

POLITICAL CONTEXT ANALYSIS:
**2021 ANAMBRA GOVERNORSHIP
ELECTION**



The Electoral Hub Political Context Analysis Number 4/2021

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POLITICAL CONTEXT ANALYSIS: 2021 ANAMBRA GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION



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About The Electoral Hub

The Electoral 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. The Electoral Hub complements 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 research, documentation, electoral education, policy and legal influencing and impact advocacy. We believe that the integrity of the electoral process is crucial in improving the electoral governance and sustaining democracy in Nigeria. We also believe in solutions rooted in the principles of justice and equity.

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Acronyms

A	Accord Party
AA	Action Alliance
AAC	African Action Congress
ADC	African Democratic Congress
ADP	Action Democratic Party
ANEP	Anambra Election Project Plan
APC	All Progressives Congress
APGA	All Progressives Grand Alliance
APM	Allied People's Movement
APP	Action People's Party
BP	Boot Party
BVAS	Bi-Modal Voter Accreditation System
CDD	Centre for Democracy and Development
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CTA	Centre for Transparency Advocacy
CVR	Continuous Voter Registration
ICCES	Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IPOB	Indigenous People of Biafra
IRIAD	Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development

KDI	Kim pact Development Initiative
LGA	Local Government Area
LP	Labour Party
MASSOB	Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra
NASS	National Assembly
NCC	Nigerian Communications Commission
NNPP	New Nigeria People’s Party
NRM	National Rescue Movement
PDP	People’s Democratic Party
PLAC	Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre
PRP	People’s Redemption Party
PU _s	Polling Units
PWD _s	Persons with Disabilities
RA _s	Registration Areas
REC	Resident Electoral Commissioner
SCR	Smart Card Reader
SDP	Social Democratic Party
YPP	Young Progressive Party
ZLP	Zenith Labour Party

Executive Summary

The Anambra State governorship election is scheduled to hold on 6 November 2021. In the run up to the election, the political and electoral landscape has been quite heated. From inter-communal conflicts to intra-party rivalry, gun violence to cult-related killings, the atmosphere in Anambra has been very hostile. Coupled with the activities of the separatist group, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), and a high level of voter apathy in the state, there are fears that the election may not hold come November 6, and even if it holds, the quality will be very poor.

Against this background, The Electoral Hub, an organ of the Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD), has produced this political context analysis to help stakeholders understand the contexts in which the Anambra election will be conducted. The following are our observations:

- Although the National Assembly is undergoing a comprehensive constitutional and electoral reform process, these changes are unlikely to come into force before the election. This means that the Anambra election will almost definitely be conducted under the current legal framework consisting of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended), the 1999 Constitution (as amended), and INEC regulations and guidelines.
- Some voters might have been disfranchised because although INEC resumed continuous voter registration online in June and physically a month later in its local government offices, the process was only devolved to ward level in Anambra on the 30th of August. This gave citizens only a week to register at ward level before the process ended.
- The riverine areas in Anambra, particularly the ‘Omambala region’, must be taken into account as they have an impact on election logistics, including access to polling units, delivery of election materials, transportation of election officials, and maintenance of election security.
- Factionalism and intra-party rivalry have been rife within the three major parties in the state: APC, APGA and PDP. This might give other parties, particularly YPP and ZLP, a better chance of winning the election.

- Based on the experience in the Edo and Ondo elections, there is a real risk that COVID-19 protocols will not be followed on election day. This is further worsened by the fact that Nigerians now go about their daily lives without following these rules, and in many public places these rules are no longer strictly enforced.
- Anambra has a trend of low voter turnout, particularly during elections within the state as opposed to presidential elections. This trend is likely to continue and may even worsen during this election, due to factors such as the pandemic, insecurity in the state, and threats from separatist groups.
- Separatist groups, particularly the IPOB, have been issuing incessant sit-at-home orders in the last few months, using violence to ensure widespread compliance. If a sit-at-home order is issued on election day, it could significantly disrupt the election and massively reduce turnout, even if it does not stop the election from holding.
- There is zero level of women, youth and PWD representation among the governorship candidates for the Anambra elections. This raises serious questions about the core democratic principles of inclusivity and representation.
- Insecurity has been rife in Anambra State, with a wave of gun violence, armed robbery, cultism, inter-communal conflicts, kidnapping, and other forms of violence. Despite efforts by various stakeholders to de-escalate tensions, it is clear that insecurity in the state is still rampant. As the elections are fast approaching, efforts at mitigating violence must be accelerated to prevent crisis during the elections.
- Various stakeholders, including CDD, PLAC, Yiaga Africa, Kimpact Development Initiative, Centre for Transparency Advocacy, and The Electoral Hub, have been working to secure the integrity and credibility of the Anambra elections. INEC has also approved 72 domestic observer groups and 5 international observer groups to observe the election. Given that the acceptance of observers is evidence of the openness of the electoral process, there is hope

that CSOs and observers, both local and foreign, will help ensure credibility and integrity.

- While INEC can be commended for innovations, particularly in introducing the BVAS and increasing access to PUs, the setbacks caused by insecurity in the state may affect the conduct of the elections especially in terms of logistics management.

Introduction

The Anambra State governorship election is scheduled to hold on 6 November 2021. In the run up to the election, the political and electoral landscape has been quite heated. From inter-communal conflicts to intra-party rivalry, gun violence to cult-related killings, the atmosphere in Anambra has been very hostile. Coupled with the activities of the separatist group, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), and a high level of voter apathy in the state, there are fears that the election may not hold come November 6, and even if it holds, the quality will be very poor.

Against this background, The Electoral Hub, an organ of the Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD), has produced this political context analysis. In line with the mission of The Electoral Hub to strengthen the electoral process, this pre-election analysis seeks to help stakeholders understand the contexts in which the November 6, 2021 governorship election will be conducted in Anambra 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 Anambra State in particular; as well as the perception of political observers and the electorate about the upcoming election.

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), the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended), and regulations and guidelines of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). This legal framework is in the process of being reformed as the ninth National Assembly is undergoing a comprehensive constitutional and electoral reform process.

In terms of constitutional reform, proposals have been made to establish a National Electoral Offences Commission charged with the responsibility of investigating and prosecuting electoral offenders, establish independent candidacy so that candidates can contest elections without being sponsored by a party, and create special seats for women to increase women representation in the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly. These proposals are likely to improve the electoral process by promoting inclusion, representation, and accountability. However, it must be recognised that these amendments are highly unlikely to be passed before the Anambra elections. This means that the elections will almost definitely be governed by the current provisions in the 1999 Constitution.

In terms of electoral reform, the Electoral Act Amendment Bill 2021, which aims to repeal and replace the Electoral Act 2010, has already been passed by both chambers of the National Assembly. The Bill is currently undergoing harmonisation, which involves reconciling the differences between the House Bill and the Senate Bill. Initially, the main area of controversy in this Bill related to the mode of elections. While both versions gave INEC the discretion to determine the mode of voting, which may include electronic voting, only the House Bill gave INEC the same discretion to determine the mode of transmitting election results. The Senate Bill, on the other hand, stated that “the Commission may consider electronic transmission of results, provided that the national coverage is adjudged to be adequate and secured by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) and approved by the National Assembly”.¹

However, the Senate has now reneged on its decision, giving INEC the discretion to determine the mode of results transmission, whether manual or electronic. The

¹ Section 52(3), Electoral Act Amendment Bill 2021 [Senate version]

Electoral Hub had been canvassing for the use of this language of mode of elections,² as it means that INEC is free to decide which form of results transmission to use based on available financial, technical and human resources. This move by the Senate is therefore commendable and likely to improve the electoral legal framework.

In terms of INEC regulations and guidelines, the advent of COVID-19 also led to INEC issuing a new policy on conducting elections in the context of the pandemic.³ This policy set out guidelines for both election workers and staff to ensure that elections are conducted in line with COVID-19 protocols. Given that the Anambra elections will hold in the context of the pandemic, this policy will also apply.

It is also worth noting that there have been calls for electoral reform in other areas including diaspora voting⁴ and early voting for Nigerians with election-day duties, such as poll workers, emergency workers, security agents, accredited observers, and journalists.⁵ Without these outstanding 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 Anambra governorship election which cannot be ignored.

