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#OndoDecides2024

How Credible?

*Ondo 2024 off-cycle governorship election:
a comparative analysis of international best practices.*



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ABOUT THE NIGERIA ELECTION VIOLENCE EDUCATION AND RESOLUTION PROJECT (NEVER).

Nigeria Election Violence Education and Resolution (NEVER) is a citizen-led electoral violence prevention intervention that aims to establish a robust, multi-stakeholder electoral security framework that will track, document, and mitigate electoral violence before, during, and after elections—ultimately, establishing an early warning system and publishing disaggregated data to aid stakeholders' mitigation strategy planning. KDI, with support from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDOO), implemented the NEVER Project during the 2024 Ondo State off-cycle governorship election. This initiative established an Election Security Early Warning System (ESEWS) across all 18 local government areas (LGAs) in Ondo State. Over the past nine months, KDI has actively monitored and analysed the pre-election environment, deploying 45 long-term security monitors to identify and document early warning signs of potential electoral violence.

Utilising globally accepted indicators, tested in over 11 countries through the IFES/EVER methodology, KDI has worked to provide data-driven insights to election stakeholders, including INEC, political parties, security agencies, and civil society organizations. Our pre-election Security Risk Assessment (ESRA) findings have been instrumental in identifying electoral risk factors, triggers of violence, and areas requiring targeted mitigation strategies. This proactive approach aims to foster a peaceful electoral process and strengthen public confidence in democratic institutions.

Data Analysis

ABOUT KDI ELECTION DAY DATA ROOM

To ensure comprehensive monitoring of the electoral process, KDI established a dedicated Election Data Room (EDR), which opened on November 18, 2024. The EDR's objectives include:

- Documenting incidents of electoral violence in real-time.
- Assessing the overall integrity and security of the election process.
- Providing timely insights to election stakeholders for prompt action.

The EDR analyses real-time reports from 3,362 trained observers deployed across the 203 wards across Ondo State. These observers provided live updates on electoral incidents, the conduct of election officials, ballot integrity, and security-related issues. Their reports provide a comprehensive picture of the election environment.

3,362
Observers Trained
& Deployed

Across
203
Wards



Executive Summary

Elections serve as a fundamental mechanism for the expression of the public will, enabling citizens to participate in the democratic process and shape their government. Ensuring that electoral processes reflect the true will of the people is foundational to democratic governance. On the 16th of November 2024, indigenes of Ondo State went into polls to elect who their democratic leader would be for the next four years. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) made significant strides in enhancing transparency with the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the INEC Result Viewing (IReV) portal. These technologies facilitated the accurate collation of results and bolstered public access to electoral data, with 97% of polling unit results promptly uploaded. Preliminary independent verification through

the Ballot Integrity Project (BIP) methodology further confirmed the alignment of a substantial number of declared results with uploaded data, reflecting a good step towards transparency and accountability. Logistical efficiency was another area of strength, as INEC ensured the timely deployment of materials and personnel, enabling voter participation without undue restrictions. Security agencies largely contained election-related violence, creating a more peaceful environment compared to previous elections in Ondo State. Despite 26 reported election day violent incidents, the collaborative efforts of security personnel ensured voter safety and minimised disruptions.

However, several critical issues detracted from the overall integrity of the process. Instances of voter

coercion, vote-buying, and intimidation by party agents created an atmosphere of fear in some polling units, undermining the principles of free and fair competition. Procedural inconsistencies, such as voters casting ballots without Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) and BVAS malfunctions disproportionately affecting specific demographics, exposed infrastructural inadequacies. Discrepancies in voter registration data and cases of overvoting further raised concerns about the accuracy and reliability of the electoral records. Systemic weaknesses in Nigeria's legal framework for addressing electoral violations were also evident. The absence of robust enforcement mechanisms allowed widespread violations such as vote-buying and ballot box snatching to go largely unpunished, undermining public confidence in the accountability of the electoral process. Furthermore, the rejection of results by opposition candidates and allegations of irregularities highlighted a lack of political consensus on the election's fairness, reflecting deeper issues of distrust in the system. These weaknesses not only undermine the credibili-

ty of the process but also hinder public trust in the democratic system.

While it is obvious that not every index was perfect, many observers' groups approve of the Ondo state 2024 elections, comparing its relative success to previous elections in Nigeria's broader electoral ecosystem, including the 2023 general elections, the Imo, Bayelsa, and Kogi 2023 off-cycle governorship elections, and the recent Edo 2024 off-cycle governorship election. While such comparisons may suggest improvement, they raise critical questions: **Are these elections the standard of credible democracy?** Or is Nigeria merely lowering the bar for electoral excellence? Evaluating elections solely through the lens of comparative improvement risks normalising ordinariness and diverging from global best practices. This evaluation report highlights the election's alignment with international best practices, assesses its adherence to principles of fairness and inclusivity, and provides actionable recommendations to strengthen future electoral processes.

Introduction

Elections are a cornerstone of democracy, providing citizens with a platform to influence governance and hold leaders accountable. In Nigeria, where democratic practices continue to evolve amid a complex socio-political and economic landscape, elections remain both a measure of progress and a test of institutional resilience. The 2024 Ondo Governorship Election marked a significant event in Nigeria's political journey, offering a critical lens to evaluate the country's progress in adhering to the principles of credible and transparent electoral processes. This election was held amidst an evolving democratic landscape characterised by both advancements in electoral technology and persistent challenges in governance and electoral administration. Ondo State, with its history of politically charged elections, dynamic political environment, and engaged

electorate, presented a unique case study for assessing the interplay between democratic ideals and practical realities.

