



Pre-Assessment Report

on the Osun State off-cycle
Governorship Election

Scheduled for 15TH August 2026

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



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

A	Accord
AAC	African Action Congress
ADC	Africa Democratic Congress
ADP	Action Democratic Party
ALGON	Association of Local Governments of Nigeria
APC	All Progressives Congress
APGA	All Progressives Grand Alliance
APM	Allied People's Movement
APP	Action Peoples Party
BVAS	Bi-modal Voter Accreditation System
CBOs	Community-Based Organisations
CDD	Centre for Democracy and Development
CEMESO	Centre for Media and Society
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EU	European Union
EU-SDGN	European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IPC	International Press Centre
ISANS	INEC Security and Alert Notification System
JDPI	Justice Development and Peace Initiative
LCDA	Local Council Development Area
LGA	Local Government Area
LP	Labour Party
NPC	National Peace Committee
NNPP	New Nigeria Peoples Party
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPC	National Population Commission
NRM	National Rescue Movement
NWTF	Nigerian Women Trust Fund
NARTO	National Association of Road Transport Owners
NURTW	National Union of Road Transport Workers
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PRP	Peoples Redemption Party
PWD	Persons With Disability
SDP	Social Democratic Party
TAF	TAF Africa
TKC	The Kukah Centre
YIAGA	Yiaga Africa
YPP	Young Progressive Party
ZLP	Zenith Labour Party

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The pre-election environment in the run-up to the off-cycle governorship election scheduled for 15 August 2026 is shaped by a highly competitive political contest, organisational and logistical challenges, institutional friction, and a fragile security context. These factors combine to heighten electoral risk and create significant uncertainty around the conduct of the poll.

This report assessed the overall environment of the off-cycle 2026 governorship election in Osun State. It scanned and appraised the political economy and analysed the actions and activities of electoral stakeholders and actors, including INEC's preparedness, the media landscape, the participation of marginalised groups, and election risk factors that could impact the integrity, credibility and legitimacy of the election.

The report was derived mainly from the integration of information from the pre-election assessment undertaken by the implementing partners of the European Union Support to Democracy and Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) Programme. This was complemented by information from other primary and secondary sources, including a field visit to Osun and desk research, to provide a comprehensive overview of the opportunities, threats and challenges that could impact the integrity, credibility and peaceful conduct of the election. The major highlights of the findings are as follows:

INEC Preparedness and Logistics: The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has commenced critical preparations. Following the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise, the state now has approximately 2.33 million registered voters. While INEC is upgrading dilapidated physical infrastructure across its LGA offices and preparing for the deployment of the Bi-modal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the INEC Result Viewing (IReV) portal, success will depend heavily on the timely release of funds, seamless logistics, and the effective training of the estimated 17,500 ad hoc staff required for the election.

Media Landscape and Information Integrity: Osun State features a vibrant but highly polarised media environment. While traditional broadcast media remains influential, there is a high risk of editorial capture by political interests. Furthermore, the proliferation of unregulated digital and social media platforms presents a severe risk for the spread of disinformation, fake news and propaganda. The physical and economic safety of journalists also remains a critical concern requiring proactive protection measures.

Inclusion of Marginalised Groups: Despite constituting a significant majority of the voting population, women, youths and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) face systemic marginalisation from political leadership and decision-making roles. Only one female governorship candidate is contesting the 2026 election. Furthermore, these demographics are disproportionately vulnerable to structural barriers, logistical hurdles and the threat of electoral violence, which serve as de facto mechanisms for voter suppression.

Security and Risk Assessment: The election faces significant security threats classified into four main categories: elite fragmentation, organised political violence, federal-state institutional conflicts, and ambient criminality (such as cultism and kidnapping). Several LGAs,

including Irewole, Osogbo, Boripe and parts of Ijesaland, have been identified as high-risk flashpoints requiring targeted, intelligence-led security deployments.

Key recommendations: To safeguard the electoral process, the report recommends the following:

- **INEC:** Ensure flawless logistical execution, as well as the timely and secure deployment of election personnel and materials, including assistive voting devices for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). INEC should also ensure the transparent operation of electoral technologies, devices and platforms.
- **Security Agencies:** Maintain strict operational neutrality, deploy proactive intelligence to secure high-risk areas, and protect all electoral stakeholders without bias.
- **Political Parties:** Adhere strictly to the electoral legal framework, publicly commit to the Peace Accord, and refrain from utilising thugs or engaging in vote trading.
- **Media and Civil Society:** Promote conflict-sensitive reporting, embed robust fact-checking mechanisms to combat disinformation, and deploy comprehensive observation missions to ensure transparency and accountability.

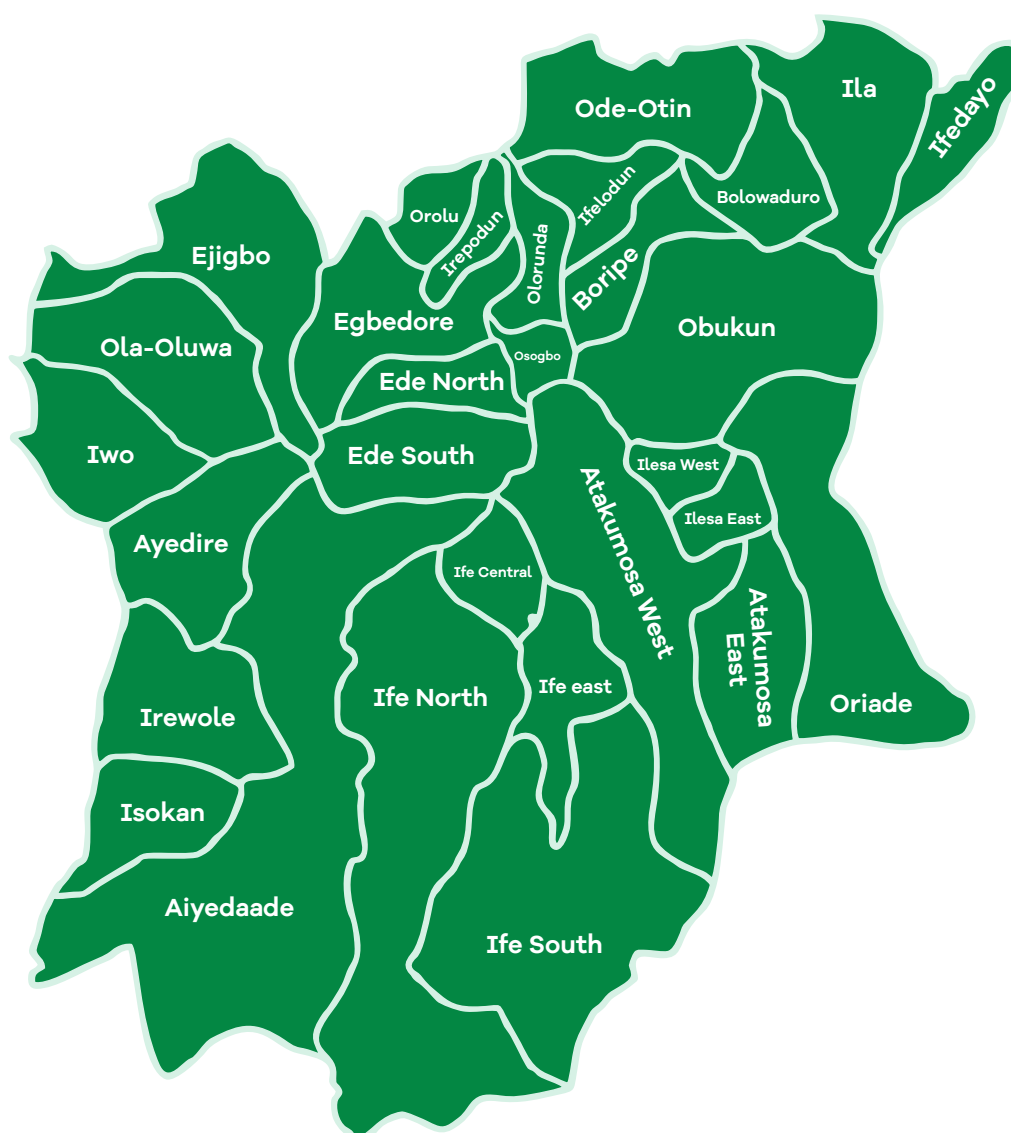
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INTRODUCTION

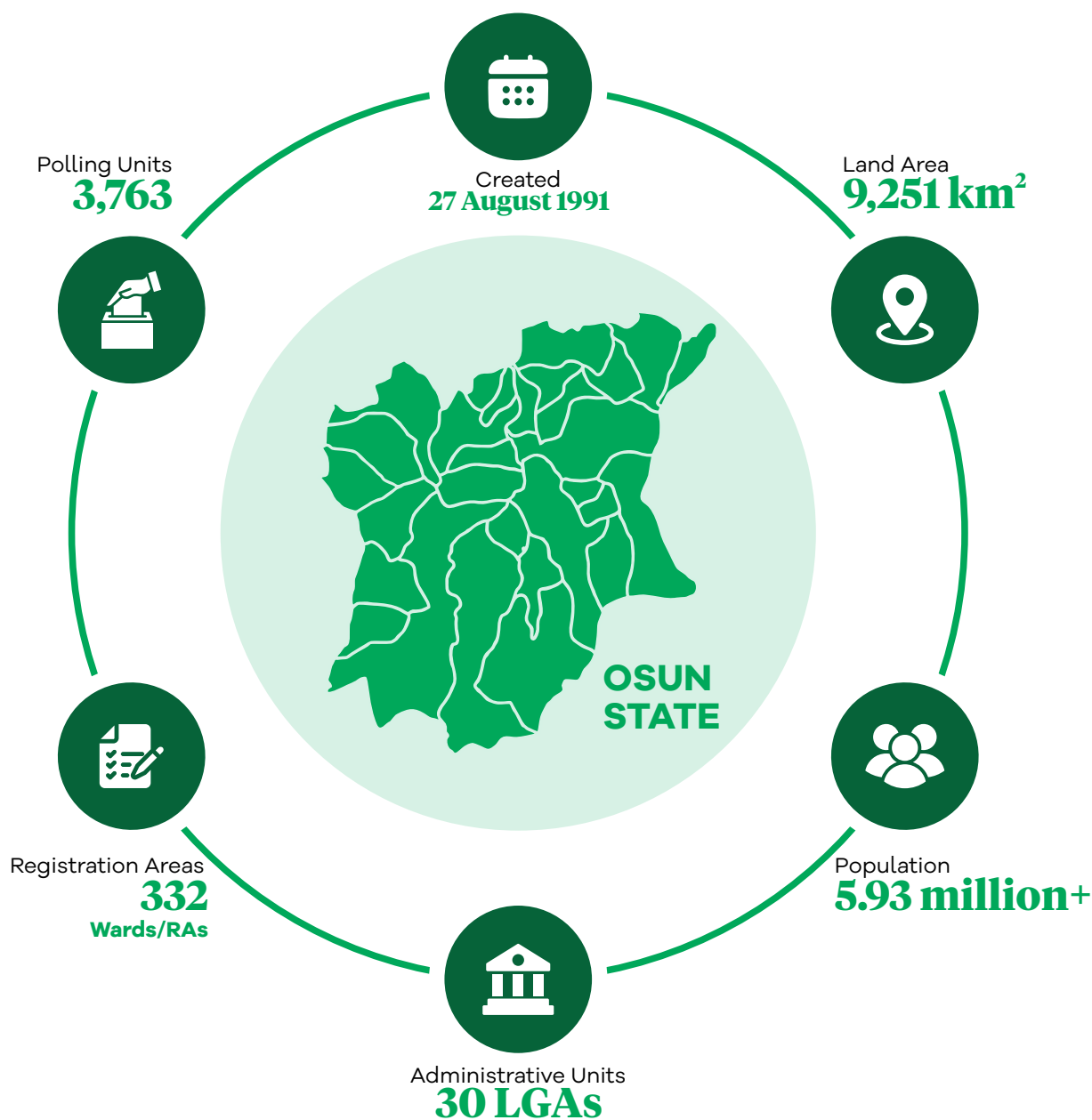
1.1 OVERVIEW

Osun State, known as the “State of the Living Spring” and *Ìpínlẹ̀ Ọ̀mọ́lúàbí* (State of the Virtuous), is located in South-West Nigeria, with its capital city in Osogbo. Created on 27 August 1991 out of the old Oyo State by the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida, it has a land area of 9,251 km² and an estimated population of over 5.93 million people spread across the 30 Local Government Areas of the state (Table One). A distinct feature of the state is that a sizeable number of its citizens live in the diaspora, especially within the ECOWAS region. Osun State is bounded to the east by Ekiti and Ondo States, to the north by Kwara State, to the south by Ogun State, and to the west by Oyo State. The electoral delimitation of the state consists of 30 Local Government Areas (LGAs) (Table Two), 332 Wards/Registration Areas (RAs), and 3,763 Polling Units (PUs) (see Annexure 1).

MAP OF OSUN STATE SHOWING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS



ELECTORAL DELIMITATION OF OSUN STATE



SOURCE: JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE MAKERS' CENTRE, OSOGBO

The electoral constituencies comprise one governorship constituency covering the entire state (Table Two), three Senatorial Districts (Table Three), nine Federal Constituencies (Table Three), and 26 state constituencies (Table Four). The total number of registered voters in the state for the 2023 General Election was 1,954,800, comprising 1,031,362 males (52.76 per cent) and 923,438 females (47.24 per cent) (Table Nine). The number of Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) collected for the election was 1,594,066 (81.54 per cent).

The state is mainly upland, rising to over 745 metres above sea level and characterised by a varied topographical landscape, ranging from rolling lowlands in the southern areas to undulating plateaus in the central region and rugged metamorphic rocks with an extensive network of river valleys and waterfalls in the north.

The farthest INEC LGA office from the state office in Osogbo is Ila-Orangun, the capital of Ifedayo LGA, which is about 80 kilometres away. Travelling there by road during the rainy season takes over two hours because of the winding terrain and topography (Table Five).

Electoral Structure

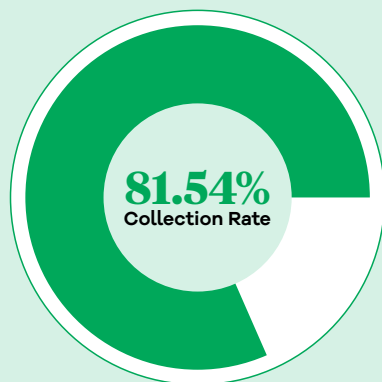
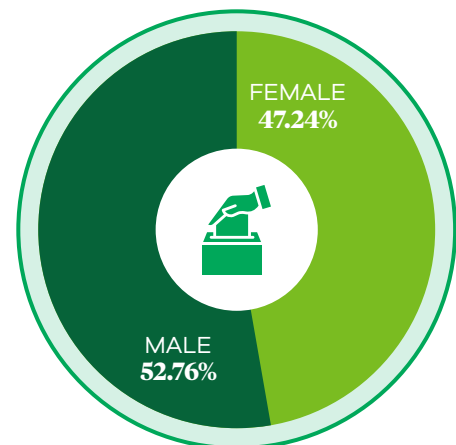
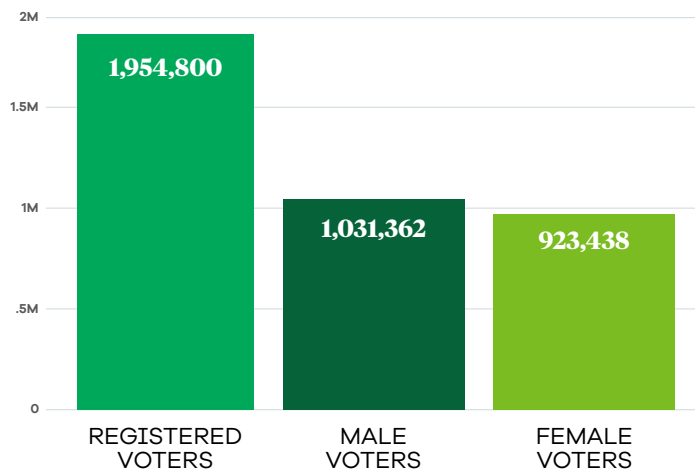
1
Governorship
Constituency

3
Senatorial
Districts

9
Federal
Constituencies

26
State
Constituencies

Registered Voters (2023 General Election)



1,594,066
PVCs Collected

COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION OF OSUN STATE BY LGA

S/NO.	LGA	MALE	PERCENTAGE	FEMALE	PERCENTAGE	TOTAL
1	AIYEDAADE	132,100	50.81	127,900	49.19	260,000
2	AIYEDIRE	66,700	50.34	65,800	49.66	132,500
3	ATAKUNMOSA EAST	66,900	50.61	65,300	49.39	132,200
4	ATAKUNMOSA WEST	59,800	50.34	59,000	49.66	118,800
5	BOLUWADURO	61,500	49.88	61,800	50.12	123,300
6	BORIPÉ	119,700	49.67	121,300	50.33	241,000
7	EDE NORTH	73,300	50.31	72,400	49.69	145,700
8	EDE SOUTH	66,200	50.42	65,100	49.58	131,300
9	EGBEDORE	64,600	50.27	63,900	49.73	128,500
10	EJIGBO	116,100	50.41	114,200	49.59	230,300
11	IFE CENTRAL	147,600	50.79	143,000	49.21	290,600
12	IFE EAST	165,800	50.60	161,900	49.40	327,700
13	IFE NORTH	134,200	50.39	132,100	49.61	266,300
14	IFE SOUTH	118,400	50.66	115,300	49.34	233,700
15	IFEDAYO	32,800	50.38	32,300	49.62	65,100
16	IFELODUN	84,800	50.60	82,800	49.40	167,600
17	ILA	54,200	50.28	53,600	49.72	107,800
18	ILESHE EAST	92,400	50.44	90,800	49.56	183,200
19	ILESHE WEST	93,700	50.48	91,900	49.52	185,600
20	IREPODUN	105,000	50.53	102,800	49.47	207,800
21	IREWOLE	125,300	50.50	122,800	49.50	248,100
22	ISOKAN	89,700	50.59	87,600	49.41	177,300
23	IWO	168,700	50.74	163,800	49.26	332,500
24	OBOKUN	102,700	50.57	100,400	49.43	203,100
25	ODO-OTIN	116,200	50.63	113,300	49.37	229,500
26	OLA-OLUWA	67,100	50.64	65,400	49.36	132,500
27	OLORUNDA	115,400	50.44	113,400	49.56	228,800
28	ORIADE	130,000	50.43	127,800	49.57	257,800
29	OROLU	90,500	50.64	88,200	49.36	178,700
30	OSOGBO	136,900	50.67	133,300	49.33	270,200
	TOTAL	2,998,300	50.50	2,939,200	49.50	5,937,500

TABLE 1: COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION OF OSUN STATE BY LGA

LIST OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS AND GUBERNATORIAL CONSTITUENCY

S/NO.	LGA	CAPITAL	NO. OF RAs	NO. OF PUs	NO. OF REG VOTERS
1	AIYEDAADE	GBONGAN	11	150	67,644
2	AIYEDIRE	ILE-OGBO	10	67	37,067
3	ATAKUNMOSA EAST	IPERINDO	10	77	41,008
4	ATAKUNMOSA WEST	OSU	11	76	36,458
5	BOLUWADURO	OTAN-AYEGBAJU	10	74	24,276
6	BORIPÉ	IRAGBIJI	11	112	69,527
7	EDE NORTH	OJA-TIMI, EDE	11	139	71,711
8	EDE SOUTH	OKE-IRESI, EDE	11	101	54,860
9	EGBEDORE	AWO	10	90	53,129
10	EJIGBO	EJIGBO	11	133	73,720
11	IFE CENTRAL	ILE-IFE	11	215	113,196
12	IFE EAST	OKE-OGBO, ILE-IFE	10	200	114,363
13	IFE NORTH	IPETUMODU	10	111	58,653
14	IFE SOUTH	IFETEDO	11	131	56,693
15	IFEDAYO	OKE ILA	10	63	19,581
16	IFELODUN	IKIRUN	12	145	80,527
17	ILA	ILA ORANGUN	11	124	46,614
18	ILESHA EAST	IYEMOGUN ROAD, ILESA	10	132	75,155
19	ILESHA WEST	OMI-ALADIYE ILESA	11	121	70,981
20	IREPODUN	ILOBU	11	133	58,597
21	IREWOLE	IKIRE	11	138	74,235
22	ISOKAN	APOMU	11	95	53,264
23	IWO	IWO	15	170	90,029
24	OBOKUN	IBOKUN	10	100	53,256
25	ODO-OTIN	OKUKU	15	121	66,844
26	OLA-OLUWA	BODE OSI	10	62	37,134
27	OLORUNDA	IGBONA OSOGBO	11	193	104,662
28	ORIADE	IJEBU IJESA	12	123	69,606
29	OROLU	IFON OSUN	10	85	39,639
30	OSOGBO	OSOGBO	15	282	142,371
			333	3,763	1,954,800