² See The Electoral Hub. (n.d.). *The Electoral Hub Agenda for Electoral Reform*. <https://electoralhub.iriad.org/the-electoral-hub-agenda-for-electoral-reform/>

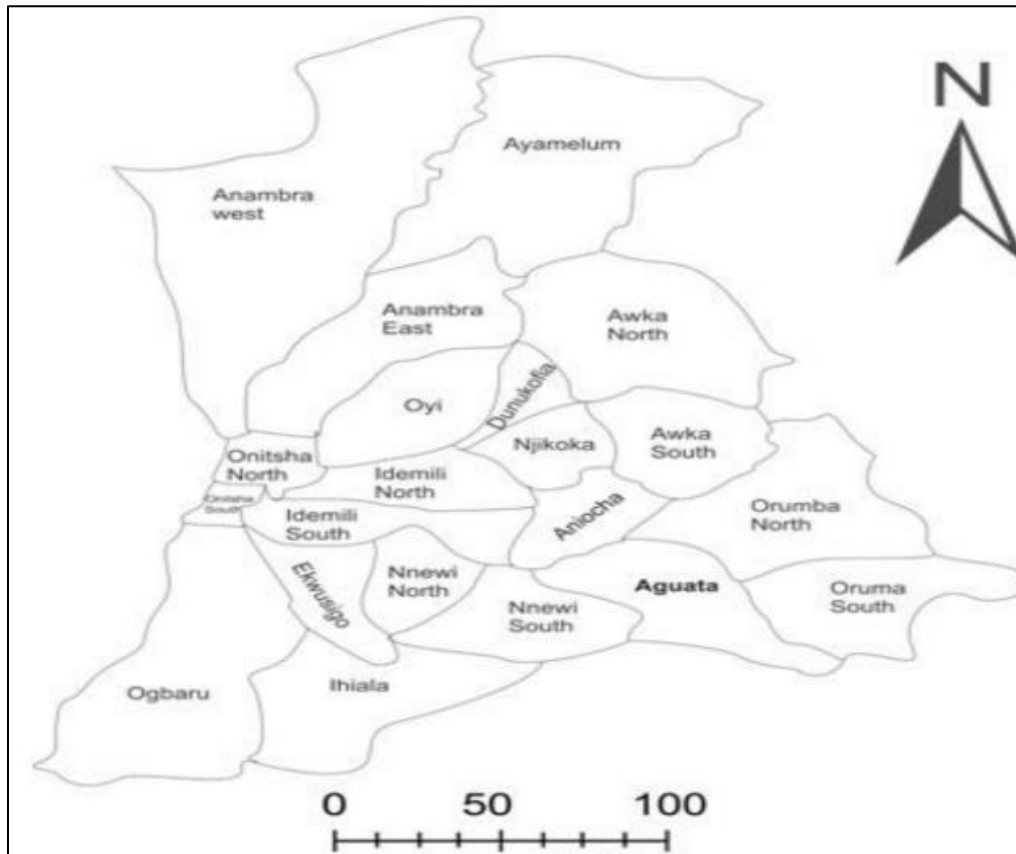
³ INEC. (2020, May 21). *Policy on Conducting Elections in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic* (INEC Policy Number 01/2020). <https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/INEC-POLICY-ON-CONDUCTING-ELECTIONS-IN-COVID19.pdf>

⁴ INEC. (n.d.). *INEC, NASS Make Case For Diaspora Voting*. <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. *West Africa Think Tank (Wathi)*. <https://www.wathi.org/opinion-election-nigeria-2019/2019-presidential-elections-improving-the-electoral-process-in-nigeria/>

Anambra State Electoral System

Nigeria runs a federal system of government where power is shared between the federal government, the 36 state governments and the 774 local governments. As shown in the figure and table below, there are three senatorial districts, 11 federal constituencies, 21 local government areas (LGAs), 326 registration areas (RAs), and 5,720 polling units (PUs) in Anambra State. The number of PUs was increased from 4,608 in 2019 to 5,720 due to INEC's project on increasing access to PUs. However, the number of RAs remained unchanged. Candidates are put forward from each federal constituency to represent Anambra in the House of Representatives; from each senatorial district to represent Anambra in the Senate; and from each LGA to represent the local governments.



*Local Governments in Anambra State.*⁶

⁶ Ezenwaji, E. *et al.* (2014). Spatial Patterns of Residential Water Supply Accessibility Levels in Anambra State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Engineering Research and Applications*, 4(1), 326-336. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259802565>

SEN. DISTRICT	FED. CONST.	LGAs	RAs	PUs	VOTERS
ANAMBRA NORTH	Onitsha North/Onitsha South	Onitsha North	15	313	159,292
		Onitsha South	17	321	161,578
	Oyi/Ayamelum	Oyi	15	207	102,663
		Ayamelum	11	191	87,051
	Anambra East/Anambra West	Anambra East	15	241	98,474
		Anambra West	10	164	62,637
	Ogbaru	Ogbaru	16	383	174,299
	4	7	99	1,820	845,994
ANAMBRA CENTRAL	Awka North/Awka South	Awka North	14	150	72,036
		Awka South	20	390	188,736
	Njikoka/Dunukofia/Anaocha	Njikoka	18	231	103,721
		Dunukofia	14	165	74,882
		Anaocha	19	320	109,860
	Idemili North/Idemili South	Idemili North	12	467	222,441
		Idemili South	12	243	113,598
	3	7	109	1,966	885,274
ANAMBRA SOUTH	Ihiala	Ihiala	20	323	148,407
	Nnewi North/Nnewi South/Ekwusigo	Nnewi North	10	318	154,286
		Nnewi South	20	297	92,411
		Ekwusigo	12	193	85,594
	Orumba North/Orumba South	Orumba North	18	253	93,620
		Orumba South	18	208	75,121
	Aguata	Aguata	20	342	144,764
3	4	7	118	1,934	794,203
GRAND TOTAL	11	21	326	5,720	2,525,471

Source: INEC⁷

⁷ INEC. (n.d.). Name of Senatorial Districts, Federal and State Constituencies Nationwide. <https://www.inecnigeria.org/downloads-all/name-of-senatorial-districts-federal-and-state-constituencies-nationwide/>; Communication with INEC.

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

According to the Constitution, a person shall only be qualified for election to the office of Governor if:

- he/she is a citizen of Nigeria by birth;
- he/she has attained the age of thirty-five years;
- he/she is a member of a political party and is sponsored by that political party; and
- he/she has been educated up to at least School Certificate level or its equivalent.⁸

A simple majority system is used to determine the winner of governorship elections: the winner must have a simple majority (plurality) of the votes cast and at least 25% of votes cast in at least two-thirds of all the local government areas of the state. If no candidate meets these criteria, the top two candidates with the highest number of votes compete in a run-off election until a winner emerges.

Under the 2019 voter register, there were 2,447,996 registered voters in Anambra State.⁹ This has been the highest increase over the years as almost 300,000 people were added to the register.¹⁰ Following the resumption of continuous voter registration by INEC, this number rose to 2,525,471 in 2021, an increase of only 77,475.¹¹

⁸ Section 177, 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended)

⁹ Okeregbe, F. (2021, October 8). Over 2.5 Million Registered Voters Eligible for Anambra Election, Says INEC. *Channels TV*. <https://www.channelstv.com/2021/10/08/over-2-5-million-registered-voters-eligible-for-anambra-election-says-inec/>

¹⁰ Orji, N. (2021, October 8). *Situation Room Dialogue Session with INEC Anambra REC* [Meeting]

¹¹ Okeregbe, F. Over 2.5 Million Registered Voters Eligible for Anambra Election, Says INEC, *op. cit.*

Anambra State Geography

Anambra State was first created in 1976 from the former East Central State, and later divided in 1991 when Enugu was carved out of the state.¹² Anambra is bounded on the north by Kogi State, on the east by Enugu State, on the southeast by Abia State, on the south by Imo and Rivers States, and on the west by Delta and Edo States.¹³ Awka is the capital city of Anambra.

A major geographical feature of Anambra that might affect the elections is the presence of riverine areas. *Omambala*, the Igbo name of the Anambra River and the inspiration for the name 'Anambra', flows through the state.¹⁴ The local settlements within the shores of the Omambala are referred to as the 'Omambala region'.¹⁵ The region comprises of three LGAs: Ayamelum, Anambra East and Anambra West. These areas are highly prone to flooding, particularly during the rainy season.

The geography of Anambra State is interesting to consider as it has an impact on election logistics, including access to polling units, delivery of election materials, transportation of election officials, and maintenance of election security. Some of the riverine areas are inaccessible by land, which makes transportation and access to polling units difficult. Problems also arise in terms of election security and the deployment of appropriate security personnel such as the navy to safeguard the areas within and around the rivers. Without adequate security, such areas could become breeding grounds for political thuggery and electoral violence.

It is therefore paramount to take the geography of Anambra State into account for election planning purposes. Adequate time should be given for longer transportation routes in those riverine areas such as Ayamelum, Anambra East and Anambra West. At the same time, adequate preparation should be made to safeguard such riverine areas.

