FROM PERSONALITIES TO POLICIES:

STRENGTHENING ISSUE-BASED POLITICS IN NIGERIA'S 2027 ELECTIONS

A Policy Brief by The Kukah Centre, Secretariat of the National Peace Committee

September, 2026

FROM PERSONALITIES TO POLICIES: STRENGTHENING ISSUE-BASED POLITICS IN NIGERIA'S 2027 ELECTIONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

01

The question facing the 2027 Accord is not who signed it but what follows the signature. This brief accepts that a voluntary commitment carrying no observable consequence loses its force over successive cycles, and responds with five dated commitments by the Committee itself.

02

The 2023 record establishes the need. Four political parties were recorded in breach between November 2022 and January 2023; violations rose sharply as the campaign progressed; and 54 deaths were recorded across eight states in the seven days before the March 2023 polls.

03

Osun 2026 shows both the reach and the limits of the present architecture. An accord signed by fourteen parties and 823 accredited observers deployed across all 30 local government areas out of the 3,763 polling units confirmed by the INEC did not prevent 323 recorded offences and irregularities, with vote trading the most frequent.

04

The problem is not necessarily a lack of rules. Much of the conduct the Peace Accord addresses: hate speech, misinformation, disinformation, threats and inflammatory rhetoric, is already unlawful. The real challenge is enforcement. The Accord provides an important bridge where enforcement falls short, turning legal obligations into a shared political and moral commitment. That is why the strength of what follows the signature matters as much as the signature itself.

05

Issue-based competition is not automatically pacifying. It reduces the temperature of a campaign only where it is accompanied by norms of respectful communication, access to credible information and institutional restraint.

06

The brief recommends stronger accountability across the electoral process, including policy commitments by political actors, transparent enforcement of electoral offences, and accountable security agencies. On its part, the NPC commits to timely monitoring, accessible reporting channels, defined verification timelines, equal application of the Accord and transparent attribution of breaches at the close of the 2027 electoral cycle.



Background

As Nigeria enters the 2027 election campaign season, the National Peace Committee (NPC), through its Secretariat, The Kukah Centre, considers the quality of political competition to be central to the quality and sustainability of Nigeria's democracy. The commencement of campaigns presents an opportunity to move political engagement away from personality-driven contests, name-calling, personal attacks and character assassination towards a political culture in which parties and candidates compete based on ideas, policies, programmes, records and alternative visions for governance.

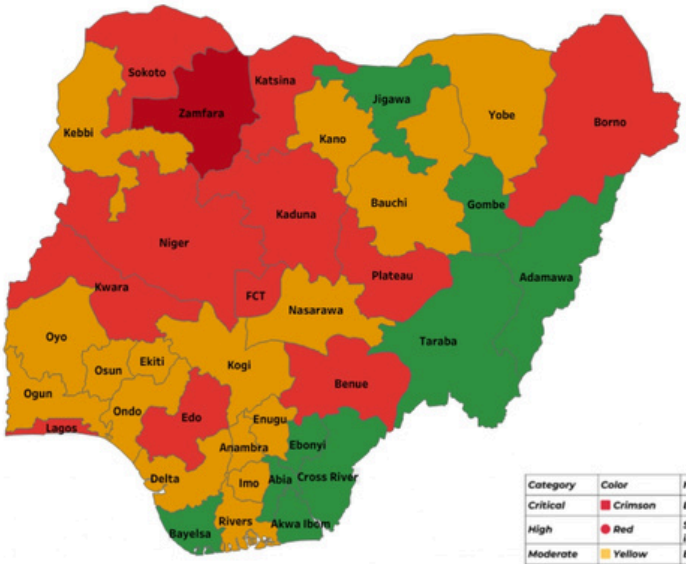
This is the central rationale behind the First National Peace Accord on Issue-Based Campaigns for the 2027 General Elections, signed by political parties and candidates on 18 August 2026. The Accord was signed by most, but not all, of the parties and candidates invited. The President was represented rather than present, and the presidential candidate of one major opposition party declined to attend, publicly describing that absence as a protest against what his party regards as insufficient enforcement of previous accords. This brief does not treat that objection as a difficulty to be managed. It treats it as the central question the 2027 Accord has to answer. The Accord represents more than a commitment to avoid violence. It seeks to establish standards for political communication and competition that allow Nigerians to interrogate competing policy choices without being subjected to intimidation, inflammatory rhetoric or narratives capable of escalating political tensions. The Committee's answer to that objection is set out in the final section of this brief: five commitments, each with a stated timeline, governing what the Committee will do when the Accord is breached.

