



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



FACTSHEET ON BAYELSA STATE 2023 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

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About The Electoral Hub

The Electoral Hub, an affiliate of the Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD), is a knowledge and advocacy hub which seeks to provide solutions to improve the credibility and integrity of the electoral process. It is committed to promoting electoral knowledge, integrity, and accountability in Nigeria. Our aim is to strengthen electoral governance and accountability in Nigeria through the provision of critical and contextualized process. We believe that the integrity of the electoral process is crucial in improving electoral governance and sustaining democracy in Nigeria. We also believe in solutions rooted in the principles of justice and equity.

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

IRIAD-The Electoral Hub

...promoting electoral knowledge, accountability and integrity

9B Omolara Adeyemi Street, Kukwaba, Abuja

Phone: +234 908 6998 850 +234 912 1551 337

+234 915 1221 138 +234 704 7998 525

Twitter: @electoralhub and @iriadev

Instagram: @electoralhub, @theelectoralforum, and @iriadev

Facebook: @electoralhubng, @electoralforum, and @iriadev

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-electoral-hub/>

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Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/@electoralhub1196>

Website: <https://www.electoralhub.iriadng.org> and <https://iriadng.org>

Introduction

The Bayelsa governorship election is scheduled to hold on November 11, 2023 (11/11/2023). The election is to elect the governor of the State for a four year-term. The Bayelsa State governorship election is one of the off-cycle governorship elections conducted after the 2023 general election in Nigeria. It became an off-cycle election following the 2007 election which Chief Timipre Sylva was declared winner but was nullified on April 14th, 2008 following a legal dispute initiated by Ebitimi Amgbare.¹ The 2023 governorship election would be the seventh election held in the state since the return to civilian rule in 1999. There are a number of issues and factors around the Bayelsa State election worth mentioning such as:

- The incumbent governor, Douye Diri, is completing his first term in office. His bid for a second tenure makes the election critical for determining if there would be a continuity of the incumbent in office or if there would be a shift in power in Bayelsa State.
- The state is known for electoral violence with hot spots such as Brass, Nembe, and Southern Ijaw LGAs
- The election provides an opportunity for further implementation of the Electoral Act 2022 following the first country-wide application during the 2023 general election.
- With the 2023 off-cycle governorship election in Bayelsa state, INEC is provided with an opportunity to improve upon the functioning of its latest technological innovation, the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), the INEC Result Viewing (IREV) portal, and the modalities for transmission of results.
- The election also provides electoral duty-bearers with an opportunity to contribute meaningfully toward improved electoral conduct in Nigeria, focusing on Bayelsa State.

There are several steps that need to be taken to improve electoral governance and integrity in Nigeria and achieve better results for the Bayelsa governorship election, including resolving issues that arose prior to, during, and after the general election as well as implementing lessons learnt from the conduct of the general election. Some of these issues as captured by The Electoral Hub's general election analysis include: logistical and operational issue, insecurity and electoral violence, misinformation, disinformation and fake news, weak political party agents, limited knowledge of legal framework, challenge with election technology, poor institutional strategic communication, heightened ethnic

¹ https://saharareporters.com/2008/04/14/breaking-news-court-appeals-nullifies-election-govtimipre-sylva-bayelsa-state#google_vignette

and regional fault lines, disenfranchisement and voter suppression, issues with result collation and transmission, and lack of accountability for electoral offences.²

For this election, **The Electoral Hub** is monitoring the process and documenting election-related violence against women and People With Disability (PWDs) as well as compliance with legal framework- the Electoral Act 2022. It will also observe election day activities as a member of the Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room)³. The Electoral Hub observation will focus on electioneering, electoral, and post electoral periods, looking at issues such as: *compliance with legal framework, RAC preparations and set-ups, security presence from RACs to PUs, youth, women and PWDs participation, malpractices including vote trading and electoral violence, ad-hoc staff performance, collation process management, and post collation electoral environment and conduct of key stakeholders and electoral duty bearers*. These key areas would serve as basis for our post-election analysis on the conduct of the election.

The Electoral Hub has prepared this factsheet to increase stakeholders’ understanding of the context and dynamics in which the Bayelsa State governorship election will hold. The factsheet covers four broad thematic areas, namely: electoral background, political dynamics, civil environment, and electoral integrity measures.



² The Electoral Hub (2023). Electoral Accountability Matters: An analysis of Nigeria’s 2023 General Election.