¹² Government of Anambra State. (n.d.). *History*. <https://anambrastate.gov.ng/history/>

¹³ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2013, June 27). Anambra. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Anambra>

¹⁴ Anambra State Association Calgary. (n.d.). *History of Anambra State*. <https://www.asacalgary.com/history-of-anambra-state/>

¹⁵ Efobi, K. & Anierobi, C. (2013). Impact of Flooding on Riverine Communities: The Experience of The Omambala and Other Areas in Anambra State, Nigeria. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development* 4(18), 58-62. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292988932>

Anambra State Electorate

Anambra State has an electorate with an ethnic composition largely from the Igbos, with a small population from the Igalas who live mostly in Anambra West LGA.¹⁶ As shown in the table below, based on the 2006 census Anambra State had a population of 4,177,828 (projected to have risen to 5,527,809 in 2016).¹⁷ It should be noted, however, that these figures were highly disputed at the time, and in any case they are now outdated since no census has been held since 2006. Given the fast rate of urbanisation in the state, it is clear that the population of Anambra is much higher today.

S/N	LGA	Population	Male	Female	Regd. Voters
1	Aguata	369,972	187,262	182,710	144,764
3	Anambra East	152,149	77,539	74,610	98,474
4	Anambra West	167,303	85,833	81,470	62,637
5	Anaocha	284,215	142,961	141,254	109,860
6	Awka North	112,192	57,219	54,973	72,036
7	Awka South	189,654	96,902	92,752	188,736
2	Ayamelum	158,152	81,065	77,087	87,051
8	Dunukofia	96,517	49,476	47,041	74,882
9	Ekwusigo	158,429	80,053	78,376	85,594
10	Idemili North	431,005	219,223	211,782	222,441
11	Idemili South	206,816	105,830	100,986	113,598
12	Ihiala	302,277	152,200	150,077	148,407
13	Njikoka	148,394	73,869	74,525	103,721

¹⁶ Anambra State Association Calgary. *History of Anambra State, op. cit.*

¹⁷ National Bureau of Statistics. (n.d.). *National Population Estimates*. <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/read/474>

14	Nnewi North	155,443	77,517	77,926	154,286
15	Nnewi South	233,362	118,532	114,830	92,411
16	Ogbaru	223,317	115,678	107,639	174,299
17	Onitsha North	125,918	61,588	64,330	159,292
18	Onitsha South	137,191	71,348	65,843	161,578
19	Orumba North	172,773	84,996	87,777	93,620
20	Orumba South	184,548	93,199	91,349	75,121
21	Oyi	168,201	85,694	82,507	102,663
TOTAL		4,177,828	2,117,984	2,059,844	2,525,471

Source: National Bureau of Statistics¹⁸ and INEC⁹

Onitsha, a bustling city in Anambra, is the hub of the state's commerce and industry.²⁰ There are many large markets in Anambra coupled with an abundant skilled labour force and entrepreneurial ability.²¹ It is therefore no surprise that trading is a major occupation in the state. Due to the presence of the Omambala, as discussed in the previous section, fishing is also a major occupation.

Religion also has a strong influence on Anambra's electorate. The Anglican and Catholic Churches have strong followings and religious leaders can massively influence the polity. This socio-economic context will have a huge impact on the level of public support for each candidate.

Youth also form a large part of Anambra's electorate. According to a study carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics and the Federal Ministry of Youth Development, in 2012 there were over 2 million youth in Anambra,²² and this number is likely to

¹⁸ National Bureau of Statistics. (2011). *Annual Abstract of Statistics*. http://istmat.info/files/uploads/53129/annual_abstract_of_statistics_2011.pdf

¹⁹ Based on communication with INEC staff

²⁰ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. Anambra, *op. cit.*

²¹ Government of Anambra State. *History, op. cit.*

²² National Bureau of Statistics and Federal Ministry of Youth Development. *2012 National Baseline Youth Survey*. https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/pdfuploads/2102%20National%20Baseline%20Youth%20Survey%20Report_1.pdf

have increased since then. Youth will play a huge role in these elections, not just in terms of voting, but also in terms of serving as ad hoc staff. INEC has stated that about 26,000 ad hoc staff will be required to conduct the election. Tertiary institutions in the state, including Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Federal Polytechnic, Oko, Nwafor Orizu University of Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), and Anambra State Polytechnic, provide a large pool of youth who can be mobilised to fill this role.

Political Environment

The 2021 off-cycle governorship election in Anambra will be the seventh governorship election in the state since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999. During the governorship elections in this period, the polity in Anambra has always been heated and contentious. Indeed, it has been noted that "Anambra State is the only state that paraded five governors under controversial circumstances from 1999 to 2007, including one who spent just 14 days in Office".²³

In the run up to the election, the political environment has been rife with voter apathy, separatist movements, and intra-party rivalry. One unique feature about this election is that, unlike previous elections in Anambra, this election will be conducted in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This section will explore these various features of Anambra's political environment and the implications for the elections.

COVID-19 Pandemic

The Edo and Ondo elections last year were the first major elections to be conducted in Nigeria during the pandemic. In preparation for the elections, INEC and the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) released guidelines for the conduct of elections during the pandemic.²⁴ These guidelines included the mandatory use of face masks, social distancing, a two-tier queueing system for crowd control, use of sanitisers, and other COVID-19 protocols. Candidates and political parties were also encouraged to use digital forms of campaigning as opposed to organising large physical rallies. However, the reality is that these rules were hardly followed before, during, and after the elections.²⁵

Given that the Anambra election scheduled for 6 November 2021 will also occur in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, these guidelines are still applicable. There is

²³ Hassan, I. & Iroanusi, Q. (2017, November 16). Anambra Election: 10 major things to know. *Premium Times*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/249600-anambra-election-10-major-things-know.html>

²⁴ INEC. *Policy on Conducting Elections in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic*, op. cit.; NCDC. (n.d.). Guidelines for Conducting Elections During the COVID-19 Outbreak in Nigeria. <https://covid19.ncdc.gov.ng/media/files/ElectionsDuringCOVID-19July2020.pdf>

²⁵ See The Electoral Hub. (2020). *Deepening Democracy: Lessons from Edo State 2020 Governorship Election* (Electoral Hub Technical Paper 1/2020). <https://electoralhub.iriad.org/deepening-democracy-lessons-from-edo-state-2020-governorship-election/>; The Electoral Hub. (2020). *Deepening Democracy: Lessons from Ondo State 2020 Governorship Election* (Electoral Hub Technical Paper 2/2020). <https://electoralhub.iriad.org/deepening-democracy-lessons-from-ondo-state-2020-governorship-election/>

a strong likelihood that the COVID-19 rules will be violated even more explicitly during this election. This is due to the fact that many Nigerians now go about their daily lives without following these rules, and in many public places these rules are no longer strictly enforced. With Anambra State having recorded over 2,000 lab confirmed cases of COVID-19,²⁶ and the dominance of the Delta variant of the virus in Nigeria,²⁷ there is a real danger of a spike in cases following the election if the COVID-19 guidelines are not adhered to.

Voter Apathy

Another feature of Anambra elections is voter apathy. During the 2013 governorship elections in the state, voter turnout was just 26.3%,²⁸ and this figure dropped to 22.16% during the 2017 elections.²⁹ Against the context of the pandemic, fears of contracting the virus may discourage some voters who are otherwise willing from coming out to vote, particularly if they are not assured that COVID-19 protocols will be strictly followed. The insecurity in the state may also further discourage turnout. In a study conducted by Kimpact Development Initiative, 63% of respondents indicated that violence might affect citizens' willingness to vote in the elections.³⁰ These factors raise concerns about participation and legitimacy of government.

Interestingly, it has been noted that “Anambra people are more interested in election at the centre and not the election in their state”.³¹ According to the Anambra State Resident Electoral Commissioner, Dr Nkwachukwu Orji, this represents not voter apathy but a form of protest by non-voting.³² In his analysis, Anambra people are politically aware but their refusal to participate in elections at the state level is a form of protest.