The NPC's experience in 2023 demonstrates both the urgency of this objective and the value of sustained monitoring and engagement. During the 2023 campaign period, the NPC Situation Room[1] monitored thousands of campaign messages from political parties, presidential candidates, spokespersons and supporters across traditional and social media. Its monitoring identified a political environment increasingly characterised by insults, personal attacks, misinformation and declining civility. Between November 2022 and January 2023 alone, four political parties were recorded as having violated provisions of the Peace Accord, with the clauses relating to issue-based campaigning and responsible use of social media among those most frequently violated.

The lesson is therefore clear: signing an Accord is important, but monitoring, engagement, dialogue and accountability are what commit practical meaning.

[1]. The Kukah Centre.Before the Votes: TKC Situation Room Report. National Peace Committee, 2023, https://nationalpeacecommittee.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Before_the_Votes_TKC_Situation_Room_Report.pdf. Accessed 4 Sept. 2026.

RISK MAP OF NIGERIA (JUNE 2025 TO AUGUST 2026)



Category	Color	Meaning
Critical	Crimson	Extreme hotspot
High	Red	Sustained insecurity
Moderate	Yellow	Emerging risk
Low	Green	Stable

General Insecurity/ERV	Electoral Offences
No of Incidents: 2,510	No of Incidents: 381
Most affected States: Zamfara, Borno, Kaduna, Niger, Kwara, Benue, Plateau	Most affected States: FCT, Osun, Oyo, Ondo, Lagos
Top threats: Banditry, Kidnapping, Cultism, Terrorism, Armed Robbery, Political Violence, Farmer-Herder Conflict, Communal Clash	Top threats: Vote Buying/Inducement, Political Violence, Thuggery & Physical Attacks, Political Intimidation, Rigging & Result Manipulation, Misinformation & Disinformation

➢ Risk is geographically uneven, but concentrated around specific political and security hotspots.

Understanding the Context

Nigeria's democratic journey has demonstrated significant institutional progress, but electoral competition continues to carry substantial risks of violence and social division. Human Rights Watch[2] reported that the 2011 elections provide a stark reminder of the consequences of political competition that becomes deeply polarised. Human Rights Watch documented that post-election violence following the April 2011 presidential election left more than 800 people dead across 12 northern states, with tens of thousands displaced. The same assessment noted that the 2011 elections, despite improvements in electoral administration, still experienced ballot-box hijacking, vote-related manipulation and violence linked to political campaigns.

More than a decade later, the security challenges surrounding elections have evolved in form and complexity, but remain a significant concern. The NPC Election Security Information (ESI) Hub's Osun State Security Outlook[3] ahead of the 2026 off-cycle election identified 2 of the state's 30 LGAs as critical risk, 11 as high risk and 6 as exhibiting emerging risk indicators.

The remaining eleven local government areas were assessed below these thresholds.. These risks were driven by organised political violence, unresolved political disputes, criminal exploitation of the political environment, and the growing influence of misinformation and disinformation. The report also points to an evolution from isolated confrontations to more organised, recurrent and targeted forms of violence, with the impact extending beyond political actors to their associates, transport workers and uninvolved civilians. Concerns over the perceived neutrality of security agencies and the ability of misinformation to rapidly amplify tensions further complicate the electoral security landscape. Taken together, the trajectory from the widespread post-election violence witnessed in 2011 to the more targeted, networked and multidimensional threats evident today demonstrates that electoral insecurity has not fully disappeared; it has evolved.