TABLE 2: LIST OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS AND GUBERNATORIAL CONSTITUENCY

LIST OF SENATORIAL DISTRICTS AND FEDERAL CONSTITUENCIES

SENATORIAL DISTRICT	NAME OF FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY & CODE	LGA COMPOSITION	NO.OF RAs	NO.OF PUs	NO. OF REGISTERED VOTERS
OSUN CENTRAL SD/085/OS	IREPODUN/ OLORUNDA/ OSOGBO/ OROLU FC/285/OS	IREPODUN	11	133	58,597
		OLORUNDA	11	193	104,662
		OROLU	10	85	39,639
		OSOGBO	15	282	142,371
		TOTAL	47	693	345,269
	ODO-OTIN/ IFELODUN/ BORIPE FC/286/OS	BORIPE	11	112	69,527
		IFELODUN	12	145	80,527
		ODO OTIN	15	121	66,844
		TOTAL	38	378	216,898
	BOLUWADURO/ IFEDAYO/ ILA FC/287/OS	BOLUWADURO	10	74	24,276
		IFEDAYO	10	63	19,581
		ILA	11	124	46,614
		TOTAL	31	261	90,471
OSUN EAST SD/086/OS	ATAKUNMOSA EAST/ ATAKUNMOSA WEST/ ILESHA EAST/ ILESHA WEST FC/288/OS	ATAKUMOSA EAST	10	77	41,008
		ATAKUMOSA WEST	11	76	36,458
		ILESA EAST	10	132	75,155
		ILESA WEST	11	121	70,981
		TOTAL	42	406	223,602
	OBOKUN/ ORIADE FC/289/OS	OBOKUN	10	100	53,256
		ORIADE	12	123	69,606
		TOTAL	22	223	122,862
	IFE CENTRAL/IFE NORTH/ IFE SOUTH/ IFE EAST FC/290/OS	IFE CENTRAL	11	215	113,196
		IFE EAST	10	200	114,363
		IFE NORTH	10	111	58,653
		IFE SOUTH	11	131	56,693
		TOTAL	42	657	342,905
OSUN WEST SD/87/OS	AYEDIRE/IWO/ OLA OLUWA FC/291/OS	AIYEDIRE	10	67	37,067
		IWO	15	170	90,029
		OLAOLUWA	10	62	37,134
		TOTAL	35	299	164,230
	AYEDAADE/ IREWOLE/ ISOKAN FC/292/OS	AIYEDAADE	11	150	67,644
		IREWOLE	11	138	74,235
		ISOKAN	11	95	53,264
		TOTAL	33	383	195,143
	EDE NORTH/ EDE SOUTH/ EGBEDORE/ EJIGBO/ FC/293/OS	EDE NORTH	11	139	71,711
		EDE SOUTH	10	101	54,860
		EGBEDORE	10	90	53,129
		EJIGBO	11	133	73,720
		TOTAL	42	463	253,420
3	6	30	332	3,763	1,954,800

TABLE 3: LIST OF SENATORIAL DISTRICTS AND FEDERAL CONSTITUENCIES

LIST OF STATE CONSTITUENCIES

S/NO.	NAME OF STATE CONSTITUENCY/CODE	COMPOSITION OF REGISTRATION AREA	NO. OF RAs	NO. OF PUs
1	BORIPPE/BOLUWADURO SC/778/OS	Ada I, Ada II, Agba, College/Egbada Road, Eripa, Gbeleru Obaala I, Gbeleru Obaala II, Iresi I, Iresi II, Isale Asa Iree, Isale-Oyo, Obala Iloro, Oja - Oba, Oke Aree, Oke Esa/Oke Ogi, Oke Ode Otan, Oke- Irurun, Oke-Omi Otan, Oke-Otan, Oloti Iragbiji, Ororuwo	21	186
2	IFELODUN SC/779/OS	Amola Ikirun, Eesa Ikirun, Ekoende/Eko Ajala, Iba I, Iba II, Ikirun Rural, Isale/Oke Afo, Obagun, Okeba Ikirun, Olonde Ikirun, Owode Ikirun, Station Road, Ikirun	12	145
3	ILA SC/780/OS	Ajaba/Edemosi/Aba Orangun, Ejigbo I, Ejigbo II, Ejigbo III, Eyindi, Eyindi/Iperin, Iperin, Isedo I, Isedo II, Oke Ede, Oke Ola	11	124
4	IFEDAYO SC/781/OS	Akesin, Asaoni, Aworo/Oke-Ila Rural, Ayetoro, Balogun, Cooperative, Isinmi, Obaale, Oyi, Temidire	10	63
5	IREPODUN/OROLU SC/782/OS	Bara 'A', Bara 'B', Elerin 'A', Elerin 'B', Elerin 'C', Elerin 'D', Elerin 'E', Olobu 'A', Olobu 'C', Olobu 'D', Olubu 'B', Olufon Orolu 'A', Olufon Orolu 'B', Olufon Orolu 'C', Olufon Orolu 'D', Olufon Orolu 'E', Olufon Orolu 'F', Olufon Orolu 'G', Olufon Orolu 'H', Olufon Orolu 'I', Olufon Orolu 'J'	21	218
6	ODO-OTIN SC/783/OS	Asi/Asaba, Baale, Ekosin/Iyeku, Esa Otun Baale Ode, Faji/Opete, Igbaye, Ijabe/Ila Odo, Jagun Osi Bale Ode, Oba Ojomu, Okua/Ekusa, Oloyan Elemosho / Esa, Olukotun, Olunisa, Ore/Agbeye, Osolo/Oparin/Ola	15	121
7	OLORUNDA SC/784/OS	Agowande, Akogun, Atelewo, Ayetoro, Balogun, Ilie, Oba Oke, Oba-Ile, Owode I, Owode II, Owoope	11	193
8	OSOGBO SC/785/OS	Alagba, Are-Ago, Ataoja 'A', Ataoja 'B', Ataoja 'C', Ataoja 'D', Ataoja 'E', Baba Kekere, Ekerin, Eketa, Jagun 'A', Jagun 'B', Otun Balogun 'A', Otun Hagun B, Otun Jagun 'A'	15	282
9	ATAKUNMOSA EAST & ATAKUNMOSA WEST SC/786/OS	Ajebandele, Ayegunle, Eti-Oni, Faforiji, Forest Reserve I, Forest Reserve II, Ibodi, Ifelodun, Ifewara I, Ifewara II, Igangan, Iperindo, Ipole, Isa Obi, Ita Gunmodi, Iwara, Muroko, Oke Bode, Osu I, Osu II, Osu III	21	153

TABLE 4: LIST OF STATE CONSTITUENCIES

10	IFE CENTRAL SC/787/OS	Akarabata, Ilare I, Ilare II, Ilare III, Ilare IV, Ireto I (Eleyele), Ireto II, Ireto III, Ireto IV, Ireto/Ajebandele, Moore Ojaja	11	215
11	IFE EAST SC/788/OS	Ilode I, Ilode II, Modakeke I, Modakeke II, Modakeke III, Moore, Okerewe I, Okerewe II, Okerewe III, Yekemi	10	200
12	IFE NORTH SC/789/OS	Asipa/Akinlalu, Edunabon I, Edunabon II, Famia, Ipetumodu I, Ipetumodu II, Moro, Oyere I, Oyere II, Yakoyo	10	111
13	IFE SOUTH SC/790/OS	Aare, Abiri Ogudu, Aye, Ayesan, Ikija I, Ikija II, Kere, Mefoworade, Oke Owena, Olode, Osi	11	131
14	ILESA EAST SC/791/OS	Biladu, Bolorunduro, Ifosan/Oke- Eso, Ijamo, Ilerin, Iloro/Roye, Imo, Isare, Itisin/Ogudu, Okesa, Upper & Lower Ijoka	11	132
15	ILESA WEST SC/792/OS	Ayeso, Ereja, Ikoyi / Ikoti Araromi, Ilaje, Isida/Adeti, Isokun, Itakogun/Upper Egbe-Idi, Lower Egbe-Idi, Omofe/Idasa, Upper/Lower Igbogi	10	121
16	OBOKUN SC/793/OS	Eesun/Idooko, Esa - Odo, Esa-Oke, Ibokun, Ilahun/Ikinyinwa, Ilare, Ilase/Idominasi, Imesi-Ile, Ipetu- Ile/Adaowode, Otan-Ile	10	100
17	ORIADE SC/794/OS	Apoti Dagbaja, Erin-Ijesa, Erinmo/Iwaraja, Erin-Oke, Ijebu- Jesa, Ijeda Iloko, Ikeji Arakeji/Owena, Ikeji-Ile, Ipetu Ijesa I, Ipetu-Ijesa II, Ira, Iwoye	12	123
18	AYEDAADE SC/795/OS	Anlugbua, Araromi-Owu, Balogun, Gbongan Rural, Ijegbe/Oke- Eso/Oke-Owu Ijugbe, Lagere/Amola, Obalufon, Ode-Omu Rural, Olufi, Otun Balogun, Otun- Olufi	11	150
19	AYEDIRE SC/796/OS	Ileogbo I, Ileogbo II, Ileogbo III, Ileogbo IV, Kuta I, Kuta II, Oke- Osun, Oluponna I, Oluponna II, Oluponna III	10	67
20	NORTH EDE SC/797/OS	Abogunde/Sagba, Alusekere, Apaso, Asunmo, Bara Ejemu, Isibo/Buari- Isola, Olaba/Atapara, Ologun/Agbaakin, Olusokun, Sabo/Agbongbe I, Sabo/Agbongbe II	11	139
21	EDE SOUTH SC/798/OS	Alajue I, Alajue II, Babanla/Agate, Babasanya, Jagun/Jagun , Kuye, Loogun, Olodan, Oloki/Akoda, Sekona	10	101
22	EGBEDORE SC/799/OS	Ara I, Ara II, Awo/Abudo, Ido-Osun, Ikotun, Iragberi I, Iragberi II, Iwoye/Idoo/Origo, Ojo/Aro, Okinni/Olorunsogo/Ofatedo	10	90

23	IREWOLE/ISOKAN SC/800/OS	Alapomu I (Odo-Osun), Alapomu II, Asalu (Mogimogi), Asalu Ikoyi, Awala I, Awala II, Idogun Ward, Ikire 'A', Ikire 'B', Ikire 'C', Ikire 'D', Ikire 'E', Ikire 'F', Ikire 'G', Ikire 'H', Ikire 'I', Ikire 'J', Ikire 'K', Olukoyi (Oja-Osun), Oosa Adifa, Oranran Ward, Osa Ikoyi (Oloke)	22	233
24	IWO SC/801/OS	Gidigbo I, Gidigbo II, Gidigbo III, Isale Oba I, Isale Oba II, Isale Oba III, Isale Oba IV, Molete I, Molete II, Molete III, Oke-Adan I, Oke-Adan II, Oke-Adan III, Oke-Oba I, Oke-Oba II	15	170
25	OLA OLUWA SC/802/OS	Ajagba/Iwooke, Asa Ajagunlase, Asamu/Ilemowu, Bode-Osi, Ikire Ile/Iwara, Isero/Ikonifin, Obamoro/Ile Ogo, Ogbaagba I, Ogbaagba II, Telemu	10	62
26	EJIGBO SC/803/OS	Elejigbo 'A', Elejigbo 'B'/Osolo, Elejigbo 'C'/Mapo, Elejigbo 'D'/Ejemu, Elejigbo/Ayegbogbo, Ifeodan 'A'/Owu-Ile, Ifeodan 'B'/Masifa, Ilawo/Isoko/Isundunrin, Inisa I/Aato/Igbon, Inisa II/Afaake/Ayegunle, Ola/Aye/Agurodo	11	133

TABLE 4: LIST OF STATE CONSTITUENCIES

DISTANCE FROM INEC STATE OFFICE TO LGA OFFICES

S/N	LGA	LGA HEADQUARTERS	APPROXIMATE DISTANCE (KM)	REQUIRED TIME OF TRAVEL
1	ATAKUMOSA EAST	LOCAL GOVT. SECRETARIAT COMPLEX, IPERINDO	67.7	1 HR 45 MINS
2	ATAKUMOSA WEST	ALONG ILESA-IFE RD, BESIDE NSCDC OFFICE, OSU	58.7	1 HR 3 MINS
3	AYEDAADE	BESIDE AYEDAADE LGA SECRETARIAT, GBONGAN JUNCTION, GBONGAN	61	43 MINS
4	AYEDIRE	INSIDE AYEDIRE LG SECRETARIAT, ILE-OGBO	67	1 HR 23 MINS
5	BOLUWADURO	LGA QUARTERS, OPP. LOCAL GOVT. SECRETARIAT, OTAN-AYEGBAJU	52	1 HR 22 MINS
6	BORIBE	ALONG LG SECRETARIAT ROAD, IRAGBIJI	37	50 MINS
7	EDE NORTH	ALONG EDE-ILOBU/ERIN OSUN ROAD, MATERNITY CENTER, EDE	22.2	31 MINS
8	EDE SOUTH	BEHIND EDE SOUTH LOCAL GOVT. SECRETARIAT, OKE IRESI, ALONG AKODA RD EDE	17.7	16 MINS
9	EGBEDORE	OPPOSITE AWO POLICE STATION, AWO	26.8	39 MINS
10	EJIGBO	OBA OMOWONUOLA STREET, BESIDE NUT BUILDING, EJIGBO	44.6	1 HR 9 MINS
11	IFE CENTRAL	BESIDE DSS OFFICE, ELEYLEE AREA, ILE-IFE	51	1 HR 2 MINS
12	IFEDAYO	BEHIND LOCAL GOVT. SECRETARIAT, OKE-ILA	77.2	2 HRS 37 MINS
13	IFE EAST	OLASODE STREET, OPA, ILE IFE	58	1 HR 14 MINS
14	IFE NORTH	OPPOSITE FGGC, ALONG ODE -OMU ROAD, IPETUMODU	40.5	42 MINS
15	IFE SOUTH	ALAGBADO STREET, (OFF AMULA ROAD BESIDE POLICE STATION), IFETEDO	76.8	2 HRS 11 MINS
16	IFELODUN	BEHIND IFELODUN LOCAL GOVT. SECRETARIAT, IKIRUN	41.9	45 MINS
17	ILA	OKE-OGUN, BESIDE ILA TECHNICAL COLLEGE, ILA	64.9	1 HR 52 MINS
18	ILESA EAST	IYEMOGUN RD (CLOSE TO ILESA EAST LGA SECRETARIAT), ILESA	49.2	1 HR
19	ILESA WEST	BEHIND AJIMOKO MIDDLE SCHOOL, OFF OSOGBO ROAD, ILESA	38.4	46 MINS
20	IREPODUN	OPP. LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT, ILOBU	27.4	44 MINS

21	IREWOLE	33, OYEBANJI STREET, BEHIND ORISUNMIBARE SAWMILL, OFF IFE/IBADAN EXPRESS WAY, IKIRE	68.3	57 MINS
22	ISOKAN	ORILE OWU RD, (BESIDE COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CENTRE), APOMU	71.2	1 HR 10 MINS
23	IWO	IWO/IBADAN RD (BEHIND OLUWO MARKET), IWO	52.3	1 HR 29 MINS
24	OBOKUN	IPETU ILE/ADA ROAD, NEAR POLICE STATION, IBOKUN	49.9	53 MINS
25	ODO-OTIN	ALONG OFFA ROAD BESIDE OLD GENERAL FILLING STATION, OKUKU	44.1	50 MINS
26	OLA-OLUWA	BESIDE POLICE STATION, ILE - OGO/IKONIFIN ROAD, BODE-OSI	58.6	1 HR 43 MINS
27	OLORUNDA	BEHIND DEEPER LIFE BIBLE CHURCH, POWERLINE AREA, OSOGBO	17.3	20 MINS
28	ORIADE	BESIDE LG SECRETARIAT, ILOKO ROAD, IJEBU-JESA	50.1	1 HR 35 MINS
29	OROLU	BESIDE LG SECRETARIAT, OGBOMOSO ROAD, IFON-OSUN	33.4	33 MINS
30	OSOGBO	LAMECO AREA, ILOBU ROAD OSOGBO	10.4	16 MINS

TABLE 5: DISTANCE FROM INEC STATE OFFICE TO L.G.A OFFICES

1.2 ELECTORAL HISTORY

The history of governorship electoral contest in Osun State has always been controversial, complex and contentious since the return to civilian democratic governance on 29th May 1999. The contest is characterised by intrigue, unpredictability and shifting alliances among political parties, actors and candidates and marred by various acts of electoral malpractices, legal malfeasance and landmark judicial interventions. The state has been governed by five democratically elected Governors since May 1999 as listed in Table Six.

LIST OF GOVERNORS, ACTING GOVERNORS AND ADMINISTRATORS 1999 - DATE

S/N	NAME	POSITION	TENURE	PARTY	REMARKS
1	Chief Adebisi Akande 	Governor	29/05/1999 – 29/05/2003 4 YEARS	Alliance for Democracy (AD)	Spent only one term of four years in office
2	Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola 	Governor	29/05/2003 – 26/11/2010 7 YEARS	Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP)	Spent 7 years and was removed from office on 26 th November 2010 through a Court judgement
3	Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola 	Governor	27/11/2010 – 27/11/2018 8 YEARS	Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) & All Progressives Congress (APC)	Spent two terms of 8 years in office
4	Alhaji Gboyega Oyetola 	Governor	27/11/2018 – 27/11/2022 4 YEARS	All Progressives Congress (APC)	Spent only one term of four years in office
5	Senator Ademola Adeleke 	Governor	27/11/2022 - 10/12/2026 10/12/2026 Date	Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) Accord (A)	Incumbent Governor

TABLE 6: LIST OF GOVERNORS, ACTING GOVERNORS AND ADMINISTRATORS 1999 - DATE

The Governorship election in Osun State is outside of the normal General Election cycle in Nigeria as a result of the termination of the tenure of Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola on 26th November 2010 by the Court of Appeal sitting in Ibadan.² This was as a result of the election petition instituted by Aregbesola and the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) contesting the outcome of the Governorship election conducted in the state on 14th April 2007. At the heart of the petition was that the election was marred by massive non-compliance with the Electoral Act 2006, widespread violence, multiple voting, and ballot-box stuffing.

In its judgement, the five-member appeal panel led by Justice Clara Bata Ogunbiyi set aside the ruling of the Osun State Retrial Tribunal, describing it as a “caricature and mockery of

² Eight governorship elections in Anambra, Bayelsa, Kogi, Edo, Ekiti, Ondo, Osun, and Imo States are conducted by INEC outside of the normal general election cycle following the overturning of the outcome of the original election by Court order and decision that the term of a Governor commences on the swearing-in date of the declared candidate.

judgment". The Retrial Tribunal was accused of either ignoring or wrongfully rejecting the evidence of electoral malpractices based on forensic handwriting data submitted by the ACN to prove electoral fraud in Atakumosa West, Atakumosa East, Ayedaade, Boripe, Ife Central, Ife East, Ifedayo, Isokan, Odo-Otin and Boluwaduro LGAs.

Rather than order a fresh election, the Appeal Panel declared Aregbesola as winner by nullifying the votes cast in the 10 disputed LGAs which reduced Oyinlola's INEC-declared votes from 426,669 to 172,880 and Aregbesola's INEC-declared votes from 240,772 to 198,799. The judgement, which remains one of the most landmark judicial interventions in Nigerian electoral history effectively nullified Oyinlola's election and declared Aregbesola as the winner with 25,919 votes and he was subsequently sworn in as Governor on 27th November 2010. As was the case in Ekiti, the Court of Appeal judgement put an end to the case as the Appeal Court was the final arbiter for Governorship election petition at the time. Section (233) 285 of the 1999 Constitution was later amended through the second alteration Act, to designate the Supreme Court as the final arbiter in governorship election petitions.

Electoral Structure



Retrial tribunal judgment set aside



Evidence from 10 LGAs upheld



Votes in disputed LGAs nullified



Aregbesola declared winner

2010 Governorship Vote Recalculation

Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola



INEC Result:

426,669



After Court Decision

172,880

Rauf Aregbesola



INEC Result:

240,772



After Court Decision

198,799

This amendment is widely regarded as a political rather than purely legal response, as it followed the controversial and conflicting judgements handed down by different divisions of the Court of Appeal after the 2007 General Elections, and was designed to eliminate that inconsistency by vesting sole, final authority over governorship election disputes in the Supreme Court.

The 2018 election between Gboyega Oyetola of APC and Ademola Adeleke of PDP is perhaps one of the most controversial and keenly contested elections in Nigeria in the fourth republic. In the first election, Adeleke won with 353 votes, which was far less than the 3,498 cancelled votes in seven polling units across four LGAs, thereby making the election inconclusive³. In the supplementary election that followed, Iyiola Omisore of the SDP who hails from Ile-Ife and a powerful political actor in the state played the role of a kingmaker by supporting Oyetola to win the election by 482 votes. Although the election tribunal initially overturned the result in favour of Adeleke, the Supreme Court later nullified the judgment and restored Oyetola as the winner on the technical ground that a member of the Election Tribunal Panel was absent during a crucial sitting day.

