensuring that perpetrators of violence against the press operate with a high degree of impunity.

### 5. Gender Perspectives and Women's Participation

The pre-election gender assessment in Anambra highlights that structural barriers and persistent patriarchal practices continue to marginalise women from accessing meaningful political power. Despite rhetorical commitments to inclusion, the four dominant political parties (PDP, APC, LP, and APGA) demonstrably prioritise male candidates, relegating women to token roles such as "women leaders" or, at best, deputy governorship candidates; only two female governorship candidates were ultimately fielded across 16 political parties, both by smaller, less influential groups. This pattern of entrenched exclusionary practices is reinforced by a pervasive political discourse that subjects female aspirants to harmful stereotyping, often questioning their competence and loyalty by framing them as poor homemakers if they pursue public office.

This hostile environment is further intensified by widespread gender-based harassment, both online and offline, which aims to delegitimise female leaders through targeted smear campaigns focusing on their morality and marital status. Women aspirants are subjected to cyberbullying and publicly questioned in influential spaces like churches and local markets, leading to self-censorship and withdrawal. Compounded by gender-blind media coverage that minimises their policy proposals and perpetuates stereotypes, women's visibility and legitimacy are severely limited. Furthermore, pre-election security risks and logistical failures, particularly in high-risk areas, threaten to disproportionately disenfranchise women voters, as mobility and safety concerns combine with poor accessibility and potential politically motivated violence.

### 6. Disability Inclusion in the Anambra Electoral Process

The Anambra Disability Inclusion Pre-election assessment reveals a mixed but generally positive outlook on voter readiness among PwDs, despite persistent systemic and security challenges. The majority of respondents, predominantly those with physical disabilities (57.9%), report a strong preparedness for the upcoming election, with 86.0% having successfully collected their PVCs.



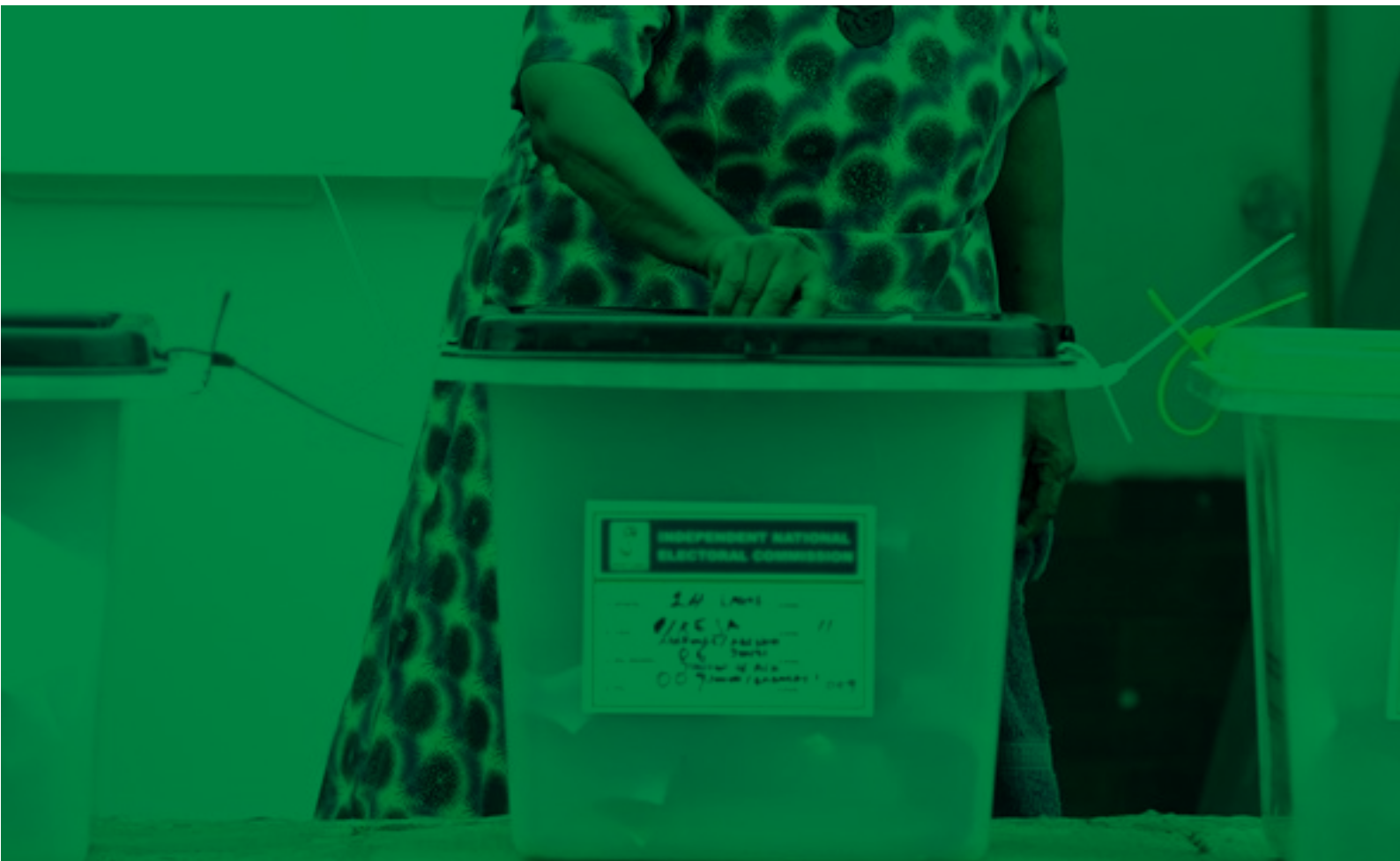
However, this readiness is critically undermined by significant accessibility gaps across all areas of the electoral process. Structural barriers, such as a lack

of ramps and poor terrain, remain a top concern, identified by 25% of respondents as the most significant barrier in past elections, while transportation difficulties are widely anticipated by 18.2% of PwDs, especially in rural areas.

Furthermore, the assessment highlights a concerning lack of commitment to inclusivity, with field checks confirming the near total absence of essential communication materials (like Braille guides) and support services, such as sign language interpreters, at registration centres. Compounding these issues are deep-seated attitudinal barriers, as a notable percentage of PwDs anticipate discrimination and negative attitudes from officials and fellow voters. Most critically,

security risks remain highly volatile in Anambra, with 30.3% of PwDs citing them as their greatest fear, given their disproportionate vulnerability to violence and limited ability to flee or seek help during incidents, further eroding trust in pledged security assurances.

Based on the findings of the Pre-Election Assessment, 66 recommendations are proffered covering Electoral offences; Electoral preparedness; Electoral environment and security; Media freedom; Gender and women's participation; and Disability inclusion. It is hoped that these recommendations, if implemented, will significantly improve the quality of the Anambra electoral process.



# INTRODUCTION

## Overview

Anambra State, one of the five States in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, has as its capital city in Awka. Other major cities are Onitsha and Nnewi. The State has 21 LGAs. As portrayed in adjacent map. With a land mass of approximately 4,844 square kilometres, Anambra is one of Nigeria's smallest states by land area. It is bordered by Delta, Imo, Enugu, Abia, and Kogi States.

The 2023 projection, based on the 2006 census, puts Anambra's population estimate at over 6 million. The people of the State are predominantly Igbo, and the Igbo language is widely spoken, although, as with the rest of Nigeria, English is the official language. The people are mostly Christian, which is dominated by Catholicism and Anglicanism, with pockets of traditional religion. Onitsha is the main commercial hub of the State, with the Onitsha Main Market being one of the largest markets in West Africa. However, Nnewi, known for automobile parts manufacturing and industrial clusters, is the main industrial centre of the State. Strategic infrastructure, including the Onitsha River Port, the Oseakwa Deep Seaport, as well as a cargo airport, have also consolidated Anambra's position as a major commercial corridor. But poor infrastructure, coupled with inconsistent power supply, and environmental

degradation have proven to be major challenges to industrialisation and economic development of the State. These dynamics make elections in Anambra highly competitive.

Given that women constitute 58% of new registrants and have historically played leading roles in Anambra's governance, gender participation and representation will be central to the 2025 Anambra off-cycle electoral dynamics.

Literacy rate in the State is relatively high compared to national average. It has a strong private sector involvement in education. Notable academic institutions in the State include the Nnamdi Azikiwe University (UNIZIK) in Awka; Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) in Igbariam; the Anambra State Polytechnic in Mgbakwu; Federal Polytechnic Oko; Nwafor Orizu College of Education in Nsugbe; Tansian University in Oba; and Paul University in Awka.

Professor Charles Chukwuma Soludo of APGA is currently the Governor, having assumed office in March 17, 2022. The 30-member House of Assembly serves as the Legislature



## Electoral History of Anambra State

The electoral process in Anambra State has been dynamic, personality-driven, litigious, and often contested. The situation reflects the resilience of voters against political imposition; the judiciary's central role in determining the outcomes of elections in the State; the volatility of party politics and the dominance of strong personalities; and increasing insecurity and low voter turnout in recent years. Below is a concise timeline of Anambra State governorship elections (1999–2021) showing winners, key disputes/court cases, and voter-turnout:

- The 1999 governorship election, won by Chinwoke Mbadinuju of PDP, came with controversies around “godfatherism” and political violence that shaped politics in the State in the early 2000s. The election was reported to have had less than 46.4% voter turnout. In 2003, INEC's declaration of Chris Ngige of PDP as winner, triggered widespread allegations of rigging. In July 2003, the Governor, Chris Ngige, was abducted following a heated disagreement with his “godfather”, Chris Uba.
- In March 2006, the Court of Appeal in Enugu nullified the election of Ngige and declared Peter Obi the winner, following which Obi was sworn in on March 17, 2006. Voter turnout in that election was reportedly less than 47.22%.
- The early part of Peter Obi's tenure (2006 to 2007) was marked by litigation. He was impeached on November 3, 2006 by the State House of Assembly, but was reinstated by the Court of Appeal in February 2007, a decision that was also affirmed by the Supreme Court.
- Just one year into Peter Obi's tenure, INEC conducted governorship election in the State in 2007 and Andy Uba of the PDP was declared winner and sworn-in in May 2007. However, the Supreme Court nullified the election on June 14, 2007, ruling that Obi's four-year tenure began to run when he was sworn in in 2006 and that his tenure had not expired. He therefore returned to office.
- In February 2010, an off-cycle election was held in the State and Peter Obi was re-elected under the banner of APGA. However, there were reports of widespread irregularities by the media and election observers. Voter turnout in the election was less than 16.3%.
- The 2013 governorship election was won by Willie Obiano, also of APGA. The election was again characterised by controversies arising from logistical failures, which led INEC to order supplementary polls in some areas of the State, such as Idemili North, before a final declaration of the winner was made. The election recorded a voter turnout of 26.3%.
- In 2017, Willie Obiano was re-elected, having won all the 21 LGAs. Although the opposition conceded defeat, there were criticisms of the elections nonetheless, regarding low voter turnout at less than 22%.
- The most recent election was in 2021, which witnessed the first statewide use



### 2006

less than 47.22%  
voter turnout



### 2021

less than 10%  
voter turnout

of BVAS and IReV by INEC. It was won by Charles Chukwuma Soludo under the banner of APGA, although some controversy surrounded the election. The election, originally scheduled for November 6, was moved to November 7 in some polling units. Supplementary polls were held in Ihiala LGA on November 9. Voter turnout for the election was reported to be less than 10%, a historic low. However, election observers' Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) confirmed that the results were credible.

## Significance of the November 2025 Elections

The gubernatorial election in Anambra State scheduled for 8th November 2025 will be the seventh governorship poll to be conducted by INEC in the state since the return of democracy in 1999. The election serves as a barometer for INEC's capacity to conduct credible, peaceful elections amidst complex socio-economic and security issues, including insurgency, political violence, and polarisation. It will be the first election to be presided over by the newly appointed INEC Chairman, Professor Joash Amupitan. As the governorship election will take place nearly one year to the next general election of February 2027, it is a critical stage rehearsal for INEC and will be a sounding board on the INEC's preparedness to conduct a credible election.

## Purpose and Methodology of the Pre-Election Assessment

A thorough analysis of Anambra's socio-political landscape is essential ahead of the November 2025 gubernatorial election, given the history of electoral violence and ongoing security challenges. Past elections have been marred by violence that undermines electoral integrity, endangers voters and election officials, and ultimately, public trust in the electoral process. The recent by-election, while less violent, revealed persistent security vulnerabilities and unresolved tensions. Understanding the underlying causes such as political rivalries, socio-economic disparities, and community tensions helps to identify key risk factors, potential flashpoints, and vulnerable communities, enabling targeted strategies to enhance security, prevent violence, and promote a credible, peaceful election. Ultimately, this proactive approach is vital for strengthening Anambra's democratic process and ensuring a safe electoral environment in 2025.

The EU-SDGN's pre-election assessment of the upcoming governorship elections in Anambra State has been undertaken through several pathways.

a) A Context Analysis was conducted by EU-SDGN's Component 6<sup>1</sup> partner in August 2025 and validated through a multi-stakeholder forum involving civil society, political leaders, religious leaders, traditional rulers, and security agencies in Anambra. The context analysis drew on a combination of desktop research, stakeholder interviews, and data review to provide an in-depth overview of the political, social, and security dynamics shaping the upcoming gubernatorial election scheduled for November 8, 2025. Its primary aim was to identify critical risks, delineate zones of concern, and propose strategic interventions to safeguard electoral integrity and foster peace. The goal is to equip stakeholders with actionable insights that will promote a peaceful, credible, and inclusive electoral process, reinforcing Nigeria's democratic resilience.

b) Media landscape analysis spearheaded by EU-SDGN's Component 4 partners<sup>2</sup> focused on an assessment of media safety, and the state of media freedom in Anambra State, with particular focus on possible risks and threats to journalists ahead of the November 8, 2025 Anambra State Governorship Election. The media assessment employed a descriptive and analytical approach, mapping incidents,

<sup>1</sup>The Kukah Centre

<sup>2</sup>CEMESO and IPC

institutional frameworks, and perceptions relating to media freedom and the safety of journalists. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilised. Data collection methods included desk review and key informants' interviews. Records and reports of attacks on journalists and other media workers were tracked from national and state media coverage, reports by CSOs, and databases of media freedom monitoring groups, were also analysed. The Press Attack Tracker of the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID), available at <https://www.pressattack.africa/report-attack>, and Media Rights Agenda's database of "Attacks on Freedom of Expression", available at <https://mediarightsagenda.org/attacks-on-foe/>, were reviewed for relevant data and information on attacks on media freedom and safety of journalists in the state.

Further, informal interviews were conducted with a cross-section of stakeholders, including correspondents and reporters, media owners, editors, members of media professional bodies, such as Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) and Guild of Corporate Online Publishers (GOCOP), representatives of civil society, and officials of the State Ministry of Information. The interviews provided first-hand perspectives on the challenges and opportunities for media freedom in Anambra State.

c) Gender Analysis led by EU-SDGN's Component 5A partners<sup>3</sup> examined the historical and gender context of the Anambra elections. This included a review of campaign messaging for all governorship candidates and a gendered security assessment to identify risks and impediments to women's participation in Anambra State elections; opportunities to advance gender mainstreaming, and likely scenarios on November 8. Further, a survey was also undertaken between 3rd and 15th September 2025 to obtain female voters' insights from a sample of 423 women across the state's 21 LGAs. A stratified sampling methodology with proportional components was applied: LGAs were

weighted and stratified by polling unit density and population size, meaning high-density LGAs like Idemili North fielded more respondents, while mid-sized LGAs such as Awka South and lower-density LGAs like Dunukofia were assigned proportionally fewer. This ensured balanced representation and reliable insights into women's perspectives across the state.

d) Disability inclusion assessment of the Anambra State elections undertaken by EU-SDGN's Component 5B partner<sup>4a</sup> explored aspects on electoral preparedness of PwDs, accessibility of polling units, attitudinal and social barriers, and security concerns specific to PwDs. The disability inclusion assessment involved a pre-election survey with 57 PwDs respondents across Anambra. The survey used structured questionnaires (quantitative and perceptual questions) to capture challenges, expectations, and readiness; informal engagements with stakeholders – namely – Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD), disability clusters, INEC officials, security agencies, and OPDs; on-ground assessments and spot-checks at registration and polling centres in collaboration with OPDs conducted accessibility. The survey also entailed review of secondary data comprising of media monitoring and public statements from INEC, security agencies, and civil society provided context on security, logistics, and policy.

e) A roundtable meeting with CSOs leaders and media partners held on the 22nd of August 2025 under the auspices of Watching The Vote (WTV) initiative<sup>4b</sup> presented an opportunity for participants from media partners and CSOs to share their insights on the political and security trends in the context of the electoral environment in Anambra State. These insights have also informed this Pre-Election Assessment Report.

