



For Immediate Release.

Friday, November 14, 2025

RockView Royale Hotel, Wuse 2, Abuja

KDI'S FINAL STATEMENT ON THE CONDUCT OF THE 2025 OFF-CYCLE ANAMBRA STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION.

Distinguished members of the press, ladies and gentlemen,

Kim Impact Development Initiative (KDI) presents its final assessment of the 2025 Anambra State off-cycle governorship election held on Saturday, November 8, 2025. Through the Strengthening Electoral Accountability Project (SEAP), supported by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), KDI engaged across the pre-election, election day, and post-election phases of the process. Our intervention covered four critical areas:

Intervention Area	Description
Nigeria Election Violence and Resolution (NEVER)	Builds a multi-stakeholder Election Security Early Warning System supported by globally recognised indicators and real-time data from long-term security monitors to mitigate violence throughout the electoral cycle.
Ballot Integrity Project (BIP)	Conducts analysis of results uploaded on the INEC Result Viewing Portal to identify consistency and issue recommendations for strengthening electoral credibility.
Political Finance Monitoring	Tracks and documents campaign expenditure of parties and candidates to promote compliance with campaign finance regulations and enhance transparency.
Citizen Participation through Technology	Using NaijaElection platform - an ElectionAI civic education tool providing citizens with easy-to-understand and accurate electoral information. KDI also used the NaijaElections DemTalks platform to mobilise young people in Anambra for active participation.

To ensure a comprehensive, data-driven assessment, KDI established a dedicated Election Day Data Room (EDDR) on November 7, 2025. This Election Day Data Room served as the central hub for coordination, verification, and analysis of real-time observation reports. It provided a structured workflow that linked data from the field to decision-makers, partners, and the public.

For the Anambra 2025 governorship election, the EDDR deployed a scientifically grounded observation framework that enabled real-time and inferential analysis of electoral conduct across 1,153 polling units as a sample size. Through KDI's 9jaTalks reporting application, 370 trained observers across the 326 wards submitted live updates, which were verified and analysed by KDI's data analysis team. The EDDR worked collaboratively with domestic and international observer groups to strengthen verification and ensure accuracy.

The 2025 off-cycle Anambra State governorship election recorded a significant improvement in voter turnout, rising to 21.34 per cent compared to the 10.26 per cent turnout in the 2021 election. This improvement reflects a stronger public willingness to participate in the democratic process and indicates growing citizen confidence in electoral engagement.

This development did not occur in isolation. It reflects the collective efforts of multiple actors across the electoral ecosystem who contributed meaningfully to voter mobilisation, safety, transparency, and public trust. The security agencies deserve recognition for maintaining order across most locations before the elections, creating an environment that enabled voters to exercise their franchise. INEC, civil society organisations and the media played a critical role in sensitising voters, providing civic education, and promoting issue-based participation throughout the election period.

Above all, the citizens of Anambra State demonstrated commendable commitment by turning out to vote despite the fears of insecurity aggravating or not, vote trading pressures, and long-standing public scepticism around electoral outcomes. Their resolve to participate underscores the growing demand for accountable governance and reflects the value they continue to place on elections as the legitimate pathway for leadership selection. KDI recognises the contributions of all stakeholders whose combined efforts contributed to this upward shift in turnout and strengthened the democratic process in Anambra State.

KEY OBSERVATIONS/FINDINGS:

Voting Commencement and Operational Readiness

KDI's Election Data Room analysis shows that operational readiness at polling units had a measurable effect on when accreditation and voting commenced across Anambra State. While INEC officials reached many locations within the expected time, the average arrival time stood at 8:11 am. This shows many officials arrived reasonably close to the official start window and before the 8.30 am start time. But accreditation and voting did not begin until an average of 9:13 am, which falls forty-three minutes behind the official commencement time of 8:30 am.

