



# **POLITICAL CONTEXT ANALYSIS: 2020 SENATORIAL DISTRICTS BYE-ELECTIONS**

ELECTORAL HUB POLITICAL CONTEXT ANALYSIS No.3 (2020)

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# Introduction

On 5 December 2020, by-elections are scheduled to hold in six senatorial districts and nine state constituencies due to the resignation or death of members in these offices.<sup>1</sup> These elections have been postponed twice – first because of the coronavirus pandemic,<sup>2</sup> and later because of insecurity in the country.<sup>3</sup>

This paper analyses the political context of the states in which senatorial elections are scheduled to hold: Bayelsa, Cross River, Imo, Lagos, and Plateau States. It first considers the activities of key stakeholders, including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) observing these elections, before analysing each state in detail. The issues that are discussed include:

- electoral statistics;
- geography;
- electorate;
- political environment;
- contesting political parties;
- main political actors; and
- security concerns.

This paper also draws common themes and observations from these states, using them to make recommendations for different stakeholders including INEC, CSOs, security agencies, political parties, the legislature, the judiciary, the media, and voters.

This paper can be used by stakeholders to understand the electoral statistics of the relevant states, the contexts in which the by-elections will occur, the security concerns, and the roles that they can play to improve the integrity and credibility of the elections on 5 December and beyond.

# Activities of Key Stakeholders

Election stakeholders have important roles to play in ensuring that elections are free, fair, and credible. This section will outline the activities that have been undertaken by INEC and CSOs in preparation for the upcoming by-elections.

## INEC

INEC, as the main electoral management body (EMB) in Nigeria, has the responsibility of overseeing and supervising the conduct of the upcoming elections. INEC has faced setbacks in preparation for these elections, including the emergence of the novel coronavirus pandemic as well as the destruction of its offices in the aftermath of the #EndSARS protests. These setbacks resulted in the elections being postponed twice. However, INEC has on several occasions given the assurance that it is now fully prepared to conduct the elections.<sup>4</sup>

The following are some of the activities conducted by INEC in preparation for the elections:

- From 10-12 November 2020, INEC held virtual meetings with political parties, CSOs, the media, and Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) to discuss, among other things, a new date for the postponed by-elections.<sup>5</sup>
- On 25 November, INEC met with the REC for Bayelsa.<sup>6</sup>
- On 25 November, INEC met with the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) in INEC Lagos office.<sup>7</sup>
- On 27 November, Acting Chairman, Ahmed Mu'azu and National Commissioner Festus Okoye met with Heads of Department, Electoral Officers, and members of ICCES in Imo.<sup>8</sup>
- On 27 November, the National Commissioner in charge of South South, Barr Agbamuche-Mbu visited INEC Cross River State for readiness assessment.<sup>9</sup>

- Additionally, in each senatorial district INEC has recruited and trained thousands of ad-hoc staff on election and COVID-19 protocols.<sup>10</sup>

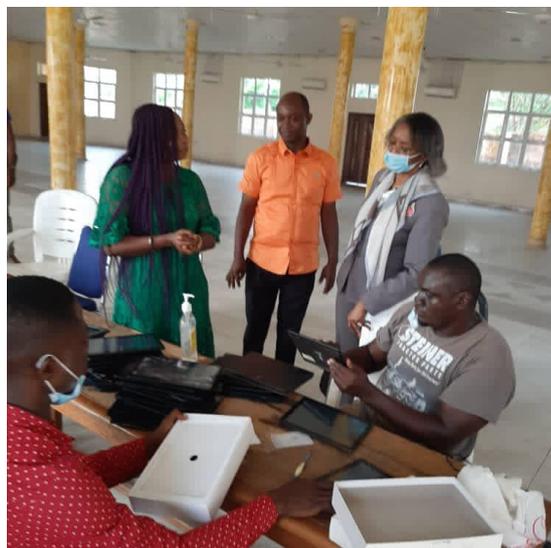
It is also noteworthy that these meetings and trainings were conducted in line with COVID-19 principles, as shown by the wearing of masks (see pictures below) and use of virtual alternatives where possible.



*Training of ad-hoc staff in Bayelsa<sup>11</sup>*



*INEC meeting with ICCES, Lagos<sup>12</sup>*



*Barr Agbamuche-Mbu conducting readiness assessment in INEC Cross River<sup>13</sup>*

## CSOs

CSOs play a critical role in elections through research, voter education, advocacy for electoral reform, capacity building of key institutions, and election observation. At least 62 CSOs have sent observers to observe the upcoming by-elections. The following are the names of the approved election observer groups:

- Africa Initiative for Sustainable and Positive Development
- Alumni Association of the National Institute
- Better Community Life Initiative
- Centre for Credible Leadership and Citizens Awareness
- Center for Grassroot Development & Crime Prevention
- Center for Good Leadership Initiative
- Center for Policy Advocacy and Leadership Development
- Centre for Positive Change and Civic Responsibility
- Center for Strategic Conflict Management
- Center for Social Advancement
- Center for Strategic Ethic and Value
- Center for the Sustenance of Civil Rules in Africa
- Citizens Right for Peace and Good Leadership Initiative
- Citizens Right and Leadership Awareness Initiative
- Center for Transparency and Advocacy
- Conscience Women of Africa Initiative
- Committee of Youth on Mobilization and Sensitization
- Coalition of Democrats for Electoral Reform
- Creative Moral Value Impact Initiative
- Diaspora Advocacy for A New Dawn Initiative in Nigeria
- Forum of Nigerian Ministers and Workers of God
- Future Leaders Global Initiative
- Global Development Center for Rescue Mission in Nigeria
- Global Hope and Justice
- Global Policy Advocacy and Leadership Initiative
- Good Governance Awareness Initiative
- Grassroot Accountability Advocacy Foundation
- Grassroot Development and Peace Initiative
- International Organization for Sustainable Development
- Intercontinental Leadership Initiative
- Initiative for Promotion of Civic Obligation and Sustainable Peace
- Initiative for Youth Transformation and Positive Change
- International Standard Center for Development
- Nigeria Progressive Women and Youth Development Initiative
- Noble Coordinators Forum for the Advancement of Ethics and Values

- Northern Patriotic Front
- New Nation Foundation for Global Development
- Mission for Education, Social and Health
- Organization of Justice for Equity Sustenance
- Police Service Commission
- Policy Advocacy and Integrity Network Nigeria
- Polling Unit Ambassador of Nigeria
- Patriotic Women Foundation
- Progressive Youths and Development Initiative
- Reconciliation and Peace Development Center
- Society for Gender Equality, Educational Advancement & Struggles Against Educational Justice
- Society for Advancement of Credible Leadership Ideas & Observation
- Society for the Protection of Human Right Development
- The Hope of Nigeria Mind-shift Initiative
- The Millennium Foundation for Sustainable Development
- United Human Rights & Philanthropy Foundation International
- Vote-count Campaign Organization
- Voters Union
- Water Light Save Initiative
- Women's Right and Peace Protection Initiative for Africa
- Wheel of Hope Human Rights Foundation
- Women Fest for Better Life Living Initiative
- Yiaga Africa
- Youth Education on Human Right and Civic Responsibility
- Youth and Student Advocates for Development Initiative
- Youth Initiative for Better & Great Nigeria
- Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC)

Election observation helps to enhance the transparency and credibility of elections, as well as promote acceptance of election results.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the acceptance of observers is evidence of the openness of the electoral process. Observers' election assessment also legitimises an elected administration. The presence of these observer groups will therefore help to improve the integrity and credibility of the by-elections.