The historical context adds depth to the analysis of Ondo's elections. Political crises in the state during Nigeria's First and Second Republics, such as the crises in the then Western Region (1964–1965) and Ondo (1983), significantly disrupted democratic processes. While violence in modern-day Ondo elections has been relatively low, the state has seen sporadic outbreaks of post-election violence. Yet, the pre-election phase for the 2024 election was notably quiet. Kim-pact Development Initiative (KDI), through its Nigeria Election Violence Education and Resolution (NEVER) project, documented 16 incidents of electoral violence in the state between January and November 16, with one fa-

tality, highlighting a relatively peaceful preparatory phase.

This relatively peaceful pre-election environment is owed to the effort of stakeholders, such as the media, EMB, security agencies, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) like KDI, who convened a series of dialogues and made available trend analysis of security risks in the pre-election phase to inform violence prevention interventions. The National Peace Committee (NPC) equally conveys a peace accord signing.

From a technical perspective, the 2024 Ondo off-cycle governorship election took place on the backdrop of lingering electoral challenges that were highlighted by members of the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room¹ such as Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI)², Yiaga Africa³, the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)⁴, and TAF Africa⁵ in the 2024 Edo state governorship election, particularly issues of result management, logistics inefficiencies, and the integrity of the electoral process. These issues not only challenge the integrity of the process but also underscore the gap between policy intentions and implementation on

the ground. Additionally, the 2024 Ondo off-cycle governorship election saw the continued use of technological innovations such as the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the INEC Results Viewing Portal (IReV). These tools were designed to enhance transparency and credibility by ensuring accurate voter accreditation and transparency in the result management process.

Nevertheless, the post-election was trailed by different percep-



tions and reactions; many observers commended the efficiency of election-day logistics—poll workers and materials arrived at polling units earlier, and over 90% of PUs commenced the voting and accreditation process on time. However, despite these encouraging factors, some stakeholders lamented the widespread incidents of vote-buying and interference by the party agents that somewhat led to sporadic violence in some locations because they were notable chal-

lenges, raising questions about the robustness of Nigeria's electoral integrity.

The phenomenon of vote-buying, a persistent threat to electoral credibility, remains a significant concern. Vote-buying is not merely a transactional act but a symptom of deeper systemic and socio-economic vulnerabilities. In Ondo State, as observed during the 2024 governorship election, this phenomenon manifested in multifaceted ways, raising critical questions about the election's adherence to principles of transparency and fairness. Despite procedural safeguards designed to ensure ballot secrecy in Nigeria, vote-buyers employed various tactics—ranging from moral debt⁶ to intimidation—to compromise the secrecy of the ballot and ensure and guarantee that purchased votes are cast for the intended candidates. Despite legal provisions, notably Sections 22 and 127 of the Electoral Act 2022 that criminalise vote-buying and impose significant penalties, enforcement remains weak, with limited arrests or convictions for vote-buying since its proliferation became a focal issue in 2016. This enforcement deficit reflects not only institutional weaknesses



but also a troubling complicity or indifference within the political and administrative structures responsible for upholding electoral integrity.

Moreover, the credibility of the 2024 Ondo election was further shaped by how it was evaluated. Many observers compared its relative success to previous elections in Nigeria's broader electoral ecosystem, including the 2023 general elections, the Imo, Bayelsa, and Kogi 2023 off-cycle governorship elections, and the Edo 2024 off-cycle governorship election. While such comparisons may suggest improvement, they raise critical questions: Are these elections the standard of credible democracy? Or is Nigeria merely lowering the bar for electoral excellence? Evaluating elections solely through the lens of comparative improvement risks normalising ordinariness and diverging from global best practices.

Based on the preceding views, KDI finds it thoughtful to benchmark the findings of its election observation of the conduct of the elections against internation-

al best practices for elections in this report. This report adopts a blended approach, benchmarking the findings from the 2024 Ondo Governorship Election against international norms while considering local socio-political realities. The analysis focuses on critical components, including security, suffrage, result management, inducement, technical competence, voter turnout, and adherence to electoral laws. These benchmarks aim to provide a practical evaluation of Ondo's electoral conduct, emphasising areas of progress, identifying gaps, and offering actionable recommendations. As Nigeria continues its democratic journey, the Ondo 2024 election underscores both the opportunities and challenges in achieving electoral integrity. By situating the election within broader democratic and normative frameworks, this report seeks to contribute to ongoing efforts to align Nigeria's electoral processes with global standards and the aspirations of its people.



Ondo State NEVR

#OndoDecides_2024

Summary

16

Incidents

1

Fatalities

Select Category

☒ Election related

☐ Non election related

Victim by Gender

8

Unidentified...

