

Advancing Credible Elections Through Election Violence Monitoring & Mitigation

*...a report of Nigeria Election Violence and Education
Resolution (NEVER) in the 2023 off-cycle governorship
election across Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi states.*



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Suggested citation:

Kimpact Development Initiative, **Advancing Credible Elections through Election Violence Monitoring and Mitigation** (2024), a report of the Nigeria Election Violence and Education Resolution (NEVER) in the 2023 off-cycle governorship elections across Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi states.

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This document has been produced by Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI) to provide insight from her analysis of the data obtained from monitoring and mitigating electoral violence in the 2023 off-cycle governorship elections in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi State. Kimpact hereby certifies that all the views expressed in this document accurately reflect the analytical views of the information gathered from the field throughout the specified election cycle by trained citizen election observers. This information was verified, reliable and evidence-based. Whilst reasonable care has been taken in preparing this document, KIMPACT and FCDO shall take no responsibility for errors, any views expressed, or actions taken due to information provided in this report.

Acknowledgments

This study is supported by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office



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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 create a more supportive environment for citizen-led development.

OUR MISSION:

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

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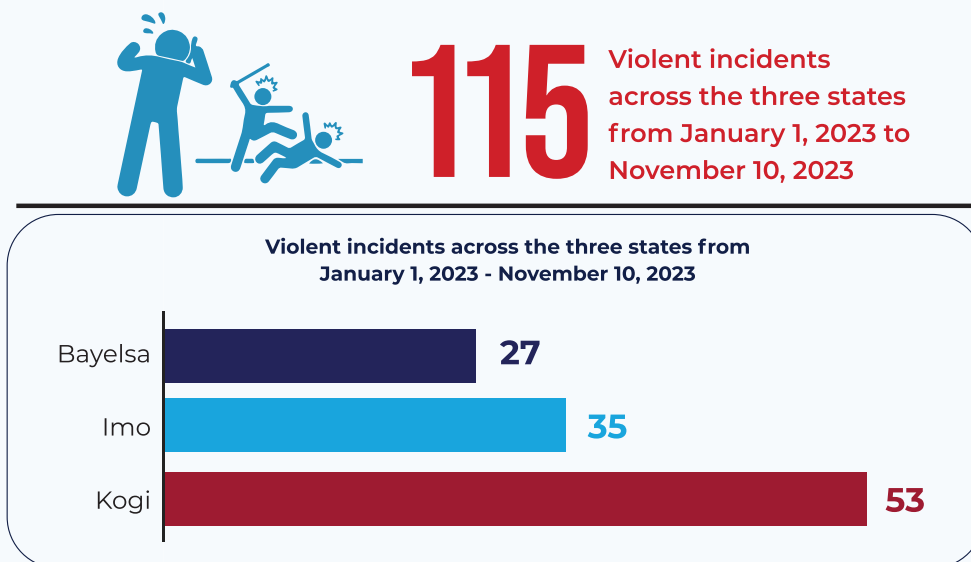
Bayelsa, Kogi, and Imo states, among others in Nigeria experiencing off-cycle governorship elections, held elections on November 11, 2023. Considering the historical disposition of the three states to electoral violence, KDI started a long-term monitoring and documenting of election related violence based on its broad knowledge of election security (***pre-election Security Risk Assessment (ESRA) and the Nigeria Election Violence Education and Resolution (NEVER) methodology***). This electoral violence monitoring and mitigation effort aimed to establish a robust, multi-stakeholder electoral security framework that will track, document, and mitigate electoral violence before, during and after the 2023 Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi States off-cycle elections—ultimately establishing an early warning system and publishing disaggregated data to aid stakeholders' mitigation planning.

KDI started her long-term monitoring of the Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi states election environment on security risks in January 2023 – ten (10) months before the November 11 governorship elections. The pre-election phase in the three states, from the party primaries to political campaign rallies, was full of potential for violence and violent events. Some of these include:

- Resentment arising from the selection of candidates. For instance, in Kogi state, the aftermath of candidate selection made pre-election violence skyrocket. Political actors were also involved in defections and cross-carpeting to other political parties, which amplified intra- and inter-party crises. The resentment after the party primaries in Bayelsa state only led to a hurricane of defections across the major political parties. Internal political party issues were not pronounced in Imo state – even though they exist, issues of unknown gunmen and kidnapping overshadowed all other issues.

- Physical attacks and group clashes during campaign rallies were heightened in Kogi State. Some incidents that started as non-electoral violence in Imo state in the long started impacting the electoral landscape. At the same time, Bayelsa experienced early escalated violence, which gave room for serious stakeholder intervention before the election day. Largely, KDI tracked and documented 115 violent incidents in the three states between January 1 and November 10, with 27, 35 and 53 recorded in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi states, respectively.

Data of pre-election monitoring



Furthermore, KDI in her Pre-election Security Risk Assessment (ESRA), triangulated all the information from long-term monitoring, quantitative data from citizens and qualitative information from stakeholders. This shows some critical, insightful and early warning signs in the build-up to the elections. These include:

- Each state has its dominant political party with a corresponding stronghold per LGAs. This, coupled with the escalated unresolved internal party issues, is a precursor to the high likelihood of electoral violence.
- The Public trust of Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi citizens in INEC following the 2023 general election dwindled. This exacerbates other concerns, potentially heightening the risk of violence.

- There was a lack of proper voter education, linked to reasons such as violence, insecurity, disputes following the General Election in 2023, and litigation.
- The unequal distribution of polling units is a cause for concern. Due to high overcrowding, voter turnout at some PUs may be lower.

Some early warning signals/risk factors that could cause violence on election day and post-election were identified – this is illustrated in the diagram below.

Risk factors and actors that could generate tension or cause violence on election day and post election.		
Bayelsa	Imo	Kogi
Political thugs, militant and cultist activities	Political thugs and cultist activities	Political thugs activities
Lack of transparency and partiality of INEC	Lack of transparency and partiality of INEC	Vote buying
Late arrival of election materials	Vote buying	Lack of transparency and partiality of INEC
Partiality of security agents.	Fake news	Partiality of security agents.
Vote buying	Partiality of security agents.	Fake news
Fake news	Late arrival of election materials	Late arrival of election materials

Given the above insight, KDI started her violence prevention effort by engaging stakeholders with the key findings of the ESRA report. Some of the efforts include technical sessions with security officials, citizen-stakeholders town hall meetings, media engagements, press conferences, and setting up the State Peace and Mediation Working Committee (SPMWC). The SPMWC, using the disaggregated data from KDI, engaged in strategic advocacy towards electoral violence prevention; the effectiveness was due to its grassroots-centred approach, adaptability, cultural acumen, and commitment to community-driven peace initiatives. Moreover, the NEVER Long-term Pre-Election Security Risk Assessment (ESRA) and election violence monitoring data were shared with security agencies. This is with the hope that this will inform their deployment plan, mitigation strategies, and intervention areas before, during and after the 11th

of November 2023 in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi States. Furthermore, the People's Town Hall Meeting brought together stakeholders to discuss election security for the off-cycle elections in Kogi, Imo, and Bayelsa states. Following concerns raised during the town hall meeting regarding the allegation against the Imo State Commissioner of Police, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) committed to the redeployment of the Commissioner of Police in Imo State as a show of neutrality.

On election day, KDI observed some of the election day processes and procedures that have the potential for violence. These include:

- The early arrival of election officials and materials varied across states. While Bayelsa and Kogi experienced relatively high percentages of early arrivals, Imo faced delays in the commencement of voting due to the late arrival of officials.
- The Biometric Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) functioned well, with swift accreditation in Bayelsa and Kogi. Imo state, however, experienced delays and malfunctions, with 80% of faulty BVAS units promptly replaced.
- Issues arose in Kogi in the early hours, where pre-filled result sheets were observed, prompting an INEC investigation. Imo faced allegations of uniform handwriting on Form EC8A, with 15 identified polling units.
- Vote buying was openly practised, with voters exchanging their votes for material goods and money.

In addition, four fatalities were recorded on the 11th of November governorship election in Kogi State; 2 people were shot in Dekina LGA for attempting to snatch ballot boxes, while a citizen with an NYSC uniform was killed in Ankpa LGA. One death was recorded in Brass LGA in Bayelsa State during the collation of results.

NOTABLE ELECTION SECURITY LESSONS FROM THE 2023 OFF-CYCLE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

- Electoral violence increases as key electoral events draw closer.
- There is a strong correlation between regional conflict dynamics and the early warning signals identified before the elections in the three states.
- Early warning signs identified by KDI's pre-election assessments were strong indicators of underlying election irregularities, emphasizing the interconnection of violence, weak electoral security, and integrity concerns.
- The events after the election in Kogi, such as the attack on the REC residence

and the blocking of the INEC state office, indicate conflict escalation and are consistent with the stages of the conflict spiral model.

In conclusion, the report gave 30 recommendations that underscore the multifaceted nature of electoral security and the imperative for proactive, collaborative, and targeted interventions to safeguard the electoral process in Nigeria. Some of these include:

- Political parties need to develop and implement robust conflict resolution mechanisms within political parties and encourage dialogue and reconciliation to address internal disputes that may escalate into violence.
- It becomes imperative that the perpetrators of violence are brought to justice. Hence, INEC needs to exercise its persecutory power to take the bold step of ensuring that electoral offenders are prosecuted.
- It was rightly noted in the report that most of the factors responsible for the resentful nature of the electoral landscape leading to the elections – It is crucial for INEC to strengthen its Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) unit to be able to intervene and mediate in some of the issues that emanated from the party primaries. This could also reduce the amount of pre-litigation that inundates the Federal High Court.
- There is a need to increase the call for the establishment of an Electoral Offences Commission dedicated to bringing electoral offenders to justice.
- Election security should form a significant component of electoral reforms.
- Security agencies through ICCESS need to start collaborating with election monitoring groups, especially those working on election security – ICCESS can set aside a day before any elections to take presentations from groups that have conducted comprehensive pre-election security risk assessments.
- There is an urgent need for election security measures to extend beyond the election day. Pre-election activities must be regarded with the same importance as election day itself. This implies that conflict-mitigation measures should be integrated into the entire electoral process, from party primaries to the main election. A budget should be drawn up for the three major phases of the electoral cycle.



The findings and recommendations presented in this report underscore the multifaceted nature of electoral security and the imperative for proactive, collaborative, and targeted interventions to safeguard the electoral process in Nigeria.



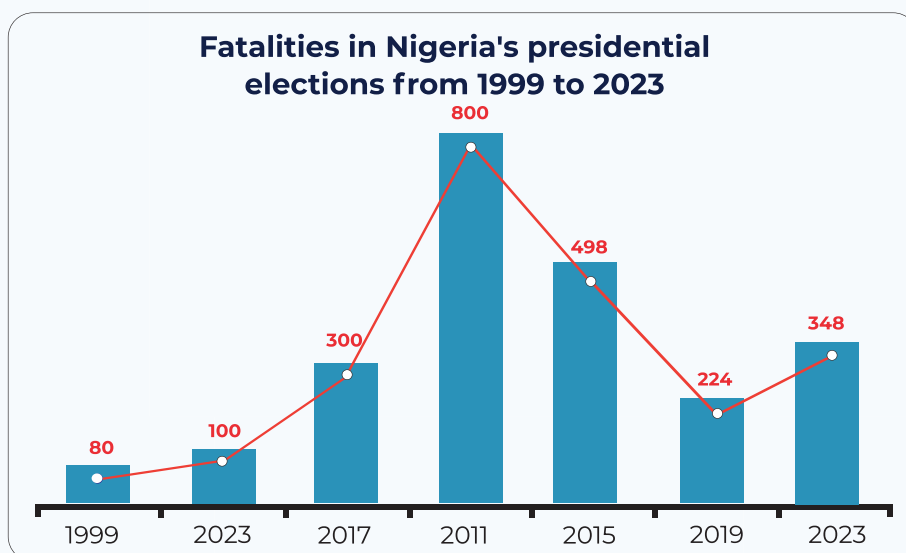
01.

Introduction

Electoral violence is any random or organized act or threat to intimidate, physically harm, blackmail, or abuse an electoral stakeholder in seeking to determine, delay, or to otherwise influence the electoral processes.

Elections are central to the existence, stability, and development of democracies. Ideally, elections should enhance the democratic consolidation of societies by conferring legitimacy and acceptance on elected officials. However, in Nigeria, the electoral process has been plagued by violence and various forms of irregularities that undermine its credibility and outcomes. Electoral violence has several consequences for voters and the broader political system.

Additionally, it can erode public faith in election results, fostering cynicism toward the democratic system and discouraging people from participating in politics or elections. This relationship is not linear: lack of confidence in the ballot can trigger violence, just as violence can undermine confidence in the ballot and cause people to lose trust in political institutions. This has been established as one of the factors responsible for low voter turnout in an election. Also, violence in elections has led to hundreds of deaths in previous elections. According to Human Rights Watch, more than 800 people were killed in 2011 in post-election violence in the north after that year's election¹. The record captured 498, 224, and 348 fatalities in the 2015, 2019 and 2023 general electoral cycles².



The trajectory, intensity, and impact of electoral violence in the off-cycle elections are not different from the aforementioned. Bayelsa, Kogi and Imo States, among the other states in off-cycle governorship elections in Nigeria, went into elections on the 11th of November, 2023. Considering the historical disposition of the three states to electoral violence, KDI started a long-term monitoring and documenting of election violence based on its broad knowledge

of election security leveraging the **Nigeria Election Violence Education and Resolution (NEVER)** methodology predicated on the IFES' Election Violence Education and Resolution (EVER). This electoral violence monitoring and mitigation effort aimed to establish a robust, multi-stakeholder electoral security framework that will track, document, and mitigate electoral violence before, during and after the 2023 Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi States off-cycle elections—ultimately establishing an early warning system and publishing disaggregated data to aid stakeholders' mitigation planning. We are aware that those preventing electoral violence lack the empirical data needed to develop practical mitigation strategies and raise public awareness of the damages that electoral violence has placed upon the nation. KDI ensures disaggregated data to violence-mitigation partners and a system that monitors election security risk indicators and provides information for effective mitigation planning.



KDI's pre-election press briefing, highlighting early warning signals from its pre-election environment assessment - emphasizing the urgent need for increased security measures in the 2023 Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi states off-cycle governorship elections.

Box 1:

About Nigeria Election Violence Education and Resolution (NEVER)

NEVER is a community-based election security risk tracker that employs a scientific approach to monitoring election violence and the potential for violence to provide disaggregated data for stakeholders to engage and plan mitigation interventions. This is to end the culture of impunity. NEVER approaches electoral violence by quantifying it through in-depth research and data gathering from trained citizens.

In the 2023 Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi States off-cycle elections, KDI deployed a multifaceted approach to its NEVER effort. With the support of the Foreign and Commonwealth Department Office, KDI established an Election Security Early Warning System (ESEWS) in the off-cycle elections, assessing the pre-election environment to identify early warning – trained and deployed 132 long-term security monitors towards gathering week-in-week out security information that feeds into the ESEWS based on globally accepted indicators that have been tested in over 11 countries through the IFES/EVER methodology. Of the 132 LTMs, 112 were deployed across LGAs in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi, while 20 LTMs were deployed to the ten neighboring states bordering Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi. The neighboring states include Rivers, Anambra, Benue, Enugu, Ebonyi, Edo, Delta, Benue, Ekiti, and Ondo States.

The deployed LTMs monitored the electoral and political landscape for eight (8) weeks based on the indicators to feed the established ESEWS; these indicators include:

- ***Assessment of the pre-election general environment, such as unusual movement or presence of security agencies and tension in the build-up to the election.***
- ***Nature and Intensity of Voter Education on Electoral Offense.***
- ***The dominance of political parties and the nature of their campaigning.***
- ***Electoral malfeasance and interference, which result in the misuse of administrative and state resources, suppression, and vote buying.***
- ***Election-related violence like physical assaults, victims, perpetrators, etc.***
- ***Early warning signals like incitement, recruitment of political thugs, militia and gangs, the proliferation of small arms, and growing activities of armed groups.***

In addition, KDI tracked the incidence and potential for violence in the states for over nine (9) months before, during and after the election. Before the election, KDI conducts ESRA to identify electoral risk factors, early warning signals, and potential causes and triggers of electoral violence so stakeholders like INEC and security agencies can deploy appropriate mitigation responses/strategies. Furthermore, KDI uses data-driven advocacy through the State Peace and Working Committee (SPWC) and media dialogue with election stakeholders, such as party leaders, socio-cultural leaders, security forces, and other civil society organizations, to mitigate electoral violence. This mitigation strategy includes a television-based town hall meeting on peaceful elections, press conferences, factsheets, and a technical session with security agencies.



132
Long-term
monitors
trained

112
Deployed
in Bayelsa,
Imo and
Kogi states

20
Deployed
in the
neighboring
states



The 2023 Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi states off-cycle governorship elections were the first major elections after the 2023 general elections. Undoubtedly, the 2023 general elections came with so much experience – it threw up salient issues. These include but are not limited to the following:

- The role and use of electoral technology and quality engagement cum increase in youth digital activism.
- Ethnic and religious sentiments seem to have deeply polarized the country before and after the election.
- The increasing number of cancelled or invalid votes
- Electoral violence that was recorded in the elections where thugs attacked voters in different places, destroyed ballots and chased away voters and electoral officials.

Many believe that INEC will leverage the elections to improve on the standard of the 2023 election. Many termed the off-cycle election a make-or-break election because it was seen as the defining election regarding the quality of elections and the goodwill of the electoral commission.

Furthermore, the off-cycle elections were in states that **have a history of either armed conflict, electoral violence, and ethnic or communal violence, which** made the states centres of election security discussion and peace-building efforts.

Bayelsa State

Bayelsa State is in the south-south region of Nigeria and has a population of about 2.5 million people, according to the 2022 estimated population³. The Ijaw ethnic group predominantly inhabits the state and has four major languages: Izon, Nembe, Ogbia and Epie-Atissa. The state covers a land area of 11,109 square kilometres and has the longest coastline in Nigeria, at 203 kilometres. The state is primarily swampy and riverine and lies below sea level. The state is rich in natural resources, such as crude oil, natural gas, clay, sand and limestone. The state capital is Yenagoa, with eight local government areas⁴.



Population:
2.5 Million

Registered voters:
1,056,862

Polling units:
2,244

Imo State

Imo State is in the southeast region of Nigeria and has a population of about 5.4 million people as of 2022⁵. The Igbo ethnic group mainly inhabits the state and has Igbo as the dominant language. The state covers a land area of 5,530 square kilometres. The state has agricultural and mineral resources, such as palm oil, cassava, maize, coal, limestone, and natural gas. The state capital is Owerri, with 27 local government areas.

Polling units:
4,758

Registered voters:
2,419,922

Population:
5.4 Million



Kogi State

Kogi State is in the north-central region of Nigeria and has a population of about 4.5 million people as of 2022⁶. The state comprises various ethnic groups, such as Igala, Ebira, Okun, Bassa, Nupe and others. The state has three major languages: Igala, Ebira and Okun. The state covers a land area of 29,833 square kilometres and has varied terrain, including hills, valleys, forests and plains. The state has natural resources, such as iron ore, coal, limestone, marble, and gold. The state capital is Lokoja, with 21 local government areas.



Population:
4.5 Million

Registered voters:
1,932,654

Polling units:
3,508

History of electoral violence in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi states

Bayelsa State



Bayelsa has a history of political and electoral violence, which sometimes can be attributed to various factors such as the struggle for political power, resource control, and ethnic tensions.

Bayelsa state is one of the oil-rich states in Nigeria. The struggle for control of the crude oil wealth and other benefits related to oil production, such as contracts, jobs, scholarships, and compensation, contribute to the political violence. This creates fierce competition among political actors and their supporters, who use violence to secure their interests. Crude oil and politics are inextricably linked as politicians see its control as the significant control of state power. This often led to intense competition for the capture of state power. Based on this, not just oil resources but all the resources of the state are controlled, distributed, and appropriated⁷. In a bid to get power at all costs to be able to harness the ben-

efit of having control of an oil-rich state -ex-militant and community-based cultists are constant tools politicians use to perpetuate violence; they use threats to give their preferred candidates an advantage in the political race, as reported by Partnership Initiative in Niger Delta in 2015⁸.

Elections in Bayelsa state are symptomatic of the enduring character of electoral violence in most Niger Delta states, where the complex interplay of political and other socio-cultural forces complement each other in the struggle for political power. This is also evident with the previous electoral violence recorded in previous elections. In the 2003 general elections, the election witnessed widespread violence across the state. In Nembe, it was reported that the clash between supporters of the United Nigeria People's Party (UNPP) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) on April 10th, 2003, at Bassambiri led to the

death of many⁹. In Southern Ijaw, the clash between the All-Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) supporters and the PDP on April 19, 2003, at Oporoma, the Local Government headquarters, resulted in the death of seven persons. In Sagbama Local government, a similar clash resulted in the razing of the house of a local transition committee chairman and the office of INEC with dozens of cars.