The challenge has not been limited to physical violence. Political competition in Nigeria has also frequently been shaped by ethnic, religious, regional and personality-based mobilisation. In the period preceding the 2023 elections, the NPC Situation Room Report[4] which monitored the compliance of political parties on issue-focused campaigns observed that campaigns by major political parties were increasingly moving along regional, ethnic, religious and personal fault lines. This environment was compounded by attacks on INEC facilities, wider security challenges, the redesigned naira controversy and fuel scarcity.

[2]. Human Rights Watch. "Nigeria: Post-Election Violence Killed 800."Human Rights Watch, 16 May 2011, https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/05/16/nigeria-post-election-violence-killed-800. Accessed 4 Sept. 2026.
[3]. The Kukah Centre. Osun State Governorship Election 2026: Security Outlook. National Peace Committee, 2026, https://nationalpeacecommittee.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Osun-State_Governorship-Election-2026_Security-Outlook.pdf. Accessed 4 Sept. 2026.
[4]. The Kukah Centre.Non-compliance Monitoring. National Peace Committee, 2023, https://nationalpeacecommittee.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Non-compliance-Monitoring.pdf. Accessed 4 Sept. 2026.

This context makes the development of a political culture based on ideas and policy choices particularly important. A democracy in which citizens cannot readily distinguish between parties based on their governing philosophies, policy priorities and implementation approaches risks becoming excessively dependent on personalities, political alliances and identity-based mobilisation. Conversely, a political system in which parties articulate coherent policy positions gives citizens a stronger basis for making informed choices and holding elected officials accountable.

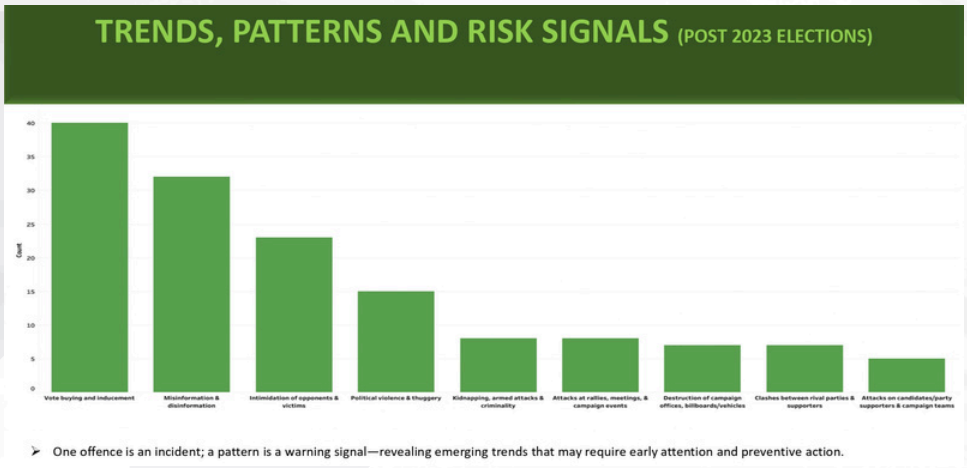
The 2023 experience also demonstrated the scale of the challenge. The Peace Committee's monitoring found that campaign messaging was frequently characterised by allegations and counter-allegations, personal attacks and hate speech. Monitoring of compliance showed significant gaps across different political actors. Political party spokespeople accounted for the highest share of recorded non-compliance at 44%, followed by party members at 26% and presidential candidates at 19%. Supporters accounted for 11%, while party chairmen recorded 4%. The pattern suggests that those responsible for communicating political positions and shaping campaign narratives played a particularly significant role in breaches of the Accord. The Situation Room specifically recommended greater emphasis on issue-based campaigns focused on policies and implementation strategies for Nigeria's development.

