



GENDER-BASED SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT

**OF 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS
IN NIGERIA**

VOLUME III

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THIS REPORT CONCLUDES THE GENDER-BASED SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT OF 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA. IT EXAMINES THREATS TO WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN THE POST-ELECTION ERA. BASED ON DESK RESEARCH, THE STUDY COVERS THE SIX GEOPOLITICAL ZONES OF THE COUNTRY BETWEEN MARCH AND AUGUST 2023, SPANING THE INAUGURATION OF THE EXECUTIVE AND PARLIAMENT AT THE FEDERAL AND STATE LEVELS, AS WELL AS THE ELECTION PETITION TRIBUNALS.

FINDINGS

Women remain significantly marginalised in Nigeria's political space. Even in the post-election period, appointments of women into political positions at the federal and state levels fall below the 35% affirmation for women inclusion in governance. This is a negation of the principle of Affirmative Action, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and national statutory guarantees for equality and inclusivity

The low level of women representation in politics in the country, which underscores the degree of marginalisation of women in governance, is occasioned by several factors, including physical violence, societal suppression



and intimidation, as well as non-gender friendly practices by political party officials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

§ The National Assembly to enact a law legalising Nigeria's Gender Policy and Affirmative Action.

§ Women's rights organisations should collaborate with political parties and the National Assembly to enact a legislation to demonetise electoral process in Nigeria.

§ Political parties should adhere to the provisions of the 2018 Political Parties Code of Conduct that commits them to zero tolerance for violence by their functionaries, candidates and supporters.

1. INTRODUCTION

MAURICE OGBONNAYA AND 'KEMI OKENYODO

The 29th May 2023 inauguration of Bola Ahmed Tinubu as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and inauguration of Executive Governors in 29 states of the Federation marked an increasing effort by Nigeria to consolidate democratic governance. The 2023 general elections were unique in several respects. The elections saw the introduction of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), which combines fingerprint and face biometrics to verify voters' identity, and the electronic transmission of results from polling units directly into the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Result Viewing (IReV) portal. This round of polls was the first time no former military officer contested for the office of the President.

However, the outcomes of the elections, which were being contested at various Election Petition Tribunals at the time of writing this report, demonstrated a continued under-representation of women in Nigerian politics.

Since Nigeria's return to democratic governance in 1999, women have consistently faced political marginalisation in each successive election, ranking the country in the bottom ten globally in women's representation in national parliaments. Notably, women's representation in Nigerian politics has been on a downward slide since 2011, persisting in 2023 despite the near parity of voter registration between men and women in past election cycles.[1] The development, therefore, reaffirmed the expectations of poor outcomes for women.[2]



VOTERS CAST BALLOTS DURING THE 2023 POLLS.

[1] Inter Parliamentary Union (2023), Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments. <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=2&year=2023>

[2] Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2023), Why women haven't been successful in Nigerian elections, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/05/09/why-women-haven-t-been-successful-in-nigerian-elections-pub-89707>

Across all national and subnational categories, women represented just one-tenth of candidates who ran in the 2023 general elections. Out of 15,307 candidates featured by the 18 registered political parties for the general elections, women were 1,553, representing 10.1 per cent of the total number of candidates. While 1,487 of them, representing 96 per cent of female contestants lost out in the elections, only 76, representing about 4 per cent, won. Three women were elected as Senators, 14 as Members of House of Representatives, 7 as Deputy Governors (Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Ebonyi, Kaduna, Ogun, Plateau and Rivers States), and 48 as Members of State Houses of Assembly.



MS NATASHA AKPOTI-UDUAGHAN OF PDP SHAKES HANDS WITH THE SENATE PRESIDENT, BARR. GODSWILL AKPABIO, AS SHE IS WELCOMED TO THE SENATE AS THE DULY ELECTED SENATOR REPRESENTING KOGI CENTRAL.

Photo: Premium Times

The figure for Senate changed to four when the Appeal Court upheld the Tribunal's declaration of Akpoti-Uduaghan of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) as winner of Kogi Central Senatorial Election. However, the expectation of having the first female Executive Governor in the northern part of the country was dashed after INEC rejected the declaration

of Aisha Dahiru (a.k.a. Binani) as winner of the governorship election in Adamawa State by the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Hudu Ari.

In July 2023, the 10th National Assembly elected and appointed Principal Officers for the Senate and House of Representatives. Out of Principal Officers, only one woman was appointed, Adewunmi Onanuga as Deputy Chief Whip in the House of Representatives, indicating a gross under-representation of women in the leadership of the National Assembly. Between August and September 2023, President Tinubu inaugurated 47 Ministers into this Administration as part of the Federal Executive Council (FEC) with only 10 women, constituting 18.75 per cent of the FEC members.[3] As it was in the administration of former President Muhammadu Buhari, President Tinubu's appointment fell short of meeting the 35 per cent affirmation of women inclusion in governance. Moreover, the non-inclusion of women as stipulated in Nigeria's Gender Policy is likely to deny women the needed political empowerment and experience to advance their participation in politics at the national and sub-national levels.

The decline in women's representation in the 2023 general elections was further exacerbated by the evident violence, which manifested in various forms, scales and dimensions; physical attacks, suppression and intimidation, across the country, particularly in Cross River, Kano, Kogi, Lagos and Rivers States. At least 39 individuals were reported to have lost their lives in different parts of the country during the polls, including voters, party agents, policemen, politicians, hired thugs, and ad hoc staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC.[4]

[3] Opejobi, S. (2023, March 30). 2023 elections: Families of 39 slain Nigerians, victims seek justice. Daily Post. <https://dailypost.ng/2023/03/30/2023-elections-families-of-39-slain-nigerians-victims-seek-justice/>

[4] Bunmi Bailey (2023), 19% of all Tinubu's ministerial nominees are women, Business Day, August 2, <https://businessday.ng/news/article/19-of-all-tinubus-ministerial-nominees-are-women/>

IMPLICATIONS OF GENDER-BASED SECURITY THREAT TO WOMEN



Reflections on the limited representation of women in the 2023 general elections largely due to gender-based violence and general insecurity in Nigeria reveal unique regional variations across the country. It is projected that the various security threats that women who worked as voters, candidates, election officials, observers and election security officers faced during the 2023 general elections are likely to heighten the attention they pay to safety and security, possibly making some of them to withdraw from active participation in future elections. This could further diminish the already low level of women involvement as candidates in the electoral process, leading to a lack of diverse perspectives and experiences in governance and decision-making processes.