8

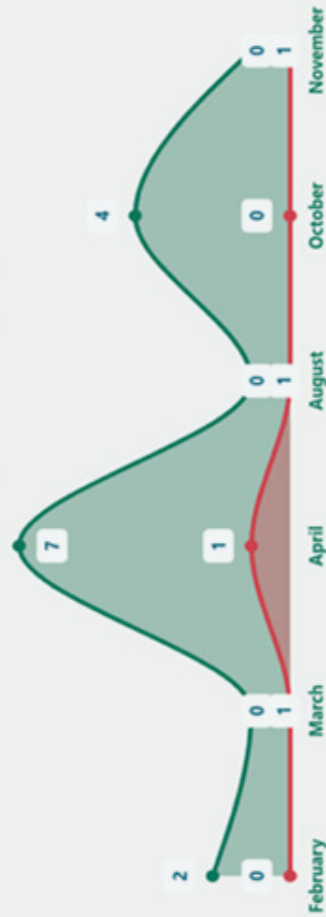
Male Ondo

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Female Ondo

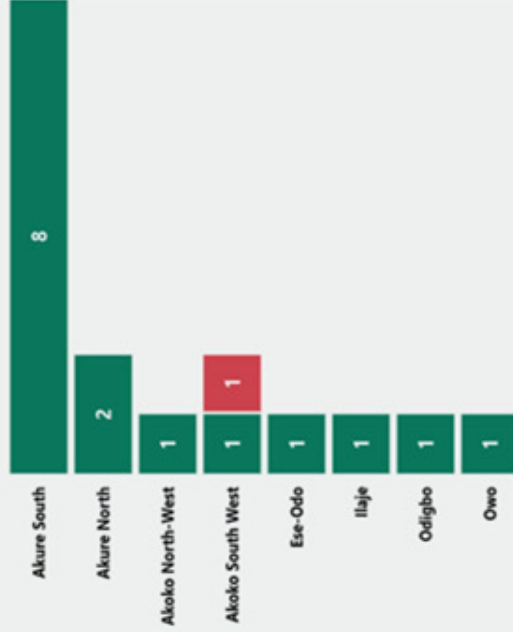
Incidents and fatalities per month

● Incidents (Ondo) ● Fatalities (Ondo)



Incidents and Fatalities per LGA

● Incidents (Ondo) ● Fatalities (Ondo)



Forms of Violence

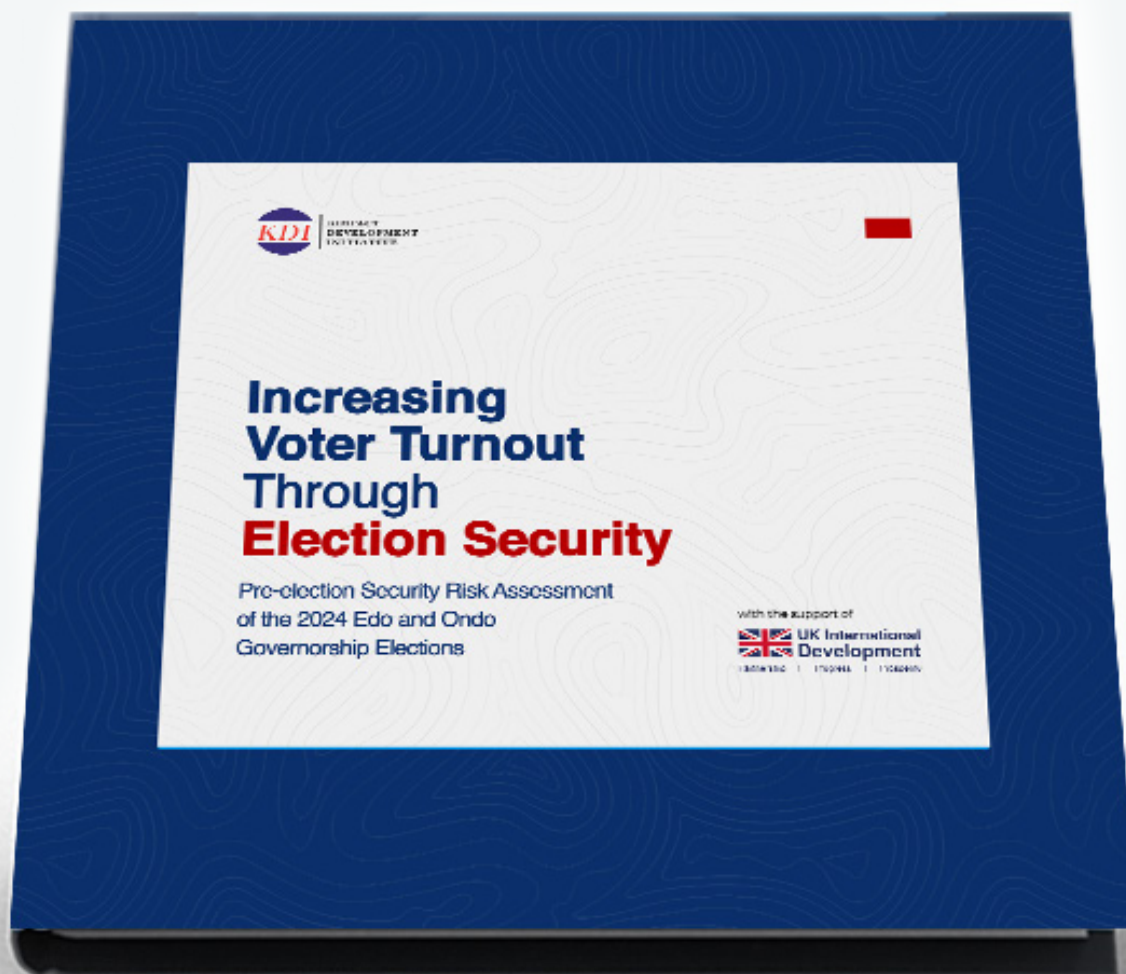
Property destruction	7
Attack	3
Mob violence	2
Violent protest	2
Intimidation	1
Shooting	1
Total	16

Perpetrators



Victims category





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Highlight of International Best Practices and Standards for Election Conduct



International standards for the conduct of elections are grounded in fundamental principles designed to uphold the integrity, transparency, and fairness of electoral processes worldwide. These principles serve as guidelines for countries in developing their election laws and practices; they can also be used to assess whether elections are free, fair, and credible. They include:

01.