2018 Osun Governorship Election

A closely contested electoral battle



353 Votes

Adeleke's initial lead



3,498 Votes

Cancelled votes



4 LGAs

Impacted by cancellations



3,498 > 353

Cancelled votes exceeded victory margin



7 Polling Units

Affected by cancelled votes



482 Votes

Impacted by cancellations



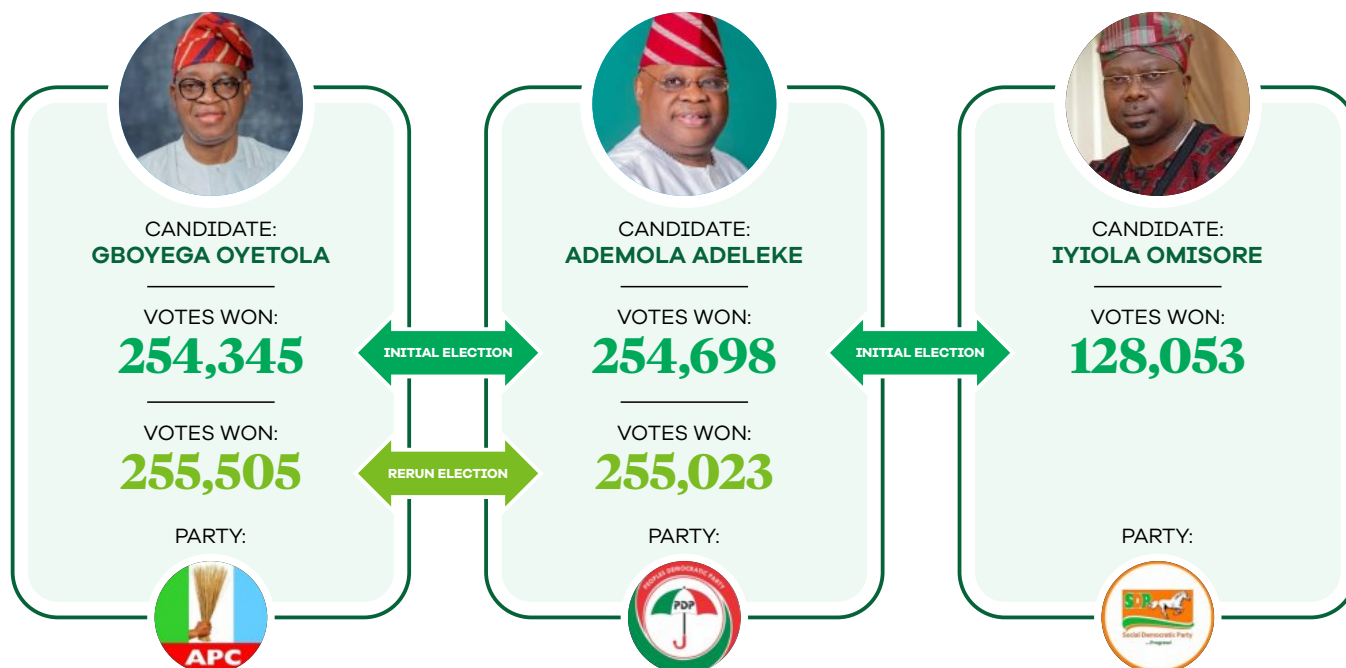
1 Supplementary Election

Conducted to determine the winner

³ The seven PUs are in Orolu (3), Ife South (2) Ife North (1) and Osogbo (1) LGAs

2018 ELECTIONS

(SEPTEMBER 22 2018 & SEPTEMBER 27 2018)



SOURCE: JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE MAKERS' CENTRE, OSOGBO

GENERAL ELECTION STATISTICS



1,678,985

Number of Registered Voters



721,621

Valid Votes



775,687

Number Of Accredited Voters



47,874

Rejected Votes



46.2%

Percentage Voters Turnout



769,495

Votes Cast

1,213,026 Number of PVCs Collected

The 2022 election represented a rematch between the two contenders and was decisively won by Adeleke with 403,371 over Oyetola's 375,027 votes. Oyetola's loss was largely attributed to the bitter internal feud within the APC and the fallout from the fractured relationship between him and Rauf Aregbesola, his predecessor. Perhaps the determining factor in the election was the efficacy of the newly introduced INEC Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) technology, which prevented ballot snatching and stuffing. Oyetola in contesting the outcome of the election obtained the voter accreditation data from INEC's backend server to challenge the results, alleging that the total number of votes in 744 PUs across the state exceeded the total number of accredited voters, amounting to over-voting.

While the Election Tribunal agreed with this position and nullified the election in a 2 – 1 split decision in January 2023, its decision was overturned by the Court of Appeal in March 2023, stating that Oyetola and the APC failed to properly prove over-voting by using premature, unverified back-end server report rather than the primary data stored directly inside the BVAS machines. The judgment, which declared Adeleke as the winner of the election, was later upheld by the Supreme Court in May 2023. In dismissing Oyetola's appeal, the Supreme Court declared that Oyetola and the APC cannot rely solely on a printout from the INEC server to prove over-voting without tendering the physical BVAS machines or the voter registers from the specific PUs where over-voting took place. In a landmark judgement, the Supreme Court established that a trinity of evidence comprising the server printouts from INEC, the actual physical BVAS machines, or primary voter registers are required to prove over-voting in an election. The result of the last governorship election in the state held on 16th July 2022 is as shown in Table Seven.

RESULT OF 2022 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

S/NO.	CANDIDATE NAME	GENDER	PARTY	VOTES RECEIVED	REMARK
1	AKINADE AKANMU OGUNBIYI	M	A	4,515	
2	AWOJIDE PETER SEGUN	M	AAC	2,148	
3	KEHINDE MUNIRUDEEN OLUMUYIWA ATANDA	M	ADP	10,104	
4	ADEGBOYEGA ISIAKA OYETOLA	M	APC	375,027	
5	AWOYEMI OLUWATAYO LUKUMAN	M	APM	1,222	
6	ADEBAYO ADEOLU ELISHA	M	APP	601	
7	ADELEKE ADESOJI MASILO ADEREMI ADEDAPO	M	BP	374	
8	YUSSUFF SULAIMON LASUN	M	LP	2,729	
9	RASAQ OYELAMI SALIU	M	NNPP	393	
10	ADEDE ADETONA SAMUEL	M	NRM	777	
11	ADELEKE ADEMOLA JACKSON NURUDEEN	M	PDP	403,371	ELECTED
12	AYOWOLE OLUBUSUYI ADEDEJI	M	PRP	1,007	
13	OMIGBODUN OYEGOKE AKINRINOLA	M	SDP	515	
14	ADEMOLA BAYONLE ADESEYE	M	YPP	1,303	
15	ADESUYI JOHN OLUFEMI	M	ZLP	364	

Registered Voters (As Collated) 1,952,387	Accredited Voters 827,218	Valid Votes 804,450
Rejected Votes 18,674	Votes Cast 823,124	PVCs Collected 1,518,303
Percentage (Registered Voters)		42.37%
Percentage Turnout (PVCs Collected)		54.48%

TABLE 7: RESULT OF 2022 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION



SOURCE: JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE MAKERS' CENTRE, OSOGBO

1.3 Significance of 2026 Governorship election

The 15th August 2026 governorship election in Osun State is the seventh in the fourth republic. While the 1998 election and subsequent elections in 2003 and 2007 were conducted within the framework of the General Election, the 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections were conducted off-cycle. The 15th August 2026 election is significant in many ways. Since 2014, it is the last major election before the conduct of a General Election and therefore serves as a critical barometer to assess the preparedness of INEC, the security agencies, political parties and candidates and other electoral stakeholders. This is especially the case within the context of the new provisions

in the electoral legal framework. Such provisions are contained in the Electoral Act 2026, in Clauses 33, 60, 62, 63 and 84 on political parties changing candidates, counting of votes and forms, post-election procedures and collation of election results, rejection of ballot paper without official mark and nomination of candidates by parties. Specifically, the election provides INEC an important and last opportunity to implement the lessons learnt from the Ekiti election of 20th June 2026 to test-run the functionality of the new technologies, including the electronic transmission of election results in real-time and the practicality of Clauses 38, 40 and 50 in the new INEC Regulations and Guidelines for Election 2026 on the close of voting procedures, electronic transmission of results and the use of electronic transmitted results for the purpose of collation respectively.

Furthermore, the lessons learnt by the security and law enforcement agencies during the election and from the Ekiti election will be useful for developing and implementing appropriate operational and deployment strategies for mitigating emergent electoral risks and threats, including voter intimidation and suppression, vote-buying, provocation of violence and adopted tactics for disrupting electoral activities at polling units and collation centres. Additionally, it will give the ruling and opposing political parties and candidates the opportunity to gauge voter sentiment and to test the effectiveness of their organisational and campaign strategy and the strength of their political alignments. Lastly, it will give election observers and the public an insight into the opportunities, threats and challenges in the organisational, operational, logistics and psychological preparations for the 2027 General Election.

1.4 Methodology of Pre-Election Assessment

This report used the mixed-research methodology, involving the collection, analysis and integration of both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a consistent, complete, corroborative and comprehensive understanding of the pre-election environment for the 15th August 2026 off-cycle Governorship election in Osun State. This was done by synthesising and integrating the pre-election assessment report by seven EU-SDGN partners, comprising of The Kukah Centre (TKC), TAF Africa, the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF), ElectHER, Yiaga Africa, the International Press Centre (IPC) and the Centre for Media and Society (CEMESO) into a single document.

The information in these reports was complemented by the data and materials obtained during a field trip to Osun State and from the review and analyses of relevant secondary documents and digital sources to validate and expand the scope and depth of the pre-election assessment report. In the course of the field trip, personal interviews, as well as key informant consultations and focus group discussions were conducted with INEC Officials, security personnel that are directly in charge of election management and election security, as well as with party officials and other stakeholders including religious and community leaders, the media and representatives of selected CSOs and CBOs. A policy of non-disclosure was adopted to maintain the confidentiality of sources by not directly attributing or ascribing the information obtained to specific stakeholders.

2 KEY FINDINGS

2. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

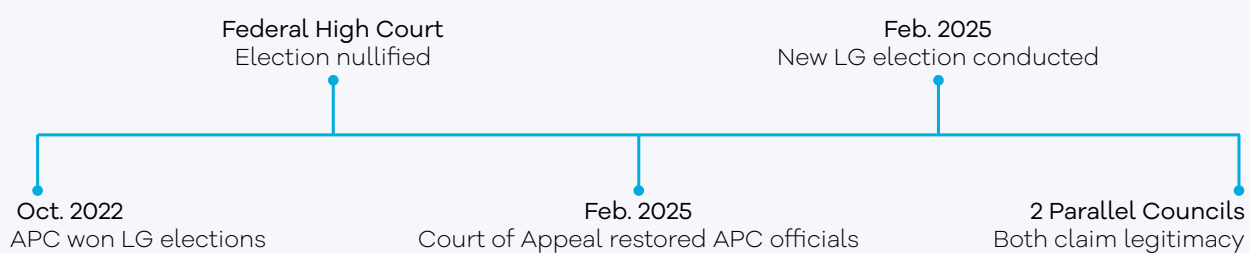
2.1.1 Political and Socio-Economic Conditions

The pre-election political and socio-economic environment in Osun State is fluid, complex and polarised. The political scene is dominated by an intense rivalry between the incumbent Governor Ademola Adeleke who was elected on the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) but later defected to Accord and former Governor Isiaka Oyetola of the All Progressives Congress (APC). The August 2026 election is therefore a continuation of the battle for supremacy between the two political rivals and it will be highly influenced by Adeleke's desire to remain in power and the determination of Oyetola and the APC to reclaim the governorship seat and win majority of the votes in the state in the 2027 presidential election.

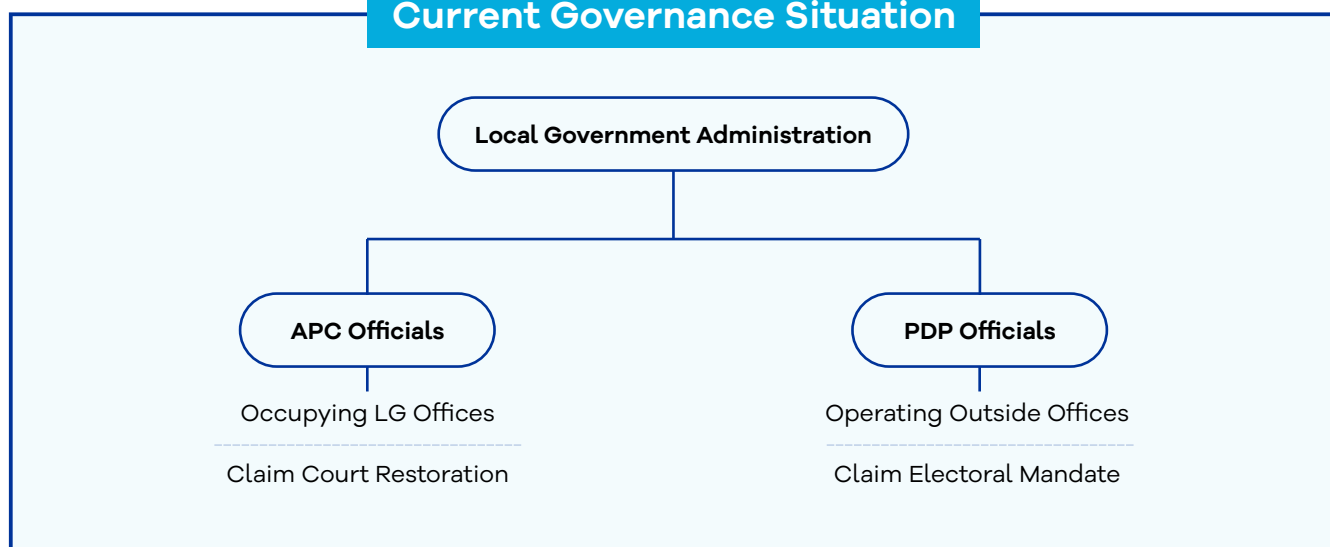
An important aspect of the supremacy battle between Adeleke and Oyetola is the ongoing, highly volatile power struggle between them over the legal control of Local Government Council administration in the state. The crisis stems from controversial local government elections conducted by the outgoing administration of former Governor Oyetola in October 2022 in which his APC Party won most of the seats. Following Oyetola's election loss and the election of Adeleke as governor, a Federal High Court in Osogbo nullified the October 2022 polls and ordered the immediate removal of the elected APC Chairmen and Councillors on the grounds that it violated the provisions of the 1999 Constitution and breached the Electoral Act 2022. However, the Court of Appeal overturned the nullification of the election and restored them back to office in February 2025 stating that they were elected for a three-year tenure.

In reaction to the judgement, Governor Adeleke conducted a new local government election in February 2025, where his PDP candidates were declared winners, creating a quagmire with two parallel sets of Chairmen and Councillors, each claiming lawful legitimacy and authority. While the APC Chairmen and Councillors are currently occupying the LGA Secretariats under police protection on the basis of a restored three-year tenure despite a subsisting Court judgement stating that their tenure has expired, their PDP counterparts who are operating outside of the LGA Secretariats are insisting that they have the mandate and legitimacy to be in office as a result of the February 2025 election. The crisis has led to the freezing of funds accruing to the LGAs by the Federal Government, recurrent acts of violence and violent clashes resulting in fatalities, widespread destruction of properties, various legal actions and disruption to LGA administration. Amidst the logjam, in a move that is perceived as an attempt to curry favour and support, the APC Chairmen and Councillors under the auspices of the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON), assisted by the Federal Government, bought and distributed over 100 JAC Pickup vehicles and motorcycles to all the Security Agencies of the Federal Government in the state. Despite Court judgments, interventions and peace appeals by well-meaning stakeholders, the crisis has remained an intractable defining feature of grassroots politics in Osun State, stalling infrastructural development and impacting negatively on the livelihoods of various communities in the state.

Local Government Crisis



Current Governance Situation



JAC PICK-UP VEHICLES GIVEN TO FEDERAL SECURITY AGENCIES IN OSUN STATE BY ALGON



Impact of the Crisis



Recurrent
violence



Fatalities
reported



Property
destruction



Legal
disputes



Disrupted LGA
administration



Infrastructure
development stalled



Community
livelihoods affected

The economy of Osun State is predominantly agrarian and civil service-driven with the majority of the population operating within the informal sector.⁴ The state depends largely on monthly allocation from the federation account and internally generated revenue from taxes on small-scale commerce to meet its statutory recurrent and capital expenditure.⁵ The literacy rate is estimated at 90.57%, making it the seventh most educated state in Nigeria and public discourse largely focuses on fund management, infrastructure delivery and local government autonomy. The 2025 budget of sustainable growth and economic transformation is estimated at ₦427.74 billion with a recurrent expenditure of ₦236.19 billion (55%) and capital expenditure of ₦191.54 billion (45) focusing on infrastructure, physical planning and urban development, agriculture and food security, education, healthcare and grassroots liquidity.

2.1.2 Political Parties, Manifestos and Campaigns

The 15th August 2026 off-cycle governorship election in Osun State will be contested by 14 candidates sponsored by 14 of the 21 registered political parties. The political parties and their candidates are shown in Table Eight.

Current Governance Situation



₦427.74 Billion
Total Budget



₦236.19 Billion
Recurrent Expenditure



₦191.54 Billion
Capital Expenditure

Budget Priority Areas



Infrastructure &
Urban Development



Agriculture &
Food Security



Education



Healthcare



Grassroots
Liquidity

⁴ The Federation Account is a special account established by Section 162 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) into which all revenues collected by FGN with certain exceptions are paid to be distributed among the Federal, State and Local Governments in a manner prescribed by the National Assembly

⁵ As a non-oil producing state, Osun State ranked 32nd in terms of population, 12th in terms of land area and 30th in terms of receipt of FAAC allocation with an estimated receipt of about ₦251.67 billion in the year 2025

POLITICAL PARTIES AND CANDIDATES FOR THE 2026 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

S/No.	PARTY	LOGO	POSITION	NAME	GENDER	AGE
1	A		Governor	Adeleke Ademola Jackson Nurudeen	M	65
			Deputy	Adewusi Kola Adegboyega	M	66
2	AA		Governor	Olanrewaju Farinloye	M	40
			Deputy	Fadahunsi Olaniyi	M	67
3	AAC		Governor	Esan Olajide	M	39
			Deputy	Bello Muideen Yekeen	M	51
4	ADC		Governor	Salaam Najeem Folasayo	M	60
			Deputy	Agiri Yemisi Temitope	F	65
5	ADP		Governor	Adeagbo Opawoye Yemisi	F	64
			Deputy	Atanda Eniola Babatunde	M	43
6	APC		Governor	Oyebamiji Bola	M	60
			Deputy	Adereti Benjamin Kayode	M	48
7	APGA		Governor	Adeyemi Doro Adesina Olusanya	M	39
			Deputy	Duro Oni Duro Irimeng	M	41
8	APM		Governor	Adebayo Simon Adewale	F	41
			Deputy	Jimoh Naheem Shina	M	42
9	APP		Governor	Adesuyi Banji Clement	M	69
			Deputy	Odesola Oluseye Titus	M	49
10	BP		Governor	Adeleke Adesoji Masilo	M	65
			Deputy	Aresa Kehinde Adenike	F	42
11	NNPP		Governor	Adeleke Adewale Taofeek	M	52
			Deputy	Adeyera Oluwabusayo Adeshola	F	36
12	PRP		Governor	Saliu Razao Oyelami	M	49
			Deputy	Adewale Alabi Solomon	M	56
13	YPP		Governor	Ogunsakin Olalekan Enoch	M	37
			Deputy	Oyetola Taye	M	40
14	ZLP		Governor	Adesuyi John Olufemi	M	50
			Deputy	Abdusalam Abubakar Olamide	M	35

TABLE 8: POLITICAL PARTIES AND CANDIDATES FOR THE 2026 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

2.1.2 Political Parties, Manifestos and Campaigns

A review of the cleared and listed political parties and candidates for the 2026 governorship election in Osun State by INEC reveals the notable absence of the PDP and Labour Party on the ballot, as the leadership crisis afflicting the two parties at the national level disrupted their primaries for the election and caused them to miss INEC's nomination deadline. This development forced Governor Ademola Adeleke, who won the seat for the Osun West Senatorial District in July 2017 and the governorship election in July 2022 on the platform of the PDP to defect to Accord, creating a significantly altered political landscape and calculations in the state. Given his power of incumbency, influential family political legacy and grassroots showmanship, Adeleke is regarded as the frontrunner in the election. Apart from his populist style of governance with emphasis on civil servant welfare, payment of inherited pension backlogs and infrastructural face-lifts, he can rely on the immense support and network of his immediate family, including the resources of his billionaire brother, Adedeji Adeleke and popularity of his musician nephew, David Adeleke for an unmatched, self-funded political machine that commands fierce loyalty of voters, particularly in his Osun West Senatorial District and among the youth population.