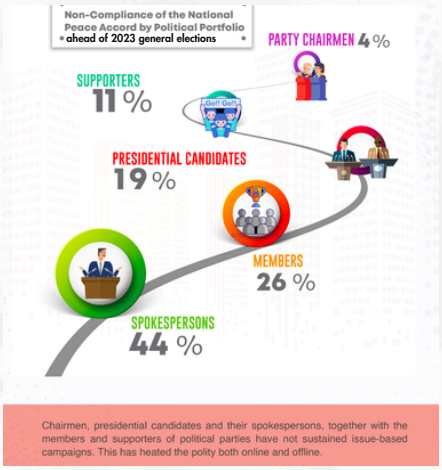
The wider security environment reinforced the need for such preventive action. Independent conflict monitoring by ACLED[5] similarly recorded more than 200 violent events involving party members and supporters in the 12 months preceding the 2023 election, resulting in nearly 100 reported fatalities. The report also noted that political violence had repeatedly spiked around Nigeria's election cycles, with 2011 representing the most severe episode in the period it examined.

It is worth being precise about what the Accord adds, because its critics are right that it adds nothing on its own. A substantial part of the conduct the Accord addresses is already unlawful. The Electoral Act 2022 provides offences for vote buying and the inducement of voters, and Nigerian law provides for the prosecution of incitement and of campaigning conducted on religious, ethnic or sectional grounds.

The difficulty has never been an absence of rules. It is that enforcement is rare, slow and concluded long after the election it was meant to protect. The Accord is therefore not a substitute for legal enforcement and should not be presented as one. It operates in the space enforcement leaves empty, using visibility, peer commitment and direct engagement to raise the cost of conduct the formal system has not been able to sanction in time to matter. That is its value and also its limitation, and it is the reason the Committee treats what follows a signature as the substance of the instrument rather than its appendix.

The situation confronting the 2027 elections[AB1] is therefore not simply one of preventing election-day violence. It is about transforming the conditions under which political competition takes place. Our record has documented violations of various provisions of the Peace Accord since its signing on the 19th of August ahead of the 2027 general election. The NPC will continue to engage political parties, candidates and other relevant stakeholders to strengthen compliance with the Accord and promote more substantive adherence to its commitments throughout the electoral process.





[5]. ACLED. "Political Violence and the 2023 Nigerian Election."ACLED, 2023, https://acleddata.com/report/political-violence-and-2023-nigerian-election. Accessed 4 Sept. 2026.

THE PERSISTENT CHALLENGES

The principal challenge is the persistence of a political culture in which the personality of the candidate can overshadow the substance of the political platform. Where campaigns are dominated by personal attacks, allegations, insults and inflammatory narratives, citizens receive less meaningful information about what competing parties actually propose to do with political power. The consequence is a weaker connection between electoral choice and public policy.

The 2023 NPC monitoring of peace accord compliance provides concrete evidence of this challenge. Between 1 November 2022 and 31 January 2023, four political parties were recorded as violating several provisions of the Peace Accord. The parties concerned are not named in this brief. The Committee's established practice during a live campaign has been to put findings to party leadership directly rather than through public attribution, on the judgement that engagement is more likely than exposure to change conduct before polling day. The monitoring found that campaign rallies and messaging were frequently devoid of policy issues and instead characterised by personal attacks, insults and misuse of social media. Clauses 1 and 4: addressing issue-based campaigns and responsible use of social media respectively, were among the provisions most frequently violated.

The challenge intensified as the campaign period progressed. The NPC recorded a sharp rise in incidents of Peace Accord violations in January 2023 compared with December, alongside the proliferation of hate speech, fake news, misinformation and disinformation by candidates, party spokespersons, members and supporters through social media.

This demonstrates an important limitation of voluntary political commitments: political actors may sign a common framework while continuing to operate within established patterns of political communication. The challenge is therefore not merely securing signatures but changing behaviour.