Thus, the methodology used for the Anambra pre-election was mixed, relying on both quantitative and qualitative data to obtain comprehensive insights on the key issues and critical narratives shaping the

<sup>3</sup>NWTF and ElectHER

<sup>4a</sup>TAF Africa

<sup>4b</sup>The initiative is led by Yiaga Africa under EU-SDGN's Component 2B

# Key findings

**01.**

**SOCIAL  
POLITICAL  
CONTEXT**

# 1. SOCIAL POLITICAL CONTEXT

## Political Trends, Power Dynamics and Realignment

In recent years, Anambra's political scene has experienced significant realignments. While APGA remains dominant, controlling both executive and legislative branches, opposition parties such as PDP, APC, and LP are increasingly contesting for influence. The traditional influence of community elders, town union presidents, and religious leaders remains strong, often swaying electoral outcomes through endorsements and patronage, but their support is sometimes driven by financial incentives, complicating efforts to establish internal party democracy<sup>5</sup>.

Post-electoral disputes, exemplified by court rulings and protests, continue to shape the landscape. The 2006 Court of Appeal decision that nullified the 2003 gubernatorial election remains a reference point for electoral volatility, emphasising the need for dispute resolution mechanisms that bolster credibility and stability. Some key trends in this regard include among others, progressively changing pattern in voter turnout. For instance, between 2003 and 2007, Anambra's elections were marred by judicial interventions during Dr. Chris Ngige's turbulent tenure, marked by kidnappings, arson, and political godfatherism, with court rulings nullifying results and resetting the electoral calendar.

From 2010 to 2017, under Peter Obi and Willie Obiano, APGA solidified gubernatorial dominance, ensuring relative stability despite persistent voter apathy. This decline worsened in 2021 when voter turnout fell to a historic low of 10.2%, Nigeria's lowest, mainly due to insecurity and Indigenous People of Biafra's (IPOB) sit-at-home orders. Earlier elections in 2013 and 2017 had higher

but declining turnouts of 24% and 22% respectively. The trend continued into the 2023 general election, with low turnout, logistical delays, and intimidation at polling units, reflecting broader national insecurity and undermining civic confidence. The August 2025 by-election, plagued by violence, ballot snatching, and electoral manipulation, exposed institutional weaknesses and foreshadowed challenges for the November gubernatorial election, highlighting both actors' disruptive capacity and the fragility of Anambra's electoral infrastructure.

## Political Candidates and Campaign Strategies

The upcoming election features a diverse array of candidates with distinct profiles and campaign approaches. Incumbent Charles Soludo (APGA) leverages his economic credentials and established networks to maintain support but faces ongoing security concerns and opposition challenges. George Moghalu (LP), an opposition figure with religious appeal, seeks to capitalise on the national Obidient momentum by consolidating party support and expanding his base. Jude Ezenwafor (PDP), with a business background, must mobilise beyond core party loyalists to gain broader appeal. Nicholas Ukachukwu (APC), backed by strong internal party support, is focused on consolidating his existing support base and gaining wider recognition. These candidates' campaign strategies and their ability to mobilise supporters and navigate security or intra-party issues will play a critical role in shaping the electoral landscape and perceptions of legitimacy<sup>6</sup>.

The 2025 campaign has seen defections, shifting alliances, and violence linked to candidate origins, especially in zones producing multiple strong contenders like Anambra Central and South, which are hotspots for vigilante mobilisation and violence. Currently, sixteen of nineteen registered parties have fielded candidates,

<sup>5</sup>Sarah Brierley. (2020). (Do endorsements by traditional leaders affect voter attitudes?,

<https://www.theigc.org/collections/do-endorsements-traditional-leaders-affect-voter-attitudes> | <sup>6</sup>Albert Uyiekpen

Usuanlele. (2025). Internal Democracy among Political Parties and the Quest for Democratic Deepening in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of APC and PDP -

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/392506685\\_Internal\\_Democracy\\_among\\_Political\\_Parties\\_and\\_the\\_Quest\\_for\\_Democratic\\_Deepening\\_in\\_Nigeria\\_A\\_Comparative\\_Study\\_of\\_APC\\_and\\_PDP](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/392506685_Internal_Democracy_among_Political_Parties_and_the_Quest_for_Democratic_Deepening_in_Nigeria_A_Comparative_Study_of_APC_and_PDP).

including two women vying for governorship and six for deputy governor.

Anambra remains one of Nigeria's most progressive states in women's political participation, having produced the country's first female governor and maintaining high representation at federal and state levels. However, female candidacy remains low—only 12.5% of 2025 governorship aspirants are women—though female deputy governorship candidates have risen to 37.5%, signalling gradual but uneven progress.

Candidates are increasingly leveraging personal credibility, traditional influence, and regional networks rather than party machinery, amid ongoing internal conflicts and shifting alliances. The campaigns are relying heavily on religious institutions, traditional rulers, and youth networks for mobilisation. However, the political discourse has been marred by mudslinging and character attacks, overshadowing issue-based debates.

Overall, the candidates' profiles illustrate a political environment marked by incumbency advantages, internal party cohesion, religious and regional influences, and the strategic importance of personal credibility and party loyalty. These factors, combined with the ongoing socio-economic challenges and security concerns, will significantly shape voter behaviour and the outcome of the

November 8 election in Anambra.

### Social-Economic Landscape and Public Engagement

The youth demographic, constituting over 60%<sup>7</sup> of the population, is increasingly mobilised through social media, advocacy campaigns, and grassroots activism. This rising engagement fosters a more participatory political culture, emphasising accountability and transparency. Nonetheless, challenges such as voter apathy, vote buying, and disillusionment persist. Youth leaders often support candidates offering financial incentives, undermining genuine democratic participation<sup>8</sup>. Addressing these barriers through civic education, reduced nomination fees, and targeted inclusion initiatives is critical for fostering a more inclusive democracy.

The high literacy rate of 92.11% fosters entrepreneurial activity, particularly in urban centres like Onitsha and Nnewi, contributing to economic vibrancy. However, infrastructural deficits, inconsistent power supply, and environmental issues such as flooding and land degradation hinder sustainable development. Socio-economic disparities, poverty, and unemployment influence voter behaviour, often leading to transactional voting and social unrest, which can destabilise the electoral process. Moreover, climate-related disruptions, especially



**16**  
CANDIDATES



**2**  
FEMALE  
CANDIDATES

<sup>7</sup>Olufemi Ariyo. (2024). Youth Activism in the Digital Age: Leveraging Social Media for Sustainable Change <https://medium.com/@roariyo/youth-activism-in-the-digital-age-leveraging-social-media-for-sustainable-change-955694dd2918>

<sup>8</sup>Chinedu O. Onyewuchi. (2024). Youth Political Participation: Obstacles and Pathways to Increased Youth Engagement in the Nigerian Political Process, [file:///C:/Users/Aluko%20Ahmad/Downloads/31+Twist+v19i4p284%20\(4\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Aluko%20Ahmad/Downloads/31+Twist+v19i4p284%20(4).pdf)

flooding and land degradation, have a tangible impact on electoral logistics and social stability<sup>9</sup>. The 2025 by-election faced logistical setbacks due to environmental factors, exemplifying how climate vulnerabilities can influence electoral processes and outcomes.

### **Voter Demographics and Public Sentiment**

Anambra's voter profile is skewed towards a youthful demographic: over 50% of the approximately 2.8 million<sup>10</sup> registered voters are aged 18–35 (INEC, 2023). Urban centres like Onitsha, Awka, and Nnewi exhibit higher engagement with opposition parties such as PDP and APC, driven by socio-economic aspirations, educational exposure, and dissatisfaction with incumbents. Conversely, rural areas, supported by traditional authorities and religious endorsements, tend to favour APGA, emphasising continuity and stability. Public sentiment, shaped by media narratives, stakeholder engagements, and religious influence, reveals a cautious optimism intertwined with apprehensions over security, electoral integrity, and economic prospects.

Observations indicate a growing disillusionment among urban youth, who are increasingly mobilised through social media campaigns, online debates, and faith-based messages emphasising peace and moral conduct. Overall, while urban voters are increasingly influenced by reformist messaging and digital campaigns, rural communities continue to rely heavily on town unions, religious institutions, and local leaders, creating asymmetrical campaign dynamics.

### **Preliminary Conclusion and Way Forward**

Anambra State's electoral environment is shaped by a confluence of historical legacies, socio-cultural dynamics, legal frameworks, and security realities. While the state has demonstrated vibrant political participation, persistent challenges—ranging from violence to socio-economic disenfranchisement—necessitate comprehensive, coordinated responses. Emphasising inclusive participation, peacebuilding, and infrastructural resilience will be vital in ensuring elections that are credible, peaceful, and truly representative of Anambra's diverse populace.



**2.8million**  
REGISTERED VOTERS **AGED 18–35**

<sup>9</sup>Angela Oyilieze Akanwa, et. AL, (2019). Journal of ecology and Natural Resources: Changing Climate and the Effect of Gully Erosion on Akpo Community Farmers in Anambra State, Nigeria. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330514105\\_Changing\\_Climate\\_and\\_the\\_Effect\\_of\\_Gully\\_Erosion\\_on\\_Akpo\\_Community\\_Farmers\\_in\\_Anambra\\_State\\_Nigeria\\_Changing\\_Climate\\_and\\_the\\_Effect\\_of\\_Gully\\_Erosion\\_on\\_Akpo\\_Community\\_Farmers\\_in\\_Anambra\\_State\\_Nigeria](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330514105_Changing_Climate_and_the_Effect_of_Gully_Erosion_on_Akpo_Community_Farmers_in_Anambra_State_Nigeria_Changing_Climate_and_the_Effect_of_Gully_Erosion_on_Akpo_Community_Farmers_in_Anambra_State_Nigeria)

<sup>10</sup>INEC confirms 2.8m registered voters for Anambra governorship poll.

**02.**

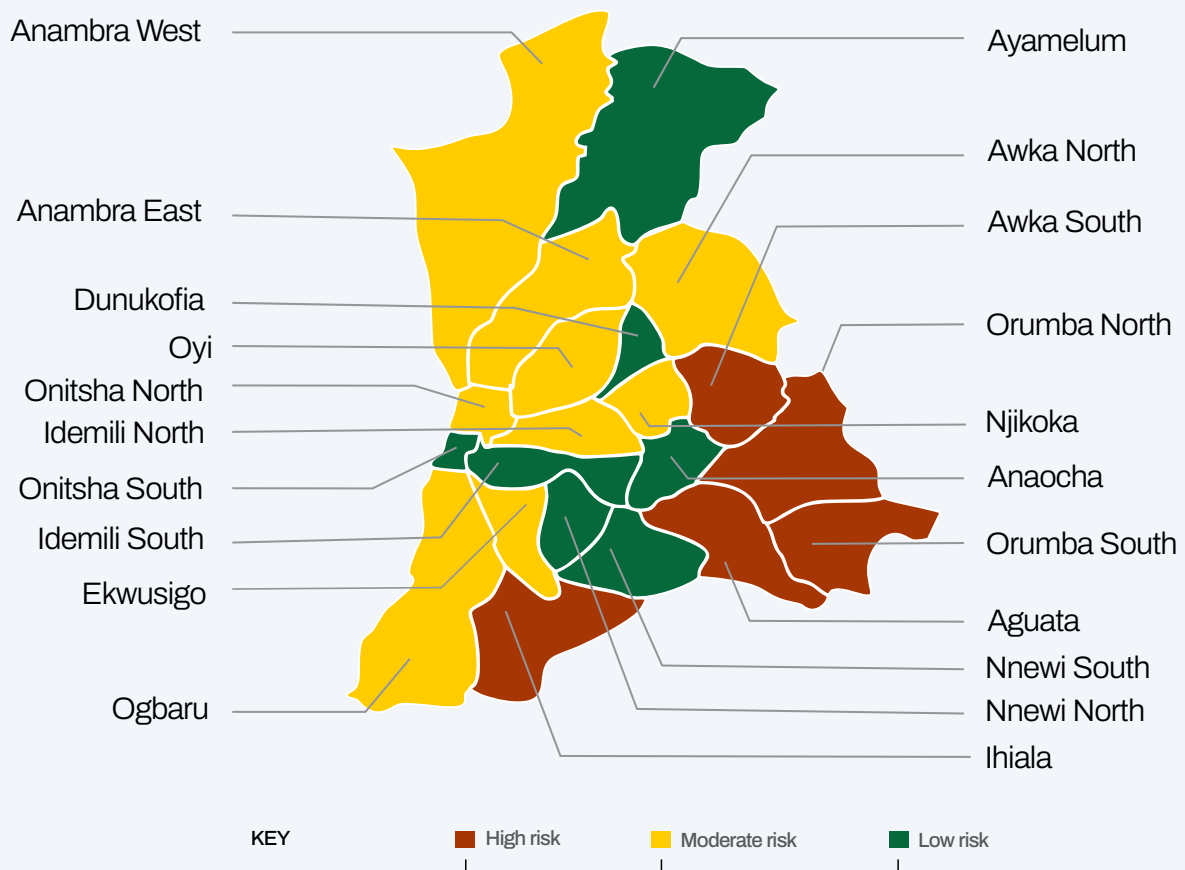
**SECURITY  
DYNAMICS AND  
RISK ASSESSMENT**

## 2. SECURITY DYNAMICS AND RISK ASSESSMENT

### Flashpoint Analysis

The map illustrates the geographic distribution of security incidents across Anambra State between June and September 2025, revealing a pattern of concentrated volatility. Hotspot LGAs, highlighted in red, such as Orumba, Aguata, Awka South, and Ihiala, emerged as epicentres of violence where recurring attacks, assassinations, and ballot snatching disrupted community life and political activity. Surrounding LGAs shown in yellow, experienced intermittent but disruptive incidents, ranging from targeted assaults on security actors to intimidation at rallies, demonstrating that insecurity is not confined to a single corridor but radiates across zones. Areas marked in green remain without recorded incidents, yet their proximity to volatile flashpoints underscores the risk of spillover.

Taken together, the map highlights how insecurity is clustered in specific zones but carries implications for the entire state, shaping perceptions of safety, voter confidence, and electoral integrity ahead of the November 2025 polls.

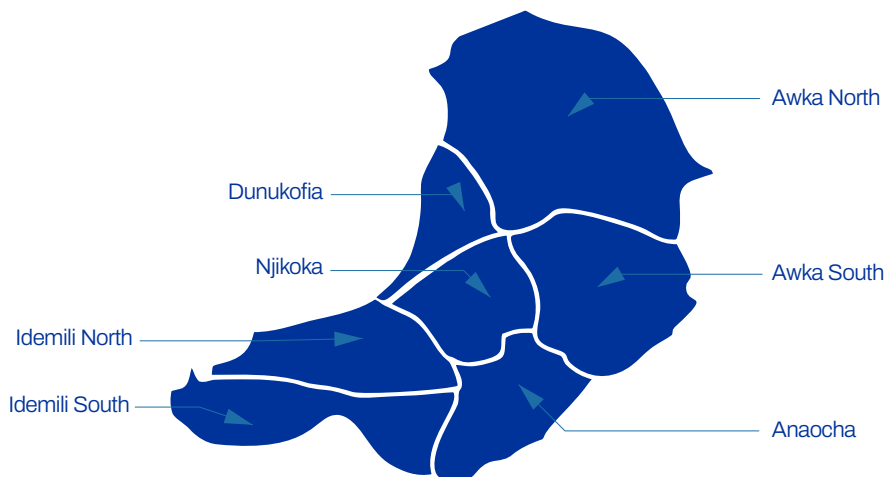


Security Incidents across Anambra LGAs June - September, 2025

## Comparative Analysis by Zone

### Anambra Central – “The Political Nerve Centre”:

- Violence linked to cultism, youth gangs, and sit-at-home orders hampers economic and political activities. Money politics and widespread vote buying, driven by unemployment and disenchantment, dominate the landscape. INEC faces criticism over logistical issues and potential manipulation. Recurrent flashpoints like Idemili North require targeted civic mobilisation. Stakeholders emphasize the importance of involving traditional rulers, religious leaders, and law enforcement to foster peace.
- Awka South recorded the assassination of a business leader and hosted targeted disinformation campaigns undermining INEC. With multiple strong candidates and its role as the State capital, the Central zone remains the theatre of elite competition and institutional mistrust, where even routine incidents escalate quickly into political crises.



