



POLITICAL CONTEXT ANALYSIS: 2020 EDO STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

ELECTORAL HUB POLITICAL CONTEXT ANALYSIS 1/2020

Introduction

The Electoral Hub, an organ of the Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD), is a multidisciplinary strategic think-tank aimed at strengthening electoral governance and accountability in Nigeria through the provision of data, critical and contextualized analysis as well as provide solutions to improve the credibility and integrity of the electoral process through an interdisciplinary lens.

In line with the mission of the Electoral Hub to strengthen the electoral process, this pre-election analysis seeks to help stakeholders gain insight into the contexts in which the upcoming gubernatorial elections will be conducted in Edo State.

This analysis contains an overview of the legal, socio-political and institutional factors and conditions that may affect the outcome of the election; the key actors and interest groups shaping events leading up to the election; the election management body and the electoral system; the threats and obstacles to a credible process; as well as the external and internal entities that can help strengthen and protect the integrity and credibility of the electoral process.

This analysis is based on unbiased research into the trends in previous elections and the tendency for relapse or change; the political and social dynamics currently within the country Nigeria in general and Edo State in particular; as well as the perception of political observers and the electorate about the upcoming elections.

This analysis should serve as a stakeholder's guide to the distribution of power, the range and interests of the various actors and the formal and informal rules that govern the electoral process; and how all these can either make or mar the electoral process.

Constitutional and Legal Background

The conduct of elections in Nigeria is governed by the provisions of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) and the Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended). This legal framework for elections in Nigeria is still criticized as inadequate especially as an electoral reform bill was extensively debated on and passed by the National Assembly (NASS), yet assent was denied on four different occasions by the President.¹

The electoral bill, if assented to by the President, was expected to deal with issues that would enhance credibility of electoral processes in Nigeria including: stiffer punishments for electoral officials involved in malpractice; electronic voting and electronic transmission of results; prohibition of arbitrary fees by the setting of maximum fees for all elective offices; and gaps in the law such as where a candidate dies after polls have begun but before the result was declared.^{2,3}

There is also clamor for legislative reforms in other areas including: out-of-country voting rights for Nigerians in the Diaspora;⁴ affirmative action for marginalized groups like women and persons with disabilities; and early voting for the millions of Nigerians who are unable to vote on election days because of essential duties e.g. poll workers, emergency workers, security agents, accredited observers and journalists.⁵

Without these reforms, the legal and constitutional framework remains questionable and inadequate. Consequently, issues of inclusivity, disenfranchisement and fairness will continue to dog the legitimacy of elections in Nigeria. This is a contextual aspect of the forthcoming Edo gubernatorial election which cannot be ignored.

Edo State Electoral System

Nigeria runs a federal system of government where power is delegated between the federal government, the 36 state governments and the 774 local governments. The responsibilities of each of these tiers of government are set out in the 1999 Constitution. The exclusive legislative list (Part I, Second Schedule) contains matters on which only the federal government can act, such as monetary issues, defence, and foreign policy. The concurrent legislative list (Part II, Second Schedule) contains matters on which both federal and state governments can act, including education, health, and infrastructural issues. The functions of local government councils are set out in the Fourth Schedule.

The representative body at the federal level is the National Assembly (NASS), which consists of the House of Representatives (lower house) and the Senate (upper house). As shown in the map and tables below, there are nine federal constituencies, three senatorial districts, and eighteen local government areas (LGAs) in Edo State. Candidates are put forward from each constituency to represent Edo in the House of Representatives; from each senatorial district to represent Edo in the Senate; and from each LGA to represent the local governments. Parliamentary elections (into both houses of NASS) occur every four years, while local government elections are organized by state governments.



Map of Edo LGAs and Senatorial Districts⁶

SENATORIAL DISTRICTS

SEN. DISTRICT		LGAs	WARDS	POLLING UNITS	REGISTERED VOTERS
EDO NORTH	1	Etsako East	10	89	81,639
	2	Etsako West	12	140	160,137
	3	Etsako Central	10	79	50,058
	4	Owan East	11	160	91,841
	5	Owan West	11	150	61,193
	6	Akoko-Edo	10	143	119,254
		TOTAL		64	761
EDO CENTRAL	1	Esan North-East	11	104	84,245
	2	Esan South-East	10	100	76,842
	3	Esan Central	10	90	57,100
	4	Esan West	10	114	99,983
	5	Igueben	10	48	46,828
		TOTAL		51	456
EDO SOUTH	1	Orhionmwon	12	208	118,672
	2	Uhunmwonde	10	91	74,529
	3	Ovia South-West	10	100	96,409
	4	Ovia North-East	13	144	143,009
	5	Egor	10	170	219,832
	6	Oredo	12	357	313,553
	7	Ikpoba-Okha	10	340	315,410
		TOTAL		77	1410
GRAND TOTAL		18	192	2627	2,210,534

FEDERAL CONSTITUENCIES⁷

FED. CONST.	S/N	LGA	WARD	PU _s	REGD. VOTERS
Etsako East/ West/Central	1	Etsako East	10	89	81,639
	2	Etsako West	12	140	160,137
	3	Etsako Central	10	79	50,058
		TOTAL	32	308	291,834
Owan East/ West	1	Owan East	11	160	91,841
	2	Owan West	11	150	61,193
		TOTAL	22	31	153,034
Akoko-Edo	1	Akoko-Edo	10	143	119,254
		TOTAL	10	143	119,254
Esan North- East/ South-East	1	Esan North-East	11	104	84,245
	2	Esan South-East	10	100	76,842
		TOTAL	21	204	161,087
Esan Central/West/ Igueben	1	Esan Central	10	90	57,100
	2	Esan West	10	114	99,983
	3	Igueben	10	48	46,828
		TOTAL	30	252	203,911
Orhionmwon/ Uhunmwonde	1	Orhionmwon	12	208	118,672
	2	Uhunmwonde	10	91	74,529
		TOTAL	22	299	193,201
	1	Ovia South-West	10	100	96,409

Ovia North-West/North-East	2	Ovia North-East	13	144	143,009
		TOTAL	23	244	239,418
Egor/ Ikpoba-Okha	1	Egor	10	170	219,832
	2	Ikpoba-Okha	10	340	315,410
		TOTAL	20	510	535,242
Oredo	1	Oredo	12	357	313,553
		TOTAL	10	340	315,410
GRAND TOTAL		18	192	2627	2,210,534

At the state level, the government consists of the executive (headed by the governor), the legislature (House of Assembly), and the judiciary (High Court and Customary/Sharia Court). Governors, who are the heads of the executive arm, are elected directly for a four-year term with a two-term limit.