# Electoral Statistics

The following are the electoral statistics for the six senatorial districts with upcoming elections:

S/N	STATE	SENATORIAL DISTRICT	LGAs	RAs	PUs	REG. VOTERS
1	Bayelsa	Bayelsa Central	3	43	788	418,109
2	Bayelsa	Bayelsa West	2	26	396	234,649
3	Cross River	Cross River North	5	51	565	429,488
4	Imo	Imo North	6	64	692	389,245
5	Lagos	Lagos East	5	71	1,928	1,343,448
6	Plateau	Plateau South	6	68	712	671,209

Source: YIAGA<sup>15</sup>

# BAYELSA STATE

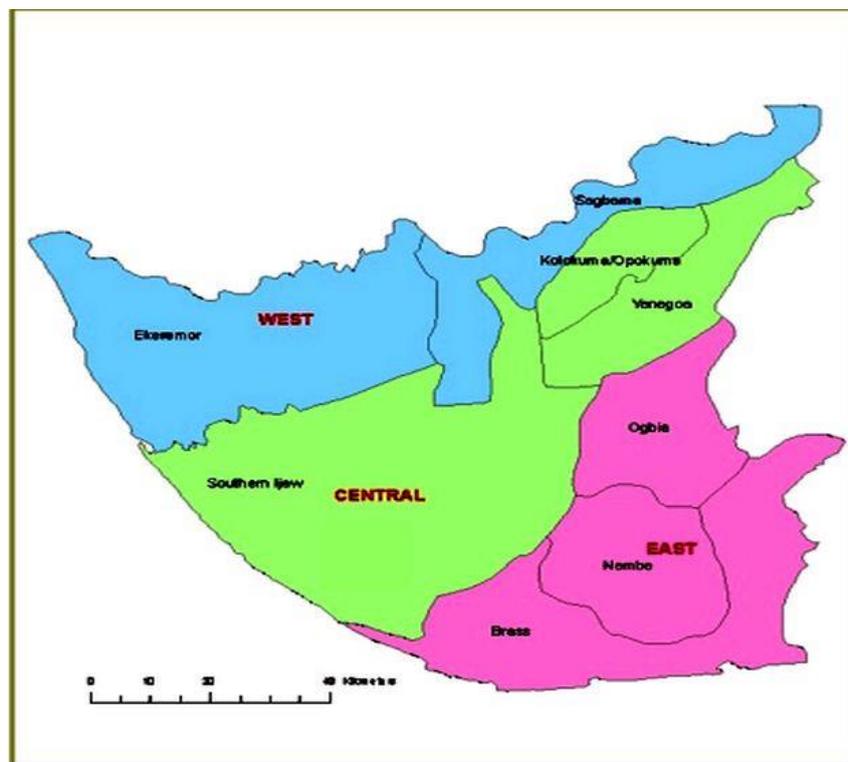


# Bayelsa State

Bayelsa State was created in 1996 from the old Rivers State. It is located in the Niger Delta region of South-South Nigeria, and is bounded to the north by Delta State, to the east by Rivers State, and to the south and west by the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>16</sup> Its capital city is Yenagoa. Home to the Oloibiri community where oil was first discovered in Nigeria in 1956, Bayelsa State has one of the largest crude oil and natural gas deposits in Nigeria and is also one of the greatest producers of oil and gas products in the country.<sup>17</sup>

## Electoral Statistics

There are three senatorial districts in Bayelsa State: Bayelsa East, Bayelsa Central, and Bayelsa West. The by-elections will hold in Bayelsa Central and Bayelsa West. Bayelsa Central has 43 registration areas (RAs), 788 polling units (PUs), and 418,109 registered voters.<sup>18</sup> Bayelsa West has 26 RAs, 396 PUs, and 234,649 registered voters.<sup>19</sup>



*Map of Bayelsa State Senatorial Districts<sup>20</sup>*

SEN. DISTRICT	FED. CONST.	LGAs	RAs	PUs
BAYELSA CENTRAL	Kolokuma/ Opokuma/ Yenagoa	Kolokuma/ Opokuma	11	144
		Yenagoa	15	219
	Southern Ijaw	Southern Ijaw	17	425
	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>788</b>
BAYELSA WEST	Sagbama/ Ekeremor	Sagbama	14	198
		Ekeremor	12	198
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>26</b>

Source: INEC<sup>21</sup>

### Geography

Bayelsa State is entirely formed of abandoned beach ridges with many tributaries of the River Niger traversing the state.<sup>22</sup> The presence of the River Niger, coupled with the high level of rainfall in the state, has made flooding a major problem. Indeed, it has been noted that “almost every part of the state is under water at one time of the year or another”.<sup>23</sup>

This level of flooding in Bayelsa has implications for transportation routes. Road transport is poor because of ecological problems including flooding, while water transport is poor because flooding incidents lead to continual changing of river courses and render rivers useless as good channels of transportation.<sup>24</sup>

These geographical features of Bayelsa State are important for election logistics. In making preparations for the delivery of election materials and the transportation of election officials to polling units, INEC should consider the likelihood of flooding and the poor transportation routes, including the fact that many communities are completely surrounded by water. During the 2019 governorship election in the state, the flood in LGAs like Sagbama (Bayelsa West), Yenagoa, and Kolokuma/Opokuma (Bayelsa Central) led to delays. In Sampou community in Kolokuma/Opokuma, INEC officials were delayed for over two hours before accessing the polling units in the area.<sup>25</sup> INEC officials, journalists and election observers had to use canoes to access the polling units.

To avoid these transportation problems re-occurring in the upcoming by-elections, alternative routes should be explored before election day if

possible; otherwise, adequate time should be given for the arrival of material and officials, taking into account the impact of flooding.

The geography of Bayelsa State is also important in terms of election security. If coastal areas are not adequately secured, they could be used for violence and electoral malpractices. For example, in Koluama in Southern Ijaw (Bayelsa Central), an agreement over vote sharing formula between APC and PDP could not be reached during the 2019 governorship election. This led to the ballot papers and boxes being thrown into the sea.<sup>26</sup> Thankfully, INEC officials were protected by the Nigerian Navy, who whisked them to safety following the incident.<sup>27</sup> It is therefore highly crucial to ensure that security agencies such as the Navy are adequately deployed to safeguard election materials and protect election officials around coastal areas.

### The Electorate

Bayelsa is a multi-ethnic state comprised of many ethnic groups such as Kolokunu, Gbarain-Ekpetiama, Atissa-Epie, Biseni, Nembe, Ogbia, and Ogboin.<sup>28</sup> Each ethnic group has its own dialect. The four main languages spoken are Izon, Nembe, Epie-Atissa, and Ogbia.<sup>29</sup> However, the official language is English.

The table below shows the population breakdown of LGAs in Bayelsa Central and Bayelsa West.

SEN. DISTRICT	LGA	Pop.	Male	Female
<b>BAYELSA CENTRAL</b>	Kolokuma/Opokuma	79,266	39,952	39,314
	Southern Ijaw	321,808	165,329	156,479
	Yenagoa	352,285	182,240	170,045
	<b>3</b>	<b>753,359</b>	<b>387,521</b>	<b>365,838</b>
<b>BAYELSA WEST</b>	Ekeremor	269,588	137,753	131,835
	Sagbama	186,869	95,667	91,202
	<b>2</b>	<b>456,457</b>	<b>233,421</b>	<b>223,037</b>

*Source: National Bureau of Statistics<sup>30</sup>*

The local population of Bayelsa engages in fishing on a subsistence and commercial level, while the Bayelsa State government is otherwise the main employer of labour in the state.<sup>31</sup>

The people of Bayelsa State are highly educated, with an adult literacy rate of 74.9% in 2010.<sup>32</sup> This is reflective of the fact that the state has many tertiary institutions, including Federal University Otuoke, Niger Delta

University, University of Africa, Bayelsa State College of Arts and Science, and Bayelsa Medical University.

However, agitation and violence relating to oil exploration and unsustainable exploitation of resources have, according to Ibaba, “constrained productivity, wealth creation and poverty reduction”.<sup>33</sup> This has led to poor sustainable development in the state, as evidenced by the poor road and transportation system. Therefore, as part of their campaigns to win public support, candidates including Peremobowei Ebebi of the APC have promised to work with the federal government to bring development to the state, which includes finishing road projects.<sup>34</sup>

### **Political Environment**

The need for a by-election in Bayelsa State arose following the nullification of the election of David Lyon as Governor on 14 February 2020. Senator Duoye Diri, who at the time was representing Bayelsa Central in the Senate, was declared Governor because he had the next highest number of votes. Diri’s running mate, Senator Lawrence Ewhrudjako, who was representing Bayelsa West in the Senate, was also declared Deputy Governor. This made the seats for Bayelsa Central and Bayelsa West vacant.

### **Implications of the pandemic**

The Bayelsa by-election will be conducted by INEC during the coronavirus pandemic. The election had already been postponed in March due to the pandemic,<sup>35</sup> and it is evident that the pandemic will inevitably have a huge effect on the elections, in terms of the way political campaigns and voting on election day are conducted, as well as the likely impact on voter turnout. In this light, INEC and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) have issued guidelines and policy documents regarding the conduct of elections in the context of the pandemic.<sup>36</sup> These documents state that public health guidelines, such as social distancing, wearing of masks, and regular washing/sanitising of hands will be followed on election day. INEC also produced a voter code of conduct to sensitise the public on how to vote safely.<sup>37</sup> These measures should mitigate the impact of the virus on elections.

However, the health guidelines have not been followed strictly. During the primaries for the election, the delegates and supporters of candidates within their respective parties “thronged venues in carnival style,

neglecting established safety protocol for Covid-19”.<sup>38</sup> Such flagrant disregard of health protocols have also been evident in previous elections like that of Edo. This raises concerns about the extent to which election activities might endanger the public.