His campaign manifesto is anchored on welfarism, based on the theme of "continuity of progress" governed by a five-point agenda of integrated youth, women, and workers' welfare and empowerment; infrastructure consolidation for citizens' social and economic wellbeing; agro-industrial expansion for human development and collective prosperity; affordable, qualitative health and education access; and improved and secured business environment for job creation. His move to the Accord Party will test whether he has the personal popularity to transcend the political structure of the PDP in the state by integrating his Imole campaign structure with the political apparatus of Accord to win a re-election. His Imole Campaign Council is chaired by Hon. Sunday Daisi, the General Chairman of the PDP/Accord alliance and comprises of the Deputy Governor, Prince Kola Adewusi, the Speaker of the House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Adewale Egbedun, the Secretary to the State Government, Hon. Teslim Igbalaye, the Chief of Staff to the Governor, Hon. Kazeem Akinleye, and Mallam Olawale Rasheed, the spokesman to the Governor. The key areas of focus of the Council are grassroots consolidation, factional harmonisation, security and anti-violence strategy.

The APC candidate in the election is Munirudeen Bola Oyebamiji, a veteran administrator with over 20 years' experience in corporate banking and asset management. He was the Managing Director of the Osun State Investment Company Limited (OSICOL) under Governor Aregbesola, Commissioner for Finance under Governor Oyetola and the Managing Director/CEO of the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) before emerging as the APC candidate for the election through affirmation. The overarching theme of his campaign manifesto is "Accelerated Development," with a promise to return the state to a path of strategic growth, fiscal discipline and institutional transparency anchored on the foundational pillars of rebuilding trust and sustainable growth based on fiscal responsibility, investment and job creation; economic growth and agro-industrialisation to reverse economic stagnation and promote infrastructure development and economic output; and restoration of public sector hope and security through public service reform and grassroots security. The Director-General of his Campaign Council is Rt. Hon. Oluwole Oke, five-term member of the House of Representatives and comprises of former Governor Oyetola as the Grand Patron and the rallying point and Senator Adedayo Adeyeye, the South-West Zone Renewed Hope Ambassador who is in charge of the local government campaign coordinators. The Campaign Council is decentralised, bypassing the top-heavy administrative structures to focus on the grassroots mobilisation. In spite of efforts at reconciliation, the APC is faced with internal schisms arising

from the disqualification of several prominent aspirants by the Party's Screening Committee which enabled Oyebanji to emerge as a consensus candidate in the primaries. Two of the disqualified aspirants, Iyiola Omisore and Kunle Adegoke have accused the APC Screening Committee of imposing a culture of dictatorship. It is rumoured they and some of their supporters are planning or have already defected to Accord. It remains to be seen how this situation alongside the virulent anti-APC campaign by former Governor Aregbesola will impact on the fortune of the APC at the polls. It will be recalled that Aregbesola never really accepted Oyetola as his natural successor and his ambivalent support for the APC and Oyetola's re-election was probably one of the reasons why Oyetola lost the 2022 election.

The third visible contestant in the 2026 Osun off-cycle governorship election is Najeem Folasayo Salaam, the candidate of the African Democratic Party (ADC). As Speaker of the Osun State House of Assembly for eight years from 2011 to 2019 with a deep understanding and mastery of the intricacies and dynamics of local politics in the state, he was reputed to have managed the legislature without any major crises through consensus building. Although he commands immense respect among current and former lawmakers, civil servants and local chiefs for his institutional experience, his movement from APC to ADC as part of the Aregbesola political family to oppose candidate imposition has impacted negatively on his political clout and popularity. The party's campaign is anchored on the "Iwaloye Agenda" (Character is Royalty) with emphasis on integrity-driven governance, moral leadership, and grassroots welfare and the core pillars of the manifesto are moral and character-driven leadership, economic revitalisation and strategic partnerships, grassroots welfare and social inclusivity, infrastructure and rural development. Although the ADC is presenting the candidate to voters frustrated by political friction between PDP/Accord and APC and Adeleke's populist style and Oyebanji's technocratic approach to governance, the party lacks the political structure and financial wherewithal, material and personnel resources to compete with both PDP/Accord and APC.

Other candidates in the election include Saliu Oyelami of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) who previously contested under ADP in 2018 and NNPP in 2022 and Adewale Adebayo of the Allied Peoples Movement (APM) who is endorsed by former Osun governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola as the factional leader of the PDP under an alliance between APM and his faction of the PDP. It is apparent that the governorship contest is dominated by male candidates with the presence of only one female candidate fielded by the ADP, while ADC, Boot Party and NNPP are fielding female deputy governorship candidates. Most of the candidates are in their late 30s to mid-60s and hail from across three senatorial districts with a mix of professional backgrounds. It is important to note that political landscape is characterised by defections, coalition negotiations and strategic partnerships that could work to the benefit and shape the outcome of the election in favour of one of the two leading candidates.

The electioneering campaigns and rallies have been mostly tensed across the state, with reported cases of sporadic gunshots and violence during campaigns that sometimes result in fatalities. In fact, the dominant political parties often prevent each other from holding election campaigns and rallies to canvass for votes in their area of relative influence and strength. Whenever they do so, it is under heavy security and the support of their armed thugs. There is also the continuous and wilful destruction and vandalism of campaign billboards, banners and posters of the APC and Accord resulting in accusations and counteraccusations among the political parties and candidates and heightened tension and mistrust among the political

actors. The issue is of so much concern that it was a subject of discussion at the engagement between the security agencies and leaders of political parties and stakeholders at the state Police Headquarters on 24th June 2026. Lastly, there is a noticeable gap in the campaign by all the political parties and candidates as there is little or no policy debate articulating the real issues of economic vulnerability and structural reforms in the education sectors. Neither is there any serious attempt to address the pressing and prevailing political and socio-economic issues and challenges in the state. This means that the voters cannot objectively assess the policies and programmes of the candidates in order to make informed and rational decision and choices on Election Day. In the end, the electoral outcomes will be influenced by primordial sentiments and the use of financial and other forms of inducement with negative implication for democracy and democratic consolidation.

VANDALISED BILLBOARD OF GOVERNOR ADEMOLA ADELEKE IN OSOGBO



VANDALISED BILLBOARD OF APC CANDIDATE BOLA OYEBAMIJI IN OSOGBO



The judgement of Justice Peter O. Lifu on 15th June 2026 in a suit filed by the National Forum of Former Legislators (NFFL) threw the validity of the list of political parties and candidates for the Osun governorship election into question. In the judgement, which has been described as one of the most controversial judicial episodes in Nigeria's recent electoral history ahead of the 2027 General Election, Justice Lifu declared that the African Democratic Congress (ADC), Accord (A), Action Alliance (AA), Action Peoples Party (APP) and Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) were liable to deregistration by INEC having failed to meet the constitutional benchmarks to exist as a political party under Section 225A of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). However, the judgement was condemned by the affected political parties, the Conference of Nigeria Political Parties (CNPP), Civil Society Organisations, some members of the legal community and political observers especially against the background that the Court of Appeal had issued an order on 22nd May 2026 staying proceedings in the matter.

The affected political parties later got a temporary relief through the unanimous decision of a three-member panel of the Court of Appeal in Abuja, led by Justice A. B. Mohammed on 17th June 2026 who ordered a stay of execution of Justice Lifu's judgement. The Appeal Court strongly criticised Justice Lifu, describing his conduct as an affront and a violation of the authority of judicial hierarchy and constitutional principles which compels lower courts to respect the orders issued by Superior Courts. The stay of execution means that the affected political parties will retain their legal status and their candidates for the Osun Governorship election will remain valid, pending the final determination of the substantive appeal, the outcome of which is uncertain and may imperil the victory of Governor Adeleke of Accord if he wins the election.

Legal Outcomes



2.1.3 Electoral Stakeholders

The electoral process in Osun State involves a broad range of stakeholders whose roles, interactions, and conduct will significantly shape the credibility, inclusiveness, and peacefulness of the governorship election. These stakeholders operate within a relatively stable environment but face structural, institutional, and resource constraints that demand careful coordination and sustained engagement. At the centre of the process is the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), constitutionally mandated to organise, undertake, and supervise elections. The Osun State Office is headed by an experienced Resident Electoral Commissioner, who before her appointment was the Director of Legal Services at INEC and she is supported by seasoned administrative and operational staff.

She has commenced key preparatory activities including voter registration, logistics planning, voter education activities and stakeholder consultations, including meetings with leaders of political parties, security agencies, civil society and community-based organisations and the

media. She has also visited the 30 INEC LGA offices to determine the infrastructural needs and assess the state of the electoral store in preparation for the election. However, the effectiveness of these efforts and overall preparedness for the election will be impacted by funding, receipt of non-sensitive and sensitive election materials, inadequate infrastructural facilities and late recruitment, training and deployment of ad hoc election personnel.

Security and law enforcement agencies represent the next critical tier of stakeholders, with the Nigerian Police Force as lead agency. The existing security architecture in the state within the ambit of the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) is facilitating coordination among members by engaging with political parties and candidates and deploying their personnel to mitigate thuggery and violence during campaigns and rallies and developing the framework for ensuring a secure electoral environment. The Commissioner of Police with the support of other security and law enforcement agencies convened a strategic peace meeting on 24th June 2026 where he reiterated the professionalism and neutrality of the security personnel in the state and assured stakeholders of a comprehensive security arrangement for the conduct of a peaceful and violence free election. Nonetheless, there are continuing and increasing concerns among some political actors and sections of the public about the perceived politicisation and bias of the security agencies with the belief of possible use of Federal might to influence the outcome of the election. This perception can undermine public trust in credibility of the outcome and can result in violent reactions.



Broad Multi-Stakeholder
Electoral Process



Credibility, Inclusiveness
& Peacefulness



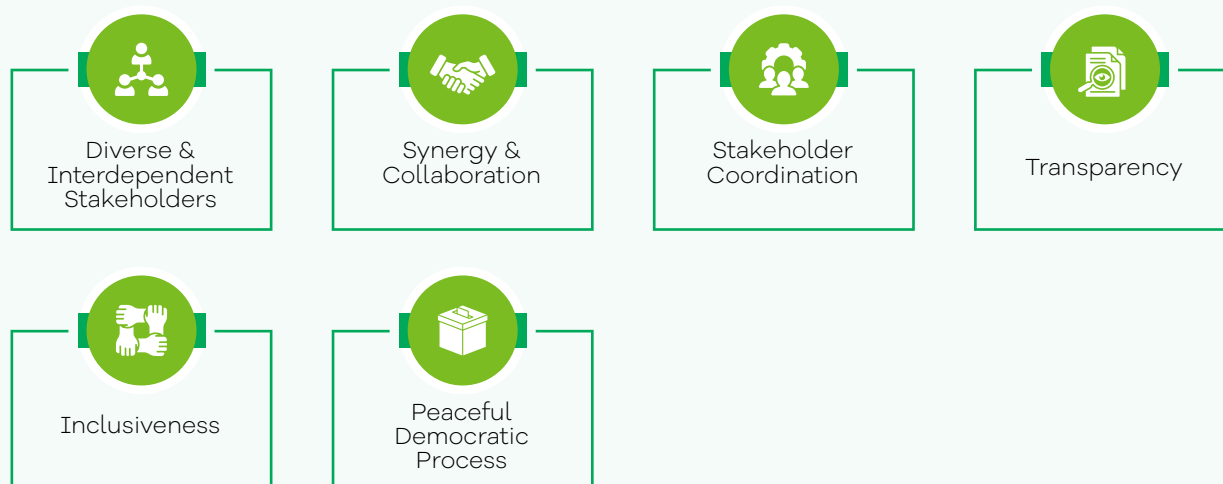
Coordination & Sustained
Engagement Required

Political parties and candidates are equally central to the electoral environment. While the absence of the PDP on the ballot and the movement of the incumbent Governor from the PDP to Accord has completely changed the political dynamics of the state, the incumbency advantage, grassroots organisational strength, financial resources and ability of Governor Adeleke to deploy the political and socio-economic apparatus of the state to his advantage cannot be

underestimated. On the other hand, the APC is determined to win back the state both in the governorship and presidential elections. However, the party will have to contend with the result of the alignment and realignment among the dominant political actors in the state occasioned from the fallout from its primaries in which Senator Iyiola Omisore was disqualified. Additionally, the effect of former Governor Aregbesola's departure from APC to becoming a chieftain in the ADC remains a lingering factor in the politics of the state. Indeed, the 15th August 2026 governorship election will be a high-stake showdown and fierce competition between the incumbent PDP/ Accord alignment and a formidable APC, both with the capacity to either promote peaceful engagement or escalate tensions through their rhetoric, conduct and ability to instigate violence before, during and after the polls.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) play a critical role in promoting voter education and civic engagement, while traditional rulers and religious leaders are important in shaping public opinion and fostering social cohesion. This is especially critical given the destabilising role of religion, tradition and culture in Osun politics. These actors have been active in voter sensitisation campaigns, peace advocacy and community mobilisation, especially in holding their representatives accountable and in combating the hydra-headed menace of vote buying. However, their impact is constrained by limited resources against the scope and scale of required outreach activities both in the urban centres and rural communities. The real and/or perceived neutrality of traditional and religious leaders will also be critical in mitigating conflicts and tensions, especially at the grassroots.

Electoral Success Factors



The media constitutes a powerful force in the electoral environment. Osun State has a vibrant mix of federal, state-owned, and private broadcast and print outlets, complemented by various digital and social media platforms. While the media platforms constitute useful channels for voter education, political communication, and public discourse, they also present both opportunities and risks for a highly literate, politically aware and religiously diverse electorate. Osun voters are historically known for exhibiting certain voting tendencies, sentiments and

pattern that are very unpredictable. Any attempt to subvert their votes through the dissemination of fake news, misinformation and disinformation by the media can incite volatile reactions to any perceived irregularities in the election.

The electoral stakeholder landscape in Osun State is diverse and interdependent. Delivering a credible governorship election will depend on the willingness and ability of every stakeholder to adhere to legal and ethical standards through synergy, cooperation, coordination and demonstrated collective commitment to transparency, inclusiveness, and peaceful democratic processes. Development partners can strengthen this foundation by providing targeted technical, financial and advisory support to key institutions and stakeholder groups, supporting the deployment of citizens' election observation groups and appealing to the political actors to shun all acts of violence and vote buying. Doing this in the Osun election is of uttermost importance in order to establish a strategic framework to strengthen the integrity and credibility of the electoral process in the run-up to the 2027 General Election, especially within the context of the current security challenges and travel advisories by the various diplomatic missions in Nigeria which may possibly prevent the deployment of international election observation missions to the election.

2.2 INEC PREPARATION AND READINESS ASSESSMENT

The Resident Electoral Commissioner in Osun State is Mrs. Oluwatoyin Babalola from Ekiti State who prior to her appointment as REC was the Director of Legal Services at INEC Headquarters, Abuja. Following her appointment as REC in December 2023, she was deployed to Ondo State where she successfully conducted the November 2024 Ondo State off-cycle governorship election. Her efficient management of the election under difficult political conditions was adjudged as credible and transparent. Mrs. Babalola's deployment to Osun State in April 2026 to replace Dr. Mutiu Agboke who was posted to replace her in Ondo State is considered as part of the Commission's routine administrative reshuffling to strengthen electoral processes and maintain institutional neutrality. Nevertheless, the issue generated controversy and elicited various reactions from different political actors who questioned the timing and purpose of the redeployment. For example, it was believed in certain quarters that Dr. Agboke's removal was as a result of a petition to the INEC Chairman by the APC and NNPP for alleged unlawful and partisan conduct. In the same vein, Mrs. Babalola was met by protesters comprising of some market women and civil society representatives on her assumption of duty on 22nd April 2026 alleging that she was deployed to Osun to influence the outcome of the governorship election in favour of certain actors. In fact, the Osun State House of Assembly formally protested her deployment, with the Speaker claiming that it was an attempt to undermine the integrity of the election. In her response, Mrs. Babalola assured stakeholders of her commitment to conduct a credible, free, inclusive and transparent election and clarified that the redeployments of RECs are routine administrative actions by the Commission over which she had no control.

Electoral Success Factors



2.2.1 Continuous and Issuance of the Permanent Voters' Card

While Part 1 Section 15(e) of the Third Schedule to the 1999 Constitution (as amended) empowers INEC to arrange and conduct the registration of persons qualified to vote and to prepare, maintain and revise the register of voters for the purpose of any election, Section 16(1) of the Electoral Act 2022 authorises the Commission to design, print and control the issuance of permanent voters' cards to eligible voters whose names appear in the register. Section 10(2) of the Electoral Act 2022 stipulated the eligibility criteria for voter registration to include that such a person must: i) be a citizen of Nigeria; ii) have attained the age of 18 years, on or before the registration day; iii) not subject to any legal incapacity to vote under any law, rules or regulation in force in Nigeria; and iv) appear in person and present himself/herself to the Registration Officers at the registration venue. INEC is therefore required to undertake a new voter registration exercise in the run-up to a general or off-cycle governorship election. In preparation for the 2026 Osun governorship election, INEC commenced the online and physical or in-person registration on 18th and 25th August 2025 respectively in the 30 INEC LGA offices in the state. Thereafter, the registration was devolved to the 332 Registration Areas in the state for 10 days from 9th to 18th April 2026. During the exercise, already registered voters were given the opportunity to review and update information on their registration, request for transfer of their voter's card and a replacement of their lost, damaged or defaced PVCs. The condition that potential registrants should present themselves in person to the Registration Officers at the registration centre is particularly of interest as it may help to explain the high number of online registrations witnessed in the state at the beginning of the CVR exercise. Given the number of Osun citizens in the Diaspora, it is possible that some of them may have initiated the process of online registration and may or may not be able to physically present themselves to complete the registration.

At the close of the voter registration exercise on 18th April 2026, Osun State recorded a massive turnout of potential registrants as a result of civic campaign and mobilisation with 499,809 applications. Available figures showed that 381,817 and 50,747 requested for first-time registration and transfer of registration respectively, 42,355 requested for the replacement of their lost or damaged PVCs, while 14,362 and 7,272 registrants reviewed and updated their registrations respectively. The names and details of the newly registered voters were displayed for claims and objections from 27th April to 3rd May 2026 and were thereafter subjected to the synchronisation and deduplication process using the Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS) to remove ineligible registrants. At the end of the exercise, it was reported that 117,992 registrations were adjudged invalid, leaving 381,817 new registrants to bring the total number of registered voters to 2.33 million.

OSUN CVR REGISTRATION EXERCISE

ENDED APRIL 18, 2026



499,809
NEW APPLICATIONS



New Voters
FRESH REGISTRATION
381,817

PVC COLLECTION

as at 4th May 2026



1,865

PVC COLLECTED

PERSONS WITH DISABILITY



1,391

REGISTERED



50,747

Transfer



7,272

Biodata Updates



42,355

Lost/Damaged



14,362

Reviews

SOURCE: JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE MAKERS' CENTRE, OSOGBO

The PVC for the eligible new registrants is currently being printed and would be made ready for collection from 9th to 13th July 2026. It is important for INEC to ensure that the collection process is organised in a very efficient and seamless manner to enable all registered voters to collect their PVC. The register of voters for the election comprising the existing registered voters for the 2023 General Election and the additional newly registered voters was published on 8th July 2026.