The constitution requires candidates for the office of governor to be citizens of Nigeria, sponsored by their party of membership, at least 35 years old, and possess the School Certificate or its equivalent. A two-round majoritarian system is used to determine the winner of gubernatorial elections: the winner must have an absolute majority of the votes cast (50% + 1) and at least 25% of votes cast in at least two-thirds of all the local government areas of the state. If no candidate achieves this, the top two candidates with the highest number of votes compete in a run-off election until a winner emerges. In contrast to the first-past-the-post system that is used for presidential elections, this majoritarian system ensures that a candidate has the votes of a majority of the people. This guarantees a higher level of legitimacy and a greater mandate for elected governments.

The Nigerian electoral system by and large guarantees citizens the right to stand for public office; however, the regulation of candidature to political party sponsorship creates a constraint for those who might want to run for office independently. Though a constitutional amendment to allow for independent candidates has been proposed and has passed second reading

in the lower house of NASS,⁸ the amendment process is still in the early stages and would certainly have no bearing on the electoral process in Edo.

Based on the 2019 voters register, there are a total of 192 wards, 2,627 polling units, and 2,210,534 registered voters in Edo State.

Edo State Voters Register and Voting Points⁹

S/N	LGA	CODE	WARDS	PU	REGISTERED VOTERS
1	Akoko-Edo	1	10	143	119,254
2	Egor	2	10	170	219,832
3	Esan Central	3	10	90	57,100
4	Esan North-East	4	11	104	84,245
5	Esan South-East	5	10	100	76,842
6	Esan West	6	10	114	99,983
7	Etsako Central	7	10	79	50,058
8	Etsako East	8	10	89	81,639
9	Etsako West	9	12	140	160,137
10	Igueben	10	10	48	46,828
11	Ikpoba-Okha	11	10	340	315,410
12	Oredo	12	12	357	313,553
13	Orhionmwon	13	12	208	118,672
14	Ovia North-East	14	13	144	143,009
15	Ovia South-West	15	10	100	96,409
16	Owan East	16	11	160	91,841
17	Owan West	17	11	150	61,193
18	Uhunmwonde	18	10	91	74,529
TOTAL			192	2627	2,210,534

However, these figures are tainted by the fact that about 483,868 registered voters in Edo State will be disenfranchised due to INEC's announcement that there is no more room for political campaigns or the collection of the Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs).¹⁰ INEC explained that the reason for this is the COVID-19 pandemic, which has made it impossible for them to distribute PVCs.¹⁰ They would therefore rely on the 2019 voters register which has

2,210,334 registered voters.

To make matters worse, Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth and Advancement (YIAGA Africa) has observed that voter cards were being purchased in the run-up to the election. This raises serious questions about the violation of people's right to vote in the upcoming Edo election. Many would be disenfranchised not just by INEC's inability to distribute PVCs, but also by the buying and selling of voter cards.¹⁷

Political Environment

Edo State was created in 1991 from the former Bendel State. It is located in the South-South of Nigeria, with Benin City as its capital and largest urban centre.¹¹ The estimated population of Edo State is 4 million.¹² The 2020 off-cycle gubernatorial election in Edo is the sixth gubernatorial election in Edo State since Nigeria's Fourth Republic, which began in May 1999. The election, fixed by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the 19th of September 2020, is the first major election that INEC will conduct since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus.

The Edo election comes at a time when Nigeria like most of the world is faced with the COVID-19 pandemic. There are fears that participation in the process and turnout on election day may be low due to the fear of contracting the virus.¹³ For example, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) conducted a survey on voting during COVID-19, and voters reported that their top two fears were "people being too close to each other while queuing and permitting too many people inside the polling station".¹⁴ This suggests that the risk of contracting the virus from voting on election day might deter voters from participating.

According to YIAGA, the political parties' campaigns in Edo kickstarted on the 21st of June 2020 and activities and media coverages of these campaigns over time have violated COVID-19 guidelines.¹⁵ The political parties that have dominated the campaign scenery are the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC).¹⁵ These political parties have consistently violated COVID-19 protocols, and have conducted rallies disregarding the precautionary measures for COVID-19 prevention.¹⁵

Apart from COVID-19 protocols, CDD observers also note that parties and candidates have flouted the provisions of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended), which state that government vehicles shall not be used for the purpose of campaigning.¹⁶ **Error! Bookmark not defined.** Watching the

Vote observers (an initiative of YIAGA Africa) also reported the distribution of money or gift items by politicians and their supporters in most of the LGAs in Edo State.¹⁷ Vote buying and selling is also prohibited by the Electoral Act 2010; yet, these actors flout the provisions with impunity.

Additionally, the pandemic further complicates an electoral process already trailed by fears of electoral violence.¹⁸ The polity in the state has been heated up by deep intra-party divisions which have led to multiple political party defections, including those from the incumbent governor and his lead contender,^{19,20} and a fragmented state legislature that is dysfunctional.²¹ The Edo State House of Assembly which is the legislative arm of the State government has been deeply divided since its inauguration on the 17th of June 2019.²²

The political tensions in Edo, which stem from a fallout between the incumbent governor and the immediate past governor, have steered the political campaigns further away from issue-based politics to personality-based politics.¹⁶ Edo like most states in Nigeria is grappling with underdevelopment. Nigeria is still rated as a country with a low Human Development Index (HDI)²³ and Edo is one of the many states with a low HDI. Although 12th out of the 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), the state's HDI was 0.5299 as at the last report,²⁴ which is below the 0.550 threshold for medium human development. Campaigns not focused on the developmental issues which plague the state, but rather on the personalities of the actors, signal a detrimental regression in democratic politics.

The central subject of the election campaigns seems to be “Godfatherism”. Godfatherism is the concept of a godfather, who is viewed as a kingmaker — someone who has built unbelievable respect and followership in the community, possesses a well-organized political structure, and is perceived to have wide acceptance from an electorate or the power to influence election outcomes — securing victory for candidates of his choice, who are termed godsons and subsequently wielding influence over these godsons when they are in political office.^{25,26}

In the case of Edo State, the Godfather is the immediate past governor of the state, Adams Oshiomhole, who is at loggerheads with the incumbent governor, Godwin Obaseki, who is his erstwhile godson. This tension started pre-political parties' primaries and candidate selection process with factions emerging within the APC over disagreement on the preferred mode of primaries to select candidates for the election. While Oshiomhole and the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party opted for direct primaries, members of the party loyal to Obaseki preferred indirect primary elections.²⁷ APC went ahead with direct primaries despite the state government COVID-19 directives against large gatherings and crowds, and despite the fact that in the same state other political parties such as the PDP, the major opposition, had chosen indirect primaries.²⁸

Interestingly, Adams Oshiomhole who emerged Governor in a swell of popular votes had boasted at that time, that godfatherism had been defeated in Edo State politics. Oshiomhole during his contest for the governorship seat defeated the candidate of the PDP, who was supported by then PDP strong man, the late Anthony Anenih, who was seen as the ultimate godfather in Edo politics and nobody emerged in any political position without his endorsement.²⁹ However, it now seems that Oshiomhole only worked to replace Anenih with himself as the godfather of Edo State politics. This was apparent during 2016 electioneering, when Oshiomhole singlehandedly made possible the emergence of the present incumbent governor, Godwin Obaseki, as the candidate of his party, APC. The outcome of the September 2020 governorship elections would be a major determining factor of the place of Oshiomhole, and the politics of godfatherism in Edo State.