Following on from this point, there are worries that the virus might result in low voter turnout due to people’s fears of getting infected. 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”.<sup>39</sup> This suggests that the risk of contracting the virus from voting on election day might deter voters from participating.

The risk of low turnout is particularly worrying as voter turnout is already poor in Bayelsa State. During the 2019 general election, the turnout in Bayelsa was just 36.4%.<sup>40</sup> It is therefore imperative for stakeholders to ensure not only that the health guidelines are followed, but also that voters are appropriately sensitised so as to increase turnout at elections even during the pandemic.

### **Internal strife in the PDP**

The screening process for PDP’s primary elections led to some internal strife within the party. There were initially six aspirants – one for Bayelsa West and four for Bayelsa Central. However, four aspirants were disqualified from contesting.<sup>41</sup> This left only Seriake Dickson as the candidate for Bayelsa West and Moses Cleopas as the candidate for Bayelsa Central.

The disqualification of other aspirants led to resentment among people like Chief Gideon Ekeuwei, who sought to contest for Bayelsa Central. Ekeuwei called for the cancellation of the primaries, arguing that the disqualification of himself and three other aspirants “was baseless and unjustified”.<sup>42</sup> Some grassroots members of the party were also displeased, as they took to the streets of Yenagoa to protest the disqualification.<sup>43</sup>

### **Internal strife in the APC**

Internal strife has been even more evident in the APC. It has been reported that many key APC members are displeased and concerned

about the current state of the party.<sup>44</sup> This stems from the events that occurred in the 2019 governorship election in the state. It has been alleged that “the Minister of State for Petroleum, Chief Timipre Sylva, handpicked Senator Degi Eremienyo as the running mate of David Lyon, a move they claimed was political and a preparation for the minister to return and take over in 2023 as governor”.<sup>45</sup>

In the end, APC had the highest votes in the election, but the election was nullified due to the discovery that Eremienyo presented a false certificate. The party with the next highest votes, the PDP, thus produced the current Governor, Duoye Diri. Since then, the APC has been divided into factions, with APC chieftains “still at loggerheads”.<sup>46</sup>

Another issue causing strife within the APC is the suspension of thirteen key members of the party for anti-party activities.<sup>47</sup> Among those suspended are Heineken Lokpobiri, a two-time senator and former Speaker of the House of Assembly who was also a frontline governorship aspirant in the 2019 governorship election. Lokpobiri had instituted a case against Lyon and the APC, alleging that he won the primary election of the party prior to the governorship election.<sup>48</sup> There are speculations within the party that the suspension was designed to stop Lokpobiri from seeking the Bayelsa West senatorial ticket for the party.<sup>49</sup> These resentments among some APC members over the suspensions are further driving division within the party.

### **Zoning**

An additional area of contention in the APC relates to the issue of zoning and seat rotation in Bayelsa West. Based on an unwritten agreement, the two National Assembly positions (House of Representatives and the Senate) should rotate between Sagbama and Ekeremor LGAs, which make up Bayelsa West. The current representative of the Sagbama/Ekeremo constituency in the House of Representatives is Hon Fred Agbedi, who is from Ekeremor. The previous senator for Bayelsa West, Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo, was from Sagbama and it was expected that another person from Sagbama would continue his tenure. However, APC flouted this rule by choosing Peremobowei Ebebi, who is also from Ekeremor, as its senatorial candidate.

On the other hand, the PDP candidate for Bayelsa West, former Governor Seriake Dickson, is from Sagbama. This led over 900 members of the

APC to defect to the PDP on 8 September 2020.<sup>50</sup> Again, on 3 October 2020 hundreds of APC members from Ward 6 of Sagbama LGA defected to PDP over displeasure at the violation of the seat rotation agreement.<sup>51</sup> The large-scale defections from APC may significantly impact its prospects during the election.

Members of the APC have argued that these allegations are unwarranted. On the contrary, they suggest that the calls for zoning are part of a ploy to ensure that the positions of Governor, Deputy Governor, and Senator are concentrated in Sagbama.<sup>52</sup> However, not all APC members hold this view. Vanguard reports that some APC stakeholders have endorsed Dickson in order “to prevent the political ambition of any politician from damaging the existing cordial relationship between Ekeremor and Sagbama”.<sup>53</sup>

These developments reveal the deep tensions around the issue of zoning in Bayelsa West. This is a crucial issue that affects both intra-party politics (as shown in some APC members’ endorsement of Dickson and the large-scale defections from the party), and inter-party politics (as shown in the allegations made by APC against PDP).

### **Disqualification**

To add to the crisis within the APC, on 3 November 2020, Ebebi was disqualified by the Federal High Court in Yenegoa from contesting in the election on account of forgery of his voter’s card and academic credentials.<sup>54</sup> In this light, INEC barred Ebebi and the APC from participating in the upcoming election.<sup>55</sup> Ebebi has vowed to challenge the court’s judgment, arguing that the court did not have the jurisdiction to entertain the matters, while APC members have criticised INEC for delisting the party when the court’s decision has been appealed.<sup>56</sup>

### **Contesting Political Parties**

The by-elections in Bayelsa Central will be conducted by eleven parties.

<b>G</b>	<b>CANDIDATE</b>	<b>PARTY</b>
<b>M</b>	Lokoja James Pere	Accord Party
<b>M</b>	Franklin Bodiseowei	Action Alliance (AA)
<b>M</b>	Azi Flint Munanyo	African Democratic Congress (ADC)
<b>M</b>	Abel Ebi Femowei	All Progressives Congress (APC)
<b>M</b>	Abson Abalaba	Allied People’s Movement (APM)

<b>M</b>	Preye Watson Kosuowei	Action People's Party (APP)
<b>F</b>	Efamughe Tunimibofa	New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP)
<b>F</b>	Bolere Elizabeth Ketebu	National Rescue Movement (NRM)
<b>M</b>	Cleopas Moses Zuwoghe	People's Democratic Party (PDP)
<b>M</b>	Dauzuo Fawei Young	Social Democratic Party (SDP)
<b>M</b>	Ayah Enetimi	Young Progressive Party (YPP)

The by-elections in Bayelsa West will be conducted by twelve parties (excluding Ebebi and the APC, following INEC's decision).

<b>G</b>	<b>CANDIDATE</b>	<b>PARTY</b>
<b>F</b>	Pereagbe Tonbra	Accord Party
<b>M</b>	Omulala Pius	Action Alliance (AA)
<b>M</b>	Plaeowei Ezebri William	African Action Congress (AAC)
<b>M</b>	Paleowei Eretonghan Famous	African Democratic Congress (ADC)
<b>M</b>	Oweifabo Felix Ebikemefa	Action Democratic Party (ADP)
<b>M</b>	Dennis Enebi Michael	Allied People's Movement (APM)
<b>M</b>	Orlando Salo	Action People's Party (APP)
<b>M</b>	Hawkins Numofe	New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP)
<b>M</b>	Amgbare Kenewenemo Kenny	National Rescue Movement (NRM)
<b>M</b>	Henry Seriake Dickson	People's Democratic Party (PDP)
<b>M</b>	Ariweriyai Tokoni Sylvester	Social Democratic Party (SDP)
<b>M</b>	Sunny Pere Agadabiri	Young Progressive Party (YPP)

From the above tables, it is evident that there are only two female candidates in Bayelsa Central, and one in Bayelsa West. Furthermore, there is only one person with disability (PWD) among the candidates in Bayelsa West, and none in Bayelsa Central. This raises concerns about representation and inclusion among the parties.

PDP has a high level of dominance in Bayelsa, as it has produced all the Governors in the state since the return to democracy in 1999. In the same vein, virtually all Senators representing Bayelsa Central and Bayelsa West since 1999 have been from the PDP (the only exception is Tupele-Ebi Diffa, who represented Bayelsa West from 1999-2003 under the platform of the Alliance for Democracy).

APC had almost broken the dominance of the PDP in the state during the 2019 governorship election which it won by over 200,000 votes.<sup>57</sup>

However, since the election was nullified and the PDP candidate declared the winner, this election is another opportunity for the APC to break PDP's dominance in the state.

## Main Political Actors

### Bayelsa West

**Seriake Dickson** is the PDP candidate for Bayelsa West and the former Governor of Bayelsa State. As an indigene of Sagbama, Dickson has gained the support of even APC stakeholders, due to the seat rotation agreement which dictates that it is the turn of Sagbama to produce a Senator for Bayelsa West. Dickson also has an advantage as the immediate past Governor.

**Peremobowei Ebebi** is the APC candidate for Bayelsa West. A former Deputy Governor of Bayelsa State, Ebebi defected from PDP to APC during the 2019 governorship election. He ran as a Deputy Governor again in 2019 under the platform of APC, but lost the election.