The final register of voters for the Osun off cycle Governorship election scheduled for 15th August 2026 was released by INEC on 9th July 2026. According to the published register, a total of 384,433 eligible voters were registered during the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise, which was concluded on 18th April 2026 following the application of business rules and the Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS). Consequently, the total number of registered voters for the election stands at 2,339,233 distributed across the 30 Local Government Areas as shown in Table Nine. This represents an increase of 384,433 voters or 19.67 percent, compared with the voter register used for the 2023 General Election. Of the total number of registered voters, 1,104,464 (47.21%) are male, while 1,234,769 (52.79%) are female. Demographically, youths (18-34 years old) constitute 36.64% (857,056) of registered voters, while middle-aged persons (35-49 years old), the elderly (50-69 years old) and the aged (70 years old and above) account for 33.04% (772,854), 20.86% (488,053) and 9.46% (221,271) respectively. Students remain the dominant occupational category, with 752,800 (32.18) registered voters followed by trading with 483,970 (20.69%) and artisans with 320,416 (13.70%) of the total registered electorate. The implication of this is that each of these occupational categories is capable of determining the outcome of the election with their bloc vote.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS IN THE 2023 GE AND THE 2026 OFF-CYCLE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION IN OSUN STATE

S/N	LGA	No of Registered Voters in 2023 GE	% of Registered voters in 2023 GE	No of Registered Voters in 2026	% of Registered Voters in 2026	Increase in the No.of Registered voters	% Increase in the No.of Registered Voters
1	AIYEDAADE	67,644	3.46%	47,767	2.04%	-19,877	-29.38%
2	AIYEDIRE	37,067	1.90%	44,076	1.88%	7,009	18.91%
3	ATAKUMOSA EAST	41,008	2.10%	77,649	3.32%	36,641	89.35%
4	ATAKUMOSA WEST	36,458	1.87%	45,502	1.95%	9,044	24.81%
5	BOLUWADURO	24,276	1.24%	29,797	1.27%	5,521	22.74%
6	BORIPÉ	69,527	3.56%	81,067	3.47%	11,540	16.60%
7	EDE NORTH	71,711	3.67%	96,644	4.13%	24,933	34.77%
8	EDE SOUTH	54,860	2.81%	67,729	2.90%	12,869	23.46%
9	EGBEDORE	53,129	2.72%	67,440	2.88%	14,311	26.94%
10	EJIGBO	73,720	3.77%	87,676	3.75%	13,956	18.93%
11	IFE CENTRAL	113,196	5.79%	122,454	5.23%	9,258	8.18%
12	IFE EAST	114,363	5.85%	28,361	1.21%	-86,002	-75.20%
13	IFE NORTH	58,653	3.00%	128,515	5.49%	69,862	119.11%
14	IFE SOUTH	56,693	2.90%	94,870	4.06%	38,177	67.34%
15	IFEDAYO	19,581	1.00%	65,718	2.81%	46,137	235.62%
16	IFELODUN	80,527	4.12%	66,255	2.83%	-14,272	-17.72%
17	ILA	46,614	2.38%	57,825	2.47%	11,211	24.05%
18	ILESA EAST	75,155	3.84%	89,491	3.83%	14,336	19.08%
19	ILESA WEST	70,981	3.63%	86,699	3.71%	15,718	22.14%
20	IREPODUN	58,597	3.00%	67,131	2.87%	8,534	14.56%
21	IREWOLE	74,235	3.80%	96,528	4.13%	22,293	30.03%
22	ISOKAN	53,264	2.72%	65,379	2.79%	12,115	22.75%
23	IWO	90,029	4.61%	106,814	4.57%	16,785	18.64%
24	OBOKUN	53,256	2.72%	64,440	2.75%	11,184	21.00%
25	ODO-OTIN	66,844	3.42%	82,574	3.53%	15,730	23.53%
26	OLA-OLUWA	37,134	1.90%	44,761	1.91%	7,627	20.54%
27	OLORUNDA	104,662	5.35%	123,063	5.26%	18,401	17.58%
28	ORIADE	69,606	3.56%	84,283	3.60%	14,677	21.09%
29	OROLU	39,639	2.03%	51,021	2.18%	11,382	28.71%
30	OSOGBO	142,371	7.28%	167,704	7.17%	25,333	17.79%
TOTAL		1,954,800	100%	2,339,233	100%	384,433	19.67%

TABLE 9: COMPARISON BETWEEN THE NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS IN THE 2023 GE AND THE 2026 OFF-CYCLE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION IN OSUN STATE

2.2.2 Stakeholders Engagements, Civic and Voter Education

Prior to his redeployment from Osun to Ondo State, Dr. Mutiu Agboke the former REC had commenced various voter sensitisation and public enlightenment activities across the state in preparation for the election. He participated in various radio and TV outreach programmes, held regular meetings of the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security, undertook advocacy visits to various traditional rulers and religious leaders and interacted with various CSOs and religious organisations. Since her resumption in office on 20th April 2026, Mrs. Babalola has received briefings from the Administrative Secretary, the various Heads of Departments and Units and Electoral Officers in the 30 Local Government offices to acquaint herself with the state and level of preparations for the election. She has also held consultative meetings with the members of ICCES and engaged with various stakeholders, including leaders of political parties in the state under the auspices of the Inter Party Advisory Council (IPAC) and commenced discussions with the road transport unions for the hiring of vehicles for the movement of election personnel and materials. Furthermore, while there are plans to expand the scope and latitude of civic and voter education and enlightenment in collaboration with CSOs/CBOs and to increase the frequency of ICCES meetings and engagement with key stakeholders in the run-up to the election, the implementation and effectiveness of the plan will depend on the early release of election funds to the state by the Commission.

2.2.3 Electoral Infrastructure and Logistics

As part of its preparations for the upcoming election, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) conducted a comprehensive assessment of electoral infrastructure at state headquarters in Osogbo and across the 30 Local Government Area (LGA) offices. The assessment evaluated the functionality, availability, suitability, and operational readiness of office buildings, storage facilities, collation centres, vehicles, voting cubicles, ballot boxes, and BVAS inventory. The outcome shows that many of the office buildings at both the state and LGA levels are in poor condition, characterised by deteriorating physical structures, leaking roofs and collapsed perimeter fences. The renovation and rehabilitation of the physical structures, including the construction of a dedicated facility for the proper and safe storage of BVAS machines is currently ongoing. In addition, electoral and general stores have been decongested and obsolete materials evacuated, in readiness for new sensitive and non-sensitive election materials. Efforts are also ongoing to repair serviceable operational vehicles, which will be supplemented by extra vehicles deployed from neighbouring states and the hiring of buses, motorcycles and boats from service providers under the INEC MOU with NURTW and NARTO for the transportation of election personnel and materials. Furthermore, the state has received about 75% of its requirements of non-sensitive materials with adequate number of ballot boxes and mats for use at the RACs. However, there is a shortfall in the number of voting cubicles, and BVAS machines and arrangements are being made to obtain additional cubicles and BVAS machines from neighbouring states to address the shortfalls. Lastly, plans are in place to map the state's network coverage to determine the most effective communication for BVAS accreditation and result uploads to the IReV portal and appropriate SIM cards will be procured from telecommunication network providers to facilitate these operations.

Infrastructure Assessment



30 LGA Offices Assessed

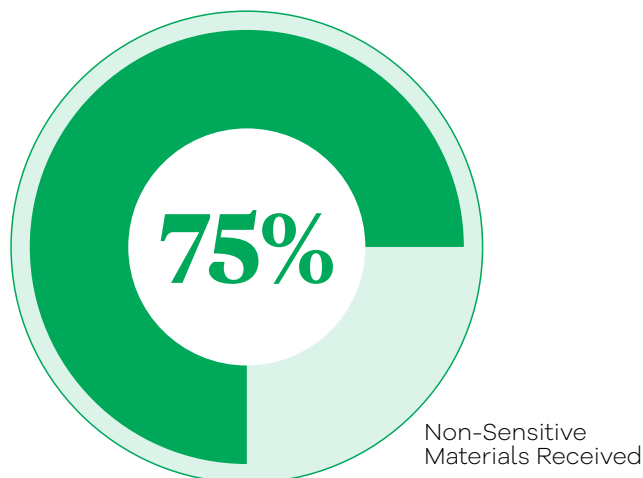


State Headquarters Evaluated



Electoral Infrastructure Audit Completed

Election Materials



2.2.4 Recruitment and Training

The ad hoc personnel required for conducting the election is estimated at 17,500, comprising Supervisory Presiding Officers, Presiding Officers, Assistant Presiding Officers, Registration Area (RA) Officers, LGA Collation Officers, and the state Collation and Returning Officer. Most of these ad hoc officials will be serving or recently discharged members of the National Youth Service Corps and students from Federal Higher Education Institutions. The recruitment process for these ad hoc staff through the INECPRES portal is currently ongoing. A series of training and capacity building workshops has been undertaken to enhance the knowledge, skills, and capacity of key personnel, including a two-day training on election administration supported by DAI and the violence mitigation and advocacy tools training by The Electoral Institute for Heads of Departments and Units, Electoral Officers and Assistant Electoral Officers. The REC has also arranged for the experienced EOs with vast experience in the conduct of elections to mentor and train the new EOs that are conducting an election at the LGA level for the first time. The training of Electoral and Assistant Electoral Officers, ad hoc election duty staff comprising of Supervising Presiding, Presiding, Assistant Presiding and Collation Officers, as well as Registration and Local Government Technology Support Assistants on effective election management and technology operations will commence on 6th July and conclude on 9th August 2026. The training of security personnel for the election is scheduled for

Recruitment & Personnel



17,500

Ad hoc Election Officials



6

Categories of Election Officials



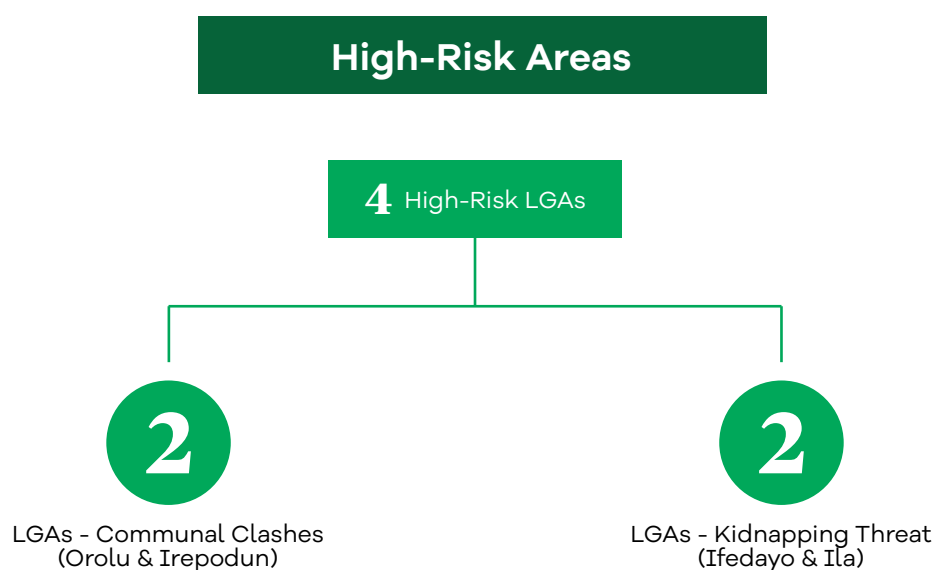
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Primary Recruitment Sources (NYSC & Higher Institutions)

12 July 2026.

It is crucial that adequate run time and resources are allocated to these trainings to prevent conflicts with other electoral activities and ensure all election duty officials and security personnel receive proper training and have a comprehensive understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the conduct of the election. Furthermore, the recruitment of ad hoc staff through the INECPRES has to be effectively monitored to ensure that there are enough election duty staff to conduct the election, especially in high-risk LGAs such as Orolu and Irepodun, which are witnessing communal clashes and Ifedayo and Ila due to activities of bandits that are kidnapping for ransom. The situation is so bad that the National Youth Service Corps did not deploy corps members to these areas. It will therefore be necessary to arrange for the establishment of a safe and secure Super RAC in proximate locations to the high risk LGAs and riverine areas around the Osun River with difficult terrain where election officials can stay on the eve of the election to enable them to deploy early to polling units on election day to open the polls on time.

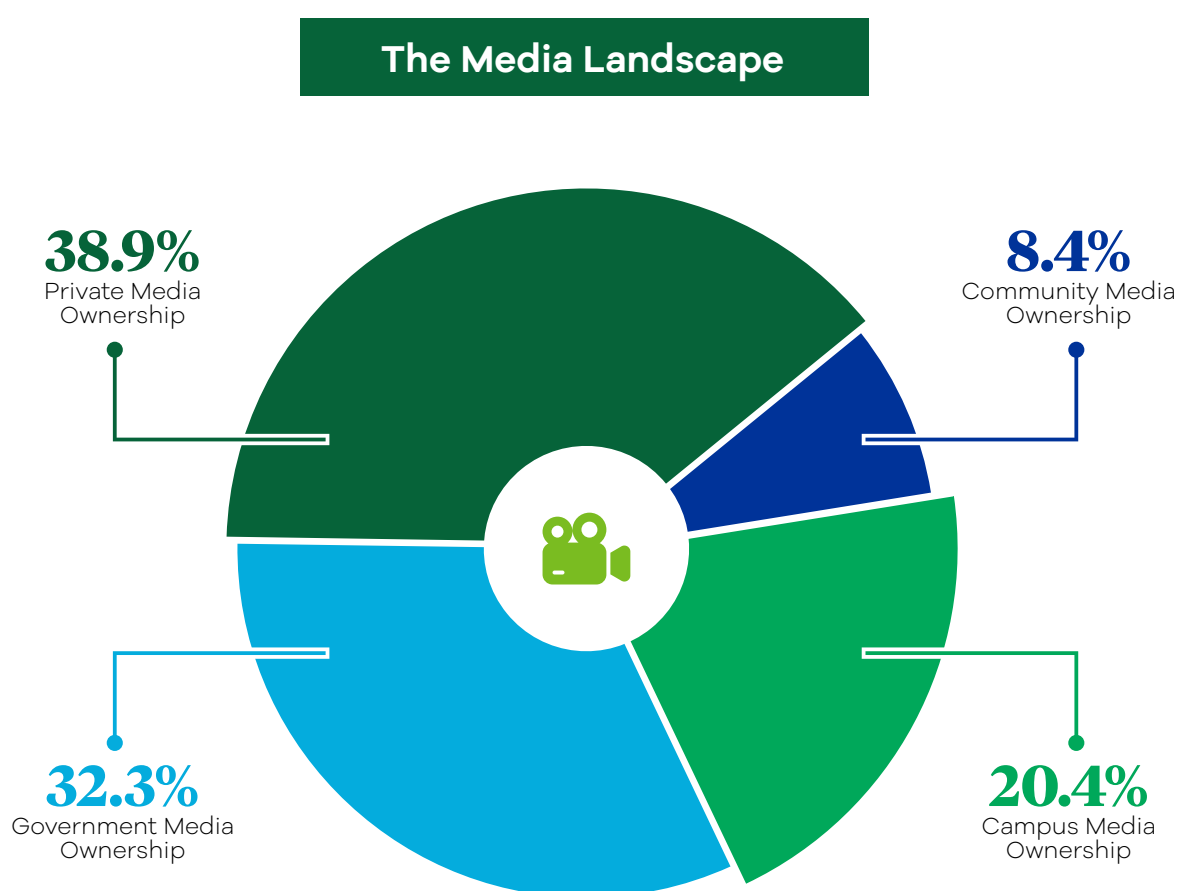
While preparations for the election are ongoing, there is an urgent need to ensure prompt release of election funds to the state to commence critical pre-election activities, including the mobilisation and supervision of contractors for rehabilitation and renovation of state and LGA offices and collation centres, repair of serviceable operational vehicles, expanded civic and voter education activities and public enlightenment campaigns. As the election approaches, there should be more attention to regular consultative meetings of ICCES, enhanced engagement with relevant electoral stakeholders, securing conducive training venues, clearing, fumigation and provision of necessary facilities for Registration Area Centre (RAC) activation, adequate preparation for timely and seamless collection of Permanent Voter Cards (PVC), printing of register of voters, configuration, safety and deployment of the Bi-modal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), receipt, batching, timely and efficient distribution of sensitive and non-sensitive election materials, and proper transportation arrangement for forward and backward logistics for election personnel and materials.



2.3 THE MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

2.3.1 Overview of the Media Landscape

The media landscape in Osun State is characterised by diversity, growth and transformation consisting of federal, state- and privately-owned print and electronic media organisations, as well as unregulated online digital and social media platforms and channels. In fact, the 1992 deregulation of broadcast ownership in Nigeria and reshaped media and communication patterns leading to the establishment of many broadcasting stations and resulting in the current 38.9%, 32.3%, 20.4% and 8.4% ownership of private, government, campus and community media organisations respectively in the state.



The presence of the correspondents of virtually all the national newspaper houses, radio and television stations in Osogbo and the evolution and use of the digital and social media platforms like WhatsApp, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram and blogs, especially among the younger demographics in urban areas is transforming the media landscape in the state.

In the run up to the governorship election, the International Press Centre (IPC) and Centre for Media and Society (CEMESO) conducted an outlet inventory and editorial independence risk assessment on the principal media outlets operating in the State. This was undertaken based on their ownership category, platform, geographic reach and estimated editorial independence

risk within the context of the election. The risk ratings were derived from field research, review of primary and secondary sources and political economy analysis. Their report presented in Table 10 shows that the State-owned broadcast infrastructure, Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC) comprising of both radio and television is the most dominant electronic media in the state and operates under strict editorial conditions that pose a substantial risk due to their politically influenced coverage and reportage. The privately-owned stations, moderated by commercial advertising models that partially reduce their dependency on the state government for patronage present medium risk, while national newspapers and digital platforms with national editorial oversight is categorised as low risk for their independent coverage, despite the exposure of the correspondents to political and socio-economic pressures. It is however the surfeit of unregulated social media platforms, channels and groups across the entire state that represents the highest risk vector that sometimes serve to incite and trigger reprisal attacks violence between the dominant political actors and forces in the state.

MEDIA OUTLET INVENTORY AND EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE RISK ASSESSMENT

OUTLET / TYPE	OWNERSHIP	PLATFORM	REACH	EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE RISK
OSBC Living Spring FM (104.5 FM, Osogbo)	State Govt	Radio	State-wide	HIGH — State-owned broadcaster; editorial output under Ministry of Information oversight; election coverage routinely mirrors government position; no evidence of editorial firewall from political executive.
OSBC Orisun FM (89.5 FM, Ile-Ife)	State Govt	Radio	Osun East district	HIGH — Same OSBC ownership structure; correspondents in Ile-Ife operate under state editorial control; coverage of APC opposition activities likely constrained during 2026 campaign.
OSBC Reality FM (96.3 FM, Iwo)	State Govt	Radio	Osun West district	HIGH — Third OSBC station completing the state broadcast network; political

				economy of state-controlled media directly shapes election-period editorial decisions at all three transmitters.
Gold FM / FRCN Osogbo (95.5 FM)	Federal Govt	Radio	State-wide	MEDIUM-HIGH — Federal government ownership limits direct capture by the Osun State Government; however, APC alignment at federal level may moderate critical coverage of the incumbent Accord/APC political bloc.
Raypower FM (95.1 FM, Osogbo)	Private	Radio	State + SW Nigeria	MEDIUM — National private network with Osogbo transmission; editorial decisions shaped primarily by Lagos-based management, providing some distance from local patronage networks; commercial advertising dependency remains a moderating constraint.
Fresh FM (104.9 FM, Osogbo)	Private	Radio	State-wide	MEDIUM — High-listenership private station; format is largely entertainment-driven but election-period political programming will be closely monitored by state actors; commercial revenue mix reduces full editorial dependence on state government.

Rave FM (91.7 FM, Osogbo)	Private	Radio	Osun Central	MEDIUM — Private ownership; commercial operations provide limited editorial buffer; proprietor relationships with political actors in Osun Central may influence coverage of key contest geographies.
Community Radio Stations (Ogunsua FM, Hope FM)	Community	Radio	LGA-level	LOW-MEDIUM — Community ownership model offers structural independence from government editorial pressure; however, limited resources, informal professional norms, and absence of safety protocols make these outlets vulnerable to localised political interference.
Campus Radio Stations (Great FM OAU, UNIOSUN FM, Bowen Radio, Adeleke University Radio, etc.)	University	Radio	Campus + proximate LGAs	LOW-MEDIUM — University governance provides editorial distance from state politics; student journalists active but lack institutional safety protocols and press freedom training; Adeleke University Radio affiliation with the Governor's family may introduce editorial complications.
NTA Osogbo	Federal Govt	Television	State-wide	MEDIUM-HIGH — Federal television presence in Osun; APC federal-level alignment complicates independent coverage; election coverage historically mirrors official federal and ruling-party narratives.

Vanguard / The Punch / The Guardian, Nation, This Day, Telegraph, Independent, the Sun, Blue prints (and other national print with bureau Chiefs in Osun	National Private	Print + Digital	National	LOW — National editorial oversight provides significant buffer from Osun-specific patronage networks; national correspondents most capable of publishing independent critical election coverage; bureau correspondents may face local social and economic pressure.
Nigerian Tribune (Osun Bureau)	Private	Print + Digital	SW Nigeria + National	LOW-MEDIUM — Ibadan-based regional paper with strong Yoruba south-west readership; editorial line broadly independent but proprietor relationships with Yoruba political actors may moderate coverage of specific candidates.
News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)	Federal Govt	Wire Service	National	MEDIUM — Federal wire service; primary distributor of official electoral information; accuracy and independence of election-related releases subject to federal government editorial norms.
Osun Defender	Private/Independent	Print & Online Newspaper	State Level	MEDIUM — While it operates independently of direct government control and has demonstrated capacity for critical reporting, its editorial agenda may be influenced by proprietor interests, commercial considerations and the highly polarised local political environment.

				Limited financial resources and dependence on advertising and political patronage during election periods present potential risks to editorial independence.
Osun online media hub (comprising members of the Osun Online Publishers Association (OOPA), such as Osun Reporters, Osun News, Western Post, Insight Links, News Makers, Parrot Xtra, Fresh Insight, City Mirror News, Orion Times, SOJ World News	Private Online	Digital	State-wide + Diaspora	LOW-MEDIUM — Privately owned digital news platform under a coordinated Association with substantial election and governance coverage. Editorial decisions of individual members may be influenced by commercial advertising, sponsored content and relationships with political actors, although there is no evidence of direct government control.
Political WhatsApp Groups / Social Media	Partisan/Anonymous	Digital	Ward/LGA level	HIGH — Dominant vector for election-period disinformation in Osun State; operates outside regulatory oversight; political actors from all parties actively leverage these channels to shape information environment and mobilise partisan content ahead of August 2026.

