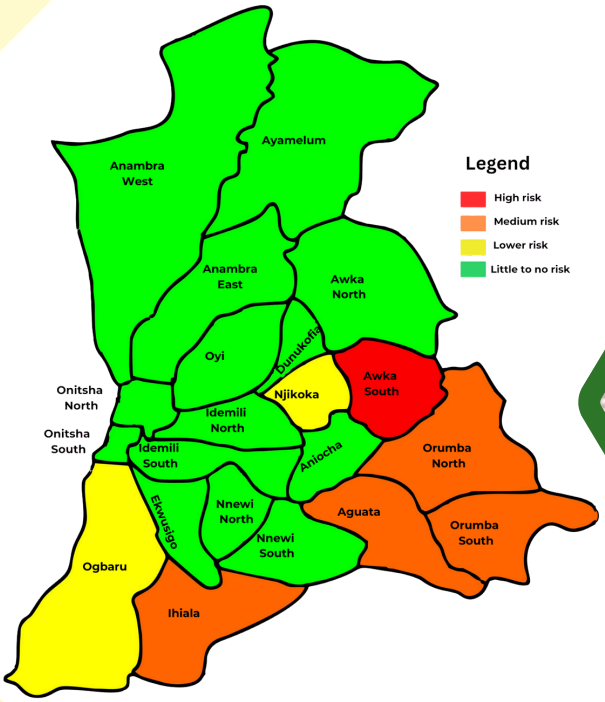
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THE KUKAH CENTRE
FAITH • LEADERSHIP • PUBLIC POLICY

ANAMBRA STATE CONTEXT ANALYSIS 2025





Political Context Analysis of Elections in Nigeria: A Case Study of Anambra Elections

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The Kukah Centre (TKC), founded by Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah, is a non-profit policy and research institution dedicated to promoting democracy, good governance, and national cohesion in Nigeria. Through evidence-based research, data-driven analysis, and inclusive dialogue, the Centre works to strengthen human-rights protection, accountability, and sustainable peace. Its interventions are designed to generate actionable insights that inform governance reforms, deepen civic participation, and reinforce institutional resilience.

As the Secretariat of the National Peace Committee (NPC), The Kukah Centre provides administrative support to the NPC — a non-governmental, non-partisan body of eminent Nigerians that has been central to Nigeria's democratic stability since its establishment in 2015. The Committee is widely recognized for facilitating the National Peace Accords, through which political parties and candidates commit to issue-based campaigns and respect for electoral outcomes. Beyond the accords, the NPC engages in preventive diplomacy, mediation, and dialogue, consistently helping to de-escalate political tensions and safeguard democratic transitions across electoral cycles.

In alignment with this peacebuilding mandate, The Kukah Centre accepted to host the Election Security Information (ESI) Hub under the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN II) programme. The ESI Hub functions as a central coordination and data-intelligence platform that tracks electoral offences, identifies insecurity flashpoints, and generates verified, real-time analysis to inform decision-making. By integrating systematic data collection, geospatial analysis, and strategic communication tools, the Hub provides actionable insights to key stakeholders, including INEC, security agencies, civil society organizations, media, and development partners. Thereby enhancing early warning, countering disinformation, and advancing the shared goal of peaceful, credible, and inclusive elections in Nigeria.

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ACRONYMS

NPC:	National Peace Committee
EU	European Union
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
AI:	Artificial Intelligence
BVAS:	Biometric Voter Accreditation System
EUAA:	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
AAN:	Action Aid Nigeria
HRW:	Human Rights Watch
UN-HABITAT:	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
CSO:	Civil Society Organization
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
LGA:	Local Government Area
IDP:	Internally Displaced Person (implied)
PDP:	Peoples Democratic Party
APC:	All Progressives Congress
LP:	Labour Party
AA:	African Action Congress

ACRONYMS

APGA:	All Progressives Grand Alliance
NGA	Nigeria
NPHCDA	National Primary Health Care Development Agency
OCD:	Organized Crime Dynamics
IDPS:	Internally Displaced Persons
IPOB:	Indigenous People of Biafra
ESN:	Eastern Security Network
PWD:	Persons With Disabilities
PDP:	People's Democratic Party
CBOS:	Community-Based Organizations
CSOS:	Civil Society Organizations



Political Context Analysis of Elections in Nigeria: A Case Study of Anambra Elections

Executive Summary

This Context Analysis was conducted by the Kukah Centre and validated through a multi-stakeholder forum involving civil society, political leaders, religious leaders, traditional rulers, and security agencies in Anambra in August 2025. The analysis draws on a combination of desktop research, stakeholder interviews, and data review to provide an in-depth overview of the political, social, and security dynamics shaping the upcoming gubernatorial election scheduled for November 8, 2025. Its primary aim is to identify critical risks, delineate zones of concern, and propose strategic interventions to safeguard electoral integrity and foster peace. The goal is to equip stakeholders with actionable insights that will promote a peaceful, credible, and inclusive electoral process, reinforcing Nigeria's democratic resilience.