²⁶ NCDC. (n.d.). *COVID-19 Nigeria*. Retrieved October 14, 2021, from <https://covid19.ncdc.gov.ng/report/>

²⁷ COVID-19 Delta variant most dominant in Nigeria – Ehanire. (2021, September 13). *Punch Newspapers*. <https://punchng.com/covid-19-delta-variant-most-dominant-in-nigeria-ehanire/>

²⁸ INEC. (n.d.). *Anambra Governorship Concluded Election, November 30, 2013. Declaration of Results*. <https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/ANAMBRA-GOV.-ELECTION-DECLARATION-for-website.pdf>

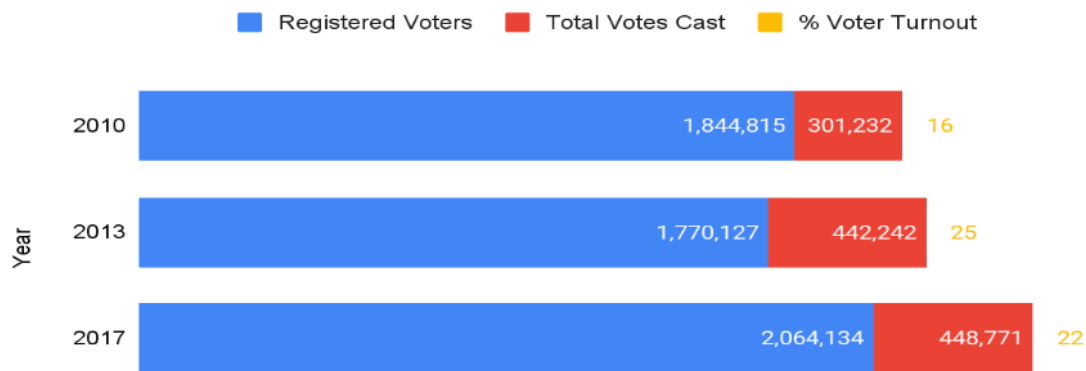
²⁹ Owoseye, A. (2017, November 9). Only 22 per cent voters partook in Anambra election – INEC. *Premium Times*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/250009-22-per-cent-voters-partook-anambra-election-inec.html>

³⁰ KDI. (2021). *Current Waves of Violence Unconnected from Anambra Election, op. cit.* <https://www.kdi.org.ng/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/KDI-ANAMBRA-ESRA-REPORT-FIRST.pdf>

³¹ Tony Okafor. (2021, September 16). Anambra has the worst record of election apathy, says Yiaga. *Punch Newspapers*. <https://punchng.com/anambra-has-the-worst-record-of-election-apaty-says-yiaga/>

³² Orji, N. (2021, October 8). *Situation Room Dialogue Session with INEC Anambra REC* [Meeting]. Dr. Orji is also a scholar of elections and have written extensively on Nigeria elections.

Anambra State Governorship Election Figures (2010-2017)



Source: CDD and Dataphyte³³

Separatist Movements

The political environment in Anambra is further complicated by the separatist movements within the state. Separatist groups in the South East have manifested in several ways, including the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Indeed, it has been claimed that apart from these two groups, there are more than 30 other separatist organisations in the South East.³⁴ The group that has been most vocal in Anambra recently is IPOB.

The arrest of IPOB leader, Nnamdi Kanu, further heightened tensions. In the last few months, IPOB has been issuing incessant sit-at-home orders with the use of violence to ensure widespread compliance.³⁵ There is widespread fear that IPOB could issue a sit-at-home order on election day, which would drastically reduce turnout. Some speculate that elections may not hold if a sit-at-home order is issued. However, others have noted that a sit-at-home order can only affect turnout but will not prevent elections from holding. The implication of this is that even if a sit-at-home order is issued, no matter how few people come out to vote, the election will still hold.

³³ Amata, D. (2021, October 7). Trend and Threats against Voter Turnout in Anambra's November 6 Governorship Election. *Dataphyte*. <https://www.dataphyte.com/development/trend-and-threats-against-voter-turnout-in-anambra-november-6-governorship-election/>

³⁴ Ehigiator, K. (2021, October 6). S-East killings: 'There're over 30 separatist groups in South-East'. *Vanguard*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/10/s-east-killings-therere-over-30-separatist-groups-in-south-east/>

³⁵ Daily Post Nigeria. (2021, September 18). Anambra election: IPOB sit-at-home, insecurity threaten exercise as citizens lose faith in govt's protection. *Break News*. <https://breakngrnews.com/2021/09/18/anambra-election-ipob-sit-at-home-insecurity-threaten-exercise-as-citizens-lose-faith-in-govts-protection/>

Nevertheless, it could lead to a crisis of legitimacy whereby the next Governor is elected on the mandate of a very small number of people. Thus, a sit-at-home order on election day, even if it does not prevent elections from holding, would have disastrous effects on the Anambra State government.

Parallels can be drawn with the 2017 election, when IPOB members chanted on the streets, “No referendum, no election” and “If you vote you will die. Don’t go out, stay in your house”.³⁶ It is believed that if the group similarly issues threats such as this during this year, voter turnout would reduce drastically.

Although the federal government has warned that it will not allow any separatist group to disrupt the election,³⁷ it is unclear how it intends to do this. Indeed, such threats only intensify the tensions further by creating a hostile atmosphere between the citizen and the state.

Factionalism and Intra-Party Rivalry

Within the three major parties in the state – APC, PDP, and APGA – there have been tensions. These tensions arose from the primaries which raised questions over the legitimacy of the emerging candidates. APC held direct primaries, which saw Andy Uba emerging as the winner. However, other aspirants claimed that the election never held and one of the aspirants, Dr George Moghalu, even sued Uba and APC.³⁸ Nevertheless, Uba has been presented by INEC as the rightful APC candidate.

In the PDP, two parallel indirect primaries were conducted, which produced two different candidates. It is reported that while the PDP’s electoral committee was harmonising delegates’ lists, a faction led by Chukwudi Umeaba held a primary.³⁹ The candidate endorsed by the electoral committee was Valentine Ozigbo, while Ugochukwu Uba was elected candidate of the Umeaba-led faction. There have been conflicting court orders regarding who should be recorded as the rightful candidate. Indeed, in the initial list of candidates presented by INEC in July 2021, the slot for

³⁶ Hassan, I. & Iroanusi, Q. Anambra Election: 10 major things to know, *op. cit.*

³⁷ Jimoh, A. (2021, September 10). We’ll Not Allow IPOB Disrupt Anambra Governorship Election – NSA. *Daily Trust*. <https://dailytrust.com/well-not-allow-ipob-disrupt-anambra-govship-nsa>

³⁸ Court Dramas Rocking APGA, APC, PDP Primaries Ahead of Anambra Election. (2021, July 26). *This Day*. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/07/26/court-dramas-rocking-apga-apc-pdp-primaries-ahead-of-anambra-election/>

³⁹ Ibid

PDP was left blank with a remark, ‘court order’.⁴⁰ However, following a later court order, INEC presented Ozigbo as the PDP candidate in the final list of candidates released.⁴¹

APGA is divided between three factions: one led by Chief Victor Oye, another led by Edozie Njoku who is the National Chairman, and another led by Jude Okeke.⁴² The Oye faction elected Professor Chukwuma Soludo as the party candidate, the Njoku faction elected Njoku, while the Okeke faction elected Chukwuma Michael Umeoji.⁴³ These factions went back and forth in the courts trying to get a favourable judgment for their candidate, until a final court order directed INEC to present Soludo as the rightful APGA candidate.

Many observers have speculated that the crises within the APC, PDP and APGA might deny them the governorship and give other parties within the state a better chance of winning the election.⁴⁴ Other parties that have been recognised as having a strong chance of winning the elections are the YPP, with Senator Ifeanyi Ubah as its candidate, and the ZLP, with Okonkwo Obiora Francis as its candidate.⁴⁵ These parties have been largely crisis-free, which gives them a better chance at winning the polls.

⁴⁰ INEC. (n.d.). *List of Candidates for Anambra State Governorship Election Scheduled for 6th November 2021*. <https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/LIST-OF-CANDIDATES-FOR-THE-ANAMBRA-GOVERNORSHIP-ELECTION.pdf>

⁴¹ INEC. (2021, August 19). *Candidates for the Anambra Governorship Election* [Press release]. <https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Anambra.pdf>

⁴² Court Dramas Rocking APGA, APC, PDP Primaries Ahead of Anambra Election, *op. cit.*

⁴³ Ibid; Tony Okafor. (2021, July 4). Tony Okafor writes on the crises rocking the APC, APGA and the PDP in Anambra State following the rancorous primaries held ahead of the state’s governorship poll scheduled to hold in November. *Punch Newspapers*. <https://punchng.com/anambra-gov-primaries-and-novembers-epic-battle/>

⁴⁴ Ayitogo, N. (2021, July 5). Anambra: Internal crises in APC, APGA, PDP may shape November governorship poll. *Premium Times*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/471681-anambra-internal-crises-in-apc-apga-pdp-may-shape-november-governorship-poll.html>; Court Dramas Rocking APGA, APC, PDP Primaries Ahead of Anambra Election, *op. cit.*; Tony Okafor. Tony Okafor writes on the crises rocking the APC, APGA and the PDP in Anambra State following the rancorous primaries held ahead of the state’s governorship poll scheduled to hold in November, *op. cit.*; Eze, M. Anambra guber: How parties, candidates stand, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ Eze, M. (2021, September 21). Anambra guber: How parties, candidates stand. *The Sun*. <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/anambra-guber-how-parties-candidates-stand/>; Tony Okafor. Tony Okafor writes on the crises rocking the APC, APGA and the PDP in Anambra State following the rancorous primaries held ahead of the state’s governorship poll scheduled to hold in November, *op. cit.*

Zoning

Another issue that has surfaced is zoning, whereby the position of Governor is rotated among the three senatorial districts. During the 2017 governorship elections, APC, APGA, and PDP all zoned their governorship candidate to Anambra North.⁴⁶ During this election, the zoning has gone to Anambra South, as Valentine Ozigbo of PDP, Chukwuma Soludo of APGA, Andy Uba of APC, and Ifeanyi Ubah of YPP all come from Anambra South. The exception is Obiora Okonkwo of ZLP who comes from Anambra Central.