### Anambra South – “The Violent Heartland”:

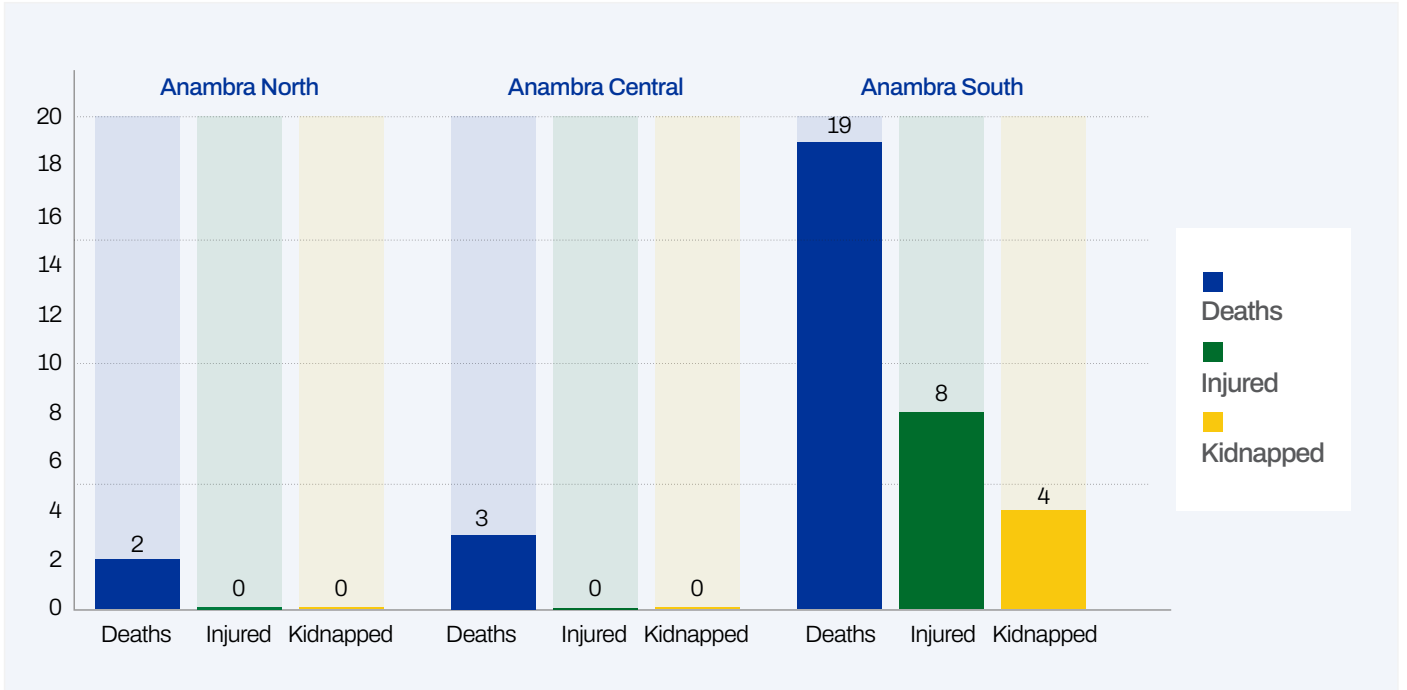
- Anambra South has emerged as the epicentre of insecurity. The zone is characterised by vigilante involvement—such as the Agunchemba group—and ethnic or denominational tensions, with LGAs like Ihiala and Orumba South frequently experiencing cult killings, kidnappings, and clashes fuelled by political and communal toxicity.
- The Ogboji killings where 10 civilians died, underscored the volatility of the rural flashpoints. Orumba and Ihiala remain hotbeds of ballot snatching, cult violence, and politicised vigilantism. The August 2025 senatorial by-election exposed institutional fragility, as attacks on officials and partisan armed groups undermined the process.
- Religious dynamics, especially between Catholics and Anglicans, influence political alignments. Threats from unknown gunmen, cult violence, and kidnappings are prevalent, particularly in Ihiala and Orumba South. Key hotspots include Ihiala and Orumba South.



### Anambra North – “The Riverine Frontier”:

- Land disputes, insecurity, and poverty are primary drivers of violence, with LGAs like Ogbaru and Oyi experiencing frequent conflicts and communal disputes, often linked to land and resource control. Trust in INEC is notably low here, and PwDs are particularly marginalised.
- Traditional and religious leaders hold significant sway, but their influence is often compromised by inducements and bias. Youths are frequently swayed by money, with insecurity driven by cultism and boundary disputes. Vigilantes and hired thugs are commonly used for intimidation, undermining electoral fairness.
- Flooding in Ogbaru regularly disrupts logistics, while the killing of a vigilante commander and a police officer revealed both insecurity and the politicisation of security actors. Onitsha, the commercial hub, remains associated with cultism, while the Omambala boundary disputes continue to serve as flashpoints.





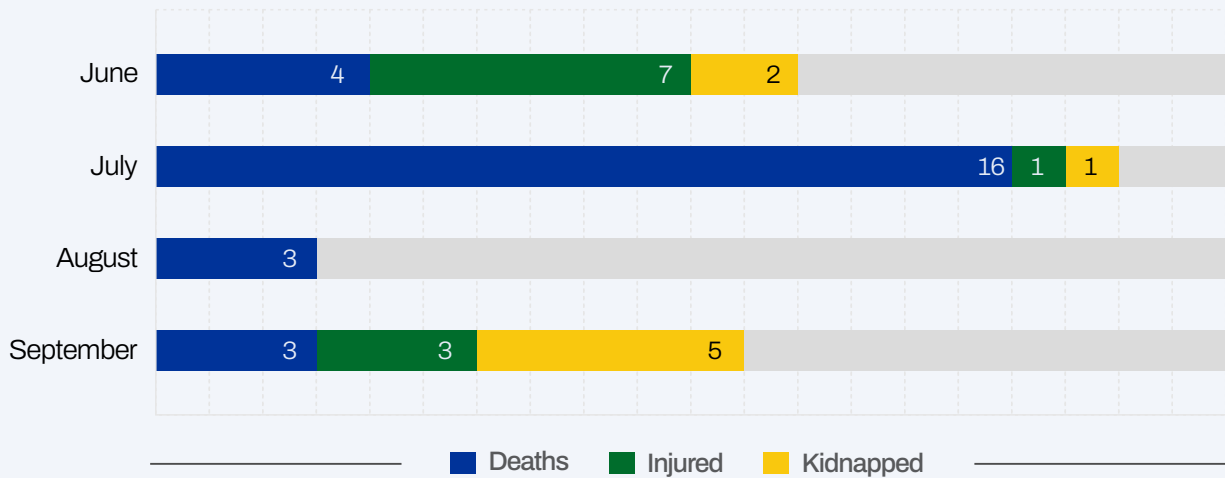
**Comparative Analysis of Insecurity by Zones (June - September, 2025)**

Risk Category	North	Central	South
Physical Violence	Medium	High	High
Electoral Manipulation	Medium	High	High
Disinformation	Low	High	Medium
Environmental Disruption	High	Low	Low
Institutional Credibility	Medium	High	Medium
Community Cohesion	Medium	Medium	High

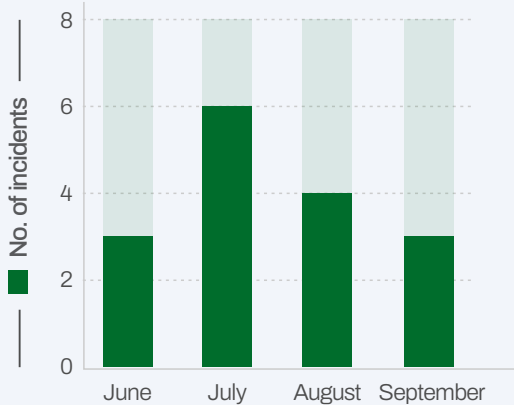
**Risk Comparison Matrix**

The following charts summarise electoral insecurity in Anambra State (June–September, 2025), with 36 incidents across seven LGAs, leading to 24 deaths, 8 injuries, and 4 kidnappings. Though limited

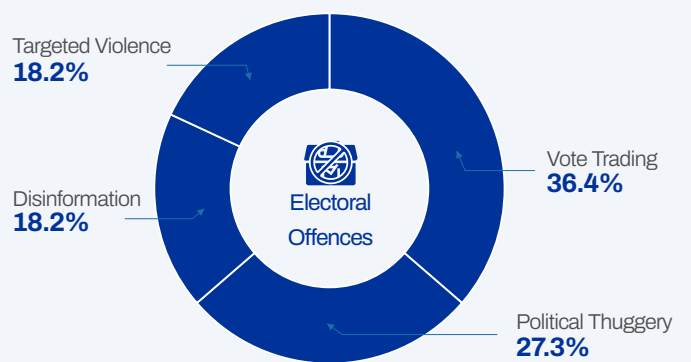
in number, high-profile assassinations and targeted attacks had significant impacts, disrupting markets, silencing leaders, and weakening voter confidence.



**Casualties from Insecurity Incidents (June - September, 2025)**



**Trend of Insecurity Incidents in Anambra (June - September, 2025)**



**Overview of Electoral Offences**

The Kukah Centre's Electoral Offences Tracking System (EOTS) identified repeated breaches of the Constitution, the Electoral Act, other extant laws, and the spirit and letter of the Peace Accord:

#### **Vote Trading:**

In the recent by-elections in Anambra State, vote trading was reported as a significant electoral offence. In several wards and polling units, inducements ranging from cash to goods were said to have been distributed to voters in the days preceding the polls. These practices, often facilitated by informal local networks and, at times, supported by cult or vigilante groups, served to erode accountability and distort the expression of the electorate's choice.

#### **Political Thuggery:**

In the recent electoral cycle, cult groups and vigilante outfits, reportedly patronised by political elites, were observed actively harassing opponents and disrupting campaign rallies in Awka South, Ihiala, and both Orumba North and South (Vanguard, 2025; Punch, 2025). Witnesses described instances in which gatherings were forcibly dispersed, with threats and intimidation directed at both candidates and supporters. Local sources indicated that these actors were often deployed strategically to assert dominance in highly contested wards, creating an atmosphere of fear and constraining the free conduct of political activities.

**Disinformation:** The spread of false narratives aimed at delegitimising INEC or fabricating scandals around candidates has polarised communities, eroded public trust, and deepened voter cynicism. In Anambra, this has taken the form of smear campaigns against candidates, fake result sheets circulated during collation and coordinated social media manipulation. Such tactics not only distort public perception but also inflame existing tensions around voter apathy, boundary disputes, and political godfatherism.

#### **Targeted Violence:**

The shooting of Chief Jude Ezenwafor, a PDP candidate, which is currently under investigation, underscores the vulnerability of political actors in Anambra's election environment. The attack occurred amid heightened political tension, drawing attention to the persistent risks of candidate-targeted violence. Such incidents not only endanger individual aspirants but also erode public confidence in the safety of the electoral process. They illustrate how informal political actors and local militias operate outside the reach of institutional safeguards, making candidate protection a critical election security concern.

These violations expose the widening gap between rhetorical endorsement of the Peace Accord and its enforcement in practice.

# Preliminary Conclusion and Way Forward

The electoral environment in Anambra State encapsulates a microcosm of Nigeria's broader political, social, and economic challenges. It is shaped by a complex nexus of intense political rivalry, socio-economic disparities, deep-seated social divisions, and emerging security threats. While the state's vibrant political culture, active civil society, and tradition of community engagement provide a solid foundation for democratic participation and reform, persistent risks such as electoral violence, voter apathy, misinformation, and systemic institutional weaknesses continue to threaten the integrity, credibility, and legitimacy of the electoral process.

Ensuring credible and peaceful elections in such a complex environment requires a holistic, multi-layered approach—one that not only addresses immediate security concerns but also tackles the root causes of conflict and disenfranchisement. It necessitates fostering inclusive participation across different social groups, especially marginalised communities, women, and PwDs, to strengthen social cohesion and reinforce the democratic fabric. Engaging traditional rulers, religious leaders, community elders, and civil society as peace ambassadors can significantly bolster trust and reconciliation efforts. Deploying impartial, well-trained security forces and leveraging innovative technology such as electronic voting and result transmission systems can enhance transparency and reduce opportunities for manipulation. Moreover, comprehensive civic education campaigns aimed at countering misinformation and promoting informed participation are essential to building public confidence.

Beyond the electoral process itself, systemic reforms aimed at reducing barriers to political participation, addressing socio-economic inequalities, and promoting economic empowerment are vital for long-term stability. These measures will help diminish vulnerabilities that often fuel

electoral violence and social unrest, creating an environment conducive to sustainable peace and development.

This context analysis affirms that peacebuilding and safeguarding electoral integrity are shared responsibilities, requiring sustained collaboration among government agencies, security institutions, civil society, political actors, religious and traditional leaders, and the general populace. With strategic investments, unwavering commitment to justice and fairness, and a collective resolve to uphold democratic principles, Nigeria can demonstrate resilience in its electoral processes and reinforce its broader democratic renewal. The upcoming election in Anambra State presents not only an opportunity to showcase electoral resilience amid complex challenges but also a pivotal moment to reaffirm Nigeria's commitment to democratic values, social cohesion, and inclusive governance.

Below are specific recommendations that can enhance prospects for a peaceful, non-violent 2025 Anambra election:

## On Vote Buying

- Strengthen Legal Frameworks and Enforcement: Enforce strict penalties for vote buying by ensuring that electoral laws clearly define and penalise such practices.
- Security agencies and INEC officials should be more proactive in detecting and apprehending offenders during campaigns and on election day.
- Civic engagement: Launch widespread multistakeholder initiatives emphasising the illegality and detrimental effects of vote buying, targeting communities, market centres, and youth groups. Use local languages and trusted community leaders to reinforce messages.

### On Intimidation and Threats

- **Enhanced Security Presence:** Increase visible police and security personnel at sensitive polling units and during campaign activities to deter intimidation. Consider specialised units trained in crowd control and conflict de-escalation
- **Legal Deterrence:** Publicise and pursue swift prosecution of individuals and groups engaging in intimidation, ensuring that offenders face commensurate sanctions.
- **Community Engagement:** Work with traditional rulers, religious leaders, and civil society to promote a culture of peace and reject intimidation tactics, fostering community-led peace committees to report threats.

### On Violence and Clashes

- **Conflict Prevention Mechanisms:** Establish early warning systems leveraging community informants and security intelligence to anticipate and prevent clashes. Conduct regular stakeholder meetings to address disputes before escalation
- **Rapid Response Units:** Deploy specialised rapid response teams in volatile LGAs, equipped to contain violence swiftly and prevent bloodshed.
- **Post-Incident Accountability:** Investigate all violence thoroughly and hold perpetrators accountable to deter repeat offenses and reinforce rule of law.

### On Campaign Finance Irregularities

- **Monitoring and Transparency:** INEC should strengthen its campaign financing monitoring endeavours, including tracking campaign donations and expenditures through digital platforms and disclosures. The Party

Finance Reporting and Accounting System (PFRAS) should be used to its full potential.

- **Legal Enforcement:** Enforce existing laws against illegal campaign funding, including sanctions for violations. Encourage civil society oversight and public reporting of suspected financial misconduct.

### On Voter Suppression

- **Protection of Voters' Rights:** Deploy election observers and security personnel to monitor and prevent voter suppression tactics, such as intimidation, ballot obstruction, or displacement.
- **Legal Recourse:** Establish accessible channels for voters to report suppression or disenfranchisement, and ensure prompt investigation and redress.

### For INEC:

- Strengthen election logistics to ensure timely delivery of materials, building on recent positive experiences and lessons learnt from the August by-elections.
- Implement targeted voter education campaigns emphasising the importance of voting, dissuading vote buying, and countering misinformation, especially via social media.
- Exclude non-statutory security outfits (e.g., vigilantes) from election security roles; reinforce police neutrality and professionalism.