Key Risks and Zones of Concern:

The political landscape in Anambra State is characterized by intense competition, entrenched power dynamics, and socio-cultural divisions. Prominent risks include electoral violence, vote-buying, and the monetization of politics, especially in volatile Local Government Areas such as Dunukofia, Awka South, Oyi, and Ihiala. These areas are affected by cultism, political thuggery, land disputes, and infiltration by non-state actors including cult groups, militias, and vigilante groups, all of which threaten electoral integrity.

Security challenges are heightened by activities of unknown gunmen, communal clashes, IPOB sit-at-home protests, and perceptions of bias among security agencies, eroding public trust and threatening electoral legitimacy. Disinformation campaigns, amplified via social media and AI-driven tools, further risk social cohesion by inciting tensions and spreading falsehoods. Voter apathy, particularly among youth and women, remains a concern due to disillusionment, economic hardship, and fears of violence—potentially leading to skewed representation and disputed outcomes.

Regionally, distinct zones present unique challenges: Anambra North faces land disputes and distrust; Anambra South grapples with vigilante involvement and religious tensions, while the Central zone struggles with logistical delays and intra-party conflicts. These localized issues highlight the need for tailored zone-specific strategies in addition to addressing statewide challenges like insecurity and systemic corruption.

Strategic Recommendations

Addressing these complex challenges requires a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach. Key strategies include:

i

Security Sector Reform:

1. Deploy neutral, professional security forces trained in electoral conduct and exclude non-statutory outfits from electoral duties to ensure impartiality.

ii

Voter and Civic Education:

Intensify campaigns targeting youth and women to combat voter apathy, misinformation, and disinformation, fostering informed and active participation.

iii

Technological Innovations:

Leverage electronic voting and result transmission systems to enhance transparency and reduce manipulation, thereby increasing public confidence.

iv

Media Engagement and Disinformation Countermeasures:

1. Deploy neutral, professional security forces trained in electoral conduct and exclude non-statutory outfits from electoral duties to ensure impartiality.

v

Addressing Structural Determinants:

Intensify campaigns targeting youth and women to combat voter apathy, misinformation, and disinformation, fostering informed and active participation.

vi

Post-Election Justice and Reconciliation:

Leverage electronic voting and result transmission systems to enhance transparency and reduce manipulation, thereby increasing public confidence.

The 2025 Anambra gubernatorial election presents a pivotal opportunity for Nigeria to reaffirm its commitment to democratic principles, peace, and inclusive governance. Its successful conduct will demonstrate Nigeria's capacity to hold credible, transparent, and peaceful elections amid socio-economic and political challenges. Achieving this requires collective effort—deploying neutral, well-trained security personnel; strengthening civic and voter education; leveraging technology for transparency; and addressing systemic issues like poverty and social disenfranchisement. Promoting inclusion of marginalized groups, such as women and persons with disabilities, through enforcement of relevant laws and accessible voting processes, is equally critical. Post-election reconciliation efforts led by institutions like the National Peace Committee will be vital to maintaining social cohesion.

Ultimately, this election can serve as a regional model of democratic stability and inclusive governance, inspiring reforms and building public confidence. The collaborative implementation of these strategies by all stakeholders will demonstrate that credible, peaceful elections are achievable despite complex circumstances, reinforcing Nigeria's democratic resilience.

1.0 Introduction:

Research Questions

- *What are the key political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors influencing the electoral environment in Anambra?*
- *Who are the primary stakeholders involved in the electoral process—security agencies, political parties, traditional and religious leaders, civil society, and voters—and what are their respective interests, influence levels, and motivations?*
- *Where are the high-risk zones and flashpoints for electoral violence within Anambra, and what are the underlying causes fuelling these tensions?*
- *What is the potential security, social, and political risks associated with electoral violence, and how can these be prioritized for mitigation?*
- *What opportunities exist for peacebuilding and conflict prevention during the electoral cycle, especially through stakeholder engagement and community-based initiatives?*

Scope of the Analysis

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the electoral process in Anambra State, covering the entire period from the inception of the electoral cycle, including party primaries and campaign activities —up to election day. It focuses on the full geographical landscape of Anambra and its environs, examining key themes such as electoral processes, security dynamics, political trends, and voter behaviour. The analysis integrates perspectives from a broad range of stakeholders, including political parties, voters, security agencies, religious and community leaders, election officials, and civil society organizations.
It utilizes both quantitative datalike voter turnout statistics and incident reports and qualitative insights gathered through interviews, focus group discussions, and media analysis. The report acknowledges potential limitations due to access restrictions, reporting biases, and ongoing political developments. Its primary audience includes the National Peace Committee, policymakers, election stakeholders, security agencies, civil society, and the public interested in election integrity and peacebuilding, aiming to inform strategic planning, risk mitigation, stakeholder engagement, and post-election reconciliation efforts.