It has been suggested that since it is the turn of Sagbama to be in the Senate, Ebebi, who is from Ekeremor, "will be roundly rejected".<sup>58</sup> However, many still believe that the election in Bayelsa West "will be keenly contested as both PDP and APC candidates are grassroots politicians and enjoy the support of their followers".<sup>59</sup>

**Duoye Diri**, as the Governor of Bayelsa State, wields a considerable level influence in the upcoming by-elections in Bayelsa West. As a PDP member, he is expected to throw his weight behind Dickson, and has publicly commended Dickson as the best candidate for the election, given his experience in the legislature and executive (as former Governor), as well as in the judiciary (as a lawyer).<sup>60</sup>

**Goodluck Jonathan** is a PDP member from Ogbia local government in Bayelsa East. As former Deputy Governor of Bayelsa State (1999-2005), Governor of Bayelsa State (2005-2007), Vice-President of Nigeria (2007-2010), and President of Nigeria (2010-2015), he holds significant political influence that could give the PDP candidate, Dickson, an advantage in the upcoming election.

## **Bayelsa Central**

**Moses Cleopas** is the PDP candidate for Bayelsa Central, and the immediate past Chairman of the party. His experience as the Chairman of the PDP might win him public support, as he has had a chance to display his “oratory power” and “leadership skill”.<sup>61</sup>

**Abel Ebifemowei** is the APC candidate for Bayelsa Central. As a cousin to a former governor of Bayelsa State, Chief Diepreye Alamiyeseigha, Ebifemowei has also had experience in governance. He was the Special Adviser on Youth Logistics and Government House Transport to Chief Alamiyeseigha during his time in office.

**Duoye Diri**, as Governor of the state and the previous senator representing Bayelsa Central, also has a considerable level of influence in this senatorial district. He is also expected to through his weight behind the PDP candidate, Cleopas, who he has commended for his skills as party Chairman.<sup>62</sup>

**Goodluck Jonathan**, as discussed above, has significant influence which could give the PDP candidate, Cleopas, an advantage in the upcoming election.

### **Security Concerns**

Bayelsa State has a high level of election-related violence. During the 2019 governorship election in the state, many violent incidents occurred including the following: three people were reported missing in Sagbama LGA; thugs accompanied by men in military uniform disrupted polls in Koluama Ward 17, Southern Ijaw LGA; and INEC officials were abducted in Yenagoa as thugs carted away voting materials at a polling unit.<sup>63</sup> Following the nullification of that election on 14 February 2020, and the emergence of Duoye Diri as the new governor, renewed incidents of violence and protests occurred.<sup>64</sup> This resulted in a three-day curfew in the state in an attempt to maintain security.

Furthermore, The Fund for Peace recognises political violence as a key risk factor in virtually all the LGAs in Bayelsa State.<sup>65</sup> With the upcoming elections, security agencies have a huge role to play in safeguarding election materials and protecting election officials.

# CROSS RIVER STATE



# Cross River State

Cross River State is a coastal state named after the Cross River, which passes through the state.<sup>66</sup> It was created in 1967, and is located in the Niger Delta, in the South-South region of Nigeria. Cross River is bounded to the north by Benue State, to the west by Enugu and Abia States, to the east by Cameroon Republic, and to the south by Akwa-Ibom and the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>67</sup> Its capital city is Calabar. Cross River attracts a lot of tourism due to its annual festivals and carnivals.

## Electoral Statistics

There are three senatorial districts in Cross River State: Cross River North, Cross River Central, and Cross River South. The by-elections will hold in Cross River North. Cross River North has 51 RAs, 565 PUs, and 429,488 registered voters.<sup>68</sup>



*Map of Cross River State Senatorial Districts<sup>69</sup>*

SEN. DISTRICT	FED. CONST.	LGA	RAs	PUs
CROSS RIVER NORTH	Bekwarra/ Obanliku/ Obudu	Bekwarra	10	87
		Obanliku	10	74
		Obudu	10	107
	Ogoja/Yala	Ogoja	10	119
		Yala	11	178
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>565</b>

Source: INEC<sup>70</sup>

### Geography

Cross River State belongs to the tropical rainfall belt where rainfall is usually seasonal and at times very heavy.<sup>71</sup> The presence of the Cross River (also known as the Oyono River) which passes through the state also makes it prone to flooding. This geographical feature of the state should be taken into account for the purpose of election planning and maintaining security.

### Electorate

Cross River State consists of three major ethnic groups: the Efik, the Ejagham, and the Bekwarra.<sup>72</sup> The Efik language is widely spoken in the state.<sup>73</sup> However, there are many other languages and ethnic groups in the state. The LGAs in the northern senatorial district comprise the following ethnic groups:

- **Bekwarra:** Bekwarra and Afrike
- **Obanliku:** Bendi, Obanliku, Utanga and Bechere
- **Obudu:** Bette, Utugwang, Alege, Ukpe and Ubang
- **Ogoja:** Mbube, Ishibori and Ekajuk
- **Yala:** Yala, Ukelle, Yache and Igede.<sup>74</sup>

However, despite this cultural and linguistic plurality, these ethnic groups have cultural similarity due to geographical contiguity and the fact that they all belong to the Niger-Congo group of languages.<sup>75</sup>

The table below shows the population breakdown of LGAs in the northern senatorial district.

S/N	LGA	Population	Male	Female
1	Bekwarra	105,497	52,914	52,583
2	Obanliku	109,633	55,998	53,635
3	Obudu	161,457	81,537	79,920
4	Ogoja	171,574	86,802	84,772
5	Yala	211,557	105,416	106,141
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>759,718</b>	<b>382,667</b>	<b>377,051</b>

*Source: National Bureau of Statistics<sup>76</sup>*

The people of Cross River North are agrarian in nature, as they grow crops and fruits such as yam, cassava, rice, maize, guinea corn, potato, okro, oil palm, cashew, beniseed, groundnut, orange, mango and pears in large quantities.<sup>77</sup>

Tertiary institutions in the state include the University of Calabar, Cross River State University of Technology, the Ibrahim Babangida College of Agriculture, and The Polytechnic, Calabar. This indicates why a good number of northern Cross Riverians are also professionals, civil servants and traders.<sup>78</sup>

### Political Environment

The need for a by-election in Cross River State arose following the death of Senator Rose Oko, a PDP member who was representing the northern senatorial district, on 23 March 2020.

### Implications of the pandemic

Like the other senatorial districts, Cross River North will have its elections in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The state had already conducted local government elections in May this year, during the pandemic. The COVID-19 Task Force had mandated all voters to wear masks and ensure social distancing at polling units.<sup>79</sup> Mike Etaba, lawmaker representing Obubra/Etung Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives, commended the state Governor for complying with COVID-19 guidelines during the elections. It is hoped that the COVID-19 guidelines will similarly be followed during the upcoming senatorial election.

There are also worries that the virus might result in low voter turnout due to people's fears of getting infected. The risk of low turnout is worrying because turnout is already poor in Cross River State, with just 29.5%

during the 2019 general election.<sup>80</sup> It is therefore important to ensure that voters are sensitised to come out and vote safely.

### **Internal strife in the PDP**

The PDP primary election was held on 5 September. This election was trailed with confusion as two aspirants claimed victory. The chairman of the electoral panel, Mr Olorogun Taleb Tebite, officially announced Stephen Odey as the winner, having polled 450 votes to Agom Jarigbe's 90 votes.<sup>81</sup> However, two members of the electoral panel, Ibiok Esu and Kenneth Zota, are said to have declared conflicting results, scoring Jarigbe 381 votes to Odey's 71 votes.<sup>82</sup> This led both Odey and Jarigbe to claim victory. Subsequently, INEC Abuja and INEC Calabar also gave conflicting reports. The former declared that Jarigbe won, while the latter declared Odey won, thus creating even more confusion.<sup>83</sup>

Although the chairman of the electoral panel, an INEC official, and Governor Ben Ayade described the process as peaceful and satisfactory, Jarigbe and two other aspirants described the process as a sham and marred by violence.<sup>84</sup> It is reported that at least 200 policemen flooded the venue and opened fire and teargas on everyone to allow mercenary voters, said to be for Odey, enter the venue at the expense of the duly accredited voters that would possibly have voted for Jarigbe.<sup>85</sup>

In this light, Jarigbe took the PDP to court over allegedly smuggling in a fake delegates' list and skewing the results of the primary election.<sup>86</sup> However, following an order by the Federal High Court, Odey was officially presented to INEC as PDP's candidate.<sup>87</sup>

