

# ANAMBRA GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

## HOW IT PLAYED OUT



**Centre for Democracy & Development**

**Centre pour la Démocratie et le Développement**

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## BACKGROUND

The governorship election has come and gone, but the most significant is the lessons the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), political parties, civil society organisations, media, and Nigerians must have learned from the process of conducting the election.

Following the conclusion of the voting process and counting of votes, INEC declared the candidate of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) and the incumbent governor of the State, Governor Willie Obiano, as the winner of the 2017 governorship election. With the total votes of 234,071, Willie Obiano defeated the candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Tony Nwoye, and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Oseloka Obaze who had 98,752 and 70,293 votes respectively.

The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) together with PREMIUM TIMES deployed trained journalists and citizen observers to observe the election. The activities of the observers were coordinated from the Election Analysis Centre set up by the partners to provide a situational analysis of the conduct of the governorship election.

We acknowledge that the results of the polls reflected the valid votes cast and level of participation in the electoral contest. It is pertinent to reflect on events that played out during and after the electioneering process and draw stakeholders' attention to some of the issues that require innovative, creative and result-driven interventions as we work towards deepening electoral process in Nigeria. These include the phenomena of godfatherism, vote-buying, voter turnout, over-voting, logistics management, etc.

## GODFATHERISM

*In One Election, One Godfather: Background Paper on the Anambra 18th November 2017 Governorship Election published ahead of the Election by CDD; We explained the phenomenon of godfatherism in the State. We argued that each electoral cycle since the country's return to democracy in 1999 birthed a new patronage system in Anambra state. We also identified the Ojukwu factor as a robust rallying factor, and that APGA is seen as an Igbo Party. These two factors and the significant role played by Victor Umeh contributed to the emergence of Willie Obiano as the winner of the election.*

However, in a post-victory interview on AIT, Mr Umeh the founder of APGA claimed he has been responsible for determining the future of the party in the South East. According to him "he does all the legwork and confers with the late Ojukwu to review situations thereby "Implying he is the real kingmaker."

More so, in the election, Arthur Eze played the role of godfather to the APC candidate, Tony Nwoye and Peter Obi for Oseloka Obaze of the PDP. How Umeh's support to Obiano's re-election will manifest in political governance of the State is yet to be known. .

**Godfatherism and its politics have been detrimental to the development of the states. It is imperative for all stakeholders to commence rigorous engagement on patronage politics.**

## LOGISTIC RELATED CHALLENGES

The election experienced late opening of polls arising from the logistic challenges, which occurred during the election. INEC in the lead up to the election have consistently expressed confidence that adequate machinery has been put in place for the conduct of hitch-free elections in Anambra State.

On the eve of the 18th November 2017 governorship election, sensitive election materials were distributed from INEC local government offices to most Registration Area Camps (RACs) to ease access of election workers to different polling units (PUs) across the State. However, the election witnessed late opening of polls, with polls opening on average between 9 am, and 11 am as against the stipulated 8 am.

There are three factors to be considered in explaining the lateness experienced. Firstly, the protest embarked upon by ad-hoc staff for non-payment of their allowance and subsequent threats not to undertake Election Daywork if not paid. For example, corp members at the Nkpor Registration Area Centre in Idemili North Local Government insisted they had to be paid their feeding allowance before setting out for the day's business

Secondly, absence of security personnel to escort ad-hoc staff and sensitive election materials to different PUs and, thirdly, the challenges experienced in the transportation of materials to the polling unit by the contracted transporters. However, it is perceived in several quarters that the failure of transporters to turn up is closely linked to the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).



The IPOB is believed to control the transporters and is believed to have requested them to renege on agreements entered into with INEC. On the other hand, our findings revealed that the fear of the IPOB and possible violence led some transporters to refrain from providing services during the elections. Some of the transporters interviewed in the course of writing the report said that their spouses and mothers had prevailed on them out of fear to refrain from working on Election Day.

However, it is important to point out that transportation challenge is a recurring dilemma in Nigerian elections. It is important to state that ahead of the 2019 general election,

**INEC and critical stakeholders; especially in the security and transport sectors, needs to fine-tune the modalities of engagement to forestall a repeat of these incidences.**

## CARD READER MALFUNCTION

Ahead of the governorship election, INEC consistently reiterated its preparedness to conduct hitch-free election. In its quest to confer credibility and integrity and rekindle the trust of people in the electoral process, the use of card readers became fundamental. During accreditation, card readers were used to authenticate the identity of bearers of Permanent Voters Card (PVC) and prevent over-voting on Election Day.