The 2007 gubernatorial election in the state, even though it appeared relatively peaceful, witnessed twin attacks on the headquarters of the state chapter of the PDP. Before and after the advent of the off-cycle gubernatorial election in the state in 2008, Bayelsa gubernatorial elections have been characterised by different forms of pre- and post-electoral violence, including interparty conflicts, group conflict, political kidnapping, assassinations, and arson. In 2012, there were two bombings suspected to be linked to political tensions around the gubernatorial elections¹⁰. November of 2013 was characterized by violence reportedly stemming from continued political tensions surrounding the Ijaw National Congress Elections in October 2012. These ugly incidents included the reported targeting and kidnapping of youth

group members and political allies supporting each candidate¹¹.

The 2015 gubernatorial election in the state was the most violent in terms of documented violent incidents. The election was characterized by voter intimidation, ballot box snatching, and hijacking of electoral materials, in addition to tumultuous violence in most parts of the state, namely Brass, Ekeremor, Nembe, Sagbama, Southern Ijaw, and Yenagoa local governments. These were evident in the pre-elections sporadic shootings in Nembe local government, precisely in Ogbolomabiri, where two persons were shot by Brass local government. In Ekeremor, gunmen on the early morning of Election Day attacked the house of Minister of State for Agriculture, Heineken Lokpobiri, the Director-General of the campaign team of the APC candidate¹². Southern Ijaw witnessed on Election Day heavy gunplay and dynamites at Oporomo, headquarters of the local government, where it was alleged that five persons lost their lives. In 2019, twenty-one (21) persons lost their lives following violence that broke out during a political campaign rally in the Nembe area three days before the state's November 16, 2019, governorship election¹³.

Imo State



Imo state, as back as 2010, used to be one of the states with the lowest violence-per-capita in the Southeast region¹⁴. Notable electoral violence started becoming evident in the 2011 election that was keenly contested between Rochas Okorocha, who had left the PDP to APGA, and the then incumbent, Ikedi Ohakim of the PDP. INEC initially declared the election inconclusive due to reports of irregularities but later confirmed Okorocha's win. The election created a context of violence for the following election in 2015.

In a political move, Okorocha defected to the APC and contested against Emeka Ihedioha of the PDP in another violent election in 2015. The power tussle during the 2015 governorship election was based on the exercise of the power of incumbency by the APC, and the PDP also wanted to regain control of the state following Rochas Okorocha's defection. Nevertheless, he emerged victorious in the second round of the 2015 elections,

the first round of which was initially declared inconclusive¹⁵.

The same tense electoral landscape trend continued in 2019. The election in Imo featured unprecedented electoral violence and fatalities, and several factors played out during that election, including the strong contestation of the seat by the dominant political parties. Also, it featured a prolonged legal battle at the Election Petition Tribunal (EPT). It dragged up to the Supreme Court, where the final judgement was delivered in favour of Hope Uzodimma, the APC candidate.

Nonetheless, multidimensional armed conflict started to be at the front burner of public discourse in Imo State in 2014/2015. However, it became a full-blown armed conflict intertwining with politics in 2019. The role of the secessionist agitation cannot be over-emphasized— notably the formation of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in 2012. The activities of the IPOB started with protests and

later started featuring violence, confrontations, and threats.

The Nigerian Government and IPOB have a turbulent relationship, with each accusing the other of foul play. The government of Nigeria declared the organisation to be a terrorist organisation in September 2017, and IPOB should not be tolerated. IPOB, on the other hand, rebut this, saying that the state of Nigeria is unfavourable in its disposition to them and is about a witch-hunt on their organisation. They have been very vocal about their plight and have been defiant against the Nigerian State several times. They have deliberately gone against them differently, like holding unauthorised rallies, sit-at-homes, and demonstrations¹⁶. It should be noted that violence in Imo became exacerbated due to the emergence of the farmers-herders clashes and the consequent establishment of the Eastern Security Network (ESN) group by IPOB. In late 2020, IPOB created the 'Eastern Security Network' as its paramilitary wing¹⁷ in response to perceived attacks by herders on the Igbo community, including alleged crimes like grazing on farmlands, rape, and killings¹⁸. The sit-at-home

order and the uncultured activities of the unknown gunmen leading to the 2021 off-cycle governorship election in Anambra State created anxiety in the region. This is one of the primary reasons for the drastic low turnout in that election. Things have spread their tentacles by raising the stakes. There have been other attacks on government buildings in the region, including correctional service centres, police stations, DSS State offices, INEC offices, and security agents like the Armed Forces, Police, Customs, and Immigration, among other officers of the law. In specific, there have been 27 direct attacks on INEC facilities between 2019 and 2022 in southern Nigeria, and 12 of these happened in Imo State. The attacks are in a complex web of violent attacks orchestrated by multiple non-state armed groups in the zone¹⁹. In the 2023 elections, 19 ad-hoc officials of the INEC were abducted with the electoral materials on their way to their polling units in the Ideato area, though they were later rescued²⁰. Yet, it shows how the situation is interconnected with electoral politics.



Kogi State

Similarly, Kogi State has been a flashpoint of political violence since the country returned to democracy in 1999²¹. Politically, the Igalas have held sway to power since the creation of the state using the 1963 census figures to claim numerical superiority over other ethnic groups. The domestication of political power by the Igalas has heightened tension, bitterness, and animosity among the three dominant ethnic groups and some minority groups, such that violent conflicts have been recorded in the state. Essentially, the heterogeneity of Kogi State is not the only source of political instability but rather the failure to manage the differences among the diverse ethnic nationalities.

During the 2003 general elections in Kogi State, many lives were lost,

while several others sustained various degrees of injuries across the state. Human Rights Watch recorded that in Idah local government area, a leading politician, and a chieftain of the All-Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), Mr Salifu, was shot dead while attempting to snatch a ballot box. In a related development, fighting broke out in Okene local government council involving supporters of PDP and ANPP that started early in the morning of April 12, 2003. The intensity of the violence was relatively high, such that the supporters of both parties were armed to hijack election materials. This happened the day preceding the election and continued through the election as well. In continuation of the scale of election violence in Kogi State, fighting was also reported between PDP and

ANPP supporters, leading to the shooting and subsequent death of two people on April 12, 2003, in Ogori-Magongo (Kogi Central Senatorial District) local government. It suffices to say that the 2003 general elections were violent across the country, particularly in Kogi state.

In 2009, tensions rose with members of the PDP in Okene Local Government over financial issues, resulting in riots that claimed the lives of two people. Okene is not new to violence, as any little provocation can spark serious violence with severe consequences. Following the 2011 general elections in Nigeria that subsequently led to the post-election violence, the violence spread to Okene, culminating in some deaths. The same spate of violence was witnessed in Ofu local government. Specifically, two persons were killed in a politically related form of violence in 2009 involving PDP and ANPP supporters, following the ruling by the Supreme Court that upheld the election of the State Governor, Mr Ibrahim Idris, whose election was challenged by the opposition, citing allegations of fraud. With this development, political tension continued into 2010, when political thugs killed ten people in the months of February, May, and August.

In 2015, Governor Yahaya Bello was first elected as Kogi governor after being chosen on the APC platform as a replacement for the late Abubakar Audu, who originally won the election but died before the result was declared.²² The Audu-Faleke ticket won 240,867 votes, and the incumbent Governor Idris Wada of PDP won 199,514, a difference of 41,353 votes. Surprisingly, Yahaya Bello, who came second during the party primaries with the late Audu, was adopted as the APC's candidate for the supplementary election.

In 2015, there were reports of violence in the State. Some thugs in Dekina, Dekina local government area, razed down the office of INEC. Out of 91 polling units where the supplementary election was supposed to occur, 29 units were in Dekina. According to an eyewitness, some thugs invaded the office at about 5 a.m. and set it on fire angrily in the early hours of Friday. The eyewitness account revealed that the thugs came in a bus and shot sporadically before razing down the office.

The lapses and security breaches of the 2019 governorship election in the State led to electoral violence.

The last governorship elections in the State that were held in 2019 across the 21 LGAs recorded over ten (10) deaths, 79 cases of violence and election malpractices, including two persons who were killed by stray bullets when hoodlums tried to snatch ballot boxes at the Adankolo polling unit. In the same year, over 35,000 security operatives under the umbrella of the Interagency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) deployed to Kogi state to safeguard the conduct of November 16, 2019, governorship election could not stop violence in the state, especially, the murder of Mrs Acheju Abuh, the woman leader of Wada/Aro Campaign council, Ochadamu ward is a case in point who was burnt alive in her home by political thugs.²³

During the recent 2023 February 25th general elections, pockets of violence were recorded in the State, and there were reports of interference of thugs in some polling units in Anyigba and Dekina in the Kogi East and Mopa in the Kogi West as well as parts of Kogi Central, where thugs allegedly carted away voting materials—the pre-election day anxiety, threats of violence and affected voter turnout. On election day, activities of some political parties and security agents led to the

disruption of polls in some areas.

Beyond electoral-related violence, there is the prevalence of communal clashes, banditry, and farmer-herder crises in the State have contributed to making the State a hot-bed. There have been several reports of kidnappings in Kogi State, one of which was the kidnap of Oba of Idofin and his wife in Yagba East Local Government Area by gunmen on Monday, 19 June 2023. There was also the kidnap of Passengers who were travelling on the Peace Mass Transit Bus. This incident occurred on Wednesday, July 26, 2023.²⁴

No state between Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi is immune from the unabated insecurity plaguing the country. The activities of non-state armed groups in Kogi state have steadily risen. On October 18, 2022, suspected members of the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP) attacked a Celestial Church in Lokoja, Kogi State, killing two people and injuring others²⁵. On December 29, 2022, a bomb attack occurred in Okene, Kogi State. According to reports, the explosion caused property loss and killed three people²⁶. Each of the states is overwhelmed with one violent conflict or another – ranging from banditry, terrorism, farmer-herder conflicts, cultist

clashes and communal clashes. The insecurity can affect the conduct and legitimacy of elections. Violence related to elections in areas that are already unstable can make the risk of armed conflict, proliferation of arms, and armed violence worse, making the area less stable.

However, stakeholders have undertaken a series of activities to examine the causes, consequences, and possible ways to mitigate electoral violence. The efficacy of these efforts has been questioned because of the lack of reliable early warning

systems and the paucity of disaggregated data (conflict mapping) on this menace. Stakeholders interested in mitigating electoral violence do not have empirical data for planning effective mitigation strategies and lack data to create awareness on the extent of damage electoral violence has done to us as a people. A structure that ensures disaggregated data is shared with violence-mitigation partners, as well as a system that monitors election security risk indicators and provides information for effective mitigation planning, becomes imperative.

02.

**Long-term monitoring of the
election security risk**

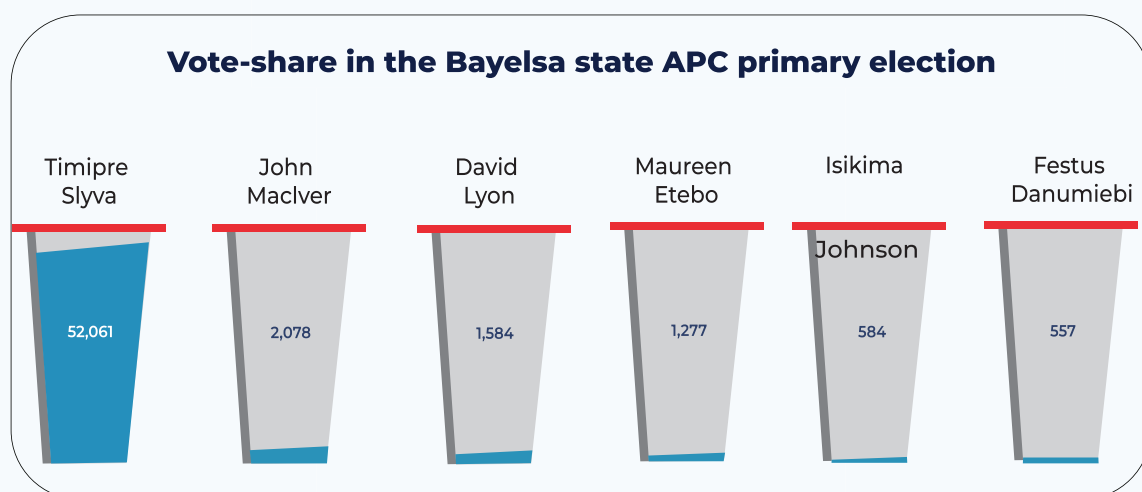
Tracking and documenting election violence

KDI started her long-term monitoring of the Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi states election environment on security risks in January 2023 – ten (10) months before the November 11 governorship elections.

Pre-election phase monitoring

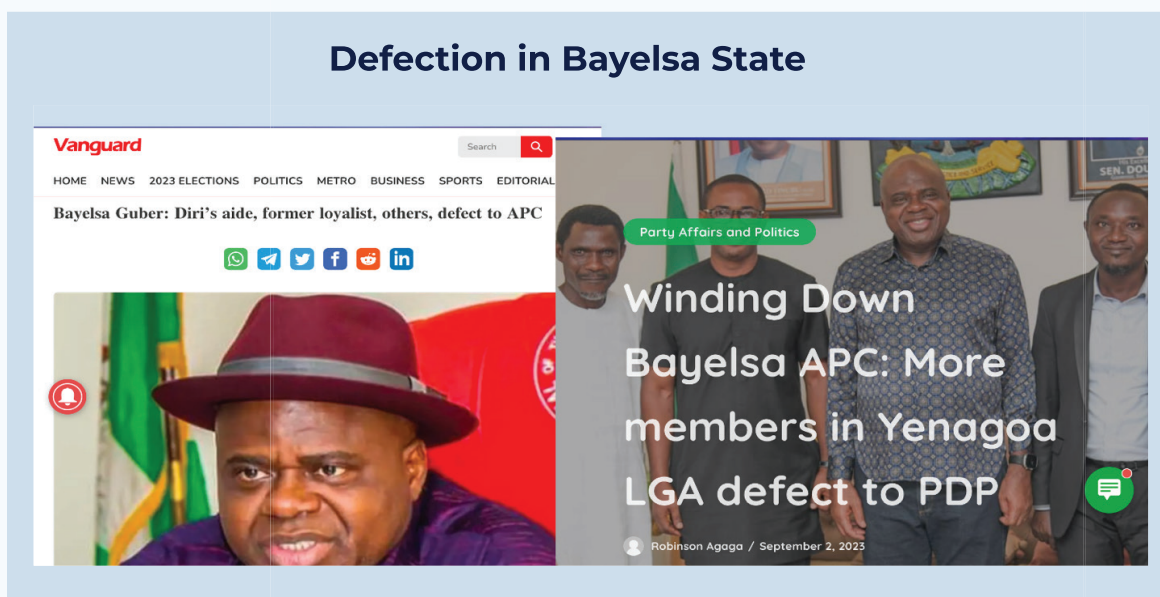
According to the timetables of election activities released by INEC, the political party primaries should occur between 27 March and 17 April 2022. KDI started monitoring the political landscape even before that time. The pre-election phase in the three states was full of events; KDI documented a few of the issues starting from the political party primaries:

In Bayelsa State, the All-Progressive Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party set their primary for 10 April and 12 April, respectively. Former Governor of Bayelsa State and immediate past Minister for State, Petroleum, Chief Timipre Sylva, won the direct primary election and emerged as the governorship candidate of All Progressives Congress (APC). He defeated the party's former candidate in the last gubernatorial election, Chief David Lyon, and four others²⁷.



Source: <https://www.thecable.ng/timipre-sylva-wins-bayelsa-apc-guber-primary>

The incumbent governor of Bayelsa, Douye Diri, the sole aspirant for the PDP primary, polled 305 yes votes from the delegates to emerge as the party candidate²⁸. There are undeniable concerns in the Bayelsa state branch of the APC and PDP- Some stakeholders feel resentful about the emergence of former Minister of State for Petroleum, Chief Timipre Sylva, as the flag bearer of APC. Some of these stakeholders include the Minister of State for Petroleum (Oil), Senator Heineken Lokpobiri, and 2019 governorship candidate David Lyon. There were vital pointers that there might be a schism between Lokpobiri and Sylva because Sylva did not back Lokpobiri's ministerial bid. On the other hand, Lyon thought he would be given the right of first refusal in consideration of the APC gubernatorial candidate nomination because of the way he was sacked as the governor-elect by the Supreme Court in 2020. The duo and many others have alleged to have seemingly distanced themselves from Sylva's campaigns and political activities ahead of the November 11 governorship elections.



All these resentments have only led to a hurricane of defections across the major political parties. For instance, towards the November 11, 2023, governorship election:

- Not less than eighteen (18) PDP leaders in Otuan Ward 5, Southern Ijaw Local Council earlier defected to the APC, along with their over 1,000 supporters, including the PDP Organizing Secretary in the Ward, Miebi Adeyn; PDP Women Coordinator, Alami Philip; Philip Amabebe; Clapperton Ogbolowari; Omoni Sunday; Victor Bob; Morris Gbere; Bomo Alaseigha; Felix Souton and Tolu Ozato.

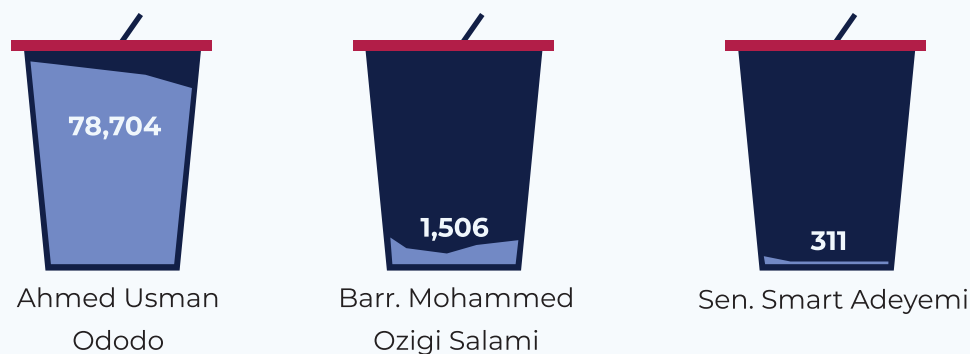
Many people, including some of the governor's aides and LP members, were also received by APC. Some of those that decamped include two former commissioners, Chief Saviour Ibegu (from Ogbia) and Chief Diodei Week (Southern Ijaw; three former local government chairmen- Victor Isiah (Brass), Nathaniel Sylva (Brass), a former senior special assistant to Diri, and Ebinyu Turner (Ogbia). Other defectors and their followers were Gideon Ogufe, a retired Assistant Police Commissioner (ACP); former youth president from Okumbiri, Akposeye Odoni; Oweifabo Felix Ebikeme; Dime Jonah and Goodluck Dime²⁹.

Conversely, one of Sylva's political allies and a former member of the House of Representatives, Mr. Israel Sunny Goli, defected to the PDP, even as some former legislators from 1999 pledged support for Diri. Some close associates of the APC candidate jumped ship, including a former acting governor of the state, Chief Werinipre Seibarugu, and his supporters. Seibarugu, Speaker of the House of Assembly under Sylva's first tenure, was among the former state lawmakers who visited Diri to declare their support for his re-election bid. Coordinator of the Seibarugu Dynasty, Mr Ebiye Waripamo, said: "We left Jerusalem and went to Egypt, but now we are back in Jerusalem, and this is where we will stay. We are not going back again³⁰."

In Kogi state, the selection of candidates was an acrimonious one – the aftermath of it made violence happenings skyrocket in the state. Political actors were also involved in defections and cross-carpeting to other political parties, which has amplified intra- and inter-party crisis.

The APC had written a letter to INEC on January 25th to notify them of the party's decision to use an indirect primary to select the gubernatorial candidate for the 2023 governorship election. However, the party rescinded its earlier decision to use indirect primaries and adopted the direct primary³¹. Ahmed Usman Ododo, the candidate that the then-incumbent governor endorsed, clinched the APC ticket with a total of 78,704 votes, followed by Barr. Mohammed Ozigi Salami scored 1,506 votes, while Senator Smart Adeyemi, representing Kogi West Senatorial District, scored 311.³² the then-incumbent Deputy Governor. Mr. Onoja and the then Chief of Staff, Pharm. Mohammed Asuku had earlier withdrawn from the gubernatorial race on the eve of the primary election.

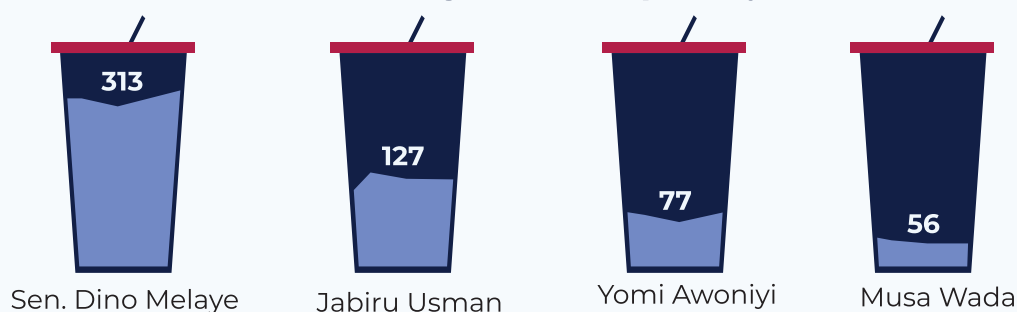
Vote-share in the Kogi state APC primary election



Alhaji Murtala Yakubu Ajaka was disqualified from participating in the party primaries through a court order that was said to have emanated from a court case from the camp of Governor Yahaya Bello and Usman Ododo. This led to a lot of resentment from the likes of Smart Adeyemi, Alhaji Murtala Yakubu Ajaka, and Edward Onoja. Subsequently, Mr Onoja was mum on the issues without an active role in the yard of Ahmed Usman Ododo. Alhaji Murtala Yakubu Ajaka defected to pick the governorship ticket in the SDP. So many violent reactions had trailed this – from SDP/APC supporters group clashes to alleged assassination attempts on the Governor's and Alhaji Murtala Yakubu Ajaka convoys on different occasions

The PDP also adopted the indirect primary method for the selection process. Senator Dino Melaye, who represented Kogi West in the National Assembly, won the PDP's ticket with 313 votes; Jabiru Usman polled 127 votes; a former deputy governor, Yomi Awoniyi, scored 77 votes; and the PDP governorship candidate in 2019, Musa Wada had a total of 56 votes .