### **Internal strife in the APC**

The primary election in the APC also generated confusion, as conflicting results were announced. The Chairman of the APC Primary Election Committee for the state, Alhaji Suleiman Nakowa, declared Joe Agi as the winner of the primaries, with 113, 229 votes to defeat Prof Zana Akpagu, who got 8,635 votes.<sup>88</sup> Shortly after, the APC Senatorial Returning Officer, Mr Lazarus Undie, declared Prof Zana Akpagu as the winner, having polled 75,490 votes to defeat others including his closest rival, Joe Agi, who polled 12,813 votes.<sup>89</sup> These results and claims were debunked by the Secretary to the Primary Election Committee of APC, who upheld the victory of Joe Agi as the only authentic result.<sup>90</sup>

The issue of zoning was also relevant here, as top party sources in Abuja said the APC leadership had asked Akpagu not to contest the primary, because the Minister of State, Mr Jeddy Agba, and Governor Ben Ayade are all from Obudu LGA, which makes it unfair to take the Senatorial position there.<sup>91</sup> The sources explained that APC leaders contended that it was fair to zone the position to Yala/Ogoja, where Agi and others hail from.<sup>92</sup>

The emergence of conflicting results from both APC and PDP primaries indicates the lack of internal democracy within major parties in Nigeria. In any case, the APC appears to be more united than the PDP, as even though there were issues with the primaries, all aspirants for the party's senatorial ticket have resolved to support Agi to defeat the other candidates, particularly that of the PDP.<sup>93</sup>

### Contesting Political Parties

The by-elections in Cross River North will be contested by nine parties:

<b>G</b>	<b>CANDIDATE</b>	<b>PARTY</b>
<b>M</b>	Liop Ebi Kenneth	Action Alliance (AA)
<b>M</b>	Aduma Ohutu Sunday	African Action Congress (AAC)
<b>M</b>	Gregory Agam	African Democratic Congress (ADC)
<b>M</b>	Joe Odey Agi	All Progressives Congress (APC)
<b>M</b>	Ogbeche Rock Ongro	Allied People's Movement (APM)
<b>F</b>	Beatrice Ekpe Edrah	New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP)
<b>M</b>	Stephen Adi Odey	People's Democratic Party (PDP)
<b>M</b>	Gabriel Abbas Abuashe	Social Democratic Party (SDP)
<b>M</b>	Francis Agaba	Young Progressive Party (YPP)

From the above table, it is evident that there is only one woman across the candidates. There is also no PWD, which raises concerns about inclusion and representation.

The PDP has a strong dominance in Cross River, as it has won all governorship elections in the state since 1999. In the 2019 senatorial election in Cross River North, the PDP candidate won by a landslide, with over 100,000 votes compared to the APC's 36,000.<sup>94</sup> The other two senatorial districts are represented by PDP candidates as well. This by-

election therefore provides the APC with an opportunity to break the PDP's dominance in the state.

### Main Political Actors

**Ben Ayade**, is the Governor of Cross River State and a PDP member. He is believed to have a high level of influence in the northern senatorial district, being an indigene of that district coupled with his power of incumbency. He is also believed to have his tentacles spread across party lines as 21 opposition parties in the state under the umbrella of the Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP) have congratulated his preferred candidate in the primaries for his emergence as the PDP senatorial candidate.<sup>95</sup> However, there is a sharp divide between Ayade and most of the National Assembly members, otherwise known as the Abuja group, who have accused him of not carrying everyone along, just as he wants to install a successor.<sup>96</sup> Some believe that he imposed Stephen Odey as his stooge so that he can return to the Senate after he completes his Governorship in 2023.<sup>97</sup>

**Stephen Odey** is the PDP senatorial candidate for the election. He will definitely enjoy the backing and support of the incumbent Governor who it is believed will pull all resources and machinery to ensure his victory.

**Joe Agi** is the APC senatorial candidate for the election. With the massive votes he pulled at his party's primary as well as belonging to the ruling party of the country (APC), it is believed that all forces will be pulled to ensure the party has a representation from that part of the state.

### Security Concerns

Election violence has been common in Cross River State. During the 2019 governorship election, elections were cancelled in many polling units due to violence and snatching of electoral materials.<sup>98</sup> Similarly, rerun elections in the Afafanyi/Igonigoni ward, Abi LGA, were cancelled earlier this year, because unknown gunmen seized election materials and abducted some electoral officials.<sup>99</sup>

Furthermore, during the PDP's primary election on 5 September 2020, there was violence as two persons were killed on the eve of the primary, while two others were shot on the day of the event.<sup>100</sup> Four vehicles and police pick-up trucks in the Governor's convoy were also smashed by some unknown youths suspected to be supporters and delegates of

Jarigbe.<sup>101</sup> If a party's primary could be so tense and violent, it leaves much to be imagined of what the actual senatorial by-election will look like. This calls for intensive efforts by security agencies to ensure peace during the upcoming by-election.

# IMO STATE



# Imo State

Imo State is one of the five states in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. It was created in 1976, and is bounded to the north by Anambra State, to the east by Abia State, to the west by River Niger and Delta State, and to the south by Rivers State. Its capital city is Owerri. Imo has the largest palm plantation complex in West Africa,<sup>102</sup> and is also one of the chief onshore petroleum-producing areas in the country.<sup>103</sup>

## Electoral Statistics

There are three senatorial districts in Imo State: Imo North, Imo East, and Imo West. The by-elections will hold in Imo North (also referred to as the Okigwe Senatorial District). While Imo West has twelve LGAs and Imo East has nine LGAs, Imo North has only six LGAs and as such is seen as the minority in the state. Imo North has 64 RAs, 692 PUs, and 389,245 registered voters.<sup>104</sup>



Map of Imo State Senatorial Districts<sup>105</sup>

SEN. DISTRICT	FED. CONST.	LGA	RAs	PUs
<b>IMO NORTH</b>	Ehime-Mbano/ Ihite-Uboma/ Obowo	Ehime-Mbano	11	131
		Ihite-Uboma	10	108
		Obowo	10	107
	Isiala Mbano/ Okigwe/ Onuimo	Isiala Mbano	12	142
		Okigwe	11	109
		Onuimo	10	95
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>692</b>

Source: INEC<sup>106</sup>

### Geography

Imo State is located between the River Niger and the Imo River. Being a riverine area, it is also prone to flooding and has experienced many flooding incidents in the past.<sup>107</sup> This has implications for transportation routes. Therefore, the likelihood of flooding is a necessary factor that should be taken into account for election planning purposes and for maintaining security.

### Electorate

Imo state is mainly inhabited by the Igbo people and is one of the most densely populated areas in Nigeria.<sup>108</sup> The population is mostly engaged in agriculture; yams, taro, corn (maize), rice, and cassava (manioc) are the staple crops, and oil palm is the main cash crop.<sup>109</sup>

Owerri, the state capital, is an industrial and educational centre that manufactures beverages, galvanized sheet-iron, leather products, and soap.<sup>110</sup> Tertiary institutions in the state include Imo State University, Imo State Polytechnic, and Federal University of Technology Owerri.

The table below shows the population breakdown of LGAs in Imo North.

S/N	LGA	Population	Male	Female
1	<b>Ehime-Mbano</b>	130,575	65,237	65,338
2	<b>Ihite-Uboma</b>	119,419	60,492	58,927
3	<b>Obowo</b>	117,432	58,204	59,228
4	<b>Isiala-Mbano</b>	197,921	100,835	97,086
5	<b>Okigwe</b>	132,701	67,660	65,041
6	<b>Onuimo</b>	99,368	50,779	48,589
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>797,416</b>	<b>403,207</b>	<b>394,209</b>

Source: National Bureau of Statistics<sup>111</sup>

## Political Environment

The need for a by-election in Imo State arose following the death of Senator Benjamin Uwajumogu, an APC member who was representing the northern senatorial district, on 18 December 2019.

### Implications of the pandemic

Imo North will also have its elections in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The REC for the state, Prof Francis Ezeonu, has said that COVID-19 protocols including wearing of masks and social distancing will be observed during the election, and it is hoped that election officials and security agencies will enforce these requirements.

However, there are also worries that the virus might result in low voter turnout due to people's fears of getting infected. Turnout in Imo State has been declining, with just 26.6% in the state during the 2019 general election.<sup>112</sup> This makes it important to encourage voters to come out to vote, and vote safely.

### Internal strife in the PDP

The PDP primaries led to the emergence of Emmanuel Okewulonu, with 609 votes to Patrick Ndubueze's 27 votes.<sup>113</sup> Mr Chuba Oramisi, Chairman of the PDP National Electoral Committee, applauded the delegates for their peaceful disposition.<sup>114</sup> However, Ndubueze described the primary as illegal, null and void.<sup>115</sup> Subsequently, Ndubueze brought a lawsuit against the party, but the matter is yet to be decided as the court rejected his application to give the suit immediate attention.<sup>116</sup> This litigious atmosphere reflects the internal strife within the party.