Furthermore, as a consequence of the above, the limited visibility and participation of women as security and law enforcement officers, as well as election observers, could cause female voters to lose confidence in the electoral process, resulting in voter apathy. The continued decline in women's representation in governance and decision-making processes in Nigeria may also limit women's access to essential services, including education, healthcare, economic and income-generating opportunities, exacerbating existing gender inequalities and hindering women's empowerment vital for effective political participation.

2. SOUTH EAST

FREEDOM C. ONUOHA



Across the six geopolitical regions of Nigeria, the South East, with only 13 per cent representation of women in National Assembly positions, exhibited the highest proportion of female candidates for the federal legislative offices. Despite this, the region struggled to secure adequate female representation in the National Assembly.[1]

Regrettably, not a single female candidate from the South East secured a seat in the Senate, with just three women earning positions in the House of Representatives from Anambra State and one from Imo State. Nkeiruka Onyejeocha who previously represented Isuikwuato/Ummunnechi Constituency in Abia State in the House of Representatives and lost her seat during the elections, filed a petition challenging the election before the National Election Petition

Tribunal. Notably, the tribunal ruled in her favor, nullifying her opponent's previous declaration, revoking his certificate of return, and subsequently reissuing it to her. She also currently serves as Minister of State for Labour and Employment[2].

Within the State Houses of Assembly, two women were elected to the 24-member Ebonyi State House of Assembly, two in Enugu, and just one in the 30-member Anambra State House of Assembly. No female succeeded in securing positions into State Assemblies in Abia and Imo.[3] Ebonyi State, notably elected a female as Deputy Governor, while Imo State Governor, Sen. Hope Uzodimma, nominated Lady Chinyere Ekomaru as his running mate in the forthcoming November 2023 gubernatorial election.

[1] Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2023), Op cit

[2] <https://guardian.ng/news/ogah-vows-to-appeal-tribunals-judgment-replacing-him-with-onyejeocha/>

[3] Sule, I.D. (2023), Meet the 17 women who made it to 10th National Assembly. Daily Trust. <https://dailytrust.com/meet-the-17-women-who-made-it-to-10th-natl-assembly/>

In the post-2023 general elections era, the South East region has experienced relative peace, marked by fewer cases and reports of security threats in the region. Nevertheless, shades of security challenges persist in a couple of places around the region. Currently, women in the region are threatened by security challenges such as kidnapping for ransom, rape, attacks by "Unknown Gunmen", ritual killings and attacks by herdsmen, among other dangers. These post-election security challenges for women may adversely affect the participation of women and girls aspiring to engage in politics and future elections in the region. Alarming, women have also not been adequately represented in political appointments since the inauguration of new governments took office. The appointment of women into political positions across the region still falls significantly short of the 35 per cent affirmative agenda. With the exception of Ebonyi State where a woman was elected Deputy Governor, another appointed as Secretary to Government, women in the region have been confined to the traditional gender-based agencies by State Governors.

MAPPING SECURITY THREATS TO WOMEN IN THE SOUTH EAST REGION AFTER THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS

Since 2020, attacks by separatist Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and a criminal group in the region, known as Unknown Gunmen (UGM), have become increasingly pervasive and challenging.[4] The groups have continued to terrorise the region, causing pains, tensions, havocs and deaths, with women, especially security officers, being directly or indirectly exposed to the attacks. Between 4-27 March 2023, UGM attacked police and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps personnel, killing at least six in Anambra, Enugu and Imo States.[5] On 6 and 21 April 2023, the group killed at least six policemen in Aboh Mbaise and Ngor Okpala areas, Imo State.

On 4 May 2023, UGM killed three policemen during an attack at a military checkpoint in

Umunze, Orumba South Local Government Area of Anambra State,[6] and on 24 May, gunmen killed three police officers on a stop and search duty at Oshiri Divisional Police Headquarters in Ebonyi State.[7] The attacks indicate the severity of the challenge to region, especially for women. Women who are development and social workers are also vulnerable to attacks by gunmen in the region. These attacks underscore the gravity of the challenge to the region, particularly for women, including those who are development and social workers. On 16 May 2023, a convoy of United States Embassy staff on humanitarian mission were attacked in Atani, Anambra State, killing two civilians and two police officers. The gunmen also kidnapped three others, a driver and two other police officers, during the attack.[8]

[4] Onuoha, F.C and Egbo, E. I. (2022). Insecurity and rise of unknown gun men in Nigeria's South-East Zone: Implications for youth-police partnership in the region. *Journal of Defence and Security Studies*, 1(1), 81-108.

[5] International Crisis Group. (2023). Tracking conflict worldwide. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/print?page=2&location%5B0%5D=28&da=&t=CrisisWatch+Database+Filter>

[6] Kucha, M. (2023, May 4). Gunmen kill 3 policemen in Anambra. *Radio Nigeria*. <https://radionigeria.gov.ng/2023/05/04/gunmen-kill-3-policemen-in-anambra/>

[7] Ugwu, C. (2023, May 25). Again, gunmen kill three police officers in Ebonyi. *Premium Times*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/600393-again-gunmen-kill-three-police-officers-in-ebonyi.html>

[8] Al Jazeera. (2023, May 17). Gunmen attack convoy of US embassy personnel in Nigeria. <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.aljazeera.com/amp/news/2023/5/17/gunmen-attack-convoy-of-us-embassy-personnel-in-nigeria>

Although the gender of those killed or kidnapped was not specified, the attack no doubt had serious security implication for residents of the region regardless of gender.[9]

Another post-election security threat to women in the South East is ritual killing. Ritual killing are perpetrated for various reasons, including quest for protection, political power and wealth, as well as organ harvesting and cultural influence.[10] Specifically, women in Anambra State, have been victims of ritual killing since the 2023 elections. In mid-March 2023, commercial activities in the Umunze Community, Orumba South Local Government Area of Anambra State, were shut down when women numbering over 3000 took to the streets to protest the murder of a 72-year-old woman, by three suspected ritualists believed to be from Abakiliki in Ebonyi State. The old woman was reportedly raped before her vital organs were harvested.[10] Reports of similar cases in some other parts of the State have also surfaced.