This limitation is no longer only an analytical observation; it has become an explicit political argument. Ahead of the 2027 signing, a major opposition party declined to participate on the ground that peace accords have become ceremonial and that commitments are not enforced when they are breached. The Committee does not accept that characterisation of the Accord's contribution across four electoral cycles. It does, however, accept the premise beneath the criticism, because its own monitoring has documented it: a voluntary commitment that produces no observable consequence when it is broken will, over successive cycles, lose its capacity to shape behaviour. The appropriate response is not to defend the instrument but to strengthen what follows the signature.

There is also an institutional challenge. Issue-based politics requires more than political parties publishing manifestoes. Parties need identifiable policy positions, candidates need the capacity to explain and defend those positions, media organisations need to interrogate them, and citizens need access to credible information with which to compare competing proposals. Without this wider ecosystem, campaign politics can quickly return to personalities and political spectacle.

Finally, Nigeria's complex security environment means that inflammatory political communication can have consequences beyond the campaign space. When political rhetoric intersects with ethnic, religious or regional divisions, the potential for online hostility to translate into offline intimidation or violence increases. The NPC's 2023 experience therefore demonstrates the importance of connecting political communication monitoring with preventive diplomacy and timely engagement.



National Peace Committee's Interventions

The National Peace Committee's response has evolved from a narrow emphasis on election-day peace messaging towards a broader model of preventive diplomacy, political engagement, monitoring and evidence-based intervention.

The Peace Accord is central to this approach. Since its establishment, the NPC has used the Accord to secure public commitments from political parties and candidates to peaceful political competition and respect for democratic processes. The issue-based campaign component, introduced in 2019, specifically seeks to encourage parties and candidates to compete on policies, programmes and ideas rather than personal attacks and inflammatory rhetoric.

In June 2025, the NPC through the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria Programme (EU-SDGN) operationalised the Election Security Information (ESI) Hub[6]. The ESI Hub is a national election security repository that collects, verifies and analyses information from across Nigeria. The Hub transforms field observations into evidence, evidence into insight, and insight into action, which enables stakeholders to identify emerging risks, strengthen early warning systems and support timely, evidence-based responses before isolated incidents become wider crises. In the weeks preceding the 2027 Accord signing, the Hub identified renewed trends capable of heightening political tensions as parties moved into active mobilisation, and those findings formed part of the basis on which the Committee convened political parties and presidential candidates in August 2026.



As part of its sustained efforts to strengthen Nigeria's peacebuilding infrastructure, the NPC has developed an Independent State Peace Architecture (ISPA), a decentralized network currently operational in about 23 states of the federation. The ISPAs serve as extensions of the NPC at the sub-national level, providing the Peace Committee with timely local data, early warning information and context-specific insights, while supporting local dialogue and peace mediation efforts. Beyond election periods, the architecture enables the NPC to engage emerging conflicts before they escalate, while during elections it provides a critical mechanism for identifying and responding to election-related tensions, disputes and other threats to peaceful political participation.

For the 2027 elections, the NPC has strengthened this commitment through the First National Peace Accord on Issue-Based Campaigns, which calls on political parties and candidates to debate opposing views respectfully, mobilise supporters peacefully, protect voters, respect electoral institutions and reject hate speech, misinformation and incitement.

Importantly, the Peace Committee has moved beyond the signing ceremony itself. During the 2023 election cycle, the Situation Room established a monitoring mechanism that collected information from more than 200 field observers, including more than 150 members of Independent State-based Peace Architectures across 14 states, local mobilisers and volunteer election observers across 22 states including the FCT. The system also drew on civil society and local partner networks to verify and augment information, while data clerks and social media analysts provided timely information to support response-driven interventions.

The 2023 experience demonstrated how monitoring can become an instrument for engagement rather than simply documentation. The NPC Situation Room tracked political messaging, identified emerging violations and provided recommendations for engagement with political party leadership, INEC and security agencies. Its recommendations included reinforcing peace messaging, working closely with political party leadership and INEC, and ensuring that party leaders called their supporters and political structures to order.