### Internal strife in the APC

Internal strife has been even more evident in the APC. Just like in Cross River, APC's primary election in Imo State resulted in confusion as two separate results were announced by members of the election committee. Chairman and Secretary of the committee, as well as two other members, announced Frank Ibezim as the winner of the contest.<sup>117</sup> However, three other members of the team, submitted a separate report declaring Senator Ifianyi Ararume as the winner of the same contest.<sup>118</sup>

The APC leadership had issued a statement saying that it only recognised the Bashiru-led committee that declared Ibezim as the winner.<sup>119</sup> However, the Screening Committee in a petition submitted at the APC National Secretariat Abuja said six aspirants, including Ibezim, had been disqualified from running because they did not meet basic requirements.<sup>120</sup> This dispute was taken to court and, on 6 November, the Federal High Court in Owerri declared Senator Ifeanyi Araraume as the APC candidate of APC for the election, given that Ibezim had been disqualified by the screening committee.<sup>121</sup>

These tensions and litigations show the internal strife within both parties.

### Contesting Political Parties

The by-elections in Imo North will be contested by fourteen parties:

<b>G</b>	<b>CANDIDATE</b>	<b>PARTY</b>
<b>M</b>	Ndubueze Chiwuba Patrick	Accord Party
<b>M</b>	Emmanuel Ogueri	Action Alliance (AA)
<b>M</b>	Nathaniel Chukwudi Uba	African Action Congress (AAC)
<b>M</b>	Chigozie Kennedy Onyinye	African Democratic Congress (ADC)
<b>M</b>	Ifeanyi Godwin Araraume	All Progressives Congress (APC)
<b>M</b>	Charles Chibuike Onyeirimba	All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA)
<b>M</b>	Raphael Nnadozie Mbachu	Allied People's Movement (APM)
<b>M</b>	Ernest Ndidi Ezirim	Action People's Party (APP)
<b>M</b>	Okorundu Nwachukwu Sunday	Labour Party (LP)
<b>M</b>	Okeafor Augustine Chukwujeze	New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP)
<b>M</b>	Charles Okechukwu Amajouyi	National Rescue Movement (NRM)
<b>M</b>	Emmanuel E Okewulonu	People's Democratic Party (PDP)
<b>F</b>	Rita Ada Ibemere Okorafor	Social Democratic Party (SDP)
<b>M</b>	Promise Anurika Nwadigos	Young Progressive Party (YPP)

From the above table, it is evident that there is only one woman across the candidates. There is also no PWD, which raises concerns about inclusion and representation.

No party has dominance in Imo State, as the Progressive People's Alliance (PPA), PDP, and APC have all produced governors in the state

since 1999. Imo West is currently represented by an APC member, while Imo East is represented by a PDP member.

### Main Political Actors

**Emmanuel Okewulonu** is the PDP candidate for the upcoming election, having beat his only contender, Ndubueze, by a landslide. Okewulonu has previously held positions at both the state and federal government levels, including serving as the Imo State Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources (2014-2015) and Special Adviser (Political) to Minister of State for Education (2015-2019).<sup>122</sup>

**Ifeanyi Ararume** is the APC candidate for the upcoming Imo North election. He previously served as senator for Imo North, from 1999 to 2007. Between 2007 and 2019, Ararume undertook a series of defections, running for the governorship tickets of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), APGA, PDP, and APC. He most recently ran for Governor under APGA in 2019, after which he rejoined APC. Following controversy around the APC primaries, Ararume was declared the APC senatorial candidate by the Federal High Court in Owerri.

**Hope Uzodimma** is the Governor of Imo State and an APC member. As Governor, he has considerable influence in the upcoming by-election in the state. Ibezim was said to be Governor Uzodimma's anointed candidate,<sup>123</sup> and nine aspirants who contested the primaries met with him and pledged to support Ibezim to ensure an APC victory.<sup>124</sup> However, as discussed earlier Ibezim was subsequently disqualified and replaced with Ararume.

### Security Concerns

Imo State, like many other states in Nigeria, has a history of election violence. During the 2019 governorship election in the state, the police confirmed the arrest of 105 suspected political thugs for electoral offences such as disrupting elections, impersonating policemen and harassing electoral officials.<sup>125</sup> The INEC office in the state was also set on fire by suspected hoodlums.<sup>126</sup>

Given the disputes surrounding the outcomes of the primaries in both parties, there are also growing concerns that the upcoming elections in Imo North could be marred by violence.<sup>127</sup> This shows the need for security agencies to make all efforts necessary to maintain security during the elections.

# LAGOS STATE



# Lagos State

Lagos State was created in 1967 and its capital city is Ikeja. It is located in the South-West region of Nigeria, and is bounded to the north and east by Ogun State, to the south by the Bight of Benin, and to the west by the Republic of Benin.<sup>128</sup> Lagos was the capital of Nigeria until 1991, when the capital was moved to Abuja. However, Lagos remains the centre of commerce and finance in Nigeria.

## Electoral Statistics

There are three senatorial districts in Lagos State: Lagos East, Lagos Central, and Lagos West. The upcoming by-elections will hold in Lagos East. Lagos East has 71 RAs, 1,928 PUs, and 1,343,448 registered voters. However, only 1,168,790 of those voters have collected their PVCs.<sup>129</sup>



*Map of Lagos State Senatorial Districts<sup>130</sup>*

SEN. DISTRICT	FED. CONST.	LGAs	RAs	PUs
LAGOS EAST	Epe	Epe	19	346
	Ibeju/Lekki	Ibeju/Lekki	11	108
	Ikorodu	Ikorodu	19	330
	Kosofe	Kosofe	10	586
	Somolu	Somolu	12	558
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>1,928</b>

Source: INEC<sup>131</sup>

### Geography

Lagos State is dominated by islands, sandbars, and lagoons.<sup>132</sup> Water bodies and wetlands cover over 40% of the total land area of the state, with lagoons and creeks consisting 22% of its area.<sup>133</sup> These geographical features make Lagos State prone to flooding, and observers have noted that 12% of the total area of the state is subject to seasonal flooding.<sup>134</sup> This also raises problems in terms of election logistics, which makes it paramount for INEC to make adequate preparations for transportation and security around coastal areas.

### Electorate

Lagos State is essentially a Yoruba environment inhabited by its sub-nationality of Aworis and Ogus in Ikeja and Badagry Divisions respectively.<sup>135</sup> However, the state's mainly Yoruba population has grown more heterogeneous with the migration of other Nigerians and West Africans to Lagos.<sup>136</sup>

According to official figures, Lagos State had a population of 9,113,605 at the time of the last national census,<sup>137</sup> however, the Lagos State Bureau of Statistics claims that the actual figure is 17,552,942.<sup>138</sup> Regardless of dispute over the actual number, Lagos is undoubtedly Nigeria's most populous state. The table below shows the official population breakdown of LGAs in Lagos East, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

S/N	LGA	Population	Male	Female
1	Epe	181,734	91,925	89,809
2	Ibeju-Lekki	117,793	60,729	57,064
3	Ikorodu	527,917	268,463	259,454
4	Kosofe	682,772	358,935	323,837
5	Somolu	403,569	207,519	196,050
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,913,785</b>	<b>987,571</b>	<b>926,214</b>

Source: National Bureau of Statistics<sup>139</sup>

The people of Lagos State are highly educated, with 153 universities, 113 polytechnics, and 85 colleges of education in the state.<sup>140</sup> Some of the main tertiary institutions in the state are: University of Lagos, Yaba College of Technology, Lagos State University, Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, and Caleb University.

## Political Environment

The need for a by-election in Lagos East arose following the death of Senator Adebayo Osinowo, an APC member, on 15 June 2019. Some observers believe that the Lagos East election will be the most competitive of the upcoming by-elections.<sup>141</sup>

### Implications of the pandemic

The Lagos East by-election will be conducted during the coronavirus pandemic. The INEC and NCDC guidelines regarding the conduct of elections during the pandemic should mitigate the effect of the virus.<sup>142</sup> However, the experience has been that COVID-19 guidelines are not usually followed during elections, which raises concerns about the health risks posed by the Lagos election.

There are also concerns about low voter turnout due to the pandemic. During the 2019 general election, Lagos State had the lowest voter turnout (just 18.3%).<sup>143</sup> This raises worries that COVID-19 will reduce turnout further. It is therefore important for stakeholders to ensure the implementation of health guidelines, and also sensitise people to vote on election day.