Vote-share in the Kogi state PDP primary election



Internal political party issues were not pronounced in Imo state – even though they exist, issues of unknown gunmen and kidnapping overshadowed all other issues. The activities of IPOB and ESN threatened the peace and stability of some areas in Imo State – the capture and prolonged detention of Nnamdi Kanu, leader of IPOB, is another major factor which has led to extensive violence in Imo State. While there has not been a lasting resolution to his trial, IPOB freedom fighters across the Southeast geopolitical zone have carried and continue to carry on violent agitations against his detention, and the Imo state has been one of their major strongholds. While it is not clear if politicians are sponsoring the activities of IPOB and ESN fighters, their actions have borne a significant political undertone. Popular views opined that the ESN fighters were the face behind the unknown gunmen. They have significantly attacked and destroyed notable government properties, assassinating military members , police, and some political figures – There were reports of military personnel in Orsu LGA³³. As such, separating the havoc they are wrecking from the political and electoral landscape becomes increasingly difficult..

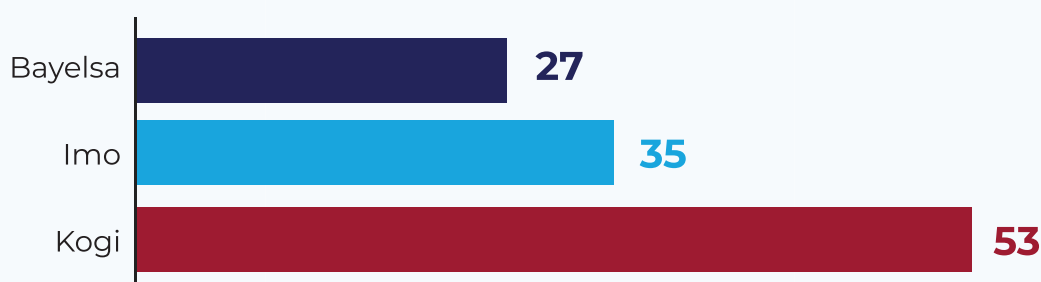
Data of pre-election monitoring

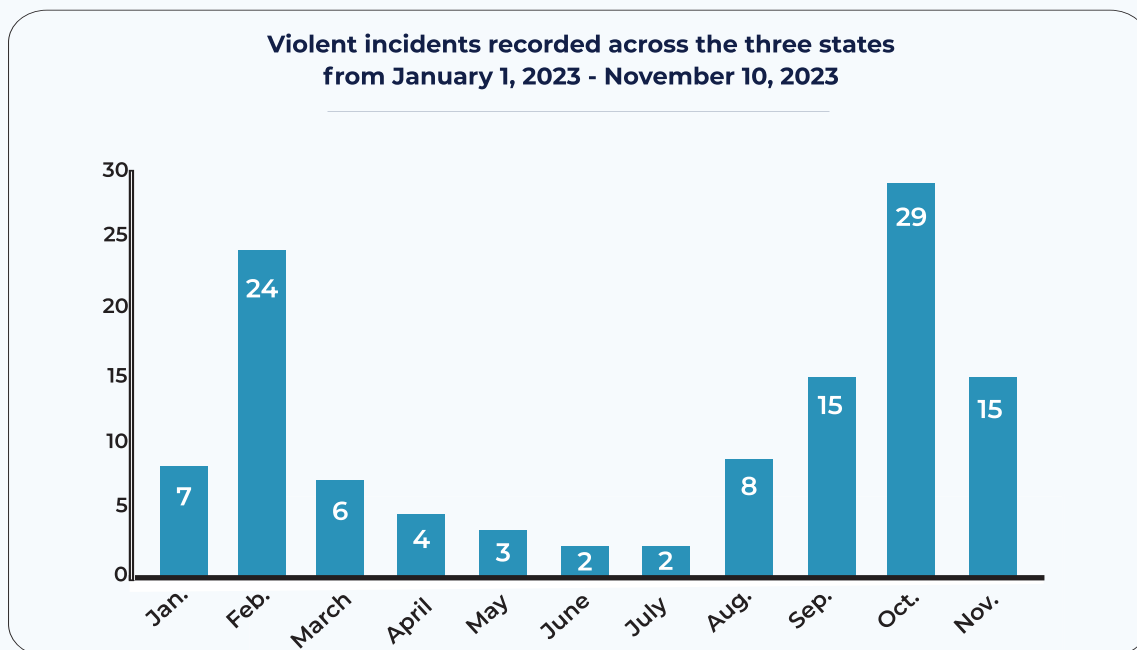
Violent incidents recorded



115 Violent incidents
across the three states
from January 1, 2023 to
November 10, 2023

Violent incidents across the three states from January 1, 2023 - November 10, 2023

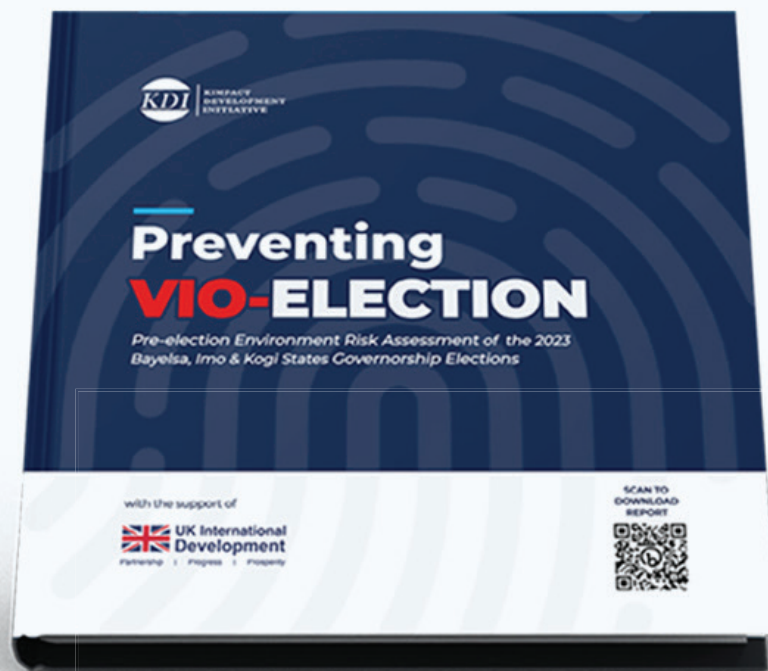




Many of the factors and actors responsible for the turbulence in the pre-election phase of the election in each of the states were deeply talked about in the KDI pre-election Security Risk Assessment.

03.

Pre-election Security Risk Assessment - ESRA



Pre-election Environment Risk Assessment of the 2023 Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi States Governorship Elections.



Download Report on:
www.kimpact.org.ng



KDI conducted a detailed Election Security Risk Assessment – ESRA to provide stakeholders with informative tools to aid effective election violence prevention interventions and support the EMBs, security agencies, CSOs, and international partners to effectively deploy resources and/or observers.

Box 2:

About the Election Security Risk Assessment (ESRA)

The Election Security Risk Assessment (ESRA) is an in-depth, holistic, and pre-election assessment of all factors of the society that could give rise to electoral violence. Thereby creating an effective electoral violence mitigation plan that will map out hotspot areas, identify early warning signals, and mobilize citizen monitoring and mitigation efforts—ultimately informing relevant institutions, especially INEC, security agencies, and civil society organizations (CSOs), of information that could assist them in deploying appropriate responses.

What ESRA aims to achieve.

1. To show an independent, accurate, ongoing tool for assessing the potential risk factors for elections.
2. Elicit views and opinions of the citizens about the risk factors towards ascertaining the actors, actions, and characteristics, among others, that are peculiar to the community and can constitute threats to peaceful elections.

To assess, map, and track the level of risk in the community to identify ‘hotspot zones’ where there may be an increased level of risk

Methodology for ESRA in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi States

- Mixed – method Research Design
- Qualitative information from Long Term Monitors
- Adequate Representation from all LGAs in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi States

Indicators assessed





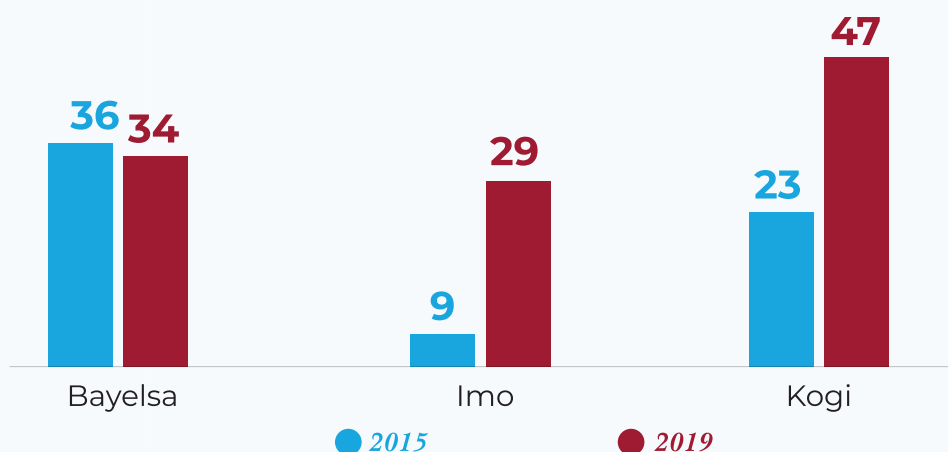
The awful consequences of electoral violence on democracy call for a framework such as the Election Security Risk Assessment.



Key findings of ESRA

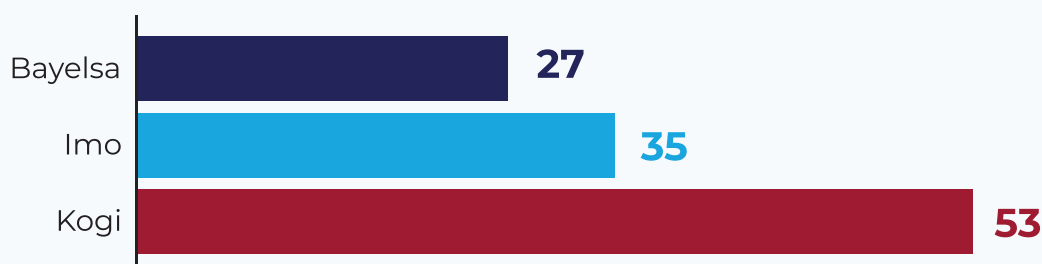
KDI went back in time to look at the occurrence of violence in Bayelsa and Imo, Kogi states. It shows that in previous elections, the three states had **a history of electoral violence**. It was established in the previous chapter the nature of political and electoral violence and how the Imo state, which used to be peaceful in the south-south region, became the epicentre of violent conflict.

Number of non-electoral violence incidents per state between January 1, to October 23, 2023.



The pre-election phase in the 2023 off-cycle governorship election was also not different in the three states

Violent incidents across the three states from January 1, 2023 - November 10, 2023

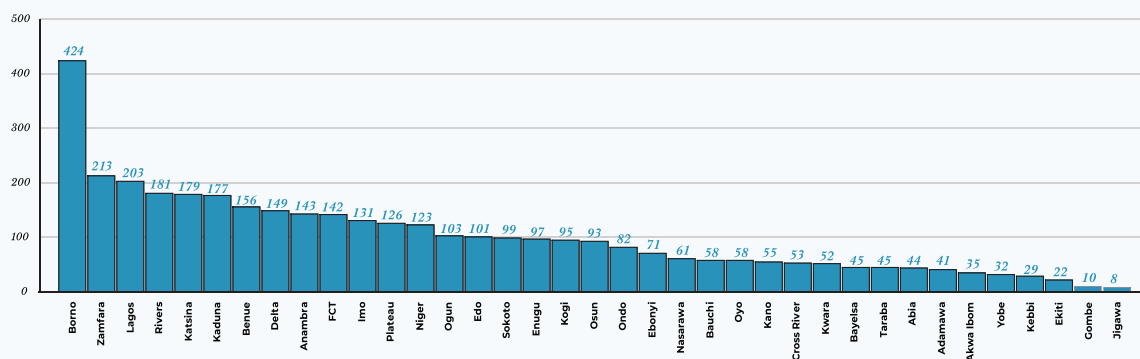




The three states have a history of Electoral Violence



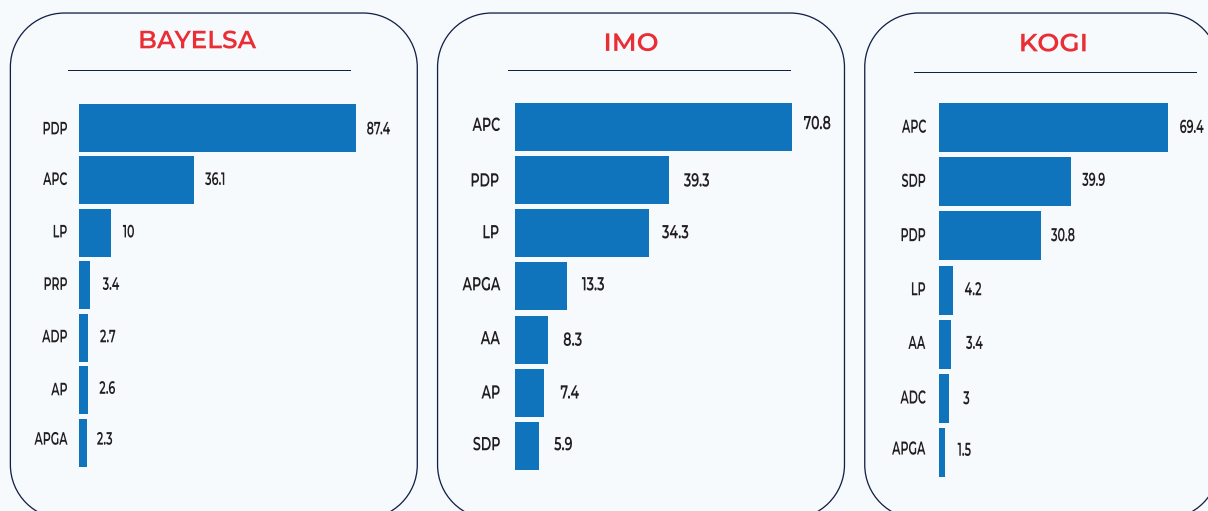
Number of non-electoral violence incident per state between January 1, to october 23, 2023.



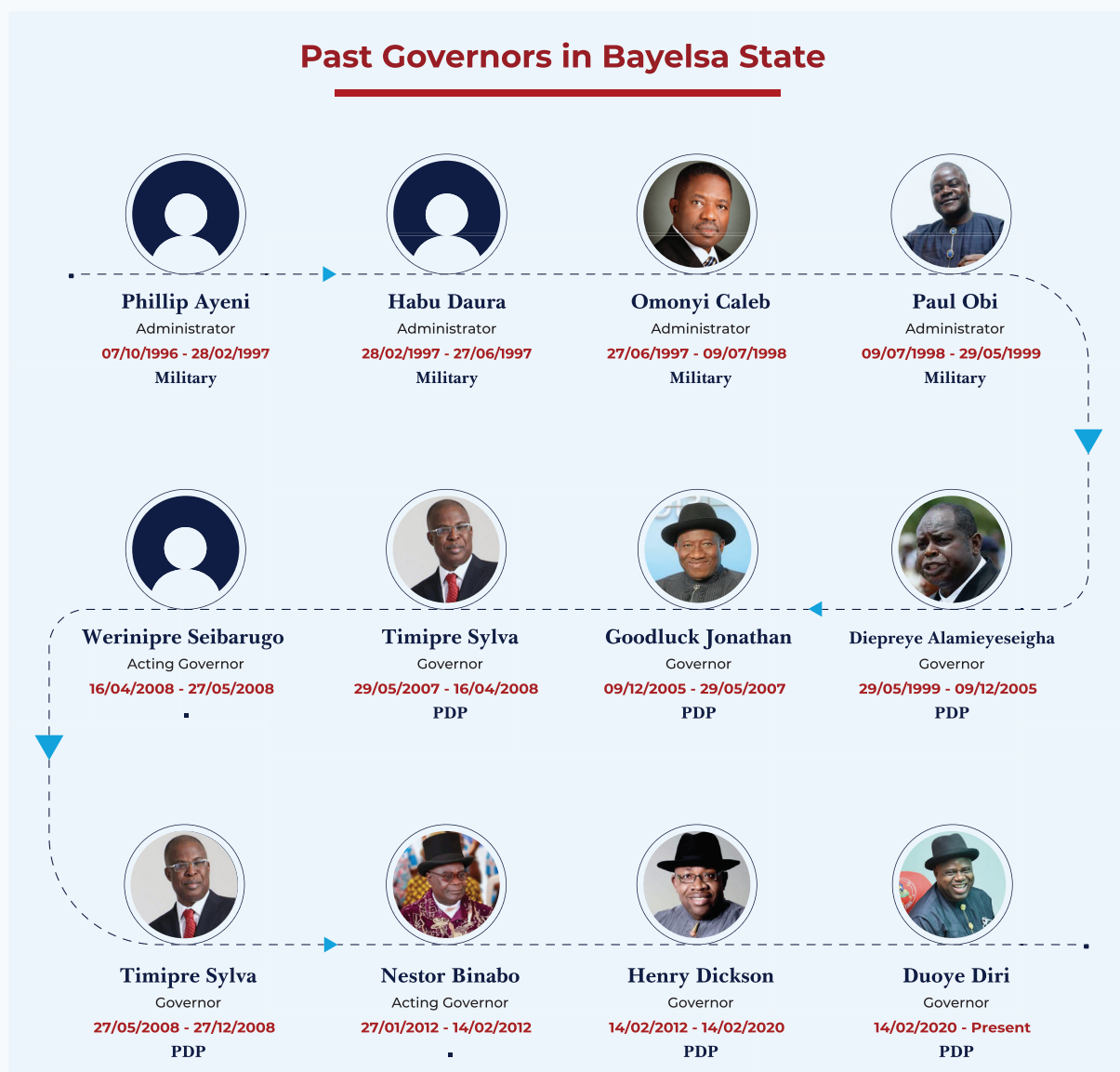
Each state has its dominant political party with a corresponding stronghold per LGAs. This, coupled with the escalated unresolved internal party issues, is a precursor to the high likelihood of electoral violence.

In the lead-up to the 2023 off-cycle elections in Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi states, the political landscape in each state was shaped by local dynamics intertwining with power structures. The pre-election environment assessment showed the dominance of specific political parties in various local government areas (LGAs) in these states, which ultimately translated into the dominance of the political parties in the state.