Since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, Edo has had four governors:

1. Lucky Igbinedion of PDP was governor from May 1999-May 2007.
2. Oserheimen Osunbor of PDP was governor from May 2007-November 2008. An election tribunal declared his election invalid and appointed the candidate of Action Congress, Adams Oshiomhole.

3. Adams Oshiomhole was governor from November 2008-November 2016. He ran for the elections on the platform of the Action Congress (AC) based on a strategic alliance with the Labour Party (LP) which he belonged to at that time. (AC changed its name to Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) in 2010). He ran again in July 2013 via a merger with other parties in what constituted the All Progressives Congress (APC). He finished his term as a member of APC.
4. Godwin Obaseki became governor in November 2016 on the platform of the APC. However, he is contesting for a second term on the platform of PDP, after resigning his membership of APC in June 2020.

The APC and PDP have mainly dominated the politics of the state. Currently, two of Edo's three senators are from PDP, while one is from the APC. Five of Edo's nine federal constituencies are represented at the Federal House of Representatives by members of the APC while four are represented by members of the PDP.

Contesting Political Parties

Political parties are indispensable to the electoral process in Nigeria as membership of one and sponsorship of same is a requirement for running for political office. The politicking in the build up to the gubernatorial elections in Edo has been very eventful with a lot of inter-party and intra-party politicking. Candidates have been presented by 14 of the 18 duly registered political parties for the Edo gubernatorial election. The candidates and the parties are as follows:

Obhafuoso Paul	Action Alliance (AA)
Mabel Oboh	African Democratic Congress (ADC)
Ibio Emmanuel	Action Democratic Party (ADP)
Osagie Ize-Iyamu	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Lucky Idehen	All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA)
Igbineweka Osamuode	Allied Peoples Movement (APM)
Amos Areloegbe	All Peoples Party (APP)
Osifo Uhun-Ekpenma	Labour Party (LP)
Tracy Agol	New Nigerian People's Party (NNPP)
Stevie Ozono	National Rescue Movement (NRM)
Godwin Obaseki	Peoples Democratic Party
Felix Obayangbon	Social Democratic Party (SDP)
Jones Osagiobare	Young Progressive Party (YPP)
Akhalamhe Amiemenoghena	Zenith Labour Party (ZLP)

Only 2 of the 14 candidates for governor are women: Mabel Oboh of ADC, and Agol Tracy of NNPP. There are also only two female deputy governorship candidates: Omogbelehan Pauline of LP and Omion Omyone of SDP. Women make up nearly 50% of the electorate, yet they are still under-represented in Edo State's party politics as reflected by the candidates who emerged. This raises questions about gender and inclusivity within the political parties.

Out of the 14 candidates, most observers believe the front runners are the incumbent governor, Godwin Obaseki of PDP and Osagie Ize-Iyamu of the APC. Nationally, APC and PDP are the parties with the largest membership. Both parties have the most governors and members of NASS.

Main Political Actors

Godwin Obaseki is the incumbent Governor of Edo and is running on the platform of the PDP for a second term. He was a former ally of the immediate past governor of the state, Adams Oshiomhole, whose support is believed to have been instrumental to his victory four years ago. He was a member of the APC until he was denied a gubernatorial ticket on the party's platform and he decamped to the PDP with his supporters.

Adams Oshiomhole is immediate past Governor of Edo, who until recently was party chairman of the APC. He is believed to be the 'godfather' in Edo politics and has been an outspoken critic of the incumbent governor since their falling out.

Osagie Ize-Iyamu is widely believed to be the lead contender for the governorship position with the incumbent governor. He is running on the platform of the APC. He ran on the platform of PDP four years ago but decamped to APC with the support of the then Chairman and immediate past governor of Edo. He has the strong support of Oshiomhole against Obaseki.

The interplay between these three political actors has generated some tension. Oshiomhole was alleged to have influenced the Edo State Governorship Primary Screening Committee in APC, favouring Ize-Iyamu over Obaseki.³⁰ This led to the disqualification of Obaseki from contesting in APC's primaries, and his subsequent defection to PDP. All these have generated a lot of tension in the pre-election period, leading to violence and general security concerns.

The tension is further heightened by the spread of false news and disinformation by the two parties on social media. An example is a viral post circulating on WhatsApp in which Oshiomhole is alleged to have said that Benin people automatically become puppets when money is thrown at them.¹⁶ The post has been used by PDP supporters to suggest that Oshiomhole has a hatred for Benin people. Another example is a blog post

online claiming that Obaseki has been infected with HIV, while his wife is accused of diverting drugs from public hospitals to enable him manage his ailment.¹⁶

These claims have not been verified, but are being used by supporters of rival candidates as calculated attempts to sway the vote. This has made the pre-election period even more tense.

Philip Shaibu is the incumbent deputy governor and the PDP candidate for deputy-governor. He is widely believed to be a political asset to the governor and the PDP because of his deep-rooted grassroots politics. He was an erstwhile ally of Oshiomhole but fell out with him. He resigned his membership of APC with the incumbent governor and joined the PDP. He has been a majority leader of Edo State House of Assembly and a member of the Federal House of Representatives.

It is also worth mentioning the person of **Chief John Odigie-Oyegun**, the former National Chairman of APC who holds the position that no single individual or group can decide for Edo State citizens who would emerge the governor of the state come September 19, 2020.³¹ According to media reports,³² Oyegun had strongly advised against the mistreatment of Governor Godwin Obaseki by the National Working Committee (NWC) of the APC. He had also stated that on the matter of who governs Edo State, the people are sovereign and neither he nor any other individual or group, whatever their status, can decide on behalf of the people of Edo.