Voting and Election Rights:

Equal and Secret Suffrage, Non-Discrimination, Voter Accessibility, Candidature, Party, and Campaign Rights and Responsibilities.

02.

Transparency and Accountability:

Transparency of Processes and Access to Results.

03.

Independent Election Management:

No Interference from the State.

04.

Ethical Conduct of Stakeholders:

Behaviour of Electoral Administrators and Conduct of Political Parties and Candidates.

05.

Effective Election Administration:

Electoral Roll and Voter Registration.

06.

Efficient Election Day Operations:

Election Security Management and Logistics.

07.

Electoral Results Management:

Inclusive and Accurate Counting.

08.

Respect for Electoral Outcomes:

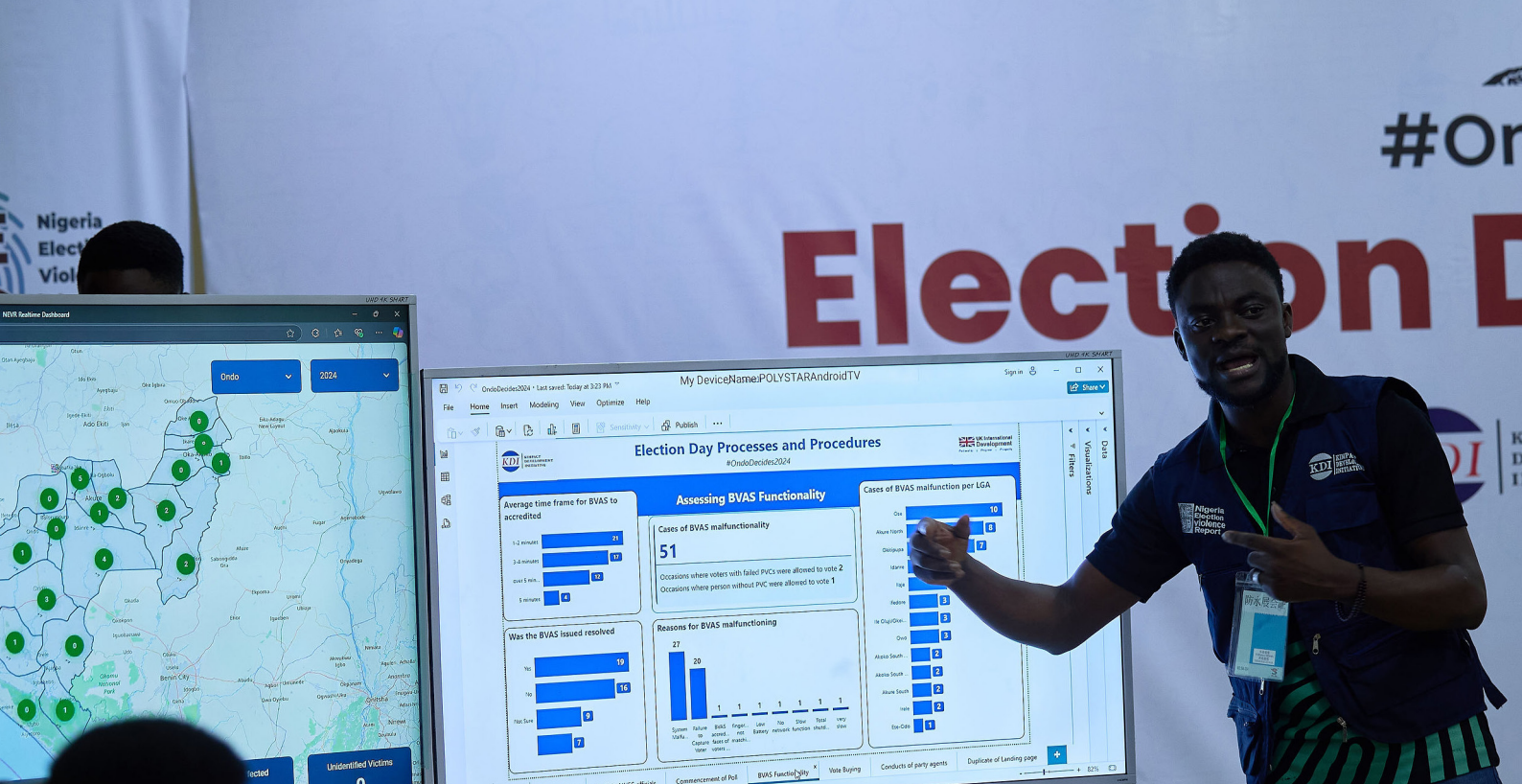
Acceptance of Electoral Outcomes.

09.

Oversight and Enforcement:

Access to monitor and observe the elections.

Findings



KDI proceeded to juxtapose her findings from the 2024 Ondo Governorship Election observation with international best practices.

NOTE: All pre-election issues like voter registration and campaigning were not considered in this component. It is also an assessment of the major component of the election not just INEC.

Evaluation and Rating Metrics:

Excellent (5/5): Fully meets or exceeds all guiding questions without concerns.