### For Security Agencies:

- Deploy sufficient, well-trained personnel committed to impartiality.
- Conduct refresher training emphasising respect for human rights, neutrality, and professional conduct.

- Establish clear protocols to prevent infiltration or misuse of non-conventional security groups, such as vigilante or state-sponsored outfits.
- Prioritise community engagement in high-risk areas like Oyi, Aguleri, and boundary communities to deter violence.

#### **For Traditional and Religious Leaders:**

- Use their influence to promote peace and discourage divisive religious and denominational politics, especially the Catholic-Anglican dichotomy.
- Actively participate in civic education, urging followers to reject violence, vote buying, and misinformation.

#### **For Civil Society and Media:**

- Promote responsible journalism that upholds ethical standards; discourage sensationalism and partisan reporting.

#### **For Political Parties and Candidates:**

- Compliance with Peace Accord: Parties should commit publicly to peaceful conduct, refrain from vote buying, and respect the electoral process.
- Political parties should be urged to undertake voter education and mobilisation on an ongoing basis, this being one of the core tasks and responsibilities of political parties.

#### **For Community and Town Union Leaders:**

- Advocate for non-partisan support for peaceful elections; avoid supporting or endorsing violence or bias.



**03.**

**ELECTORAL  
PREPAREDNESS AND  
INEC PERFORMANCE**

## 3. ELECTORAL PREPAREDNESS AND INEC PERFORMANCE

### Voter Registration

The recent CVR in Anambra demonstrates INEC's commitment to expanding electoral participation, with over 168,000 new registrations, including 58% women and 54% youths aged 18–34. The exercise was largely peaceful and extended by three days to address logistical constraints, reflecting institutional responsiveness (Centre for Democracy and Development). However, operational hurdles such as shortages of personnel and equipment, procedural inconsistencies, and structural barriers hindered effective access. The short registration window, initially 13 days, was inadequate given Anambra's challenging terrain and security environment, leading to voter frustration. To improve access, early planning, simulation exercises, and tailored logistical arrangements are necessary, especially considering security and geographic challenges. Despite a high PVC collection rate among PwDs (86%), delays in distribution and structural barriers still hinder full participation, particularly for the remaining 14% who have yet to collect their cards.

Risk Category	Data
Total Number of LGAs	21
Number of Wards	326
Total Number of Polling Units	5,720
Total Registered Voters	2,802,790
New Registrants	168,167
Duplicate/Multiple Registrations Removed	27,817
Valid New Registrants	146,353
Gender Breakdown (New Registrants)	Women: 97,832 (58%)   Men: 70,355 (42%)
Number of Youths (ages 18-34)	90,763 or 53.97%
Occupation Category	Businessmen/women: 62,157 (36.92%) Students: 44,243 (26.31%)
Disability Status	Physical impairment: 303   Albinism: 207

### Voter Education and Engagement

INEC launched inclusive voter education campaigns utilising multilingual civic materials and digital platforms to deepen civic engagement. Despite these efforts, voter trust remains

moderate, primarily due to poor dissemination of information and logistical delays in distribution of PVCs. Challenges in PVC distribution—delays and logistical lapses—further discourage voter turnout. Therefore, targeted voter education programmes, especially leveraging digital media, are vital to reach diverse population segments including women, youth, and PwDs. Voter participation remains moderate, hindered by lack of trust in electoral institutions, fear, and poor dissemination of electoral information. Building trust through consistent, accessible, and culturally sensitive information is critical to enhancing voter engagement. Engagement with civil society and media must be strengthened to reach marginalised groups, including women, youth, and PwDs. Effective voter education is crucial for building confidence and ensuring informed participation, especially in an environment where logistical barriers can discourage voter turnout<sup>13</sup>.

### **Logistics and Infrastructure**

INEC's logistical arrangements face recurring challenges: late delivery of election materials, equipment failures—including malfunctions of card readers and BVAS—and infrastructural deficits such as unreliable power supply and poor transportation networks. The deployment of BVAS and IReV systems during the 2021 governorship showcased both the potential of technological innovations and their fragility under operational strain. Anambra's experience as a pilot for electronic result transmission underscores the importance of robust logistical planning, real-time coordination, and security measures. Recent incidents, such as harassment of journalists and access restrictions at INEC offices, highlight gaps in transparency and institutional credibility. Strengthening infrastructure, security, and logistical capacity is vital to minimise delays, malfunctions, and access issues.

### **Transparency and Credibility**

INEC has taken steps to increase transparency, including publishing election schedules and results online, and deploying technology for result transmission. However, perceived opacity persists, especially regarding procedural inconsistencies and access restrictions, which threaten electoral credibility. The 2023 incident involving journalists at INEC's Awka office revealed challenges in ensuring open access and transparent communication. Ensuring adherence to media accreditation guidelines, proactive disclosure, and community engagement are essential to bolster trust. Transparency remains a key determinant of public confidence and legitimacy of the election process.

### **INEC Readiness for November 8 Elections**

INEC, through its state Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Elizabeth Agwu, has declared its readiness for the November 8 elections. The Commission has leveraged recent by-elections as “live rehearsals,” testing the delivery of sensitive and non-sensitive materials as well as the transmission of results.

Ahead of the polls, INEC concluded a voter registration exercise across all 326 wards from July 8–20, 2025, and displayed the list of new registrants in line with Section 19(1) of the Electoral Act 2022. With 5,720 polling units and approximately 2.8 million registered voters, INEC must ensure adequate staffing, sufficient materials, and contingency measures to avoid bottlenecks—historical planning for the 2021 polls involved around 26,000 ad-hoc staff, which may need to be scaled upwards considering the expansion of the voter register. The state REC has also announced the configuration of 300 BVAS scanners, though questions remain about adequacy given the size of the state's electorate. Security and storage of election materials also remain concerns: INEC facilities in Anambra were attacked in 2021 with nearly 50% of non-sensitive materials destroyed, raising fresh questions about supply chain

<sup>13</sup>YIAGA Africa. (2025). Voter Engagement and Participation in Anambra 2025 Elections, <https://yiaga.org/2025-anambra-state-governorship-election-media-csos-roundtable/>

resilience.

Historically, Anambra governorship elections have been marked by recurring logistical challenges, particularly late opening of polling units caused by delays in material distribution and staff deployment. In the 2021 elections, observation reports revealed that 73% of polling units had not opened by 9:30 a.m., 52% remained closed by 10:30 a.m., and 21% were still not operational by noon. These persistent delays across the state's 5,720 polling units highlight the urgent need for stronger pre-election logistics planning, especially given the expanded scale of the 2025 polls. As preparations intensify, the balance between technical readiness, logistics scaling, and voter education will determine whether INEC can deliver a seamless and credible poll.

### **Going Forward**

To address these issues holistically, INEC should bolster electoral credibility, increase voter participation, and foster public confidence in the legitimacy of the 2025

elections in Anambra State. The interplay of logistical efficiency, infrastructural robustness, transparency, and institutional integrity will ultimately determine the success of the electoral process. Specifically, there is a need to:

- Enhance targeted voter education using digital, multilingual, and community-based platforms to reach marginalised groups and build trust in the electoral process.
- Deploy tested and reliable technology and infrastructure, including modern voting equipment, power supply solutions, and secure transportation, to minimise malfunctions and delays.
- Strengthen transparency and accountability through consistent information sharing, media engagement, and strict adherence to accreditation and Freedom of Information (FOI) guidelines.

# 04.

## **MEDIA LANDSCAPE AND THREAT ASSESSMENT**

# Overview of the Media Landscape in Anambra State

Anambra State has a robust media ecosystem with a mix of Federal and State Government-owned, private/commercial, religious, campus, community and ethnic-media outlets and platforms across radio, television, newspapers and other print media. It is a media hub in the Southeast geo-political zone.

The State presents a very diverse media landscape. Although the media organisations are mostly small, owner-operated outfits, Anambra State is reported to rank second in media company count nationwide, behind Lagos State, which is estimated to have about 398 media companies, and ahead of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, which is estimated to have 188 media organisations. Most of the media organisations and outlets are based in Awka with 54 media companies, Onitsha with 123 media companies, and Atani being the other major media hub in the State with 11 media companies.

According to SmartScrapers, a web scraping service company that extracts information from relevant websites and

gathers datasets, there were 250 media companies in Anambra State as of May 5, 2025, an increase of 2.88% from the number in 2023. Of these, 246 media companies, which is 98.40% of all media companies in Anambra State, are single-owner operations, while the remaining four, which is 1.60%, are part of larger brands. The average age of media companies in the State is said to be 2 years and 6 months.

The media landscape is vibrant and continues to evolve. It combines traditional radio, television, and print media outlets with dynamic digital platforms, whose strengths lie in growing infrastructure, enthusiastic digital engagement, and proactive capacity building.

The media sector nonetheless faces significant challenges, including low public trust and therefore lack of credibility, inadequate training of media professionals and actors, sustainability of the numerous small media outlets that lack strong business models and reliable revenue streams, and ineffective regulatory frameworks.

**123**

MEDIA COMPANIES  
IN ONITSHA

**54**

MEDIA COMPANIES  
IN AWKA

**11**

MEDIA COMPANIES  
IN ATANI

The following text boxes show leading media outlets in Anambra State.

## RADIO STATIONS

- Radio Sapientia 95.3 FM (Onitsha) - A private commercial station broadcasting in English, Pidgin, and Igbo
- Purity FM 102.5 Mhz (Mgbakwu, Awka) - A Federal Government-owned radio station that is part of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) and broadcasts in English and Igbo
- Wazobia FM 93.7 FM (Onitsha) - A pidgin English entertainment and news radio station

- Brilla FM 88.9 FM (Onitsha) - A privately-owned sports-focused station
- Blaze FM 91.5 FM (Oraifite) – A privately-owned radio station
- City Radio 89.7 FM (Onitsha) – A privately owned radio station
- Odenigbo FM 99.1 FM (Obosi) - A 24-hour regional voice radio station
- Ogene 98.3 FM (Awka) - An indigenous-language station
- Anambra Broadcasting Service 88.5 FM (Awka) – Anambra State Government-owned radio station
- Anambra Broadcasting Service 90.7 FM (Onitsha) – Anambra State Government-owned radio station
- Unizik 94.1 FM (Awka) - Campus radio station
- Madonna 93.3 (Okija) - Campus radio station
- Tansian 107.1 (Tansian University) – 107.1 FM Umunya - Campus radio station
- Moment 98.7 - Campus radio station
- Rhythm FM – 95.7 FM Awka
- Minaj FM – 89.4 FM Obosi
- Authority FM – 91.9 FM Nnewi
- Alpha FM – 106.5 FM Nnobi
- Lumen FM – 90.1 FM Uga
- Gist FM – 103.5 FM Ogidi
- Omega FM – 101.7 FM Umuchu
- Global FM – 101.9 FM Nnobi
- Kpakpando FM – 101.9 FM Mbaukwu
- Ebonadi FM
- Choice FM Onitsha

## NEWSPAPERS AND PRINT MEDIA

- Anambra Times - Periodical local newspaper
- Niger Times – Anglican Communion, Onitsha
- Donac Pilot – Anglican Communion, Nnewi
- Vintage - Nnewi
- Trinitas Newspaper - Catholic Church, Onitsha Archdiocese
- National Vision - Nnewi
- The Oracle Today - Onitsha
- The Dove - Catholic Adoration Ministry, Uke, monthly
- Outlook - Catholic Church, Nnewi Archdiocese
- Lampada Christi – Anglican Communion, Aguata, monthly
- Our Nation – Catholic Church, Onitsha Archdiocese
- National Link - Nnewi
- National Light - Anambra State Government-owned, daily
- Together - Anglican Communion, Awka
- The Orient Daily - Onitsha
- Sure Anchor newspaper - Anglican Communion, Amichi
- The Lamb - Anglican Communion, Ihiala
- New Breed – Onitsha
- FIDES - Catholic Church, Awka Archdiocese
- Christian Outlook - Awka
- FactcheckNg.com - Awka
- Angel Network News
- Odogwu blog - Awka



## TELEVISION STATIONS

- Anambra Broadcasting Service (ABS) TV Channel 27 (Onitsha) – Anambra State Government-owned public television
- Anambra Broadcasting Service (ABS) TV Channels 24 (Awka) - Anambra State Government-owned television
- Anambra Broadcasting Service (ABS) TV – Ch 27 UHF (Awka) - Anambra State Government-owned television
- NTA Channel 5 (Awka) - Federal government public television service
- NTA Onitsha - Local station under NTA network
- Sapientia TV (Onitsha) - Religious-affiliated broadcaster run by Sapientia International Media Centre
- Anambra TV (Online) - Local digital video news outlet

## ONLINE AND DIGITAL MEDIA

- Anambra TV - Local news portal and digital content producer
- Diaspora Digital Media (DDM) - Focuses on Anambra-related politics and current affairs, including digital reportage and analysis
- I-Witness News - Digital news outlet offering real-time updates, environment, health, and policy stories
- Anambra City Online (Anambra City Digest) - Local news and business site focused on happenings in Anambra State
- Anambra State New Media Channel (@AnambraNewMedia) - Official digital media communication channel of the Anambra State Government

# Media Freedom Situation and Safety of Journalists

## General Overview

Journalists in Anambra State face various forms of attacks and threats from state and non-state actors. Security forces have reportedly harassed, detained, or assaulted journalists covering sensitive issues such as elections, governance, insecurity, and militant-related activities. There are many documented incidents of such attacks on journalists and violations of media freedom. Documented attacks have included physical violence against journalists, kidnappings, destruction of media equipment, intimidation, and legal

harassment.

The perpetrators of such attacks include the Police, officials of the NSCDC, a paramilitary agency of the government, officials of INEC as well as non-state actors such as hoodlums, gunmen, criminal elements and armed militants, particularly during election periods and protests. Most of the incidents have taken place around Awka, Onitsha, and Ihiala, the hotspots for media attacks.

There have been increasing reports and concerns expressed of digital surveillance, especially during elections, with reports of journalists' phones being seized or monitored. There have also been reports of online harassment targeting journalists, particularly those reporting on governance, security, or human rights. The apparent lack of digital security awareness and capability among many local journalists has increased the vulnerabilities of media professionals in the State, as with many other parts of the country.

There are no dedicated state-level mechanisms to protect journalists and media organisations. Indeed, law enforcement agencies and officials are often complicit in the media or are most often unresponsive when called upon to protect journalists who are under attack or being threatened. Judicial interventions are often slow and costly. The fear of reprisals, the high cost of litigation and the certainty of prolonged period discourage most journalists from pursuing redress through the judicial process.

### **Incidents of Attacks on Journalists and Other Media Workers**

Following are some of the instances of attacks on journalists in Anambra State in recent years (2020 to date):

- On May 30, 2020, Mr. Matthew Onwuasoanya, a journalist with National Light newspaper, published by the Anambra Newspapers and Publishing Corporation, was abducted from his residence in Ngodo, Nise, by gunmen in security uniform. He regained his freedom 40 days later.
- On November 6, 2021, journalists covering the Anambra governorship election in Okija, including Mr. Afam Aminu Chimezie of Business News, Ms Gloria Anaeze and Mr. Eche Nwaobasi of Daily Independent, and Mr. Chike Ifedi of National Light, among others, were intercepted in their vehicle by about 20 armed attackers wielding machetes, pistols, and sticks. They were beaten and robbed of their phones, money, and other valuables. They were threatened with being burned alive.
- On February 5, 2022, Mr. Solomon Musa of Metro Times, was ambushed by gunmen shooting in the air in Isu Aniocha LGA. He was beaten, threatened with a pistol, while his media equipment, including his laptop, mobile phone and personal belongings, such as his international passport and bank cards, were confiscated and destroyed. His vehicle was also vandalised and he was injured.
- On May 30, 2022, gunmen invaded Anambra Broadcasting Service premises in Onitsha, setting fire to buildings, buses and other vehicles, while journalists were inside the building.
- On July 5, 2022, a journalist and publisher of online news platform, 247ureports.com, Mr Ikenna Ellis Ezenekwe, was arrested by security operatives dressed in civilian clothes reportedly over a petition filed against him by Mr Primus Odili, Chief of Staff to former Governor Willie Obiano of Anambra State. Mr Odili reportedly wrote to the police complaining that the journalist published a libellous article about him in May 2022. He was released on July 16, 2022 after being held in Police custody for 11 days without trial.
- On October 9, 2024, a bus carrying a crew of 11 sports journalists, mostly camera operators and photojournalists from SuperSport/DSTV, en route Uyo, in Akwa Ibom State, to cover the Nigeria vs Libya match as part of the African Cup of Nations qualifying match, was attacked in Isseke community in Ihiala LGA of Anambra State while travelling through the Isseke-Orlu Road. Six of the journalists were rescued while one was killed. Four others were released several days later.
- On December 23, 2023, Police opened fire during a land dispute in

Ezinano–Enugu Agidi, Awka during which 14 journalists caught in the cross-fire were nearly killed. Four of them were injured.