³ The Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room is a platform of 70 civic groups working on electoral reforms as well as addressing gaps in governance.



BAYELSA STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION. 2023

1,056,862
Registered Voters

105
Registered Areas

1,017,613
PVC Collection



8 LGAs

16
Candidates

2,244
Polling Units

YOUR

VOTE

#BayelsaDecides2023
#InclusiveElectionNaija
#ElectoralIntegrityNaija
#ElectoralCredibilityNaija

POWER

YOUR



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S/N	ISSUES	FEATURES
ELECTORAL BACKGROUND		
1	The Election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The governorship election is scheduled to be held on November 11, 2023⁴. – This election will be the seventh governorship election in the state since the return to civilian rule in 1999. – Governorship elections were held on January 9, 1999; April 19, 2003; April 14, 2007; February 11, 2012; December 5, 2015; November 16, 2019. – The election is to be conducted for the position of the governor and the deputy governorship for a four-year term. – The election is also important as it provides another platform for implementing the Electoral Act, 2022, as well as implementing and deploying lessons learned in the 2023 general election which was conducted on February 25 and March 18, 2023. – It gives INEC and other important stakeholders an additional opportunity to improve their institutional capability and integrity and to strengthen Nigeria’s electoral democracy.
2	Constitutional and Legal Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The conduct of elections in Nigeria is governed by the provisions of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended) and the Electoral Act, 2022. – Section 176 (1), (2) of the 1999 Constitution provides for the Office of the Governor. – Section 177 of the Constitution outlines the qualifications for a candidate to be qualified for election to the Office of the governor. The qualifications for contesting are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Must be a Nigerian by birth ▪ Should not be less than 35 years old ▪ Must be a member of a political party and be sponsored by that party

⁴ <https://inecnigeria.org/?events=time-table-and-schedule-of-activities-for-the-Bayelsa-state-governorship-election>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Should be educated up to at least School Certificate level or its equivalent – The Electoral Act, 2022, INEC Regulations and Guidelines, and INEC Codes of Conduct are some other legal instruments that will guide the conduct of the Bayelsa State governorship election. – The conduct and management of the election will be handled by INEC, the federal electoral management body (EMB) of Nigeria with the legal authority to plan, carry out, and oversee all elections for the offices of president and vice president, governor and deputy governor of a State, membership in the Senate, house of representatives, and house of assembly of each State of the Federation (State House of Assembly)⁵.
3	Electoral Delimitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bayelsa State is delimited into 8 Local Government Areas (LGAs); and 105 Registration Areas/Electoral Wards⁶ – It is also divided into three senatorial districts: Western Senatorial District, Central Senatorial District, and Eastern Senatorial District⁷. Additionally, it has six federal constituencies: Brass/Nembe, Ogbia, Sagbama/Ekeremor, Southern Ijaw, Yenagoa/Kolokuna/Opokuma.⁸ Bayelsa state has 24 state constituencies, represented in the State House of Assembly.⁹ – There are 1,056 862 registered voters¹⁰ and a total of 2,244 Polling Units which is a result of the conversion of some Voting Points to Polling Units from the previous 1,804 Polling Units¹¹.
4	Bayelsa State Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bayelsa state is regarded as the glory of all lands. It is one of the six states in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria and at the heart of the Niger Delta region.

⁵ See Third Schedule Item F Paragraph 15(a) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended)

⁶ <https://businessday.ng/politics/article/eight-reasons-november-11-Bayelsa-guber-election-should-mater-to-nigeria/>

⁷ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/08/Bayelsa-at-30-the-journey-so-far/>

⁸ <https://www.manpower.com.ng/places/federal-constituencies/7/bayelsa-state>

⁹ <https://allnigeriainfo.ng/history-of-bayelsa-state/>

¹⁰ <https://dailypost.ng/2023/10/10/election-inec-confirms-numbers-of-registered-voters-for-imo-bayelsa-Bayelsa-polls/>