Conflict between sedentary farmers and nomadic herders is another threat to women in the post-election period in the South East. Suspected nomadic herdsman have attacked a couple of places in the region with women constituting a significant percentage of the casualties, and sparking women-led demonstrations in some parts of the region. On 24 March 2023, demonstrations erupted in Ishiagu community in Ivo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, with over 1000 women

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CONFLICT BETWEEN SEDENTARY FARMERS AND NOMADIC HERDERS IS ANOTHER THREAT TO WOMEN IN THE POST-ELECTION PERIOD IN THE SOUTH EAST. SUSPECTED NOMADIC HERDSMEN HAVE ATTACKED A COUPLE OF PLACES IN THE REGION WITH WOMEN CONSTITUTING A SIGNIFICANT PERCENTAGE OF THE CASUALTIES, AND SPARKING WOMEN-LED DEMONSTRATIONS IN SOME PARTS OF THE REGION.
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protesting the killing and kidnapping of relatives by suspected herders in the area. The four-day protest resulted in the burning of the palace of the monarch of Ishiagu kingdom in Ebonyi State.[11]

Women in the South East region are also vulnerable to kidnapping for ransom, which has assumed an alarming dimension. Between January 2021 and May 2023, over 74 persons were reportedly abducted in the region, representing 54.2 per cent increase from the 2019 and 2020 figures.[12] In March 2023, a female student of Imo State University was abducted.

[9] Oluwafemi, A. (2023), Police arrest two suspects over attack on US convoy, blame IPOB, The Cable, May 10, <https://www.thecable.ng/just-in-police-arrest-two-suspects-over-attack-on-us-convoy-in-anambra>

[11] Ayandiji, I. N. (2023), Shocking reality of ritual killing in Nigeria. The Cable, March 12, <https://www.thecable.ng/shocking-reality-of-ritual-killing-in-nigeria/amp>

[12] Nwaokolo, S. (2023), Women protest rape, ritual killing of 72-year-old woman in Anambra community, Nigerian Tribune, March 14. <https://tribuneonline.ng/women-protest-rape-ritual-killing-of-72-old-woman-in-anambra-community/solution/%3famp;>



The kidnappers demanded a N5 million ransom from her relatives. She was held hostage in the kidnappers' hideout at Uturu in Abia State for three days before she was rescued.[13] Other cases of abduction of women have also been reported in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi and Enugu

States in the post-election period. The development is likely to escalate owing to high rate of youth unemployment and the proliferation of small and light weapons in the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are advanced to address gender-based security threats in the South East region:

- **Strengthen security measures:** Governments in the region should prioritise the safety and security of all citizens, with a specific emphasis on women. This may be achieved through enhanced law enforcement efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, intimidation, and harassment. Establishing safe reporting mechanisms for incidents of gender-based violence, especially during election periods, is essential.
- **Create targeted awareness:** State authorities should conduct targeted awareness campaigns to educate women on their rights, available support services, and reporting mechanisms. This will empower women to recognise and respond to threats effectively, and encourage them to report incidents of violence or harassment.
- **Strengthening of coordination and collaboration:** Women's rights organisations in the region should foster partnerships between government agencies, civil society organisations and community leaders to evolve robust early warning and early response system crucial to addressing the post-election security threats to women effectively.
- **Promotion of women's political participation:** Gender-based organisations should collaborate with governments in the region and other relevant non-governmental organisations to promote women economic and political empowerment through training and mentorship at increasing women's political skills and knowledge, and to increase women's participation in political processes.
- **Ensure access to justice:** Establish special courts or fast-track legal procedures to expedite cases related to gender-based violence and electoral intimidation. Ensure that survivors have access to free legal aid and support services to navigate the justice system. Strengthen collaboration between law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, and civil society organisations to ensure effective investigation and prosecution of gender-based violence cases.

13. Uwujare, N. (2023), Imo police nab kidnappers, The Sun, April 22, <https://www.google.com/amp/s/sunnewsonline.com/imo-police-nab-kidnappers/%3famp>

- **Conduct post-election assessments:** The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), security agencies and non-governmental organisations should carry out comprehensive assessments of the post-election environment to identify areas of concern and assess the impact of insecurity on women to inform current and future planning, programming and training interventions.

CONCLUSION

The inadequate representation of women in politics in the South East region highlights the extent of women's marginalisation in governance. This predicament is perpetuated by a myriad of factors, including physical violence, societal suppression and intimidation, exacerbated by non-gender friendly practices by political party officials. To bolster the rights and security of women in the region, priority attention should focus on peacebuilding initiatives, ensuring access to justice for survivors of gender-based violence, providing support and resources for vulnerable and at-risk women, enhancing women's economic empowerment, and encouraging women's participation and leadership in political processes.

3. SOUTH SOUTH

SOLOMON AKPANUFOT

Elections in the South South region are high stakes, often characterised by violence and tension, which take varied dimensions, including sexual, physical, psychological, threats and coercion, with implications for the participation of women in the process. Across the region, the 2023 general elections witnessed different forms of violence, especially shootings in elections by armed political thugs, coercion and intimidation of voters, forceful disruption of the electoral process and vandalism of electoral materials, as well as kidnapping, hate speech and vote buying. Thus, the participation of women in the process was largely low, resulting in underrepresentation. There were also attacks on the facilities of the Independent National Electoral Commission. Five of such attacks occurred in Akwa Ibom State and four occurred in Cross River State.

For women representation in politics, the South South region, amidst minimally, presents a sense of hope. In the 2023 general elections, the region produced two female Deputy Governors, Dr. Akon Eyakenyi in Akwa Ibom State and Prof. Ngozi Nma Odu in Rivers State. It also produced a female Senator, Ipalibo Harry Banigo, representing Rivers State West Senatorial District; and three female Members of the House of Representatives, namely, Ibori-Suenu Erhiatake, representing Etiope East/Etiope West Federal Constituency of Delta State; Ebikate Marie Enenimiete, representing Brass/Nembe Federal Constituency of Bayelsa State; and Goodhead Boma, representing Akuku Toru/ Asari Toru

Federal constituency of Rivers State. At the State Assemblies, the region produced 10 female members; four in Akwa Ibom State, two in Bayelsa State, one in Cross River State, two in Delta and one in Edo. Notwithstanding, it is only in Edo State, which has a female Deputy Speaker, that a female is a Principal Officer across the six state Houses of Assembly in the region. However, appointment into political positions in the region has been lopsided against women. In Akwa Ibom State, there 3 females out of 31 Commissioners, 3 out of 25 in Bayelsa, 6 out of 31 in Cross River, 4 out of 26 in Delta, 2 out of 15 in Edo and 2 out of 14 Commissioners, in Rivers State.