⁴⁶ Hassan, I. & Iroanusi, Q. Anambra Election: 10 major things to know, *op. cit.*

Contesting Political Parties

Political parties are indispensable to the electoral process in Nigeria as membership of one and sponsorship by same is a requirement for running for political office. APGA has a large stronghold in Anambra State, having produced the Governor of the state since 2006. Prior to 2006, PDP was the dominant party in the state, having produced the Governor in 1999 and 2003. PDP still has a standing in the state, having produced two of the three Senators in 2019 (Anambra Central and Anambra North).⁴⁷ In the House of Representatives, there is an almost even split between PDP and APGA, with 6 members from the former and 5 from the latter.⁴⁸ The Anambra State House of Assembly is dominated by APGA, with 24 members compared to PDP's 6.⁴⁹

APC is poorly represented in Anambra as it has never produced the Governor, and it is not currently represented in the National Assembly delegation from Anambra, or in the Anambra State House of Assembly. Nevertheless, as the ruling party at the federal level, it wields a significant level of influence across the country, which includes Anambra State.

YPP is also emerging as a strong party in the state, having produced the Senator for Anambra South (Ifeanyi Ubah) in 2019. Ubah, who is still serving as a Senator, is also running for this governorship election. Although the ZLP is relatively unknown in the state, the personality of its candidate, Obiora Okonkwo, has improved its popularity.⁵⁰

Candidates have been presented by all eighteen registered political parties for the Anambra governorship election. The candidates and the parties are as follows:

S/N	PARTY	CANDIDATE	SEX	AGE	PWD
1	Accord Party (A)	Maduka Godwin O.	M	62	No
2	Action Alliance (AA)	Etiaba Bennet Chukwuogo	M	57	No
3	African Action Congress (AAC)	Nwankwo Wilson Chidozie	M	55	No
4	African Democratic	Akachukwu Sullivan Nwankpo	M	59	No

⁴⁷ INEC. (2020). *Report of the 2019 General Election*. INEC.

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Eze, M. Anambra guber: How parties, candidates stand, *op. cit.*

	Congress (ADC)				
5	Action Democratic Party (ADP)	Prince Ume-Ezeoke Afam Luke Douglas	M	51	No
6	All Progressives Congress (APC)	Emmanuel Andy Nnamdi Uba	M	62	No
7	All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA)	Charles Chukwuma Soludo	M	60	No
8	Allied People's Movement (APM)	Onyejegbu Geoffrey Okwudili	M	48	No
9	Action People's Party (APP)	Azubuike Philip Echetebe	M	50	No
10	Boot Party (BP)	Chika Jerry Okeke	M	47	No
11	Labour Party (LP)	Agbasimalo Obiora Emmanuel	M	39	No
12	New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP)	Ohajimkpo Leonard Emeka	M	50	No
13	National Rescue Movement (NRM)	Ezenwafor Afamefuna Victor	M	45	No
14	People's Democratic Party (PDP)	Valentine Chineto Ozigbo	M	50	No
15	People's Redemption Party (PRP)	Nnamdi Nwawuo	M	45	No
16	Social Democratic Party (SDP)	Uzoh Obinna Chukwudum Godwin	M	58	No
17	Young Progressive Party (YPP)	Ifeanyi Patrick Ubah	M	49	No
18	Zenith Labour Party (ZLP)	Okonkwo Obiora Francis	M	55	No

Source: INEC⁵¹

From the table above, it is evident that there is no female governorship candidate. Interestingly, in the initial list of candidates presented by INEC in July 2021, there were two female candidates: Doreen Ifeoma Maduka-Arisa of the AA and Adaobi Uchenna Okpeke of the NRM.⁵² However, as many as 7 governorship and 11 deputy governorship candidates were substituted by 11 of the 18 parties.⁵³ AA and NRM were

⁵¹ INEC. *Candidates for the Anambra Governorship Election*, op. cit.

⁵² INEC. *List of Candidates for Anambra State Governorship Election Scheduled for 6th November 2021*, op. cit.

⁵³ INEC. *Candidates for the Anambra Governorship Election*, op. cit.

part of the parties that substituted their candidates, leading to the removal of the only two women candidates. This is a huge decline from the 2017 governorship elections when there were up to five women candidates.⁵⁴

In terms of youth representation, the story is similar. There were initially two candidates below the age of 40: Ekene Alex Nwankwo of the Accord Party (age 37) and Agbasimalo Obiora Emmanuel of the LP (age 39).⁵⁵ However, these candidates were replaced with older people.

None of the initial candidates was a person with disability (PWD) and the situation has not changed with the substitution. Thus, there is zero level of women, youth, and PWD representation among the governorship candidates for the Anambra elections. This raises serious questions about the core democratic principles of inclusivity and representation.

⁵⁴ Jonathan, S. (2021, August 18). A drop in female contestants and other things to know about forthcoming Anambra Gubernatorial Elections. *Dubawa*. <https://dubawa.org/a-drop-in-female-contestants-and-other-things-to-know-about-forthcoming-anambra-gubernatorial-elections/>

⁵⁵ INEC. (n.d.). *List of Candidates for Anambra State Governorship Election Scheduled for 6th November 2021*, op. cit.

Main Political Actors

Willie Obiano is the incumbent Governor of Anambra State under the platform of APGA. He has served for two terms in Anambra and is thus prohibited from contesting these elections. As incumbent Governor, he wields significant power in the state. However, there has been mass dissatisfaction with his performance in government, which may reduce support for another APGA candidate during these elections.

Chukwuma Soludo, the APGA candidate for the election, is an Economics Professor and a former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria. Although APGA has been the dominant party in Anambra since 2006, the party's reducing popularity since the election of Obiano may affect his standing. It has also been observed that Soludo, as a businessman, is detached from real politicking. There were also problems with the primaries that brought him as the APGA candidate. Some factions within the party favoured Edozie Njoku as the party candidate, while others favoured Chukwuma Michael Umeoji. All of these problems stand in Soludo's way as he contests the governorship seat.

Valentine Ozigbo, the PDP candidate for the election, is the immediate past President and CEO of Transcorp Plc. The primaries that brought Ozigbo as the PDP candidate were laced with many problems. Following many conflicting court orders, some favouring Senator Ugochukwu Uba and others favouring Ozigbo, INEC was finally directed to present Ozigbo's name as the party candidate. However, it has been noted that due to the problems with the primaries, even if PDP emerges victorious at the polls, it may still not come into power due to the litigations that will arise.⁵⁶

Andy Uba, the APC candidate for the election, was elected Governor of Anambra State in 2007. However, he only served for 14 days as he was removed by a Supreme Court decision stating that his predecessor, Peter Obi, still had three years left to serve in his tenure. Uba was later elected as a Senator representing Anambra South in 2011. He defected from PDP to APC in 2017,⁵⁷ and contested the APC primaries for the Anambra elections. However, 11 of the 13 other aspirants accused him of

⁵⁶ Eze, M. Anambra guber: How parties, candidates stand, *op. cit.*

⁵⁷ Sen Andy Uba dumps PDP, defects to APC. (2017, February 1). *Vanguard*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/02/sen-andy-uba-dumps-pdp-defects-apc/>

manipulating the process.⁵⁸ In addition to this internal crisis, the resentment for the ruling APC government at the centre within the South East including Anambra may affect Uba's standing as an APC candidate in this election.⁵⁹

Ifeanyi Ubah, the YPP candidate for the election, is the current Senator for Anambra South. The primaries that produced Ubah were crisis-free. He emerged through voice acclamation and there was no opponent in the contest.⁶⁰ Capitalising on this, Ubah and the YPP took APC and PDP to court asking the court to nullify their primaries for failing to comply with statutory provisions.⁶¹ Although the primaries have not been nullified, these crises within other parties give Ubah a better standing.