¹¹ Ibid

- The State with capital as Yenagoa, was formed from Rivers State on 1st October 1996 by the military administration of General Sani Abacha¹².
- One of the unique features of Bayelsa State is its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean. The state is known for its abundant water bodies, creeks, and swamps.¹³
- Another unique feature of Bayelsa State is that the state hosts the Oloibiri oil field, the birthplace of Nigeria’s oil industry.¹⁴
- Other notable landmarks in Bayelsa Sate include Akassa beach, Ox-Bow Lake.
- Bayelsa State is 21,100 Square Kilometres and is situated in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.¹⁵
- Bayelsa State is almost homogeneous in terms of culture, language, and tradition, consisting of people of Izon with different dialects such as Epie/Attisa, Nembe, Ogbia, Okordia/Zarama, Biseni, Gbarain, and a host of others.
- The major towns and cities in Bayelsa State include Yenagoa, Ogbia town, Nembe, Amassoma, Okpoama-Brass, Okolobiri, Kaiama, Odi, Sagbama, Twon-Brass, Otuoke.
- Bayelsa State is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the South and West, by Rivers State to the East, and by Delta State to the North.
- Bayelsa State is renowned as a major oil producing state in Nigeria.
- There are abundant mineral resources in Bayelsa State. Some of these resources include: oil/gas, clay, gypsum, lead/zinc, lignite, limestone, manganese and uranium¹⁶.

¹² Ibid, <https://bayelsastate.gov.ng/our-history/>

¹³ <https://www.cometonigeria.com/region/south-south-nigeria/bayelsa-state/>

¹⁴ <https://www.dataphyte.com/latest-reports/special-report/oloibiri-the-community-where-crude-oil-was-first-discovered-poverty-deprives-residents-of-solar-energy/>

¹⁵ https://www.nigeriagallery.com/Nigeria/States_Nigeria/Bayelsa/

¹⁶ Ibid

5 Bayelsa State Electorate

- Bayelsa State electorate is predominantly Izon/Ijaw spread across diverse dialects including Nembe, Ogbia, Epie/Atissa, amongst others¹⁷.
- The National Bureau of Statistics NBS (2016) population projection places Bayelsa State’s population as 2,277,961 at 1.9% annual population change. From the 2006 population census, Bayelsa had a population of 1,704,515 (males- 874,083 and females- 830,437)¹⁸.
- In Bayelsa State, the percentage of PWDs is 0.39% for men and 0.50 for women¹⁹.
- Bayelsa State's economy is mostly dependent on agriculture, particularly, fishing and farming. Majority of the population are engaged in fishing with dugouts in the numerous rivers and creeks within the state. Others engage in farming crops such as cassava, water yam, cocoyam, maize, pepper, among others.²⁰
- Its workforce is 60.3% of the total population²¹ and 43.6% of households receive remittances, including 1.1 remittances internationally and 43.1 remittances domestically²².
- 36.6% of the people use better sources of drinking water, and 73.9% of the people are literate²³. In addition, 46.2% of households are connected to the national grid and 73.8% of households have access to electricity²⁴.
- Bayelsa State’s poverty headcount rate for 2018/2019 is 22.6%, the poverty income gap is 0.053, and the Gini coefficient is 29.7²⁵.

¹⁷ <https://thedailysblog.com/facts-about-Bayelsa-state>

¹⁸ https://citypopulation.de/en/nigeria/admin/NGA006_bayelsa/

¹⁹ NBS (2020) Nigeria Living Standards Survey 2018/2019, page 41 <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/1123>

²⁰ <https://thedailysblog.com/facts-about-Bayelsa-state>

²¹ NBS (2020) Nigeria Living Standards Survey 2018/2019, page 48 <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/1123>

²² Ibid Page 61

²³ <https://nigeria.opendataforafrica.org/>

²⁴ NBS (2020) Nigeria Living Standards Survey 2018/2019, page 87 <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/1123>

²⁵ The World Bank (2022) Nigeria Poverty Assessment 2022: A Better Future for All Nigerians. Accessed from <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099730003152232753/pdf/P17630107476630fa09c990da780535511c.pdf>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bayelsa State has an average household size of 3.69 family members²⁶. – Nigeria Living Standards Survey 2018/2019 places Bayelsa State dependence ratio as 0.70 with an average of 29.3% of households with female heads²⁷. – According to World Bank 2022 Poverty Assessment Report, Bayelsa State has a Median deflated consumption per person/year of ₦ 190,084²⁸, and 28.7 are multidimensionally poor²⁹. – Bayelsa State is reported to have 250,000 out-of-school children³⁰. – Tertiary institutions located within the State include: Federal University Otuoke (FUOTUOKE), Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, University of Africa Toru Orua (UAT), Bayelsa Medical University (BMU), Yenagoa, Federal Polytechnic Ekowe, Bayelsa State College of Arts and Science, and the Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education (IJB COE), Sagbama.
6	Key Electoral Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Notification of Polls – 14 November 2022 – Party Primaries – 27 March 2023 – 17 April 2023 – Submission of names of candidates by Political Parties – 5 May 2023 – Publication of Personal Particulars of Candidates by INEC – 12 May 2023 – Publication of the final list of candidates by INEC - 9 June 2023 – Publication of official register voters for the election by INEC – 12 October 2023 – Publication of Notice of Poll by INEC – 16 October 2023 – Campaign by political parties in public – 14 June 2023 – 9 November 2023 – The Election will be held on 11 November 2023