- On December 2, 2023, Mr. Izunna Okafor, a journalist with an online news outlet, 247ureports.com, was brutally attacked while returning on board a campaign bus from a rally in Awka, by more than 10 officials of the NSCDC. He was physically beaten while some of the men pointed guns at him and threatened to kill him. He sustained injuries as a result of the incident.
- In early hours of August 4, 2024, Mr. Okafor had another unpleasant experience when he was ambushed by unknown armed men while he was driving in his vehicle in Awka. But he also survived the incident.
- On March 31, 2023, journalists covering INEC activities were insulted, surveilled, and denied entry to the Commission's premises in Awka by INEC's Public Relations Officer, who alleged that the journalists constituted security threats and directed security guards to treat them as suspicious persons.

### Likely Election-Day Media-Related Scenarios (November 8, 2025)

Based on past electoral patterns in Anambra and the wider Southeast, ongoing security challenges, insights from media practitioners, as well as current threat analysis, the following scenarios are likely to affect journalists/media coverage and the broader media ecosystem during the November 8, 2025 Governorship Election:

#### 1. Restricted Access and Denial of Entry

- Journalists may face denial of access to polling units or collation centres due to accreditation lapses, bureaucratic hurdles, or deliberate obstruction by security agents, vigilante groups, or political thugs.
- Media workers attempting to document sensitive electoral processes such as vote counting, ballot transportation, or result transmission may be barred, threatened, or have equipment confiscated.

#### 2. Harassment and Intimidation of Journalists

- Journalists could be subjected to verbal harassment, arbitrary detention, or physical assault by security personnel or political party loyalists.
- Vigilante groups, operating in some communities under the guise of local security, may intimidate or physically obstruct reporters, particularly those perceived as "outsiders" or critical voices.
- Journalists covering political campaigns, protests, or election-day activities may be caught in clashes between rival political party supporters, or may be victims of attacks by thugs, or police crowd-control operations.
- Reporters perceived to be critical of certain political actors may face threats, harassment, or physical attacks by political party agents or even security operatives who are sympathetic to such political actors for reasons, including financial inducement.
- There is also a risk of spontaneous violence by politically charged crowds, especially in sensitive or contested constituencies, resulting in mob violence.
- Female journalists may face gender-specific threats, including online trolling or harassment at polling sites.

### 3. Information Disorder: Fake News, Misinformation, and Disinformation

- Premature and false results circulation: Social media platforms, especially WhatsApp, Facebook, X (Twitter), and TikTok, may be flooded with fake election results well before INEC's official announcements, creating tension and eroding trust in the process.
- Weaponisation of disinformation: Political actors and their supporters may sponsor smear campaigns, including doctored videos, fake quotes, or manipulated images, targeting journalists, INEC officials, or opposing candidates.
- Deepfakes and AI-driven content: The rising use of AI-generated media could be exploited to impersonate credible journalists or news outlets, misleading voters.
- Conspiracy narratives: Some politically motivated online influencers may spread false claims about voter suppression, ballot snatching, or foreign interference, which could provoke unrest.
- Some online journalists may inadvertently amplify misinformation if they lack fact-checking support or succumb to the pressure of breaking news competition.

### 4. Targeted Attacks during Collation

- Collation centres at ward and LGA levels remain traditional flashpoints. Journalists attempting to livestream or report irregularities may be expelled, assaulted, or prevented from accessing results.
- Security operatives and vigilantes may use excessive force in the guise of "maintaining order," increasing risks to reporters.

### 5. Harassment through Security and Legal Restrictions

- Security operatives may invoke laws such as the Cybercrime Act or electoral guidelines to intimidate or arrest journalists under accusations of "spreading falsehoods" or "inciting violence." Security and law enforcement agents, particularly the Nigeria Police and the Department of State Services (DSS), could deploy laws such as the Cybercrimes Act, Criminal Code, or criminal defamation provisions to intimidate, harass or attempt to silence journalists.
- Legal harassment could be used selectively to silence critical reporting or prevent scrutiny of malpractice.
- Journalists may be arrested and detained without charge or may be questioned by police for a variety of opaque offences, including "incitement," "false information," or for reporting that is deemed politically sensitive.
- Broadcast media outlets may also face sanctions from the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) for airing critical political content, especially live debate or investigative reporting.

### 6. Logistical and Safety Challenges

- Journalists covering rural communities in some LGAs may struggle with poor road networks, lack of transportation, and unreliable connectivity, limiting timely reporting.
- Absence of protective gear, insurance, and institutional support may heighten personal risks and restrict coverage in volatile zones.

## 7. Self-Censorship and Information Gaps

- Fear of reprisals from political actors, vigilantes, or security agencies may cause journalists to avoid reporting sensitive incidents.
- An environment of fear can result in selective or watered-down coverage, depriving citizens of accurate, real-time information on the credibility of the election.

## 8. Political and Institutional Pressures

- Politically connected media owners may censor or interfere with election coverage or instruct journalists to avoid critical reporting on particular political parties or candidates.
- Journalists may also be denied access to political rallies, press briefings, or polling centres by security agents or political campaign handlers because of their previous reporting that have been critical or negative towards such parties or candidates or indeed the election management body.
- When threatened, journalists are likely to receive inadequate, or no protection at all, from law enforcement or security agencies, especially if the threat involves politically connected individuals or the ruling party or its officials.

## Preliminary Conclusion and Next Steps

While Anambra State maintains a relatively pluralistic media environment, the safety of journalists is precarious, and media freedom is increasingly undermined by harassment, violence, political interference, and weak legal protections. The climate fosters self-censorship, especially on issues of governance, security, and the activities of militants. Protecting journalists and the media during the 2025 Anambra Governorship Election is essential for the integrity of the electoral process and democratic legitimacy.

The most effective approach in achieving such a goal would be the adoption of multiple strategies, which combine training,

legal protection, advocacy, monitoring, and other interventions, that can significantly reduce the risks and enable journalists to do their work professionally and in safety. Such strategies are also best implemented by a multi-stakeholder group, including media professional bodies, CSOs, law enforcement and security agencies, the election management body, and legal professionals.

To ensure a safe, transparent, and professional media environment during the Anambra Governorship Election, the following mitigation measures are proposed:

### 1. Physical Safety and Protection of Journalists

- **Security Deployment and Collaboration:** INEC, the Nigeria Police, DSS, and other security agencies should establish a Media-Security Desk at the state level, with clear communication lines to provide accredited journalists safe access to polling units and collation centres.
- **Accreditation and Identification:** INEC should ensure timely issuance of accreditation tags to journalists, with recognition by all security operatives and political stakeholders. Security personnel must be sensitised to respect media accreditation as a legal right, not a privilege.

- **Protection against Vigilante Groups:**  
Security agencies should regulate and monitor activities of community vigilante groups on election day, preventing them from obstructing accredited reporters.
- **Emergency Hotlines and Rapid Response:**  
International Press Centre (IPC), NUJ, and civil society partners should set up dedicated hotlines for journalists to report threats, harassment, or attacks in real time. Emergency support networks should be activated for immediate interventions.
- **Accountability Mechanism:**  
Establishment of a Media Safety Hotline and rapid response desk linking NUJ, IPC, Police, and legal aid.
- **Safety Training and Equipment:**  
Media organisations should provide pre-election safety training (physical and digital), as well as basic safety gear such as press jackets, first-aid kits, and communication devices for field reporters.
- **Observer Engagement:**  
Election observers and civil society groups should monitor and document incidents of press harassment, making such reports part of their official post-election assessment.

## 2. Countering Disinformation and Information Disorder

- **Fact-Checking Hubs:** A coalition of fact-checking organisations (such as NDR Factcheckhub, Haltfake, Dubawa, Africa Check) should establish real-time election-day verification desks to debunk fake news, deepfakes, and premature result announcements.
- **Pre-Bunking Strategies:** Journalists and fact-checkers should circulate accurate, verified information on INEC processes (e.g., result transmission, collation steps) ahead of time to reduce the impact of false claims on election day.
- **Access to Information:** INEC should publish timely data and facilitate direct press briefings to curb speculation and disinformation.

**05.**

**GENDER PERSPECTIVES  
AND WOMEN'S  
PARTICIPATION**

## Historical and Gender Context

While Nigeria's overall female representation in public service remains low, Anambra State stands out as one of the country's most progressive states in terms of women's political participation and leadership since the start of the Fourth Republic in 1999. The state's record includes the following key milestones:

### Anambra's Women in Leadership Highlights

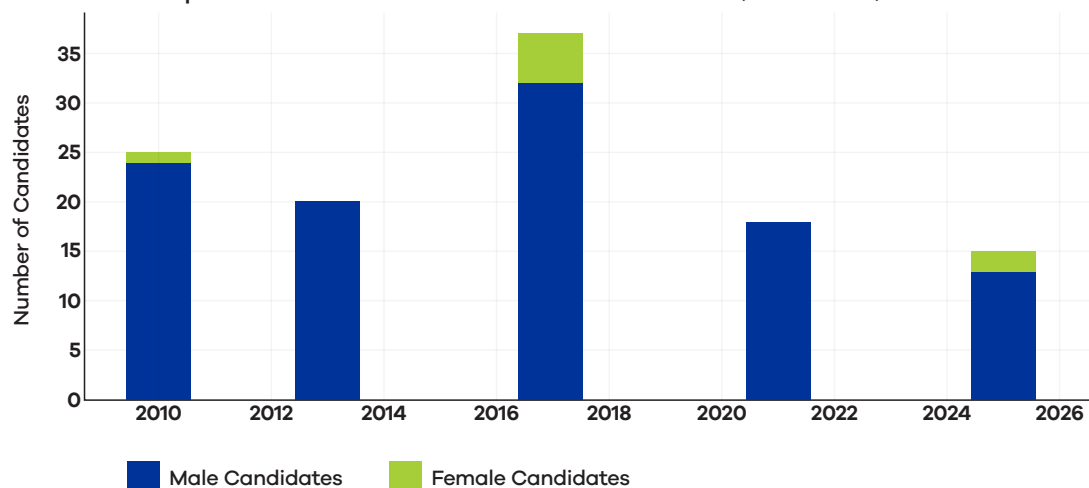
Milestone	Data
First Female Governor (Acting)	Dame Virginia Etiaba (2006-2007)
Highest Number of Female Senators (tied with Lagos)	4 Female Senators
Highest Number of Female Members of the House of Representatives (tied with Lagos)	12 Female Representatives
Highest Number of Female Ministers Across Administrations	6 Female Ministers

### Female Governorship Candidates in Anambra Governorship Elections (2010–2025)

Women's participation in Anambra gubernatorial elections from 2010 to 2025 has been minimal and inconsistent. In 2010, only 1 woman contested out of 25 candidates, followed by none in 2013. The 2017 election marked a brief high point with 5 female candidates out of 37, including Uju Uchendu Ozoka who ran on an all-female ticket. However, this momentum was not sustained: no woman contested in 2021, and by 2025, just 2 female candidates were fielded among 15 contestants.

This trend demonstrates that while women occasionally break through structural barriers, their participation remains fragile, sporadic, and heavily dependent on smaller political parties rather than the dominant platforms. The data underscores how systemic exclusion and weak enforcement of inclusion policies prevent sustained progress in women's political representation.

### Women's Participation in Anambra Gubernatorial Elections (2010-2025)

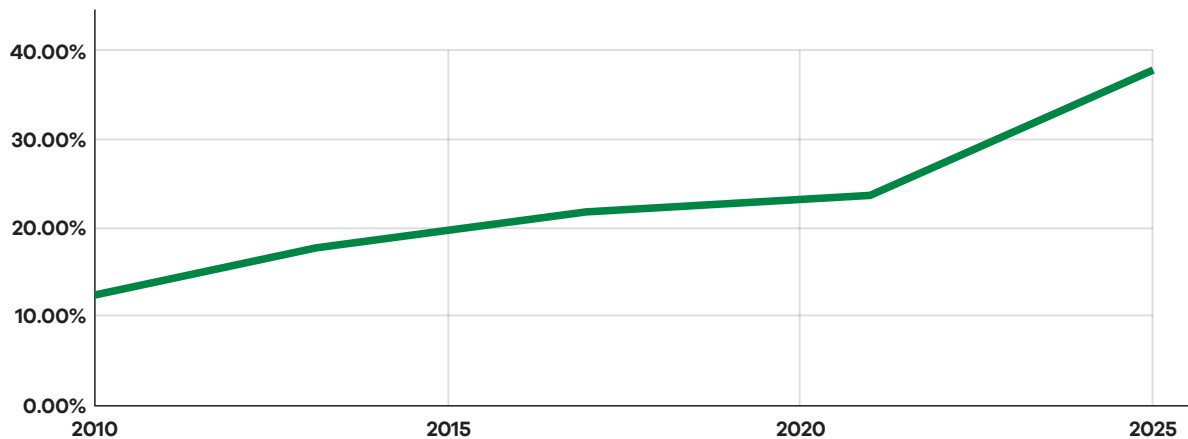


### Female Deputy Governorship Candidates in Anambra Governorship Elections (2010–2025)

While comprehensive data on deputy governorship candidates before 2010 is limited, the past 5 electoral cycles in Anambra State reveal a clear upward trend in women's inclusion on gubernatorial tickets. In 2010, women constituted **12.5%** of deputy governorship candidates, rising steadily to **17.4%** in 2013, **21.6%** in 2017, and **23.5%** in 2021. For the 2025 elections, women now account for **37.5%**—the highest share on record.

This trajectory underscores a gradual but meaningful shift: the deputy governorship slot is emerging as a key platform for women's political visibility and executive participation in Anambra. If sustained, it could strengthen the pipeline for women's leadership at the highest levels of state politics.

Percentage of Female Representation in Deputy-Governorship Candidates (2010–2025)



### State of Female Candidacy in Anambra's 2025 Elections

**Overview**

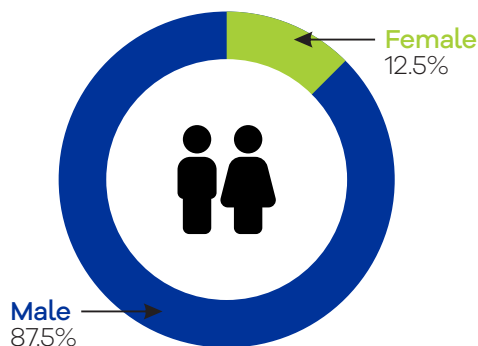
#### Female Governorship Candidates (2025)

Candidate	Political Party
Chioma Grace Ifemeludike	African Action Congress (AAC)
Ndidi Christy Olieh	National Rescue Movement (NRM)

### Female Deputy Governorship Candidates (2025)

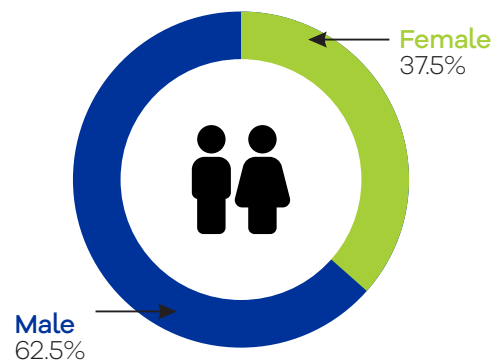
Candidate	Political Party
Appolonia Ezeadili	Accord (A)
Uche Lilian Ekwunife	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Blessing Ebele Okeke	Action People's Party (APP)
Happiness Ugboma	Boot Party (BP)
Ifeoma Veronica Okaro	Labour Party (LP)
Chibuzo Faith Obi	Zenith Labour Party (ZLP)

#### Gender Distribution of Governorship Candidates



Despite Anambra's relatively strong historical record, female representation at the top of the ticket remains low in 2025, with only **12.5% (2 of 16)** of gubernatorial candidates being women, up marginally by **0.74 percentage points** from the last 2021 governorship elections in which **11.76%** of the governorship candidates were female. The higher presence of women as deputy governorship candidates (**37.5%** of male-led tickets) suggests political parties may be leveraging these positions to balance

#### Gender Distribution of Deputy Governorship Candidates



gender optics, rather than enabling women to lead tickets. The 2025 list of deputy governorship candidates has also seen a significant boost of **14 percentage points** from the last election cycle of which **23.5%** of all deputy governorship candidates were female. The incumbency advantage, coupled with APGA's strong internal cohesion, may limit electoral competitiveness for other candidates, including women.