Security

According to Edigin and Obakhedo, election periods in Nigeria “are usually associated with all forms of violence, and all manner of fissiparous tendencies”.³³ Edo State is no different. The forms of political violence usually seen in Edo State are “violence-prone campaigns, thuggery, political assassination, arsons, election related ethno-religious crisis, snatching of ballot boxes” and so on.³⁴

Given this context of electoral violence in Nigeria and Edo State in particular, there have been a lot of security concerns regarding the 2020 gubernatorial election in Edo. YIAGA observers reported the repositioning of cult groups as political merchandise for the election, as well as sexual and gender-based violence in some LGAs.³⁵ There have also been a lot of inflammatory remarks from political actors in the state,¹⁶ as well as the trading of accusations between members of the PDP and members of the APC of plotting different forms of electoral violence.

Some of the heated rhetoric from political actors on record are:

Obaseki (PDP):

“Nobody has a monopoly of violence. If they (APC) want violence, we will show them violence; if you see anybody smashing any car because my sticker or poster is in the car, let us know, and we will show that person that we are in government.”³⁶

“And I am sending a clear warning – very, very clear – if I find anybody misbehaving, no matter who you have been, I will arrest you and I will deal with you.”³⁶

Oshiomhole (APC):

“As they say, he is a green snake under green grass. Now the summer has come; the green is getting brown and we can now see the snake.

When we see the snake, what do we do? We kill am.”¹⁶

Ize-Iyamu (APC):

“Your influence goes beyond one polling unit. After doing your unit, you will move to another unit. In fact, you will move to other wards. Some of you are so dangerous you will move to other local governments.”³⁷

“Make I tell you, this election will be operation show your result. And that operation, make I tell una the truth, na many of una e go favour, because wetin una go fit do, many big men nor go fit do am.”³⁷

There was a reported violent clash between the supporters of the PDP candidate and supporters of the APC candidate at the King’s Square during a courtesy visit of the PDP candidate to the palace of the Oba of Benin on July 25th.³⁸ According to observers from the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), the divisive language of the candidates was the “trigger” for this clash.¹⁶ There have also been reports of vandalizing of cars with campaign paraphernalia by supporters of opposing parties,³⁸ as well as accounts of defacing and destruction of campaign billboards.¹⁶

Threats and intimidation of voters have also been present in this election. APC supporters reported to CDD observers that they were being coerced into withdrawing their support for their preferred candidates through threats to revoke long held land allocations.¹⁶

One particularly tragic event that occurred was the brutal rape and murder of the pregnant wife of a Governorship Campaign Coordinator, Comrade Promise Igbinevbo. It was reported that the attackers gained access to their home through the ceiling and attacked the woman, when the whereabouts of her husband was unknown.³⁴³⁴

The most recent event that occurred was the accident at the Benin-Lagos high way, which involved the convoy of Oshiomhole. A trailer carrying a container ran into one of their vehicles and killed two police officers instantly, while they were on their way to campaign for APC ahead of the election.³⁹ The Media Aide to Oshiomhole, Victor Oshioke, said they have reasons to believe that the accident was a calculated assassination attempt targeting

Oshiomhole.³⁹

These events and the rhetoric by the main actors have been a source of concern over the peaceful conduct of the election. In a recent poll conducted by YIAGA Africa and NOI Consulting, 56% of the respondents expressed fears of violence by political parties and 42% expressed fears of violence by security agents.⁴⁰

Security agents have a role to play in curbing electoral violence or aggravating it. There has been a history of the use of security agents to perpetuate electoral violence in Nigeria. According to Human Rights Watch, the post-election violence in 2019 was partly caused by soldiers and police officers, who were involved in intimidation, arrest, and killing of voters and INEC staff.⁴¹

In Edo, the governor is the Chief Security Officer of the state and works with the security chiefs of the different agencies. However, the security agencies are mainly federal agencies and under the purview of the federal government which is APC-controlled. The incumbent governor is the candidate for the PDP and his main opposition is of the APC. There are fears that the governor can use the security apparatus at his disposal. There are also fears that the APC-controlled federal government may use security agents to influence the conduct of the election.

The Nigeria Police Force had in an Election Security Threat Analysis identified the arming and movement of political thugs, use of inciting statements during political campaigns, misinformation and disinformation aimed at heating-up of the polity and deliberate efforts at delegitimizing government institutions involved in the electoral processes as the indicators that point to the likelihood for violence in the election.¹⁸

INEC had warned that the fierce political tensions in the state could lead to a declaration of a state of emergency,¹⁸ a situation that could have a debilitating effect, not only on voter participation, but also on the credibility of the process. Despite assurances from the Inspector General of Police and the state governor, the propensity for electoral violence remains high.

Efforts at Mitigating Violence

Despite the highly tense atmosphere in Edo State, there have been efforts at mitigating violence. On 3rd September 2020, the Oba of Benin, Omo N’Oba N’Edo Uku’ Akpolokpolo Ewuare II, initiated a meeting with the two leading candidates, Obaseki and Ize-Iyami, and their supporters, former governors John Odigie-Oyegun and Adams Oshiomhole.⁴² In this meeting, he rebuked the politicians for the violence and division they had caused in the state through their campaigns. He urged them to maintain the security of the state and maintain peace in their actions, stating that elections are not a do-or-die affair.⁴² The politicians heeded the monarch’s advice and resolved to maintain peace in the state.

As part of the efforts to mitigate violence, the Chairman of INEC, Prof Mahmood Yakubu, also announced on 10th September 2020 that all candidates in the Edo election are required to sign a peace accord in order to participate in the polls.⁴³ Following this, numerous peace accords were signed. On 11th September 2020, it was reported that six parties – the APC, ZLP, APGA, YPP, ADC, and APM – signed a peace accord pledging to eschew violence before, during and after the forthcoming governorship election in the state.⁴⁴ The peace accord, referred to as the Stakeholders Peace Accord, was organised by the Conference of Non-Governmental Organisations (CONGOS).

Most recently, on 15th September 2020, all the political parties and their candidates, including Obaseki and Ize-Iyamu, signed another peace accord committing to peaceful conduct before, during and after the election.⁴⁵ The peace accord was organised by the Nigeria Peace Committee (NPC) and supported by the Kukah Centre for Faith, Leadership and Public Policy, and the European Centre for Electoral Support.

Given these developments in the few days leading up to the election, it is hoped that the atmosphere will be less tense and peace will be pursued, as the candidates have promised.

Civil Society Organisations

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are key stakeholders in political and electoral processes in Nigeria. Their support and contributions to the overall enhancement of the electoral process is immeasurable: in research, voter education, advocacy for electoral reform, capacity building of key institutions and many other areas.