²⁶ NBS (2020) Nigeria Living Standards Survey 2018/2019, page 8 <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/1123>

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ The World Bank (2022) Nigeria Poverty Assessment 2022: A Better Future for All Nigerians, Page 28. Accessed from <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099730003152232753/pdf/P17630107476630fa09c990da780535511c.pdf>

²⁹ Ibid, Page 44

³⁰ <https://www.thecable.ng/diri-250000-out-of-school-children-in-bayelsa-alarmed-we-must-reverse-it>

INEC and Stakeholders' Engagement

- On July 25, 2023, Mahmood Yakubu, the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and national commissioners of the electoral umpire met with leaders from political parties³¹.
- The meeting was aimed at reviewing the 2023 general election and preparing for the off-cycle governorship elections in Imo, Kogi, and Bayelsa states³².
- On July 28, 2023, INEC held a meeting with the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES)³³. During the meeting, INEC Chairman, Prof. Yakubu Mahmood stated the need for security agencies to take decisive action against promoters of violence and other anti-democratic behaviours like vote-buying, assaults on election officials, and interference with the electoral process while upholding absolute impartiality³⁴.
- Ahead of the elections, INEC opened the portal for ad hoc staff recruitment on August 31, 2023³⁵.
- On October 25, 2023, INEC held its quarterly consultative meeting with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) at the INEC conference room, in Abuja³⁶. During the meeting, the Chairman revealed that the Commission has accredited 145 organisations deploying 7,896 observers³⁷. He also stated that the Commission would continue to engage stakeholders in the electoral process³⁸.

³¹ Channels (2023), INEC Chair, Party Leaders Review 2023 Elections. <https://www.channelstv.com/2023/07/25/inec-chair-party-leaders-review-2023-elections/>

³² Ibid

³³ Ogunseyin O. (2023), INEC Wants Security Improved for Bayelsa, Imo and Bayelsa Governorship Elections. *Guardian*. <https://guardian.ng/news/inec-wants-security-improved-for-bayelsa-imo-kogi-governorship-elections/>

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Egobiambu E. (2023), Apply: INEC Begins Recruitment of Ad-hoc Staff for Imo, Bayelsa and Bayelsa Polls. *Channels TV*. <https://www.channelstv.com/2023/08/31/apply-inec-begins-recruitment-of-ad-hoc-staff-for-imo-bayelsa-bayelsa-polls/>, https://inecnigeria.org/?page_id=12870

³⁶ INEC Twitter (2023), { @inecnigeria }, <https://twitter.com/inecnigeria/status/1717137305301848421>, <https://von.gov.ng/imo-kogi-and-bayelsa-states-elections-critical-inec/>

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ibid

8	Training/Electoral Personnel Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – INEC through The Electoral Institute (TEI) organized a workshop tagged “Enhancing Electoral Security: TEI Methodology Workshop on EVMAT for 2023 Bayelsa Off-Cycle Governorship Election Field Agents”³⁹. – A five-day technical workshop on "Effective Management of Key Electoral Processes and Activities" was organized by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for electoral officers, assistant electoral officers (operations), and heads of departments, legal, in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, and Lokoja, Kogi State.
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POLITICAL DYNAMICS

9	2019 Governorship Election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Bayelsa 2019 governorship election was conducted on November 16, 2019⁴⁰. – Forty-five (45) political parties contested the election⁴¹. – Following the election, Douye Diri became governor of Bayelsa State as the Supreme Court nullified the victory of David Lyon who polled the highest number of votes in the contest⁴². – The election was reportedly marred by violence and ballot box snatching⁴³. – There were also reports of pervasive vote trading during the elections.⁴⁴ – Historically, Nembe, Brass, Ekeremor and Southern Ijaw LGAs have featured as violence flashpoints in the state.⁴⁵
10	Political Parties, Candidates and Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 16 political parties will be participating in the election including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) – Ruling party ▪ All Progressives Congress (APC) – Major Opposition