Satisfactory (4/5): Meets most guiding questions with minor concerns.

Adequate with Flaws (3/5): Partially meets guiding questions; significant concerns present but manageable.

Needs Improvement (2/5): Fails to meet many guiding questions; critical improvements required.

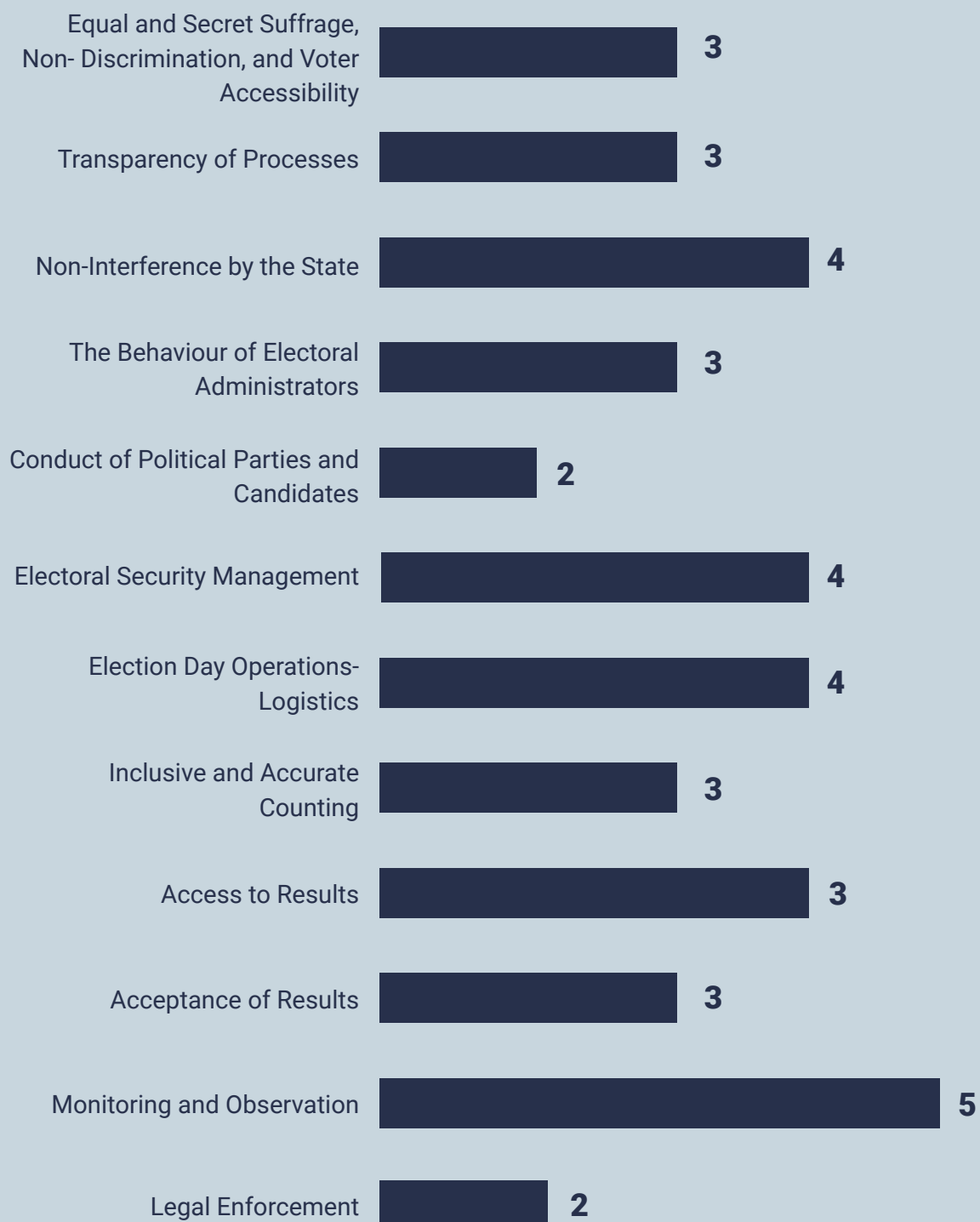
Unsatisfactory (1/5): Does not meet guiding questions; severe deficiencies.