Methodology

The Anambra Context Analysis was primarily based on a combination of desktop research, review of existing literature, policy documents, media reports, and relevant secondary data to gain an initial understanding of the region's political landscape. To enrich and validate these findings, a limited number of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with selected stakeholders, including political analysts, community leaders, and security officials. An interview guide with open-ended questions was used to explore expert perspectives on key political issues, governance challenges, and security dynamics within Anambra State. These interviews, conducted both in person and remotely, provided valuable contextual insights that complemented the secondary data. The information from the KIIs was integrated with the desktop research findings to produce a comprehensive overview of Anambra's political environment.

Justification of the Analysis

A thorough analysis of Anambra's socio-political landscape is essential ahead of the November 2025 gubernatorial election, given the history of electoral violence and ongoing security challenges. Past elections have been marred by violence that undermines electoral integrity and endangers voters and officials, reflecting deep-rooted grievances and eroding trust. The recent by-election, while less violent, revealed persistent security vulnerabilities and unresolved tensions.
Understanding the underlying causes such as political rivalries, socio-economic disparities, and community tensions is crucial.

This analysis will identify key risk factors, potential flashpoints, and vulnerable communities, enabling targeted strategies to enhance security, prevent violence, and promote a credible, peaceful election. Ultimately, this proactive approach is vital for strengthening Anambra's democratic process and ensuring a safe electoral environment in 2025.

Background and Context of the Anambra Political Landscape

Since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, Anambra State—home to approximately 4.2 million people[1] with Nigeria's highest literacy rate (92.1%)—has been a pivotal democracy bellwether in Nigeria's Southeast[2]. Its political environment is characterized by vibrant competition rooted in ethno-regional loyalties, traditional authority, and a multi-party system dominated by APGA, which leverages regional identity and longstanding networks[3]. Recent developments, including Peter Obi's 2023 presidential bid, have reinvigorated contestation and involvement by youth and emerging actors.

However, electoral processes have been repeatedly marred by violence, vote-buying, manipulation, and judicial disputes[4] (INEC, 2023), eroding public trust. The 2021 gubernatorial election recorded a historic low turnout of 10.2%, driven by insecurity and IPOB sit-at-home protests[5] (INEC, 2022). Systemic flaws such as logistical delays, high nomination fees, and low participation among women, youth, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) threaten electoral integrity.

Socio-Political and Security Dynamics:

Traditional and religious authorities wield significant influence, often acting as peacebuilders or catalysts for conflict, especially amid intra-religious tensions between Catholics and Anglicans[6]. Socio-economic hardship—unemployment estimated at 35–40% (NBS, 2021)—fuels vote-buying and political thuggery, while disinformation campaigns via social media deepen mistrust. The role of non-statutory security outfits like vigilante groups complicates peace efforts, with recent incidents involving attacks on security personnel and communal clashes highlighting vulnerabilities[7].

Historically, Anambra's electoral turbulence has prompted judicial interventions: the annulment of the 2003 election set a precedent for off-cycle elections, and low turnout persisted in subsequent cycles[8]. The 2025 campaign has seen defections, shifting alliances, and violence linked to candidate origins, especially in zones producing multiple strong contenders like Anambra Central and South, which are hotspots for vigilante mobilization and violence.

The influence of IPOB and ESN, with enforced sit-at-home orders and attacks, exacerbates insecurity, disrupting logistics and raising fears of violence during the upcoming polls[9] (Global Terrorism Index, 2024). Environmental hazards, such as flooding in Ogbaru and Anambra West LGAs, threaten logistical operations, risking disenfranchisement.

[1] National Population Commission, Census Report (2006). https://nationalpopulation.gov.ng/
[2] Nigeria Education Data Survey (NEDS) (2015) National Bureau of Statistics, https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/pdfuploads/Anambra_PDF_rev.compressed.pdf
[3] Anambra State, (n.d.). In Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anambra_State
[4] Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC (2023). https://www.inecnigeria.org/
[5] Ibid. (2021)
[6] Benjamin Chukwunonso Nwokocha. Religion as a tool of Politics: the Anambra State Experience, Trinitarian International Journal of Arts and Humanities, Vol. 1(2), 2021. file:///C:/Users/Aluko%20Ahmad/Downloads/1916-2585-1-PB%20(1).pdf
[7] Anambra state homeland security law. (2025). https://anambrastate.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/ANAMBRA-STATE-HOMELAND-SECURITY-LAW-2025.pdf
[8] Vanguard Report. (2013) Anambra Elections: The past, present and future, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/03/anambra-elections-the-past-present-and-future/
[9] Global Terrorism Index. (2024). https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/global-terrorism-index/#/

Electoral Risks and the Way Forward

Anambra's electoral environment remains volatile—marked by mass-casualty incidents, targeted assassinations, and attacks on security forces—that undermine voter confidence and participation. Incidents in key areas like Orumba South, Aguata, and Awka South exemplify this, with violence often linked to candidate competition and community disputes.