³⁹ INEC Twitter (2023), { @inecnigeria }, <https://twitter.com/inecnigeria/status/1705358940563812629>

⁴⁰ <https://dailypost.ng/2019/05/16/breaking-inec-shifts-kogi-bayelsa-guber-elections-new-date/>

⁴¹ <https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/BAYELSA-STATE-GOVERNORSHIP-ELECTION-2019-FINAL-LIST-OF-CANDIDATES.pdf>

⁴² <https://punchng.com/breaking-supreme-court-nullifies-bayelsa-governor-elects-election-declares-pdp-winner/>

⁴³ Business Day (2019), Violence, ballot box snatching marred Bayelsa election. <https://businessday.ng/top-stories/article/violence-ballot-box-snatching-marred-bayelsa-election-coalition-of-observers-alleges/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.thecable.ng/elections-foreign-observers-speak-on-violence-in-kogi-bayelsa>

⁴⁵ <https://thesouthernexaminer.com/bayelsa-monarchs-fear-escalating-political-violence-ahead-guber-election-p10534-179.htm>

Candidates

- The final list of candidates was approved by INEC on Tuesday, 6 June 2023 for the Bayelsa governorship election⁴⁶.
- The list⁴⁷ comprises 16 governorship candidates and 16 deputy governorship candidates for the 2023 Bayelsa election⁴⁸. The candidates are:
 1. Idikio Warmate Jones – A
Owo Desmond Inodu
 2. Mufumoh Akpoebi Alex – AA
Okoya Ladebi Lilian
 3. Kalango Stanley Davies – ADC
Obesi Otasome Benjamin
 4. Oguara Nengimonyo – ADP
Omonibo Angonimi
 5. Syla Timipre Marlin – APC
Maciver Joshua
 6. Subiri Waibodei Joseph – APGA
LOTT Kime Thompson
 7. Oshariken Saturday – APM
Ugbenbo Woyindeinyefa
 8. Ogege Kemelayefa Mercy – APP
Leigh Robertson Kirk
 9. Ben Victor Magbodo – BP
Ineinei Ebiowei Major
 10. Eradiri Udengmobofa – LP
Nathus Benjamin
 11. Azebi Bestman Ayabeke – NNPP
Ganagana Ebimowei

⁴⁶ https://inecnigeria.org/?page_id=12836

⁴⁷ <https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/List-of-Candidates-Bayelsa-State.pdf>

⁴⁸ <https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/List-of-Candidates-Bayelsa-State.pdf>

		<p>12. Micah Akeems – NRM Ziprebo Pius Emomotimi</p> <p>13. Diri Douye – PDP Ewrudjakpo Oborawharievho Lawrence</p> <p>14. Ozato Erepadei Erepadei – PRP Okala Azibola</p> <p>15. Osuluku Binalayefa – SDP Doibi Ebinabo</p> <p>16. Simeon Imomotimi Karioru – ZLP Josiah Famvie</p> <p>Inclusivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There are 14 male gubernatorial candidates and 2 female gubernatorial candidates, as well as 14 male and 2 female candidates for the position of deputy governor. – The female governorship candidates are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Oguara Nengimonyo – ADP 2. Ogege Kemelayefa Mercy – APP – Female deputy governorship candidates are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Okoya Ladebi Lilian 2. Doibi Ebinabo
11	Pre-election Litigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – On Thursday, 10th October 2023, a Federal High Court in Abuja disqualified Timipre Sylva, the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), for the governorship election in Bayelsa State.⁴⁹ – The judgement followed a suit filed against Sylva by a chieftain of the APC in the state, Mr. Demesuoyefa Kolomo.⁵⁰ – Stressing that the 1999 Constitution allows for a maximum tenure of eight years, the court held that Sylva, who is the immediate past Minister of

⁴⁹ <https://punchng.com/court-disqualifies-sylva-from-bayelsa-governorship-poll/>

⁵⁰ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/606028-bayelsa-2023-apc-chieftain-prays-court-to-stop-sylva-from-contesting.html>