Table 1: INEC officials' arrival times at polling units

Arrival Time Window	Percentage of PUs
Before 7:30 AM	20.29%
7:30 AM - 8:00 AM	26.36%
8:01 AM - 8:30 AM	20.83%
8:31 AM - 9:00 AM	13.68%
After 9:00 AM	18.84%

Table 2: Accreditation and Voting Start Times

Start Time Category	Percentage
Before 8:30am	7.15%
Between 8:30am and 9:00am	48.85%
After 9:00am	43.99%

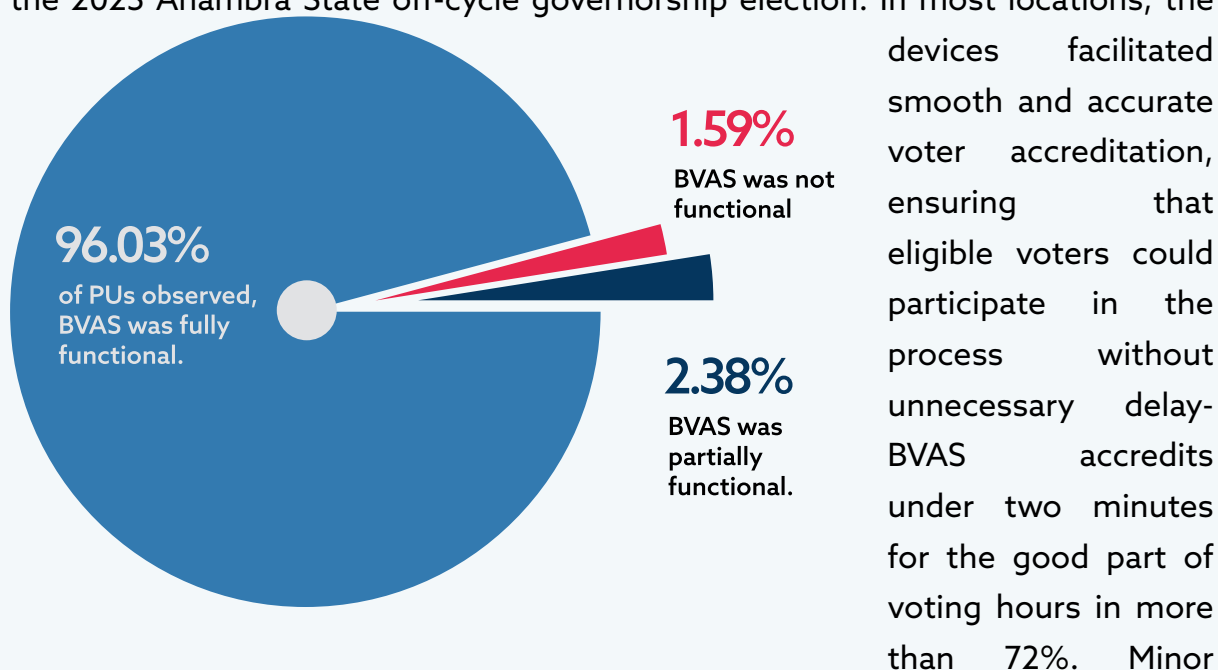
The delay stemmed from several systemic factors reported consistently across multiple wards. In many units, particularly in Awka South, ad-hoc officials had difficulty locating their assigned polling stations. Some officials arrived at the wrong locations and required support from party agents and voters to reroute,

contributing to the late commencement. Security deployment delays also impacted poll opening times. In several locations, INEC officials could not leave the Registration Area Centres as scheduled because security personnel had not arrived, resulting in late movement of election materials to the polling units.

KDI observers documented that only 3 per cent of polling units began the day with incomplete materials. The combined effect of these constraints pulled the average commencement time beyond the official schedule time. This highlights the need for enhanced logistical coordination, improved mapping and routing for ad-hoc staff, tighter security deployment sequencing, and stricter material verification at the RAC level. Strengthening these areas will reduce avoidable delays and contribute to a more efficient and predictable opening process in future elections.

Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) Functionality and Voter Verification

KDI observed that BVAS functioned effectively in over 96% of polling units during the 2025 Anambra State off-cycle governorship election. In most locations, the



instances of fingerprint verification failures were efficiently resolved through facial recognition, demonstrating the resilience of the system in maintaining voter inclusion. However, KDI recorded device malfunctions in 1.59% of the polling units observed but couldn't confirm if there were swift replacements. These isolated failures did not significantly impede voter participation but highlight the importance of maintaining fully operational accreditation devices at every polling unit.