As the election in Edo approaches, CSOs have already been active participants in the electoral process. Some of the CSO support and contributions towards enhancing the electoral process include:

a) Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)

CDD has been one of the of the most active CSOs working to ensure a credible, peaceful and safe election amid the rising tensions in the state and the global Covid-19 pandemic. Among their many activities in the build up to the election are:

- The reopening of her Election Analysis Centre (EAC) to serve as a one-stop-shop for rigorous analyses of the electoral process. The EAC provides accurate and real-time analyses of events pre-election, on election day and post-election. CDD's analyses are grounded in historical facts and data spanning the 1999-2016 governorship elections.⁴⁶
- The publication of a comprehensive pre-election report titled, "New Allegiances, Familiar Faces: A Preview of Edo's 2020 Gubernatorial Election." The report contains pre-election observations in Edo state and proffers recommendations for a peaceful and credible electoral process.⁴⁷ CDD also produced a background paper on Edo ahead of the election.
- The support for a peace rally organized by local CSOs in Edo ahead

of the election to advocate for peaceful conduct of elections.

- The monitoring and dispelling of misinformation and disinformation which have the propensity to disrupt the electoral process through its “Fact Checker” publications on social media. It has also produced a report on the “fake news ecosystem.”⁴⁶
- The convening of a Stakeholders’ Consultative Meeting with civil society actors and other stakeholders ahead of the election. The meeting, which brought together participants from the 18 LGAs of Edo, was aimed at examining the unfolding political events characterizing the election and their impact(s) on the electoral process, as well as proffering practical ways to promote electoral integrity. The forum also created a platform for the participants to interface with INEC on its preparedness in the lead up to the election. A communique was issued after the meeting.⁴⁸
- The design and implementation of a robust civic education programme in collaboration with agencies like INEC at both national and state levels.⁴⁶ Components of this programme include:
 - The production of an instructional video, in partnership with INEC, on conducting election within the context of Covid-19. The video is aimed at enlightening Nigerians, and specifically voters in Edo State, on how the accreditation and voting process will be conducted differently to curb the spread of coronavirus at the poll. This video is broadcast on a daily basis on African Independent Television’s Kaakaki, Focus Nigeria and Democracy Today shows.
 - The airing of two radio jingles on the fake news to further inform voters on voting procedures and allay the fear of spread of COVID-19 at the poll. These jingles are broadcast on Independent Radio, Edo.

- The airing of a one-hour radio program, “Your Vote,” on Independent Radio, to enlighten citizens on mandate protection strategies. The program will run on a daily basis in the week of the election.

b) CLEEN Foundation:

Has conducted a Security Threat Assessment to support stakeholders especially the Independent National Electoral Commission and security officials by providing empirical data for the deployment of manpower and other resources for the election.⁴⁹

The foundation will also recruit, train and deploy volunteers to all the LGAs in Edo to observe, document and report in real time, security incidents and threats during the election. The foundation will collate, analyze and disseminate the findings to relevant stakeholders before, during and after the election.⁴⁹

The foundation plans to use the Tella Human Rights Monitoring Application developed by electoral stakeholders as a standardized tool for assessing election-related security threats. Tella is an ICT-based human rights platform for mapping of security risk factors through real-time observation, documentation and analysis of accredited observers’ reports on the conduct of security officials during elections.⁴⁹

c) YIAGA Africa:

YIAGA Africa through its Long-Term Observers (LTOs) in every local government of Edo has been making pre-election assessments of the conditions in Edo. YIAGA, in conjunction with NOI Consulting, has also carried out an important survey to empirically gauge the opinions of the electorate on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and the campaign environment.⁴⁰

YIAGA also intends to observe the elections and conduct a Parallel Voter Tabulation (PVT) based on statistical sampling of polling units to verify election results.

d) Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC):

PLAC convenes and hosts the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (CSO Situation Room): a coalition of more than 70 CSOs which maximize their various resources for information sharing, anticipation of problems during elections and responding rapidly when they occur.⁵⁰ NSCSR has been carrying out pre-election observations and recommendations for the Edo election and will continue during the election and post-election periods.

For the Edo governorship election, the CSO Situation Room convened series of meetings with key stakeholders of the electoral process. These included an interactive session with the Inspector General of Police (IGP) at the Police Headquarters. Issues discussed in the meeting included: public misinformation and disinformation; use of inciting statements by political actors; possibility of violence during the elections; the welfare of Police officers as well as training in line with COVID-19 guidelines. Also discussed was the security of election observers and the Nigeria Police's deployment strategy to achieve a free and fair election.⁵¹ There was also a virtual dialogue session with the Edo State INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner, Dr. Johnson Alalibo, to discuss the preparations of INEC ahead of the Edo State governorship election.⁵²

The CSO Situation Room further held meetings with the National Peace Committee on ways to foster peace and mitigate electoral violence, as well as supported political parties' candidates' debates hosted by Channels TV.⁵³

These and other CSO-led programmes and activities are expected to enhance public confidence, accountability and the transparency of the electoral processes.

Role of INEC

INEC is the Electoral Management Body (EMB) that will oversee and conduct the gubernatorial election in Edo. Managing this off-cycle election has been complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic. INEC is expected to deliver a credible election process amid a public health emergency and fierce political tensions. In May 2020, INEC released a statement that it will liaise with security agencies, health authorities, political parties, CSOs, and other stakeholders on resumption of work in the Edo and Ondo States in order to conduct the upcoming elections successfully.⁵⁴

Commenting on the state of INEC's preparedness for the election, YIAGA noted that INEC is successfully implementing activities in the timetable and schedule for the election within limits imposed by the COVID-19 protocols.⁵⁵ Moreover, INEC has made effective use of technology to mitigate the effect of the pandemic on the electoral process. For example, it introduced party candidate nomination portal, election observer accreditation portal, and media accreditation portal, which all minimize physical contact.⁵⁵ In collaboration with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the commission is also conducting training for its electoral officers, recruiting ad-hoc staff and the configuring Smart Card Readers.⁵⁵

However, the EMB has also been criticized as being in need of more transparency; in need of better management of logistics; and in need of better technology to enhance its conduct of elections.⁵⁶ YIAGA observers also note that while INEC activities for the election have begun in earnest, it is conducting very little voter education, especially on the new voter's code of conduct for elections during COVID-19.³⁵³⁵ Voter education is highly important, especially in the context of COVID-19, in order to encourage maximum participation.