Obiora Okonkwo, the ZLP candidate, is the Chairman of United Nigeria Airlines, The Dome Entertainment Limited, and other companies.⁶² Although ZLP is not as popular as other parties in the state, some speculate that the personality of Okonkwo as an astute businessman and entrepreneur, and his antecedents in creating businesses and employing workers, have made him a top contender.⁶³ The fact that ZLP has also been relatively crisis-free during this election, compared to APC, PDP and APGA, has also increased Okonkwo's chances in the election. However, he is the only one of the top five contenders who does not come from Anambra South. Due to the informal zoning arrangement in the state, this might affect his level of support.

⁵⁸ Okafor, T. (2021, June 29). Uba's emergence fraudulent, allege 11 Anambra APC gov aspirants. *Punch*. <https://punchng.com/ubas-emergence-fraudulent-allege-11-anambra-apc-gov-aspirants/>

⁵⁹ Eze, M. Anambra guber: How parties, candidates stand, *op. cit.*

⁶⁰ Ovat-Awka, M. (2021, June 20). How Ifeanyi Ubah Emerged YPP Candidate for Anambra Guber Election. *Nigerian Tribune*. <https://tribuneonline.com/how-ifeanyi-ubah-emerged-ypp-candidate-for-anambra-guber-election/>

⁶¹ Jimoh, A.M. (2021, July 11). Anambra: Ifeanyi Ubah's YPP drags PDP, APC to court over validity of candidates. *The Guardian*. <https://guardian.ng/news/anambra-ifeanyi-ubahs-ypp-drags-pdp-apc-to-court-over-validity-of-candidates/>

⁶² OBIORA OKONKWO: Why We Established United Nigeria Airlines. (2021, February 28) *This Day*. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/02/28/obiora-okonkwo-why-we-established-united-nigeria-airlines/>; Uba, J. & Onyebukwa, V. (2019, December 21). My dome story – Dr Obiora Okonkwo. *The Sun*. <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/my-dome-story-dr-obiora-okonkwo/>

⁶³ Eze, M. Anambra guber: How parties, candidates stand, *op. cit.*

(In)Security

Insecurity has been rife in Anambra State, with a wave of gun violence, armed robbery, cultism, inter-communal conflicts, kidnapping, and other forms of violence. Interestingly, some observers have speculated that the current violence in Anambra state is not election-related, but triggered by IPOB activities, youth unemployment, corruption, police brutality, and poverty.⁶⁴ Whatever the cause of violence, it is clear that such a hostile atmosphere will affect the elections in a significant way.

Gun Violence

Reports of gun violence, frequently referred to as killings by ‘unknown gunmen’, have recently filled the airwaves. One particularly shocking event was the killing of Dr Chike Akunyili, a renowned medical doctor and the husband of the late Professor Dora Akunyili, by gunmen.

Earlier this year, the APGA candidate, Soludo, escaped death during a political meeting and although he was unhurt, three police officers attached to him were killed.⁶⁵ More recently, gunmen attacked the venue of an APGA rally, during which they engaged Governor Obiano’s security convoy in a shootout that lasted over one hour.⁶⁶ A soldier was shot during the shootout, and there were unconfirmed reports that at least six people were killed with several others injured.⁶⁷

Ultimately, it is estimated that no fewer than 175 persons, including soldiers, police and civilians, have lost their lives in the South East within the last six months due to the insecurity that has engulfed the region.⁶⁸

Armed Robbery and Cultism

Added to the activities of unknown gunmen are armed robbery and cultism. It is reported that armed robbers consisting of youths have seized on the insecurity in the state to have a free reign, moving from street to street and robbing shops and

⁶⁴ KDI. *Current Waves of Violence Unconnected from Anambra Election*, *op. cit.*

⁶⁵ Njoku, L. (2021, October 5). Insecurity, killings threaten Anambra governorship election. *The Guardian*. <https://guardian.ng/politics/insecurity-killings-threaten-anambra-governorship-election/>

⁶⁶ Ujumadu, V. (2021, October 11). Breaking: Gunmen attack APGA rally, engage Obiano’s convoy in shootout, kill many in Anambra. *Vanguard*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/10/breaking-gunmen-attack-apga-rally-engage-obianos-convoy-in-shootout-kill-many-in-anambra/>

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ Sunday, N. (2021, October 12). [VIDEO] INSECURITY: Anambra guber candidate takes campaign to Lagos. *Vanguard*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/10/insecurity-anambra-guber-candidate-takes-campaign-to-lagos/>

residential buildings in broad daylight.⁶⁹ Earlier in the year, a commercial tricycle rider popularly known as Prince was killed, and preliminary investigations by the police revealed that it was a cult-related clash.⁷⁰ These acts of armed robbery and cult killing have further increased insecurity in the state.

Inter-Communal Conflicts

Inter-communal conflict within the state has further exacerbated these problems. For example, Anaku and Omor, two communities in Ayamelum LGA, have had long standing issues. In May 2021, there was a conflict between these two communities which resulted in at least three people dying.⁷¹ Indeed, INEC initially wanted to have one registration centre in Omor and Anaku due to their proximity. However, due to the conflict, the Commission had to create one registration centre in each community.⁷² Earlier this year, there was also a conflict between the Aguleri and Umuleri communities. Although no lives were lost, at least one building, four vehicles and two motorcycles were burned.⁷³ These inter-communal conflicts further contribute to an atmosphere of violence that might make the conduct of the Anambra elections difficult.

Kidnapping and Other Forms of Violence

Kidnapping has also become a huge problem in the state. Towards the end of September, the former Acting State Chairman of PDP, Dan Ulasi, was kidnapped alongside his driver at Nnewi, although they were released several hours later.⁷⁴ Around the same time, the governorship candidate of LP, Obiora Agbasimelo, was declared missing, fuelling speculations that he was kidnapped.⁷⁵ This was also confirmed by the party Chairman. Less than three weeks to the election, Agbasimelo has still not been found. This is particularly worrying, given that he has been in the kidnappers' den for over a month, has not been seen in public, and may not even be released until the election is over. The implication is that the Labour Party has very

⁶⁹ Cultists, Armed Robbers Worsen Insecurity in Anambra. (2021, July 21). *This Day*. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/07/21/cultists-armed-robbers-worsen-insecurity-in-anambra/>

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ NAN. (2021, May 16). Police confirm 3 dead in Anambra inter-communal clash. *The Guardian*. <https://guardian.ng/news/police-confirm-3-dead-in-anambra-inter-communal-clash/>

⁷² Orji, N. (2021, October 8). *Situation Room Dialogue Session with INEC Anambra REC* [Meeting]

⁷³ Aguleri, Umuleri at War Again. (2021, January 20). *This Day*. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/01/20/aguleri-umuleri-at-war-again/>

⁷⁴ Ojoko, I. (2021, October 6). Annals of anarchy: Who will vote in Anambra election? *The Cable*. <https://www.thecable.ng/annals-of-anarchy-who-will-vote-in-anambra-election>

⁷⁵ Nzeagwu, U., Osibe, O. & Omolaoye, S. (2021, September 29). Anambra LP guber candidate's whereabouts unknown. *The Guardian*. <https://guardian.ng/politics/anambra-lp-guber-candidates-whereabouts-unknown/>

limited chances of winning this election. This reveals the severity of the insecurity in the state.

Apart from kidnapping, it has also been recognised that other forms of violence have surfaced in the state to varying degrees. These include kidnapping/abduction, farmer-herder crises, terrorism, ritual killings, religious crises, and arson.⁷⁶ For example, INEC's offices in Anambra have been exposed to criminal attacks, and the Awka office was burned in May 2021, leading to huge loss. This has set back the Commission's ability to prepare for the elections, as discussed later in this paper.

Ultimately, due to insecurity in the state, many candidates have suspended their campaigns and even taken them to other states. Most citizens are scared to come out of their houses. The INEC Chairman, Professor Mahmood Yakubu, has even stated that there might be a constitutional crisis in the state if the Commission is unable to conduct elections due to insecurity.⁷⁷ It is therefore imperative to take measures to prevent violence and de-escalate the situation.

⁷⁶ KDI. *Current Waves of Violence Unconnected from Anambra Election, op. cit.*

⁷⁷ Omolaoye, S. (2021, September 30). INEC worries about insecurity in Anambra alerts on impending constitutional crisis. *The Guardian*. <https://guardian.ng/news/inec-worries-about-insecurity-in-anambra-alerts-on-impending-constitutional-crisis/>

Efforts at Mitigating Violence

The National Security Adviser, Major-General Babagana Monguno, stated that the Federal Government would counter the security threat to the election through deployment of security operatives.⁷⁸ However, this is unlikely to be an effective measure, as the use of force during elections does not do much to prevent violence.