Source: Field mapping, secondary source review, and research assessment. Note: Editorial independence risk ratings reflect the structural assessment of this report, not the self-assessment of individual outlets or their proprietors. **CRITICAL** = severe editorial capture; **HIGH** = significant constraint; **MEDIUM-HIGH** = notable constraint; **MEDIUM** = moderate structural pressure; **LOW-MEDIUM** = limited structural constraint; **LOW** = strongest editorial independence buffer.

TABLE 10: MEDIA OUTLET INVENTORY AND EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE RISK ASSESSMENT

SOURCE: IPC/CEMESO: ASSESSMENT OF JOURNALISTS' SAFETY AND PRESS FREEDOM RISKS IN OSUN STATE

2.3.2 Media Access and Coverage

Section 99 (2-5) of the Electoral Act 2026 states that state apparatus, including the media shall not be employed to the advantage or disadvantage of any political party or candidate, guarantees equal access, coverage, schedule and airtime to all political parties and candidates and prohibits the denial of airtime or space to a candidate by any public medium, provided they are willing to pay the requisite fees. Media access and coverage in the run up to the off-cycle governorship election in Osun State is dynamic and deeply intertwined with the state's vibrant political climate characterised by the resources and political influence of the two leading political parties and actors.

While Radio broadcast remains the most accessible and influential medium for communication and information dissemination, especially for reaching both the urban and rural populations, airtime on the state-owned media stations is heavily restricted for opposition figures, forcing them to rely on private stations or digital channels. This has led to the proliferation of digital media channels and platforms that are providing a medium for opposition political actors to air their views and opinions.

For example, the state-owned Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC) radio and television services and Reality Television Service (RTS) in Iwo are known for promoting the policies and political activities of Governor Adeleke, while the Federal Government owned Gold FM (95.5 FM) in Ilesha, operated by the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), provides the APC and its candidate with wide coverage across the state.

In between are the private commercial stations like Rave FM (Osogbo), Uniq FM (Ilesha), and Crown FM (Ile-Ife) that command large audiences by offering the public a more diversified political coverage and alternative platforms for political reportage and debate through interactive talk shows and phone-in programmes. There are also the online news portals, blogs, WhatsApp groups and X (formerly Twitter) channels known for their capacity for breaking local news and promoting political misinformation and unverified rumours.

Osun State is confronted with a different kind of challenge in terms of access by political parties and candidates to public space. While such access was circumscribed in Ekiti by the imposition of an exorbitant fee of ₦5 million campaign signage levy for the placement of any billboard, banner or poster which worked in favour of the APC and its candidate, the situation in Osun differs with specific reference to two issues. First is the removal of "unauthorised" opposition billboards and posters by agents of the state government citing regulatory violations, environmental, aesthetic and safety concerns or tax compliance issues.

Media Access & Election Coverage



1

Most Accessible Medium
— Radio



3

Major Private Radio
Stations



2

Government-Owned
Broadcasters (OSBC & RTS)



4

Major Digital Platforms
(WhatsApp, X, Facebook,
Instagram)



₦5 Million

Campaign Signage Levy (Ekiti Comparison)

Second is the vandalism and destruction of billboards, banners and posters by supporters of the ruling and opposition party, especially in Osogbo, the state capital. This involves physical tearing down, defacement or burning of campaign billboards, banners and posters at major roads in all the major towns resulting in heightened tension and conflict between the political groups and debates about freedom of expression, concerns about breakdown of law and order and raising questions about the possibility of a peaceful election.

2.3.3 Safety of Media Practitioners

In the run-up to the 15th August off cycle governorship election, there is intense focus on and concern about the safety of media practitioners. This is as a result of the increasing political polarisation in the state which is putting intense pressure on media houses and media practitioners to align with either the ruling PDP/ Accord alliance or with the opposition APC. The concerns over journalists' safety and press freedom are aptly demonstrated in the arbitrary arrest, detention and subsequent unconditional release of Olalekan Akindoju, the Secretary of the Osun State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists by officers of the Nigeria Police Force. Although the Commissioner of Police later apologised and ordered an investigation, the incident underscored the need for stronger safeguards against harassment and intimidation of media practitioners. A study by IPC/CEMESO involving 167 practicing journalists evaluated the safety and operational environment of journalists in Osun State ahead of the election identified deep political hostility, ownership interference, economic vulnerabilities, legal and regulatory harassment and physical or digital threats as the most critical risks facing media practitioners.

The study highlighted a clear hierarchy of concerns among media practitioners and classified the threats and risks to press freedom and media practitioners into eight distinct categories as shown in Table 11.

THREATS AND RISKS TO PRESS FREEDOM AND MEDIA PRACTITIONERS

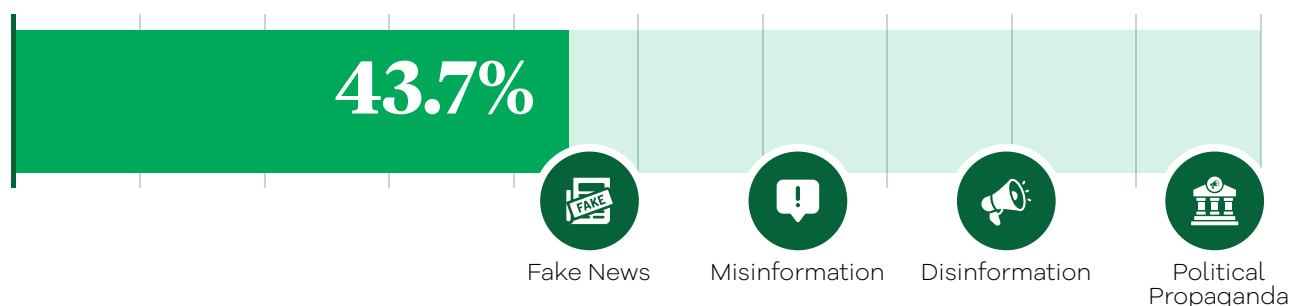
S/NO.	CATEGORY	THEMATIC DOMAIN	AGREEMENT	CLASSIFICATION
1	B	General Political Environment and Hostility	45.9%	Moderate-High
2	H	Misinformation, Propaganda, and Political Speech	43.7%	Moderate-High
3	F	NBC / Broadcast Regulatory Environment	40.5%	Moderate
4	C	Ownership, Editorial Pressure, and Welfare	38.8%	Moderate
5	I	Economic Pressures on Journalism	35.9%	Moderate
6	G	Legal Threats and Judicial Environment	30.4%	Low-Moderate
7	E	Digital and Cyber Threats	25.0%	Low-Moderate
8	D	Physical Safety of Journalists	25.0%	Low

TABLE 11: THREATS AND RISKS TO PRESS FREEDOM AND MEDIA PRACTITIONERS

SOURCE: IPC/CEMESO: ASSESSMENT OF JOURNALISTS' SAFETY AND PRESS FREEDOM RISKS IN OSUN STATE

In terms of the threats of political hostility, this is typified by escalating friction between political actors and the media and a near-even split between journalists who perceive the environment as peaceful and those who face direct political blackmail or pressure. This dichotomy is especially demonstrated in the area of information warfare (43.7%) characterised by fake news, misinformation, disinformation and political propaganda, especially through personal attacks on the candidates on faceless social media accounts. Ownership interference is typified in editorial capture through the exercise of direct and subtle pressure by media owners, especially the Federal and State government to compel media practitioners to align with and support partisan views and opinions thereby compromising objectivity and independent broadcast. This situation became so serious that the Osun State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) began to demand better professional standards, ethic and editorial independence from its members. Another major area of concern is the challenge of economic vulnerability of media practitioners as a result of poor remuneration, unpaid or late payment of salaries, bribery and patronage which undermine their professionalism and subject them to financial influence and pressure to compromise their ability for accurate and objective reportage of political events and activities. The use of legal and regulatory instrument such as the Cybercrimes Act, defamation provisions in the Criminal Code and some provisions of the Electoral Act 2026, such as Clause 100 and 101, as well as in the Nigeria Broadcasting code to harass media practitioners is another area of concern. The fear of litigation for libel and imposition of sanction by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has a chilling effect on media practitioners and compels them to exercise restraint and self-regulate.

Information Warfare Threat



Although physical and digital safety constitutes the least area of concern, the threat of arrest, brutalisation, assaults, cyber-attack and bullying against media practitioners by security personnel, opposing political party thugs and partisan actors is real at campaign events and venue of electoral activities. It may therefore be necessary for the Osun State Chapter of the Nigeria Union of Journalists to establish an active, real-time reporting framework for tracking threats and violence against the media for necessary intervention. To mitigate the highlighted threats and risks, there is the need to hold perpetrators of violence against media practitioners accountable, ensure the non-partisanship of the regulatory agencies and enforcement mechanism to impose sanctions, invest in the welfare, safety and training of journalists, provide institutional guarantee for balanced, apolitical, objective and conflict-sensitive reporting and enhance access to protective equipment and secure communication tools before, during, and after the election.

2.4 PARTICIPATION BY WOMEN, YOUTHS AND PWD IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

2.4.1 Contextual Analyses

Osun State has an estimated population of over 5.93 million people spread across the 30 Local Government Areas of the state. The population is made up of 50.5% and 49.5% female in all the LGAs, except in Boluwaduro and Boriye LGA where the female population constitutes 50.12% and 50.33% of the total population. However, this gender composition of the population is skewed in favour of women. Out of the 2,339,233 total registered voters in the state, 1,104,464 (47.21) are male, while 1,234,769 (52.79) are female. However, the assessment conducted by the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF) on women's political participation, representation and inclusion in the State highlights a stark, systemic contradiction between the female numerical strength and political representation. Although women represent the numerical majority in the register of voters and demonstrate active presence and capacity for mobilisation at the grassroots, they are almost entirely excluded from executive decision-making bodies and elective offices across all tiers of governance. Although the 2021 Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law has been successfully domesticated in the state, it is primarily focused on eliminating violence against women and not for the promotion of political inclusion. Thus, out of the 15 candidates in the 2022 governorship election, none of them is a woman and this barrier remains entrenched for the 2026 gubernatorial race as only one of the 14 candidates is a woman—Adegabo Opawoye Yemisi of the Action Democratic Party (ADP). The representation deficits of women are across the governance spectrum extending to federal, state, and local governance frameworks as shown in Table 12

Population & Gender



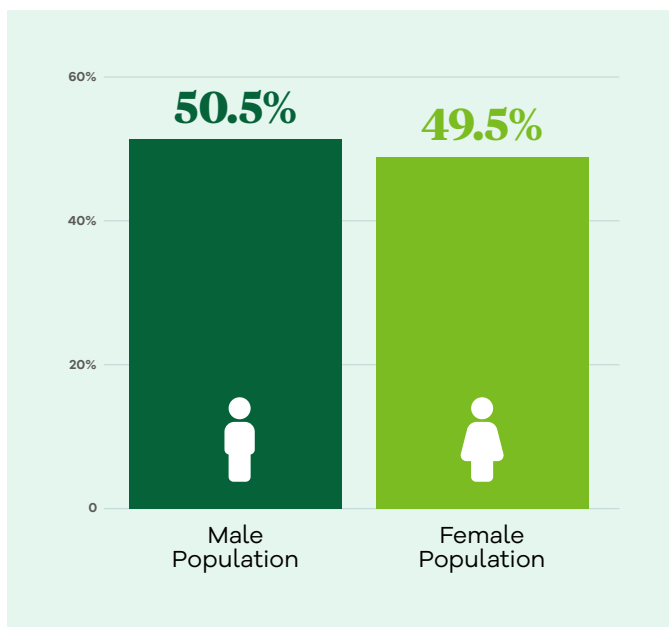
5.93 Million+
Estimated Population



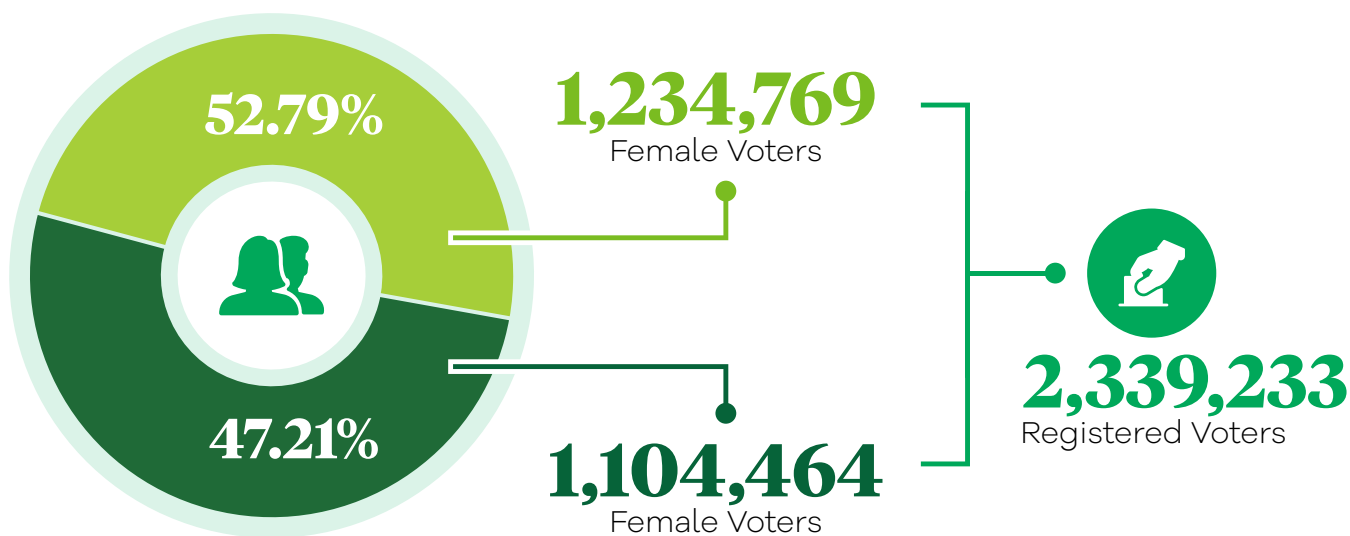
30
Local Government Areas



2 LGAs
with Female Majority
(Boluwaduro & Boriye)



Registered Voters



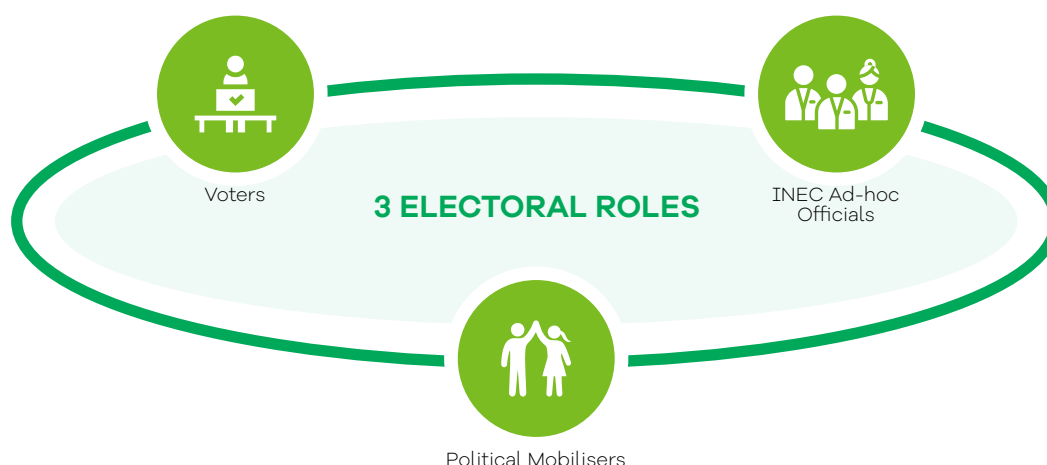
WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN GOVERNANCE

S/NO.	GOVERNANCE TIER	TOTAL SEATS / POSITIONS	FEMALE REPRESENTATION	PERCENTAGE REPRESENTATION
1	Federal Senators (2023–Present)	3	0	0.0%
2	Federal House of Representatives	9	0	0.0%
3	State House of Assembly	26	0	0.0%
4	Local Government Chairpersons (2025)	30	2	6.7%
5	State Executive Council (Cabinet)	32	4	12.5%
6	State High Court Judges (Bright Spot)	22	8	36.4%

TABLE 12: WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN GOVERNANCE

SOURCE: THE NIGERIAN WOMEN TRUST FUND (NUTF) OSUN PRE- ELECTION ASSESSMENT THEMATIC REPORT

The youth population, which is persons aged between 18 and 34 years old constituting approximately 40% of total registered voters is perhaps the single most critical demographic voting bloc in the Osun State governorship election. Apart from their numerical voting strength with which they can single-handedly determine the outcome of the election, the youth are also the primary backbone for electoral operations for INEC and targets of political mobilisation and recruitment by the political actors to perpetrate electoral violence. For example, members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and students from the Federal Higher Educational Institutions like the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and Federal Polytechnic, Ede will serve as Presiding and Assistant Presiding Officers who constitute the majority of ad hoc election officials. Conversely, the youths are also the target of recruitment by political actors as thugs, party agents and digital content creators flooding social media spaces with fake news, misinformation and disinformation.





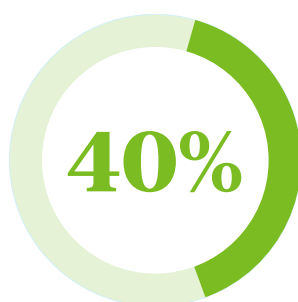
The participation of Persons with Disabilities (PwD) in the electoral process is a fundamental right and a demonstration of the measure of democratic inclusivity. The application of the proportional national framework metric by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Africa Polling Institute (API) which estimated that approximately 15% of any given population in developing nations lives with some form of functional disability shows that the estimated PwD population in Osun State will be between 700,000 and 750,000 individuals, with various forms of disability ranging from physical disabilities to visual, hearing, speech and mental impairments and albinism.

While the National Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act of 2018 is applicable in Osun State, the enactment of the Osun State Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Law in June 2024 protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination, guarantees equal access to employment, education and public facilities and mandates a 5% employment reservation for qualified persons with disabilities in the state workforce. Furthermore, the law established a Bureau for People with Disabilities and appointed a Special Adviser on Special Needs with the primary mandate to provide for the integration and full inclusion of PwD into the society and ensure their education, health care, social, economic and civic rights by conducting regular and formalised exercises to identify, enumerate and collect necessary data for the purpose of planning, educational placement and resource allocation.

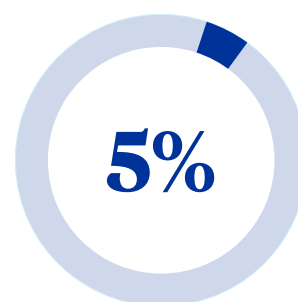
Insight



Estimated Population Living with Disabilities (WHO/API Benchmark)



Youth constitute the largest voting bloc.



Employment quota demonstrates institutional commitment to inclusion.

2.4.2 Trends and Gaps

In the run up to the off-cycle governorship election in Osun State on 15th August 2026, the trinity of institutionally imposed structural barriers, including strategic gatekeeping, threat of violence and the volatile security environment remain the de facto mechanisms for the exclusion of women, youths and persons with disabilities (PWD) in the electoral process. Evidence from the online perception survey conducted by the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTf) on women's political participation, representation and leadership in Osun State suggests that public resistance to female political leadership may be lower than generally assumed. For example, 95% of the respondents believe that women can effectively lead in political office and should actively participate in politics and 85% indicated that they would vote for a qualified female candidate.

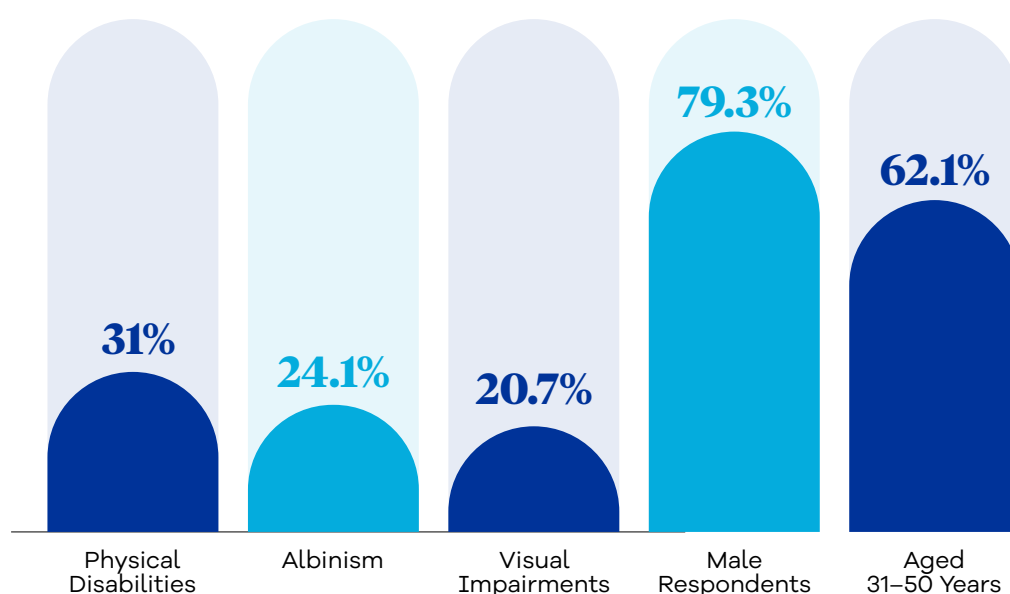
However, this support for, and belief in women in leadership does not translate into reality in the prevailing political environment, as the male-dominated leadership of political parties remains one of the most significant barriers to the emergence of women as candidates for elective positions using such practices as exclusionary measures as exorbitant costs of political campaigns, expensive party nomination fees, and exclusionary practices like late-night political meetings. In fact, 85% of respondents agreed that women face greater challenges than men in politics identifying severe barriers including violence and harassment, such as the coordinated attacks on LGA secretariats in February 2025, family responsibilities, cultural beliefs, bias by male-dominated political party leadership, media visibility and coverage, as well as lack of financial resources as major deterrents to women's participation in political activities and leadership contests. The Gender-focused Pre-election Assessment by ElectHer found that women are disproportionately affected across multiple dimensions as aspirants, candidates, voters, community mobilisers, political actors and voters. Their campaigns are not only resource-constrained and more vulnerable to disruption but are also subjected to various acts of intimidation and harassment and more economically vulnerable to vote trading. Overcoming these challenges will require the inclusion of affirmative action in support of women in the electoral framework, gender-sensitive security planning, including female-only queues where necessary, the deployment of female security personnel and targeted voter reassurance campaigns to rebuild trust and assure women of their safety.