Secrecy of the Ballot and Vote Trading

KDI observed that, while most INEC officials carried out their duties professionally, the physical arrangement and set-up of many polling units in the 2025 Anambra State off-cycle governorship election inadvertently compromised the secrecy of the ballot. This structural shortcoming, combined with lapses in the enforcement of electoral procedures, created conditions conducive to vote trading. Our observers reported widespread instances where voters openly displayed their marked ballots to party agents after voting. In some cases, party agents led voters away from the polling units after verifying their votes before distributing rewards. Such practices undermine the integrity of the electoral process and signal a tacit tolerance across multiple political parties for behaviours that compromise voter autonomy.

Vote trading in Anambra was observed in multiple forms, ranging from the exchange of small items such as snacks and beverages to cash inducements. Reports of this practice came from all the 326 wards, highlighting the pervasive nature of the challenge and its potential to distort electoral outcomes.

The compromise of ballot secrecy has direct implications for the credibility and fairness of the electoral process. It facilitates coercion, encourages transactional voting, and diminishes public confidence in the integrity of elections. KDI's observations underscore the urgent need for stricter enforcement of polling unit layout, improved physical arrangements that protect voter privacy, and heightened oversight by both electoral officials and security personnel. Addressing these vulnerabilities is essential to strengthening electoral integrity, safeguarding the principle of free choice, and restoring public confidence in democratic processes.

Security Presence and Conduct

KDI observed that security personnel were present during the setup phase in most polling locations, with 88.22 per cent of the units reporting the presence of security agents at the start of the process. The Nigeria Police Force accounted for more than 66 per cent of deployments recorded by observers across the state. Despite this, gaps in presence and coverage were evident. For instance, in Awka South LGA, Ward 19, PU 21, no security personnel were sighted as at 9:57 am, long after voting should have commenced.

KDI also observed an uneven distribution of personnel across the local government areas. Such variation was expected due to risk-adjusted deployment strategies recommended in KDI's Election Security Risk Assessment (ESRA), which identified

specific hotspots requiring heavier security presence. The more concerning issue is the disconnect between publicly announced deployment figures and the realities on the ground.

The conduct of security agents throughout Election Day reflected a mixed pattern. Officers generally demonstrated professionalism in their interactions with voters, and most officers were human rights-friendly, and polling environments remained orderly. However, KDI documented one incident in Oyi LGA where a police officer allegedly released tear gas accidentally, causing a temporary disruption at the polling unit. Security performance in addressing electoral offences, particularly vote trading, remained inadequate. Although KDI's earlier findings established the widespread nature of vote buying across the state, security personnel were often seen observing these acts without intervening. Current provisions of the Electoral Act restrict law enforcement officers from making arrests at polling units without the authorisation of the presiding officer. While this legal limitation is acknowledged, KDI believes that the constitutional responsibility of law enforcement to prevent criminal activity provides a basis for officers to act to deter and discourage open violations that compromise electoral integrity. Ongoing legislative amendments present an opportunity to clarify these gaps and strengthen the mandate of security agencies during elections.

Election-Related Violence and Post-Election Security Incidents

KDI, through its Election Day Data Room (EDDR), documented thirty-five (35) incidents of election-related violence across Anambra State during the 2025 governorship election. The incidents captured included group clashes, voter intimidation and harassment, ballot box snatching, murder and accidental discharge by a security officer.

Voter intimidation and harassment accounted for the highest number of reports, with eighteen incidents recorded. Group clashes were documented in fourteen locations, while ballot box snatching occurred in one polling unit (this was done by non-armed actor, security personnel present at the PU were able to curtail this situation and voting resumed). KDI also recorded one case of accidental discharge by a security officer that disrupted voting at the affected polling location.

A fatal incident occurred in Orumba South LGA, where a councillor representing the Owerre-Ezukala community was shot and killed by gunmen at Owerre Ezukala Ward 1. This incident represents the most serious breach of electoral security

observed on Election Day and underscores the persistent vulnerability of political actors and citizens in high-risk communities.