Moreover, such statements are unlikely to allay citizens' fears. This can be illustrated with the sit-at-home orders. Although Governor Willie Obiano has frequently urged citizens to go about their daily businesses regardless of the sit-at-home orders, citizens have continued to comply due to fear and lack of faith in the government's protection.⁷⁹

On the part of INEC, it had an emergency meeting with political parties on October 8, where it warned parties against resorting to violence and intimidation in their electioneering.⁸⁰ INEC has also been conducting Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) meetings to assess the security level and identify preventive measures.

CSOs have also made peace interventions in the form of advocacy and engagement with stakeholders. Examples are CDD, PLAC and Situation Room, and Yiaga Africa, which have been engaging INEC, security agencies, traditional rulers, and the media to ensure credible and peaceful elections in the state.

A group called the Association of Anambra State Development Union also organised an event called the Nzuko Umunna with Anambra Governorship Candidates, which Ben Etiaba of AA, Godwin Maduka of the Accord Party, Akachukwu Nwankpo of ADC, Valentine Ozigbo of PDP, and Obiora Nwankwo of ZLP in attendance.⁸¹ During this event, the candidates assured that security of lives and properties would be their topmost priority.

There has also been establishment of local security outfits such as in Emma Nnaemeka Street, a neighbourhood in Awka, where leaders of the area have

⁷⁸ We will counter threat to Anambra election, says NSA. (2021, September 10). *The Nation*. <https://thenationonline.net/we-will-counter-threat-to-anambra-election-says-nsa/>

⁷⁹ Daily Post Nigeria. Anambra election: IPOB sit-at-home, insecurity threaten exercise as citizens lose faith in govt's protection, *op. cit.*

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Sunday, N. [VIDEO] INSECURITY: Anambra guber candidate takes campaign to Lagos, *op. cit.*

employed private security to ensure security in the area.⁸² In Onitsha and Nnewi, the traditional rulers of the areas have established security agencies and funded them with operational vehicles, arms and ammunition.⁸³

Despite these efforts, it is clear that insecurity in the state is still rampant. During a Situation Room Dialogue Session with the INEC Anambra REC on 8 October 2021, it was suggested that there is need for deeper engagement with stakeholders. However, the problem is that time is running out. As the elections are fast approaching, efforts at mitigating violence must be accelerated to prevent crisis during the elections.

⁸² Cultists, Armed Robbers Worsen Insecurity in Anambra, *op. cit.*

⁸³ Ibid

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. Some of the CSO support and contributions towards enhancing the electoral process in Anambra include:

a) Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)

CDD has been conducting work on the Anambra elections through advocacy and engagement with stakeholders. In September 2021, the CDD team went to Anambra to study the political environment and engage with stakeholders including INEC, security agencies, the media, and traditional rulers.⁸⁴ CDD has also been countering misinformation and disinformation which have the propensity to disrupt the electoral process through its “Fact Checker” publications on social media and its website. This will enable the electorate, including those in Anambra, to make proper and informed decisions.

b) Situation Room

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room, convened by the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC), is a coalition of more than 70 CSOs which maximise their various resources for information sharing, anticipation of problems during elections and responding rapidly when they occur.⁸⁵ In preparation for the Anambra elections, the Situation Room has been organising roundtables and dialogue sessions with key stakeholders including CSOs, INEC, and security agencies to address issues in the Anambra election.

c) Yiaga Africa

Yiaga Africa runs a variety of election-related programmes, including Ready to Run, The Power of 18, Watching the Vote, and Fix Elections NG. Prior to the Anambra elections, Yiaga Africa has been:⁸⁶

- Mobilising students in Anambra to register to vote.

⁸⁴ Information gathered from CDD’s Twitter page: <https://twitter.com/cddwestafrica>

⁸⁵ PLAC, *Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room*. Available at: https://www.placng.org/situation_room/sr/about-us/

⁸⁶ Information gathered from Yiaga Africa’s Twitter page: <https://twitter.com/yiaga>

- Conducting advocacy for credible and peaceful elections in Anambra by engaging the media, security agencies, and political parties.
- Discussing electoral issues surrounding the Anambra elections through its radio programme on Ogene FM, Anambra.
- Producing pre-election observation reports to highlight trends around the Anambra elections.
- Training election observers through its Parallel Vote Tabulation Academy.

d) Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI)

KDI carries out extensive work in relation to elections in Nigeria, including trainings, advocacy meetings with stakeholders, and voter education. Prior to the Anambra election, KDI produced an election security risk assessment titled *Current Waves of Violence Unconnected from Anambra Election*. This is an in-depth pre-election assessment aimed at determining the possible causes and effects of violence during the Anambra elections, identifying the potential perpetrators of election violence, and making appropriate recommendations.⁸⁷

e) Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA)

CTA is a consortium of CSOs birthed with the purpose of providing unbiased, independent and transparent assessment of public institutions in Nigeria.⁸⁸ Prior to the Anambra elections, CTA has been supporting the electoral process through stakeholders' engagements particularly with traditional rulers and grassroots organisations⁸⁹, reports on electoral issues, and statements urging stakeholders to conduct a peaceful and credible election. CTA has been approved by INEC to observe the Anambra elections.

f) The Electoral Hub

The Electoral Hub carries out work on elections through research, documentation, policy and law influencing, public education, and impact advocacy. In order to enable stakeholders, understand the electoral landscape, power dynamics, and security

⁸⁷ KDI. *Current Waves of Violence Unconnected from Anambra Election*, op. cit.

⁸⁸ Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA). https://twitter.com/cta_abj

⁸⁹ Conversation with the executive director

situation in the Anambra State, The Electoral Hub⁹⁰ has produced this political context analysis. This will be followed by a results analysis after the election to highlight strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations for the future.

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

⁹⁰ The Electoral Hub is also a member organization of CSO Situation Room

Role of INEC

INEC, as the primary electoral umpire in the country, will oversee and conduct the Anambra governorship election. In preparation for the Anambra election, INEC has done the following:

1. Introduction of BVAS

INEC introduced the Bi-Modal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) to replace the Smart Card Readers (SCR) which were used previously. Unlike the SCR which could only use fingerprint recognition, the BVAS makes use of two biometric features: fingerprint recognition and facial recognition. Furthermore, the BVAS serves three functions: voter registration, voter accreditation, and uploading of election results. The BVAS was successfully tested during the Isoko I constituency by-elections for the Delta State House of Assembly and will be used during the Anambra election. This is likely to improve transparency and credibility during the election.

2. Increasing Access to PUs

INEC also embarked on a project to increase access to polling units, and the Anambra elections will be the first election conducted with new polling units. As many as 1,112 PUs were added to the 4,608 PUs that existed previously, making a total of 5,720 PUs now.⁹¹ This should ensure easier access for voters and reduce long queues and wait times.

3. Voter Registration

Having earlier suspended continuous voter registration (CVR), INEC resumed the process prior to the elections. INEC innovatively began the CVR exercise virtually in June 2021 through the cvr.inecnigeria.org platform, before physical registration, biometrics, and distribution of PVCs in INEC LG offices resumed a month later. On 30 August 2021, CVR was devolved to the 326 wards in Anambra State.⁹² During this resumption of CVR, as many as 77,475 people were registered, thus increasing the

⁹¹ Orji, N. (2021, October 8). *Situation Room Dialogue Session with INEC Anambra REC* [Meeting]

⁹² INEC. (2021, August 26). *Devolution of the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) Exercise to Ward Level in Anambra State* [Press release]. <https://inecnigeria.org/devolution-of-the-continuous-voter-registration-cvr-exercise-to-ward-level-in-anambra-state/>

number of registered voters in the state to 2,525,471.⁹³

However, it is likely that some people were disfranchised because the devolution to ward level only lasted for one week before CVR ended on 5 September. Indeed, it has been noted that most of the 77,475-people registered within that final week when CVR was devolved to ward level.⁹⁴ The Civil Liberties Organisation called for CVR to be extended for fear that many voters would be disfranchised.⁹⁵ Unfortunately, INEC could not extend it because it is limited by law which says voter registration shall stop not later than 60 days before an election.⁹⁶

Following the CVR, INEC undertook a clean-up of the voter register, during which they discovered that 62,698 people had already registered previously (excluding the 77,475 mentioned above).⁹⁷ The double registrations were removed accordingly.

4. Planning and Internal Capacity Building

Commendably, INEC has also been doing internal capacity building to ensure readiness for the election. The Commission's Anambra office launched the Anambra Election Project Plan (ANEP) as a way to domesticate INEC's Election Monitoring and Support Centre at the national level.⁹⁸ In terms of planning for the elections, INEC has also been engaging fleet owners to ensure that they have a fallback in terms of transportation.⁹⁹ This level of planning and internal capacity building should improve the Commission's ability to conduct the election.