Sub-Component	Findings of the Ondo State 2024 Election	Evaluation
Equal and Secret Suffrage, Non-Discrimination, and Voter Accessibility	<p>There were no reported restrictions or undue barriers to voter participation based on discrimination. However, some voters without Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) were allowed to vote after being identified on the register in several locations in Akure North, Akoko South, Ifedore, Okitipupa, and Akoko Southwest. This was more apparent in Akure North Ward 5 PU 18, raising concerns about the relevance of PVCs and adherence to the guidelines.</p> <p>BVAS generally performed well but malfunctioned in isolated cases, particularly when capturing the biometrics of elderly voters, in Akoko Southeast Ward 8 PU 6 and Ward 6 PUs 1 and 2, Akure North Ward 10 PU 3, Okitipupa Ward 2 PU 9, Ilu-Ti-tun 1 PU 11, and multiple locations in Ilaje, Ose, and Idanre. This shows that some demographic groups may be excluded, and that accreditation technology should be more inclusive. While some ICT specialists raised concerns that BVAS face recognition may theoretically be immune to age-related changes, these practical faults expose infrastructural gaps.</p> <p>In certain locations, the secrecy of the vote was compromised by party agents instructing voters on how to cast their votes. These violations were especially observed in Odigbo and Akoko South-East LGAs.</p>	<p>Rating: Adequate with Flaws (3/5) Voting accessibility and inclusiveness were notable strengths, but PVC irregularities and BVAS limitations indicate moderate shortcomings. Ballot secrecy violations further reduced the overall score.</p>
Transparency of Processes	<p>INEC's preparedness and efficient logistical deployment suggested clear communication of procedures. However, the observed allowance of voters without PVCs to vote after they were identified on the voter register raises questions about INEC's adherence to its own "No PVC, No Voting" guideline. The timely release of results on IReV and the observed logistical readiness highlight efforts to maintain transparency. Campaign funding sources, however, remained opaque and unverified, indicating a gap in transparency.</p>	<p>Rating: Adequate with Flaws (3/5) While procedural transparency was largely upheld, the lack of enforcement consistency and the impact of party agent misconduct on fairness call for stronger regulatory oversight.</p> <p>INEC's logistical efficiency and prompt result uploads were commendable, but vote-buying incidents and the absence of campaign funding disclosure detracted from full transparency.</p>
Non-Interference by the State	<p>No evidence suggested interference with INEC's operations during the Ondo election. However, civil disobedience was observed before the election due to calls for the removal of the Ondo REC over allegations of bias toward the PDP and its candidate. These concerns, though not proven, illustrate perceptions of potential partisanship within the EMB.</p>	<p>Rating: Satisfactory (4/5) While operational independence was maintained and the absence of direct state interference was a positive, pre-election controversy about the REC's impartiality moderately impacted public trust.</p>
The Behaviour of Electoral Administrators	<p>Most observers noted that polling officials arrived on time and were professional. However, there were reports of voter registration discrepancies, overvoting, and bypassing BVAS. There was no evidence of extensive efforts to address this administrative misconduct.</p>	<p>Rating: 3/5 (Adequate with Flaws): Electoral administrators demonstrated professionalism, but systemic breaches and a lack of proactive remediation measures highlight areas for improvement.</p>

Conduct of Political Parties and Candidates	<p>Party agents were widely implicated in vote-buying and voter coercion, contributing to clashes at polling units. They exceeded their roles, engaging in disruptive activities such as voter intimidation and desecrating ballot secrecy. For example, blatant vote-buying by party agents led to clashes in Ward 5 PU 3 in Idanre LGA, with thugs shooting sporadically to disperse voters. In Odigbo Ward 1 PU 63 and Ward 10 PU 11, party agents were seen instructing voters, resulting in physical altercations. Such incidents were also reported in Ward 8 PU 6 in Akoko South-East LGA, where agents fought over who would assist an elderly man to vote. Observers noted that 58% of violent acts reported to KDI's EDR were perpetrated by party agents.</p>	<p>Rating: 2/5 (poor and needs improvement): Widespread violations of codes of conduct by party agents and associated violence undermined the integrity of the election.</p>
Electoral Security Management	<p>KDI's Election Day Data Room received 26 verified violent incident reports. While 20 incidents did not disrupt polling, 6 led to disruptions and ballot box snatching, notably in Ifedore, Ose, and Idanre LGAs. In Idanre Ward 5 PU 3, sporadic gunfire dispersed voters. Importantly, no fatalities were recorded, and the overall process was considered notably peaceful compared to past elections.</p>	<p>Rating: 4/5 (satisfactory): While overall peace was maintained, sporadic violence and ballot snatching reduced the perception of a fully secure election.</p>
Election Day Operations – Logistics	<p>Polling stations were generally well prepared, with timely material deployment. Observers did not report ballot tampering; however, incidents of ballot box snatching were documented in several polling units, including Ward 8 Unit 16 (Ifedore LGA), Ward 7 Unit 4 (Ose LGA), Ward 7 Unit 19 Ogbagi (Akoko North-West), and Ward 8 Unit 8 (Idanre LGA).</p>	<p>Rating: 4/5 (satisfactory): Material preparedness and secure ballot distribution were commendable, but ballot snatching incidents point to residual security vulnerabilities.</p>
Inclusive and Accurate Counting	<p>The BVAS and IReV systems ensured transparency in the vote-counting process. However, discrepancies were observed. The preliminary assessment shows that INEC-declared results fell within the range of estimated figures expected when benchmarked against results uploaded to IReV and collated from Wards. However, 25 Form EC40Gs uploaded to IReV highlighted issues such as disruptions, overvoting, and BVAS malfunctions in 9 LGAs—Akoko Northwest, Akure North, Akure South, Ese-Odo, Idanre, Ilaje, Ileoluji/Okeigbo, and Ondo West.</p> <p>(Form EC40G contains information about the number of registered voters in polling units where the election was either not held or cancelled. This information is crucial because it helps determine the potential impact of these cancellations on the overall election results. The Chief Electoral Commissioner uses this data from Form EC40G(II) to populate Form EC40G(III) which then gets compared to the margin of victory between the top two candidates.)</p>	<p>Rating: 3/5 (Adequate with Flaws) While transparency mechanisms such as BVAS and IReV provided a credible foundation for vote counting, the documented discrepancies, missing votes, and lack of clear resolutions underscore a need for more robust accuracy in the electoral process.</p>