#### Gaps and Trends

- Despite women being a large share of registered voters, their representation as aspirants and candidates is significantly lower, declining sharply as the stakes of positions increase (from ward-level to governorship).
- Primaries remain a critical choke-point with minimal female aspirants, limited resources, and weak party support.
- Conversion from participation to winning office is extremely weak—for instance,

women hold just 3.33% of seats in the Anambra State House of Assembly.

- The four dominant parties (PDP, APC, LP, and APGA) demonstrate a persistent lack of political will and genuine commitment to gender inclusion, in contrast to smaller parties that have shown relatively better openness by fielding female candidates.
- Running mates offer some progress but are not a substitute for top-ticket access. Several parties have used female running mates or token appointments as a concession to inclusion. Running mate slots are important, but the impact is limited when the most powerful positions (governor) and the actual nominations process remain male-dominated.
- Subnational representation remains dire. The very low number of women in Anambra's State House of Assembly and

the limited number of women elected to federal seats from Anambra indicate that the pipeline from aspirant → candidate → elected official is blocked at multiple stages. National comparisons reinforce that Nigeria's subnational representation of women remains among the lowest globally.

- A striking paradox is that while women are underrepresented in elective positions, they are more visible in appointive positions and the civil service. In Anambra, as in many parts of Nigeria, women occupy important bureaucratic roles, are well-represented among civil servants, and are frequently appointed as commissioners, special advisers, or permanent secretaries. These appointments demonstrate women's administrative capacity but also highlight that barriers to elective office are political rather than competency-based.

### Gender Considerations in the 2025 Campaign Manifestos

A review of available campaign manifestos of the 2025 Anambra elections has indicated that gender and women issues do not feature prominently party or candidates' agendas. Below are highlights from some of the key candidates in the Anambra Governorship elections.



#### Dr. George Nnadubem Moghalu – Labour Party (LP)

Dr. George Nnadubem Moghalu, 63, from Nnewi North LGA of the state, has a career spanning the public and private sector. Moghalu's manifesto, titled the Recovery Agenda, is centred on five issues: good governance, human capital development, economic transformation and job creation, infrastructure and urban development, and agriculture and food security. On gender, he pledges to prioritise women and girl-child empowerment by promoting rights protection, expanding access to education and healthcare, and ensuring equal opportunities in leadership and business.

The George Moghalu Campaign Organisation, led by DG Arc. Okey Chukwuogo, comprises 55 members across 17 directorates, with women holding 11 senior positions (20%). Female leaders occupy key roles:

- **Women Mobilisation** – Oge Ekwezor (Director), Amaka Ofojebe (Deputy), Uju Egbuchiem (Secretary).
- **Welfare** – Hon. Nkechi Ogbueli (Director), with Gloria Nwaba and Ifeoma Oraekie (Deputies).

- **Contact & Mobilisation** – Prof. Oby Orogbu (Deputy Director), Chinelo Ofoche (Secretary).
- **Finance** – Uju Okoye (Deputy Director), Helen Nweri (Secretary).
- **Health & Medical** – Lady Henrietta Agbata (Deputy Director).

Other directorates — including Operations, Legal, Media, and Election Management — remain male-led. While women feature prominently in mobilisation, finance and welfare, their share of senior roles at 20%, highlights progress but also the potential for deeper inclusivity.



#### **Prince Nicholas Chukwujekwu Ukachukwu – All Progressives Congress (APC)**

Prince Nicholas Ukachukwu's manifesto is not publicly available, but his campaign has emphasized priorities such as security, power, industrial development, agriculture, education, and health. For the 2025 Anambra governorship election, the APC has constituted a **92**-member campaign council, with 6 women (**6.52%**). Within its **71**-member finance committee, 5 are women (**7%**), underscoring the limited gender balance in senior campaign structures. Notable female members of the council include, **Hon. Nkeiru Onyejeocha, Hon. Miriam Onuoha, Hon. Rita Mmaduagwu, and Lady Ego Akagbogu.**



#### **Prof. Chukwuma Charles Soludo – All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA)**

Professor Chukwuma Soludo, CFR, 65, is the incumbent Governor of Anambra State. Soludo's manifesto, built on his 2021 'People's Manifesto' and his 'Solution Government Agenda,' is structured around five pillars: security and law enforcement; economic transformation and infrastructure; human capital and social development; governance; rule of law and values; and the environment. Gender issues feature peripherally in his manifesto, and his commitments include strengthening the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Children Affairs; promoting women's participation across all levels of government; providing targeted funding for women-led Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs); and pursuing a minimum of 30% female representation in governance.

Soludo's 2025 campaign council has disclosed limited details of its senior leadership structure. Known figures include Lady Esther Onyekesi, APGA State Women Leader, overseeing women's mobilisation. With only Onyekesi identified as a female leader among six named senior roles, women constitute approximately 17% of the known leadership.



**Chioma Grace Ifemeludike**  
– African Action Congress (AAC)

Chioma Grace Ifemeludike, 36, is a Nollywood actress and activist recognised for her advocacy on gender inequality, child rights, police brutality, and broader human rights issues. A former volunteer with the OurMumuDonDo and Take It Back movements, she has used her public platform and social media presence to highlight the challenges facing women and children in Nigeria. As the youngest candidate in the 2025 Anambra governorship race, she represents youth inclusion and a bold call for change.

Ifemeludike's manifesto is built on eight pillars—food and agriculture; security; economic revitalisation; education; youth and PwDs empowerment; healthcare; revenue infrastructure; and minimum wage—but interestingly makes no explicit prioritisation of gender issues. Together with her running mate, Friday Igboanugo, she leads the Chioma4Governor campaign team focused on youth empowerment, women's rights, and governance reform; however, the campaign's senior structure remains undisclosed, and beyond Ifemeludike herself, no women leaders have been publicly identified.



**Ndidi Christy Olieh**  
– National Rescue Movement (NRM)

Amidst much controversy, Ndidi Christy Olieh, 40, emerged as the NRM governorship candidate, with Ekene Reginald Ogbe as her deputy. Details of the NRM Campaign Organisation's manifesto, structure and activities ahead of the election remain largely undisclosed, leaving little visibility into its leadership composition or strategy.



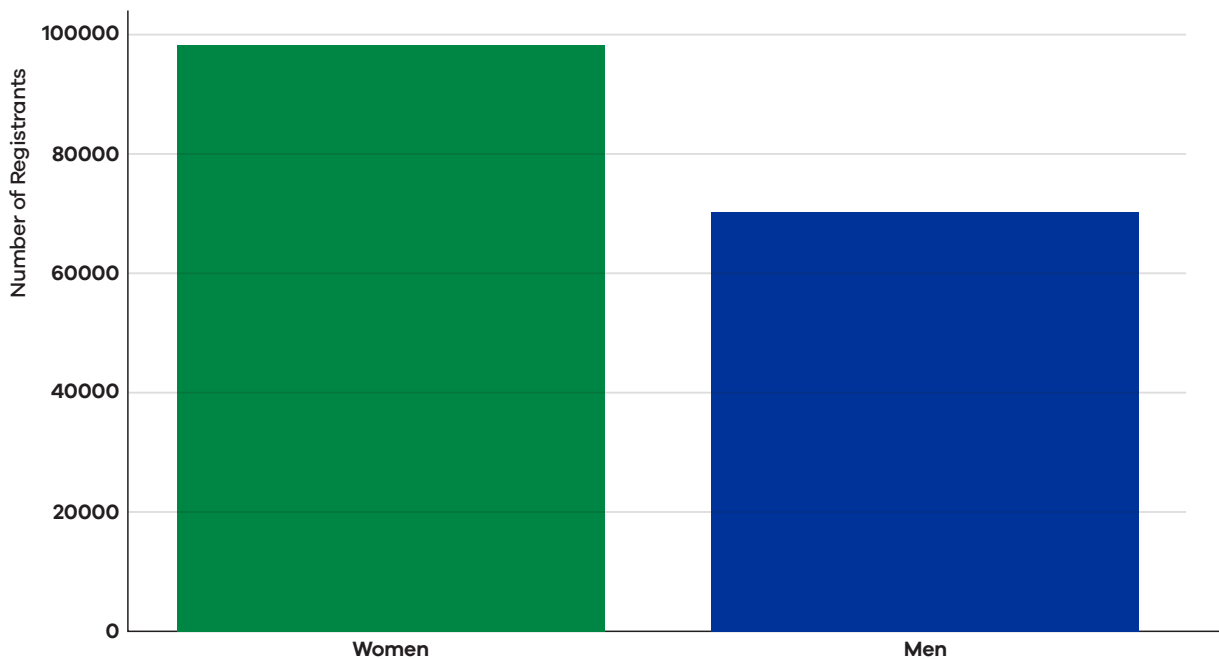
**Sir Jude C. Ezenwafor**  
– People's Democratic Party (PDP)

Sir Jude C. Ezenwafor's manifesto is not publicly available for review; however, in media engagements he has outlined priorities such as tackling insecurity; improving education; upgrading infrastructure; and strengthening commerce, if elected. Along with his running mate Chukwudi Okeke, Sir Ezenwafor has built his campaign on grassroots mobilisation. All PDP LGA and ward chairmen serve as coordinators, supported by the Ifeabata Media Office for publicity. Party leaders, including the State Chairman Chidi Chidebe, reinforce his campaign efforts. However, the campaign has not disclosed a formal senior team structure, and there is no available information on women's representation in leadership roles.

### Women's Responsiveness to the CVR

In the just concluded CVR exercise for the 2025 governorship election, 168,187 new registrants were recorded in Anambra State. Of these, 97,832 (58%) were women, 70,355(42%) men, with 90,763 (53.97%) of new registrants being youth aged 18–34.

#### CRV Registration by Gender (Anambra 2025)



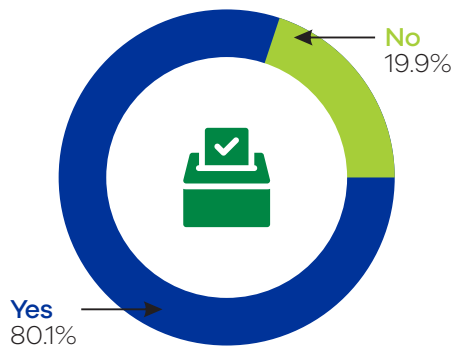
### Female Voter's Sentiment Analysis - To Vote or Not To Vote

As part of the EU-SDGN Anambra Pre-Election Assessment, ElectHER conducted a rapid poll between 3rd and 15th September 2025, sampling 423 women across the state's 21 LGAs. A stratified sampling methodology with proportional components was applied: LGAs were weighted and stratified by polling unit density and population size, meaning high-density LGAs like Idemili North fielded more respondents, while mid-sized LGAs such as Awka South and lower-density LGAs like Dunukofia were assigned proportionally fewer. This ensured balanced representation and reliable insights into women's perspectives across the state.

Poll results indicate a youth-dominated

electorate, with over two-thirds of respondents aged 18–34 (54.6% in total) and another 33.8% in the 35–49 age bracket. This underscores the centrality of young and middle-aged women to electoral outcomes in Anambra. Access to voter identification cards appears relatively strong: 91.3% of respondents have obtained their PVCs, though a notable 31.2% experienced difficulties getting them. Encouragingly, engagement levels are high—80.1% reported voting in the last election and 81.6% intend to vote in the November polls, with only 4.5% opting out and 13.9% undecided. This points to potentially low voter apathy among Anambra State's female electorate, but also signals a critical undecided bloc.

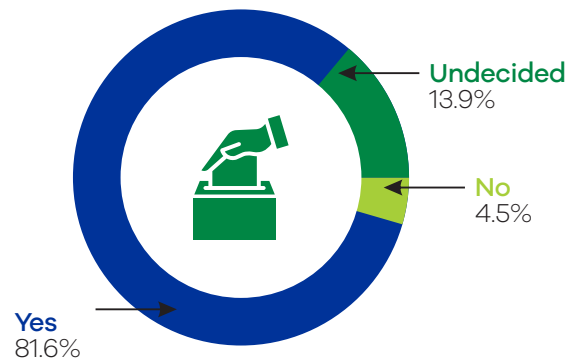
### Did you vote in the last gov. elections?



To test whether respondents who own a PVC are more likely to participate in elections, a chi-square analysis on voter readiness and past voting behaviour was run – which revealed a clear and statistically significant relationship: respondents with PVCs were more likely to have voted in the last election, while those without PVCs were less likely to have participated. The strength of this association, measured by the Phi coefficient ( $\phi = 0.454$ ), indicates a moderate positive correlation—suggesting that PVC ownership was a key driver of voter turnout. While other factors also play a role, these findings underscore the importance of ensuring voter access to PVCs. Although the CVR exercise for the November 2025 Anambra governorship election has closed, INEC is encouraged to strengthen future voter registration efforts, especially given that 31.2% of respondents reported challenges in obtaining their PVCs.

Another chi-square analysis was conducted to test whether PVC ownership influences respondents' intention to vote in the upcoming November 2025 elections. Results revealed a statistically significant relationship: respondents with PVCs were more likely to express an intention to vote, while those without PVCs were more likely to be undecided or not to vote. However, the strength of the relationship was weak ( $\phi = 0.252$ ), suggesting that while PVC ownership is an important enabler of participation in

### Will you vote in the upcoming elections?

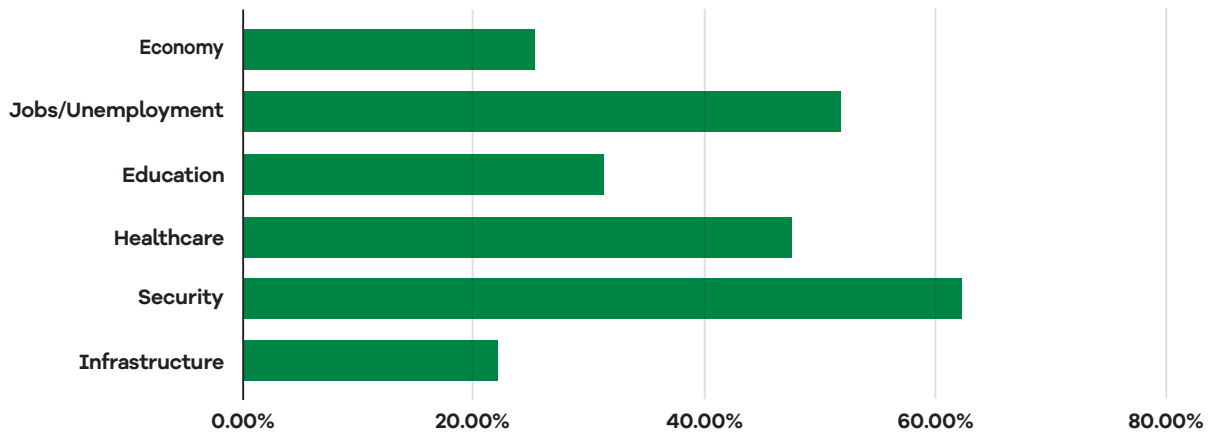


the upcoming elections, other factors—such as distrust in the process, security concerns, and voter apathy—will also shape turnout. This highlights the need for INEC not only to sustain efforts at broadening PVC access but also to complement this with targeted voter education, stronger cooperation with security agencies, and measures that build trust in the electoral process.