However, the use of card readers has raised serious concerns for its unending malfunctioning, which may have been caused by two reasons: 1) lack of requisite experience and knowledge by ad-hoc staff on how it should be utilised; 2) alleged deliberate attempt by ad-hoc staff, in connivance with party supporters, to make it non-functional.

In some of the polling units we observed during the governorship election, card readers failed to capture fingerprints and voters. This had two implications on the process.

Firstly, it caused delay in either commencement of the voting process or brought to a temporary halt of the process. For example, at ward 1, polling units 002, 003, 004, at All Saints Primary School, Onitsha, and voters were delayed for accreditation over the failure of the card readers. Same was the case at Bishop Patterson Junior Seminary Mbosi Ward 20, Polling unit 004, polling unit 003, Ubuluisiozor, Ihiala LGA, polling unit 003 St Peters Ogidi.

Secondly, because of the malfunctioning of the card reader, ad-hoc staff resorted to manual accreditation in which, in some instances, resulted in over-voting and subsequent cancellation of votes in the affected PUs.

Approximately, one (1) in four (4) voters were accredited even though the card reader could not authenticate their fingerprints and only their PVC was authenticated by the card reader.

At about 11 o'clock on the Election Day, the smart card reader at PU004/13/17/008 Nimo Ward III, Nijkoka LGA, stopped working and all efforts made by INEC ad-hoc staffers to revive the device proved abortive. This resulted in a loss of patience from waiting voters who started leaving the polling unit.

The incumbent Governor, Willie Obi, was also unable to use the card reader at his Eri Primary School, Unit 004, Otuocha 1, Aguleri, polling unit as the card reader also malfunctioned. Also in Onitsha North, All Saints Primary School Ward 1 PU 002, the card reader was reported to have malfunctioned.

The same situation took place in PU 04/01/16/009 and 010, Ezinkwo Primary school, I, UGA I Ward Aguata LGA.

Following incidences of card reader malfunctioning, it is important that the electoral umpire look critically into how to make it more efficient and effective in the run-up to the 2019 general elections. We recommend INEC to look at storage of the SCRs as, for if it is not properly stored, its effectiveness may be jeopardised. More so, INEC reportedly deployed 6,200 card reader machines to conduct elections in 4,608 PUs across 326 Wards in the State.

Yet, the malfunctioning of card readers stalled the voting process in some polling units because card readers ran out of power and immediate replacements were unavailable. INEC should always make adequate preparations in this regard to prevent its reoccurrence in our future elections.

Lastly, INEC should attempt to professionalise its ad-hoc staff and ensure that punitive measures are put in place to deter those with an agenda of compromising the electoral process as well as address capacity gaps.

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Anambra 2017 Gubernatorial Election:

YIAGA #WatchingTheVote Releases PRELIMINARY Process Statement, assessed at

<http://watchingthevote.org/anambra-2017-gubernatorial-election-yiaga-watchingthevote-releases-preliminary-process-statement/>

Anambra Guber Polls: INEC deploys 6,000 card reader machines, Vanguard, assessed at

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/10/anambra-guber-polls-inec-deploys-6000-card-reader-machines/>

## VOTE BUYING AND VOTE SELLING

The political behaviour exhibited by leadership of political parties, parties' supporters, security agents, and voters during the 18 November 2017 governorship election is a representation of day-to-day market affairs. In a market place, buyers and sellers meet to negotiate prices and initiate economic transactions. This exactly was what played out during the Anambra elections with vote buying and selling occurring in almost all local government.

Our observers witnessed voters voluntarily demanding for their votes to be bought while all-time ready agents of the major political parties offered gift items, food, and cash at polling units. Who the voters voted for is dependent on how much their party agents were ready to offer. As reported by our observers, voters were offered between N5,000, N3,000 and N2,000 by parties' agents who adopted "eye-mark and pay" approach. Simply put, payment is dependent on confirmation that votes have been cast for parties that intend to offer money for votes.

As detailed in our preliminary report, for example, at Illo Abito square, Nsugbe, where the APC gubernatorial aspirant, Tony Nwoye, voted, people received cooked rice as incentive to vote. Also, at the Okija Ward 2, PU009, Umuohi Community Primary School, our observers witnessed suspected agents of major political parties wooing voters with cash. At Nnewi Ichi Polling Unit 003, our observers witnessed party agents giving prospective voters money in exchange for their voter cards. Also, party supporters shared gala sausage and Malt drink at Polling Unit 020/ and Unit 021, at Community Primary School, Abatete.

It is not that money politics is alien to Nigeria. What is problematic is the worrying state the phenomenon is turning into in recent times. Role of money in politics was a problem in the recently concluded off-cycle elections in Edo and Ondo State. But, this became worse in the 2017 Anambra governorship election.