	<p>Okitipupa LGA's returning officer explicitly scored PU 1, Ward 10, zero due to over-voting. Other returning officers did not report cancellations in their LGAs as against the EC40Gs uploaded on IReV. While the collection of PVCs from registered voters in this area does not impact the declared outcome or alter its trajectory, we express significant concern regarding this action. In cases where the margin is narrow, it could potentially compromise the integrity of the election. INEC stated the number of registered voters for the election as 2,053,061, but INEC cumulative LGA data showed 2,051,135—a discrepancy attributed to significant variations, such as a 4,341 increase in Akoko Southwest and reductions of 4,901 in Ondo East and 1,063 in Ilaje. Additionally, the number of accredited voters (510,862) yielded 497,007 valid votes and 11,886 rejected ballots, leaving a gap of 1,899 votes unclassified as either valid or rejected. If only one PU was reported as experiencing overvoting, these missing votes raise significant questions about the integrity of the counting process.</p>	
Access to Results	<p>INEC achieved a commendable 97% upload of polling unit results on IReV by 9:30 PM, demonstrating timely and accessible result dissemination. Preliminary use of the BIP methodology confirmed that the declared results aligned with the data uploaded on IReV, ensuring opportunities for independent verification of results.</p>	<p>Rating: 4/5 (satisfactory): Timely release of results and alignment with verification methodologies like BIP established accessibility and reliability, though minor delays in the remaining 3% of results detracted from full effectiveness.</p>
Acceptance of Results	<p>The People's Democratic Party's (PDP) candidate, Agboola Ajayi, rejected the results, alleging that the All-Progressives Congress (APC) and INEC engaged in "criminality" during the election process. Nevertheless, the legal mechanisms such as the Election Petition Tribunal are constitutionally available with the tribunal registry opened before the election for addressing grievances⁷.</p>	<p>Rating: 3/5 (Adequate with Flaws): The rejection of results by the PDP candidate highlights disputes, but the availability of legal recourse aligns with established standards for resolving election-related conflicts.</p>
Monitoring and Observation	<p>INEC accredited 134 monitoring groups for the election, including 124 domestic and 10 international organizations⁸. Report from the field shows that domestic observers were allowed into the Ward and LGA level collation centres without restrictions, ensuring robust external oversight.</p>	<p>Rating: 5/5 (excellent): The unrestricted access provided to domestic and international observers ensured a transparent and well-monitored election process, aligning fully with the guiding questions.</p>
Legal Enforcement	<p>Prosecution and conviction of electoral offenders remain notably low in Nigeria. While some violations, such as vote-buying and voter intimidation, were reported during the Ondo election, there was no evidence of arrest, investigation, or prosecution of these offences.</p>	<p>Rating: 2/5 (poor and needs improvement): The lack of consistent enforcement and low prosecution rates for electoral violations undermine the credibility of the legal framework for elections.</p>

Rating of each component of the Ondo 2024 Governorship Election against International Best Practices



Conclusion

Based on the evaluation across the subcomponents, the Ondo 2024 elections demonstrated moderate integrity and fairness. While the elections showcased notable strengths in some areas, significant weaknesses in others detracted from an overall robust assessment of fairness. Here's an analytical breakdown of the evaluation:

1. Areas of Strength

- **Access to Results:** The use of BVAS and IReV significantly enhanced the transparency of the vote-counting process and facilitated public access to results. For example, 97% of polling unit results were promptly uploaded, and preliminary verification through the BIP methodology confirmed the alignment of declared results with uploaded data. These efforts signify a commitment to transparency, which is critical for public trust and confidence in electoral processes.
- **Monitoring and Observation:** INEC's accreditation of 124 domestic and 10 international observer groups and unrestricted

access to the electoral process demonstrated compliance with international best practices for election monitoring. This openness bolstered the perception of a transparent and credible election environment.

- **Voting and Elections Rights:** Most eligible citizens participated without undue restrictions, and INEC demonstrated logistical efficiency in deploying materials and personnel.
- **Electoral Security Management:** Despite 26 reported violent incidents, the overall election was notably peaceful compared to prior elections in Ondo State. Most incidents were contained without fatal outcomes, and the security architecture largely ensured the safety of voters, officials, and materials.

2. Areas of Concern

- **Conduct of Political Stakeholders:** Widespread voter coercion, vote-buying, and physical clashes instigated by party agents severely impacted the integrity of the election. These

actions undermined fair competition and created an atmosphere of intimidation in some polling units.

- **Legal Enforcement and Equal Suffrage:** Instances of voters casting ballots without PVCs after being identified on the register contravened INEC's guidelines. Furthermore, BVAS malfunctions disproportionately affected the older demographics, exposing infrastructural inadequacies.

Additionally, The absence of robust mechanisms to address violations, such as vote-buying and ballot box snatching, highlights systemic weaknesses in Nigeria's legal framework for electoral accountability. This failure undermines deterrence and allows repeat violations. Furthermore, electoral violations such as vote-buying and voter intimidation were reported, but the lack of arrest highlighted persistent systemic weaknesses. Low prosecution rates undermine the deterrent effect of legal frameworks and challenge perceptions of accountability in the electoral process.

- **Election Result Management:** While BVAS and IReV strength-

ened counting, key discrepancies were reported, including missing 1,899 votes and over-voting in several polling units (e.g., PU 1, Ward 10, Okitipupa LGA). Additionally, inconsistencies in the number of registered voters (e.g., discrepancies in Akoko Southwest, Ondo East, and Ilaje) raise questions about the accuracy of electoral records, even though these discrepancies did not significantly affect the outcome.