The distribution of confirmed cases shows that Oyi LGA recorded the highest number of incidents with fourteen cases. Njikoka recorded five; Ogbaru and Anambra West had three each; Onitsha North and Orumba South documented two each. Isolated incidents were also reported in Aguata, Anambra East, Anaocha, Nnewi North, Nnewi South and Orumba. The perpetrators varied across locations and included party agents, political thugs and voters.

Despite these thirty-five verified incidents, the broader field data indicate that the election environment remained relatively calm in most polling units. Most security-related disruptions were localised and did not escalate into widespread violence across the state.

Post-election tensions were also reported. A confrontation between soldiers and police officers occurred at a checkpoint along Onitsha Road on Sunday, as officers were returning from duty. The argument escalated, leading to gunfire by soldiers. One police officer was shot in the chest while others sustained injuries. Although this incident occurred outside the polling cycle, it presents a concerning signal regarding inter-agency coordination and underscores the need for strengthened protocols to prevent operational disputes during and after elections.

KDI maintains that the presence of election-related violence, even when relatively contained, requires sustained attention. Continued investment in conflict prevention, intelligence sharing and risk-based deployment will remain essential for building voter confidence and protecting electoral integrity in future elections.

Party Agent Conduct and Political Interference

KDI notes a troubling pattern of interference by political party agents across several polling units, reflecting a coordinated breach of electoral standards that threatens the credibility of the process. Observers documented repeated disruptions driven by party agents from the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), the All Progressives Congress (APC), the Young Progressives Party (YPP), and others operating in ways inconsistent with Nigeria's electoral guidelines.

Field reports show that party agents directly engaged in vote-buying schemes that took different forms, including approaching voters with cash inducements

and setting up informal checkpoints where individuals received payments after casting their ballots. These actions strike at the core of electoral integrity by introducing undue influence into voter decision-making and compromising the freedom of choice required in any democratic election.

KDI also recorded a strong correlation between the misconduct of party agents and several incidents of intimidation, harassment, and clashes around polling units. Their overbearing presence destabilised the voting environment in locations where voter intimidation and harassment were recorded.

The limited response from election officials and security personnel at affected locations increased concerns about enforcement gaps and voter protection. Despite the clear violations occurring in full view of officials, observers did not witness proactive steps to halt these actions. KDI stresses that protecting the sanctity of the vote depends on strict compliance with electoral rules by all stakeholders. Party agents carry a responsibility to support a peaceful and credible process, not to compromise it through actions that distort electoral outcomes.

Electoral Results Management:

Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI) commends INEC for the significant progress recorded in the publication of polling-unit results during the governorship election. The timely upload of 98% of PU results on the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IREV) by midnight greatly enhanced transparency and boosted public confidence at the early stages of the results-management cycle. KDI's preliminary review, carried out through the Ballot Integrity Project methodology, however, identified a number of inconsistencies in registered-voter figures and result documentation that deserve institutional attention.

Our analysis observed variations across three sets of registered-voter totals (pre-election figures, LGA collation announcements, and EC8A records on IReV), as well as mismatches in some polling-unit voter registers and minor discrepancies between accredited-voter numbers and the sum of valid and rejected ballots. KDI also noted isolated inconsistencies between cancellations announced at collation centres and those reflected on IReV, alongside instances of overvoting in a limited number of polling units. These issues point to gaps in data transfer, staff training, supervisory oversight, and database management that INEC should address through an internal audit and improved quality-control protocols.

While these findings highlight areas requiring procedural strengthening, KDI emphasises that the inconsistencies identified are **minute in scale and insufficient to alter the overall outcome of the election**. We therefore encourage INEC to use this review as an opportunity to deepen transparency, reinforce public trust, and strengthen Nigeria's electoral results-management architecture ahead of future polls.

Conclusion

The Anambra governorship election demonstrated areas of operational progress, particularly in the high functionality rate of BVAS devices, and the early publication of polling unit results on the INEC Result Viewing Portal. These gains indicate that elements of Nigeria's electoral reforms are taking root. However, the election also exposed persistent structural and procedural weaknesses that collectively undermine electoral integrity.