Participation in pre-election activities has also been significant, 53.9% of respondents have been involved in rallies, town halls, or meetings, reflecting a vibrant and engaged electorate. Yet, a glaring weakness is voter education: 76.4% have not received any voter education materials, and of those who have, just 12.3% attributed them to INEC, leaving CSOs, religious institutions, traditional leaders, and political parties to fill the gap.

On female voter priorities, security dominates respondents' top 3 concerns (61%), followed by jobs/unemployment (51.8%) and healthcare (46.6%), with infrastructure, education, and the economy also featuring prominently. Security concerns are further reinforced by 65.5% of respondents citing fear of violence as the greatest deterrent to voting. Distrust in the electoral system (40%) and lack of childcare (2%) were also noted as potential barriers to voting on election day.

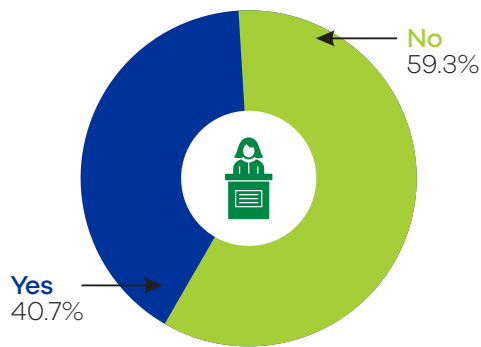
**What issues are most important to you? (Top 3)**



A logistic regression analysis was run on the poll data to assess other factors which are strong predictors of whether respondents intend to vote in the upcoming elections. Results showed that respondents who felt unsafe in their communities were far less likely to plan to vote, and those who had received voter education materials were more likely to express willingness to vote.

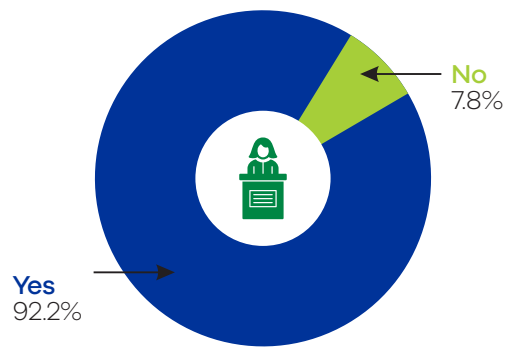
These findings highlight that building voter confidence in security, and scaling up voter education are critical steps to boosting turnout in Anambra's 2025 governorship election. Importantly, these barriers are often more pronounced for women, who face additional hurdles in navigating security risks and being adequately targeted in voter education efforts.

**Do you feel female candidates are visible enough in this election?**



Conclusively, while 68.8% of respondents report awareness of candidate campaign messaging, 50.4% believe that key issues are not being addressed, suggesting a gap between voter priorities and candidate messaging. Visibility of women in politics also remains a major concern: 59.3% do not

**Would you vote for a female governor if she were the strongest candidate?**



believe female candidates have been visible enough, yet an overwhelming 92.2% would vote for a female candidate if she were the strongest contender—a critical signal of electoral openness toward women's leadership. Another logistic regression analysis was run using the poll data to test

factors which influence support for a female candidate. Results showed that the strongest and statistically significant factor was whether candidates prioritised the issues most important to voters. Respondents were more likely to support a female candidate when they felt that their key concerns—such as security, jobs, or healthcare—were being addressed. While visibility of female candidates and receipt of voter education appeared to have some effect, these were not statistically significant in the model. These findings

highlight that beyond gender, issue-driven campaigns remain the most effective pathway for female candidates to build voter support in Anambra.

Overall, the insights derived from the rapid poll reveal an electorate that is both eager and engaged, yet still constrained by gaps in voter education, security concerns, and the limited visibility of female candidates—factors that will shape the credibility and inclusivity of the 2025 Anambra elections.

### Summary of Key Findings from the Voter Sentiment Poll and their Policy Implications

Factor Tested	Key Finding	Policy Implication
PVC Ownership	Predictor of past and future voting intentions.	Expanding PVC access, easing bottlenecks, and strengthening registration are crucial to sustaining participation.
Security and Safety	Feeling unsafe significantly reduces willingness to vote.	Preventive deployment, protection of women, and rapid response at hotspots are vital for a successful election.
Voter Education	Receipt of voter education increases likelihood of turnout.	Targeted outreach to women and youth with accessible, locally relevant materials is essential.
Issue Prioritisation	Voters are more likely to support (female) candidates when they address priority issues.	Highlighting core voter concerns in manifestos and messaging is key to boosting support.

### Emerging Risks and Trends

#### Continued Marginalisation of Women in Candidate Lists

Political parties in Anambra continue to prioritise male aspirants, particularly for high-stakes positions such as governor. Women are often relegated to less influential roles, such as deputies or advisory positions. Only two female governorship candidates were cleared by INEC among 16 political parties, underscoring persistent structural barriers.

Although political parties in Anambra frequently advertise measures such as reduced nomination fees for women or voluntary quotas, these commitments are

largely rhetorical and rarely translate into tangible electoral opportunities. The reality is a persistent lack of political will and genuine commitment to gender inclusion, particularly among the four dominant parties—PDP, APC, LP, and APGA—which collectively shape the state's political landscape.

In the lead-up to the 2025 governorship elections, none of the major parties fielded a woman in their primaries for the governorship position. Instead, women were largely confined to token roles as

supporters, “women leaders,” or, at best, running mates—with six women eventually fielded as deputy governorship candidates. By contrast, it was the smaller political parties, with far less visibility and resources, that showed greater openness by presenting female aspirants, with two parties (NRM and AAC) fielding women as governorship candidates.

This pattern highlights the entrenched exclusionary practices of mainstream parties: while they make public claims about promoting women's participation, they fail to operationalise these commitments in high-stakes contests. Without institutional reforms and external pressure, women will continue to face closed doors at the very level where party nominations determine access to serious electoral competition.

### **Stereotyping and Biased Political Discourse**

Female aspirants are frequently subjected to narratives that question not only their competence, loyalty, or moral standing but also their capacity to balance public leadership with domestic responsibilities. A pervasive stereotype in Anambra—and Nigeria more broadly—frames women as primarily responsible for managing household chores, childcare, and caregiving duties. This discourse often manifests in public debates where women aspirants are asked, “Who will take care of your home if you are in government?” or accused of being “neglectful wives and mothers” if they pursue political office.

Such narratives reinforce the patriarchal expectation that a woman's legitimacy lies within the private sphere rather than the public one. They also place women in a double bind: if they prioritise politics, they are branded as poor homemakers; if they prioritise family, they are deemed unfit for the demands of governance. This bias undermines their credibility with voters and political parties alike, discourages women from declaring aspirations, and creates psychological pressure to overperform in both domains.

### **Gender-Based Harassment, Both Online and Offline**

Women in Anambra politics face a range of targeted attacks designed to delegitimise and silence them. Online, female aspirants are frequently subjected to cyberbullying campaigns, including false allegations about their morality or marital status. Troll accounts on Facebook and WhatsApp groups—key mobilisation platforms in Anambra—often spread narratives that brand female politicians as “wayward women,” “home breakers,” or “tools of godfathers,” framing their ambitions as socially unacceptable.

Offline, the intimidation takes more physical and communal forms. Female aspirants have reported verbal abuse during ward meetings, deliberate exclusion from nocturnal strategy sessions (often scheduled late at night when cultural expectations dictate women should be at home), and in some cases, threats of violence at rallies. Women are also more vulnerable to targeted smear campaigns in local markets and churches—spaces that are highly influential in Anambra's socio-political culture—where their reputations as “good wives” or “good mothers” are publicly questioned. These tactics discourage participation, increase personal and family risks for women in politics, and contribute to a climate where aspiring female leaders often self-censor or withdraw rather than endure sustained harassment.

### **Gender-Blind Media Coverage Further Limiting Women's Visibility**

Media narratives around the elections overwhelmingly highlight male frontrunners, with minimal coverage of women's candidacies or policy proposals. Where women are mentioned, reporting often frames them in relation to male counterparts or focuses on personality rather than substantive issues. This gender-blind approach not only reduces the visibility of female candidates but also perpetuates stereotypes that undermine their legitimacy. A lack of gender-sensitive media framing risks reinforcing existing

inequalities in public perception and voter engagement.

### **Potential Disenfranchisement of Women Voters Due to Insecurity or Logistical Failures**

Pre-election security assessments warn of ongoing threats of politically motivated violence, intimidation by non-state actors, and logistical bottlenecks in certain LGAs. Women, particularly in rural and peri-urban communities, may be disproportionately affected if polling units are inaccessible, security presence is weak, or voter materials arrive late. Given that women often constitute the majority of grassroots mobilisers and community-based voters, such disruptions could result in significant disenfranchisement and reduced female turnout.

### **Gendered Security Assessment and Flash Points**

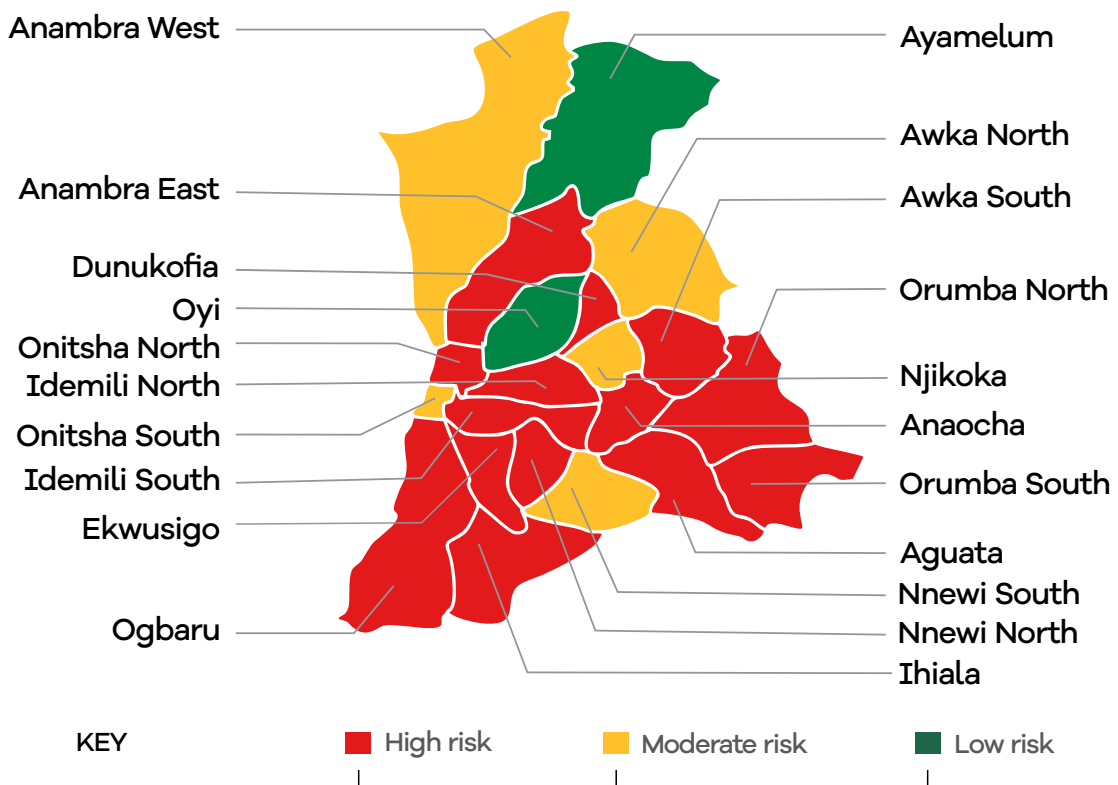
The security landscape in Anambra ahead of the November 2025 governorship election is already showing signs of tension, with gendered risks particularly evident. A widely publicised incident in Oba (Idemili South LGA) saw operatives of the state-backed vigilante security outfit, Agunchemba, assault a female NYSC corps member serving as an ad-hoc electoral staff. The episode triggered

widespread condemnation, civil society demands for prosecution, and dismissal of some operatives, underscoring persistent risks of violence against women in elections.

Beyond gendered risks, political tensions are heightening. A physical face-off between the incumbent APGA deputy governor and the APC governorship candidate, marked by threats of violence, has further inflamed the polity. Recent by-elections also revealed flashpoints in Nnewi, Ozubulu, and other parts of Ekwusigo LGA (including Ukpok Ward 3009; Ward 4 Units 001, 003, 008), where clashes, arrests, and intimidation of voters and agents were reported. Onitsha North Constituency 1 and Awka South—close to INEC headquarters—also witnessed threats of violence, heavy security deployments, and movement restrictions. Notably, Hon. Justice Azuka, a member of the Anambra State House of Assembly representing Onitsha North 1 constituency was assassinated, and his widow, Mrs. Justina Azuka contested in the by-elections, under the African Democratic Congress (ADC), to serve the outstanding 13 months of her deceased husband's tenure. While security forces intervened in some cases, these incidents serve as early warning signals. Without proactive coordination and preventive deployment strategies, such flashpoints risk escalating into larger-scale disruption during the November polls.

Based on reported security incidents, triangulated against the female voters' sentiment data—where residents in some LGAs highlighted fear of violence and community insecurity as major deterrents to voting—a RAG (Red–Amber–Green) security assessment has been developed across Anambra's 21 LGAs, with red indicating high risk, amber moderate risk, and green low risk.

### Gendered RAG Security Rating of LGAs



### Opportunities to Advance Gender Inclusion:

#### Active women-led CSOs and networks

- Grassroots and CSOs in Anambra are mobilising women as voters, observers, and advocates, thereby creating support structures for aspirants.

#### A vibrant youth demographic

- With young people constituting over 60% of registered voters, there is potential for intergenerational solidarity around more inclusive and accountable governance.

#### Partnerships with INEC and development partners

- These actors provide entry points for technical support, advocacy for gender-sensitive electoral processes, and monitoring of women's participation.

#### Regional precedent

- States across Nigeria, including some in the Southeast, have begun to witness modest but symbolic gains in women's representation, suggesting that shifts are possible with targeted interventions.

## Preliminary Conclusion and Next Steps

To deliver a credible, inclusive, and violence-free election, coordinated action is required from INEC, security agencies, and political parties with a focus on the following interventions:

### For INEC:

- Ensure adequate gender representation in the deployment and mobilisation of electoral officers, with at least one female official per polling unit.
- Regularly publish gender-disaggregated data on voter registration, accreditation, turnout, and candidacy to ensure transparency and evidence-based advocacy.
- Strengthen the role of Gender Desk Officers across state and LGA offices, equipping them with the resources and training to monitor women's participation and flag gender-related incidents in real time.

### For Security Agencies:

- Proactively deploy to identified flashpoints (Nnewi, Ozubulu, Ekwusigo, Onitsha North, Awka South, Oba, etc) with gender-sensitive protection measures, including female security presence and rapid response systems to address violence against women in elections and intimidation of female staff, candidates, and voters.
- Integrate gender-sensitive protocols into election security operations, ensuring that female voters and candidates are not disproportionately exposed to intimidation or violence.
- Deploy security personnel to women-dominated polling units and campaign venues, ensuring safe participation without fear of harassment.
- Establish confidential reporting and response mechanisms for electoral Gender-Based Violence (GBV), ensuring timely intervention and accountability.

### For Political Parties:

- Align campaign messaging with voters' top concerns—security, jobs, and healthcare—while enhancing visibility of female candidates and ensuring inclusivity within campaign structures to reflect electorate expectations.
- Parties should widely publicise their candidate manifestos.
- Provide structured campaign support to women candidates, including access to party platforms, media visibility, and protection from internal sabotage or substitution.

### For CSOs:

- Actively amplify the voices of female candidates through debates, town halls, and voter education campaigns that highlight women's policy priorities.
- Monitor and document instances of gender-based harassment, disinformation, and electoral violence, creating a database that can be used for real-time advocacy and post-election accountability.
- Strengthen partnerships with media organisations to encourage gender-sensitive reporting and sustained coverage of women in the electoral space.

Collectively, these measures will help safeguard electoral integrity while strengthening women's participation in Anambra's 2025 polls and beyond.