As we march towards the 2019 general elections, it is imperative that all stakeholders should rethink their approach to voter education. We strongly believe that by assessing where we are, how we got there, emerging challenges and how to move forward, we will be able to frame our intervention constructively and in a way that addresses primary driver(s) of voluntary vote selling and the buying.

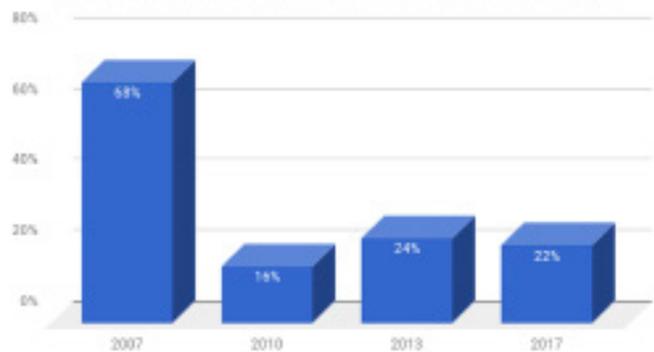
## VOTER TURNOUT

Anambra State has maintained the culture of high voter apathy with approximately 22% voter turnout recorded in the 2017 governorship election while 16% and 24% of the total of registered voters turned out to vote during the 2010 and 2013 elections respectively.

Even, the 68% turnout recorded in 2007 has been subjected to debate following very high cases of electoral malfeasance recorded during elections in the year.

Watch at <https://youtu.be/aU64GKs-mVE>

% OF VOTERS TURNOUT IN GOVERNORSHIP ELECTIONS IN ANAMBRA STATE



There is local government area dimension to voter turnout. A close examination of level of turnout in the 21 local government areas (LGAs) shows that, in proportion to number of registered voters in each LGA,

Anambra East (40%), Ayamelum (39.1%), Njikoka (31.9%), Awka North (29.6%), Dunukofia (29.2%), Aniocha (28.5%), Ekwusigbo (27.4%), Nnewi South (25.8%), Anambra West (25.6%), Orumba South (25.6%), Oyi (22.4%), Aguata (23%), Orumba North (23.2%), Ihiala LGA (24.1%) and Awka South (24.2%) had voter turnout above the state level 22% turnout in the 2017 elections.

NO	LGA	Accredited Vote	Register Voters	Voters Turnout (%)
1	Onitsha South	14,634	145,876	10.0
2	Ogbaru	16,049	149,070	10.8
3	Idemili North	25,254	178,938	14.1
4	Idemili South	14,205	94,194	15.1
5	Onitsha North	20,806	127,865	16.3
6	Nnewi North	21,880	115,662	18.9
7	Oyi	19,931	89,157	22.4
8	Aguata	27,883	121,009	23.0
9	Orumba North	16,149	79,022	23.2
10	Ihiala	29,999	124,588	24.1
11	Awka South	36,114	149,279	24.2
12	Orumba South	16,149	63,149	25.6
13	Anambra West	15,628	61,012	25.6
14	Nnewi South	18,658	72,431	25.8
15	Ekwusigo	20,196	73,800	27.4
16	Aniocha	25,474	89,515	28.5
17	Dunukofia	18,632	63,861	29.2
18	Awka North	16,119	54,390	29.6
19	Njikoka	28,346	88,793	31.9
20	Ayamelum	28,837	60,034	39.7
21	Anambra East	29,299	72,886	<b>40.2</b>
	<b>TOTAL//AVERAGE</b>	<b>457,432</b>	<b>2,074,534</b>	
		Voters Turnout (%)		
		-State Level	22.04986758	

More so, from the data presented above, Anambra East (40.2%) where the APGA candidate, Willie Obiano, and the APC candidate, Tony Nwoye, hailed from had the highest voter turnout in proportion to its registered voter. Even in 2013, the LGA had the highest voter turnout. 39% of its registered voters voted.

However, in Ogbaru LGA where the candidate of PDP, Obaze Oseloka, hailed from had the second lowest voter turn with just 10.8% of its registered voters got accredited. 20% of registered voters in the LGA voted in the 2013 governorship election.

At the top of the list of LGAs with lowest voter turnout is Onitsha South which had only 10% of its registered voter accredited on Election Day. Idemili North (14.1%), Idemili South (15.1%), Onitsha North (16.3%), and Nnewi North (18.9%) had turnout lower than the 22% state-level turnout.