Cumulative percentage of political party dominance across LGA in the state



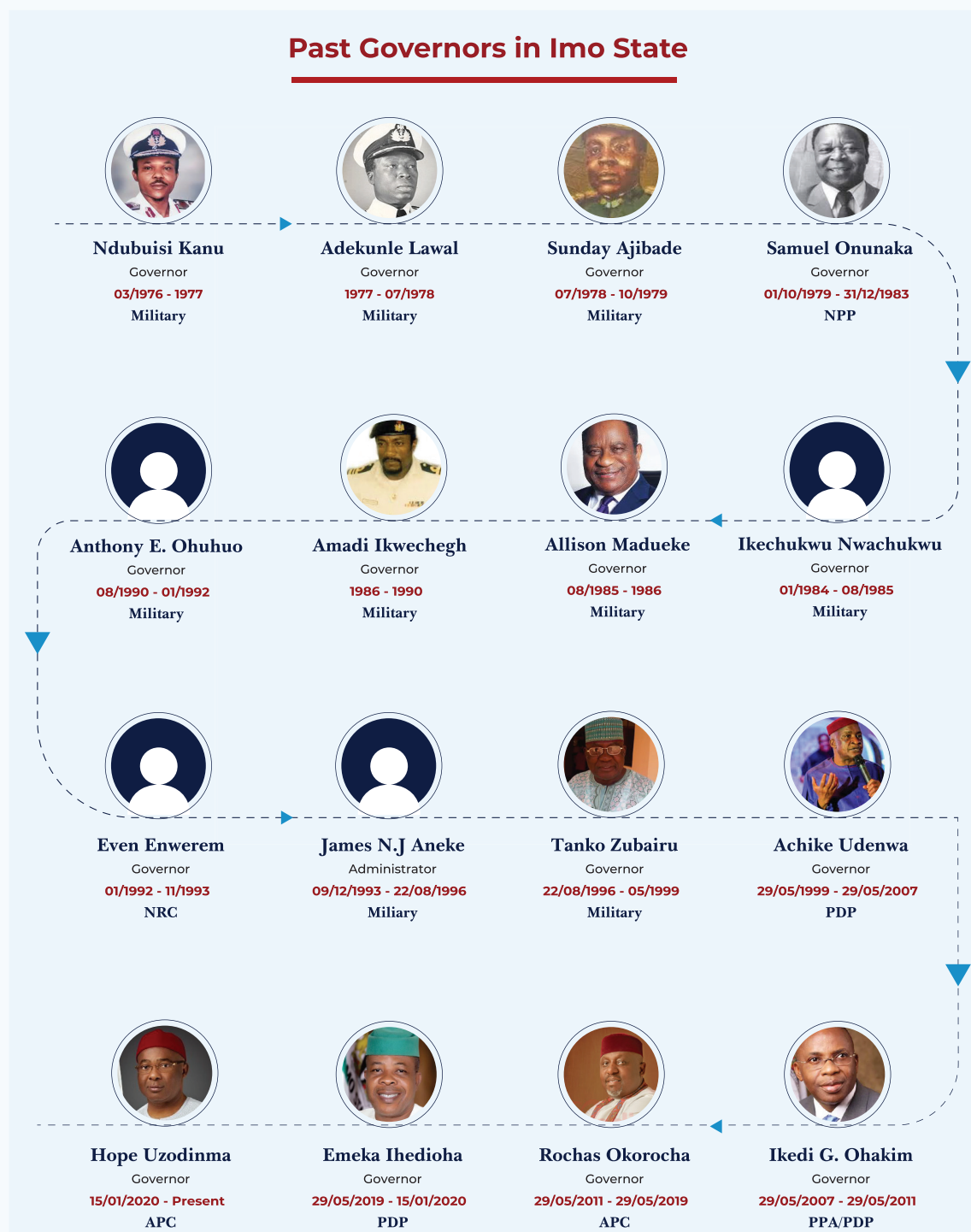
Bayelsa State, traditionally a stronghold of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), had a change in political dynamics, as shown by the data. The rise of the All-Progressives Congress (APC) posed a challenge to the PDP's control, resulting in the APC winning the 2019 general elections and ending the PDP's 20-year rule in the state.



The PDP filed pre-election litigation against the APC's Deputy Governorship candidate for discrepancies in documents submitted to INEC. The Supreme Court upheld the Federal High Court's judgement, stating there was no evidence to prove the documents submitted belonged to the deputy governor-elect. The court ruled that the disqualification affects the joint ticket with which the candidate contested, nullifying their earlier victory. The Supreme Court's decision was made less than 24 hours before the governor-elect's swearing.

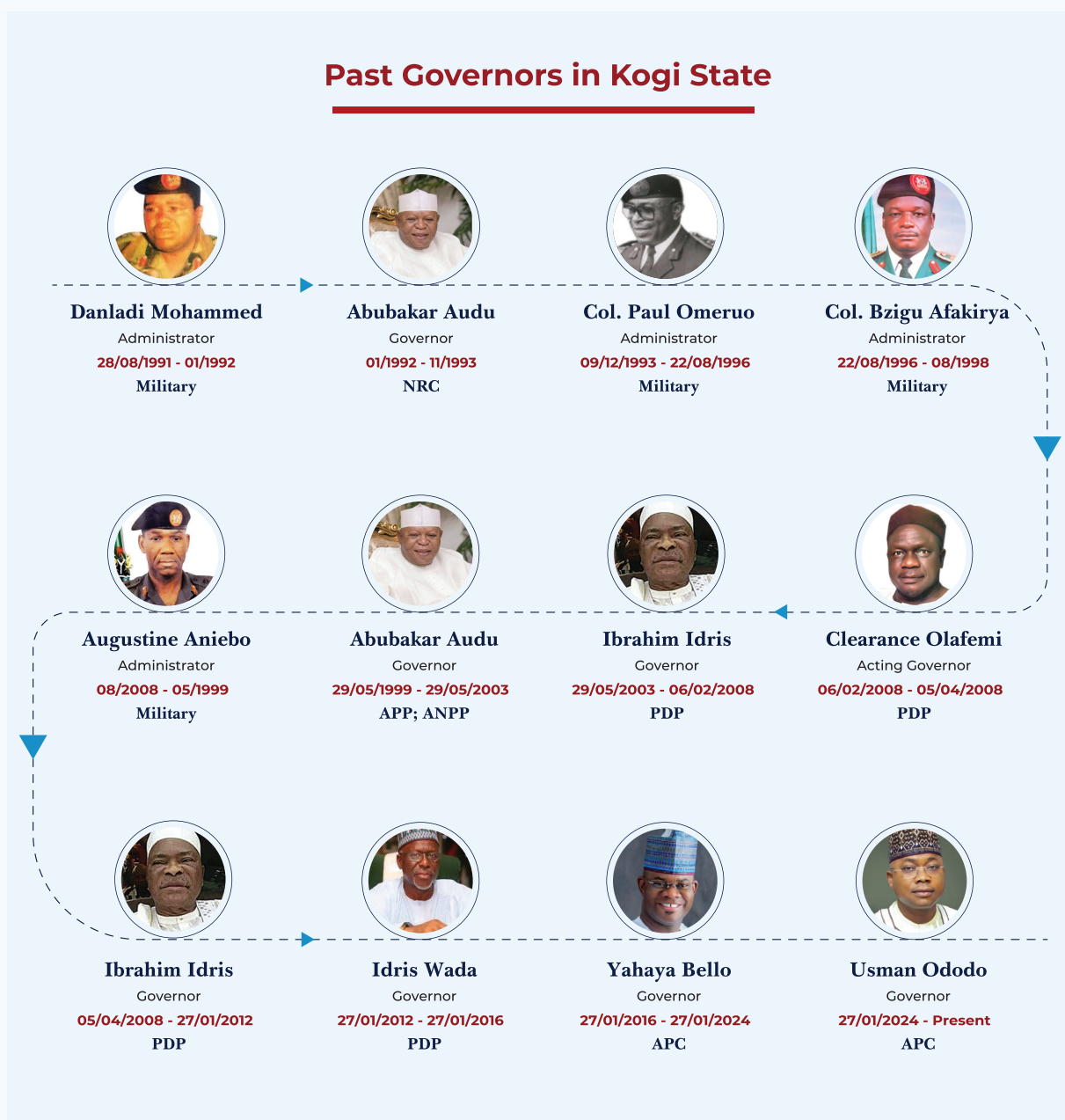
Nonetheless, this does not rule out the fact that APC has effectively transformed into a significant force in the state. Its giant strides in elections, especially in the 2019 governorship election, have placed it directly in strong competition with PDP, challenging its dominance over the political space in Bayelsa.

Similarly, **Imo State** experienced a keenly contested political environment, with the APC and PDP vying for supremacy. The traditionally dominant APC



faced stiff competition from the PDP; this has led to interparty conflicts, hate speeches, and intense campaigning. LP also moved high in ranks, partly attributed to the Labour Party's widespread support in the 2023 general elections.

In **Kogi State**, despite the constitutional term limit preventing the immediate past governor, Yahaya Bello, from seeking re-election, the power of incumbency played a role. The APC, PDP, and SDP were the major players, with political permutations based on ethnic lines. The gubernatorial candidates' profiles and their association with strongholds in various LGAs contributed to an atmosphere of intense competition and rivalry.



Internal party dynamics and the aftermath of contentious primaries added to the political tension. The power play between dominant parties, unresolved internal issues, and the strong personalities involved set the stage for potential electoral violence. The influence of money in politics, inducements, and the impact of vote buying were notable factors adding complexity to the political scenarios in these states. The gale of defections, characterized by prominent political figures shifting allegiances, further heightened political tensions and created an environment conducive to potential violence.

As the states prepared for the off-cycle elections, the unresolved internal party issues, coupled with the historical dominance of specific parties and the intricate interplay of local dynamics, indicated a high likelihood of electoral violence during the pre-election, election day, and post-election periods.

The Public trust of citizen in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi in INEC following the 2023 general election dwindled. This exacerbates other concerns, potentially heightening the risk of violence.

INEC had significant issues with public perception and trust due to issues during the 2023 general elections, including perceived incompetence of ad hoc officials and logistical and technological challenges. Most people viewed INEC's performance as inadequate in the general election, diminishing confidence in the commission's capacity to carry out unbiased elections in Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi States.

The ESRA survey showed the opinions of the residents of the 3 states regarding possible obstacles to the efficient management of elections. It was considered essential to tackle those difficulties before the election to avoid worsening negative impressions, which can result in violence.

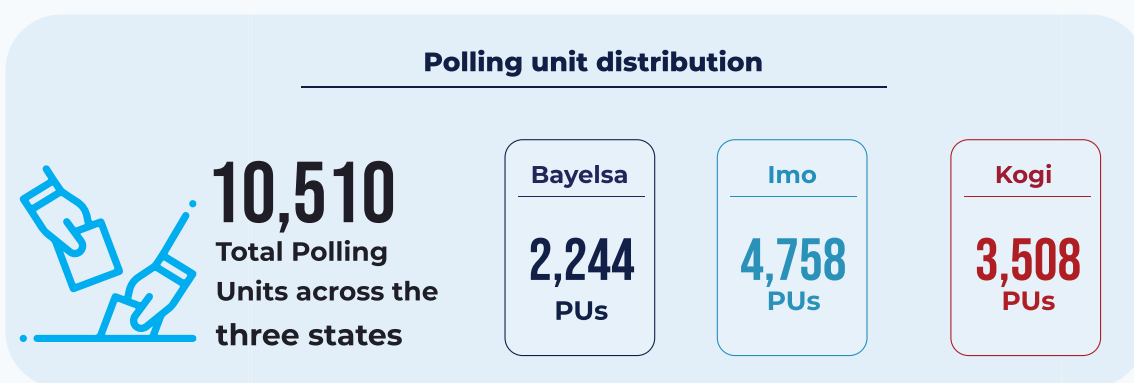


Voter education, aimed at providing citizens with information on participating in elections, was identified as essential. The electoral institution and relevant state agencies were urged to lead in providing voter education to address issues such as increased voter turnout, improved voter knowledge of new accreditation procedures, reduction in invalid votes, encouragement of ethical voting, curbing vote buying, countering misinformation, and strengthening citizen faith in the electoral system. On the other hand, it was observed that there was a lack of proper voter education, which was linked to reasons such as violence, insecurity, disputes following the general election in 2023, and litigation.



Polling Unit (PU) Distribution

In 2021, INEC created over 56,872 additional polling units, including 440 in Bayelsa, to bring the total to 176,846. As the people of Bayelsa head to the November 11, 2023, governorship election – the number of polling units remains at 2,244 with only 2 PUs with no registered voters, and INEC did mention that the election will not be held in these 2 PUs. The average number of voters per PU in Bayelsa continued to oscillate, and concerns were raised about uneven distribution. The creation of additional PUs aimed to reduce overcrowding and tension during voting. However, issues persisted, such as challenges in informing voters of new PU locations and potential overcrowding in PUs with large numbers of registered voters.

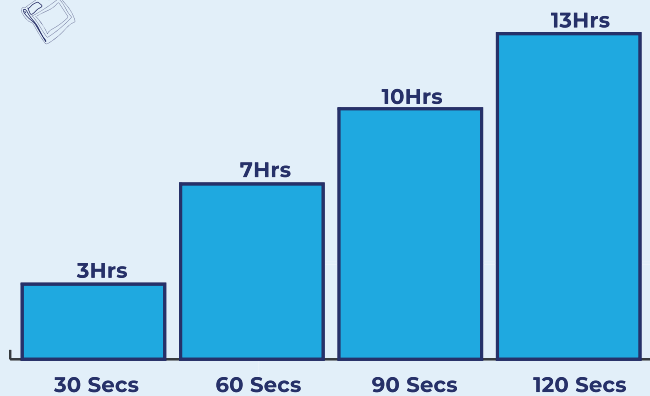


We have repeatedly acknowledged BVAS innovation for increasing election transparency, but concerns were raised about its potential to slow down the process, particularly in PUs with a high number of registered voters. As we have always noted in previous elections, there is a notable correlation between the number of registered voters of PU and turnout in the same PU. Polling units with severe overcrowding experienced lower voter turnout, while most polling units with high turnout are PU with fewer voters.

SCENARIO

There are 1231 PUs in Bayelsa State with registered voters between 51-499 and 840 PUs with Registered voters between 500-999. Take, for instance, a polling unit with over 450 registered voters, considering the high PVC collection rate based on INEC data – if 400 voters turn to vote in that polling unit. All things being equal, voting will end in that PU at 6.30 pm if BVAS accredits a voter at 90secs and if BVAS accredits for 2 minutes, it will take 13 hours for the last voter to be accredited, and this is going to be around 9.30 pm.

BVAS accreditation speed in relation to 400 registered voters at a polling unit



The commission had said it would deploy two or more BVAS to PU with over 1,000 registered voters, and we think INEC should lower this threshold by considering deploying two or more BVAS to PU with more than 500 Registered voters for off-cycle elections because there are more PUs with voter between 500 and 999. Also, the commission should consider using PVC collected as a threshold for BVAS deployment.

In Imo State, public trust in INEC's capacity to conduct a free and fair election had dwindled. Calls were made for the removal and replacement of the current REC based on allegations of compromise and assistance to a political party during the last election. Preparation of personnel and tools for election day processes was emphasized to avoid bottlenecks and agitation.

In Kogi State, most respondents expressed a lack of trust in INEC to deliver a free, fair, and safe election in the gubernatorial election. The trust deficit between citizens and INEC was seen as a potential trigger for violence and heightened political tension. The lack of confidence in INEC increased the likelihood of citizen interference in electoral procedures. The distribution of polling units was highlighted as a factor influencing public trust.

Identifying locations susceptible to election violence in the November 11 governorship election in three states.

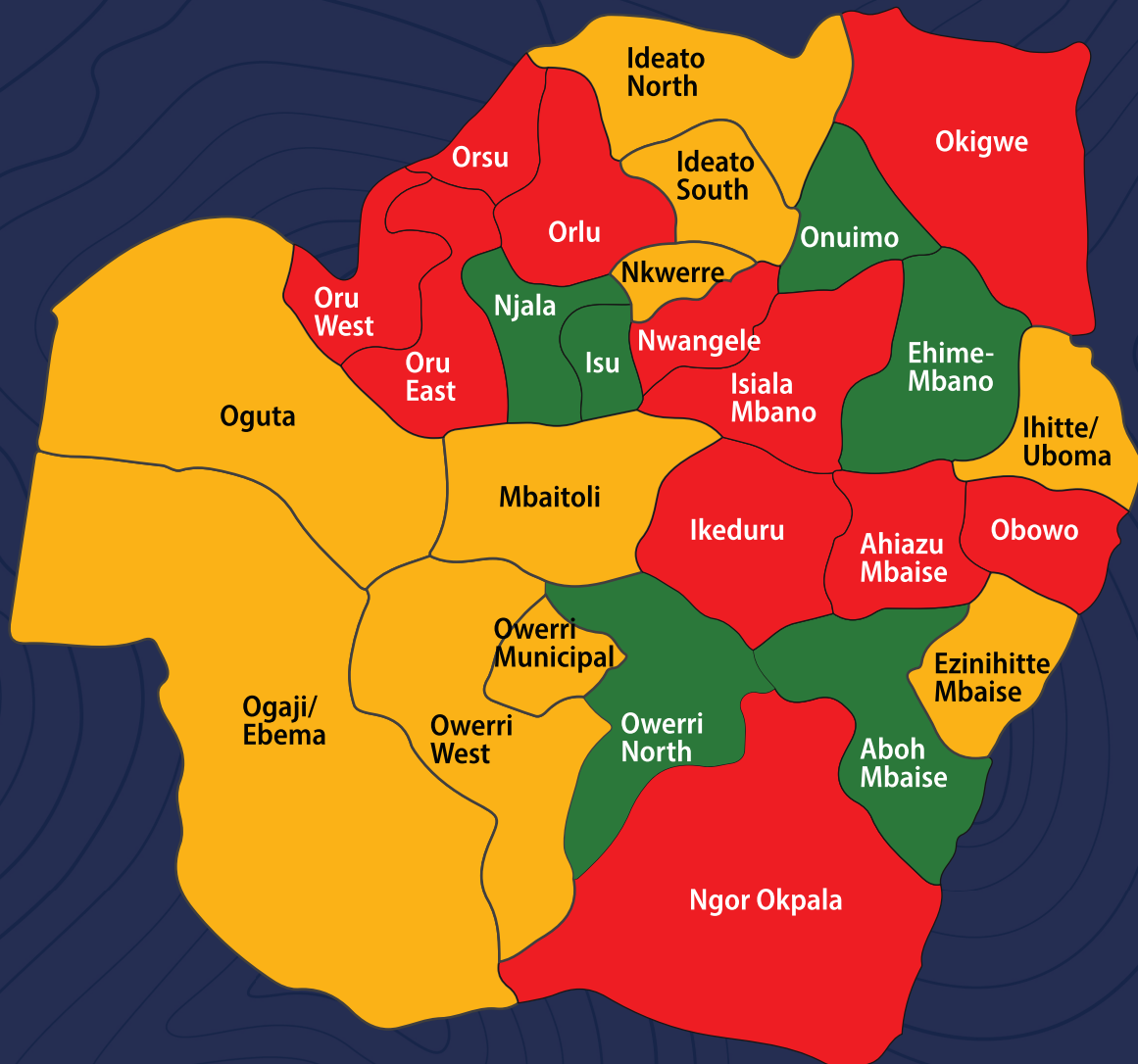
Bayelsa state hotspot map



Likelihood of Violence

- Unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Likely

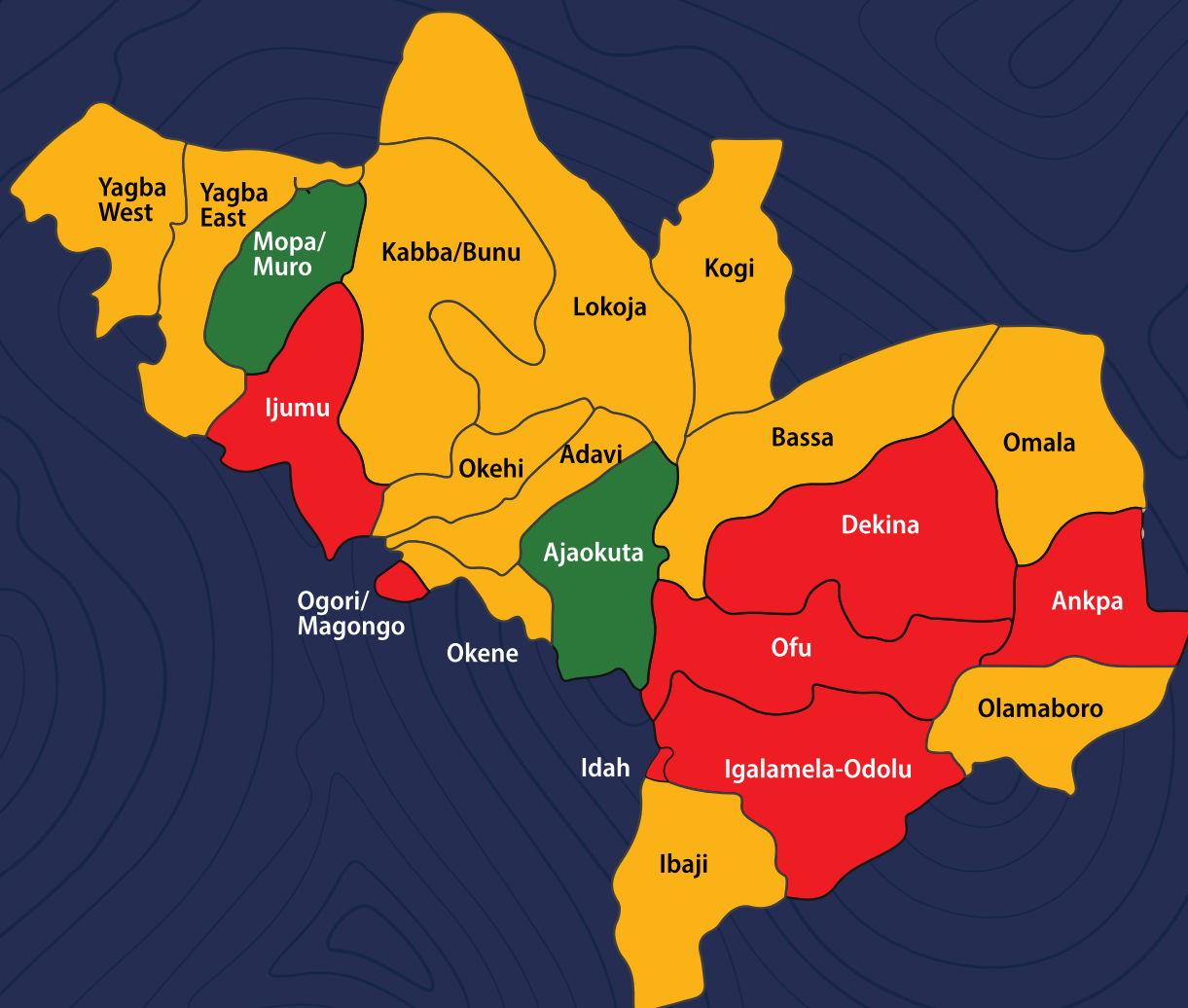
Imo State violence hotspot map



Likelihood of Violence

- Unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Likely

Kogi State hotspot map



Likelihood of Violence

● Unlikely

● Somewhat likely

● Likely

Early warning signals

Bayelsa

-  Cult activities
-  Proliferation of small and light arms
-  Hate speech and provocative actions by political chieftains
-  Intimidation and harassment of party faithfuls
-  Destruction of campaign materials

Imo

-  Political thugs activities
-  Unfair Restriction on Political activities
-  Hate speech and provocative actions by political chieftains
-  Proliferation of small and light arms/kidnapping
-  Secessionist agitations

Kogi

-  Proliferation of small and light arms
-  Hate speech and provocative actions by political chieftains
-  Destruction of campaign materials
-  Unfair restriction on Political activities

Unfair Restriction on



Proliferation of small and light arms was a major warning signal that appeared across the three states.