INEC was further criticized as being less transparent in the 2019 general elections than in the 2015 general elections.⁵⁶ INEC's role in delivering a

credible election cannot be overemphasized. Observers have said that for an efficiently conducted election, INEC will have to:

- Intensify its training of ad-hoc staff to understand the new measures for COVID-19 prevention and their implementation at the polling unit level.¹⁶
- Reinforce a firm understanding of the role of their staff as impartial agents in the conduct of the election.¹⁶
- Commence voter education that clearly communicates the procedures for conducting the polls during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁶
- Collaborate with other stakeholders like Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs), Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), the National Peace Committee, traditional institutions, security agencies, media, and other CSOs to curb the rising political tension and violence through initiatives like the signing of peace accords or pacts between the candidates.¹⁵
- Collaborate with the Presidential Task Force and State Task Force to ensure strict compliance with all public health and safety protocols.¹⁵
- Require Polling officials to undergo COVID-19 testing before and after the election.¹⁵
- Take concrete steps to dispel the perception that it lacks the requisite independence, impartiality, and professionalism to conduct credible elections by proactive disclosure of election-related information, consistency in the application of electoral guidelines, and conducting a transparent collation process.¹⁵
- Liaise with the relevant security and health agencies to guarantee a safe and secure environment for polling officials and voters on election day.¹⁵

Election Observers

Observers play an important role in lending credibility to an election process. The acceptance of observers is evidence of the openness of the electoral process.

INEC has approved 52 domestic observer groups and 6 international observer groups.⁵⁷

The international observers are:

- British High Commission
- Embassy of The United States
- European Union
- International Foundation for Electoral Systems
- International Republican Institute
- National Democratic Institute

The domestic observers are:

- Advocacy for Quality Leadership & Health Foundation
- Advocates for Peoples' Right and Justice
- African Centre For Leadership, Strategy & Development
- African Initiative for Sustainable and Positive Development
- Christian Association of Nigeria
- Centre For Citizens with Disabilities (CCD)
- Centre For Credible Leadership and Citizens Awareness
- Centre For Democracy and Development
- Centre For Positive Change and Civic Responsibility
- Centre For Strategic Conflict Management
- Centre For the Sustenance of Civil Rule in Nigeria
- Centre For Transparency Advocacy (CTA)
- Citizens' Rights and Leadership Awareness Initiative
- Citizens' Rights for Peace and Good Leadership Initiative

- CLEEN Foundation
- Coalition of Democrats for Electoral Reform (Coder)
- Election Monitor
- Global Development Centre For Rescue Mission in Nigeria
- Global Policy Advocacy and Leadership Initiative
- Grassroot Development and Peace Initiative
- Grassroots Empowerment Initiative for Positive Change and Development
- Ilimi Wal Hikma Islamic Foundation
- Inclusive Friends Association
- Initiative for Youth Transformation and Positive Change
- Intercontinental Leadership Initiative
- International Peace and Civic Responsibility Centre (IPCRC)
- Justice, Development and Peace Makers' Centre, Osogbo, Osun State
- Kimpact Youth Development Initiative
- National Committee of Patriots
- NESSACTION
- New View Global Initiative for Youth and Women Development
- Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre - PLAC)
- Nigeria Progressive Women & Youth Development Initiative
- Noble Coordinators Forum for The Advancement of Ethics and Values
- Organisation Of Justice for Equity Sustenance Pan African Leadership League
- Patriotic Women Foundation
- Progressive Youths Development Initiative Reclaim Naija
- Sustainable Initiative for Nurturing Growth (Sing) Waterlight Save Initiative
- Women Arise for Change Initiative
- Womenfest For Better Life Living Initiative
- Voice of Africa Women for Human Dignity
- YIAGA Africa Initiative
- Youth Initiative for Better and Great Nigeria
- Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution

- National Council for Women Societies (NCWS) Nigeria
- National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies, National Assembly
- National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies National Orientation Agency
- Police Service Commission

Reports from observer groups are usually viewed as credible records of the conduct of elections.

Conclusion

The Edo off-cycle gubernatorial election is a high-stake contest. Edo State is the only state in the South-South region with hitherto governor from the APC (prior to decamping of the incumbent to PDP). All other governors in the region are from the opposition PDP. This has attracted a lot of interest in the contest which has been characterized by political tensions and the fear for public health and safety.

The tensions are so rife, that the most influential traditional monarch in the state, the Oba of Benin, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku' Akpolokpolo Ewuare II convened a meeting that had the two prominent candidates, Obaseki and Ize-Iyamu; the commissioner of police; the immediate past governor; and a past governor, John Oyegun; in attendance. The monarch decried the inflammatory utterances from politicians, and sued for maturity and peaceful conduct.⁵⁸ The monarchy is usually silent on political matters but because of the escalating tensions it broke the norm.

From observations of the current dynamics, the Edo State gubernatorial election is one that will be held in a highly tensed political environment; and guided by a legal and constitutional framework in need of reform; under an extremely partisan electoral system; contested primarily by two dominant political parties which are famed for the crisscrossing of their members and yet to fully embrace gender inclusion; with political actors who are benefactors, erstwhile benefactors or perpetrators of 'godfatherism;' in a highly volatile security situation; with the hope that CSOs and observers, local and foreign, will help ensure credibility and integrity; while being overseen by an EMB in need of monumental improvements and image redemption.

Following the meeting with the Oba of Benin, as well as the numerous peace accords signed, there is hope that the level of violence in the state will reduce, even as the election day approaches.

The EMB, the political parties, the political actors, security agencies, health officials, media, CSOs, observers and citizenry all have a role to play in either furthering or reversing the democratization process in Edo State and ultimately Nigeria.

ENDNOTES

¹Freedom House. (n.d.). *Freedom in the World 2020: Nigeria*. Retrieved September 2, 2020

<https://freedomhouse.org/country/nigeria/freedom-world/2020>

² PLAC. (n.d.). *President Buhari's veto of the Electoral Act Amendment Bill Kills Expectations on Electoral Law Reform*. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from Legist:

<http://placng.org/legist/president-buharis-veto-of-the-electoral-act-amendment-bill-kills-expectations-on-electoral-law-reform/>

³ PLAC. (n.d.). *FACTSHEET ON THE ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL, 2018 AS PASSED BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY*. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from

<http://placng.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/FACTSHEET-ON-THE-ELECTORAL-ACT-AMENDMENT-BILL-2018-AS-PASSED-BY-THE-NATIONAL-ASSEMBLY.pdf>

⁴ INEC. (n.d.). *INEC, NASS Make Case For Diaspora Voting*. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from

<https://inecnigeria.org/news-all/inec-nass-make-case-for-diaspora-voting/>

⁵ Obisesan, P. (2019, March 1). *2019 Presidential Election: improving the electoral process in Nigeria*. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from West Africa Think Tank (Wathi):

<<https://www.wathi.org/opinion-election-nigeria-2019/2019-presidential-elections-improving-the-electoral-process-in-nigeria/>

⁶ New Telegraph. (2017, September 29). *Edo, NGOs to empower 1,600 youths, women*. Retrieved September 14, 2020, from New Telegraph:

<https://www.newtelegraphng.com/edo-ngos-empower-1600-youths-women/>

⁷ NASS. (n.d.). *HONOURABLE REPRESENTATIVES Find Your Legislator*. Retrieved September 14, 2020, from NASS: <https://www.nassnig.org/mps/members>