As with the participation of women, the off-cycle Osun governorship election again reveals the paradox in Nigerian politics of institutional gatekeeping. While the youth make up the largest and most critical voting demographic, their representation and inclusion in governance remains primarily operational rather than systemic. An analysis of the unfolding trends in youth participation in the electoral process in Osun highlights persistent gaps regarding youth participation. Their exclusion and marginalisation from core political party leadership positions and decision-making roles in governance often breeds political apathy, cynicism, frustration and cultism which is often exploited by the political actors who engage and mobilise them to become political thugs. In the end, the youth become the main target for recruitment into political violence as well as the primary victims of electoral insecurity orchestrated by the same political actors. In the run up to the election, political parties and candidates relied heavily on the youth population as campaign foot soldiers to boost voter turnout, party agents at the polling units and digital influencers and content creators to drive grassroots digital campaigns. For instance, Governor Adeleke is relying on the popularity of his musician nephew, Davido who is leading the Imole Youth Mobilisation Campaign Council to drive grassroots support for his re-election, while the APC and its candidate, Bola Oyebamiji constituted a

dedicated youth campaign and mobilisation team to canvass for votes across the state. There is a critical need to ensure that the youth population are provided with concrete and visible pathways to meaningful political engagement to reduce their vulnerability to radicalisation, cultism and proclivity to act as purveyors of electoral violence.

The trend in the participation of Persons with Disabilities (PwD) in the 2026 Osun governorship election presents a mix of progressive structural planning and persistent systemic exclusion. The report of the perceptions, preparedness, and electoral inclusion of persons with disabilities survey undertaken by TAF Africa to assess the electoral awareness, preparedness, and inclusion barriers for PwD in Osun State ahead of the election shows some positive trends. The survey which was carried out among a diverse group of PwD, including those with physical disabilities (31%), albinism (24.1%), visual impairments (20.7%), and hearing/speech impairments across a predominantly male respondent base (79.3%) between the ages of 31 and 50 (62.1%) reveal a high level of preparedness and confidence for the election in the PwD community. For example, all the respondents are aware of the upcoming election and are registered to vote and 86% have already collected their PVC which is a requirement to vote. While many respondents cited social media as their preferred future channel for information dissemination and access, some of them currently rely on Radio (28.8%), INEC outreach (21.2%) and social media (17.3%) as their primary sources of election information.

PWD Survey Profile

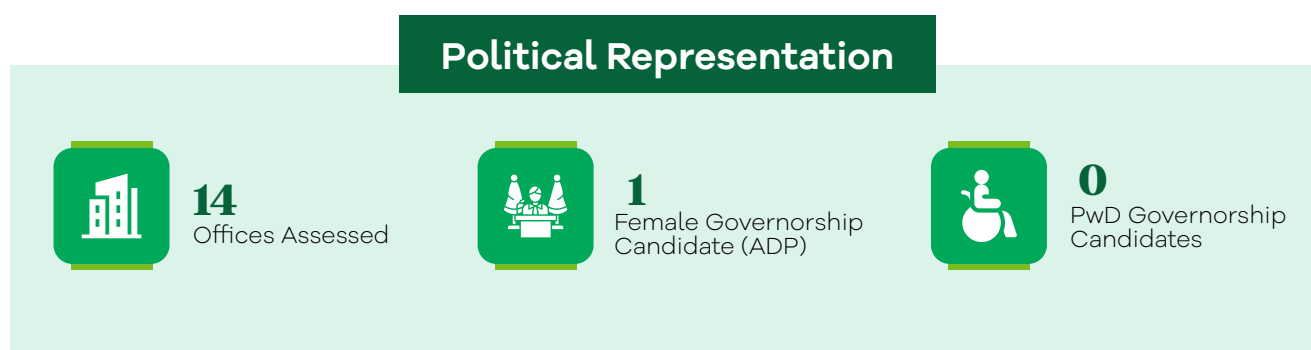


Majority of the respondents also expressed strong confidence and trust in the ability of INEC to conduct a free and fair election (93.1%) with the acknowledgement that they received priority treatment during voter registration and PVC collection process. Lastly, 79.3% of the respondents expressed their optimism that the security agencies are capable of ensuring their safety during the election. Nevertheless, some of them expressed concern of the persistent challenges standing in the way of their full participation in the electoral process. These include lack of easy accessible polling units (cited by 27.6%) as many of them are located in public schools or open spaces with rugged terrain, staircases or gutters that restrict independent access for physically challenged voters; inadequate assistive voting devices such as

Braille/large-print guides (27.6%), sign-language interpreters (27.6%) and magnifying glasses (17.2%) prompting many PwD voters to rely on third parties, which compromises the secrecy of their vote; and the perennial and enduring problem of lack of transportation to convey them to and from the polling units on election day as well as long queues under the sun and ever present fear of election-related violence. By and large, it is evident that PwD in Osun State are highly motivated to exercise their franchise by registering and collecting their PVC to vote, it is necessary to build their confidence and trust to participate in the election by ensuring their safety and addressing gaps in physical infrastructure, lack of assistive voting devices and the issue of transportation on Election Day.

2.4.3 Enhancing Participation

The contextual analyses and the examination of the trends and gaps in the participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in the political and electoral process reveals that there are structural and institutional challenges militating against their full engagement. This is demonstrated in the under-representation of these groups as candidates for election and in party leadership positions as political party primaries and candidate nomination structures remain highly exclusive and male dominated and characterised by elite bargaining which often places women, youth, and PwD at a disadvantage. For example, only one, (ADP) out of the 14 political parties contesting the election is fielding a female governorship candidate, while all of the candidates are above 35 years old with no PwD among them. The visible lack of political representation by women, youth and PwD in the contest for executive position is symptomatic both at the national, state and LGA levels and it is often attributed to their lack of strong political godfather or substantial financial resources, high nomination fees, informal gatekeeping practices and entrenched patronage networks.



In order to address the continued neglect of these dominant groups in contesting for and occupying executive and legislative positions in government, there is an urgent need to move beyond the rhetorical commitments. Genuine pathways must be created to overcome the use of restrictive candidate nomination process in the structural exclusion of women, youth and persons with disabilities from leadership positions in the political process towards enhancing their full participation in key decision-making areas of governance. Such measures would include addressing the groups' political and socio-economic vulnerabilities and the adoption of legislative measures to support the passage and implementation of affirmative action frameworks, especially on the creation of Reserved Seats for women, youth and PwD in order to promote electoral credibility, equity and consolidate democratic representation at all levels of governance. In conclusion, the credibility of the 2026 Osun State governorship election will not be measured solely by the peaceful conduct of polls and transparent collation of results, but by the level to which women, youths, and PwD are able to exercise their franchise safely, unhindered and without intimidation and inducement. Consequently, INEC, security agencies

and civil society organisations must adopt deliberate operational measures and deploy appropriate logistical strategies to prevent their disenfranchisement.

2.5 RISK ANALYSES

2.5.1. Nature of Risks

The security landscape in the run up to the 15th August 2026 Osun off-cycle Governorship election is highly volatile due to the multiple threats of alignment and realignment of political actors, organised political violence, deep federal-state institutional conflicts, especially in relation to the tenure and legitimacy of Local Government Chairmen and Councillors, cultism and unresolved political assassinations. Furthermore, the risk environment is aggravated by socio-economic vulnerabilities, latent communal tensions and clashes and subsisting litigations. The nature of risk for the election in The Kukah Centre's security pre-election assessment report is categorised into four interconnected primary risk categories. These are elite fragmentation, organised political violence, federal-state institutional conflicts, criminal activities of non-state actors as shown in Table 13.

NATURE OF RISK AND CATEGORISATION OF THREATS AND RISKS

S/N	RISK CATEGORY	PRIMARY DRIVERS & EVIDENCE	LIKELIHOOD	GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION	POTENTIAL IMPACT ON ELECTORAL PROCESS	MITIGATION
1	Fragmentation & Elite Defection Risk	1. Transformed Party Landscape: Governor Adeleke's December 2025 defection from PDP to Accord fractured the ruling coalition; internal fissures within Accord (parallel primary disputes). 2. Aregbesola - Oyetola Rift: Long-simmering factional divide within Osun APC culminated in Aregbesola's move to ADC.	Medium High	Statewide, particularly in former PDP strongholds (Ede, Osogbo) and APC-leaning areas (Ikirun, Iragbiji)	Fragmented opposition vote that benefit the most organised party; voter confusion over which candidates represent their preferred political tradition; post-election disputes fueled by intra-party grievances	Inter-party dialogue platform; peace accord enforcement; voter education on candidate affiliations; traditional leader engagement for clarity messaging.

		3. Unclear Loyalty of PDP Structures: PDP Southwest spokesman clarified party is "not in any pact" with Accord, leaving grassroots mobiliser loyalty uncertain.			spilling into the public domain; reduced mobilisation capacity if grassroots agents disengage.	
		4. Pre-Election Litigation Risks: Ongoing legal challenges to candidate nominations				
Political Violence & Security Risk		1. Organised Political Violence: February 17, 2025, coordinated attacks across five LGAs. The simultaneous, networked nature confirms externally mobilised armed groups.	High	Irewole, Ilesa West, Boripe, Olatunwa, Obokun, Ife North	Physical harm to citizens, candidates, and officials; targeted assassination of electoral stakeholders; disruption of voting and	Inter-state security collaboration; proactive engagement with transport unions; surveillance of border
		2. Unresolved Political Killings: Over 100 victims over two decades with no successful prosecutions.			collation; potential suspension of polls; creation of "no-go" zones;	entry points; rapid response teams; personal security
		3. Imported Political Violence: Transport unions are vulnerable to exploitation as vectors for imported thugs.			emboldening of perpetrators through impunity.	briefings for candidates; rapid abduction response mechanism.
		4. Ijesaland Volatility: Concentration of lethal violence in Ilesa West/East, Obokun, Oriade				

Institutional & Legitimacy Risk	1. Federal -State Institutional Conflict: Documented allegations of federal security agency weaponisation against Osun State government; federal financial instruments allegedly used to extend illegal APC LGA tenures; alleged pressure on INEC officials.	High	Statewide; concentration in Osogbo and Osun Central	Erosion of public trust in impartiality of electoral administration; perception that process is "rigged" before voting begins; opposition withdrawal from constructive engagement; reduced voter turnout among supporters of excluded parties; post-election litigation focused on institutional bias; international observer criticism.	Early judicial engagement ; transparent INEC communication; independent observer presence in high-risk LGAs; media partnerships for verified information; peace accord enforcement .
	2. INEC Under Pressure: Unprecedented off-cycle election burden (FCT, Ekiti, Osun in rapid succession); controversial "primacy of manual forms" provision creates potential for result manipulation.				
	3. Voter Registration Controversies: ADC allegations of irregular voter registration spikes.				
	4. PDP/LP Exclusion: Absence of PDP and Labour Party from ballot – parties that collectively commanded significant voter loyalty in 2022.				

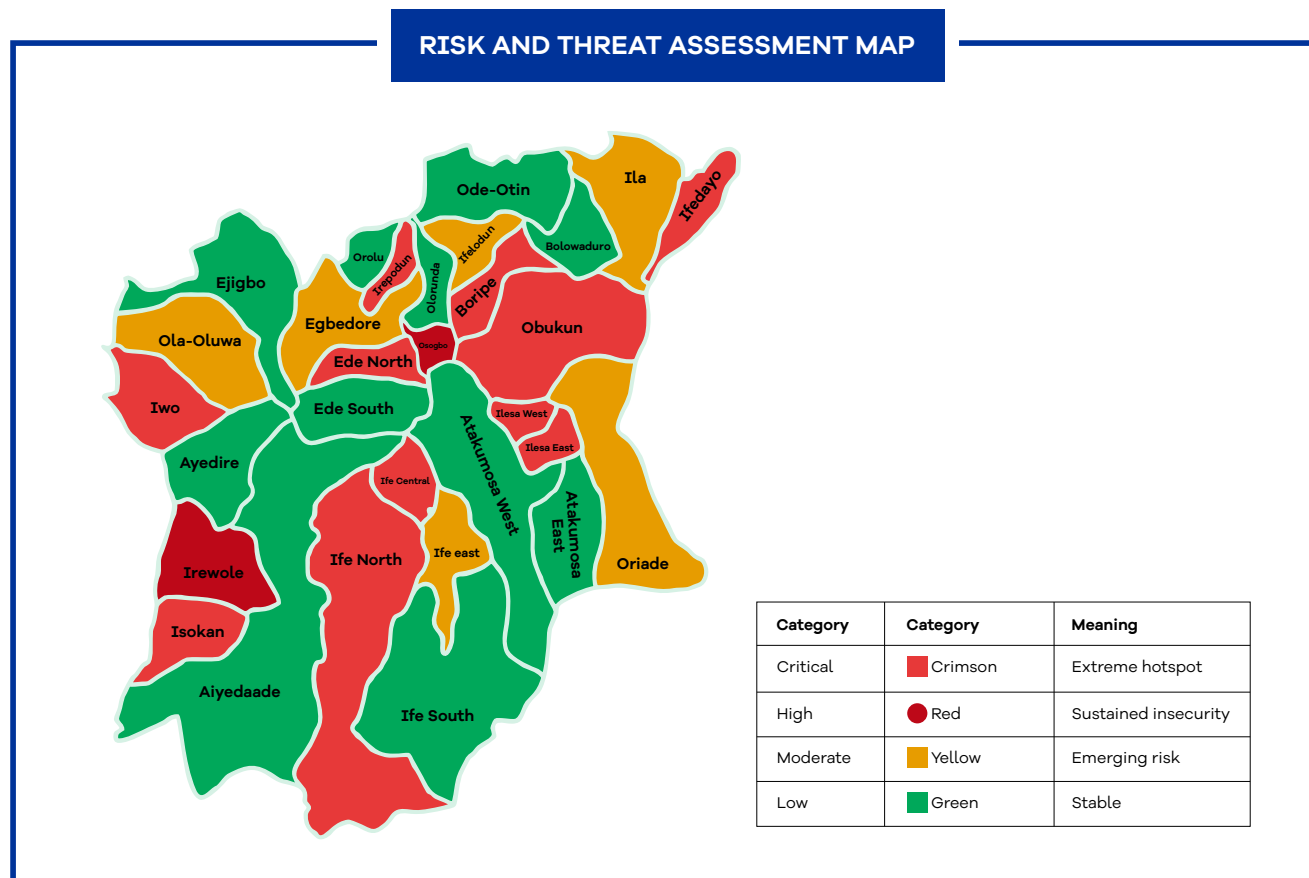
4	Criminal Insecurity & Logistical Risk	1. Ambient Criminal Violence: Cultism, banditry, and kidnapping persist as structural threats independent of electoral cycle. LGAs affected: Ife North (banditry, 5 deaths), Obokun (gunmen attacks, 6 deaths), Ife Central (cultism, 4 deaths, 3 injured), Ifedayo (kidnapping). 2. Transport Network Vulnerability: Assassination of transport union leaders has disrupted informal accountability structures within the sector. 3. Rural Corridor Exposure: LGAs with high kidnapping exposure (Ifedayo, Obokun, Atakumosa East) pose direct challenges to INEC deployment and retrieval plans.	Medium	Ife North, Obokun, Ife Central, Ifedayo, Atakumosa East	Voter turnout suppression in high-crime LGAs, particularly among women and elderly; logistical delays or cancellations in areas where security cannot be guaranteed; increased costs of election administration due to heightened security requirements; potential for criminal violence to be opportunistically branded as "political" to create maximum disruption.	Targeted voter reassurance campaigns via local radio; security escorts on rural transit corridors; early distribution of non-sensitive materials to LGAs; contingency polling units in secure locations.
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TABLE 13: NATURE OF RISK AND CATEGORISATION OF THREATS AND RISKS

SOURCE: THE KUKAH CENTRE PRE-ELECTION ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR OSUN STATE

2.5.2 Potential Threats and Flashpoints

The potential threats and flashpoints are as presented in Table 14



SOURCE: THE KUKAH CENTRE PRE-ELECTION ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR OSUN STATE

POTENTIAL THREATS AND FLASHPOINTS

Irewole – site of the deadliest single incident (9 deaths, 50 injuries across two incidents)

Osogbo – electoral manipulation hub; disinformation epicentre; law enforcement incidents

Boripe – political assassination and thuggery; 3 deaths, 10 injuries

Obokun – gunmen attacks; 6 deaths from a single incident

Ilesa West – political assassination; 3 deaths, 15 injuries

Ife Central – cultism and armed robbery; 4 deaths, 3 injuries

Ife North – banditry and ritual killing; 5 deaths

Iwo – Risk of political thuggery and localised violence between party supporters.

Ede North – civil unrest; historically contested

Ifedayo – kidnapping; cross-border criminal exposure

	Ilesa East – targeted assassination (NURTW chairman); unresolved case Isokan - civil unrest; historically contested Irepodun - Communal clashes; historically contested.
	Olaoluwa – pre-election violence; 2 deaths, 5 injuries Ife East - civil unrest; historically contested Ifelodun - civil unrest; historically contested Oriade - Political thuggery, violence, and cultism Ila – Cross-border criminal exposure Egbedore – Political thuggery and localised violence
	Atakumosa West, Atakumosa East, Ayedaade, Ayedire, Boluwaduro, Ede South, Ejigbo, Ife South, Ila, Odo-Otin, Olorunda.