Risk factors and actors that could generate tension or cause violence on election day and post election.

Bayelsa

Political thugs, militant and cultist activities

Lack of transparency and partiality of INEC

Late arrival of election materials

Partiality of security agents.

Vote buying

Fake news

Imo

Political thugs and cultist activities

Lack of transparency and partiality of INEC

Vote buying

Fake news

Partiality of security agents.

Late arrival of election materials

Kogi

Political thugs activities

Vote buying

Lack of transparency and partiality of INEC

Partiality of security agents.

Fake news

Late arrival of election materials

In Bayelsa State, early warning projections based on KDI's environment assessment highlighted several risk factors preceding the elections. Incidents of cult clashes, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, hate speech by political chieftains, and intimidation tactics, including the destruction of campaign materials, were identified. Specifically, activities from political thugs, militants, and cult groups in various LGAs underscored the potential for unrest.

Similarly, in Kogi State, pre-election monitoring by KDI identified significant risk factors that could escalate into electoral violence. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons among party thugs heightened tensions, exacerbated by tribal and political complexities. Hate speeches and provocative actions by political elites further fueled animosity, contributing to the precarious electoral environment. Additionally, the destruction of campaign materials, denial of access to venues for opposition parties, and partial conduct of INEC officials at polling units were observed, amplifying apprehensions of violence.

In Imo State, heavy restrictions on political activities exacerbated the polarized political environment, particularly in local government areas like Orsu and Oru East and West. The spread of fake news, targeted attacks on INEC facilities, and activities of proscribed groups like the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Eastern Security Network (ESN) added to the apprehension among voters. Fear of attacks by secessionist gunmen and incidents of violence in communities intensified as the election date approached, further undermining the credibility of the electoral process. The circulation of fake videos, political thuggery, cultist activities, lack of transparency by INEC, vote-buying, partiality of security agents, and late arrival of election materials were identified as additional risk factors in Imo State. These factors not only heightened tensions but also jeopardized the integrity of the electoral process, fueling suspicions of bias and contributing to post-election unrest.

Addressing these risk factors requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders. Enhancing security measures, promoting transparency and accountability in electoral processes, and fostering dialogue and reconciliation among political actors is imperative to mitigate the risk of violence and uphold the democratic principles of free, fair, and peaceful elections.

04.

**Violence
prevention
initiatives**

KDI, in her ESRA, gave recommendations on what stakeholders needed to start doing. One of such recommendation is the need to intensify awareness raising on the importance of peaceful elections for the electorates in all the LGAs and recommended an integrated approach to peacebuilding. KDI started her violence prevention effort by engaging stakeholders with the key findings of the ESRA report.





Stakeholders' engagement at the public presentation of ESRA Report

State Peace and Mediation Working Committee

KDI organized an inaugural meeting with influential non-partisan electoral stakeholders in Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi to establish the State Peace and Mediation Working Committee members (SPWCM) in the three off-cycle states. The initiative aims to minimize electoral violence ahead of off-cycle elections. The SPWCM members will engage in strategic advocacy, set mitigation plans, and plan contingencies. KDI uses the SPMWC for electoral violence prevention due to its grassroots-centered approach, adaptability, cultural acumen, and commitment to community-driven peace initiatives.

1. Grassroots-Centric Approach to Electoral Violence Prevention:

- The SPMWC operates at the grassroots level, recognizing that electoral violence (EV) often originates from local dynamics. Unlike other broader national groups, the SPMWC tailors its strategies to address the specific challenges faced at the community level.
- Unlike a generic approach, the SPMWC tailors' violence prevention interventions to address the specific characteristics of electoral violence incidents within the state. This customised approach takes into account the particular circumstances, identifies the perpetrators, and acknowledges the delicacy of each scenario, resulting in a more efficient and subtle reaction.
- The SPMWC excels in contextualizing its solutions by prioritizing cultural sensitivity and understanding local nuances. Recognizing the diversity in traditions, beliefs, and practices across different regions, the committee ensures that its interventions are culturally appropriate and resonate with the local population.

2. Data-Driven Violence Prevention:

- Leveraging data generated from the Early Warning System and analyzing localized information, they deploy targeted interventions to prevent electoral violence before it escalates. The SPMWC usually adopt a proactive approach to violence prevention.

3. Community Engagement and Ownership:

- By operating at the grassroots, the SPMWC actively engages with local communities. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and

involvement among community members, making them active participants in the prevention of electoral violence. This community-focused strategy contributes to sustainable peace-building efforts.

4. Responsive and Adaptive:

- The SPMWC remains responsive to changing dynamics. Through continuous monitoring and evaluation, the committee adapts its strategies based on evolving threats and challenges. This agility ensures that the SPMWC remains effective in its mission to prevent electoral violence.

5. Collaborative Partnerships:

- The SPMWC establishes partnerships with local organizations, civil society groups, and community leaders. This collaborative approach enhances the committee's reach and effectiveness, tapping into local networks and resources for a more comprehensive violence prevention strategy.

6. Capacity Building at the Grassroots:

- In addition to immediate intervention, the SPMWC builds the capacity of local communities to address the root causes of electoral violence. This long-term approach empowers communities to manage conflicts and disputes, contributing to sustained peace independently.

7. Transparent and Inclusive Processes:

- The SPMWC inclusivity is a key principle involving diverse stakeholders in formulating and implementing violence prevention strategies. This approach fosters trust and cooperation among community members.



The State Peace and Mediation Working Committee interfaces with local communities. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and involvement among community members, making them active participants in the prevention of electoral violence.



State Peace and Mediation Working Committee Engagement

KOGI STATE

The SPMWC was inaugurated on 11th September 2023 in Kogi State. The committee was saddled with the responsibility to advocate for peaceful elections throughout the election circle. Members are drawn from religious organisations such as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Kogi State Council of Ulama, National Orientation Agency and Nigeria Union of Journalists.

Activities

The committee, upon inauguration, undertook the following activity pre-election, during and post-election period:

- **Active Involvement in ESRA:** Committee members participated in the Pre-Election Security Risk Assessment (ESRA) Report Survey. Their contributions played a crucial role in fine-tuning the findings, demonstrating a dedication to recognising and tackling possible risk factors prior to the elections.
- **Media Amplification:** The committee, particularly through the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), effectively disseminated information about the Pre-Election Risk Assessment Survey and the inauguration of the peace committee. This media engagement contributed to heightened public awareness and emphasised the committee's dedication to promoting peaceful elections. <https://kogireports.com/kdi-sets-up-peace-committee-for-kogi-bayelsa-imo-govship-polls-identifies-flash-points/>
- **Short Media Messages:** Leveraging social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and WhatsApp, the committee disseminated short but impactful messages on peaceful elections. Platforms like "Kogi Decides" and "Kogi in Focus" were channels for promoting these messages, fostering a positive narrative around election conduct.
- **Advocacy Visits:** The committee undertook strategic advocacy visits to key stakeholders, including Jamatul Nasri Islam and the Nigeria Union of

Journalists. These visits aimed to secure commitments to using their platforms to encourage a peaceful election and post-election environment. The successful extraction of commitments from influential figures demonstrated the committee's ability to garner support for peace initiatives.

- **Radio Program:** The Peace Committee actively participated in a radio program on Grace 95.5FM, Lokoja, discussing the importance of peace and emphasising the need to address grievances through legal channels. This engagement allowed the committee to reach a wider audience and promote a message of non-violence.

Achievements

- **Enhanced Public Perception:** Through their activities, the peace and mediation working committee positively influenced public perception, reinforcing the idea that peaceful elections are achievable. The committee's consistent efforts contributed to creating an environment where citizens were more inclined to engage in the electoral process without fear of violence.
- **Commitment from Stakeholders:** The successful advocacy visits and engagements resulted in tangible commitments from influential stakeholders, such as the Chairman of NUJ and Jamatul Nasri Islam. These commitments added weight to the committee's efforts and fostered a collaborative approach to ensuring a peaceful electoral process.

BAYELSA STATE

The Bayelsa State Peace Committee, inaugurated on 11th September 2023 as part of the NEVER Project by Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI), made significant strides in fostering peace and stability during the off-cycle governorship elections in Bayelsa. Their activities spanned pre-election, election day, and post-election phases, and the committee's achievements are highlighted below:

Pre-Election Advocacy:

Stakeholder Engagement: The committee engaged key figures in the community, including King Bubaraye Dakolo, the Chairman of the Bayelsa State Traditional Rulers Council, and the Chairman of the Ijaw Youth Council. King Bubaraye Dakolo expressed delight with the visit and highlighted a potential risk factor along with the necessary precautions to be put in place: The importance of logistics, particularly the provision of local boats for INEC ad-hoc staff, instead of relying on politically motivated parties. He stressed the importance of security operatives maintaining a neutral stance.

The Chairman of the Pan-Ijaw Youths group, Ijaw Youths Council, Central Zone, Comrade Perekosufa Ineifie, when the SPMWC visited him, highlighted the need for government at all levels to create an enabling environment for youths to be engaged and learn skills as a precursor to change the narrative for violence. Furthermore, the Chairman noted that efforts are intensified to work with security agencies to sweep the creeks of small ammunition and weapons already distributed for political thuggery across the State; he emphasised that he had organised a peaceful rally to dissuade youths from using themselves as thugs during electioneering period.

On Election Day: The Committee members volunteered to get involved in election day observation. They did the following on election day:

- 1. Security Flashpoints Coverage:** Committee members strategically assigned themselves to cover major security flashpoints across the State during the election to engage with stakeholders within the flashpoints area. This proactive approach is aimed at preventing potential violence and ensuring peaceful conduct of the election.
- 2. Logistical Challenges and Timely Reporting:** The committee reported on

logistical challenges faced by INEC, such as delayed delivery of materials and disruptions due to unforeseen events like a boat capsizing. Also, the committee reported a recorded death in Twon Brass during collation, emphasising the need for swift actions to address post-election challenges. This timely reporting contributed to an understanding of the overall election dynamics and aided the amplification of incidents to relevant authorities from the data room. Additionally, the KDI Election Day Data Room leverages the Committee members' activeness on Election Day to verify incidents reported from the field by citizen observers.

Post-Election Engagement:

- 1. Media Sensitization:** After the election results were declared, the committee actively engaged with People's 93.1 FM to sensitise the public on the importance of embracing peace. This media outreach aimed to maintain a calm post-election atmosphere.
- 2. Jingles and Short Messages:** : Production and dissemination of jingles and short messages through various media platforms, including NTA Yenagoa, NDTv, social media, and bloggers, reinforced the peace message and contributed to post-election stability.
- 3. Collaboration with Law Enforcement:** The committee visited the Bayelsa State Commissioner of Police, represented by the Police Public Relations Officer, CSP Asinim Butswat. The CP's representative demonstrated her commitment by promising to hold perpetrators of electoral violence accountable. This will deter future incidents and ensure justice.
- 4. Continued Stakeholder Engagement:** The Committee also met with the Chairman of the Bayelsa State Traditional Rulers Council, King Bubaraye Dakolo, and the Chairman of the IYC Central Zone, Comr. Peres Ineifie. They discussed the possibility of working together to promote collaboration, exchange ideas, and plan for a peaceful post-election period.

The Bayelsa State Peace Committee, through its proactive measures, keen observations, and strategic engagements, significantly contributed to the success of the NEVER Project, promoting peace, transparency, and accountability throughout the electoral process.

IMO STATE

The Imo State Peace and Mediation Working Committee (SPMWC) was pivotal in promoting post-election peace through strategic advocacy visits to key organisations, fostering dialogue and collaboration for a peaceful and harmonious post-election environment.

Advocacy Visits to the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)

Prior to the elections, the members of the State Peace and Mediation Working Committee (SPMWC) paid a visit to the CAN president, Imo State chapter, Rev Eche Divine Eche, in his office. The SPMWC, under the leadership of Chairman Engr Peter Ohagwa, highlighted its mission to promote and maintain peace in Imo State throughout the election and post-election phases. Amb. Ohagwa emphasised the importance of addressing potential grievances that may arise after the election. The committee urged Rev Eche to leverage his influential position to discourage violence and encourage CAN members to continue promoting peace. Rev Eche expressed appreciation for the committee's commitment to fostering peace and praised their valuable contributions to ensuring a peaceful election. He expressed his commitment to utilise his position to promote the committee's message and assured the SPMWC that he would spread the message of peace to other CAN members.

Advocacy Visits to Imo State Amalgamated Market Traders Association (ISAMATA)

Similarly, the SPMWC visited ISAMATA, led by Chairman Amb Peter Ohagwa. The Chairman stated that the objective of the visit was to partner with the association to leverage the market's extensive network and disseminate the peace message among its large membership. Engr Ohagwa acknowledged ISAMATA's significance as one of the most populated unions in the State, emphasising its potential to influence a broad spectrum of members. The committee advised ISAMATA to encourage its members not to be used for violent or undemocratic actions and urged the market union to promote unity and peace in the State.

Chairman of ISAMATA, Chief Emma Ezeanochie, expressed displeasure at not meeting the committee earlier but pledged total commitment to the cause. He reiterated the importance of peace for market activities and promised to support the committee's mission. Chief Ezeanochie pledged ISAMATA's com-

mitment to the committee's mission, assuring them of their cooperation and support.

The Imo State Peace and Mediation Working Committee engaged vital stakeholders, fostering collaboration and commitment to post-election peace. The committee's proactive approach and strategic advocacy contributed significantly to the success of the NEVER Project in Imo State.

Technical Sessions with Security Agencies

KDI brought together security agencies (Nigeria Police, NSCDC, DSS, and private security consultants) from the National and State Headquarters of Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi States for a technical session. In this technical session, KDI shared the findings and recommendations of the NEVER Long-term Pre-Election Security Risk Assessment (ESRA) and election violence monitoring reports with the agencies. This is with the hope that this will inform their deployment plan, mitigation strategies, and intervention areas before, during and after the 11th of November 2023 in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi States.





Notable Output of the Technical Session with Security Agencies

- **Informed Deployment Plans:** The technical session successfully shared findings and recommendations from the NEVER Long-term Pre-Election Security Risk Assessment (ESRA) with security agencies. This information aimed to enhance the security agencies' understanding of the unique risks and challenges in Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi States, thereby informing more effective deployment plans.
- **Mitigation Strategies:** The session facilitated discussions on identified threats and challenges, allowing security agencies to collaboratively develop mitigation strategies. By openly addressing issues such as insecurity in specific locations, the numerical strength of security forces, and logistical challenges, the session contributed to proactive planning for potential risks.
- **Collaborative Problem-Solving:** The discussions during the session provided a platform for security personnel to share concerns and challenges they anticipate in the election process. This collaborative problem-solving approach allowed for the exchange of ideas and the development of instant recommendations to address specific issues raised by security agencies. Also, the session featured engagement with security agencies at both national and state levels, fostering a direct line of communication between KDI and these

critical stakeholders for information sharing on the election day. This engagement is of utmost importance in fostering trust and ensuring that security agencies are supported with a comprehensive data of the local context and concerns.

- **Risk Mitigation Recommendations:** Instant recommendations, such as community consensus building, mobilization against vote-buying, and specific travel precautions for security officers, were agreed upon during the session. These recommendations served as practical measures to mitigate risks and enhance the security agencies' effectiveness during the elections.

In summary, the technical session with security agencies achieved the objectives of sharing critical information, fostering collaboration, and developing practical strategies to enhance election security in Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi States.

Media Engagements

People's Townhall on Election Security

On November 5, 2023, KDI, in partnership with Channels Television, organized the People's Town Hall Meeting at Abuja Continental Hotel, FCT, Abuja, to discuss election security for the off-cycle elections in Kogi, Imo, and Bayelsa states.

In his opening remarks, Bukola Idowu, Team Lead of KDI, emphasized the importance of a secure electoral environment. The findings of KDI detailed 101 incidents of documented electoral violence (47 in Kogi, 24 in Imo, and 20 in Bayelsa). Inspector General of Police Kayode Egbetokun, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu (Chairman of the INEC), and Mallam Ribadu Nuhu (National Security Adviser) in a video statement expressing their support for an election devoid of violence.

The panel, moderated by Seun Okinbaloye, included:

1. Kayode Egbetokun (Inspector General of Police)
2. Mary Nkem (INEC Acting Director of Voter Education and Publicity, representing INEC Chairman)
3. Kabiru Adamu (Security Consultant and ED Beacon Consulting)
4. Hon. Umar Abdullahi Ganduje (APC National Chairman)
5. Umar Bature (PDP National Organizing Secretary)
6. Comrade Julius Abure (LP National Chairman)
7. Engr. Yabagi Sani (IPAC Chairman)

The discussion encompassed election readiness, logistical factors, risk assessment, and candidates' commitment. The IPAC Chairman encouraged INEC to be neutral, while the Labour Party Chairman raised concerns over violence. The Inspector General of Police addressed an assault on the LP candidate in Imo state and promised to investigate the incident. He used the platform to announce the redeployment of the Imo State Commissioner of Police in a bid to promote transparency. The discussion ended with the audience asking questions regarding harassment prevention, guarantee of free and fair elections, citizen security and how the police will hold election offenders accountable. The panel members collectively committed to creating a conducive environment for secure, transparent, and participatory elections, with the goal of increasing public confidence in the democratic system.



Achieved results of the people's town hall meetings

- **Redeployment of Imo State Commissioner of Police:** Following concerns raised during the town hall meeting regarding the allegation against the Imo State Commissioner of Police, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) committed to the redeployment of the Commissioner of Police in Imo State as a show of neutrality.

Vanguard HOME NEWS VANGUARD AWARDS POLITICS METRO BUSINESS SPORTS EDITORIAL COLUMNS ALLURE

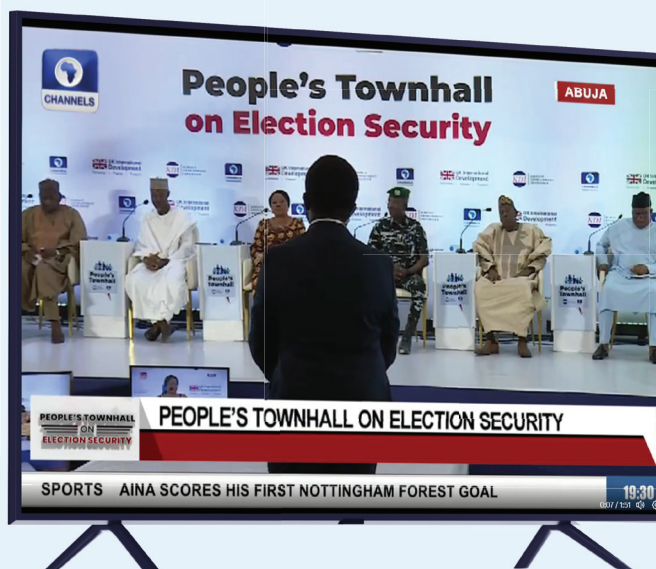
IGP announces redeployment of Imo police commissioner



Source: <https://www.vanguardngr.com>

- **Enhanced election preparedness:** The town hall meetings contributed to highlighting the importance of election preparedness. Both the Inspector General of Police and the INEC representative confirmed that lessons learned from previous elections, as discussed during the meetings, informed preparations for the off-cycle elections. This underscored the commitment to improving the electoral process.
- **Commitment to violence-free elections:** Key figures, including Prof. Mahmood Yakubu (INEC Chairman), Mallam Ribadu Nuhu (National Security Adviser), and Inspector General of Police Kayode Egbetokun, expressed unwavering commitment to ensuring violence-free elections. These public statements aimed to reassure citizens and political stakeholders of a secure electoral environment.
- **Peace Pledges and Stakeholder Engagement:** The town hall meetings provided a platform for representatives from political parties, security agencies, and INEC to engage in open dialogue. The APC National Chairman, Hon. Umar Abdullahi Ganduje, emphasized the importance of candidates' commitment to influencing peaceful elections. This highlighted efforts by political parties to contribute to a peaceful electoral process.