		<p>Petroleum Resources, was not eligible to participate in the gubernatorial contest having already spent five years in office as governor of the state.⁵¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The verdict was delivered by Justice Donatus Okorowo, who held that uncontroverted evidence established that Sylva had earlier taken the oath of office as Bayelsa state governor, on two occasions.⁵² – The court directed the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to remove his name from the list of candidates for the election.⁵³ – Following the verdict, the APC flagbearer, Chief Timipre Sylva has filed an appeal.⁵⁴ – The appeal court voided the decision of Justice Donatus Okorowo and reversed the nullification of the candidacy of Chief Timipre Sylva.⁵⁵
12	Power Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Prominent political parties participating in the election include the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the All Progressives Congress (APC), and the Labour Party (LP). – Several members of the ruling PDP have defected to the opposition APC, while some APC members have switched to support the PDP. – Notable defections from the APC to the PDP include Chief Werinipre Seibarugu, former Speaker of the State House of Assembly, and Hon. Israel Sony-Goli, a former member of the House of Representatives.⁵⁶ – Special Assistant to Governor Douye Diri, Mr. Doubara Benjamin, and grassroots mobilizer, Apostle Bodmas Prince Kemepadei have officially defected to the All Progressives Congress (APC).⁵⁷

⁵¹ <https://punchng.com/court-disqualifies-sylva-from-bayelsa-governorship-poll/>

⁵² *ibid*

⁵³ *ibid*

⁵⁴ <https://www.thecable.ng/sylva-appeals-disqualification-from-bayelsa-guber#:~:text=Timipre%20Sylva%2C%20former%20minister%20of,the%20Bayelsa%20state%20governorship%20election.>

⁵⁵ <https://www.channelstv.com/2023/10/31/bayelsa-poll-appeal-court-reverse-timipre-sylvas-sac/>

⁵⁶ <https://dailytrust.com/bayelsa-govship-gale-of-defections-hit-pdp-apc-lp-as-battle-for-creek-haven-hots-up/>

⁵⁷ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/09/bayelsa-guber-diris-aide-former-loyalist-others-defect-to-apc/>

- Some aides and political allies of Governor Douye Diri, the PDP candidate, have defected to Chief Timipre Sylva, the APC candidate, including Nunieh Odede, the state youth leader of the PDP, and former commissioners.⁵⁸
- Other defectors from the PDP to the APC include Chief Saviour Ibegu from Ogbia LGA, and Chief Diodei Week from Southern Ijaw LGA. Additionally, three former local government chairmen, namely Victor Isaiah and Nathaniel Sylva from Brass, as well as Ebinyu Turner from Ogbia, also joined the ranks of defectors.⁵⁹
- A prominent Labour Party chieftain and campaign coordinator, Mr. Morris Alagoa, also left the party to support the PDP.
- Bayelsa State Deputy Governor, Senator Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo, has criticized those leaving the PDP, calling them "political leeches" and "ingrates." He believes the PDP remains strong and is gaining more ground.

CIVIL TERRAIN

13 Community Stakeholders

- Traditional leaders are frequently sought out for endorsement and support by those running for elective offices in Bayelsa State. As such, they play key roles as community-level stakeholders in Bayelsa State politics capable of influencing voting patterns and the outcome of the process. Some notable traditional rulers with potential of influencing the Electoral Process and its outcomes are:
 - His Royal Majesty, King Bubaraye Dakolo, the Ibenanaowei of Ekpetiama Kingdom and Chairman, Bayelsa State Traditional Rulers Council.
 - His Royal Majesty, King Alfred P. Diete-Spiffis, the Amanyanabo of Twon Brass and Former Military Governor, Old Rivers State.
 - His Royal Majesty, King Godwin Igodo, the Obenibe of Atissa Kingdom.
 - His Royal Majesty, King Malla Sasime, the Obenibe of Epie Kingdom.