- **Acceptance of Results:** The rejection of results by the PDP candidate and allegations of "criminality" point to a lack of political consensus on the fairness of the elections. While legal mechanisms like the tribunal exist for addressing disputes, the rejection reflects broader issues of distrust.

The Ondo 2024 elections were conducted with notable efforts toward transparency and monitoring. Transparency measures such as BVAS and IReV boosted confidence, the process largely allowed voter participation and ensured timely result dissemination, systemic issues—including weak enforcement of laws, procedural inconsistencies, party agent misconduct, and technical irreg-

ularities, reduced the election's credibility; and these issues must be addressed to enhance future electoral processes. Thus, the elections can be categorized as

average, demonstrating progress in some areas but requiring substantial reforms to achieve higher integrity and broader acceptance in future elections.



Recommendations ■



Based on the analysis and observations of the Ondo 2024 elections, the following recommendations aim to address identified issues and reinforce democratic principles:

1. Strengthen Enforcement Mechanisms Against Electoral Misconduct

- Establish mobile courts on election day to swiftly address cases of vote-buying, intimidation, and other violations.
- Empower the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) to collaborate more actively with INEC in monitoring and prosecuting electoral offences.
- Increase penalties for violations to deter misconduct, such as vote-buying and ballot box snatching.

2. Improve BVAS and Technological Efficiency

- Conduct rigorous pre-election testing of BVAS devices and ensure the availability of technical support teams across all polling units.
- Increase training for polling officials to minimize errors in BVAS operation and troubleshooting.
- Expand investment in backup systems to address potential malfunctions on election day.

3. Enhance Voter Education and Awareness

- Collaborate with civil society organizations (CSOs) and media outlets to run voter education campaigns focused on the importance of rejecting vote-buying and coercion.
- Ensure voter education materials are accessible to people with disabilities and are available in local languages.

4. Address Accessibility Challenges for Vulnerable Groups

- Provide assistive devices and trained personnel to facilitate voting for persons with disabilities (PWDs) and the elderly.
- Conduct audits of polling units to ensure compliance with accessibility standards, such as ramps and seating areas.

5. Increase Transparency in Electoral Processes

- Develop a clear protocol for addressing discrepancies in vote counts and unclassified votes, with a focus on timely communication to the

public.

- Ensure that ward-level results are uploaded to the IReV portal immediately after counting, with real-time tracking available to the public.
- Create an independent review body to audit sensitive materials, such as voter registers and tally sheets, to prevent data manipulation.

6. Bolster Electoral Security Architecture

- Deploy a multi-agency security approach that includes community engagement to reduce intimidation and violence.
- Equip and train security personnel to handle electoral tensions professionally, with an emphasis on non-violent de-escalation techniques.
- Penalize security officials found colluding with political actors.

7. Build Public Confidence in INEC's Impartiality

- Review and restructure the process for appointing Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) to enhance transparency and reduce perceived bias.

	AA	AAC	ADC	ADP	APC	APGA	APM	APP	BP	LP	NNPP	NRM	PDP	PRP	SDP	YPP	ZLP	VALID VOTES CAST	VALID VOTE CAST ON SCAL	REJECTED BALLOTS	Spilled Ballot
683																		208			
684	0	0	0	2	0	138	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	208			
685																		0			
686																		0			
687																		0			
688																		0			
689																		0			
690																		0			
691																		0			
692																		0			
693																		0			
694																		0			

Endnotes

1. <https://situationroomng.org/statement-of-the-nigeria-civil-society-situation-room-and-its-accredited-member-organisations-on-the-2024-edo-state-governorship-election-held-on-saturday-21st-september-2024/> (Accessed on the 5 December 2024)
2. <https://kimpact.org.ng/publications/51/details#gsc.tab=0> (Accessed on the 5 December 2024)
3. <https://yiaga.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Post-election-Press-Statement-on-2024-Edo-Gov-Election.pdf> (Accessed on the 5 December 2024)
4. <https://www.cddwestafrica.org/press-releases/post-election-statement-on-the-21-september-2024-edo-state-governorship-election-centre-for-democracy-and-development-cdd-west-africa-election-analysis-centre-eac/> (Accessed on the 5 December 2024)
5. <https://www.facebook.com/tafafricang/posts/852931026986444/> (Accessed on the 5 December 2024)
6. This is voters comply with the vote buyer's wishes simply due to a sense of personal obligation or a moral debt to the candidate or vote-buyer most especially when a known agent is used for this purpose with the community
7. <https://www.channelstv.com/2024/11/20/ondo-apc-inec-prosecuted-criminality-pdps-ajayi-alleges-heads-to-court/>
8. https://inecnigeria.org/?page_id=13744

About Kimpact

Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI) is an independent non-governmental organization that advances good governance, democratic rights, public policy, and public engagement. We do this by building informed and active citizens through capacity development, advancing public policies, data-driven advocacy and reforms that give a more supportive environment for citizen-led development.

OUR MISSION:

To inspire citizen-led democratic and economic development that is fixed firmly on the principles of participation, data-driven advocacy, strong democratic institutions, and public policies.

10 | S.B Abubakar Avenue | NAF Valley Estate | Behind Mogadishu Cantonment | Asokoro | Abuja.

1 | Aresa Close | Behind Union Bank Gbodofon Area | Aregbe | Osogbo, Osun.

*+234 813 482 8527 | +234 810 394 7690
info@kimpact.org.ng | www.kimpact.org.ng*



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