⁸ Kwen, J. (2020, May 13). *Reps clear way as Independent Candidacy Bill passes second reading*. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from Business Day:

<https://businessday.ng/news/article/reps-clear-way-as-independent-candidacy-bill-passes-second-reading/>

⁹ PLAC. (2019, January 6). *EDO REGISTERED VOTERS AND VOTING POINTS*. Retrieved September 14, 2020, from PLAC: https://www.placng.org/situation_room/sr/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/EDO.pdf

¹⁰ Momoh, I.U, & Okoro, C. (2020, July 5). *Edo poll: 483,868 registered voters may not vote over unclaimed PVCs - INEC*. Retrieved September 16, 2020, from Business Day:

<https://businessday.ng/politics/article/edo-poll-483868-registered-voters-may-not-vote-over-unclaimed-pvcs-inec/>

¹¹ McKenna, A. (n.d.). *Edo state, Nigeria*. Retrieved September 16, 2020, from Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Edo-state-Nigeria>

¹² Edo State Government. (n.d.). *Edo People*. Retrieved September 16, 2020, from www.edostate.gov.ng/edo-people/

¹³

Agomuo, Z. (2020, August 10). *Desperate moments in Edo and INEC burden of conducting election in Covid-19 era*. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from Business Day: <https://businessday.ng/politics/article/desperate-moments-in-edo-and-inec-burden-of-conducting-election-in-covid-19-era/>

¹⁴ Buri, F. (2020, July 29). *Voting During COVID-19: What Scares People the Most?* Retrieved September 2, 2020, from IFES: <https://www.ifes.org/news/voting-during-covid-19-what-scares-people-most>

¹⁵ YIAGA Africa. (2020, September). *2020 Edo Election: An election defined by strongarm tactics and violence*. Retrieved September 2, 2020 from https://www.yiaga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/EDO_PREO_ONE.pdf

¹⁶ CDD. (2020, August). *New Allegiances, Familiar Faces A Preview of Edo's 2020 Gubernatorial Election PRE-ELECTION BRIEFING PAPER* . Retrieved September 2, 2020, from CDD: https://mcusercontent.com/c3ea48a61a89cccf2814b1d1/files/58f95361-d1be-419b-b53e-b61aef68ccd9/EDO_STATE_PRE_ELECTIONS_AUGUST_2020_1.0.pdf

¹⁷ The Cable. (2020, August 31). *YIAGA: Politicians buying voters card ahead of Edo election*. Retrieved September 16, 2020: <https://www.thecable.ng/yiaga-politicians-buying-voter-cards-ahead-of-edo-election>

¹⁸ Olufemi, A. (2020, August 30). *IG warns of violence during Edo, Ondo elections*. Retrieved August 2, 2020, from Premium Times. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/411580-ig-warns-of-violence-during-edo-ondo-elections.html>

¹⁹ Idris Umar Momoh, C. (2020, July 2). *Edo Guber: 20,000 persons so far defected to PDP- Aziegbemi*. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from Business Day: <https://businessday.ng/politics/article/edo-guber-20000-persons-so-far-defected-to-pdp-aziegbemi/>

²⁰ NAN. (2020, July 7). *106 ADP members defect to PDP in Edo*. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from The Punch: <https://punchng.com/106-adp-members-defect-to-pdp-in-edo/>

²¹ Okocha, C., Orizu, U., & Emenyonu, A. (2020, August 7). *BreakingLatestNigeria Political Crisis in Edo Deepens as Assembly Speaker is Removed*. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from ThisDay: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/08/07/political-crisis-in-edo-deepens-as-assembly-speaker-is-removed/>

²² PLAC. (n.d.). *Edo Assembly: House of Reps Committee Submits Report*. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from Legist: <http://placng.org/legist/edo-assembly-house-of-reps-committee-submits-report/>

²³ UNDP. (n.d.). *Human Development Report 2019 Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today: Inequalities in human development in the 21st century*. Pp.300-311 Retrieved September 2, 2020, from <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2019.pdf>

²⁴ UNDP. (n.d.). *National Human Development Report 2018: Achieving Human Development in North East Nigeria*. P.84 Retrieved September 2, 2020, from <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/national-human-development-report-2018-nigeria>

-
- ²⁵ Jones, M. (2019, February 4). *Nigeria election 2019: How 'godfathers' influence politics*. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from BBC News: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-47089372>
- ²⁶ Ahmed, F., & Alhaji Ali, M. (2019). Politics of Godfatherism and its Implication on Socio-Economic and Political Development of Nigeria. *American International Journal of Social Science Research*, 4(1), 9-19. <https://doi.org/10.46281/aijssr.v4i1.243>
- ²⁷ <https://placng.org/Legist/edo-governorship-intrigues-deepen/>
- ²⁸ Ibid
- ²⁹ Ibid
- ³⁰ Punch. (2020, June 13). *Edo gov poll: PDP opens door as Obaseki loses APC ticket*. Retrieved September 16, 2020: <https://punchng.com/edo-gov-poll-pdp-opens-door-as-obaseki-loses-apc-ticket/>
- ³¹ <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/09/15/no-individual-group-can-decide-for-edo-people-says-oyegun/>
- ³² <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/south-south-regional/415004-edo-2020-i-cant-determine-who-wins-election-odigie-oyegun.html> ;
<https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/09/15/no-individual-group-can-decide-for-edo-people-says-oyegun/>
- ³³ Edigin, L.U., & Obakhedo, N.O. (2010, December). *Electoral Violence in Nigeria: The Case of the April 14, 2007 Edo State House of Assembly and Governorship Elections*. International Journal of Communication No. 12.
- ³⁴ KDI. (August 2020). *Nigeria Election Violence Report (NEVR) Factsheet 1: Historical View and Current Trends of Electoral Violence in Edo State*. Retrieved September 16, 2020: <https://www.kdi.org.ng/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/KIMPACT-NEVR-FACTSHEET-ON-EdoDecides2020.pdf>
- ³⁵ Royal, D.O. (2020, September 2). *Edo election: PDP, APC reduce campaign to personalities - YIAGA Africa*. Retrieved September 16, 2020, from Vanguard: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/09/edo-election-pdp-apc-reduce-campaign-to-personalities-yiaga-africa/>
- ³⁶ Bello, A. (2020, August 29). *The Brewing Storm in Edo*. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from ThisDay: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/08/29/the-brewing-storm-in-edo/>
- ³⁷ Emwanta, A. (2020, August 1). *Edo 2020: A Pastor, his tigers, lions and the rest of us* . Retrieved September 2, 2020, from Vanguard: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/08/edo-2020-a-pastor-his-tigers-lions-and-the-rest-of-us/>
- ³⁸ David, P. (2020, July 25). *Edo election: APC, PDP supporters clash in Benin*. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from Punch: <https://punchng.com/edo-election-apc-pdp-supporters-clash-in-benin/>
- ³⁹ Affe, M. (2020, September 2). *Edo 2020: Two police officers dead in accident involving Oshiomhole's convoy*. Retrieved September 16, 2020, from Premium Times: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/411936-edo-2020-two-police-officers-dead-in-accident-involving-oshiomholes-convoy.html>
- ⁴⁰ Okocha, C. (2020, September 1). *Survey Predicts Use of Strong Arm Tactics, Violence in Edo*. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from ThisDay: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/09/01/survey-predicts-use-of-strong-arm-tactics-violence-in-edo/>