⁵⁸ ibid

⁵⁹ <https://dailytrust.com/bayelsa-govship-gale-of-defections-hit-pdp-apc-lp-as-battle-for-creek-haven-hots-up/>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ His Royal Majesty, King Funpere Akah, the Ibenanaowei of Gbarain Kingdom and Chairman of Yenagoa Traditional Rulers Council. ▪ His Royal Majesty, King Consul Oluke, the Ibedaowei of Akassa Kingdom. ▪ His Royal Majesty, King Paul Seide, the Ibedaowei of Bilabiri Kingdom. ▪ His Royal Highness, King D.D.A Akpele, the Amayanabo of Sangana Kingdom. ▪ His Royal Majesty, King Perekebina Alfred, the Paramount Ruler of Koromotoru Kingdom. ▪ His Royal Majesty, King Joshua Igbagara, the Ibenanaowei of Oyakiri Kingdom. ▪ His Royal Majesty, King Edmund Maduabebe Daukoru, the Amayanabo of Nembe Kingdom ▪ The Amananaowei of Tombia Kingdom⁶⁰
14	Stakeholder's⁶¹ Engagement with the Electoral Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – On August 10 2023, the National Orientation Agency (NOA) commenced a voter education and sensitization campaign ahead of the November 11th governorship election in Bayelsa State⁶². – The sensitization campaign was designed to address concerns from the 2023 General Elections, such as low turnout, poor understanding of the Electoral Act, and incidents of electoral violence.⁶³ – A coalition of 25 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) has issued a call to security agencies to caution political parties to prevent potential crises in the off-cycle governorship elections in Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi states. – In Bayelsa State, the CSOs noted signs of security concerns arising from accusatory and volatile campaign language between the leading candidates of the APC and PDP, with a 35% possibility of violence.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ A new king is yet to be crowned. The previous King, His Royal Highness Christian Atani Okpofaa Otoboteker passed on February 13, 2023 at the age of 98years old. <https://www.timelesspersons.com/christian-atani-okpofaa-otobotekere-1925-2023/>

⁶¹ These includes CSOs, Security Agencies and MDAs

⁶² <https://erevisionmediatv.com/noa-launches-voters-sensitization-for-guber-elections-in-bayelsa-state/>

⁶³ ibid

⁶⁴ [Imo, Bayelsa, Kogi Polls: Don't Plunge States Into Chaos, CSOs Caution Candidates \(leadership.ng\)](#)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fostering Achievement of Community Empowerment (FACE) Initiative, on May 15, 2023 expressed concerns over the reluctance of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to conduct a Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) in Bayelsa State ahead of the November 11, 2023 governorship selection in the state.⁶⁵
15	Media in Bayelsa State	<p>Radio Stations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Radio Nigeria, Creek FM 106.5: Located in Yenagoa and owned by the Federal Government. It has the widest coverage, reaching all the LGAs. - Bayelsa State Broadcasting Corporation (BSBC), Radio Bayelsa Glory FM 97.1 is located at Ekeki Yenagoa. It is owned by the State Government. It has less coverage compared with Creek FM-Radio Nigeria - Silverbird Rhythm FM 94.7 located Oxbow Lake Swali Market, Yenagoa, the state capital. It is own by Senator Ben Murray-Bruce, who is the founder and CEO of the Silverbird Group. He is a PDP Stewart. It has a wider coverage that the state-owned Radio Bayelsa - Ray Power FM 102.5: located at Elebele and owned by late Senator Raymond Dokpesi, a PDP Stewart. - Royal FM 95.5: Located at Agudama-Epie, Yenagoa. - Peoples FM 93.1: Located at Oxbow Lake. - Wilberforce FM 98.1: Located at Wilberforce Island and owned by Niger Delta University -NDU. It has limited coverage restricted to the university and immediate environs. <p>Television Stations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NTA Bayelsa – Federal Government owned television station with wide coverage

⁶⁵ [2023 Bayelsa governorship election: CSOs worried over non-conduct of CVR - Blueprint Newspapers Limited](#)

- Niger Delta Television (NDTV) - A regional television station serving the Niger Delta region, including Bayelsa State.
- Silverbird Television (STV) - A national television station with coverage in Bayelsa State.
- Channels Television - A popular national TV station with a wide viewership.
- AIT Bayelsa - A branch of the African Independent Television (AIT) network with local coverage.

Newspapers

- Niger Delta Herald Newspaper: A weekly tabloid print media located in Yenagoa with the “aim is to fight for total resource control, equity and justice for the people of the South South Region”⁶⁶.
- Bight Newspaper: A daily newspaper located in Yenagoa.
- Track News: Privately owned online media featuring political news and opinions. It is owned by a PDP member, Ogidi Ben Bara

INTEGRITY MEASURES

16 Integrity Measures for Bayelsa State Electoral Process

- The Bayelsa governorship election will be held on November 11, 2023, and INEC has followed the timeline and schedule and properly made regulations and guidelines public. Hence fostering certainty and stability.
- INEC engages with stakeholders in an effective way. INEC has routinely communicated its objectives and election preparations through several meetings.
- Additionally, INEC has routinely communicated with the electorate and the public by posting information on its website and engaging through conventional and social media initiatives.