- **Risk Management and Mitigation Strategies:** Security expert Kabiru Adamu contributed insights into risk management, acknowledging identified threats and emphasizing ongoing challenges. The discussions prompted the exploration of potential strategies and collaborations required for more robust threat mitigation.
- **Transparent Communication from INEC:** The INEC representative reassured the public of the commission's preparedness for the off-cycle elections. The town hall meetings provided a platform for INEC to transparently communicate its post-2023 general election review, highlighting improvements and outlining plans for the upcoming elections.
- **Public Participation and Direct Citizen Involvement:** The inclusion of a panel session and questions from the studio audience allowed citizens to directly express concerns and seek assurances on various election-related topics. This interactive approach facilitated a direct exchange between citizens and key stakeholders, fostering a sense of inclusivity and responsiveness.



These achievements collectively demonstrate the impact of the People's Town Hall Meetings in addressing concerns, fostering transparency, and contributing to the overall improvement of the electoral process in Kogi, Imo, and Bayelsa states.

PRE AND POST-ELECTION PRESS CONFERENCES

Kim pact Development Initiative (KDI) successfully organised a series of press conferences positioned at different stages of the off-cycle governorship elections in Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi States. The pre-election conference, held on 10th November 2023, comprehensively assessed the electoral environment. KDI highlighted early warning signs and identified hotspots of electoral violence in the three states. With an alarming 115 incidents of election-related violence reported leading up to the elections, KDI emphasised the urgent need for increased security measures.



Pre-election press conference

Following the elections, the second press conference on 14th November 2023 presented vital findings, observations, and potential areas for improvement in the election processes. KDI reported on the functionality of electoral technology, including the Biometric Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV). Condemned instances of vote buying, interference by party agents, and violence, urging thorough investigations and prosecutions where necessary.



Post-election press conference

05.

**Election Day
Observation**

KDI, during the 11th of November 2023 off-cycle governorship elections in Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi States, established her Election Data Room in Lokoja, Kogi State, between the 9th of November and the 12th of November 2023. The EDR served as a central coordinating point for receiving reports from monitors in the field to enhance electoral security and provide real-time analysis of election day processes.

On the day of the election, KDI was receiving reports from this field through her trained Long-Term Monitors and Election Day Observers. KDI was able to visually represent and analyse data in real-time because of the election observation data management system that she developed.



Pictures of election day data room

Key findings of election day data room

KDI observed some of the election day processes and procedures that have the potential for violence. These include:

- **Arrival of Election Officials and Commencement of Polls:** The early arrival of election officials and materials varied across states. While Bayelsa and Kogi experienced relatively high percentages of early arrivals, Imo faced delays in the commencement of voting due to the late arrival of officials. In Bayelsa, 77.42% of polling units witnessed the early arrival of election officials and materials. 73.91% of polling units experienced early arrivals in Kogi. In comparison, only 47.89% of polling units had early arrivals, leading to delays in the commencement of voting in Imo.
- **Electoral Technology- BVAS Functionality:** The Biometric Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) functioned well, with swift accreditation in Bayelsa (91.67%) and Kogi (82.50%). Imo, however, experienced delays and malfunctions, with 80% of faulty BVAS units promptly replaced.
- **INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV):** The INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV) operated smoothly with no reported issues, indicating improvement from previous elections.
- **Result Management:** Issues arose in Kogi in the early hours, where pre-filled result sheets were observed, prompting an INEC investigation. Imo faced allegations of uniform handwriting on Form EC08, with 15 identified polling units.
- **Voter Inducement:** Vote buying was openly practised, with voters exchanging their votes for material goods and money. The arrest of some offenders was commended, with a call for publicised prosecution to deter future incidents.

On Election Security, KDI recorded 50 incidents of violence across the three states. Imo reported the highest incidents, followed by Bayelsa and Kogi. Various forms of violence, including intimidation, voter suppression, ballot box snatching, sporadic gunshots, and clashes, were documented. Four fatalities were reported in Kogi. Security agents were present in commendable numbers, ensuring secure election environments. However, reports of compromised security agents engaging in or failing to prevent acts of violence require thorough investigation.



50 Cases of violence recorded on election day

Disaggregation of the cases recorded per state

Bayelsa

17 Cases
(1 Fatality)

Imo

19 Cases
(0 Fatality)

Kogi

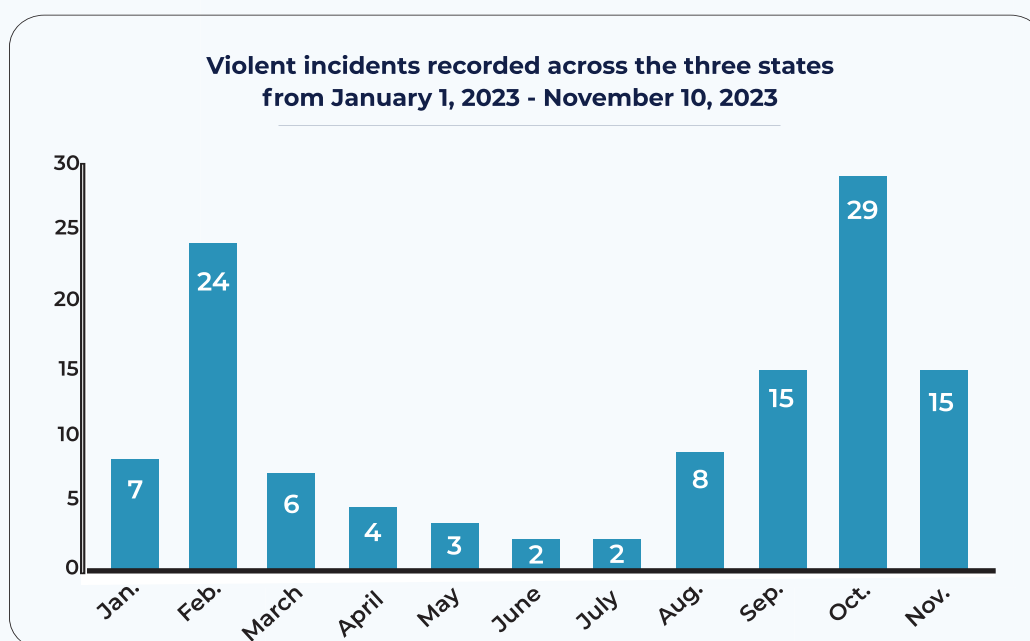
14 Cases
(3 Fatalities)

**Notable Election
Security Lessons from
the 2023 Off-cycle
Governorship Election**

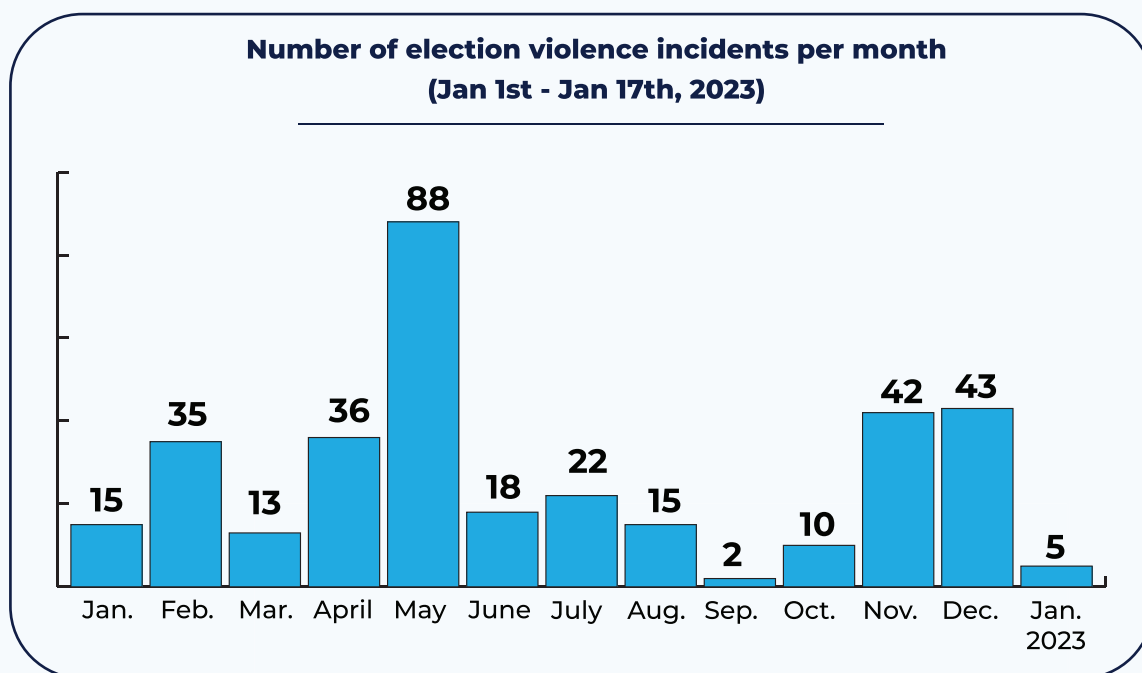
The 2023 off-cycle governorship elections in Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi States have provided significant insights into the dynamics of election security, unveiling notable lessons that demand attention and strategic mitigation measures for future electoral processes.

- **Heightened violence surrounds key electoral events.**

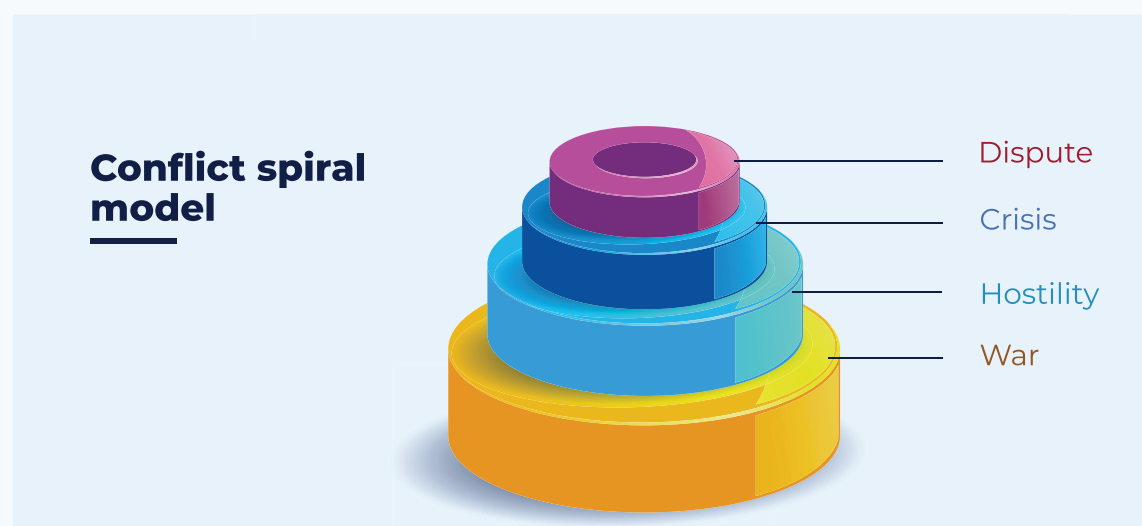
One striking observation from the 2023 Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi off-cycle governorship elections is the noticeable surge in violence during significant electoral and political milestones. Analysing data from the three states, a discernible pattern emerged—following the general elections in February and March 2023, incidents of electoral violence experienced a decline. However, electoral violence exhibited a notable resurgence as the political landscape in Kogi, Imo, and Bayelsa experienced party primaries.



The situation intensified during the campaign period, particularly in Kogi, where heightened tensions and clashes among political groups became evident. This pattern was the same before the 2023 general election. This underscores the correlation between these notable milestones and the escalation of violence in the electoral landscape.



The correlation between significant electoral or political events and the escalation of violence in the electoral landscape can be explained using the conflict spiral model. This model describes how conflicts can escalate due to the actions of the parties involved. The model comprises four stages: **dispute, crisis, hostility, and war**^{34 35}. In the dispute stage, the parties involved have a disagreement, but the conflict has not yet escalated. In the crisis stage, the parties involved take actions that increase the tension and the risk of violence. In the hostility stage, the parties involved engage in violent actions such as attacks or sabotage. In the war stage, the parties involved engage in a full-scale war.



The surge in violence during significant electoral or political milestones can be seen as a manifestation of the hostility stage of the conflict spiral model. The occurrence of crucial electoral or political events can increase the tension and the risk of violence, escalating the conflict from nonviolent to violent actions.

A comprehensive approach to early warning systems and proactive security measures is imperative to address this challenge in subsequent elections.

Election Security should not be seen as just an election day phenomenon - Strengthening security protocols during critical phases, such as party primaries and campaign periods, is vital. Law enforcement agencies should enhance surveillance and closely monitor potential hotspots. Additionally, robust community engagement, civic education, and conflict resolution initiatives can reduce tensions and promote a peaceful political environment.

By recognizing the temporal correlation between electoral events and violence escalation, electoral management bodies and security agencies can develop targeted strategies to manage and mitigate these risks effectively. This proactive stance is crucial in fostering an environment conducive to democratic processes and safeguarding the integrity of elections.

- **A strong correlation exist between regional conflict dynamics and the early warning signals identified preceding elections in the three states**

Analysis revealed a nuanced pattern wherein the specific security challenges prevalent in each region are mirrored in the issues identified by the KDI pre-election security risk assessments. This highlights a symbiotic relationship between the underlying socio-political dynamics and the anticipated challenges during the electoral process. Elections do not happen in silos; it happens within an environment – if there is environmental instability of any kind, it may hamper the conduct of an election. Practically, this pattern was also noticed in the 2023 general elections. The 2023 general election NEVER Data shows that separating armed conflict and electoral violence in some regions is increasingly difficult. For example, between 2019 and January 2023, there were more than 51 attacks against INEC facilities in 15 states. Twelve (12) of these fifteen (15) states are in the southern part of the country, and all five (5) states in the southeastern part of Nigeria have witnessed these coordinated attacks perpetually, not just on INEC facilities but also on some police formations. This shows a typical pattern of how non-electoral and electoral violence is intertwined.

Table 1: Linkage between Predominant Security Issues and KDI Pre-election Security Risk Assessments:

Zone	Predominant Security Issue	Identified Issues in KDI Assessment
Bayelsa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economically motivated crime, militancy, and piracy. Prevalence of cultism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultism activities. Widespread use of small and light weapons. Dangerous speech and provocative actions. Intimidation and harassment of party faithful. Logistic challenges for security officers. Partisan security formation.

Linkages

Bayelsa, being one of Nigeria's oil-rich states, is entrenched in a complex web of conflict dynamics closely tied to its economic fortunes. The struggle for control over crude oil wealth and associated benefits, including contracts, jobs, scholarships, and compensation, has fueled militancy and piracy. Many ex-militants who were granted amnesty, along with community-based cultists, become tools exploited by politicians to instigate violence. These individuals often used threats to provide their preferred candidates with an advantage in the political race. This often comes with intimidation and harassment of party faithful.

Crude oil and politics are inextricably linked as politicians see its control as the significant control of state power. This often led to intense competition for the capture of state power. This creates fierce competition among political actors and their supporters, who use violence to secure their interests. This competition further contributes to the proliferation of small and light weapons, exacerbating tensions in the state.

Bayelsa is marked by prevalent cult and gang-related violence. The distinction between armed conflict and political conflict is increasingly blurred. Allegedly,

politicians support these cult groups to disrupt the electoral process and advance their political agendas. Many former militant leaders and their followers have transitioned into politics, aligning themselves with different political figures. The prolonged battles for supremacy among various cult groups and ex-militants vying for political relevance heightened the pre-election environment's tension.

During campaigns, candidates with roots in militancy contribute to the charged atmosphere, making dangerous speeches and engaging in provocative actions. This environment, in turn, leads to incidents like the adoption of an INEC staff in South Ijaw at the creeks, escalating into logistical challenges for both electoral and security officers. The intertwining of economic, political, and social factors creates a complex landscape in Bayelsa, where security challenges are deeply rooted in the region's historical and contemporary dynamics.

Imo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separatist movements, clashes with security agencies, emergence of IPOB's ESN. • Unknown gunmen causing unrest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political thug's activities. • Political activity restrictions. • Dangerous speech and provocations. • Widespread use of small and light weapons, kidnapping. • Insecurity in specific regions (Orlu, Orsu, Okigwe). • Infiltration of ad-hoc officers. • Logistic challenges for materials and security personnel.
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In Imo State, the prevalent security issues align with the concerns identified in KDI's ESRA, revealing a complex interplay of separatist movements, clashes with security agencies, and the emergence of groups like IPOB's ESN and Unknown gunmen. These security challenges are intrinsically linked to the identified issues, highlighting the intricate dynamics at play.

Individuals that were believed to be separatist agitators, particularly in areas like Orlu, Orsu, and Okigwe, transitioned from separatist agitator to assailants,

targeting individuals associated with Nigeria's electoral processes. Perceiving such individuals as traitors unsupportive of their secessionist agenda, these groups became a source of unrest, contributing to the widespread use of small and light weapons.

There were beliefs that politicians exploit these security challenges for political gains, manipulating these groups to intimidate voters and create an atmosphere of fear during elections. The incumbent administration leverages the prevailing insecurity to restrict political activities, indirectly impacting ballot integrity. The Orlu and Okigwe zone became the epicenters of violence – voters in these areas became hesitant to participate, allowing politicians to generate results even in areas where elections did not effectively take place.

The insecurity in Orlu, Orsu, and Okigwe has had a chilling effect on political engagement. Many individuals are reluctant to wear party uniforms or openly support a political cause due to fears for their safety. This has made it challenging for people to exercise their democratic rights freely.

The challenging security situation, particularly in the identified zones, has made it difficult for security personnel to operate effectively. Travelling to these areas in Hilux vans is viewed with caution, reflecting the broader impact of insecurity on law enforcement operations. In essence, the insecurities in Imo State are deeply intertwined with political dynamics, impacting the electoral process, political activities, and the overall security landscape.

Kogi

- Communal clashes, susceptibility to militia attacks, frequent clashes between farmers -herders
- Widespread political thug's activities.
- Dangerous speech and provocations.
- Destruction of campaign materials.
- Political activity restrictions.
- Logistic challenges in election logistics.
- Issues with VIPs movement.

Kogi state grapples with persistent ethnic and communal disagreements, often rooted in disputes over boundaries and the perceived dominance of one tribe over another. The Igala ethnic group's political hegemony, dating back to the state's creation, has contributed to heightened tensions and animosity among the major ethnic groups and some minorities.

The political power shift, notably in 2015 when Governor Yahaya Bello, an Ig-bira man, assumed office, intensified the pre-existing tribal dynamics. The Okun ethnic group from Kogi West felt it was their turn to govern the states. This belief spilt over into the political arena, where tribal considerations influenced party primaries and candidate selections, further exacerbating the prevailing tensions. The tribal calculations significantly influenced party dynamics, leading to acrimonious party primaries, candidate selections, and an overall unhealthy rivalry within the Kogi State political arena. Political actors engaged in defections and cross-carpeting across parties, further intensifying intra- and inter-party crises.

The tribal and political complexities, such as the acrimonious party primaries, have perpetuated resentful campaigning in Kogi State. Political actors continue to leverage tribal sentiments, contributing to a charged electoral atmosphere with implications for widespread political thuggery, dangerous speech, destruction of campaign materials, and restrictions on political activity, as identified in KDI's ESRA.

- **Most of the potential for violence flagged around the elections were pointers to election irregularities.**

In the context of the 2023 off-cycle elections in Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi states, the nexus between violence, electoral security, and irregularities unveils a complex interplay that significantly impacts the integrity of the electoral process.

Most of the potential for violence identified by KDI preceding these elections emerged as stark pointers to underlying election irregularities. Pre-election warnings from the KDI regarding the partiality of INEC officials gained significance during and after the polls. The complicity and compromise of some INEC officials deployed for the election may have become crucial factors that contributed to issues such as pre-filled result sheets.

KDI's foresight on insecurity in the Orlu, Orsu, and Okigwe regions of Imo was another practical point- it was obvious that these areas became focal points of violence towards the elections. The resultant hesitancy among voters provided a window for politicians to manipulate results, generating figures even in areas where elections did not hold. Issues of infiltration of ad-hoc officers by political parties stressed as a potential for violence by KDI could be a pointer to issues of poll workers boycotting BVAS (Biometric Voter Accreditation System). In Bayelsa, KDI's emphasis on the logistics of security officers was something that could have averted the tragic incident at the Nembe/Brass Collation Centre. Logistics challenges could have led to the inadequacy of security measures that contributed to a situation where violence escalated, leading to casualties.

It is important to say that **violence**, which is one of the manifestations of compromised electoral security, was a potent tool for ballot manipulation. In the face of insecurity, threats or acts of broader political violence can coerce voters and election officials to skew voters' choices. The intimidation stemming from insecure conditions contributes to voter suppression, hindering the free exercise of democratic rights. Physical intimidation, denial of access to polling stations, and creating a fearful atmosphere collectively discourage voter participation. The disruptive nature of violence can extend to the polls and jeopardize the integrity of the entire electoral process. In the aftermath, the vote-counting process becomes susceptible to manipulation, leading to inaccurate or manipulated outcomes.