[7]. Musa, Musa Luka. "2027: Peace Committee, EU Launch Election Security Info Hub." Daily Trust, 16 Oct. 2025, dailytrust.com/2027-peace-committee-eu-launch-election-security-info-hub/.



The approach also extends to election-day monitoring. During the March 2023 Governorship and State Houses of Assembly elections, the NPC Situation Room monitored all 36 states using information from observers and analysts across the country. It combined rapid-response reporting, graphical data representation and evidence-based analysis to support timely intervention by the Committee.

The 2026 off-cycle elections provide the most recent and most directly relevant test of this model. Ahead of the Osun State Governorship Election of 15 August 2026, the Committee facilitated a subnational peace accord signed by fourteen political parties. Observation of the election was extensive: the EU-SDGN Election Observation Hub deployed 823 accredited observers across all 30 local government areas of the state out of the 3,763 polling units confirmed by the INEC. The observation recorded 323 electoral offences and irregularities across 726 of the state's polling units, together with 38 security incidents, with vote trading the most frequently reported offence. Osun therefore demonstrates both the reach of the current architecture and the distance still to be travelled: an accord was signed, observation was extensive, and inducement and violence nevertheless occurred[7].

This operational model is significant because it establishes a continuum between commitment, monitoring, dialogue and intervention. The Peace Accord creates the standard; monitoring identifies departures from that standard; engagement provides an opportunity for correction; and preventive diplomacy seeks to contain emerging tensions before they escalate.













[7]. European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria Election Observation Hub. "Osun Election Day Report: Preliminary Statement." 15 Aug. 2026. See Nigerian Democratic Report, https://www.ndr.org.ng/osun-election-day-report-strong-voter-turnout-orderly-peaceful-polls/. Accessed 4 Sept. 2026.

What are the Outcomes?



The available evidence demonstrates that the NPC's approach has produced an increasingly structured mechanism for identifying political risks and responding to them, while also revealing areas where political behaviour remains resistant to change.

One important result is the development of a functioning evidence-to-intervention architecture. During the 2023 election cycle, the Peace Committee was able to collect information from a geographically distributed network of observers, verify reports through civil society and local partners, analyse political communication and provide timely information to the Committee. This represented a significant evolution from generalised peace messaging towards an approach grounded in real-time information and contextual analysis.

The 2023 Governorship and State Assembly election monitoring also provides evidence of peaceful participation at a significant proportion of observed polling units, even amid a difficult security environment. NPC field observers reported that 87.2% of polling units visited were peaceful, while 12.8% experienced tensions. The same monitoring recorded security personnel at 85.1% of polling units visited. These proportions describe the polling units actually visited by NPC field observers. They are not estimates drawn from a nationally representative sample, and observer deployment was weighted towards locations identified in advance as higher risk. They should therefore be read as a description of the observed sample rather than of national conditions on election day. These figures should not be interpreted as evidence that electoral violence had been eliminated; rather, they demonstrate that significant areas of peaceful electoral participation can coexist with pockets of serious violence and that preventive mechanisms remain necessary.

At the same time, the evidence demonstrates that the work remains unfinished. The NPC Situation Room recorded 54 deaths across eight states in the seven days preceding the March 2023 elections, alongside continued incidents of political violence, vote buying and attacks on electoral stakeholders. Election-day monitoring subsequently documented serious incidents, including attacks on voters and election materials in several states.

The most important lesson for issue-based campaigning is therefore not that the Peace Accord has solved the problem of political violence. It has not. Rather, the evidence suggests that the Accord has created a platform through which political behaviour can be publicly framed, monitored and challenged, while the NPC's wider engagement architecture provides channels for preventive intervention.