### Internal strife in the PDP

There has been internal strife in the PDP relating to the way in which the primaries were conducted. The Chairman of the PDP in Lagos State, Ade Doherty, was accused of giving the ticket away to Babatunde Gbadamosi at the expense of others.<sup>144</sup> According to a source within the party, “Doherty deliberately gave the senatorial ticket to Gbadamosi to distract him ahead of 2022 when PDP will conduct its governorship ambition in 2023”.<sup>145</sup>

Another area of contention within the PDP is related to finances. It has been reported that the PDP candidate is finding it difficult to get financial support from Governors on the PDP platform, after the party lost in Ondo State.<sup>146</sup> This has deepened the internal strife within the party.

### **Internal strife in the APC**

There has been longstanding internal strife in the Lagos branch of the APC. In July 2020, Chief Lateef Arigbaruwo filed a lawsuit challenging the legitimacy of the caretaker committee of the party.<sup>147</sup> In response, the state chairman, Tunde Balogun, warned all members of APC Lagos to withdraw cases against the party, as any member found instituting legal action against the party will face sanctions ranging from suspension to expulsion.<sup>148</sup>

However, in relation to the Lagos senatorial by-election, there has been relatively little conflict, as Tokunbo Abiru emerged as the consensus candidate of the party after six other aspirants withdrew to support him.<sup>149</sup> All 40 members of the Lagos State House of Assembly, who are all APC members, also expressed their support for Abiru.<sup>150</sup>

### **Inter-party rivalry**

Inter-party rivalry has been rife in Lagos East, with lawsuits and counter-lawsuits from opposing parties. The PDP filed a lawsuit calling for the disqualification of the APC candidate, Tokunbo Abiru, on the ground that there has been “voter fraud”.<sup>151</sup> The allegations are that Abiru has two Permanent Voter Cards (PCVs) and he is not registered to vote in the Lagos East Senatorial District. In response, the APC filed a lawsuit calling for the disqualification of the PDP candidate, Babatunde Gbadamosi, over alleged perjury and falsification of his WAEC certificate.<sup>152</sup>

The PDP has also accused Abiru of murder on two occasions.<sup>153</sup> In reaction, Abiru wrote to the Inspector-General of Police, asking him to conduct an investigation into the claims, arrest the perpetrator if there was any, and institute legal actions against the PDP if the claims were false.<sup>154</sup>

Furthermore, Abiru filed a ₦1 billion suit against the Media Director of the PDP Senatorial Campaign Council, Dr Adetokunbo Pearse, for character defamation regarding an article allegedly written by Pearse with the title, "Why Adetokunbo Mukail Abiru Must Be Disqualified From The October 31, 2020, Lagos East Senatorial Race".<sup>155</sup>

These developments and litigious atmosphere indicate the inter-party rivalries that characterise the political environment in Lagos East.

## Contesting Political Parties

The by-elections in Lagos East will be contested by twelve parties.

<b>G</b>	<b>CANDIDATE</b>	<b>PARTY</b>
<b>M</b>	Muyiwa Sunday Adebajo	Action Alliance (AA)
<b>F</b>	Adeoye Mercy Bosedo	African Action Congress (AAC)
<b>M</b>	John Kome	African Democratic Congress (ADC)
<b>M</b>	Ogunlaru Adebawale Johnson	Action Democratic Party (ADP)
<b>M</b>	Abiru Mukhail Adetokunbo	All Progressives Congress (APC)
<b>M</b>	Olusola Taiwo Moses-Babatope	Allied People's Movement (APM)
<b>F</b>	Florence Trautman	Labour Party (LP)
<b>F</b>	Lawal Adijat Opeyemi	New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP)
<b>M</b>	Olakunle Akin Adisa	National Rescue Movement (NRM)
<b>M</b>	Babatunde Olalere Gbadamosi	People's Democratic Party (PDP)
<b>M</b>	Aluko Saheed Olawale	Social Democratic Party (SDP)
<b>M</b>	Temitope Taiwo Elijah	Young Progressive Party (YPP)

From the list above, it is evident there are only three female candidates. There is also no PWD among the candidates, which again brings up issues of poor representation and lack of inclusion.

Since 1999, PDP has failed to win in any governorship or senatorial election in Lagos State.<sup>156</sup> This by-election therefore provides an opportunity for the PDP to break the dominance of the APC in the state.

## Main Political Actors

**Babajide Sanwo-Olu** is the Governor of Lagos State and a main political actor in the upcoming by-election in the state. There were speculations that Abiru's nomination by the party set the stage for a power struggle between him and Sanwo-Olu, but these claims have been dismissed by the party.<sup>157</sup> As an APC member, Sanwo-Olu has himself solicited for votes for Abiru on different occasions.<sup>158</sup>

Some observers have also noted that the by-election will be a test of the popularity of Sanwo-Olu's administration, and whether the electorate in Lagos East still hold grievances over the way in which former Governor Akinwunmi Ambode (from Lagos East) was denied a second term ticket by APC in favour of Sanwo-Olu (from Lagos West).<sup>159</sup>

**Tokunbo Abiru** is the APC candidate. He was the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Polaris Bank Limited, until he resigned in August 2020 to join the race for the Lagos East Senatorial seat. He has been subject to various allegations from the PDP relating to incompetence, voter fraud, and murder.

**Babatunde Gbadamosi** is the PDP candidate. He left the PDP in 2017 and contested for the 2019 governorship election in Lagos State under the platform of the Action Democratic Party (ADP), but rejoined the PDP on 16 March 2020. This history of defection has led some critics to claim that Gbadamosi lacks commitment to a specific political belief.<sup>160</sup>

According to The Guardian, the contest goes beyond the APC and PDP candidates – it is also a battle of wits between two political godfathers: National Leader of the APC, **Bola Tinubu**, and former Deputy National Chairman of PDP, **Olabode George**.<sup>161</sup> It is alleged that Tinubu imposed Abiru on the party, while George and the state’s Chairman, Doherty, gave the ticket to Gbadamosi.<sup>162</sup> Tinubu has controlled the politics of Lagos State for a long time, but George has been less successful in trying to win Lagos for the PDP.<sup>163</sup>

The contest between these two godfathers is therefore linked to their own prospects for the 2023 presidential election, as the South-West would likely be a key zone for that election.<sup>164</sup>

### Security Concerns

Lagos State has a history of election-related violence. During the 2019 general elections, observers noted the high level of violence in the state, including shooting and burning of voting materials in some areas.<sup>165</sup> Intimidation from gangs and thugs is another feature that is common during elections in the state.<sup>166</sup>

The mass looting, arson, and violence in the aftermath of the #EndSARS protests are also a cause for concern. Lagos bore the main brunt of this violence, which led to losses worth billions of naira in the state.<sup>167</sup> INEC local government offices and facilities were also affected by this destruction, which is one of the reasons why the elections had to be postponed from 31 October.<sup>168</sup> This proves Ambassador Lasiende’s point that “election security cannot be isolated from the general security environment and socio-economic milieu within which elections are conducted”.<sup>169</sup> Ultimately, general insecurity in the state will also affect

election security, and security agents must work hard to ensure security both generally and during the election.

# PLATEAU STATE



# Plateau State

Plateau State was created in 1976 and is in the Middle Belt or North Central region of Nigeria. Plateau is approximately in the centre of the country, bounded to the north-east by Bauchi State, to the north-west by Kaduna State, to the south-west by Nasarawa, and to the south-east by Taraba State.<sup>170</sup> Its capital city is Jos. Plateau State is the most important mining area in Nigeria and is a major exporter of tin and columbite.<sup>171</sup>

## Electoral Statistics

There are three senatorial districts in Plateau State: Plateau North, Plateau Central, and Plateau South. The by-elections will hold in Plateau South. Plateau South has 68 RAs, 712 PUs, and 671,209 registered voters.<sup>172</sup>



*Map of Plateau State Senatorial Districts*<sup>173</sup>

SEN. DISTRICT	FED. CONST.	LGA	RAs	PUs
PLATEAU SOUTH	Langtang North/ Langtang South	Langtang North	14	114
		Langtang South	10	68
	Mikang/ Qua'an/ Pan/ Shendam	Mikang	10	60
		Qua'an Pan	11	166
		Shendam	11	182
Wase	Wase	12	122	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>712</b>

Source: INEC<sup>174</sup>

### Geography

Plateau State is named after the Jos Plateau, a mountainous area in the north of the state with captivating rock formations.<sup>175</sup> Its capital city, Jos, is the source of numerous rivers, including:

- the Kaduna, Karami, and N'gell, which feed the Niger River;
- the Mada, Ankwe, Dep, Shemanker, and Wase, which flow to the Benue;
- the Lere, Maijuju, and Bagei, which supply the Gongola; and
- the Kano, Delimi, Bunga, Jamaari, and Misau, which intermittently nourish Lake Chad.<sup>176</sup>

### Electorate

Plateau State has over forty ethno-linguistic groups, including Berom, Afizere, Aten, Bogghom, Buji, Gashish, Montol, Ron-Kulere, Youm and Fulani/Kanuri.<sup>177</sup> These ethnic groups have similar cultural and traditional ways of life.<sup>178</sup> Due to migration, there are also people from other parts of country who have settled in the state. These include the Igbo, Yoruba, Ibibio, Annang, Efik, Ijaw, and Bini.<sup>179</sup>

Plateau is best known for its mining production, but agriculture is the major occupation of the people.<sup>180</sup> Acha and millet are the chief cash crops; yams, sorghum, corn (maize), potatoes, cowpeas, rice, fruits, and vegetables are the staple crops.<sup>181</sup> Tertiary institutions in the state include University of Jos and Plateau State University.