THREATS TO WOMEN IN POST-ELECTION PERIOD

On the evening of the Presidential and National Assembly elections, violence erupted at the Igwuruta axis of Ikwerre Local Government Area, Rivers State, as angry youths took to the streets to protest an alleged attempt to tamper with the presidential election results. The protesting youths fired sporadic shots and vandalised vehicles traveling along the Igwuruta-Elele-Airport Road. Two persons were reportedly killed in Ward 12, Ubimini community, in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State. Members of the local vigilante group also fired gunshots, which led to the death of a woman.

In Delta State, the State Resident Electoral Commissioner, Monday Tom, confirmed that an INEC staff on duty was killed and corps members injured while returning to Asaba to deliver election results. In Akwa Ibom State, two persons were shot dead while two others sustained injuries in Etim Ekpo Local

Area during the Presidential and National Assembly elections. There were gunshots as early as 8 am in the area which scared away the INEC staff, observers, and other officials. Elections did not hold in Wards 5, 6 and 7 in the LGA.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the build-up to the 2023 general elections, election-related violence reported in several States across the South South region had implications for the participation of women in the process as candidates, voters, observers and election duty officials. This raised the imperative of conducting elections in ways that ensure social inclusivity and gender sensitivity. Electoral process that gives primacy to women and guarantees their safety as candidates, voters, observers and election duty officials, would have promoted their participation in the process. Against this background, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. Politicians within the region must internalise political ethics and be guided by it in all that they do. There should be adequate legal education to curtail violence against women. Political parties must liaise with INEC, NOA, NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders to sensitise the people, especially those in rural areas, on the democratic procedure. To do this more effectively, INEC must rise to play a leading role. Messages to this effect must be cascaded to the people at the community level using various means of communication including the use of local languages.
2. INEC, political parties, candidates, government, and other actors must comply strictly with the Electoral Law, 2022. Participation in the electoral process
- whether as a candidate, voter, observer, security personnel, or whatever must be guided by the provision of the relevant laws guiding Nigeria's electoral process.
3. Professionalism and morality must also be the watchword by media professionals covering electoral processes during the elections. The media must be professional and above-board in its electoral reportage. The consideration of morality by media professionals in electoral reportage is very important. The press must completely jettison the publication of hate speeches, misinformation, and disinformation.
4. INEC as an electoral umpire must live up to expectations. It must be seen to be neutral in all instances. INEC should not promise the people one thing and does another.

4. SOUTH WEST

TOLU OJESHINA

In the South West region, there was a decrease in the number of women elected into political offices. 20 women were elected in the region, 2 into the National Assembly (1 in each House), 2 as Deputy Governors, and 16 into State Houses of Assembly. The 10th National Assembly has witnessed a 50% decrease in the number of female lawmakers overall when compared to the 9th Assembly, and a 66.67% decrease in the number of female lawmakers from the South West region.

GENDER DYNAMICS IN POST 2023-GENERAL ELECTIONS

On April 15, 2023, INEC organised supplementary elections in Ogun, Oyo and Ekiti States. In Ogun and Ekiti States, state constituency elections held in Ifo1 State Constituency and Ido Osi 1 State Constituency, respectively. In Oyo State, elections held in 2 Federal Constituencies; Ibadan Northeast/Ibadan Southeast Federal Constituency and Oluyole Federal constituency.[1] A female can-

didate, Tolulope Akande-Sodipe, was declared winner of the supplementary election in Oluyole Federal Constituency of Oyo State. Three women, Mojisola Meranda [2], Bolanle Ajayi [3], and Bolaji Adediwura Olagbaju [4], were elected Deputy Speakers in Lagos, Ogun and Ekiti State Houses of Assembly, respectively. This is a positive step towards promoting women's participation and representation not only in law-making, but in leadership. Of the five justices presiding over the recently concluded Presidential Election Petition Tribunal (PEPT), Justice Monsurat Bolaji-Yusuf, a former judge in the Oyo State High Court, was nominated.

Appointments into political positions, especially in Lagos, Oyo and Ekiti States, have reflected very low level of women representation in the region. In Lagos State, Barrister Bimbola Salu Hundeyin was appointed Secretary to the State Government [5] and Ms. Ololade Ajibola as Senior Special Assistant, Special Duties to the Executive Governor of Oyo State [6]. In Ekiti State, Modupe Adelabu and Ronke Okunsanya were appointed into the State Executive

[1] Premium Times (2023), INEC declares APC candidate, Akande-Sadipe, winner of Oluyole Federal Constituency election, April 15, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/south-west/593509-inec-declares-apc-candidate-akande-sadipe-winner-of-oluyole-federal-constituency-election.html>

[2] The Cable, Obasa re-elected as Lagos Assembly Speaker, June 6, <https://www.thecable.ng/just-in-obasa-re-elected-as-lagos-assembly-speaker>

[3] Ishola Oludare (2023), Kashamu's son, others emerge Principal Officers of Ogun Assembly, Daily Post, June 22, <https://dailypost.ng/2023/06/22/kashamus-son-others-emerge-principal-officers-of-ogun-assembly/>

[4] Alo Abiola (2023), Aribasoye, Late Egbeyemi's Daughter Emerge 7th Ekiti Assembly Speaker, Deputy, Leadership, June 6, <https://leadership.ng/aribasoye-late-egbeyemis-daughter-emerge-7th-ekiti-assembly-speaker-deputy/>

[5] Henry Ojelu (2023), Presidential election tribunal: 5 justices that'll determine Tinubu, Atiku, Obi's fate, Vanguard, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/05/presidential-election-tribunal-5-justices-thatll-determine-tinubu-atiku-obi-fate/>

[6] Kazeem Ugbodaga (2023), Who is Salu-Hundeyin, Sanwo-Olu's new SSG? Six quick facts, PM News, June 8, <https://pmnewsnigeria.com/2023/06/08/who-is-salu-hundeyin-sanwo-olus-new-ssg-six-quick-facts/>

Council by the Governor. In Osun State is lagging as regards female representation in leadership within the region. There are currently no female elected officials in the state across the Executive and State House of Assembly. Osun State previously had a

female Deputy Governor between 2010 and 2018—Grace Titilayo Laoye-Tomori— but this changed since the 2019 administration. No female aspirants were elected to the legislative houses at the state and federal levels.