# 06.

## **DISABILITY INCLUSION IN THE ANAMBRA ELECTORAL PROCESS**

# Overview

The methodological approach for the Anambra Disability Inclusion Pre-election assessment, conducted by TAF Africa as part of the EU-SDGN programme, was multifaceted, combining both primary and secondary data collection to establish a comprehensive view. The primary methods included a rapid survey involving 57 PwDs respondents across Anambra using structured questionnaires to capture quantitative data, challenges, expectations, and perceptual readiness for the election. This was complemented by informal engagements with stakeholders such as JONAPWD, disability clusters, INEC officials, security agencies, and OPDs. Crucially, on-ground assessments were carried out in collaboration with OPDs, who conducted accessibility spot-checks at various registration and polling centres. Finally, secondary data derived from media monitoring and public statements released by INEC, security agencies, and CSOs provided essential contextual information on security, logistics, and policy matters.

## Key Insights

### 1. Disability Types

The majority of respondents reported having physical disabilities, accounting for (57.9%), making it the most common category. Visual disabilities followed as the second-largest group (19.3%). A smaller proportion identified with albinism (8.8%), while equal numbers reported being deaf (5.3%) or having hearing disabilities (5.3%).

### 2. Voter Registration and PVC Status

A significant majority of respondents (86.0%) have successfully collected their PVCs, reflecting a strong level of preparedness to participate in the electoral process. However, some 14% respondents reported not having collected their PVCs, indicating a gap that could potentially limit their ability to vote. This overall distribution highlights a predominantly positive outlook on PwDs voter readiness, though it underscores the need for targeted efforts to ensure that those yet to collect their PVCs are supported to do so.

### 3. Availability of Assistive/Communication Materials

Despite INEC's commitments, survey and field checks revealed limited or absence of braille ballot guides, sign language interpreters, or large-print materials in the previous elections and during voter registration/PVC collection. In all 20 registration centres visited, sign language interpreters were absent.

### 4. Accessibility of Polling Units

- **Structural Barriers:** 25% of PwDs respondents identified inaccessible polling units as the most significant barrier in past elections. Common issues include a lack of ramps, high ballot tables, and poor terrain.
- **Recent Improvements:** INEC has reaffirmed its commitment to providing ramps in some centres, but wider coverage to rural community polling stations cannot be ascertained.

### 5. Attitudinal and Social Barriers

- Discrimination and stigma remain significant challenges, with 6.7% of respondents citing them as barriers in past elections, and 15.2% anticipating them in the upcoming one.
- Negative attitudes from electoral officials and fellow voters discourage participation and undermine trust.
- Civil society sensitisation efforts (e.g., TAF Africa's ABLE2VOTE campaign) have improved awareness but need scaling up.

### 6. Security Concerns

- **Current Situation:** Insecurity remains volatile in Anambra. Clashes with IPOB/ESN (reported by Premium Times, September 2) and arrests of kidnapping suspects (September 1) highlight persistent risks (Daily Post).

- **PwD Vulnerability:** 30.3% of respondents cited security risks as their greatest fear for November's election. PwDs face disproportionate risks due to mobility and communication limitations, which hinder their ability to flee or seek help in emergencies.
- **Trust in Security Agencies:** While security agencies have pledged safe, inclusive elections, previous harassment of PwDs (e.g., restrictions on assisted transport) has eroded confidence.

## 7. Transportation and Logistics

Transportation challenges (16.7% in past elections; 18.2% anticipated in 2025) remain a major barrier. Accessible, affordable transport is scarce, especially for rural PwDs.

### Major Barriers/Challenges Faced in Previous Elections

S/N	Barriers /Challenges	Percentage
1	Inaccessible polling units	25.0%
2	Fear of standing long in the queue under the sun	18.3%
3	Fear of violence	18.3%
4	Transportation challenges	16.7%
5	Discrimination	6.7%
6	Stigma	6.7%

### Anticipated Barriers/ Challenges in the November 2025 Election

S/N	Barriers /Challenges	Percentage
1	Security risks	30.3%
2	Transportation challenges	18.2%
3	Attitudinal barriers	15.2%
4	Discrimination	15.2%
5	Inaccessible polling units	10.6%
6	Lack of information in accessible formats	7.6%

### Preliminary Conclusion and Next Steps

In the lead-up to the Anambra gubernatorial election, progress has been made in PwDs sensitisation, voter registration, and stakeholder engagement. However, persistent barriers, insecurity, inaccessible polling units, inadequate assistive devices, stigma, and transportation gaps continue to threaten inclusive participation. Yet, hope isn't lost: there are opportunities and actions that stakeholders could do to make the Anambra elections more inclusive. These are listed below.

**To INEC:**

- Audit and upgrade all polling and registration centres for physical accessibility (ramps, tactile paths, lowered tables).
- Ensure sufficient assistive devices (braille guides, magnify glasses, sign language interpreters, large-print guides, Form EC40H, etc.) are distributed statewide, including rural areas.
- Train all election officials and ad hoc staff on Section 54 of the Electoral Act (2022) regarding the rights of PwDs.
- Issue clear guidance on priority voting and accommodations (mobility aids, companions, flexible queuing).

**To Security Agencies:**

- Guarantee safe and inclusive access for PwDs on election day; avoid unnecessary movement restrictions.
- Deploy trained officers sensitised on disability rights, ensuring respectful treatment of PwDs.
- Provide visible protection at polling units to reassure voters, while avoiding intimidation.

**To Political Parties:**

- Integrate PwDs issues into manifestos and campaign messages, not as token gestures but as substantive commitments.
- Ensure campaign venues and events are accessible to PwDs.

**To Civil Society and OPDs:**

- Sustain voter education in accessible formats (braille, sign language, radio, simplified text, audio).
- Intensify monitoring of INEC and security compliance with inclusion commitments, especially in rural areas.
- Document and publicise accessibility failures to ensure accountability.

**To the Media:**

- Frame disability narratives around rights and agency, not pity.
- Highlight stories of PwDs electoral participation to inspire wider inclusion.
- Hold institutions accountable for broken promises and gaps in accessibility.

The weeks ahead will be decisive. Whether commitments translate into concrete action will determine if PwDs in Anambra experience equal citizenship in practice. An inclusive, safe, and accessible election is not just a legal obligation but also a democratic imperative.

# **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**ELECTORAL OFFENCES**

S/N	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE ACTORS
1	Strengthen Enforcement of Legal Frameworks: Enforce strict penalties for vote buying by ensuring that electoral laws clearly define and penalise such practices. Increase the capacity of security agencies and INEC officials to detect and apprehend offenders during campaigns and on election day.	INEC, Security agencies, EFCC
2	Security agencies and INEC officials should be more proactive in detecting and apprehending offenders during campaigns and on election day.	Security agencies, INEC
3	Voter Engagement Campaigns: Expand civic engagement initiatives emphasising the illegality and detrimental effects of vote buying, targeting communities, market centres, and youth groups. Use local languages and trusted community leaders to reinforce messages.	INEC, CSOs
4	Enhanced Security Presence: Increase visible police and security personnel at sensitive polling units and during campaign activities to deter intimidation. Consider specialised units trained in crowd control and conflict de-escalation.	Security agencies
5	Legal Deterrence: Pursue swift prosecution of individuals and groups engaging in intimidation, ensuring that offenders face commensurate sanctions.	INEC, Security agencies, Judiciary
6	Community Engagement: Work with traditional rulers, religious leaders, and civil society to promote a culture of peace and reject intimidation tactics, fostering community-led peace committees to report threats.	CSOs
7	Conflict Prevention Mechanisms: Establish early warning systems, leveraging community informants and security intelligence to anticipate and prevent clashes. Conduct regular stakeholder meetings to address disputes before escalation.	Security agencies, CSOs
8	Rapid Response Units: Deploy specialised rapid response teams in volatile LGAs, equipped to contain violence swiftly and prevent bloodshed.	Security agencies
9	Post-Incident Accountability: Investigate all violence thoroughly and hold perpetrators accountable to deter repeat offenses and reinforce rule of law.	Security agencies
10	Monitoring and Transparency: INEC should strengthen its campaign financing monitoring endeavours, including tracking campaign donations and expenditures through digital platforms and disclosures. The Party Finance Reporting and Accounting System (PFRAS) should be used to its full potential.	INEC

S/N	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE ACTORS
11	Legal Enforcement: Enforce existing laws against illegal campaign funding, including sanctions for violations. Encourage civil society oversight and public reporting of suspected financial misconduct.	INEC
12	Protection of Voters' Rights: Deploy election observers and security personnel to monitor and prevent voter suppression tactics, such as intimidation, ballot obstruction, or displacement.	CSOs, Security agencies, INEC (on accreditation)
13	Election Observers should proactively deploy and observe the collations centres and compare the results of their polling unit with what they announce there.	Election Observers
14	Legal Recourse: Establish accessible channels for voters to report suppression or disenfranchisement, and ensure prompt investigation and redress.	Security agencies

### ELECTORAL PREPAREDNESS

S/N	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE ACTORS
15	Strengthen election logistics to ensure timely delivery of materials, building on recent positive experiences and lessons learnt from the August by-elections.	INEC
16	Expand/sustain voter education campaigns emphasising the importance of voting, dissuading vote buying, and countering misinformation, especially via social media.	INEC, CSOs
17	Enhance targeted voter education using digital, multilingual, and community-based platforms to reach marginalised groups and build trust in the electoral process.	INEC, CSOs
18	Deploy tested and reliable technology and infrastructure, including modern voting equipment, power supply solutions, and secure transportation, to minimise malfunctions and delays.	INEC
19	Strengthen transparency and accountability through consistent information sharing, media engagement, and strict adherence to accreditation and FOI guidelines.	INEC

### ELECTORAL ENVIRONMENT AND SECURITY

S/N	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE ACTORS
20	Exclude non-statutory security outfits (e.g., vigilantes) from election security roles; reinforce police neutrality and professionalism.	Security agencies

S/N	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE ACTORS
21	Deploy sufficient, well-trained personnel committed to impartiality.	Security agencies
22	Establish clear protocols to prevent infiltration or misuse of non-conventional security groups, such as vigilante or state-sponsored outfits.	Security agencies
23	Prioritise community engagement in high-risk areas like Oyi, Aguleri, and boundary communities to deter violence.	Security agencies, CSOs
24	Optimise traditional and religious leaders' influence to promote peace and discourage divisive religious and denominational politics, especially the Catholic-Anglican dichotomy.	Traditional and religious leaders, CSOs
25	Compliance with Peace Accord: Parties should commit publicly to peaceful conduct, refrain from vote buying, and respect the electoral process.	Political parties, CSOs
26	Political parties should undertake voter education and mobilisation on an ongoing basis, this being one of the core tasks and responsibilities of political parties.	Political parties
27	Community and town union leaders should use their power to proactively advocate for non-partisan support for peaceful elections; avoid supporting or endorsing violence or bias.	Community and Town Union Leaders

### MEDIA FREEDOM

S/N	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE ACTORS
28	Promote responsible journalism that upholds ethical standards; discourage sensationalism and partisan reporting.	Media actors, CSOs
29	Security Deployment and Collaboration: INEC, the Nigeria Police, DSS, and other security agencies should establish a <i>Media-Security Desk</i> at the state level, with clear communication lines to provide accredited journalists safe access to polling units and collation centres.	INEC, CSOs
30	Accreditation and Identification: INEC should ensure timely issuance of accreditation tags to journalists, with recognition by all security operatives and political stakeholders. Security personnel must be sensitised to respect media accreditation as a legal right, not a privilege.	INEC

S/N	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE ACTORS
31	Protection against Vigilante Groups: Security agencies should regulate and monitor activities of community vigilante groups on election day, preventing them from obstructing accredited reporters.	Security agencies
32	Emergency Hotlines and Rapid Response: IPC, NUJ, and civil society partners should set up dedicated hotlines for journalists to report threats, harassment, or attacks in real time. Emergency support networks should be activated for immediate interventions.	Media actors, CSOs
33	Accountability Mechanism: Establishment of a Media Safety Hotline and rapid response desk linking NUJ, IPC, Police, and legal aid.	Media actors, Security agencies
34	Safety Training and Equipment: Media organisations should provide pre-election safety training (physical and digital), as well as basic safety gear such as press jackets, first-aid kits, and communication devices for field reporters.	Media actors
35	Fact-Checking Hubs: A coalition of fact-checking organisations (such as NDRFactcheckhub, Haltfake, Dubawa, Africa Check) should establish real-time election-day verification desks to debunk fake news, deep fakes, and premature result announcements.	Media actors
36	Pre-Bunking Strategies: Journalists and fact-checkers should circulate accurate, verified information on INEC processes (e.g., result transmission, collation steps) ahead of time to reduce the impact of false claims on election day.	Media actors
37	Access to Information: INEC should publish timely data and facilitate direct press briefings to curb speculation and disinformation.	INEC
38	Observer Engagement: Election observers and civil society groups should monitor and document incidents of press harassment, making such reports part of their official post-election assessment.	Election observers

## GENDER AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

S/N	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE ACTORS
39	Ensure adequate gender representation in the deployment and mobilisation of electoral officers, with at least one female official per polling unit.	INEC
40	Regularly publish gender-disaggregated data on voter registration, accreditation, turnout, and candidacy to ensure transparency and evidence-based advocacy.	INEC

S/N	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE ACTORS
41	Strengthen the role of Gender Desk Officers across state and LGA offices, equipping them with the resources and training to monitor women's participation and flag gender-related incidents in real time.	INEC
42	Proactively deploy to identified flashpoints (Nnewi, Ozubulu, Ekwusigo, Onitsha North, Awka South, Oba, etc.) with gender-sensitive protection measures, including female security presence and rapid response systems to address violence against women in elections and intimidation of female staff, candidates, and voters.	Security agencies
43	Integrate gender-sensitive protocols into election security operations, ensuring that female voters and candidates are not disproportionately exposed to intimidation or violence.	Security agencies
44	Deploy security personnel to women-dominated polling units and campaign venues, ensuring safe participation without fear of harassment.	Security agencies
45	Establish confidential reporting and response mechanisms for electoral GBV, ensuring timely intervention and accountability.	Security agencies
46	Align campaign messaging with voters' top concerns—security, jobs, and healthcare—while enhancing visibility of female candidates and ensuring inclusivity within campaign structures to reflect electorate expectations.	Political parties
47	Parties should widely publicise their candidate manifestos.	Political parties
48	Provide structured campaign support to women candidates, including access to party platforms, media visibility, and protection from internal sabotage or substitution.	Political parties
49	Actively amplify the voices of female candidates through debates, town halls, and voter education campaigns that highlight women's policy priorities.	CSOs
50	Monitor and document instances of gender-based harassment, disinformation, and electoral violence, creating a database that can be used for real-time advocacy and post-election accountability.	CSOs
51	Strengthen partnerships with media organisations to encourage gender-sensitive reporting and sustained coverage of women in the electoral space.	CSOs

**DISABILITY INCLUSION**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE ACTORS</b>
52	Audit and upgrade all polling and registration centres for physical accessibility (ramps, tactile paths, lowered tables).	INEC
53	Ensure sufficient assistive devices (braille guides, magnify glasses, sign language interpreters, large-print guides, Form EC40H, etc.) are distributed statewide, including rural areas.	INEC
54	Train all election officials and ad hoc staff on Section 54 of the Electoral Act (2022) regarding the rights of PwDs.	INEC
55	Issue clear guidance on priority voting and accommodations (mobility aids, companions, flexible queuing).	INEC
56	Guarantee safe and inclusive access for PwDs on election day; avoid unnecessary movement restrictions.	Security agencies
57	Deploy trained officers sensitised on disability rights, ensuring respectful treatment of PwDs.	Security agencies
58	Provide visible protection at polling units to reassure voters, while avoiding intimidation.	Security agencies
59	Integrate PwDs issues into manifestos and campaign messages, not as token gestures but as substantive commitments.	Political parties
60	Ensure campaign venues and events are accessible to PwDs.	Political parties
61	Sustain voter education in accessible formats (braille, sign language, radio, simplified text, audio).	CSOs
62	Intensify monitoring of INEC and security compliance with inclusion commitments, especially in rural areas.	CSOs
63	Document and publicise accessibility failures to ensure accountability.	Election observers, CSOs
64	Frame disability narratives around rights and agency, not pity.	Media actors
65	Highlight stories of PwDs electoral participation to inspire wider inclusion.	Media actors
66	Hold institutions accountable for broken promises and gaps in accessibility.	Media actors

## About the EU-SDGN Programme

The European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) is the EU's flagship democracy support programme in Nigeria. The programme is designed to complement the efforts of the Nigerian government to improve and strengthen democracy.

### IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS