NIGERIA ELECTORAL TRENDS
Nigeria has witnessed five general elections conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) since the return to civil rule in 1999. Each of the successive elections has had areas of commendation and areas that need to be improved upon. The fourth republic has been the longest uninterrupted period of democratic governance in Nigeria since independence in 1960 and the founding of the republic in 1963. The successful transition - from ruling parties being perpetually in power to political alternation of power from a ruling to an opposition party - which occurred in 2015, is a sign of growing consolidation of democracy. As critical democracy stakeholders continue to engage the political process, the country’s democratic culture is deepening and the quality and level of citizens’ participation in governance continues to grow.

The electoral history of Nigeria since the fourth republic have misgivings about the significant difference between total number of registered voters and total number of voters turnout. A review of voting behaviour of Nigerians shows a decline in both voter registration and turnout. Measured by voting behaviour such as voter registration and voter turnout, there has been decline both in the long term (1999-2015) and short term (2011-2015). The number of registered voters as a percentage of total population declined from 45.7% in 1999 to 38.3% in 2015. Similarly, voter turnout declined from 52.3% in 1999 to 43.7% in 2015. Ahead of the 2019 general election, Nigeria has a total of 84,004,084 registered voters representing about 42.9% of the country’s estimated population of 195.9 million people.

What accounts for the drop in voter turnout in the long and short term? What will be the outcome of 2019 in terms of voter turnout and voting pattern? These and the historical trends in electoral violence have been meticulously examined in this report, with an eye on what to expect in the 2019 national elections, which is only a few days away.

NOTE
The official figures for the 2003 and 2007 elections are problematic because of the high levels of electoral fraud, but they are official statistics, so it is utilised. However, the figures for 2015 are relatively low which likely may be an indication of a higher level of accuracy given the use of card readers in most States.
01 INTRODUCTION
Following the return to civil rule in 1999 and almost twenty years of uninterrupted democracy, Nigeria is set to experience the sixth successive general elections organized since 1999 and the fifth to be organized by civilian government since the return to civil rule in 1999. The fourth republic remains the longest uninterrupted period of civil rule in Nigeria since independence in 1960.

While Nigeria deserves commendation for the democratic sustenance, particularly the conduct of periodic elections since 1999, it is apposite to note that each of the successive elections has had its peculiar challenges. Even though the 2007 general election is generally considered to be the worst in Nigeria’s recent history, it is important to highlight that other elections have had their fair share of low moments; resulting in litigation and in some instances post-election violence. For example, the 2011 general election was highly commended for being credible but was marred by high levels of post-election violence that resulted in the destruction of lives and properties. Even the widely praised 2015 general election had several gubernatorial and legislative elections thrown into litigation and in some instances Senators, House of Representatives and State Assembly members were sacked by the court, with re-run elections conducted in some cases. The National Assembly has continued to tinker with the electoral act by attempting numerous reforms. These trends reveal that Nigeria’s electoral process, just as her democracy, is evolving and must continue to do so until it becomes a fully established and functional democracy.

As Nigeria heads into yet another general election in the coming days, it is incumbent on all stakeholders to strive to improve the 2019 elections and lay a solid foundation for future elections. It is against this background that the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) has interrogated the previous elections and highlighted the high and low points with an eye on what to expect in 2019.

1.1 The Political Context of 2019 Elections

Up till the third quarter of 2018, there was a lot of speculation and maybe hope that a “third force” would emerge to challenge the two dominant parties that have been in power in the Fourth Republic. They are the Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP), in power between 1999 and 2015, and the All Progressives Congress (APC), in power since 2015. The party primaries season however left a clear field with the presidential candidates of the PDP and APC being by far the main contestants. There are 73 candidates contesting in the presidential race but essentially the contest is between two candidates – Atiku Abubakar and Muhammadu Buhari, both in their seventies, Muslim and of northern Nigerian Fulani background. Nigeria has so far been unable to develop a new generation of leaders especially those below 50 years of age as the president since 1999.

During the 2015 elections, Buhari was the beacon of hope that galvanized Nigerians to vote out an incumbent president, Goodluck Jonathan. Today, after nearly four years, the hope has dimmed following
his inability to deliver fully on his very clear campaign promises of security, jobs and effectively combatting corruption. His rival, Atiku Abubakar, who has had Presidential ambitions for the past thirty-five years, entered the race with numerous allegations of corruption against him, both in his professional life as a customs officer and subsequently as Vice President of the country between 1999 and 2007.

Nigeria has a long history of playing politics along the lines of identity fractures linked to religion, region and ethnicity. The fact that the two leading candidates have the same identity profile has considerably reduced the identity stakes and tension of the electoral campaign. Nonetheless, ethno-religious tensions persist. The massacres associated with the farmer-herder crisis over the past few years have created a lot of antipathy along the divide Fulani-Muslim and Christian-Farmer, even if the dynamics of the conflicts have not been strictly along religious lines. The political legacy of the crisis however is that very many Christians believe that President Buhari has not worked hard enough to protect their people and many of them would vote for Atiku Abubakar as a protest vote against President Buhari. These dynamics have pushed many in the Muslim community to rally behind President Buhari. This means identity divides still play a significant role in the elections.

President Buhari has a number of weaknesses that are affecting his campaign. His biggest weakness is that he has lost his 2015 coalition with many key players such as Atiku himself, Senate President Saraki, Speaker Dogara, Governor Tambuwal and so on defecting back to the PDP. Buhari has also lost a lot of his financiers who assumed winning would provide financial rewards for them and that simply did not happen. Buhari has also lost the support of much of the Northern technocratic elite who are of the view that he has not shown sufficient competence in governance and has in addition allowed his key ministers – finance, budget, power and works – to allocate more resources to the South West than the North East and North West. His party, APC, has also been very concerned that Buhari has consistently refused to make political appointments in favour of his party and that too many of Jonathan’s appointees have been retained over the four years. This has created a significant lack of enthusiasm and commitment to the campaign among many of his supporters. This might reduce his support within his own base.

However, President Buhari has a number of strengths that work in his favour. First and foremost, he enjoys the privileges of incumbency, which is always useful during elections. His core support base in the North West and North East zones have remained with him and still consider him a good man, even if, as many
of them say, he is surrounded with bad advisers. They disregard his alleged non-performance by blaming it on others.

Atiku’s greatest weakness is that he is not well-liked in his own base in the North East and North West. He does not have the type of love and charisma that Buhari enjoys in the zone. Atiku has also alienated the zone by articulating his campaign on restructuring the country, which is pleasing to the South. Atiku is also considered by too many people as having a long track record of corruption. Even those who are complaining that Buhari has not performed as much as he could have on the anti-corruption front are worried that Atiku would be much worse.

Atiku’s strength is that he has built significant support from the South and the Christian community. He is the beneficiary of the terrible farmers-herders conflict that has turned much of the Middle Belt against President Buhari, who many in that zone believe allowed mass killing to spread unhindered. Atiku also has a vast network of friends and associates supporting him all over the country and has been able to keep his friends while Buhari has lost much of his own. The PDP machine also has the capacity to generate a lot of financial support for the Atiku campaign and one of the greatest unknowns of the elections is whether the PDP money will flow. If it does, it will be a great boast to the Atiku campaign. The Atiku campaign has strong support in the South East, South South and what is known as the cultural or Christian Middle Belt. Even so, he is another Fulani man so it’s not clear whether voters there would come out en masse to elect him.
The 2019 general election is by far the largest in Nigeria’s political history. There are 73 presidential candidates and 1,008 people seeking to be state governors. 1,904 candidates are contesting for the 109 senatorial positions while 4,680 candidates are hoping to be elected into the 360 seats available in the House of Representatives. 14,643 candidates will contest for seats in the 36 States Houses of Assembly. Over 23,000 candidates are therefore contesting for seats in the elections. It is hoped that this huge array of contestants and dissatisfaction with the two leading parties will create opportunities for new parties to make inroads into office.

The greatest challenge facing Nigerian democracy remains the absence of a real and functional party system. There are currently 91 registered political parties in the country but, as indicated above, only two are strong. The other parties have no ideology or programmatic vision, and even more important, they have no members who participate in party activities because they believe their parties have something to offer their country. Depending on their financial capacity, most parties source for and pay crowds to provide participants for their activities. It is for this reason that often, the same persons would be seen attending the activities of different parties.

From 1999, Nigeria operated as a one-party dominant political system in which the PDP held sway and controlled enormous resources compared to the other parties. The President of the country emerged as the leader of the dominant party although a party chairman existed and state governors became the leaders of their party at that level. In the build-up to the 2015 elections, key opposition parties merged to establish the APC, which won the elections. The PDP then went into a leadership crisis created by factionalism, which was eventually sorted out by the courts. Since then, the PDP has grown in strength, poaching many leading members of the ruling party including their presidential candidate, to a two-party dominant one. For all these reasons, the elections will be exciting and, hopefully, peaceful and orderly.

The two leading candidates, Buhari (left) and Atiku (right) have the same identity profile and this fact has considerably reduced the identity stakes and tension of the electoral campaign. Photo Source: Pulse.ng
02
VOTER REGISTRATION
Voter Registration

From the transition elections of 1999, Nigeria generated a voter register with 57.9 million registered voters, out of an estimated population of 119,327,100. This meant that 48.5% of the population registered to vote in 1999. By 2003, the percentage of the population that registered to vote decreased to 45.7%. This trend continued in 2007 when the number of registered voters as a percentage of total population further decreased to 41.9%. The trend changed slightly in 2011 when the number of registered voters as a percentage of total population increased to 45.1%. However, the progress witnessed in 2011 was reversed in 2015 when the number of registered voters as a percentage of total population dropped drastically to 38.3%. Currently, the trend of voter registration has returned to the path of increase as the number of registered voters as a percentage of the total population has increased to 84.0 million representing 42.8% of the total population (see figures 1.1 and 1.2). When compared with the situation twenty years ago, the number of registered voters as a percentage of total population has declined 5.7% while the number of registered voters measured in absolute numbers has increased by 26,065,139, representing a 44.9% increase.

Generally, the trend in the number of registered voters as a percentage of total population for the past twenty years has been that of retrogression. One reason for this decline in the number of registered voters as a percentage of the total population could be due to dissatisfaction and disenchantment of voters with the political system, after democratic rule failed to deliver the benefits associated with democracy such as improved living standards. The high rate of electoral violence experienced in various phases of elections in previous years could be another reason for the decline in voter registration. Again, the integrity of the elections conducted, particularly that of 2003 and 2007, are considered among the worst elections in the fourth republic. This may have also undermined voters’ confidence in the electoral processes and reduced their participation in elections. More so, the clean-up of voter’s register and the introduction of permanent voters cards (PVC) involving biometric capture of voters contributed to the drop in the number of registered voters particularly in 2015 where the number of registered voters dropped to 69.3 million from 73.5 million in 2011.

“Generally, the trend in the number of registered voters as a percentage of total population for the past twenty years has been that of retrogression. One reason for this decline in the number of registered voters as a percentage of the total population could be due to dissatisfaction and disenchantment of voters with the political system, after democratic rule failed to deliver the benefits associated with democracy such as improved living standards.”
Despite the general decline experienced in the past twenty years, year-on-year analysis reveals that 2011 and 2019 are remarkable for the slight increase obtained over the respective previous years in terms of absolute number of registered voters and number of registered voters as a percentage of total population. The reason for the increase witnessed in 2011 over the 2007 figure could be due to the electoral reform embarked upon by the new leadership of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), particularly the introduction of biometric voter’s register which gradually restored faith in the integrity of the electoral process and increased momentum in voter registration. Interestingly, between 2015 and 2019 alone, the number of registered voters increased by 14.7 million representing 25.4% increase in the number of registered voters over the previous year. This increase may be connected to increase in voter education and mobilization by political parties, civil society groups, INEC and other relevant stakeholders.

Generally, the key trends in voter registration over the past twenty years are:

1. Since 1999, voter registration has never reached 50% of the country’s total population. This means that less than half of the population registers to vote in elections and decide the leadership that emerges.

2. The average percentage of registered voters compared to the country’s population for the past twenty years is 43.7%.

3. The highest number of registered voters as a percentage of the total population was recorded in 1999 and the lowest was in 2015.

4. While in 2019 the number of registered voters compared to 1999 has increased by 26.1 million or 44.9%, the country’s population within the same period increased by 76.6 million or 64.2%. This indicates that the increase in registered voters is not proportional to the increase in the country’s population over the twenty year period.

**Figure 1.1**

Nigeria’s Population and Number of Registered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population ( Millions)</th>
<th>Registered Voters (Millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>119.3</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>139.1</td>
<td>60.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>61.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>162.9</td>
<td>73.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>181.2</td>
<td>69.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>195.9</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source INEC
Voter registration in itself does not translate into electoral participation, at least not in the sense of voting at election. Whether these registered voters are showing up at the polling unit on election days and casting their vote is the focus of the next section.

Voters show their new electoral cards while queuing at a accreditation center in Abuja during the 2015 general elections. Photo: AFP/Getty Images.
03 VOTER TURNOUT
3.0 Analysis of Voter Turnout in General Elections, 1999 – 2015

Since the return to civil rule in 1999, the 2015 general elections recorded the lowest rate of voter turnout at 29.4 million voters, representing 42.4% of registered voters for the year 2015 (see figures 2.1 and 2.2). This suggests that high voter registration may not automatically translate to increased voter participation in the election. In fact, when examined against the backdrop of voter participation in the three key phases of the election cycle (pre-election, election and post-election), what it means is that the level of participation may be high during the pre-election period measured by voter registration, but participation may be low during the voting period measured by voter turnout.

The long term (1999 – 2015) trend in voter turnout has been that of decline. This reflects the trend in voter registration since the return to civil rule in Nigeria. For instance, the data reveals that voter turnout dropped from 30.2 million or 52.3% of registered voters in 1999 to 29.4 million or 43.7% of registered voters in 2015. Although there was a sharp increase in voter turnout in 2003, this declined again in 2007. This sharp increase in 2003 could be attributed to the tenacious effort by the then president Olusegun Obasanjo to secure a second tenure in office.

In the short term (2011- 2015), there was a significant drop in the voter turnout, from 40.7 million or 55.4% of registered voters in 2011 to 29.4 million or 43.7% in 2015. This is a reflection of the decline in voter registration within the same period where the number of registered voters dropped from 73.5 million or 45.1% of total population in 2011 to 69.3 million or 38.3% of total population in 2015 (see figures 1.1 and 1.2). Moreover, the 2011 general election which witnessed the highest voter registration also experienced a very high (57.4 %) of voter turnout. During the fourth republic this has only been surpassed by the 2007 turnout, (see also figure 2.2).

The implication of this trend is that the voter turnout rate has dropped both in the long term (1999 – 2015) and short term (2011 – 2015). The reason for the long-term decline could be the growing disenchantment of the people following the inability of the government to improve livelihoods. It is also possible that the decline is due to the introduction of PVCs. These reduced the incidence of electoral malfeasance such as ballot-stuffing, which previously counted as voter turnout.

The short-term decline between 2011 and 2015 could be attributed to the electoral violence experienced in 2011 and the failure of the government to hold to account perpetrators of the electoral violence. This accentuated the fears of voter and fed into voter apathy or poor voter turnout. Other security issues like the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East may have equally contributed to the decline in voter turnout.

The short-term decline between 2011 and 2015 could be attributed to the electoral violence experienced in 2011 and the failure of the government to hold to account perpetrators of the electoral violence.
Arising from the above, the question stakeholders working on voter education are struggling to answer is why the steady decline in turnout both in the long term (1999-2015) and in the short term (2011-2015)? At several roundtables and workshops, Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) have found the following as some of the reasons behind voter apathy:

- The absence of dividends of democracy to the people. Many Nigerians, particularly the poor, are yet to feel the impact of transition from military to civil rule in terms of improved welfare and livelihood. This has brought about increased disenchantment with the whole political process as this class of citizens are now in a place where going to the polling unit to vote has lost its meaning.

- The absence of citizens’ education, especially for young Nigerians that qualify as first-time-voters. For the first time, some Nigerians have turned 18 years and above without experiencing military rule. However, on turning 18, most young Nigerians are completely unaware of their civic duties.
with regards to registering to be able to vote and be voted for in an election. These young Nigerians are not voting because they don’t even know the import of such a civic duty.

The conduct of the political class is unfortunately now becoming a disincentive to some Nigerians as it regards participation in the electoral process. It is commonplace to hear some politicians say: no matter what; they are going to win. Many voters take that to mean their votes won’t count, and so don’t participate in elections.

Insecurity is yet another driver of electoral apathy. Citizens who already feel neglected by government will not be willing to take the risk of going to the polling unit. Several incidences of violence at polling units have been recorded. It is now even common place to see Nigerians of southern extraction leaving the Northern part ahead of every general election for fear of being attacked due to the outcome, and vice versa.

The 2015 national election was fiercely contested, yet the declining turnout could not be stopped. Centre for Democracy and Development considers this a negative trend that could further alienate national leadership from the people. Ahead of the 2019 national election, INEC have registered 84,004,084 prospective voters with about 5.6 million of these registered voters yet to collect their PVCs as at November 2018. Meanwhile, the outcome of the election in terms of indicators like voter turnout remains debateable. Going by the long and short-term trend of voter turnout in Nigeria and the subsistence of some of the factors identified as drivers of low voter turnout across the country, it is not likely that voter turnout for 2019 will be impressive.
However, there are certain emerging factors likely to reverse the declining trend in voter turnout and bring about increased voter turnout in the 2019 general elections. These factors include:

- For the first time since 1999, there are 73 presidential candidates canvassing nationwide. This could potentially draw out first-time voters given that there is increased attention on young voters by the candidates.

- The two frontline candidates are both from the Northern part of the country but with South Western and South Eastern running mates. This is likely to pitch the southern part of the country as the deciding factor. This could potentially drive more participation in the election.

- Improvement in voting procedure, like simultaneous accreditation and voting, activities of civil society organizations and existence of strong opposition political party may bring about increase in voter turnout in the 2019 general elections.

- Growth in the activities of civil society organizations and the media. The advocacy campaign of civil society organizations and the media, together with the attempt to bridge the communication gap between the candidates and the electorate through activities like the presidential debate, are likely to increase voter turnout in the 2019 general elections.

- With over 63 million internet users in Nigeria, and the adoption of social media by various stakeholders as a means of political mobilisation, social media has been pointed as a potential driver of voter turnout. However, a study of the 2015 general elections revealed that social media did not influence voting behaviour, particularly in the area of voter turnout, as expected. This is largely because, many social media users are located in urban areas and represent less than 25% of the total number of voters, while their online political engagement is usually restricted to people already active in politics (see Mustapha, 2017). The challenge before stakeholders in the coming election is to see how to adequately utilize social media to influence voter turnout.

The 2015 national election was fiercely contested, yet the declining turnout could not be stopped. Centre for Democracy and Development considers this a negative trend that could further alienate national leadership from the people.
04 VOTER LITERACY
The level of voter literacy remains a cause for concern. Measured by the number of invalid votes recorded in the five past general elections, it is obvious that more still needs to be done in the area of voter education to ensure the electorate vote appropriately. The 1999 presidential election had 1.42% of invalid ballots, representing 431,611 votes. The 2003 presidential election had 6.04% invalid ballots, representing 2,538,246 votes. For the 2011 presidential election, 3.09% of ballots, representing 1,259,505 votes, were invalidated while for the 2015 presidential election, 2.86% of ballots, representing 844,519 votes, were declared invalid. In a close to call election, all the invalid votes from 1999 to 2015 would be significant enough to decide the outcome of the election.

The implication is that much effort on voter education has focused on mobilizing the electorate to register and vote during elections, with little attention paid to educating the voters on how to vote appropriately on ballot papers. For instance, INEC focus primarily on voter registration, PVCs collection, voting procedure and logistics management. For their part, political parties focus more on drumming the names of their parties and candidates into the ears of the electorate. Most CSOs pay attention to enlightening the electorate on their right to vote and defend their votes. Unfortunately, information on what makes a ballot paper valid and what invalidates a ballot paper is usually scarce in the public domain. Most voters feel accomplished once they have thumb printed on the ballot paper, irrespective of whether the thumb printing was done in a manner that invalidates the ballot paper.

Apparently, there is a growing effort by relevant stakeholders to address the huge number of voided votes through sensitization, improvement in the voting ink and design of the ballot papers, in ways that would reduce the number of voided ballots. However, the large number of political parties with access to the ballot for the 2019 general election and the length of the ballot paper remains a source of worry as these have the tendency to further increase volume of voided ballot papers if not addressed properly.
BATTLEGROUND STATES VS SWING STATES
Battleground states as captured here are the states that historically have turned out high registered voters and have consistently given block votes to a preferred candidate in every given election. Comparing 2019 voter registration data with that of previous election years indicates that battleground states have been largely consistent in topping voter registration, as shown in Table 1.1a below. Further analysis as shown in Table 1.1b the outcome of the 2015 presidential election across the battleground and swing states shows that majority of these states had below 51% voter turnout during the 2015 election. States like Lagos, Kano, Oyo, and Benue as seen in Table 1.1b had less than half of the total number of registered voters that cast their votes. Paradoxically, with the political tensions and incidents of violence in these states now, voters’ turnout during the 2019 presidential election will likely not be up to 30% in most of the identified battleground and swing states.

Table 1.1a: Battleground and Swing states

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kano</td>
<td>Kano</td>
<td>Kano</td>
<td>Kano</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaduna</td>
<td>Kaduna</td>
<td>Kaduna</td>
<td>Kaduna</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katsina</td>
<td>Katsina</td>
<td>Katsina</td>
<td>Katsina</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers</td>
<td>Oyo</td>
<td>River</td>
<td>Rivers</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oyo</td>
<td>Bauchi</td>
<td>Oyo</td>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borno</td>
<td>Rivers</td>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauchi</td>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>Bauchi</td>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>8th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anambra</td>
<td>Borno</td>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>9th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>Sokoto</td>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>Bauchi</td>
<td>10th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GREEN: States that have consistently held the same spot – first to fourth – on the battleground states (Lagos Kano, Kaduna and Katsina).

BLUE: States that have always featured on the list of battleground states: states like Rivers, Oyo, Bauchi and Benue may have fluctuations in ranking but always have found a spot on the top ranking of battleground states.

YELLOW: States that have featured on the list more than once: states like Borno, Delta and Plateau have bounced on and off the list of battleground states. They are not states to underrate in the 2019 elections. Insecurity in Plateau will be a factor in determining votes and whilst Delta has shown consistency in being a PDP state over time, what will be the direction for the state in 2019?

PURPLE: States that have featured on the list once: Anambra and Sokoto follow closely as states with potential to hold a spot in the battleground states. These will also have a major impact the 2019 elections, especially given that Anambra is APGA and Sokoto Governor defected from APC to PDP only recently.
Table 1.1b: 2015 Presidential election results across the top 10 battleground and swing states

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Registered voters 2015</th>
<th>Total votes cast 2015</th>
<th>% of total votes cast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>5,827,846</td>
<td>1,495,975</td>
<td>25.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kano</td>
<td>4,943,862</td>
<td>2,172,447</td>
<td>43.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaduna</td>
<td>3,361,793</td>
<td>1,650,201</td>
<td>49.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers</td>
<td>2,324,300</td>
<td>1,584,768</td>
<td>68.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oyo</td>
<td>2,344,448</td>
<td>928,606</td>
<td>39.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>2,044,372</td>
<td>1,284,848</td>
<td>62.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauchi</td>
<td>2,053,484</td>
<td>1,039,775</td>
<td>50.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>1,977,211</td>
<td>1,000,692</td>
<td>50.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>1,893,596</td>
<td>703,131</td>
<td>37.13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: INEC

In 2003, Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Rivers, Oyo, Borno, Bauchi, Anambra and Benue States made the list of top ten battleground states. After three general elections, Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Rivers, Oyo, Delta, Plateau, Benue and Bauchi States are the battleground states ahead of 2019.

Figure 4.1
Ten Battleground States of 2003

In 2003, Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Rivers, Oyo, Borno, Bauchi, Anambra and Benue States made the list of top ten battleground states. After three general elections, Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Rivers, Oyo, Delta, Plateau, Benue and Bauchi States are the battleground states ahead of 2019.

Battleground states as captured here are the states that historically have turned out high registered voters and have consistently given block votes to a preferred candidate in every given election. Comparing 2019 voter registration data with that of previous election years indicates that battleground states have been largely consistent in topping voter registration.
In 2011, Sokoto had a leap in voter registration ahead of Anambra to join the battleground states. Recall also that following the Supreme Court judgement, Sokoto like Cross River, Kebbi, and Adamawa states had an off-cycle state election after the 2011 general election. However, after the continuous voter registration exercise ahead of 2015 and the cleaning of the 2011 electoral register, Sokoto and Borno States dropped off the list of battleground states during the 2015 elections.

For Borno State, it is possible to explain this dip by the activities of Boko Haram insurgents in the state and region. For Sokoto, could it be possible the electoral register in 2011 was bogus?

Ahead of the 2015 election, Plateau State returned as a battleground state and block-voting saw the PDP defeated in the gubernatorial elections of that year. Bauchi – the home state to the PDP National chairman – also was captured by APC. Kano, Kaduna and Katsina all also made a swing from PDP to APC. Lagos, which is historically an APC state, had in previous elections given block votes to PDP presidential
candidates, but for the 2015 election the state maintained its APC block voting for both the presidential and gubernatorial election.

**Figure 4.4**
Ten Battleground States of 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Registered Voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAGOS SW</td>
<td>6,570,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KANO NW</td>
<td>5,457,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KADUNA NW</td>
<td>3,932,492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KATSINA NW</td>
<td>3,230,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIVERS SS</td>
<td>3,215,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OYO SW</td>
<td>2,934,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELTA SS</td>
<td>2,845,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLATEAU NC</td>
<td>2,480,455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BENUE NC</td>
<td>2,480,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAUCHI NE</td>
<td>2,462,843</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: INEC 2019

Ahead of the 2019 general elections, the ten battleground states are Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Rivers, Oyo, Delta, Plateau, Benue and Bauchi. Overall, based on the official voter register, the total number of registered voters is 84,004,084.

Lagos has the highest number of registered voters, with 6,570,291 registered voters representing 7.85% of the total registered voters in Nigeria. Although the state has an uncollected PVC of 221,948 as of 23rd November, 2018, it remains a battleground for most political parties given that the block votes from the state can determine to a large extent the direction of the presidential election.

Kano is placed second with total registered voters with 5,457,747 registered voters, representing 6.5% of total voters in Nigeria. In third place is Kaduna with 3,932,492 registered voters representing 4.8% of total registered voters in Nigeria. In fourth is Katsina with 3,230,230 voters representing 3.85% of total registered voters in Nigeria; closely followed by Rivers State in fifth position with 3,215,273 registered voters representing 3.83% of total registered voters in Nigeria. Occupying the sixth place is Oyo state which now has 2,934,107 registered voters representing 3.49% of total registered voters in the country and is closely followed by Delta state in seventh with 2,845,274 registered voters representing 3.39% of total registered voters in Nigeria. From the 23rd November, 2018 voter registration records, Plateau and Benue have now overtaken Bauchi state to place eighth and ninth with 2,480,455 2.95% of total registered voters and 2,480,131 2.95 of total registered voters respectively. Bauchi occupies the tenth place on the list of battleground states with 2,462,843 registered voters representing 2.93% of total registered voters.

These states have a combined total of thirty five million, six hundred and eight, eight and forty three (35,555,502) voters representing 42.38% of the total registered voters. These states cut across five geopolitical zones excluding South East. With such a critical mass of potential votes, it will be interesting to see how the battleground states vote.
In the battle for a simple majority of votes, each of these battleground states have the potential to produce a large number of votes for their preferred candidates. This is however dependent on three key outcomes: high rate of PVC collection, high voter turnout and incidence of invalid votes.

Table 1.2: PVC Collection between 2015 and 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Registered voters</th>
<th>Number of PVCs collected</th>
<th>% of total PVCs collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>6,570,291.00</td>
<td>5,324,958.00</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kano</td>
<td>5,457,747.00</td>
<td>4,681,492.00</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaduna</td>
<td>3,932,492.00</td>
<td>3,628,332.00</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katsina</td>
<td>3,230,230.00</td>
<td>3,018,963.00</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers</td>
<td>3,215,273.00</td>
<td>2,758,285.00</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>2,390,035.00</td>
<td>2,145,900.00</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>2,845,274.00</td>
<td>2,472,668.00</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>2,480,455.00</td>
<td>2,246,865.00</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>2,480,131.00</td>
<td>2,096,055.00</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauchi</td>
<td>2,462,843.00</td>
<td>2,270,742.00</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imo</td>
<td>2,272,293.00</td>
<td>1,730,546.00</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: INEC

Out of the states with high PVC collection rate between 2015 and 2018, Kano, Lagos, Kaduna, Rivers, Bauchi, Delta, Jigawa, Imo and Niger States have very high percentage of collected PVCs as seen in Table 1.2. These states are more likely to be the swing states, even ahead of those with a higher number of registered voters and a lower PVC collection rate. Kano state, which takes second place in the number of registered voters, led in PVC collection, followed by Lagos state. Among the battleground states, Kaduna, Katsina, Rivers, Bauchi, Delta and Oyo states are ranked in the top ten on PVC collection.
Across three national elections, 15 states with a high number of registered voters have been examined and found to be inconsistent in votes cast /turnout especially after the introduction of the smart card reader. Rivers state, which has had a consistently high turnout, also showed a twist in pattern when actual votes cast was examined. In 2003, before the introduction of the card reader, Rivers had approximately 2.2 million voter’s turnout, which dropped to 1.9 million turnouts in 2011 and further dropped to 1.6 million turnouts in 2015. Lagos, which showed consistent voter turnout in 2003 and 2011 with 1.9 million votes, also dropped in 2015 to 1.4 million votes after the introduction of the card reader. The same is true for Kano.
state, which had 2.3 million votes in 2003. This increased to 2.67 million in 2011 but drastically dropped to 2.1 million votes in 2015 after the introduction of the card reader. Most dramatic is Ogun state: in 2003 the state had 1.36 million votes, which dropped to 543,715 votes in 2011, with a further drop to 533,172 in 2015 after the introduction of the smart card reader.

A number of factors could have been responsible for these inconsistencies in voter turnout in battleground states. First is the new voter register that was introduced by INEC in 2010 ahead of the 2011 elections. Given that the election was conducted using a register with some semblance of sanity, it was no longer possible to simply stuff ballot boxes - as had been the case with 2003 and 2007 elections. Secondly and closely related to the first factor was the introduction of the new regulation that stipulated a time for accreditation and a later time for voting. This was primarily to make it impossible for anyone to undertake multiple voting. A third factor, especially for the 2015 election, is the introduction of the smart card reader. Most of the states that use to churn out a large number of votes were now censored into only counting actual votes according to turnout.

A typical example is when you do triangulation analysis of the 2015 INEC registered voters, PVC collection rate, and voter turnout for states with very high number of registered voters like Lagos and Kano the outcome does not translate to very high voters turnout and/or votes cast as may be anticipated. The scenario practically shows that Lagos state for instance with the highest number of registered voters in 2015 had 65.25% of PVCs collected and out of which only 25.6% votes were cast during 2015 presidential election in the state. When you review Kano which has the second highest number of registered voters, 82.64% of the PVCs were collected while 43.94% votes were cast during the 2015 presidential elections. Similarly, Rivers in 2015 had 83.85% of PVCs collected and 68.18% votes cast; Delta had 85.26% collected PVCs and 62.85% votes cast; Katsina had 92.63% registered voters and 52.12 votes cast; Bauchi had 95.36% registered voters and 50.61% votes cast, then Kaduna had 93.17% registered voter out of which only 37.13% votes were cast. The implication in all these is that the aforementioned states are among the top 10 battleground and swing states for the 2019 elections, and if voter education is not intensified, together with adequate assurance of peaceful, free and fair elections, voter apathy by citizens in these states will dwindle below expectation and worse than previous elections.

A typical example is when you do triangulation analysis of the 2015 INEC registered voters, PVC collection rate, and voter turnout for states with very high number of registered voters like Lagos and Kano the outcome does not translate to very high voters turnout and/or votes cast as may be anticipated. The scenario practically shows that Lagos state for instance with the highest number of registered voters in 2015 had 65.25% of PVCs collected and out of which only 25.6% votes were cast during 2015 presidential election in the state.
06
ELECTORAL SECURITY & VIOLENCE
Electoral violence has remained a feature of elections conducted in Nigeria since the colonial era (see Alemika cited in Shamsudeen, 2015, p. 4). The situation did not change with independence and with return to civil rule in 1999: elections conducted since the return to civil rule have also experienced various levels of violence. The pattern and intensity of electoral violence has remained dynamic across different locations, across the five different elections conducted since 1999 and across the three key phases of the electoral cycle.

Between 1954 and 2015, eleven general elections were conducted by different Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) in Nigeria, in addition to other off-cycle, re-run and local government elections. All these elections have witnessed varying levels of violence with those of 1965, 1983 and 2011 notorious for the high incidence of electoral violence recorded. The 1965 elections contributed to the collapse of the first republic due to the intense struggle by the various political parties to ‘win’ elections by all means. This led to bloodshed and violence in which over 2,000 people were reported to have lost their lives, with many other casualties including election officials. Similarly, the violence associated with the 1983 general elections led to the fall of the second republic. The 1983 violence followed allegations of widespread electoral fraud, which triggered pockets of violent protests across the country leading to destruction of lives and properties (see Orji & Uzodi, 2012).

The five general elections conducted since return to civil rule in 1999 by INEC have also been smeared by electoral violence. One remarkable feature of all the fourth republic elections is that two of the elections (2003 and 2007 elections) notorious for sophisticated electoral fraud did not trigger a high level of post-electoral violence as experienced in the first and second republics. Unfortunately, the 2011 general election - adjudged as one of the most credible elections in the history of Nigeria - was dented by the escalation of an unprecedented level of post-electoral violence in which unquantifiable lives and property were lost/destroyed. The 2015 general election did not witness much electoral violence largely because of the spirit of sportsmanship demonstrated by the incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan, who conceded defeat and willingly handed over power to the opposition that emerged victorious at the polls.

A spatial analysis of the electoral violence between 2006 and 2014 demonstrates that the Middle Belt region of Nigeria was the most affected by electoral violence. This feeds into the long existing ethno-religious and communal conflict in the region. The Middle Belt is closely followed by the North West and the North East in terms of frequency and intensity of electoral violence. The South South and South West region also experience electoral violence arising from godfatherism, while the South East is afflicted with political thuggery, kidnapping and other similar crimes, all associated with the prebendal character of politics in the region (see Hoffman, 2010; Shamsudeen, 2015, p. 2).

Figure 6.1 provides ratings of the intensity and frequency of electoral violence across various states in Nigeria in the fourth republic. It also presents the risk rating for violence in the various states for the 2019 general elections.
The above chart examines the frequency of electoral/politically motivated violence across the pre-election years (2006, 2010, 2014 and 2018) as well as the general election years (2007, 2011, 2015) to suggest and classify states prone to electoral violence during the 2019 general election.
Very High-Risk States

Out of the 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory, (FCT, Abuja), ten states including Benue, Kogi, Kano, Akwa-Ibom, Cross River, Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta, Lagos and Imo have been classified as very high-risk states for electoral related violence during the 2019 general election.

Though issues shaping this trend differ from state to state, the challenges of electoral violence have remained a major concern across these states based on previous experience.

For instance, most of the states in the South South are prone to electoral violence, with Rivers State leading the trend. In 2015, the oil rich Rivers state was heavily contested between APC candidate Dakuku Peterside and PDP candidate Nyesom Wike. The rift between the former Governor of Rivers State, Rotimi Amaechi, and Nyesom Wike was also heavily linked to the violence during the 2015 election in Rivers state.

In Akwa-Ibom State, both the presidential and gubernatorial election of 2019 are poised to be keenly contested. The election may serve as a referendum between Senator Godswill Akpabio, the immediate past governor of the state who recently joined APC from PDP, and the incumbent Governor of the state.

Beyond being rated as a very high-risk state due to electoral/politically motivated violence, Benue State has also been exposed to escalating violence between herdsmen and farmers violence which correlates with elections.

Lagos and Kano States are also rated as very high-risk states for electoral violence. In 2015 for instance, the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in charge of Kano was found burnt with his family in the aftermath of the election, an act many alleged was an assassination. Kano witnessed a series of incidences of electoral violence, which has been consistent over the years. Lagos especially during the governorship election has always been a keen contest between APC and PDP. Meanwhile, both states have the highest number of registered voters, meaning they will be priority states for most political parties and candidates.

Imo State is also rated very high-risk for violence in the upcoming election, and not only due to its history of electoral violence. The existing bitterness between the incumbent Governor and the APC national leadership may see the governor working for his son-in-law who defected from APC to Action Alliance (AA), having lost at the APC primaries. This is going to make the gubernatorial contest a heated one.

High-Risk States

Other states like Kwara, Nasarawa, Borno, Ekiti, Taraba, Jigawa, Kaduna based on our findings from the previous pre-election years and the election year incidences of electoral related violence were rated high-risk States.

In Kwara State, whilst the history electoral violence primarily defined our classification of the state, other factors like the defection of the Senate President and the Governor from APC to PDP has escalated tension in the state. This has further exacerbated the already existing tension between the APC federal government and the now PDP senate president. Both APC and PDP have expressed utmost intent to win the Kwara
state election. The ability of the Senate President Bukola Saraki’s dynasty to sustain its leadership in the state has been keenly questioned.

Kaduna and Borno have also remained states in distress. Major concerns in the run-up to the 2019 elections include: electoral/politically motivated violence, the continuous prevalence of religious and farmers/herders' conflict in Kaduna and the Boko Haram insurgency in Borno State.

**Low-Risk States**

Niger, Plateau, Bauchi, Gombe, Ebonyi, Enugu and Katsina are all ranked as low-risk states based on their past electoral/political violence trend. Although Plateau State has continued to experience other conflict correlated to elections and other factors, including religious, farmer/herders and communal conflict, its antecedent towards direct electoral violence remained low.

Electoral violence in Ebonyi has remained low, especially pre-election year electoral violence which did not occur in 2006, 2010 and 2014. However, this trend has gradually begun to change with electoral/politically motivated violence witnessed in 2018 ahead of the 2019 election. Electoral violence increased by 50% in 2015 compared to the situation in the 2007 and 2011 elections.

**Not Sure States**

These States - Adamawa, Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara, Abia, Anambra, Ondo, Osun, Yobe and FCT - are states where electoral violence is unlikely based on the trend in previous elections. However, this trend may change for some of these states considering the following factors.

Atiku-factor in Adamawa – the presidential candidate of the PDP was part of the APC change wave in 2015 that saw the ruling party lose the presidential and state level election (in Adamawa) to APC. In the 2019 election, Atiku has moved and successfully become the presidential candidate of the opposition party at both levels. This puts Adamawa State as a keenly contested State between the two major political parties and has already experienced some conflict during the APC primaries in the state.

In Zamfara state, insecurity has also increased in recent times with the state governor purportedly resigning from his position as the chief security officer and even in support of ‘State of Emergency’ in Zamfara state. Beyond that, APC also witnessed conflict and challenges during the primaries and it is uncertain whether they will participate in the 2019 general elections at the governorship level.

Sokoto State has already witnessed electoral violence in 2018 ahead of the 2019 election, which was not the trend in the past elections. While past trends may not suggest that Sokoto state is prone to electoral violence, recent events indicate the potential for violence, for example due to the the moving of the state governor from the ruling APC to PDP.
6.2 **Other Emerging Security Issues in 2019 Election**

**Table 1.4: Herdsmen/Farmers Conflict**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasarawa</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Nigerian Watch*

The table above shows that herdsmen/farmers violent attacks remain on the increase across pre-election years as well as during election years. The data covers 2010/2011, 2014/2015, and 2018. Further breakdown of the trend of herdsmen-farmers attacks has shown significant correlation to election period across the most affected States of Benue, Plateau and Nasarawa State.

For instance, in Benue, the incidence of herdsmen/farmers violence has increased in previous pre-election years from 1% in 2010 preceding the 2011 election to 28% (i.e. 27% increase) in 2014 ahead of the 2015 election. In 2018 it has now reached an all-time high of 55%, a 27% increase in violence compared to 2014 and 53% increase from the 2011 pre-election year.