- **Conflict escalation in kogi state needs to be curbed.**

The post-election events in Kogi State, with the barricading of the INEC state office and the attack on the REC residence, signify an escalation of the conflict from the crisis stage to the hostility stage, which appears to be progressing towards the war stage, considering the **conflict spiral** model in conflict studies. Similar occurrences in other states, such as Rivers and Imo, have underscored a concerning pattern of armed conflict emerging after elections.

- **Dispute Stage:** Dissatisfaction with the party primary conducted, disqualification of some candidates from participating in the primary election, unjust zoning that potentially fuels ethnic sentiments, etc.
- **Crisis Stage:** Widespread political thugs' activities and Dangerous speech and provocations, political activity restrictions.
- **Hostility Stage:** Sporadic shooting, arson and barricading of the INEC

state office, attack on the REC residence.

- **Armed Conflict or War Stage:** How the post-election litigation is managed will go a long way in this.

This situation emphasizes the urgent need for conflict resolution measures, peacebuilding initiatives, and heightened security interventions to prevent further escalation and foster a peaceful post-election environment. Analyzing the root causes during the pre-election phase is crucial for developing targeted strategies to effectively address and mitigate these conflicts.



06.

Recommendations

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

- INEC needs to strengthen communication channels with the public to increase transparency in the electoral process. Most of INEC's **communication strategies** have always been reactive. Also, provide timely and accurate information on election logistics, results, and security measures. Furthermore, regarding the specifics of election administration transparency, it is important for INEC to make public the outcome of the committee set up to investigate the incidents and causes of pre-filled election results. This will help strengthen public confidence in the EMBs and their processes.
- INEC must continue fostering Institutional synergy with security agencies through the Inter-agency Consultative Committee on Electoral Security to ensure effective coordination with security agencies before, during, and after the subsequent election. Additionally, the commission should intensify its collaboration with anti-graft agencies to counter vote traders' activities at polling centres.
- INEC needs to ensure its information management is top-notch in elections, and the commission should communicate proactively with the public regarding the elections to boost confidence and trust in the electoral process.
- It becomes imperative that the perpetrators of violence are brought to justice. Hence, it is important for INEC to exercise its persecutory power to take the bold step of ensuring that electoral offenders are prosecuted.
- It was rightly noted in the report that most of the factors responsible for the resentful nature of the electoral landscape leading to the elections – It is important for INEC to strengthen its Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) unit to be able to intervene and mediate in some of the issues that emanated from the party primaries. This could also reduce the amount of pre-litigation that inundates the Federal High Court.
- INEC, practically, must ensure that measures are taken to prevent fraud on the polling day to reduce violence potential. These measures include maintaining ballot secrecy, numbering of ballot papers, and providing secure handling of the electoral materials.

- INEC should partner with CSOs and development partners to provide training and education to stakeholders involved in the electoral process to avoid their actions and inactions contributing to violence-risk factors.

Civil Society Organizations

- Advocate for electoral reforms, especially increasing calls for establishing an Electoral Offences Commission and Tribunal dedicated to bringing electoral offenders to justice. If electoral offenders are prosecuted and convicted if found guilty, it is a major way to disincentive violence; doing this is important to instil the non-violence act in the Nigerian electoral landscape. The challenges of prosecuting and swiftness of judgment are numerous. If created, the combined mandate of the Electoral Offences Commission and the Electoral Court will help achieve proper and speedy prosecution.
- CSOs need to start building cases for alternatives to the current electoral system – considering the implications of the current electoral system (First-past-the-post/zero-sum politics) on the risk of violence. Evaluating options like proportional representation to promote inclusivity and unity government is important.
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and other state and non-state stakeholders should also prioritize sensitizing the electorate extensively on the dangers and impact of violence.
- A broad collaboration between CSOs and media organizations is also recommended for the proper and long-term targeted education of the electorates and the extensive reach of peace messages.
- CSOs and development partners need to work more with religious and community leaders to initiate community-based conflict resolution programs. It is then important to encourage open dialogue between diverse communities to foster understanding and unity.

Political Parties

- Political parties need to establish internal ADR mechanisms that will address incessant intra-party litigations.
- Party primaries must be conducted transparently in accordance with the party constitution's provisions. Most conflicts arise due to the poor conduct of party primaries.
- It is imperative for political parties to denounce electoral violence publicly and unequivocally. And have the courage to penalize candidates or members who engage in violent activities up to the ward level.
- Political parties need to develop and implement robust conflict resolution mechanisms within political parties and encourage dialogue and reconciliation to address internal disputes that may escalate into violence.

Security Agencies and Institutions

- Security agencies through ICCESS need to start collaborating with election monitoring groups, especially those working on election security – ICCESS can set aside a day before any elections to take presentations from groups that have conducted comprehensive pre-election security risk assessments.
- There is an urgent need for election security measures to extend beyond the election day. Pre-election activities must be regarded with the same level of importance as election day itself. This implies that conflict-mitigation measures should be integrated into the entire electoral process, from party primaries to the main election.
- Security agencies must, therefore, develop proactive security strategies that are customized to the unique threats of each region.
- Security agencies should collaborate with community residents and leaders to foster a bottom-up approach to securing the election process. A bottom-up approach is particularly recommended because community

residents are believed to understand the nature of their localities more and can significantly assist security agents in discharging their duties.

- ICCESS should coordinate with all stakeholders relevant to peacebuilding to enhance peacebuilding efforts and identify policy gaps for the effective improvement of such gaps.
- Election Security Control Center should be proactive in communications towards having an appropriate and swift response team for intervention on violence issues if any erupts.
- Election Security Control Center should also popularize their dedicated hotlines for the elections among the citizens so that citizens can call in to give them security information.
- Election Security Finance needs utmost attention– We urge ICCESS to map out a template of what must be financed or budgeted for in each of the three major phases of the electoral cycle. It should not just be for a single phase. This requires medium-term planning involving elections, security, and fiscal governance experts. Personnel requirements and materials (non-human requirements) must be determined. Some budget items may feature throughout the cycle, whereas others may be skipped. Double budgeting must be avoided.
- Timely release of appropriated funds is essential in planning for election security and materials, and the welfare needs of security personnel should be properly aligned. It is important that ICCES strategists reconcile electoral security with overall national security. It will seek to resolve the poser of how you can use the existing and already paid-for security resources to promote electoral security and how electoral security will enhance overall national security in the medium to the long run.

Community and Religious Leaders

- Religious and community leaders need to be encouraged to use their platforms to promote messages of peace and tolerance.
- Interfaith collaboration should be encouraged to address underlying socio-economic and political factors contributing to conflicts

Media House

- Media houses are encouraged to ensure that they do not publish provocative content as this could lead to violent conflicts before, during, and after the election. They should verify all news and always ensure they publish information based on physical and hard evidence.
- Media houses should ensure that they create spaces for fair play by granting access and coverage to the activities of all political parties and their candidates without appearing to the public as being partial.
- Media houses should ensure that their platforms are used as avenues to educate voters, especially on the use of new election technologies and procedures.

Electoral Violent Incident

Incident Date	State	LGA	Location	Form of Violence	Incident Description	Perpetrator	Perpetrator Gender	Victim Gender	Fatalities	Media Source
14-Jan-2023	Imo	Ideato North	Akokwa	Attack	On 14 January 2023, an unidentified armed group invaded the residence of the CUPP's spokesperson in the Umukeygwu community, Akokwa (Ideato North, Imo), when he was meeting with some of his supporters. The armed group shot and killed four persons, including the PDP's candidate for Ideato north and south constituency for the Federal House of Representatives. They also burnt some vehicles. 4 fatalities reported.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Male	4	Nigeria Punch; The Cable (Nigeria)
15-Jan-2023	Imo	Ahiazu Mbaise	Oru	Armed clash	Around 15 January 2023 (as reported), an unidentified armed group, numbering about twenty men, shot and killed a security guard as they attacked the INEC office in Oru (Ahiazu Mbaise, Imo). The armed group suspected to be Eastern Security Network (ESN), dressed in the ESN uniform, invaded the INEC office in search of the officers distributing the permanent cards. The assailants were heard shouting, 'No elections in Biafra Land.' 1 fatality reported.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	1	Daily Post (Nigeria)
25-Jan-2023	Kogi	Igalamela/Odolu	Ajaka	Attack	On 25 January 2023, suspected loyalists of the APC and the Kogi state governor attacked members of the PDP and vandalized the party's offices in Ajaka (Igalamela, Kogi) and Aloma. Vehicles and other properties were damaged and at least one person sustained machete cuts.	Political Actors	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Sahara Reporters

25-Jan-2023	Kogi	Ofu	Aloma	Attack	On 25 January 2023, suspected loyalists of the APC and the Kogi state governor attacked members of the PDP and vandalized the party's offices in Aloma (Ofu, Kogi) and Ajaka. Vehicles and other properties were damaged and at least one person sustained machete cuts.	Political Actors	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Sahara Reporters
19-Jan-2023	Imo	Ideato North	Ndizuogu	Attack	On 19 January 2023, an unidentified armed group shot and abducted the Sole Administrator of the Ideato North Local Government Area of Imo State with two others in the Imoko community, Arondizuogu or Ndizuogu (Ideato North, Imo). The administrator was shot in the leg and was abducted after setting his house on fire. Another source reported that the APC party chairman of the area was abducted together with the sole Administrator.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Blueprint; Nigeria Punch
25-Feb-2023	Kogi	Dekina	Dekina	Looting/property destruction	Looting: On 25 February 2023, an unidentified armed group in large numbers stole some ballot boxes from Odaba polling unit in Dekina LGA (Kogi). The group was armed with guns, machetes also broke chairs and dispersed voters.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Blueprint; Nigeria Punch
25-Feb-2023	Kogi	Okene	Okene	Attack	On 25 February 2023, suspected APC members killed a PDP agent during the elections at Okene (Okene, Kogi).	Political Actors	Unidentified	Unidentified	1	Sahara Reporters
25-Feb-2023	Kogi	Dekina	Dekina	Looting/property destruction	Looting: On 25 February 2023, an unidentified armed group stole ballot boxes from seven polling units in Dekina town (Dekina, Kogi).	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Premium Times (Nigeria)
25-Feb-2023	Kogi	Dekina	Ayangba	Attack	On 25 February 2023, a presumed unidentified armed group killed a voter at a polling unit at Ayangba (Dekina, Kogi).	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	1	Blueprint; Daily Trust (Nigeria)

25-Feb-2023	Kogi	Dekina	Ayangba	Attack	On 25 February 2023, a soldier stabbed an APC polling unit leader and killed him at Ayangba (Dekina, Kogi) after he was invited to the unit to calm violence during voting. Some sources reported that he was killed when he attempted to snatch a ballot box.	State Actors	Unidentified	Male	1	Blueprint; Daily Leadership (Nigeria); Nigeria Herald
24-Jan-2023	Imo	Onuimo	Okwelle	Abduction/forced disappearance	On 24 January 2023, an unidentified armed group abducted a female APC member in Okwelle (Onuimo, Imo). There are no reports about ransom demands.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Daily Trust (Nigeria); Nigeria Punch
25-Feb-2023	Kogi	Dekina	Ayangba	Armed clash	On 25 February 2023, soldiers killed three members of an unidentified armed group who attempted to steal electoral materials at Ayangba (Dekina, Kogi).	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	3	Risk and Strategic Management, Corporation
25-Feb-2023	Kogi	Olamaboro	Imane	Attack	On 25 February 2023, an unidentified armed group that was hired by the Chairman of Olamaboro LGA who is also an APC member attacked a youth leader of the PDP in Imane (Olamaboro, Kogi). The victim's car was destroyed and the assailants threatened to murder him if the APC lost the elections in the LGA.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Male	0	Sahara Reporters
26-Feb-2023	Kogi	Lokoja	Lokoja	Abduction/forced disappearance	On 26 February 2023, suspected APC members abducted five INEC presiding officers in Kogi state, location coded to Lokoja (Lokoja, Kogi).	Political Actors	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Sahara Reporters

19-Mar-2023	Kogi	Lokoja	Obajana	Armed clash	On 19 March 2023, an unidentified armed group clashed with policemen when they attacked INEC officials and ad-hoc staff at Obajana (Lokoja, Kogi). A reinforcement of policemen also arrived and engaged the assailants who eventually fled with varying degrees of injuries. 96 victims comprising INEC officials, ad hoc staff and bus drivers were rescued, three injured victims were evacuated to the hospital. Six INEC officials were abducted, a ransom of 50 million naira was demanded for their release.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Daily Post (Nigeria); Nigeria Punch; Sahara Reporters
2-Apr-2023	Kogi	Dekina	Oganenigu	Attack	On 2 April 2023, an unidentified armed group in their hundreds attacked civilians in Oganenigu (Dekina, Kogi) and killed 10 persons including the APC ward chairman of Oganenigu and a pastor who initially fled but went back to the church when he thought the assailants had left. Hundreds of houses were also set ablaze, other sources report that at least 50 houses were burnt by the assailants who shot people on sight when they arrived.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	10	Blueprint; Daily Independent (Nigeria); Daily Trust (Nigeria); Sahara Reporters
24-Jan-2023	Imo	Onuimo	Okwe	Attack	On 24 January 2023, an unidentified armed group killed an APC ward chairman when they invaded his residence at Umuchoke Okwe, coded to Okwe (Onuimo, Imo). The victim was an aide of a former organizing secretary of the APC, five other chieftains of the party were abducted by the assailants who shot in the air to scare residents away.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	1	Nigeria Punch; The Cable (Nigeria)

4-Feb-2023	Imo	Okiawe	Ihube	Looting/ property destruction	Property destruction: On 4 February 2023, an unidentified armed group set the houses and properties of an LP candidate for Okiawe state constituency and chieftain of the party at Ihube (Okiawe, Imo). The houses of the candidate's father, uncle and other relatives were also set ablaze.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Blueprint; Nigeria Punch
6-Feb-2023	Imo	Oru East	Omuma	Looting/ property destruction	Property destruction: On 6 February 2023, an unidentified armed group destroyed canopies and a power generating set when they invaded the venue of an APC rally in Omuma (Oru East, Imo). The assailants who arrived in 5 hilux van and with weapons and gas bottles shot sporadically and stole the phones that were abandoned by their owners who fled.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Blueprint
7-Feb-2023	Imo	Ideato North	Akokwa	Attack	On 7 February 2023, an unidentified armed group abducted the brother of the spokesperson of CUPP who is also a PDP candidate for the House of Representatives at Akokwa (Ideato North, Imo) and vandalized his house according to him, the house came under heavy gunfire by the assailants who were armed with explosives and shot water tanks because they assumed he was hiding inside.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Male	0	Blueprint; Daily Leadership (Nigeria); New Telegraph; Nigeria Punch
11-Feb-2023	Imo	Mbaitoli	Ogbaku	Attack	On 11 February 2023, an unidentified armed group shot and wounded the PDP chairman of Ogbaku ward at his residence in Umunomo Nsookpo (Mbaitoli, Imo) coded to Ogbaku. The victim was shot in one his legs by the assailants who gained entrance into the compound by scaling the fence and fled after the shooting.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Nigeria Punch; Premium Times (Nigeria)

22-Feb-2023	Imo	Okigwe	Amuro	Abduction/ forced disappearance	On 22 February 2023, an unidentified armed group abducted the wife of the traditional head when they invaded Amuro community (Okigwe, Imo) and set some houses ablaze. The homes of the LP and APC chairmen were affected, there are no reports about ransom demands and some residents fled the community.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Daily Post (Nigeria); Nigeria Punch
22-Feb-2023	Imo	Ohaji Egbema	Umuapu	Attack	On 22 February 2023, an unidentified armed group attacked the PDP House of Representatives candidate for Ohaji-Egbema, Oguta and Oru West federal constituency at Umuapu (Ohaji, Imo). The party's publicity secretary in Imo state claimed that assailants were state sanctioned, and they attacked the candidate, party members and other locals at the arena where he was wrapping up his campaign. Casualties are unknown.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Nigeria Punch; Sahara Reporters
23-Feb-2023	Imo	Ihite Ubooma	Okata	Armed clash	On 23 February 2023, an unidentified armed group suspected to be assassins engaged in an armed clash with the security detail (assumed Police) who were attached to the convoy of the APC House of Representatives candidate for Okigwe South federal constituency at Alike, near Okata (Ihite Ubooma, Imo) as they were returning from a campaign rally. The assailants ambushed the candidate's convoy which some state government appointees were part of and shot at the cars, there were no casualties.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	New Telegraph, Sun (Nigeria); Vanguard (Nigeria)
23-Feb-2023	Imo	Orlu	Orlu	Armed clash	On 23 February 2023, an unidentified armed group killed a policeman who was providing security for the elections in Orlu (Orlu, Imo).	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	1	Blueprint

24-Feb-2023	Imo	Ohaji Egbema	Mmahu-Egbema	Attack	On 24 February 2023, an unidentified armed group attacked the house of the PDP House of Representatives candidate for Ohaji-Egbema, Oguta and Oru West federal constituency at Umuorji (Ohaji, Imo) coded to Mmahu-Egbema. The party's publicity secretary in Imo state claimed that assailants were state sanctioned; they beat up everyone in the house, abducted the candidate's family members and supporters when they could not find him. Casualties are unknown.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Nigeria Punch, Sahara Reporters
25-Feb-2023	Imo	Owerri Municipal	Owerri	Armed clash	On 25 February 2023, an unidentified armed group engaged EFCC officers who were on election monitoring duty in an armed clash at Cherubim Junction in Owerri (Owerri Municipal, Imo). The assailants who were suspected to have been involved in vote buying fled.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Blueprint; Daily Post (Nigeria); New Telegraph
7-Mar-2023	Imo	Okiawe	Umulolo	Remote explosive/landmine/IED	On 7 March 2023, an unidentified armed group detonated IEDs and set the home of the PDP candidate for Okiawe constituency in the Imo state house of assembly ablaze in Umulolo community (Okiawe, Imo). Two houses and vehicles that were parked within the compound were destroyed.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Male	0	Daily Trust (Nigeria); Nigeria Punch
18-Mar-2023	Imo	Ideato South	Dikenaifai	Abduction/forced disappearance	On 18 March 2023, an unidentified armed group abducted 19 INEC ad-hoc staff who were on their way to seven different polling units in Ugbele ward 6 (Ideato South, Imo) coded to Dikenaifai. The abductees were rescued by the police, there are no reports of a clash or ransom payment.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Daily Post (Nigeria)

18-Mar-2023	Imo	Ideato South	Dikenafai	Attack	On 18 March 2023, an unidentified armed group beat and wounded a retired soldier at her polling unit in Dikenafai (Ideato South, Imo) for attempting to prevent them from rigging an election as claimed by the victim.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Guardian (Nigeria)
3-Jun-2023	Kogi	Lokoja	Lokoja	Armed clash	On 3 June 2023, supporters of the Kogi state SDP governorship candidate clashed with the convoy of the Kogi state governor near Lokoja (Lokoja, Kogi). Some of the governor's aides sustained injuries, cars and cars were destroyed. Both parties accused the other of being responsible for the attack.	Political Actors	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Blueprint; Daily Independent (Nigeria); Daily Trust (Nigeria)
18-Mar-2023	Bayelsa	Ogbia	Otuokpot	Looting/property destruction	Property destruction: On 18 March 2023, an unidentified armed group hijacked and burned election materials meant for four wards in Ogbia constituency 2 at Otuokpot (Ogbia, Bayelsa).	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Daily Trust (Nigeria); Nigeria Punch; Sahara Reporters
15-Apr-2023	Imo	Owerri Municipal	Owerri	Mob violence	On 15 April 2023, a group affiliated with a member of APC attacked the delegates and officials of the party in Owerri (Owerri Municipal, Imo). The party claimed that the leader of the group was a candidate who did not qualify to participate in the party's governorship primary election. Casualties are unknown.	Rioters	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Nigeria Punch

25-Feb-2023	Bayelsa	Sagbama	Sagbama	Mob violence	On 25 February 2023, a group suspected to be PDP supporters attacked 3 journalists at the voting area of a polling unit at Ebelebiri community in Sagbama LGA (Bayelsa). The journalists were assaulted, their phones were seized and cameras were broken; two other journalists were chased away from the community and the younger brother to the APC House of Representatives candidate was beaten. The attack resulted from a disagreement over who would aid a voter.	Rioters	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Daily Post (Nigeria)
25-Feb-2023	Bayelsa	Sagbama	Ofofi	Mob violence	On 25 February 2023, a group shot and wounded two women at a polling unit in Ofofi ward (Sagbama, Bayelsa). The first woman was attacked following a misunderstanding, while the second was hit by a bullet stray bullet.	Rioters	Unidentified	Female	0	Daily Trust (Nigeria); Nigeria Punch
22-Jun-2023	Kogi	Ofu	Ejule	Armed clash	On 22 June 2023, policemen engaged an unidentified armed group led by Kabir Bala, also known as Okwo in an armed clash at Ejule (Ofu, Kogi). The group's leader who the police claimed was responsible for a number of attacks in the area was killed, other members of the group fled with varying degrees of injuries. Other sources report that Okwo was used by politicians to attack their opponents and that he was killed for withdrawing his support for the governor and giving it to the governorship candidate of the SDP.	State Actors	Unidentified	Unidentified	1	Guardian (Nigeria); Nigeria Punch; Sahara Reporters
25-Feb-2023	Bayelsa	Yenagoa	Yenagoa	Excessive force against protesters	On 25 February 2023, residents of Epie Atissa protested at the INEC office in Yenagoa (Yenagoa, Bayelsa) over the lack of voting materials and absence of ad-hoc staff at polling units in the area. Operatives of DSS shot sporadically at the protesters to disperse them.	Protesters	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	New Telegraph