It has also helped bring issue-based campaigning to the centre of national political discourse, while supporting effort for greater decency, civility and responsibility in political engagement. The very focus of the 1st signing of the peace accord ahead of the general election is to encourage political parties and candidates to focus on their policy programmes, governance priorities and proposed solutions, rather than resorting to personal attacks and inflammatory rhetoric, challenging political actors to make campaigns more substantive and responsive to citizens' concerns.

This distinction is critical to institutional learning. The impact of the Peace Accord should not be measured solely by whether violations occurred. It should also be measured by whether there is now greater capacity to identify violations, engage political actors, mobilise stakeholders and intervene before political tensions become more destructive.

What the 2023 Evidence Means for 2027

The 2023 experience offers several lessons for the current electoral cycle.

Firstly, signing must be followed by monitoring. The documented violations of the 2023 Accord demonstrate that political commitments require sustained observation if they are to influence behaviour. Monitoring should therefore remain an integral component of the 2027 Peace Accord architecture.

Secondly, monitoring must lead to engagement. Data has limited value if it does not inform decisions. The NPC's experience shows the importance of using verified information to engage party leadership, candidates, campaign organisations and other stakeholders before violations become entrenched patterns.

Thirdly, issue-based campaigning must become a political incentive, not merely a moral appeal. Parties and candidates should understand that citizens are increasingly interested in knowing what political actors intend to do about the economy, security, education, healthcare, employment, energy and other issues affecting everyday life. Political actors who provide clear and credible answers should be able to compete on the strength of their ideas.

Fourthly, the media and citizens must become active participants in policy accountability. The quality of political debate cannot be transformed by political parties alone. Journalists, civil society organisations, professional associations, researchers and citizens must consistently ask candidates to explain their proposals, compare alternatives and demonstrate how their commitments will be implemented.

Finally, peacebuilding and democratic accountability should be treated as mutually reinforcing objectives. This relationship should not be assumed to operate automatically. Sharper policy disagreement can also raise the temperature of a campaign, particularly where policy positions map onto existing regional, religious or identity cleavages. The claim advanced here is therefore conditional: issue-based competition contributes to peaceful elections where it is accompanied by norms of respectful communication, access to credible information and institutional restraint. That is precisely why the Accord addresses the conduct of campaigns and their content together rather than separately. Political competition based on substantive policy differences provides citizens with better choices, while respectful political communication reduces the likelihood that disagreement will become hostility. A stronger political party system can therefore contribute simultaneously to better governance and more peaceful elections.





The Policy Direction for 2027 and Beyond

The Kukah Centre, through its work with the National Peace Committee, considers the transition from personality-driven politics to issue-based competition an important long-term democratic objective. The 2027 election cycle should therefore be viewed not simply as another electoral contest but as an opportunity to deepen the quality of Nigeria's political discourse.

Recommendations

The recommendations below are addressed to the actors in a position to act on them and are framed so that action can be observed. Each is intended to be checkable at the close of the cycle.

Political parties and candidates. Publish, within the first quarter of the campaign period, a costed position on each of five issues — the economy and cost of living, security, education, health and energy — stating what is proposed, what it will cost and how it will be financed. Designate a senior campaign official publicly accountable for the conduct of the campaign's communications, including those of surrogates and affiliated online networks, and notify that name to the Committee. Respond in writing within fourteen days to any finding of non-compliance put to the party by the Committee.

The Independent National Electoral Commission. Refer documented cases of vote buying and voter inducement to the prosecuting authorities within the cycle in which they occur, and publish at the close of the cycle the number of referrals made, the offences alleged and the status of each. The absence of a published enforcement record is what allows the claim that electoral offences carry no consequence to stand unanswered.

Security agencies. Publish the rules of engagement for personnel deployed to elections in advance of deployment, together with the channel through which complaints about their conduct may be made. Investigate and report publicly on incidents in which deployed personnel are alleged to have acted partially. The perceived neutrality of security agencies is identified in this brief as a driver of electoral risk, and it is addressed by demonstrated accountability rather than by assurance.