The table below shows the population breakdown of LGAs in Plateau South.

S/N	LGA	Population	Male	Female
1	Langtang North	142,316	70,203	72,113
2	Langtang South	105,173	53,111	52,062
3	Mikang	96,388	47,584	48,804
4	Qua'an Pan	197,276	96,800	100,476
5	Shendam	205,119	101,951	103,168
6	Wase	159,861	79,496	80,365
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>906,133</b>	<b>449,145</b>	<b>456,988</b>

Source: National Bureau of Statistics<sup>182</sup>

### Political Environment

The need for a by-election in Plateau State arose following the death of Longjan Datong, an APC member who was representing the northern senatorial district, on 10 February 2020.

### Implications of the pandemic

Plateau will conduct its by-elections during the COVID-19 pandemic. INEC has stated that its officials in Plateau will be trained on COVID-19 protocols so that people can vote safely without spreading the virus.<sup>183</sup> It is hoped that election officials will duly follow and enforce health guidelines on election day.

There are also legitimate concerns that the virus might result in low voter turnout due to people's fears of getting infected. The risk of low turnout is worrying because turnout in Plateau has been poor even before the pandemic. During the 2019 general election, the turnout was 43.9%, which is higher than the turnout in other states discussed in this paper, but represents a decline from the turnout in the Plateau State during the 2011 (62.1%) and 2015 (50.6%) general elections.<sup>184</sup> It is therefore important to ensure that voters are sensitised to come out and vote safely.

### PDP

PDP's primaries led to the emergence of Hon George Daika, former Speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly, with 434 votes to Hon Mike Dapianlong's 199 votes.<sup>185</sup> The primaries were described by the state PDP Chairman, Hon Chris Hassan, as transparent and peaceful.<sup>186</sup>

However, beyond the primaries there are tensions regarding the formation of the PDP executive in Plateau State. There are two rival factions – one

led by Senator Jeremiah Useni, and another led by Senator Jonah Jang. Useni has urged his supporters to form a parallel executive, expressing discontent at the executive led by Jang.<sup>187</sup> If these divisions escalate further, they could affect the PDP's chances in the upcoming election.

## **APC**

The APC primaries led to a landslide victory for Prof Nora Daduut with 1,936 votes to Damina Shakarau's 61 votes.<sup>188</sup> The primaries were peaceful and were commended by Governor Simon Lalong and the Chairman of Shendam Local Government Council, Alex Naantuum.<sup>189</sup>

However, there has been some inter-party rivalry as the Chairman of the PDP in Plateau State, Chris Hassan, urged INEC to disqualify Prof Daduut over allegations that she failed to obtain her PVC and she has not contributed to the progress of grassroots politics.<sup>190</sup> The APC in response dismissed the allegations as a figment of Hassan's imagination.<sup>191</sup>

Ultimately, the political environment of Plateau State appears to be relatively calm, in contrast to the ostensible tensions, lawsuits and counter-lawsuits that have characterised other states.

## **Contesting Political Parties**

The by-elections in Plateau South will be contested by ten parties:

<b>G</b>	<b>CANDIDATE</b>	<b>PARTY</b>
<b>M</b>	Caleb A Rangka	Action Alliance (AA)
<b>M</b>	Dakuhut Nanbal Tongrang	African Action Congress (AAC)
<b>M</b>	Richard Ponkap Bature	African Democratic Congress (ADC)
<b>M</b>	Alphonsus Jepgwam Goewam	Action Democratic Party (ADP)
<b>F</b>	Nora Ladi Daduut	All Progressives Congress (APC)
<b>M</b>	Kamilu Muhammad	Labour Party (LP)
<b>M</b>	Johnson Jangnap David	National Rescue Movement (NRM)
<b>M</b>	George Edwards Daika	People's Democratic Party (PDP)
<b>M</b>	Agwo Naanlong Nicodemus	Social Democratic Party (SDP)
<b>M</b>	Fredrick Nanman Yakwai	Young Progressive Party (YPP)

From the above table, it is evident that there is a recurring theme of poor representation and inclusion within the parties, as only one woman is among the candidates. There is also no PWD.

From 1999-2015, all Governors in Plateau state had been from the PDP. However, the APC was able to break this dominance with the election of Governor Simon Bako Lalong in 2015 and again in 2019. Since 2019, all three senatorial districts have also been represented by APC members. This suggests that the APC is gaining popularity in the state, which might improve their chances in the upcoming by-election.

### Main Political Actors

**George Daika** is the PDP candidate for the election. As the former speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly, he has gained considerable experience in politics.

**Nora Daduut** is the APC candidate for the election. An academic who heads the French department at the University of Jos, Daduut has also been a member of the PDP, LP, and APC at different times. Following her victory at APC's primaries, she will be contesting the Plateau South election on the platform of the APC. It is also worthy of note that Daduut is the only woman contesting the election.

**Simon Lalong** is the Governor of Plateau State and an APC member. As Governor, he wields influence in the state and is expected to fully back his party's candidate. Governor Lalong has expressed confidence that APC will retain its seat in the Senate during the election.<sup>192</sup> There are also speculations that Daduut is being sponsored by Governor Lalong in order to pave the way for him into the Senate in 2023, but Daduut has debunked these claims as "political propaganda".<sup>193</sup>

### Security Concerns

Although the political environment in Plateau State appears to be relatively calm in the build-up to the election, the state has witnessed clashes between herders and farmers for a long time. These clashes have escalated in recent years, with over 1,800 people killed and more than 50,000 people displaced in 2018.<sup>194</sup> The insecurity in the state has the potential to undermine peaceful elections. The 2019 governorship election in the state also experienced violence,<sup>195</sup> which further indicates the risk of violence during the upcoming election. It is paramount for security agencies to ensure that the atmosphere is adequately safeguarded to ensure that elections are peaceful.

## Conclusion

Upon analysis of the six senatorial districts in which the by-elections are scheduled to hold, the following themes emerge:

- Most of the states with upcoming elections are riverine areas, which are subject to flooding. INEC must take this geographical feature into account for election planning purposes, in terms of making provisions for transportation and security.
- The elections will be conducted in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and while INEC has set out guidelines for safe voting and trained ad-hoc staff on COVID-19 protocols, it is not sufficient. Other stakeholders, including voters, election officials, security agencies, CSOs, and political parties have roles to play in ensuring that these guidelines are implemented on election day.
- Turnout rates across all states have been declining rapidly. In all the states, less than half of registered voters came out to vote during the 2019 general elections (in most states, the figure was even less than a third). Given that general elections usually have higher turnout rates than senatorial or governorship elections, it is reasonable to assume that turnout for the upcoming senatorial elections might be even lower. This is a cause for concern, and indicates the pressing need for more effective civic and voter education from INEC and CSOs. In the near future, other methods to encourage voting such as early voting, absentee voting, and electronic voting should also be adopted by INEC and the National Assembly (through the Amended Electoral Bill).
- There have been both intra- and inter-party rivalries in virtually all the senatorial districts. Lack of internal democracy during party primaries leads to resentment among candidates. Parties can address this by making their primaries more transparent and credible.

- Tensions within and across parties have been heightened by lawsuits and counter-lawsuits. These developments have also made the political process in Nigeria very litigious, as both primary and main elections lead to disputes that have to be settled by courts and tribunals. This is a threat to the independence of the judiciary, and must be curtailed.
- Despite at least ten parties contesting in all but one senatorial district, there is little to no information on the activities of other parties apart from the dominant APC and PDP. This has meant that research for this paper could only focus on candidates from these two parties. In order to facilitate increased choice and multi-party politics, there is a need for the media to also highlight the activities of candidates from other parties.
- Women and PWDs are grossly underrepresented in all the parties. This lack of inclusion and representation within the parties' feeds into poor representation in elective offices. It is therefore important for parties to start actively adopting measures such as affirmative action in order to promote inclusion and representation.
- All senatorial districts have a history of election violence, which poses risks for the upcoming by-elections. Security agencies have a highly important role to play in maintaining peace during these elections.

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**INITIATIVE FOR RESEARCH,  
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### **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.

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