⁴¹ Human Rights Watch. (2019, June 10). *Nigeria: Widespread Violence Ushers in President's New Term*. Retrieved September 2020: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/10/nigeria-widespread-violence-ushers-presidents-new-term>

⁴²

Emenyonu, A. (2020, September 3). *Seeking Peace, Oba of Benin Chides Obaseki, Ize-Iyamu over Electoral Violence*. Retrieved September 4, 2020, from ThisDay. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/09/03/seeking-peace-oba-of-benin-chides-obaseki-ize-iyamu-over-electoral-violence/>

⁴³ Oyero, K. (2020, September 10). *Obaseki, Ize-Iyamu to sign peace accord Tuesday - INEC*. Retrieved September 16, 2020, from Punch: <https://punchng.com/obaseki-ize-iyamu-to-sign-peace-accord-tuesday-inec/>

⁴⁴ Ukwu, J. (2020, September 11). *Edo governorship election: APC, 5 other political parties sign peace accord*. Retrieved September 16, 2020, from MSN: <https://www.msn.com/en-xl/africa/nigeria/edo-governorship-election-apc-5-other-political-parties-sign-peace-accord/ar-BB18VpE2>

⁴⁵ Okocha, C., Uzoho, P. & Emenyonu, A. (2020, September 16). *Nigeria: Dousing Tension, Obaseki, Ize-Iyamu, Others Commit to Peaceful Election*. Retrieved September 16, 2020, from All Africa: <https://allafrica.com/stories/202009160242.html>

⁴⁶ Based on e-mail exchange with Principal Programme Officer at CDD.

⁴⁷ Ojeme, V., & Eromosele, F. (2020, August 12). *EDO 2020: Reduce growing tension ahead of Edo election - CDD tells politicians*. Retrieved September 15, 2020, from Vanguard: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/08/edo-2020-reduce-growing-tension-ahead-of-edo-election-cdd-tells-politicians/>

⁴⁸ CDD. (2020, August 6). *CSO'S ROUNDTABLE ON THE 2020 OFF-CYCLE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION IN EDO STATE: COMMUNIQUE*. Retrieved September 15, 2020, from CDD: <https://www.cddwestafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CDD-Communique-on-Edo-CSOs-meeting.pdf>

⁴⁹ Olugbuo, B. (2020, June 9). *CLEEN Foundation Launches Election Security Support Centre for Edo and Ondo States Governorship Elections*. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from CLEEN Foundation: <https://cleen.org/2020/06/09/cleen-foundation-launches-election-security-support-centre-for-edo-ondo-states-governorship-elections/>

⁵⁰ PLAC. (n.d.). *Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room*. Retrieved September 2, 2020 from https://www.placng.org/situation_room/sr/about-us/

⁵¹ https://www.placng.org/situation_room/sr/igp-mohammed-adamu-hosted-an-interactive-session-with-situation-room-ahead-of-the-edo-and-ondo-governorship/

⁵² https://www.placng.org/situation_room/sr/dialogue-session-with-inec-resident-electoral-commissioner-in-edo-state-dr-johnson-alalibo/

⁵³ Mma Odi, Executive Secretary, Alliance for Credible, a key member of the CSO Situation Room

⁵⁴ Osamor, I. (2020, May). *INEC to resume preparations for Ondo, Edo governorship elections*. Retrieved September 16, 2020, from AIT Live: <https://ait.live/just-in-inec-resumes-preparations-for-edo-ondo-governorship-elections/>

⁵⁵ Vanguard. (2020, September). *Edo Guber Election: YIAGA releases 1st pre-election findings on political activities*. Retrieved September 16, 2020:

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/09/edo-guber-election-yiaga-releases-1st-pre-election-findings-on-political-activities/>

⁵⁶ Elebeke, E., & Ochayi, C. (2019, August 30). *INEC less transparent 2019, than 2015, 2011- CDD*. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from Vanguard:

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/08/inec-less-transparent-in-2019-than-2015-2011-cdd/>

⁵⁷ INEC. (n.d.). *List of Accredited Domestic and Foreign Observers for the Edo and Ondo Governorship Elections Scheduled for September 19th 2020 and October 10th 2020 Respectively*. Retrieved September 2, 2020: <https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/List-of-Accredited-Domestic-and-Foreign-Observers-for-the-Edo-and-Ondo-Governorship-Elections..pdf>

⁵⁸

Emenyonu, A. (2020, September 3). *Seeking Peace, Oba of Benin Chides Obaseki, Ize-Iyamu over Electoral Violence*. Retrieved September 4, 2020, from ThisDay.

<https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/09/03/seeking-peace-oba-of-benin-chides-obaseki-ize-iyamu-over-electoral-violence/>



**INITIATIVE FOR RESEARCH,
INNOVATION AND ADVOCACY
IN DEVELOPMENT**

©2020 Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development

About the Electoral Hub

The Electoral Hub (E-Hub), an organ of the Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development (**IRIAD**), is a multidisciplinary strategic think-tank which seeks to provide solutions to improve the credibility and integrity of the electoral process. It is conceptualized to complement the roles and activities of the different institutions, stakeholders and drivers of the electoral process and governance. The Electoral Hub's aim is to strengthen electoral governance and accountability in Nigeria through the provision of data and critical analysis supporting the credibility and integrity of the electoral process. We believe that the integrity of the electoral process is crucial in improving the electoral governance architecture and democracy in Nigeria. We also believe in contextual analysis for solutions and rooted in the principles of justice and equity

Our core values are knowledge-exchange, inclusion, justice, equity, transparency and accountability.

Contact

IRIAD- The Electoral Hub

C/O 1 Sankuru Close, Maitama

Phone: +234 8077222801 and +234 9092068680;

Email: info@iriadev.org and electoralhub@gmail.com

Social Media Channels

Twitter: @electoralhub; Instagram: @electoralhub

Facebook: Electoral Hub

Website: <https://electoralhub.iriadev.org>