Low voter turnout may be attributed to many factors including hopelessness or lack of trust of eligible voters in the electoral system to bring about pro-poor leaders, over-securitization of the Election Day activities which may have created artificial fears in voters, IPOB factors, among others. It has become important to interrogate why voters continue to develop apathy towards elections in Nigeria. This deserves a rigorous and systematic investigation given the dynamic nature of the country's electoral system.



Anambra governorship election 18th November 2017

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## **OVER-VOTING AND CANCELLATION OF RESULT**

Reducing the incidence of over-voting is one of the major reasons for the introduction of biometric registration and the use of Smart Card Reader (SCR) for accreditation and voting process on Election Day. However, over-voting poses a threat to the conduct of free, fair and credible elections.

In tandem with the provision of section 53 of the 2010 Electoral Act (as amended) that bestowed on INEC power to declare any result that exceeds number of accredited voters null and void, the electoral umpire cancelled results in at least 50% of LGAs in the State (including Akwa South, Ayamelum, Anaocha, Orunba South and North, Ihiala, Oyi, Ekwusigo, Aguata, Onitsha South, Idemili North, among others).

These are LGAs with reported cases of over-voting which was consequence of non-use of card reader for accreditation. These incidences affected over 28,818 registered voters across the LGAs. The affected registered voters constitute 1.32% of total registered voters in the State.

## **IPOB THREAT AND THE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION**

In the run-up to the governorship election, members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) adopted hate campaigns, door-to-door mobilisation, and use of Short Messaging Service (SMS) and activation of rumour mills to dissuade voters from voting on Election Day.

Analysis of how IPOB's strategies or campaigns impacted on the voter turnout of the 18 November 2018 governorship, especially in LGAs CDD considers as IPOB strongholds (that is, Onitsha North, Onitsha South, Ogbaru, Idemili South and Ihiala LGAs), would largely predicate on the lens through which the analysis is conducted.

This is a summation of figures from returning officers from Akwa South, Ayamelum, Anaocha, Orunba South and North, Ihiala, Oyi, Ekwusigo, Aguata, Onitsha South, Idemili North, among others, as reported by our partner, Premium Times Nigeria.

The LGAs have in one way or the other experienced IPOB activities having had high population of IPOB supporters in the State compared to other LGAs.

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of turnout in IPOB strongholds

LGA	2013	2017	DIFFERENCE
	Voter Turnout (%)		
Onitsha North	21	16.3	-4.7
Onitsha South	18	10	-8
Ogbaru	20	10.8	-9.2
Idemili South	22	15.1	-4.9
Ihiala	20	24.1	4.1

Table 1 above provides a snapshot of voter turnout in proportion to registered voters in the LGAs in 2013 and 2017 governorship elections in Anambra State. As revealed in the table, except for Ihiala LGA that experienced an increase in voter turnout in the 2017 elections, the other four LGAs recorded a comparatively lower turnout than what was recorded during the 2013 elections. From this analysis, one may be quick to assert that IPOB campaign impacted on the turnout but a twist of the analysis may show otherwise.

Table 2: Voters Turnout Position Table

LGAs	% of turnout, 2013	Position	% of turnout, 2017	Position
Onitsha North	21	6 <sup>th</sup>	16.3	5 <sup>th</sup>
Onitsha South	18	2 <sup>nd</sup>	10	1 <sup>st</sup>
Ogbaru	20	4 <sup>th</sup>	10.8	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Idemili South	22	7 <sup>th</sup>	15.1	4 <sup>th</sup>
Ihiala	20	5 <sup>th</sup>	24.1	10 <sup>th</sup>

Table 2 above reveals that apart from Ihiala LGA that moved down from 5th to 10th position on the voter turnout position table out of the 21 LGAs in Anambra State, having had 24.1%, the other four LGAs maintained an upward trend.

While Onitsha North LGA moved from 6th position to 5th position of turnout ranking ladder of 2013 and 2017 respectively, Onitsha South (2nd to 1st), Ogbaru (4th to 2nd) and Idemili South (7th to 4th) maintained similar stances. Importantly, this shift may present a case for IPOB influence, but there may be underlining factor(s) to underscore this development beyond IPOB.

Nevertheless, evidence gathered in the post-election period suggests that IPOB may have sabotaged the elections.

Our findings revealed that many transport workers engaged by INEC for the smooth deployment of election materials and ad-hoc staff on Election Day were compromised. The same was experienced by several observer groups. This may partly be because of fear of what could happen or mere expression of support for the movement.

## BALLOT BOX SNATCHING

A renewed effort by hoodlums of snatching ballot boxes is becoming prevalent in recent off-cycle elections conducted by INEC in the country. During the governorship elections in Anambra State, incidence of ballot box snatching was reported in a few PUs during the collation process.