⁶⁶ <https://nigerdeltaheraldng.com/bs-about-us/>

- Voter education activities have been conducted. These were carried out through both offline methods, such as actual gatherings and grassroots community interactions, and online methods, such as social media engagements.
- To all key stakeholders involved and the public, all election-related material has been disclosed. The public can, for instance, acquire details on topics like candidate lists for political parties, PVC collection, election technology, and voter registration.
- The implementation of the results viewing portal (IReV) by INEC strengthens the process' integrity through measures of transparency and accountability. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) reveals that the Bayelsa State governorship election results would be electronically sent from polling places to its website on Election Day⁶⁷.
- To ensure that the election is transparent INEC has accredited 145 domestic and international observers' groups to observe the election.
- There is freedom for Civil Society Organizations and other stakeholders to engage in the process and engage with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the national EMB.
- The Commission has tested the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) for accreditation and upload polling unit results to the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV). On Saturday, October 14, 2023, between the hours of 8.30 am and 2.30 pm, the test run was conducted concurrently throughout the three States holding governorship elections on November 11, 2023⁶⁸.

⁶⁷ Obahopo B. (2023), 2023 Bayelsa Governorship Election Results Will be Transmitted from Polling Units- INEC. *Vanguard*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/08/2023-Bayelsa-govship-election-results-ll-be-transmitted-from-polling-units-inec/>

⁶⁸Suleiman Q. (2023), INEC to Hold Mock Accreditation Ahead of Kogi, Bayelsa and Imo Polls. *Premium Times*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/628182-inec-to-hold-mock-accreditation-ahead-of-kogih-Bayelsa-imo-polls.html>

Conclusion

The 2023 Bayelsa State Governorship Election will play a critical role in shaping the future of the state. In view of its importance, this factsheet has provided insight on the numerous facets of this momentous event, which is set to take place on November 11, 2023.

Understanding the circumstances of the election is critical. It is the seventh governorship election in Bayelsa since civilian government was restored in 1999. It provides an opportunity to implement the Election Act, 2022, to strengthening INEC capacities and increasing Nigeria's election integrity. Furthermore, the off-cycle election in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi States offer an opportunity for INEC and other electoral duty-bearers to implement lessons learnt from the 2023 general elections. Bayelsa State's distinct topography, cultural diversity, and demography will all play a role in defining the election. The political scene is dynamic, with 16 political parties competing, including the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the principal opposition, the All Progressives Congress (APC). Political defections highlight power dynamics and their possible influence on election results.

The engagement of community stakeholders and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) is also a critical factor on the civil front. The influence of traditional leaders, as well as the vigilance of CSOs working with security agencies, are critical for a calm election atmosphere. Finally, integrity safeguards have been put in place to ensure openness and trust. These initiatives, such as the results viewing portal, observation groups, and a test run of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), attempt to improve the integrity of the voting process.

As Bayelsa State prepares for the 2023 governorship election, the lessons learned from previous elections, active stakeholder involvement, and the adoption of integrity measures will all contribute to a more transparent, credible, and peaceful electoral process. The people of Bayelsa and the rest of the country are anxiously awaiting the results of this crucial election, which will surely impact the state's leadership for the next four years. It is our common hope that this election would mark a step forward towards improved credibility and integrity in Nigeria's electoral process and democratic journey.



INITIATIVE FOR RESEARCH,
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IN DEVELOPMENT



...promoting electoral knowledge, accountability, and integrity

ABOUT THE ELECTORAL HUB

The Electoral Hub, an affiliate of the Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD), is a knowledge and advocacy hub which seeks to provide solutions to improve the credibility and integrity of the electoral process. It is committed to promoting electoral knowledge, integrity, and accountability in Nigeria. Our aim is to strengthen electoral governance and accountability in Nigeria through the provision of critical and contextualized analysis, and solutions to improve the credibility and integrity of the electoral process. We believe that the integrity of the electoral process is crucial in improving electoral governance and sustaining democracy in Nigeria. We also believe in solutions rooted in the principles of justice and equity.

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

📍 9B Omolara Adeyemi Street,
Kukwaba, Abuja, Nigeria
☎ +2347047998525, +235915122138
✉ electoralhub@gmail.com
🌐 www.electoralhub.iriadng.org
www.iriadng.org

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