TABLE 14: POTENTIAL THREATS AND FLASHPOINT

2.5.3 Securing the Election

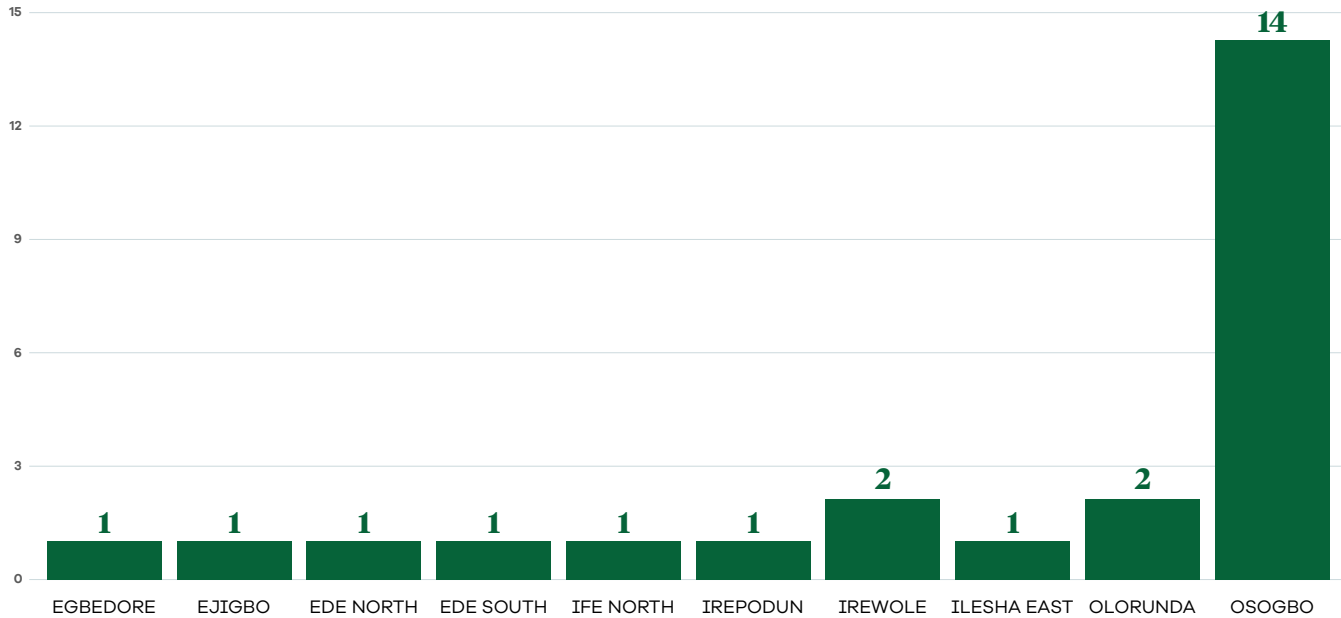
The August 2026 Osun governorship election will be a high-risk contest that will threaten the peace, stability, law and order in the state. Apart from being the last major election that will serve as a bellwether for the 2027 general election, both the APC controlled Federal Government with former Governor Oyetola as the arrowhead and the incumbent PDP/Accord state government under Governor Adeleke are preparing for the contest in a “do or die” manner. In fact, none of them will concede defeat irrespective of whether the election is free, fair and credible. Consequently, in the lead up to the election, the rising pattern of insecurity across the various LGAs demonstrated in violent confrontations, destruction of properties, indiscriminate shootings and physical and verbal threats, intimidation and assaults is of grave concern. For example, the pre-election observation and violence monitoring activities of Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI) documented 44 election-related violent incidents across the state between October 2025 and June 2026 resulting in 13 known fatalities.⁷ Furthermore, the Election Security Information Hub (ESI-Hub) at The Kukah Centre documented 44 election related violent incidence across the state between June 2025 and June 2026 resulting in 34 known fatalities.⁸

⁷ KDI Statement of Escalating Electoral Violence ahead of the 15 August Governorship Election in Osun State released on 25th June 2026

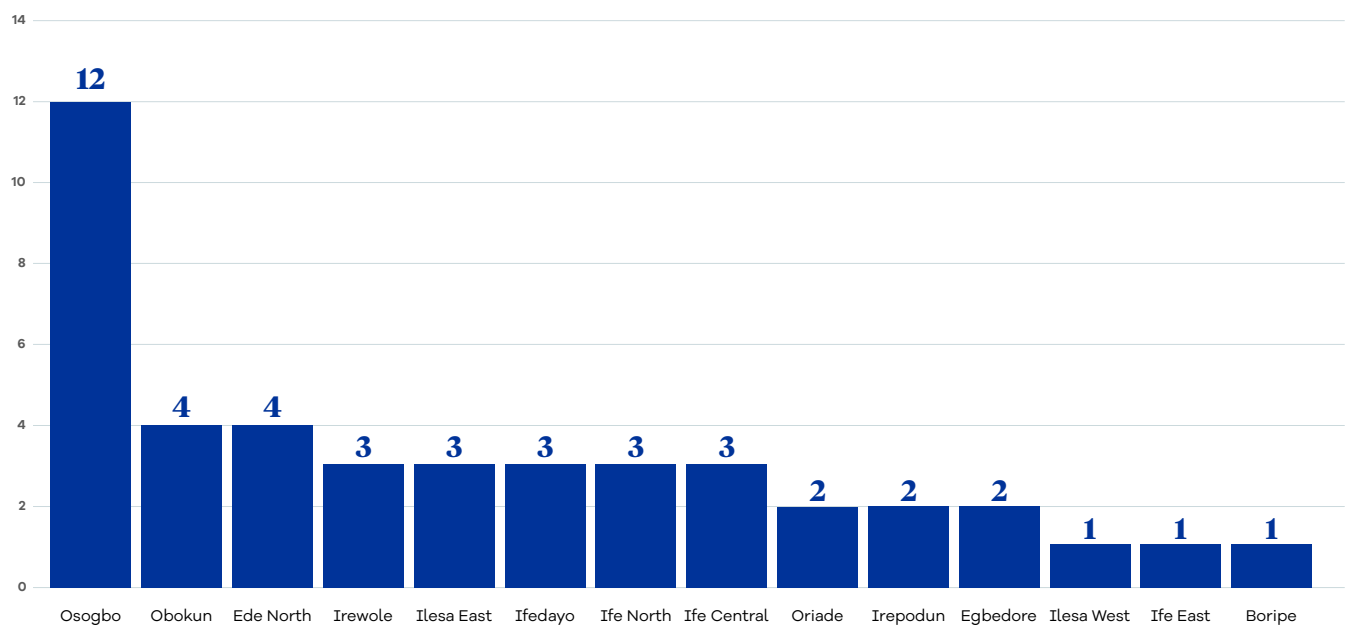
⁸ The Kukah Centre: Political Context Analysis of Osun State, June 2026

REPORTED CASES OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE BY LGA

LGA with the reported cases of electoral violence and numbers of incidents tracted



SOURCE: JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE MAKERS' CENTRE, OSOGBO



SOURCE: JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE MAKERS' CENTRE, OSOGBO

The burden of securing the election falls on Osun State Police Command under the leadership of CP Ibrahim Gothan who assumed duty in the state on 17th June 2026. The Command consists of eight (8) Area Commands with three (3) core commands in Osogbo, Ile-Ife and Ilesa, 50 Divisional Headquarters at the LGAs and several local stations and community outposts across the state. The Command consists of about 5000 personnel made of regular police personnel and others in the tactical units of the Police Mobile Force, the anti-bomb squad and the tactical Counter Terrorism Unit. As the lead agency in election security, the Police Command has already developed an operational framework for securing the election with a proposal to deploy up to 30,000 conventional policemen drawn from other parts of the country. This will be complemented by other security personnel from the Nigerian Army Depot in Osogbo and the Engineering Construction Command in Ede to man the state's outer security perimeter and ready to intervene in securing the election if required to do so. Given the prevailing security situation in the state, the Office of the National Security Adviser has also requested that all the personnel and assets of the other security and law enforcement agencies in the state and neighbouring states should be ready to deploy for the purpose of securing the election. These include the Department of State Services (DSS), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Nigeria Immigration Service, (NIS), Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS), Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) and National Drug and Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). The effective mobilisation and strategic deployment of these security personnel provide a strong foundation for securing the electoral environment.

Security Personnel



5,000

Existing Police Personnel



30,000

Additional Police Personnel Proposed

Furthermore, it is important to devote adequate attention and resource to the early identification, mapping and monitoring of high-risk areas, especially in Osogbo the state capital and Ede, the hometown and stronghold of Governor Adeleke, as well as the other hot spot and high-risk areas in Ila, Egbedore, Olaoluwa, Isokan, Ilesa North, Oriade Ilobu and Irepodun LGAs which are plagued by political violence and communal clashes. In deploying targeted security and surveillance mechanisms to these areas and across the State, it is important to ensure the neutrality, professionalism and accountability of the security personnel. While security operatives should be firm and operate within the provisions of the code of conduct and rules of engagement for security personnel on electoral duties, they must avoid creating any impression of bias or deploy excessive use of force that is capable of undermining public confidence and escalate tensions before, during and after the election. It is also necessary to ensure effective inter-agency coordination through the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) to provide for seamless sharing of information and especially in responding rapidly to any threat to safe movement of sensitive and non-sensitive materials and the safety and security of electoral personnel, materials and infrastructure, including securing

INEC offices, Registration Area Centres (RACs), polling units and collation centres.

The successful conduct of the Osun governorship election will depend largely on addressing these operational, logistics and security challenges to reduce the risk of loss of public trust, disputes and unrest on the outcome. In doing so, all stakeholders must work together to provide a conducive security environment for the conduct of a peaceful election. In this regard, the National Peace Committee, traditional rulers, religious leaders, CSOs activists and the security and law enforcement agencies should use their moral authority, communal influence and professional training to discourage violence by intensifying their efforts at peace messaging, voter education and conflict de-escalation. Political parties and candidates should commit to peaceful conduct in all their actions and activities and adherence to timelines in the INEC calendar and schedule of election activities and the provisions of the electoral legal framework. Furthermore, the media should practice conflict-sensitive media reporting and adopt proactive measures and strategies to combat fake news, misinformation and disinformation, especially on digital and online channels and platforms. Regulatory bodies and civil society actors should work collaboratively to monitor and counter harmful narratives. Finally, targeted measures should be implemented to enhance voter confidence and participation by providing adequate voter information and ensuring safe access of vulnerable groups to polling units. The successful conduct and credible outcome of the 2026 Osun governorship election will depend largely on the ability of INEC, security agencies and other stakeholders to proactively manage these risks, maintain public confidence and ensure a free, fair, credible transparent and inclusive electoral process.



RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Osun State Governorship election offers an important opportunity to consolidate democratic governance and strengthen electoral integrity ahead of the 2027 General Election. Available evidence from the contextual election analyses indicates that the election will be competitive and prone to disruption and violence if not properly managed. Thus, the credibility of the process will be determined by the ability of all stakeholders to ensure the conduct of a violence-free, credible, transparent and inclusive election whose outcome must reflect the choice of the electorate in the State. This will, to a large extent, involve the adoption of various measures and specific strategies by the election management body, INEC and the security agencies to address identified threats and risks by acting in a prompt, professional, non-partisan and transparent manner and sustaining the trust and confidence of all stakeholders throughout the electoral process. Other stakeholders, including the political parties and their candidates, civil society and community-based organisations (CSOs/CBOs), the media, traditional rulers and religious leaders must play a positive and constructive role to guarantee peace and tranquillity in the pre-election, election and post-election period. Their conduct and behaviour must be seen to promote support for all efforts and initiatives aimed at mitigating electoral violence and in addressing extant socio-cultural and structural barriers standing in the way of all eligible voters, especially vulnerable and marginalised groups in freely exercising their franchise on election day.

The recommendations for mitigating identified risks, strengthening public confidence in the conduct of a peaceful, credible, transparent and inclusive election in Osun State on 15th August 2026 are as follows:

3.1 TO INEC

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should:

- i. Ensure timely release and effective utilisation of election funds to enable the completion of critical pre-election activities, including the rehabilitation of State and LGA offices and collation centres, preparation of Registration Area Centres (RACs) and logistics arrangements for the deployment of personnel and materials.
 - ii. Make concrete arrangements to enable all eligible voters to collect the PVCs at the scheduled period without any encumbrances.
 - iii. Strengthen operational and logistical preparedness, particularly through the repair and deployment of functional vehicles, timely distribution of sensitive and non-sensitive materials, proper configuration and testing of the Bi-modal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) to avoid technical failures on election day and the activation and deployment of the INEC Security and Alert Notification System (ISANS) for rapid response to any incidence of arson, kidnapping or hijacking of election personnel and materials.
- Provide raincoats and protective cellophane cover for election duty officials and election
- iv. materials against the severe weather conditions of the rainy season.
- Upscale civic and voter education in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to address
- v. voter apathy, enhance public understanding of electoral procedures and discourage vote trading.

- vi. Ensure transparent and efficient election day processes, including the timely opening of polling units, proper accreditation of voters, and adherence to procedures for collation and transmission of results. Clear and proactive communication with stakeholders will be critical in managing expectations and preventing fake news and misinformation.
- vii. Intensify stakeholder engagement, including more frequent meetings of the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) at the national, state and LGA level, as well as consult with political parties and their candidates, and engage with traditional rulers and religious leaders to build trust and confidence in the electoral process.
- viii. Take deliberate measures to enhance inclusivity, by adopting gender-sensitive approaches to electoral management and engaging more PwDs to serve as poll officials.
- ix. Engage in targeted voter education, sensitisation and outreach programmes to improve electoral inclusion measures by training election officials to implement priority voting for the vulnerable persons, strengthening security at the polling units and make them more accessible, expanding the availability of assistive voting devices for disability communities and improving the collection and dissemination of gender and PwD-disaggregated data for the purpose of planning and advocacy.

3.2 To the Security and Law Enforcement Agencies

The security and law enforcement agencies that play a critical role in securing and safeguarding the electoral process should:

- i. Ensure the effective implementation of the election operation order adopting intelligence-based crime and violence preventive measures, with adequate mobilisation and strategic deployment of personnel across the State, particularly in identified high-risk politically sensitive and volatile LGAs.
- ii. Investigate all cases of violence, intimidation and harassment and bring the culprits to book, address impunity, deal decisively and respond promptly to emerging threats, including criminal activities and potential electoral threats and risks posed by cultism, commercial motorcycle operators and thugs that are used to disrupt the election.
- ii. Adhere to the code of conduct and rules of engagement for security personnel on electoral duty by maintaining strict neutrality and professionalism, avoiding any form of bias, intimidation, excessive use of force or heavy-handed tactics that could provoke public backlash, escalate tension and undermine public confidence.
- iii. Prioritise the protection of electoral personnel, materials and infrastructure, including INEC offices, RACs, polling units and collation centres, as well as ensuring the safety and security of voters and the safe movement of election personnel and materials, election observers, journalists and vulnerable persons wishing to cast their vote.
- iv. Strengthen inter-agency coordination through ICCES to facilitate information sharing, joint planning and rapid response to incidents.

- v. Monitor the actions and activities of the transport service providers as stipulated in INEC MOU with the transport unions for the movement of personnel and materials and the potential use of commercial motorcycle operators and other willing element as thugs to disrupt the election.
- vi. Adopt a proportionate and rights-based approach and engage with communities, including traditional rulers and religious leaders to support confidence-building and early warning mechanisms in addressing vote trading and other electoral and criminal offences.
- vii. Adopt strategies and prioritise enforcement mechanisms against vote-buying schemes targeting women, especially in economically marginalised communities and high-risk polling units.

3.3 To Electoral Stakeholders

1) Political Parties and Candidates should:

- i. Adhere to the provisions of the electoral legal framework, observe internal democracy and manage their primaries and candidate nominations and disputes arising therefrom in a fair and transparent manner.
- ii. Publicly renounce violence and commit to issue-based campaigns, refraining from the use of inciteful and inflammatory rhetorics and hate speech anchored on ethnic, religious or other primordial sentiments against political opponents.
- iii. Ensure that supporters refrain from violence, intimidation, harassment and against the destruction and vandalism of campaign billboard, banners and posters of political opponents by holding identified culprits accountable.
- iv. Educate party agents to be peaceful and law abiding in their conduct and behaviour in observing all electoral activities in the pre-election, election and post-election period.
- v. Commit to signing the Peace Accord and publicly pledge commitment to peaceful, credible, transparent and inclusive elections.
- vi. Condemn and refrain from vote buying, voter intimidation and suppression through the use of thugs.
- vii. Pledge to accept the lawful outcome of the election and the use of appropriate and lawful judicial and alternate dispute resolution channels to resolve disputes arising from the election result.

2) Civil Society and Community Based Organisations should:

- i. Be neutral, non-partisan, non-discriminatory and professional in all actions and activities.

- ii. Intensify voter education, public awareness and peace messaging, particularly targeting youths, women and rural communities to promote active participation in the electoral process.
- iii. Undertake advocacy and sensitisation programmes targeted at promoting a more inclusive electoral process and outcomes among women, youths and PWD.
- iv. Intensify campaigns for peaceful, non-violent and issue-based electoral process among voters, especially on the negative and dangerous implication of vote trading.
- v. Demand accountability from the political actors.
- vi. Deploy gender-disaggregated observation protocols to monitor women's voter access, queue management, polling unit conduct and all forms of gender-based electoral intimidation or harassment.

3) The Media should:

- i. Ensure fair, balanced and conflict-sensitive reporting, providing equitable access to all candidates.
- ii. Avoid the dissemination of unverified information, fake news and disinformation and strengthen fact-checking mechanisms, especially in the digital space by embedding fact-checkers in your situation room on Election Day to instantly debunk and combat misinformation and disinformation.
- iii. Apply for accreditation from INEC within the timeframe, get accreditation and comply with the rules and regulations to avoid any untoward situation.
- iv. Pay due attention to their safety and security by ensuring that journalists covering the election are adequately briefed on safety protocols, equipped with appropriate identification and provided with access to emergency communication and support mechanisms.
- v. Document and report all security incidents and electoral offences and malpractices for potential use by INEC to take disciplinary action against any of its indicted officials, for the purpose of litigation in the Election Tribunal and Courts and for post-election advocacy.
- vi. Promote voter education and public confidence in the electoral process by providing timely, accurate and issue-based information on electoral procedures, citizens' rights and responsibilities and verified election updates, while avoiding sensationalism and inflammatory content that could heighten tensions.

4) Traditional Rulers and Religious Leaders should:

- i. Leverage on their moral authority and influence to promote voter turnout, peaceful coexistence, tolerance and responsible political participation.

- ii. Remain non-partisan and accommodating to all political parties and candidates wishing to pay courtesy visits and especially for the purpose of alternate dispute resolution.
- iii. Avoid inciting communal clashes and religious conflict that are capable of jeopardising the election in their jurisdictions.
- iv. Discourage electoral malpractice by condemning electoral malpractices, especially vote trading and provide information and early warning to INEC and the security and law enforcement agencies on real and potential threats to the election in their domain.

3.4 To Election Observation Missions

Election observers should:

- i. Adopt proactive and coordinated approaches to support electoral integrity by effective training and early deployment of observers, extensive and well-coordinated observation strategy covering both urban and rural areas, including identified high-risk locations
- ii. Ensure registration for accreditation within the stipulated timeframe by INEC, get accreditation by collecting the required identification card.
- iii. Acquire adequate training for the systematic observation of the key aspects of the electoral process, including pre-election environment, campaign activities, election day procedures, collation and results management.
- iv. Cooperate, collaborate and coordinate actions and activities among each other to optimise resources for a more strategic and wider deployment of personnel across the State.
- v. Strengthen early warning and incident reporting mechanisms, working collaboratively with other stakeholders to identify and flag potential risks in a timely manner.
- vi. Engage in evidence-based reporting, providing objective and credible assessments that can enhance public confidence and inform stakeholders.
- vii. Pay attention to inclusivity measures during observation, documenting and reporting on the experiences of women, youths and persons with disabilities.
- viii. Apply for and obtain their accreditation within the INEC stipulated timeline and maintain constructive engagement with INEC, security agencies and other stakeholders.
- ix. Adhere to the INEC and universal rules and regulations governing election observation, uphold the principles of non-partisanship, neutrality and independence, avoid any unpleasant situation and provide timely feedback and recommendations to improve electoral processes.

3.5 To Citizens

As the ultimate stakeholders and beneficiaries of a credible democratic process, the citizens of Osun State should:

- i. Locate their PU, verify their name on the final voters' register published by INEC and collect your Permanent Voter's Card during the scheduled window (9th–13th July 2026) to avoid last-minute disenfranchisement.
- ii. Decline financial or material inducements from any political party or candidate and report incidents of vote buying to INEC, security agencies, or credible CSOs, particularly in economically vulnerable communities identified as high-risk for this practice.
- iii. Verify and cross-check election related information, especially content designed to inflame tension between supporters of rival parties against credible media outlets or INEC's official channels before circulating or sharing it on WhatsApp groups and unregulated social media to avoid spreading fake news and disinformation.
- iv. Avoid participation in political thuggery or violence and refuse recruitment by political actors as thugs or agents of intimidation, particularly in the identified flashpoint LGAs (Irewole, Osogbo, Boriipe, Ilesa West/East, Obokun, and others), and report suspicious mobilisation of armed groups to security agencies.
- v. Exercise their franchise safely and independently by voting based on personal conviction rather than coercion, intimidation, or inducement and safeguard the secrecy of the ballot from third parties at polling units.
- vi. Accept the lawful outcomes of the election and use legal channels for grievances, including the Election Petition Tribunal and other lawful dispute-resolution mechanisms rather than embarking on street protests or violence.



CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

The August 15, 2026, Osun State off-cycle governorship election stands as a critical litmus test for Nigeria's democratic integrity and institutional readiness ahead of the 2027 General Elections. The pre-election environment is highly competitive and fraught with complex political, institutional and security challenges driven by intense elite rivalry, unresolved local government crises and a volatile security landscape.

To guarantee a credible, transparent, and peaceful electoral process, the following critical imperatives must be prioritised:

1. **Institutional Efficiency and Neutrality:** The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) must ensure flawless logistical execution, timely deployment of materials, and the optimal functionality of technological tools like the BVAS and IReV. Furthermore, security and law enforcement agencies must operate with absolute neutrality, professionalism, and proactive intelligence to secure high-risk flashpoints and build public trust.
2. **Mitigation of Electoral Violence:** The looming threats of organised political thuggery, cultism, and voter intimidation require immediate, coordinated interventions by the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES). Political parties and their candidates must be held accountable to the Peace Accord, shunning inciteful rhetoric and the weaponisation of violence.
3. **Inclusive Democratic Participation:** The stark disconnect between the high voting demographics of women, youths, and Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and their exclusion from political leadership remains a major democratic deficit. Deliberate operational, logistical, and security measures must be deployed to dismantle structural barriers and ensure these groups can exercise their franchise safely and independently.
4. **Combating Information Disorder:** In a highly polarised environment, the media and civil society must actively combat fake news, misinformation, and disinformation. Conflict-sensitive reporting and real-time fact-checking are essential to prevent the escalation of tensions and protect the integrity of the electoral space.

Ultimately, the success of the 2026 Osun governorship election will not be measured solely by the peaceful collation of results, but by the collective commitment of all stakeholders to uphold the rule of law, foster an inclusive political environment, and protect the sovereign will of the Osun electorate.

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.