The election reflects a system that can deliver credible outcomes when its mechanisms function properly, but remains hindered by gaps in enforcement, training, coordination, and accountability. Addressing these weaknesses is essential to strengthening public trust and upholding Nigeria's democratic process.

Recommendations

1. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

Issue Area	Recommendation
Operational Readiness and Logistics	Strengthen pre-election logistics planning to ensure more consistent poll opening times across all polling units. Improve coordination between RACs and presiding officers to reduce delays linked to movement, incomplete materials, and route confusion.
Polling Unit Setup and Ballot Secrecy	Enforce mandatory polling unit layouts that prioritise ballot secrecy. Deploy supervisory officers with explicit responsibility to verify that secrecy is maintained before voting begins.

Results Management and Data Quality	Conduct a full audit of registered voter data to resolve discrepancies across pre-election figures, LGA collation announcements, and EC8A entries on IReV. Review the quality of training for ad hoc staff responsible for completing EC8A forms. Strengthen oversight structures to ensure alignment between cancellations announced at collation centres and those uploaded to IReV.
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2. Security Agencies (NPF, NSCDC, Joint Task Force, etc.)

Issue Area	Recommendation
Deployment and Coverage	Adopt a transparent deployment model informed by early-warning and risk assessments. Ensure more even distribution of security personnel to prevent unattended polling units.
Conduct and Enforcement	Strengthen election-specific training focusing on voter protection, de-escalation, and identification of electoral offences. Improve coordination between officers and INEC officials to ensure clear communication on when intervention is required.
Post-Election Security Incidents	Enhance inter-agency coordination to prevent clashes such as the shooting between soldiers and police after the election. Strengthen internal accountability mechanisms for officers who misuse force or fail to act when violations occur.

3. National Assembly (Legal and Electoral Reform)

Issue Area	Recommendation
Enforcement Powers of Security Agencies	Amend the Electoral Act to clarify and expand the powers of security personnel to intervene immediately in cases of vote buying, intimidation, and obstruction, without requiring direct instruction from presiding officers. This will prevent the passive enforcement gap observed during the election.

Sanctions for Party Agent Misconduct	The establishment of the National Electoral Offence Commission becomes more necessary as days goes by in the electoral landscape – this will impose stronger accountability requirements on political parties- especially prosecute and enforce penalties to party agents who obstruct voting, intimidate voters, or engage in vote-buying operations.
Strengthening Documentation Standards	Review the legal framework governing completion and verification of Forms EC8A, EC40G, and related results documentation. Establish stricter legal obligations for accuracy and verification before collation.
Enhancing Transparency in Data Management	Mandate stricter legal requirements for INEC to maintain a consistent voter database across all electoral documents, including public reporting on corrections or updates.
Audit and Oversight Mechanisms	Establish a statutory requirement for post-election audits of data discrepancies, cancellations, and overvoting patterns to ensure accountability.

4. Political Parties

Issue Area	Recommendation
Party Agent Conduct and Accountability	Provide better training on electoral guidelines and acceptable conduct.
Voter Education and Engagement	Invest in civic education for supporters to discourage practices that compromise ballot secrecy and promote a culture of lawful participation.

5. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Election Observer Groups

Issue Area	Recommendation
Voter Education and Awareness	Conduct targeted campaigns on ballot secrecy, the dangers of vote trading, and how these practices weaken the electoral process.

Observation and Rapid Reporting	Enhance rapid-response systems during elections to report incidents of violence, vote buying, or irregularities in real time to relevant authorities.
Advocacy for Legal Reforms	Mobilise stakeholder coalitions to push for reforms that increase enforcement capacity, address party agent behaviour, and strengthen results management procedures.

6. Voters and Communities

Issue Area	Recommendation
Protection of Ballot Secrecy	Encourage voters to reject practices that compel them to display their ballots, emphasising long-term community impact.
Reporting Violations	Strengthen community awareness of reporting channels for vote buying, intimidation, or material deficiencies at polling units.
Reduction in Youth Involvement in Violence	Promote community-level sensitisation on nonviolence and the consequences of involvement in election-day clashes or disruptions.



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