POST-ELECTION SECURITY THREATS TO WOMEN

The recent ethnic tension in Lagos State, especially between the Yoruba and the Igbo, has added another layer of insecurity and discrimination against women in the State. There are indications that gender-based violence in the South West region may begin to assume ethnic undertones, specifically targeted at women of either ethnic group. Meanwhile, the decline in women representation in elected and appointed political positions in the post-2023 General Elections, presents a significant risk to the socio-economic and political security of women in the region.

[7] Remi Feyisipo (2023), Makinde appoints private secretary, SSA, PAs, Business Day, June 1, <https://businessday.ng/news/article/makinde-appoints-private-secretary-ssa-pas/>

[8] Premium Times (2023), Oyebanji constitutes 8-member committee on political appointments, April 4, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-west/591632-oyebanji-constitutes-8-member-committee-on-political-appointments.html>

This is because, experiences from other climes have shown that women in leadership in governance, typically has a positive effect on women empowerment, protection, and safety. This decline at the state, and federal levels, especially in the legislature, may negatively affect some of the successes that have been achieved in this regard.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are advanced to address gender-based security threats and to strengthen the participation of women in politics in the South West region:

- 1.As State Governments in the region should ensure gender parity in political appointments.
- 2.States Governments should strengthen gender-based institutions such Ministries of Women Affairs to collaborate with women's rights organisations in the region to provide services that support community efforts at mitigating election-related gender-based violence, including bringing the perpetrators to justice to reduce prevalence.

5. NORTH CENTRAL

SESAN A. PETER



L-R: REV. FR. HYACINTH ALIA (BENUE), ENGR. SULE ABDULLAHI (NASARAWA), BARR. CALEB MUTFWANG (PLATEAU), ABDULRAHMAN ABDULRASAQ (KWARA), AND HON. UMAR MOHAMMED BAGO (NIGER).

On 29th May 2023, five Executive Governors were inaugurated in the North Central region; Benue, Nasarawa, Niger, Kwara and Plateau States. Off-cycle election is scheduled in Kogi State in November 2023. Three of the Governors-- Benue, Niger and Plateau-- are new, while governors in Nasarawa and Kwara were re-elected for the second term. Amidst the ongoing election petition tribunals, Plateau has a female Deputy Governor, the only in the region.

FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN NORTH CENTRAL

The hope of women's participation in the elections was quite high, especially as voters, security personnel and election observers. The total number of registered voters was 93,469,008. The statistics of men is 52.5 percent, while women are 47.5 percent. For the general election from president to State Houses of Assembly candidates, male amount to (13,775) 89.85 percent while female (1,556) 10.15 percent. For House of Representatives in North Central, female candidates were 28 (6 percent) out of 451 contestants across all the political parties

and constituencies. For Senate, out of 189 contestants for the position of Senate in all the Senatorial Districts in all six states in North Central, only 11 (6 percent) contestants were women across all the political parties for 2023 Senatorial elections.

The region produced a female Senator (FCT) and three female members in House of Representatives (1 in Plateau and two in Benue States). The political terrain is still largely dominated by men in the North Central.

The Appeal Court upholds the Tribunal's declaration of Natasha Akpoti of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) as winner of Kogi Central Senatorial Election, the figure in the North Central may change. Kogi State has a female member in the House of Assembly, four in Kwara, two in Plateau, one in Benue and one in Nasarawa. No female member is a Principal Officer in any of the State Houses of Assembly in the region. However, Governors across the region have appointed some women to the State Executive Councils, 4 out

of 19 in Plateau, 3 out of 17 in Benue, 3 out of 16 in Nasarawa, 5 out of thirty in Niger, and 7 out of 18 in Kwara State.

Also from this region, President Bola Tinubu appointed Dr. Jamila Bio Ibrahim to serve as the Minister of Youth.



POLLING OFFICIALS AND SECURITY AGENTS DURING THE ELECTIONS

THREAT SOURCES, CAUSATIVE FACTORS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

In the region, several factors are identified as sources of threat to the participation of women in political processes. While some threats resulted from the presence of non-state armed groups (NSAGs), others are structural in nature. The inability of the government to address the issues of security holistically led to physical threat where armed groups such as bandits and kidnappers use small and light weapons to carry out their nefarious activities. This has become a potent threat that made women participation in politics a dreadful one. The other part that is structural in nature has to do with the level of finances of women to favourably compete with men in the current dispensation. Most women have no financial capacity to buy electoral forms and run campaign alongside their male counterparts in the political spheres.

The implication of the threat to women's participation is that it has deprived women of the ability to actively participate as a result of fear and potential intimidation from electoral processes. The vulnerable nature of women has made it difficult for them to cope in the face of violence, insecurity and suppression. For instance, in Katsina State, on 6 February, the APC cancelled its presidential road show after an armed group attacked villages in Bakori Local Government Area, killing more than 100 people in the various communities. This made women to restrain themselves during the general elections because of the fear that such situation may not repeat itself in one form or another. Again, in the face of political uncertainty, families cautioned their female family members from involvement in

the electoral process because of the fear of the unknown. The threat recorded during the presidential elections was seen on the part of INEC's inability to upload results to the IReV and this became the major reason why there was low turnout during the State's elections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are proffered to strengthen the participation of women in politics and public decision-making processes:

1. INEC should re-strategise especially before the next elections, to sort and clear up the problems that marred the Presidential and National Assembly elections, especially as related to BVAS and the upload of results from the various polling units in subsequent elections.
2. In violence-prone states, security agencies should address such matters and ensure there is no repeat of snatching of ballot boxes, harassment, or suppression of voters so as to have free, fair, and credible elections. This is the only way credible elections can be guaranteed.
3. Political parties should engage in advocacy to teach potential voters how to vote and engage communities and stakeholders on the dangers of electoral violence in their various communities and the nation at large.
4. The government and other stakeholders should begin to sensitise the various communities to the dangers of identity politics that played out during the general elections in order to reduce the tendencies for violence in the aftermath of the general elections.
5. Non-state actors should embark on post-election reconciliation among the stakeholders in order to deescalate the already-pledged animosity resulting from the elections. This will help post-election community cohesion.