For example, in Amaugochukwu Hall 1 PU in Idemili South Local Government, it was reported that suspected party supporters disrupted the accreditation and voting process and fled with ballot boxes and card readers. This phenomenon took a new dimension in some PUs.

In Aguata LGA, a returning officer announced that a presiding officer absconded with election results and the card reader and, in Awka South, a collation officer failed to present result.

Going forward, it is imperative that the incidence should be strictly treated as a criminal case and its perpetrators (both primary and secondary perpetrators) should be subjected to punishment prescribed in the 2010 Electoral Act (as amended).

## NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ELECTORAL ACTS

Non-compliance to the provisions of the 2010 electoral act (as amended) manifested itself in two ways on Election Day.

First, the phenomenon of vote buying and selling which strongly characterised the Anambra elections contravenes Section 23 (1) (b)(c) of the Act. The section stipulates that:

“

**Any person who (b) sells or attempts to sell or offers to sell any voter's card whether issued in the name of any voter or not; or © buys or offers to buy any voters' card**

**whether on his own behalf or on behalf of any other person, commits an offence and shall be liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding N500,000 or imprisonment not exceeding two years or both.”**

Secondly, most of the major political parties committed a breach of 24 hours political campaign law as contained in Section 99 (1) of the 2010 Electoral Act (as amended). According to the Section:

All these, while many may argue are minor irregularities, we will want to point out that these are wilful breaches by all actors and it impugns the character of the elections.

In contradistinction to the laid-out law guiding electoral campaign, our observers reported cases in which posters of candidates were pasted at PUs and thugs dressed in party T-shirts parading PUs, and some wore slippers with campaign messages.

“

**For the purpose of this Act, the period of campaigning in public by every political party shall commence 90 days before polling day and end 24 hours prior to that day**”

It is imperative for INEC to adopt proactive measures in preventing this wilful breach of the law.

## ELECTION SECURITY

In the Anambra governorship election, 26,000 police officers, 13,000 civil defence officials, 10 gunboats and 3 helicopters were deployed to ensure the peaceful conduct of the elections.

It will be recalled that, ahead of the elections, IPOB threatened that unless a referendum is conducted, the elections will not hold.

Even, just a week to the elections, IPOB held a massive rally and threatened voters with death if they voted and also vowed to disrupt the elections. This factor may have accounted for the massive deployment of security in the state .

However, the new emerging trend of over-securitisation of elections is becoming a challenge for several reasons.

Firstly, despite the huge numbers of security people deployed, the deployment of election materials continues to be bedevilled with the challenges as there is hardly any security available to accompany ad-hoc staff on the Election Day.

Secondly, over-securitisation as a reason for voter apathy and lastly, there are beliefs in several quarters that this new phenomenon is itself a gimmick to steal elections. However, what is imminent is the need to find a way to secure elections, as with the number of security apparatus and looming security challenges in Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, it will be impossible to deploy such numbers in the 2019 general elections.



Polling unit results of the election  
been announced



Voter's accreditation process



Low voter's turnout in the LGA's

## CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the country is still in its first phase of the democratisation process despite the fact that it's been 18 years of the democratic project. Indeed, the struggle of transiting beyond electoral democracy has not yielded a meaningful outcome. Increasing phenomena of vote buying/selling, de-democratisation of political parties that is central to godfatherism, low voter turnout, electoral violence, among others, deserves more attention from all stakeholders, particularly INEC, ahead of the 2019 general elections.

In doing this, priority must be given to effective and strategic voter education, productive engagement with political parties to promote internal party democracy, inclusive electoral process and enforcing compliance with electoral laws at different stages of the election. More so, there were over 26,000 rejected voters, which constitute almost 6% of the entire vote cast.

INEC and political parties have roles to play in addressing inherent challenges bedevilling elections and electoral process in Nigeria. For the efficient conduct of elections, a collaborative effort of civil society groups cannot be over-emphasised, but building momentum around the advocacy for unbundling INEC is significant.

This is the surest way to go to enable the electoral umpire focuses more on the primary mandate of conducting elections. The responsibility of monitoring political parties' activities and registration, prosecution of defaulters of guiding laws, etc. should be delegated to another body with a well-crafted and focused mandate and play a complementary role in strengthening democracy in the country.

Reformulation and redesign of voter education strategy are also required to address lingering problem of voter apathy, and high rejected votes, vote buying, and so on.

## REFERENCE

Anambra 2017 Gubernatorial Election: YIAGA #WatchingTheVote Releases PRELIMINARY Process Statement. Accessed at: <http://watchingthevote.org/anambra-2017-gubernatorial-election-yiaga-watchingth-evote-releases-preliminary-process-statement/>

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