A similar trend of pre-election year herdsmen/farmers conflict was also observed in Nasarawa and Plateau state with Nasarawa accounting for 0% in 2010, rising to 34% in 2014 and increasing again to 49% in 2019. In Plateau, the conflict levels have increased from 5% in 2010, 16% in 2014 ahead of the 2015 election and 45% in 2018 leading to 2019 general elections.

**Table 1.5: Herdsmen Conflict during Election Years (2011 and 2015)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>66 (55%)</td>
<td>33 (28%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasarawa</td>
<td>33 (49%)</td>
<td>23 (34%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>36 (45%)</td>
<td>13 (16%)</td>
<td>4 (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Trend of Herdsmen Conflict within Election Years, 2011 & 2015**

Also looking at the data across pre-election and election year of 2011, (preceded by 2010) 2014 leading to 2015 election and 2018 leading to 2019 election, the trend of herdsmen/farmers violence increased from 6% in 2011 to 14% in Benue, that’s more than 50% increase in number of violence across both election year. Same trend was observed in Plateau with such violence increasing from 8% in 2011 to 19%, over 50% as well, Nasarawa has also witnessed and sustained same level of herdsmen/farmers violence activities with same across both election years.

This consistent trend of events puts Benue, Plateau and Nasarawa States as high-risk areas to experience herdsmen/farmers violence pre and post 2019 general election.
2019 PROJECTIONS
7.1 2019 Projections

◊ Low voter turnout in previous elections is attributed to several factors such as voter apathy, the militarisation of elections and lack of public safety. The absence of these factors during the 2019 election including increased voter awareness may likely result in a slight increase in voter turnout compared to 2015 and other previous elections.

◊ There is likely to be a significant increase in voter turnout in battleground states such as Lagos, Katsina, Benue, Kano, Kaduna, Rivers, Oyo and Plateau if elections across the states would be relatively peaceful.

◊ Security challenges during and post-2019 election are likely in the following flashpoint states: Benue, Kogi, Kano, Imo, Akwa- Ibom, Cross River, Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta, Lagos, Kaduna.

◊ In terms of voting pattern, some states in the last five presidential elections since 1999 have remained consistent in giving the highest number of votes to a particular political party. For example, Plateau, Taraba and Nassarawa have only voted PDP since 1999-2015 in the presidential elections alongside all the South East and South-South states. Replication of this voting pattern will not come as a surprise in the coming 2019 election.

7.2 Conclusion

Nigeria has experienced approximately twenty years of uninterrupted civil rule since the transition to civilian rule on 29 May 1999. Since then, five general elections have been conducted by INEC in addition to other off-cycle and re-run elections. While the conduct of elections has been regular, the trend in voting behaviour and other indicators like electoral violence have remained dynamic. The trend in voting behaviour in terms of voter registration (number of registered voters as a percentage of total population) and voter turnout has not been encouraging: these have declined both in the long term (1999 – 2015) and short time (2011-2015). Nevertheless, states such as Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina and Rivers have consistently been the best performers in terms of voter registration between 1999 and 2015 even though the high number of registered voters in these states have not translated to very high voter turnout during elections. According to current voter registration figures, they have maintained this position in 2019.

“Nigeria has experienced approximately twenty years of uninterrupted civil rule since the transition to civilian rule on 29 May 1999. Since then, five general elections have been conducted by INEC in addition to other off-cycle and re-run elections. While the conduct of elections has been regular, the trend in voting behaviour and other indicators like electoral violence have remained dynamic.”
Historically, the trend in electoral violence has been spasmodic, with the 2011 general election being categorised as the most notorious for electoral violence since 1999. Geographically, the Middle Belt, followed by the North West and North East geopolitical regions, appear to be consistent in having the highest frequency and intensity of violence particularly in the last five years. The intractable conflicts in these regions pose a severe threat and security challenge in the 2019 elections.

Ahead of the 2019 general elections, it is likely that there will be a reversal of the declining level of voter turnout given that voter registration has already returned to the path of progress, surpassing 2015 levels. The activities of key stakeholders like INEC, CSO, political parties, government institutions like National Orientation Agencies, and some media outfits, if sustained, are likely to improve voter turnout in the forthcoming general elections. However, factors such as insecurity and high voter illiteracy, particularly in rural areas, continue to subsist as impediments to improved voter turnout and peaceful elections. If not adequately addressed such factors may undermine the improved performance anticipated for the 2019 general elections.

### 7.3 Key Recommendations

**The Government:**
- The government at all levels should continue to improve on election security provisioning to build confidence among the electorate as a way to encourage voter turnout.
- The incumbent at both national and sub-national levels must also ensure that the opposition is not repressed but given an equal playing ground.

**INEC:**
- Must demonstrate a high level of professionalism and independence to ensure credible elections and citizens’ confidence in the electoral system.

**Political Parties:**
- Must avoid hate speech, threats, populism and all forms of inflammatory rhetoric.
- Party campaign must be issue-based with the aim of educating the people and winning more supporters.
• Party agents must be trained, non-violent, adhere strictly to a peace accord signed by the parties, and must not engage in voting buying in any form.

Civil Society and Development Partners:
• Should continue to educate the electorate on the electoral process, particularly those in hard-to-reach areas
• They must also serve as the watchdog of the government to ensure democratic processes are not undermined.

Citizens:
• Participate actively in all electoral processes.
• Ensure they mobilise to vote correctly and wait for their votes to be counted.
• They should not be involved in the spread of fake news and must avoid being used as instruments of violence by politicians.

Media:
• The media (both private and public) must be seen non-partisan and not being used as a propaganda medium that creates tension in the polity.

Security Agencies:
• Security agents on election must be those trained on elections process. They must display professionalism and should be non-partisan throughout the election period of voting, counting, collation and final results announcement.

The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) was established in the United Kingdom in 1997 as an independent, not-for-profit, research training, advocacy and capacity building organization.

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