6. NORTH EAST

CHRIS KWAJA

Over the years, the issue of women's political rights and participation in electoral politics has been a dominant one in Nigerian politics. In fact, the principle of equality of men and women has been in key policy documents such as the United Nations Charter (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the Nigerian Constitution of 1999 [as amended]. Notwithstanding the international declarations affirming the rights and equality between men and women, the issues of women's participation continue to bedevil political systems and countries throughout the world. Available literature shows that women still constitute a disproportionately small proportion of those participating in political decision-making and leadership roles in the electoral and political processes.

There is sufficient evidence to support the assertion that women have potential that can be tapped to meaningfully enhance the social, economic, and political development of nations. This awareness has led to efforts by governments, complimented by civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), multilateral institutions, and individuals at all levels, to actualise these potentials through sustained programmes on women's empowerment. Though efforts by civic actors and groups have, in some instances, yielded positive results, there is still much to be done to ensure that women, in fact, contribute their skills and talents to the political, social and economic enhancement of their nations and communities.

As it relates to the participation of women and men in the five top positions of leadership and

in the executive structures of some of the big political parties such as the All Progressive Congress (APC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Labour Party, Social Democratic Party (SDP); which indicate the hierarchy of women and men in leadership positions in the top five positions: National Chairperson, Vice National Chairperson; Secretary General; as well as Organising Secretary, all the positions are occupied by men. In the context of states within the north east region, the situation is not different, most of the positions reserved exclusively for women across the states is that of women leader.

The most prominent case of women's bold attempt at engaging the electoral process was the elected of Aishatu Binani as the flag bearer of the APC in the gubernatorial election in Adamawa State.[1]

[1] Vanguard (2022). APC primaries: Sen. Binani beats Ex-Governor, 4 others to emerge flag bearer in Adamawa, May 27; <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/05/apc-primaries-sen-binani-beats-ex-governor-4-others-to-emerge-flag-bearer-in-adamawa/>

Unfortunately, after series of controversies within the APC, Binani's candidature was nullified by a high court in Adamawa State. [2] The APC resorted to an appeal of the judgement, which might see a reversal of the judgement of the high court by the court of appeal.[3]

The most prominent case of women's bold attempt at engaging the electoral process was the elected of Aishatu Binani as the flag bearer of the APC in the gubernatorial election in Adamawa State. Unfortunately, after series of controversies within the APC, Binani's candidature was nullified by a high court in Adamawa State. The APC resorted to an appeal of the judgement, which might saw a reversal of the judgement of the high court by the court of appeal. In response to the APC's choice of a women as the gubernatorial candidate, the Adamawa State Governor Ahmadu Fintiri picked a woman, Prof. Kaletapwa Farauta, as his running mate under the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)[4], which makes Adamawa State the only state with women contesting for governorship and Deputy Governorship positions in the North East region. Governor Ahmadu Fintiri and his running mate, Prof. Kaletapwa Farauta, were declared winners of the gubernatorial election on April 18, 2023, by INEC.[5]

The high costs associated with the sale of expression of interest and nomination forms



AISHATU BINANI

might have been a primary cause of women's disempowerment in the electoral process. With costs pegged to the advantage of the men against the women, many women who might have presented themselves for the elections were not able to do so. The monetisation of the party primaries, further compounded the situation for women, due to the costs associated with the payments made to delegates in exchange for their votes during the primaries.

[2] International Centre for Investigating (2022). Court nullifies Binani's election, says no guber candidate for APC in Adamawa, October 14; <https://www.icirnigeria.org/court-nullifies-binanis-election-says-no-guber-candidate-for-apc-in-adamawa/>

[3] The Cable (2022), Adamawa APC to appeal court ruling disqualifying Aisha Binani as guber candidate, October 15; <https://www.thecable.ng/adamawa-apc-to-appeal-court-ruling-disqualifying-aisha-binani-as-guber-candidate>

[4] The Cable (2022), Adamawa APC to appeal court ruling disqualifying Aisha Binani as guber candidate, October 15; <https://www.thecable.ng/adamawa-apc-to-appeal-court-ruling-disqualifying-aisha-binani-as-guber-candidate>

[5] Punch (2022), 2023: Fintiri picks female running mate, July 1, <https://punchng.com/2023-fintiri-picks-female-running-mate/>

[6] Abdulqudus Ogundapo (2023), INEC declares PDP's Fintiri winner of Adamawa governorship election, April 18; <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/594019-updated-inec-declares-pdps-fintiri-winner-of-adamawa-governorship-election.html#:~:text=The%20Independent%20National%20Electoral%20Commissioner,supplementary%20election%20with%209%2C337%20votes.>

COSTS OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST AND NOMINATION FORMS APC AND PDP FOR 2023 ELECTIONS

S/No	Positions	APC	PDP
1	President	N100,000,000.00	N40,000,000.00
2	Governor	N50,000,000.00	N21,000,000.00
3	Senate	N20,000,000.00	N3,500,000.00
4	House of Representatives	N10,000,000.00	N2,500,000.00
5	State House of Assembly	N2,000,000.00	N600,000.00

SOURCE: AUTHOR'S COMPILATIONS FROM POLITICAL PARTIES' WEBSITES

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite considerable progress over the last decade to promote the participation of women in politics in the North East region, there are evident gaps related to their roles in decision-making within political parties and the electoral process in general. However, this report suggests that having women occupy strategic leadership roles has a positive effect on their ability and capacity to influence the process and outcome of the electoral process in the run-up to the 2023 elections.

The emergence of either the governorship candidate of the APC or the deputy governorship candidate of the PDP in Adamawa State represents a major feat, as it relates to women's involvement in politics. While their emergence might be on elective positions, more attention should be given to advocacies that targets appointments into positions, outside the usual ministries of women affairs that are often the exclusive positions for women.

1. PWAN and other women-led organisations should push for political parties to provide sufficient financial support for women candidates to enable them deploy party agents towards ensuring their votes count during the voting, counting and declaration of results.
2. PWAN should work with other civil society, legal aid groups, and political parties towards the provision of free legal assistance for women who seek legal redress over the conduct of the elections, with a specific focus on post-election litigations, which are often out of reach of most women due to their poor financial standings.
3. Security agencies in ensuring a proper gender disaggregation of the personnel to be deployed during election duty, with specific reference to highlighting the extent of gender consideration in such deployments.
4. PWAN, in collaboration with other women-led organisations should organise a workshop or training to build and strengthen the capacity of female political leaders. The female political leaders will have increased knowledge of various strategic issues and connect be connected with civil society advocates, who can be key partners in creating new beneficial policies.