9-Jul-2023	Kogi	Lokoja	Lokoja	Looting/ property destruction	Property destruction: On 9 July 2023, an unidentified armed group vandalized the secretariat of the SDP and burned some materials in Lokoja (Lokoja, Kogi). The party's deputy governor-ship candidate claimed that the vandals were suspected to have been sponsored. Other sources report that the party claimed that the attack was sponsored by the state government while the state government denied the claims.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Blueprint; Daily Independent (Nigeria); Daily Post (Nigeria)
9-May-2023	Imo	Oru East	Awo-Omamma	Attack	On 9 May 2023, suspected IPOB militants ambushed and killed a member of the Imo state's APC presidential campaign council of Oru-East LGA around Awo-Omamma technical school (Oru East, Imo). The assailants dumped body of the victim, who was also a kinsman of the state governor and a retired military officer in the booth of his car, where it was later found.	Sectarian actors	Unidentified	Male	1	Blueprint; Daily Post (Nigeria); Daily Trust (Nigeria); Sahara Reporters
10-May-2023	Imo	Ehime Mbano	Umueze	Abduction/ forced disappearance	On 10 May 2023, suspected armed pastoralists abducted a chieftain of the APC from his residence at Umuarugo village in Umueze II (Ehime Mbano, Imo). The abductors trailed the abductee who is the APC's chairman in the village to his residence and shot sporadically before taking him away. There are no reports about ransom demands.	Ethnic/communal clash	Unidentified	Male	0	Daily Leadership (Nigeria); Sahara Reporters; Sun (Nigeria)

23-Jul-2023	Kogi	Lokoja	Lokoja	Looting/ property destruction	Property destruction: On 23 July 2023, an unidentified armed group suspected to be affiliated to the state governor set the campaign office of the SDP governorship candidate ablaze in Lokoja (Lokoja, Kogi). Vehicles parked around the building were also set ablaze, other sources report that the security men on the premises were also attacked without being precise on how they were attacked. The SDP deputy governorship candidate claimed that the members of the APC were responsible for the attack.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	Sahara Reporters; Vanguard (Nigeria)
10-Aug-2023	Imo	Owerri Municipal	Owerri	Attack	On 10 August 2023, an unidentified armed group suspected to be assassins shot at the vehicle of an former spokesperson of the PDP at Akwakuma/ Mbieri road in Owerri (Owerri Municipal, Imo) as claimed by the victim. A shop owner was abducted in the process. There were no casualties.	Unknown gunmen		Unidentified	0	Vanguard (Nigeria)
22-Aug-2023	Imo	Owerri Municipal	Owerri	Peaceful protest	On 22 August 2023, supporters of a faction of the Labor Party protested and blocked the road leading to the venue of the party's campaign in Owerri (Owerri Municipal, Imo) over claims that the party's presidential candidate was supporting a governorship candidate that had been re-moved by the court.	Protesters		Unidentified	0	Blueprint

13-Aug-2023	Bayelsa	Nembe	Nembe	Attack	On 13 August 2023, an unidentified armed group killed a civilian at Opu-Nembe community in Nembe LGA (Bayelsa) as claimed by members of the community. The PDP claimed that the assailants were working for the APC and also that the APC governorship candidate was behind the attacks, over the rejection of his candidature by the community.	Unknown gunmen		Unidentified	1	Daily Leadership (Nigeria); Sahara Reporters
15-Aug-2023	Bayelsa	Nembe	Opu-Nembe	Attack	One killed as gunmen invade Opu Nembe community	Unknown gunmen		Unidentified	1	https://guardian.ng/news/one-killed-as-gunmen-invade-opu-nembe-community/
24-Sep-2023	Bayelsa	Southern Ijaw	Otuan Community	Attack	PDP Political thugs attack APC thugs	Civilians	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	NEVR monitors
25-Sep-2023	Kogi	Dekina	Antanegoma area, Anyigba town	Looting/property destruction	On 25th September 2023, Sporadic shooting in Anyigba town by APC thugs. The target of the operation was the compound of Hon. Muhammed Ojile, an SDP coordinator.	Political Actors			0	NEVR monitors
27-Sep-2023	Kogi	Dekina	Ajiolo Oji-Aji	Attack	On 27 September 2023, Civilians were attacked by political thugs for publicly supporting SDP.	Political Actors			0	NEVR monitors
28-Sep-2023	Kogi	Dekina	Ajiolo Oji-Aji	Attack	On 28 September 2023, individual identified as Aminu Shaibu was attacked and injured and his properties were vandalized by APC thugs for supporting SDP.	Political Actors			0	NEVR monitors
29-Sep-2023	Kogi	Koton Karfe	Ohimege palace	Looting/property destruction	On 29 September 2023, armed thugs identified as APC supporters vandalised bill boards, SDP banners and caused nuisance around Koton-Karfe Local government. Attacks were also directed towards SDP supporters	Political Actors			0	NEVR monitors

29-Sep-2023	Kogi	Koton Karfe		Armed clash	On 29 September 2023, An APC supporters car was attacked by SDP supporters	Political Actors			0	NEVR monitors
29-Sep-2023	Kogi	Koton Karfe	Ohimege palace	Armed Clash	On 29 September 2023, A female identified as an APC thug attempted to stab a police security who was protecting the SDP governorship candidate. She was shot down in the process.	State Actors		Female	1	NEVR monitors
29-Sep-2023	Kogi	Koton Karfe	Ohimege palace	Attack	On 29 September 2023, Koton-Karfe local government chairman was injured while engaging in violence directed towards SDP governorship candidate supporters	Others			0	NEVR monitors
7-Oct-2023	Kogi	Dekina	Anyigba town	Armed Clash	On 7 October 2023, there was a clash between APC and SDP supporters.	Political Actors			0	NEVR monitors
7-Oct-2023	Kogi	Dekina	Anyigba town	Armed Clash	On 7 October 2023, There was a clash between APC supporters and Joint task force. The clash led to the death of 2 individuals including an APC ward chairman, Abbas Ojonimi Shaibu.	State Actors			2	NEVR monitors
11-Oct-2023	Kogi	Idah	Ayija market	Riot	Vandalisation of billboards by political thugs	Political thugs	Male	Unidentified	0	NEVR Monitor
1-Oct-2023	Imo	Owerri Municipal	Mallam Ali Cora	Peaceful protest	On 28 September 2023, Labour Party leaders protested at the INEC state Headquarters in Owerri (Owerri Municipal, Imo) over the alleged partisanship of the Imo State Resident Electoral Commissioner. They demanded immediate redeployment of the Electoral Commissioner to ensure credible elections in the state.	Unknown gunmen			0	Daily Post (Nigeria)
29-Sep-2023	Kogi	Lokoja	Koton-Karfe	Attack	On 26 September 2023, medical doctors protested on the streets of Lokoja (Lokoja, Kogi) over the abduction of their colleague [code separately].	Unknown gunmen			1	Daily Leadership (Nigeria)

24-Sep-2023	Kogi	Igalamela/ Odolu	Oforachi	Abduction/ forced disappearance	Property destruction: On 19 September 2023, an unidentified armed group set the house of a member of the Oteri-Ughelli community electoral committee ablaze over issues related to the community's election. Location coded to Ughelli (Ughelli North, Delta).	Civilians			0	Daily Trust (Nigeria)
24-Sep-2023	Imo	Mbaitoli	Ogbaku	Abduction/ forced disappearance	On 18 September 2023, an unidentified armed group abducted a man and his daughter along Afon road (Asa, Kwara) while they were returning from the farm. The police claimed that the girl was rescued, there are no reports on ransom demands for the man.	Unknown gunmen			0	Risk and Strategic Management, Corporation
17-Oct-2023	Bayelsa	Southern Ijaw	Amassoma Ward 10	Armed clash	As at the late hours of yesterday 17th October, 2023. Some APC supporters in the community went and destroy all the PDP banners that where at the community round about, so the PDP supporters getting to find out also this morning went and destroy all the APC Banners in their ward Secretariat.	Political thugs	Unidentified	Male	0	NEVR Monitor
18-Oct-2023	Kogi	Otu	Ejule	Attack	:APC THUGS ATTACK SDP SUPPORTER DURING SDP RALLY AT EJULE	Political thugs	Male	Male and Female	0	NEVR Monitor
18-Oct-2023	Kogi	Igalamela/ Odolu	Ajaka	Attack	APC thug AKA Makama and boys terrorizing Ajaka (shooting bullet) and attacked some SDP supporters ,collect Thier phones and scared them away with bullet.	Political thugs	Male	Male	0	NEVR Monitor

14-Oct-2023	Kogi	Idah	ofiji polling unit	Other	on 14)ctober 2023, SDP supporter came and distracted their supporter not to do the accredited-itation that it was sponsored by the yahaya bello to get their PVC number,	Political thugs	Uniden-tified	Uniden-tified	0	NEVR Mon-itor
19-Oct-2023	Kogi	Idah	Idah	Attack	Cunmen ambush Kogi SDP guber candidate's convoy again, 'Police ASP' arrested	Political thugs	Male	Male	0	Cunmen ambush Kogi SDP guber candidate's convoy again, 'Police ASP' arrested - The Advocate (advocate-ng.com)
19-Oct-2023	Kogi	Idah	Idah	Armed clash	Kogi poli: Many injured as APC, SDP supporters engage in gun duel	Political thugs	Uniden-tified	Uniden-tified	0	https://punchng.com/kogi-poli-many-injured-as-apc-sdp-supporters-engage-in-gun-duel/
18-Oct-2023	Kogi	Ofu	Aja-Odi Ago-joeju	Looting/property destruction	Kogi Governorship Poli: Armed Political Thugs Attack SDP Chairman In Country Home, Destroy Vehicle	Political thugs	Uniden-tified	Male	0	Kogi Governorship Poli: Armed Political Thugs Attack SDP Chairman In Country Home, Destroy Vehicle Sahara Reporters
22-Oct-2023	Kogi	Ofu	Ejule	Attack	APC thugs attack SDP members , seizing their valuable properties	Political thugs	Male And Female	Male and Female	0	NEVR Mon-itor

22-Oct-2023	Kogi	dekina	Alokegbe Egume	Attack	Brother and a Strong member of APC in dekina local government has just killed.	Unknown gunmen	Unidentified	Male	1	NEVR Monitor
24-Oct-2023	Kogi	Ofu	Ugolawo	Attack	APC thugs attacked SDP Ofu coordinator. Destroyed Properties	Political thugs	Male	Male	0	NEVR Monitor
28-Oct-2023	Bayelsa	Kolokuma/Opokuma	Gbarabiri community in Opokuma clan	Attack	PDP supporters attacked apc supporters	Political thugs	Male	Male	0	NEVR Monitor
27-Oct-2023	Imo	Nkwere	Nkwere	Vote trading	APC members are collecting PVC Card numbers for empowerment promise to give them 20k each vote cast	Political Actors	Male	Male and Female	0	NEVR Monitor
29-Oct-2023	Bayelsa	Kolokuma/Opokuma	Wanka-wari compound in kaiama town	Looting/property destruction	Description: PDP party supporters went and destroy APC posters and flags in (DR Appah Souyo house) and also shooting	Political thugs	Unidentified	Unidentified	0	NEVR Monitor
29-Oct-2023	Kogi	Ofu	Ejule Community	Attack	APC supporters attack and vandalize properties in Ofu Local Government Area	Political thugs	Male and Female	Unidentified	0	NEVR Monitor
31-Oct-2023	Bayelsa	Sagbama	Undubiri quarter tungbo	Other	intimidation/attached on APC party members	Political thugs	Male	Male	0	NEVR Monitor
3-Nov-2023	Bayelsa	Nembe	Nembe Cit	Mob violence	Angry APC Youths attacked PDP Youths in the community Yesterday, Thursday. One is confirmed Dead and many others are hospitalised.	Political thugs	Unidentified	Unidentified	1	NEVR Monitor
5-Nov-2023	Imo	Owerri North	orie obliezena	Attack	Guber candidate of Imo state was attacked on his way to rally	Political thugs	Unidentified	Male	0	NEVR Monitor
6-Nov-2023	kogi	olamaboro	Ogugu	Mob violence	Attack on SDP supporter's	Political thugs	Male	Unidentified	0	NEVR Monitor
7-Nov-2023	Kogi	dekina	Anyigba	Attack	A young Police Officer with three kids was killed today the 7th November, 2023 at Anyigba in an over night raid	Political thugs	Unidentified	Male	1	NEVR Monitor
7-Nov-2023	Kogi	dekina	Anyigba	Other	Joint security operation in Anyigba neutralizes 3 political thugs, recover s 2 AK47 rifles	Political thugs	Unidentified	Male	3	NEVR Monitor

8-Nov-2023	Kogi	dekina	Anyigba	Attack	KOGI CUBER: Suspected Political Thugs Attack, Kill Three Policemen, Four Others	Political Thugs	Unidentified	Male and Unidentified	4	KOGI CUBER: Suspected Political Thugs Attack, Kill Three Policemen, Four Others - Truth Live Int'l (truth-livenews.com)
7-Nov-2023	Bayelsa	Yenagoa Yenagoa	Kpansia	Attack	Thugs attack Bayelsa PDP chief-tain's residence, two injured	Political Thugs	Unidentified	Male and Unidentified	0	Thugs attack Bayelsa PDP chieftain's residence, two injured - BarristerNG.com
7-Nov-2023	Kogi	Ofu	Ogwolawo	Mob violence	APC thugs attacked SDP Supporters	Political Thugs	Unidentified	Female	0	NEVR Monitor
8-Nov-2023	Kogi	Yagba East	Ijowa Isanlu	Mob violence	APC thugs beating ADC supporters	Political Thugs	Unidentified	Male and Female	0	NEVR Monitor
9-Nov-2023	Bayelsa	Ogbia	Ologoghe Community	Mob violence	APC Thugs attacked 4 PDP Supporters in Ologoghe Community, Ogbia LGA	Political Thugs	Unidentified	Male and Female	0	NEVR Monitor
10-Nov-2023	Bayelsa	Brass	Brass Jetty	Mob violence	Physical assault on CTC Brass LGA and PDP LGA chairman by APC supporters lead by APC LGA chairman and former Brass LGA chairman at Brass jetty over bag of money on 9th of Nov 2023 at 8pm	Political Thugs	Unidentified	Male	0	NEVR Monitor
10-Nov-2023	Bayelsa	Brass	Twon Brass jetty	Mob violence	Bayelsa Pol: Tension As APC, PDP Supporters Fight Over Electoral Materials	Party member	Male and Female	Unidentified	0	Bayelsa Pol: Tension As APC, PDP Supporters Fight Over Electoral Materials - CityMirrorNews

10-Nov-2023	Bayelsa	Yenegoa Yenagoa	saptex road yenagoa	Attack	Dynamite of a PDP chieftain's house	Political Thugs	Uniden- tified	Male	0	NEVR Mon- itor
11-Nov-2023	Bayelsa	Sagbama	Ward 6	Abduc- tion/ forced disap- pearance	As at 7:30pm last night the SPO of Ossiamma was abducted by unknown gunmen	Unknown gunmen	Male	Male	0	NEVR Mon- itor
11-Nov-2023	Bayelsa	Ekeremor	Ward 008, polling unit 002	Attack	A young man came with cutlass and snatched election materials	Political Thugs	Male	Male	0	NEVR Mon- itor
14-Nov-2023	Bayelsa	Brass	Odioa- ma Ward 5	Attack	Physical attack by same party followers due to the misunderstanding that erupted on the Bayelsa State Governorship election day. Yesterday night the APC supporters injured themselves with bottles at a bar while trying to have a peaceful reunion after the town chiefs had settled their differences at about 6:45pm yesterday.	Party member	Male	Male	0	NEVR Mon- itor
7-Nov-2023	Kogi	Dekina	Ayangba	Armed clash	On 7 November 2023, an unidentified armed group suspected to be affiliated with the APC fired indiscriminately at policemen and other security guards at the country home of the director-general of the SDP gubernatorial campaign in Ayangba (Dekina, Kogi). At least one policeman and four other persons were killed, their corpses were taken away by the assailants. The police claimed that in collaboration with DSS and NSCDC operatives, it carried out an operation and killed two suspected political thugs who were housed by politicians and that two members of the team were wounded while 7 suspects were arrested.	Unidenti- fied Armed Group (Nigeria)			5	Daily Post (Nigeria); Sahara Re- porters

5-Nov-2023	Imo	Owerri North	Obibiezena	Attack	On 5 November 2023, policemen and Ebube Agu operatives shot at the convoy of the Imo state LP gubernatorial candidate at Obibiezena (Owerri North, Imo) and prevented him from passing the road as claimed by the LP candidate. He also claimed that the was denied access to the road because he was going to a church where both he and the governor were invited. The police denied attacking him and claimed that he was only asked to not campaign in the area because the APC candidate was already doing so. There were no casualties.	Police Forces of Nigeria (2023-)			0	Nigeria Punch; Sahara Reporters; Sun (Nigeria)
3-Nov-2023	Bayelsa	Nembe	Nembe	Attack	On 3 November 2023, an armed group suspected to be APC killed a PDP chieftain and injured another in the Ogbolomabiri community in Nembe LGA coded to Nembe (Nembe, Bayelsa). The attack occurred about eight days before the gubernatorial election in the state.	Unidentified Armed Group (Nigeria)			1	Daily Trust (Nigeria)
31-Oct-2023	Imo	Owerri Municipal	Owerri	Looting/property destruction	Property destruction: On 31 October 2023, an unknown group of people tore down the APC campaign posters of the incumbent Governor of Imo State in Owerri (Owerri Municipal, Imo). Opposition parties were suspected of masterminding the poster destruction. They were angry since they could not mount their posters due to the new rule made by the state government, mandating them to pay N54,000 million before they could mount their political banners.	Unidentified Armed Group (Nigeria)			0	Vanguard (Nigeria)

25-Oct-2023	Kogi	Dekina	Dekina	Attack	On 25 October 2023, an armed group affiliated with the APC attacked and shot at a supporter of the SDP at his residence in Dekina town (Dekina, Kogi) over his refusal to support the APC governorship candidate. The victim was critically wounded.	APC: All Progressives Congress			0	Sahara Reporters
24-Oct-2023	Kogi	Ofu	Gwolawo	Looting/ property destruction	Property destruction: On 24 October 2023, an armed group suspected to be affiliated with the APC vandalized the campaign office of the SDP in Ofu LGA coded to Gwolawo (Ofu, Kogi). The assailants shot sporadically during the attack, vehicles and valuables worth millions of naira were destroyed.	APC: All Progressives Congress			0	Sahara Reporters
20-Oct-2023	Kogi	Igalamela	Ajaka	Attack	Around 20 October 2023 (as reported), an unidentified armed group attacked SDP members and destroyed their properties in Ajaka (Igalamela, Kogi). The SDP members engaged them and overpowered the group. A police officer was caught among the suspects. There were no fatalities.	Unidentified Armed Group (Nigeria)			0	Daily Post (Nigeria)
19-Oct-2023	Kogi	Ofu	Ejule	Attack	Around 19 October 2023 (as reported), an unidentified armed group suspected to be APC members disrupted the SDP political rally at the St. Matthew Primary School in Ejule-Kogi, Ejule (Ofu, Kogi). The group invaded the venue, shot weapons sporadically and injured many people. They destroyed canopies, public address systems, chairs and the podium arranged for the event.	APC: All Progressives Congress			0	Premium Times (Nigeria)

18-Oct-2023	Kogi	Idah	Idah	Armed clash	On 18 October 2023, APC and SDP supporters engaged in a gun-fight in Idah (Idah, Kogi). Many people, including a police officer, sustained bullet injuries, and vehicles were vandalized. There were no fatalities.	APC: All Progressives Congress			0	Daily Post (Nigeria)
23-Nov-2023	Imo	Ezinihite Mbaise	Okpofe	Attack	On 23 November 2023, an unidentified armed group on motorcycles shot and killed the PDP chairman, Ife/Akpodim/Chokoneze Ward, in the Ezinihite Mbaise LGA, coded to Okpofe (Ezinihite Mbaise, Imo). No further details.	Unidentified Armed Group (Nigeria)		1		Nigeria Punch; Sahara Reporters
29-Nov-2023	Kogi	Lokoja	Lokoja	Violent demonstration	On 29 November 2023, SDP supporters demonstrated at the headquarters of INEC in Lokoja (Lokoja, Kogi) over claims that INEC was dubious and demanded that the election materials be moved to Abuja. The demonstrators threw objects at passers-by and policemen threw tear gas to disperse them.	Rioters (Nigeria)		0		Daily Independent (Nigeria); Daily Trust (Nigeria); Nigeria Punch

End notes

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53 A.N Amosu Avenue, NAF Valley
Estate, Behind Mogadishu Barracks
Asokoro, FCT-Abuja.

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