5. Other Activities

Other activities of the Commission which are done in every election cycle include publishing the notice of elections, publishing the final list of candidates, engagement with stakeholders, election and party monitoring, accreditation of journalists and election observers, registration of party agents, and recruitment and training of ad hoc staff. Some of these processes were migrated online, as INEC created portals to enable

⁹³ Orji, N. (2021, October 8). *Situation Room Dialogue Session with INEC Anambra REC* [Meeting]

⁹⁴ Ibid

⁹⁵ NAN. (2021, September 6). CLO urges INEC to extend CVR registration deadline in Anambra. *The Guardian*. <https://guardian.ng/politics/clo-urges-inec-to-extend-cvr-registration-deadline-in-anambra/>

⁹⁶ Section 9(5), Electoral Act 2010 (as amended)

⁹⁷ Okeregbe, F. Over 2.5 Million Registered Voters Eligible For Anambra Election, Says INEC, *op. cit.*

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ Orji, N. (2021, October 8). *Situation Room Dialogue Session with INEC Anambra REC* [Meeting]

interested journalists, election observers, and ad hoc staff apply online. In terms of election and party monitoring, INEC was able to effectively monitor party primaries but not campaigns and campaign financing since most of the candidates have not done much campaigning due to insecurity in the state.¹⁰⁰

Some of the stakeholders INEC has continued to engage with are NASS, CSOs, security agencies, political parties, and the media. These engagements are aimed at ensuring a peaceful and credible election in Anambra. To ensure readiness for the elections, INEC is also in the process of training Electoral Officers, Assistant Electoral Officers, Supervisory Presiding Officers, and other poll workers. The effectiveness of these trainings will have an impact on how effectively the elections are conducted.

Despite these achievements, INEC has faced many setbacks in the run up to the Anambra elections. The Commission's role has been complicated by insecurity in the country, particularly in Anambra State. For example, INEC lost three offices in Nnewi and two other local governments during the #EndSARS protests last year, some of its offices were exposed to burglary and criminal attacks, and the Awka office was burned in May 2021.¹⁰¹ In addition to the items that were lost due to burglary, the burning of the Awka office led to the loss of 60% of non-sensitive materials for the election, including 326 generating sets and several Hilux vehicles.¹⁰² INEC had to rebuild the office and replace the lost materials which not only had cost implications but also affected its timeline for the election. The sit-at-home orders issued by IPOB have also affected the Commission's ability to prepare for the election, as it is now operating under a reduced work week.¹⁰³ All of these issues might affect the conduct of the elections, particularly in terms of logistics management.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹ Orji, N. (2021, October 8). *Situation Room Dialogue Session with INEC Anambra REC* [Meeting];

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/464658-timeline-41-inec-offices-attacked-in-two-years.html>

¹⁰² Omeiza Ajayi. (2021, October 8). Don't compound security woes in Anambra, INEC warns parties. *Vanguard*.

[https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/10/dont-compound-security-woes-in-anambra-inec-warns-parties/;](https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/10/dont-compound-security-woes-in-anambra-inec-warns-parties/)

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/05/anambra-guber-inec-loses-50-of-non-sensitive-materials-in-fire-attacks/>

¹⁰³ IPOB Sit-At-Home order may affect Anambra governorship election – INEC. (2021, September 17). *Premium Times*.

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/485400-ipob-sit-at-home-order-may-affect-anambra-governorship-election-inec.html>

Election Observers

Electoral observation is an integral part of democratic and electoral processes. Observers play important roles in enhancing the transparency and credibility of elections and, in the acceptance of election results.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, the acceptance of observers is evidence of the openness of the electoral process. Observers' election assessment also legitimises elected administration.

INEC has approved 72 domestic observer groups and 5 international observer groups.¹⁰⁵

The international observers are:

- British High Commission
- European Union
- International Foundation for Electoral Systems
- National Democratic Institute
- US Consulate General (Mission Nigeria)

The domestic observers are:

- Advocacy for Quality Leadership and Health Awareness Foundation
- Advocates for Peoples Right & Justice
- Africa for Millenium Change Initiative
- Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria (CCFN) (Justice Development and Peace Commission)
- Centre for Civic Education (TMG)
- Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)
- Centre for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD)
- Centre for Credible Leadership & Citizens Awareness
- Centre for Grassroot Development and Crime Prevention
- Centre for Positive Change and Civic Responsibility

¹⁰⁴ African Union. (2013). *Election Observation Manual*. <https://www.eisa.org.za/pdf/au2014EOMmanual.pdf>

¹⁰⁵ INEC (n.d.). *List of Accredited Domestic and Foreign Observer Groups for Anambra State Governorship Election Scheduled for 6th November,2*. <https://inecnigeria.org/list-of-accredited-domestic-and-foreign-observer-groups-for-anambra-state-governorship-election-scheduled-for-6th-november2/>

- Centre for Strategic Conflict Management
- Centre for Strategy, Ethics and Value
- Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA)
- Citizens' Rights and Leadership Awareness Initiative
- CLEEN Foundation
- Committee for the Defence of Human Rights
- Committee of Youth on Mobilization and Sensitization
- Education, Social and Health Mission (Mesh)
- Foundation for Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth
- Future Leaders Global Initiative
- Global Development Centre for Rescue Mission in Nigeria
- Global Hope and Justice for the Less Privileged
- Global Initiative for Africa Development
- Global Policy Advocacy & Leadership Initiative
- Grassroot Development and Peace Initiative
- Grassroot Development Centre for Peace and Social Justice
- Grassroots Accountability Advocacy Foundation
- Grassroots Empowerment Initiative for Positive Change and Development
- Human Rights Monitor
- Ilimi Wal Hikmah Islamic Foundation
- Inclusive Friends Association
- Initiative for Promotion of Civic Obligation and Sustainable Peace
- Initiative for Youth Transformation & Positive Change
- Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution
- Intercontinental Leadership Initiative
- International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Nigeria
- International Organisation for Sustainable Development
- International Peace and Civic Responsibility Centre (IPCRC)
- International Peace Commission
- International Standard Centre for Development
- Kimpact Youth Development Initiative
- National Committee of Patriots
- National Council for Women Societies Nigeria
- National Orientation Agency

- National Human Rights Commission
- National Institute for Legislative & Democratic Studies
- New View Global Initiative for Youth and Women Development
- Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre)
- Nigeria Bar Association
- Noble Coordinators Forum for the Advancement of Ethics and Values
- Northern Patriotic Front
- Organisation of Justice for Equity Sustenance
- Orient Foundation for Social Justice and Civic Education
- Patriotic Women Foundation
- Police Service Commission
- Polling Unit Ambassadors of Nigeria (PUAN Vocational Care Initiative)
- Progressive Youth's Initiative
- Society for Equity, Justice and Peace (SEJUP) Anglican Communion
- Sustainable Initiative for Nurturing Growth (SING)
- The Albino Foundation
- The Presidency Auda-Nepad Nigeria
- The Adaobi Enemuoh Initiative for Development
- Waterlight Save Initiative
- Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre
- Women Arise for Change Initiative
- Women's Right and Peace Protection Initiative For Africa
- Womenfest For Betterlife Living Initiative
- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Nigeria
- Yiaga Africa
- Youth and Students Advocates for Development Initiative (YSAD)
- Youth Initiative for Better and Great Nigeria
- Zaram Life Foundation

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

Conclusion

From observations of the current dynamics in Anambra State, it can be inferred that:

- a. Constitutional and electoral reforms, while underway, might not have an impact on the Anambra elections due to the delays in passage;
- b. Some voters might have been disfranchised due to the limited time within which CVR was devolved to ward level;
- c. The geography of Anambra, particularly the presence of riverine areas, must be taken into account for election planning purposes;
- d. Internal crises within the APC, APGA and PDP might give other parties, such as YPP and ZLP, a stronger standing during the election;
- e. There is a real risk that COVID-19 protocols will not be followed on election day;
- f. The trend of low voter turnout is likely to continue, and may even worsen, during this election;
- g. Separatist movements within the state could significantly disrupt the election, particularly if a sit-at-home order is issued on election day;
- h. There is zero level of women, youth and PWD representation among the governorship candidates;
- i. There are obvious and logical concerns over plans for violent activities that may undermine public safety and security;
- j. There is hope that CSOs and observers, both local and foreign, will help ensure credibility and integrity; and
- k. While INEC can be commended for innovations, particularly in introducing the BVAS and increasing access to PUs, the setbacks caused by insecurity in the state may affect the conduct of the elections especially in terms of logistics management.



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