7. NORTH WEST

AL CHUKWUMA OKOLI

North West Nigeria comprises seven states of the Nigerian federation, namely Jigawa, Katsina, Kano, Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara, and Kaduna. The region is an important voting bloc in Nigeria, whose three large states (Kano, Kaduna, and Katsina) have often determined the northern margin of lead in general elections in the country over the years. Apart from its strategic importance as a crucial voting bloc, North West Nigeria is also a prominent destination of post-election crisis. Among the states of the region, Kaduna, Kano, and Sokoto have been variously identified as hotbeds of post-election violence. [1]

Among the major drivers of (post)election violence in North West Nigeria are its large and growing urban voter population that is mixed in terms of partisan and identitarian considerations, a teeming youthful urban electorate that is not only conscious and active but also restive, existence of activist youth-led political vanguards that are susceptible to opportunistic partisan mobilising, and stiff competition for local political hegemony among the established (dominant) parties.

Post-election violence in North West Nigeria has reflected not only partisan but also identitarian dynamics. More often, it has played into the existing fault lines of religion, sectionalism, or ethnicity to form a complicated mix of crisis wherein the underlying motives and drivers are nebulous. The 2007 and 2011 post-election crises in Kaduna, Kano, and other parts of northern Nigeria manifested this dangerous tendency. The tipping points of election violence in North West Nigeria are manifold. For the purpose of this brief, the following are identified as the commonest patterns (Table 1).

TIPPING POINTS OF POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE IN NORTH WEST NIGERIA

S/N	Tipping Point	Comment(s)
1.	During or after declaration of election results	Aggrieved party supporters take to rioting. Protesting party supporters trigger off violent backlash by the opposing party elements. Targeted attacks on electoral officials or candidates by disgruntled party elements.
2.	During and after inauguration of a new government	Aggrieved party supporters take to rioting. Protesting party supporters trigger off violent backlash by the opposing party elements. Provocative celebration by those who are assuming power.
3.	During and after tribunal rulings	Aggrieved party supporters take to rioting. Protesting party supporters trigger off violent backlash by the opposing party elements. Targeted attacks on court officials or those celebrating the outcome of court's verdict.

SOURCE: AUTHOR'S ORIGINAL CONCEPTION (2023)

[1] Reliefworld. <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/post-election-riots-kaduna-bauchi-yobe-niger>

POST-ELECTION SECURITY THREATS IN NORTH WEST NIGERIA: THE GENDER NEXUS?

The security situation in North West Nigeria after the 2023 general elections was tense and potentially volatile, to say the least. In view of the various forecasts of possible post-election violence in the region, there was a heavy deployment of armed and unarmed security operatives in the region's major city-centres and perceived trouble spots. In effect, most parts of the region, especially the urban and suburban hubs, were heavily guarded and patrolled by visibly duty-poised security personnel. The highly securitised scenario that played out constituted, in itself, a sort of security threat in that an apparent state of civil siege was invariably created in some instances.

Although the outcome of the various polls in the region witnessed strikingly lower levels of violence than it was envisaged, there were nonetheless pockets of violent incidents in some places. In Kano State, for example, there was an eruption of violent protest by some aggrieved party supporters, resulting in vandalism and arson, following the declaration of the governorship election results. In the riot that ensued, the residence of a famous local musician, Dada Kahutu Rarara, who campaigned for the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), was set ablaze by the irate rioters.[2]

In Kaduna State, the police averted what could have been a fatal clash between

opposing party supported and activists in the state's capital, sequel to the announcement of the governorship election results.[3] This incident occurred against the backdrop of the heated contest between the ruling APC and the opposition fronts in the state – the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the Labour Party (LP). The growing popularity of the LP in the state whose party politics has been traditionally characterised by a two-party play, indeed, raised the stakes of opposition politics in that context.

In Zamfara State, following the declaration of the governorship election results, there was a thuggee-style violence, leading to vandalism and looting of facilities in a number of APC offices, campaign offices of APC candidates, private homes of local politicians, as well as government establishments.[4] This incident occurred amidst the palpable fear of a possible infiltration and instrumentalisation of post-crisis by brigands in the banditry-ravaged state.

The post-election tension and contestations in North West Nigeria did not only occur within physical spaces; online sites were also agog with charged and toxic exchanges by party activists and supporters, some of which were couched in hate speech, sexist stereotyping, and ethno-religious bigotry.

[2] Muawiya Shuaibu (2023), Voters, INEC Officials, Other Casualties Of 2023 Elections, Daily Trust, March 23, <https://dailytrust.com/voters-inec-officials-other-casualties-of-2023-elections/>

[3] Personal communication with an informant, Kaduna, April, 2023.

[4] Sahara Reporters (2023), 57 Suspects Arrested For Post-Election Violence In Zamfara, Looting Of APC Offices After Declaration Of Governorship Results, April 1; <https://saharareporters.com/2023/04/01/57-suspects-arrested-post-election-violence-zamfara-looting-apc-offices-after>

There were instances of cyberbullying and labelling. The online encounters were violent to the extent that they offended public sensibilities, inflamed intergroup hatred, and bred sentiments capable of inciting physical violence.

As voters celebrated and protested the outcomes of the polls in the different states of the North West, there prevailed an atmosphere of rancour, which largely trended along ethno-religious and sectionalist divide. The associated narrative has been feeding into the pre-existing identitarian fault lines to reproduce fractured inter-group relations whose dialectics can drive any parts of the region into major unrest.

The gender question in the prevailing post-election security situation in North West Nigeria is salient. However, such a question is more hypothetically relevant than it is empirically salient. This is in view of the fact that no hard data exists to show the gender disaggregates on the post-election security situation. However, it is logical to posit that the threat scenario highlighted in the foregoing may apply differently to men and women respectively. This is in view of their different and varying levels of threat exposure, vulnerability and resilience as members of different gender categories. Corroborated anecdotes and field insights available for this brief indicate that women are likely to be less affected by post-election violence and allied threats in view of the following reasons:

- Women participation in the post-election phase of the electoral process is minimal, especially in the focal region. Most women in that context do not take active part in organised celebration or protestation of electoral outcome. So, they are unlikely to be affected by post-election crisis as participants.
- The stakes that women wield in the entire electoral process as participants in whatever roles is generally low in the focal region because of a number of factors, including the prevailing patriarchal norms.
- Post-election incidents in the focal region in 2023 have largely been localised, isolated and less aggravated; thus, vitiating the likelihood of a widespread incidence of violence that could expose women to situational vulnerabilities.