Media organisations: Commit publicly to a stated minimum proportion of campaign coverage devoted to comparative policy analysis rather than to the reporting of political confrontation. Adopt and publish a verification standard for audio and video material attributed to candidates, and label clearly any material that cannot be verified.

Civil society and research organisations: Publish comparative analyses of party manifestos against costed and independently verifiable baselines during the campaign rather than after it. Maintain a public record of campaign commitments against which performance in office can later be assessed, so that the connection between electoral choice and public policy survives the election.

Development partners: Support election monitoring architecture on timelines that extend beyond the election-day peak, since the evidence in this brief shows the decisive period runs from the opening of campaigns to the resolution of results. Support the transition of the Election Security Information Hub to arrangements that can be sustained beyond the current EU-SDGN programme cycle, so that a national election security repository built over two cycles is not lost at the close of a funding instrument.

The NPC's role is to help create the conditions in which this transformation can take place peacefully. Through the Peace Accord, sustained stakeholder engagement, preventive diplomacy, monitoring and evidence-based intervention, the Committee will continue to support a political environment in which disagreement is managed through democratic dialogue rather than confrontation.

What the Committee Will Do: Commitments for the 2027 Cycle

Because voluntary commitments depend on visible follow-through, the Committee sets out what it will itself do over the 2027 campaign period. These commitments carry timelines and thresholds so that the Committee can be held to them.

1. **Publication during the campaign, not after it.** The Committee will publish a monitoring bulletin in each month of the campaign period, and a consolidated report within thirty days of the declaration of results.
2. **A published channel for allegations.** The Committee will maintain a channel through which any political party, candidate, observer group or citizen may submit an alleged violation of the Accord. Every submission will be acknowledged within seventy-two hours of receipt.
3. **A disclosed verification timeline.** The Committee will complete verification of a reported violation within fourteen days of receipt and will initiate engagement with the actor concerned within seven days of verification. Where verification cannot be completed within that period, the Committee will say so and give the reason.
4. **Equal application to incumbents.** The Committee will apply the standards of the Accord to officeholders and government officials on the same terms as to candidates and challengers, and its bulletins will record findings against incumbents and challengers in the same format.
5. **Attribution at the close of the cycle.** From the 2027 cycle, the Committee will name in its end-of-cycle report each party found to have breached the Accord, the clause breached, the engagement undertaken and the response received. Findings will continue to be put to party leadership privately during the live campaign, on the judgement that engagement changes conduct more reliably than exposure before polling day. They will no longer go unattributed afterwards.



The reason for stating these commitments in this form is straightforward. A framework that asks parties, candidates, media, civil society and citizens to change their conduct, while asking nothing measurable of the body that convenes it, will not withstand a second cycle of the criticism now being made of it.

The early emergence of substantive debate around fuel subsidy policy at the beginning of the 2027 campaign season is therefore an instructive development, and instructive in two directions at once. It demonstrates the possibility of a different kind of campaign conversation; one in which political actors are challenged to explain what they believe, what they propose and how their choices will affect Nigerians. It also demonstrates how quickly such a conversation can revert to form. Within days, the exchange had moved from the design, financing and sequencing of energy policy to disputed accounts of what rival camps had actually said, contested claims about consistency and motive, and characterisations of opponents' competence. Both features belong to the same episode. The appetite for policy argument among Nigerian voters is evident; the discipline required to sustain it is not yet established. The task for the remainder of the campaign is to hold on to the first without conceding to the second.

The objective is not to eliminate political competition. It is to improve the quality of that competition.

Nigeria needs political parties that can be distinguished by what they believe and propose, candidates who can defend their records and policies, media that can interrogate competing claims, and citizens equipped to make choices based on evidence rather than hostility. The Peace Accord provides a framework for this transition. The experience of 2023 provides the evidence for why it is necessary. The 2027 campaign season provides the opportunity to deepen it.

The aspiration is simple:
Let ideas compete.
Let policies be interrogated.
Let political differences remain peaceful.
And let Nigerians decide.

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