However, in situations of generalised post-election violence, women are likely to be victims of direct and indirect causes. Apart from suffering physical violence and victimhood, the women may also suffer various forms of sexual or sexist abuse in the process. The latter may occur in more significant measure in online platforms where women are often subjected to cyberbullying, labelling, and stereotyping.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

The various threats identified and discussed in this report are inimical to democratic participation and inclusion. They are also detrimental to the concerns of gender equity and general electoral security. Generally, the threats reinforce conditions for gender inequality, inequity, and exclusion, thereby making the electoral process less inclusive and not sufficiently democratic.

As observers, party agents, polling officers and security agents in an election, women faced some gender-specific threats that not only affect their personal safety but also undermine electoral security. They were intimidated, harassed, molested, or victimised in a manner that exploited their gender

vulnerability as actors in the context of a male-dominant process. The ultimate effect of the foregoing is the entrenchment of a male-dominated electoral democracy where the rights and dignity of women are treated with wanton abuse.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Victimhood in the context of post-election security threats in North West Nigeria can be assessed in gender-specific terms. In this brief, an attempt has been made to engage the security threats that followed the conduct of the 2023 general elections in North West Nigeria from the analytic lens of gender discourse. The brief highlighted a number of security threats that attended the elections in the focal area drawing from relevant occurrences from select states. Although it was difficult to elicit gender-specific disaggregate data on the threat patterns with regard to the election experience under review, corroborated anecdotes and field-based insights tend to suggest, among others, that women are likely to be less affected by post-election violence and allied threats in view of their low involvement in post-election phase of the

electoral process. More focused empirical research is needed to further investigate and problematise this tentative submission.

Electoral politics across democratic systems goes with salient attributes and outcomes that border on gender question. So should electoral administration and security. Hence, mitigating gender-based security threat should part of the electoral administration and security concern. In tandem, therefore, the brief recommends thus:

1. Election security in Nigeria should be gender-focused and sensitive in orientation.
2. Electoral administration and security strategies in Nigeria should be retooled to incorporate concrete and actionable measures to mitigate vulnerabilities of women in the electoral process.
3. Non-governmental agencies that engage in election-related interventions should invest in programmes geared towards protecting vulnerable groups, especially women, from the inhibiting impact of electoral violence.
4. Concerns of election security should be mainstreamed into the post-election activities of relevant stakeholders of the electoral process.

8. CONCLUSION

MAURICE OGBONNAYA AND 'KEMI OKENYODO

This security threat assessment, which examined the context, nature, patterns and implications of prevailing threats to the participation of women in the 2023 general elections, was underpinned by empirical realities and evidence-based studies across several climes. Those studies showed that having women in key and strategic leadership roles has a positive effect on their ability and capacity to influence the process and outcome of developmental, including political processes. In Nigeria, however, despite considerable progress over the last decade to promote the participation of women in the political process, there are evident gaps related to their roles in decision-making within political parties and the electoral process.

Although women participated in the 2023 general elections in different capacities, the outcome, on all indicators, fell below expectations of improving the level of women participation in politics as candidates, election security officials, election observers, and election officials. Thus, women remain significantly marginalised as the electoral process in Nigeria is still largely male-dominated. Across the various regions, the 2023 general elections were characterised by conditions and occurrences that impeded the safe and effective participation of women as voters, contestants, or on-duty personnel. These include, among other things, physical attacks, violence, suppression and intimidation, as well as the impact of scarcity of Naira banknotes and fuel, were major threats to women participation in the process.

These conditions and occurrences, which undermine the electoral participation of women, are rooted in economic, socio-cultural and political imperatives that are dominant in the Nigerian society. These factors, not only expose women to multiple gender-based vulnerabilities, which impede their safe and effective involvement and participation in the political process, they also negate the principles of the Affirmative Action, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, as well as all national statutory guarantees for equality and inclusivity in Nigeria's political and governance processes. The development calls for urgent interventions by all stakeholders to the electoral process that will guarantee the adequate participation of women in the political and governance processes.

This study is part of the effort at the intervention. Conducted across the six geopolitical zones of the country and the Federal Capital Territory, the study has made far-reaching recommendations and measures relevant for electoral reforms, political party inclusivity, and security provisioning by state actors. It has also recommended the need for programmatic interventions by civil society organisations. The whole essence is to mitigate the various threats that militate against the adequate participation of women in the electoral process in Nigeria.

ABOUT PWAN

THE RULE OF LAW AND EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE ALSO
KNOWN AS PARTNERS WEST AFRICA NIGERIA (PWAN)

is a women-led, non-governmental organisation dedicated to enhancing citizens' participation and improving security governance in Nigeria and West Africa.

PWAN achieves its objectives through its Rule of Law, Citizens Security and CSO Strengthening program areas. Its senior management team is comprised of highly experienced professional women, as well as two-thirds of its board. PWAN has established a strategic and adaptive management structure with an emphasis on field presence, accountability, and cost efficiency which builds on extensive consortium and effective programme delivery experience in West Africa.

PWAN has operated in Nigeria since 2016 and currently employs 36 staff, including lawyers and 62 citizen observers. The head office is based in Abuja with two sub-offices in Kano and Borno states. The organisation maintains a robust pool of 30 consultants and facilitators with expertise across various sectors including justice and security sector reform, gender mainstreaming, peacebuilding and conflict resolution, developing creative ways to prevent/counter violent extremism and research.

Its Citizens Security programme area also works to ensure inclusive and transparent governance as the underpinning of a democratic and prosperous society by facilitating critical dialogue platforms for security sector stakeholders, strengthening the capacity of women to participate in democratic processes, and ensuring credible elections through capacity building for state and non-state actors.

Through its Rule of Law programme area, the team works to ensure that Nigerian criminal justice sector institutions are strengthened through the implementation of activities that encourage transparency and accountability. This is achieved through strategic engagements with the criminal justice sector actors, collaborative advocacy, capacity building and encouraging synergy through interagency coordination mechanisms.

As part of its CSO Strengthening component, the organisation focuses on building resiliency in the 'diminishing' civic space, and self-regulation. PWAN has strategically engaged CSO leadership across six geo-political zones to facilitate pivotal dialogues resulting in agreed capacity-building / organisational strengthening initiatives.



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