The persistence of vote-buying, intimidation, disinformation, and institutional weaknesses—such as INEC's logistical challenges and reliance on partisan vigilantes—creates a feedback loop of disengagement and scepticism, threatening the legitimacy of the electoral process[10]. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach: strengthening security and institutional reforms, community-led peacebuilding, reducing systemic barriers, and countering disinformation[11].

Only through coordinated, multi-stakeholder efforts involving political actors, traditional and religious leaders, security agencies, civil society, and the media can Anambra ensure credible, peaceful elections that uphold democratic principles and foster social cohesion.

[10]Chukwuma Okoli. The Conversation (2022). Votes for cash: the significance of vote buying in Nigeria's democracy, https://theconversation.com/votes-for-cash-the-significance-of-vote-buying-in-nigerias-democracy-186159

[11]Disinformation and Peacebuilding in Sub-Saharan Africa: Security Implications of AI-Altered Information Environments, Research Report. (2024). Chrome extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://unu.edu/sites/default/files/2024-11/disinformation%20peacebuilding%20subsaharan%20africa.pdf

2.0 MAIN ANALYSIS

ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT IN ANAMBRA STATE

Political Landscape of Anambra state

Anambra State, often regarded as the heartland of Igbo political thought, presents a highly competitive and dynamic electoral environment[12]. Its political landscape is shaped by a complex web of historical legacies, socio-economic realities, security challenges, and evolving multi-party dynamics, primarily involving APGA, PDP, APC, and LP—and characterized by active contestation, and fluctuating alliances[13]. Historically, the state's politics have been marred by post-electoral disputes, court rulings, and allegations of bias, which continue to influence electoral stability and public trust[14] (Supreme Court, 2007). These interrelated factors influence the prospects for peaceful, credible, and inclusive elections, demanding a nuanced understanding of both past patterns and current trends.

Historical and Socio-Political Foundations

Anambra's political identity is deeply rooted in indigenous institutions such as traditional rulers, town unions, and community associations, which historically serve as custodians of local culture and mediators of communal interests[15]. Since its creation in 1976, the state has developed a reputation for vibrant, yet fiercely contested, political competition[16]. Leaders like Peter Obi (2006–2014) played pivotal roles in fostering civic engagement through infrastructural development and anti-corruption efforts, which significantly boosted voter confidence and participation. However, electoral contests have often been marred by disputes, legal rulings, and allegations of malpractices—highlighted by landmark court decisions in 2006 and 2007[17] that led to off-season elections—underscoring the fragility of electoral integrity.

These historical disputes continue to influence current politics, fuelling tensions and sometimes escalating into violence, especially when perceptions of bias or manipulation are perceived to undermine fairness.

Current Political Trends, Power Dynamics and Realignments

In recent years, Anambra's political scene has experienced significant realignments. While the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) remains dominant, controlling both executive and legislative branches, opposition parties such as PDP, APC, and Labour Party (LP) are increasingly contesting for influence. The traditional influence of community elders, town union presidents, and religious leaders remains strong, often swaying electoral outcomes through endorsements and patronage, but their support is sometimes driven by financial incentives, complicating efforts to establish internal party democracy[18].

[12] PhilipMary Ayika. (2023). Pre-colonial political powers in Igbo land. https://acjol.org/index.php/NJP/article/view/3673

[13] Governance and security challenges in Anambra State. https://scispace.com

[14] Solomon Ifejika. (2023). Rising Incidence of Post-Electoral Dispute in Nigeria: Implications for its Democracy, https://www.perspectivasjournal.com/index.php/perspectivas/article/view/3674

[15] Traditional Rulers and Town Unions in Local Government in Nigeria: The Socio-Political Expectations, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/377810510_traditional_rulers_and_town_unions_in_local_governance_in_nigeria_the_socio-political_expectations

[16] August 16 bye-election 'll determine who's in charge of Anambra – APC's Ukachukwu, Vanguard. (2025) https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/08/august-16-bye-election-ll-determine-whos-in-charge-of-anambra-apcs-ukachu

[17] Alayinde, Z. O., & Ijalana, E. F. (2025). Examining judicial precedents' dilemma in conflicting decisions on electoral disputes in Nigeria. Scientific Research Publishing- https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation?paperid=141624

[18] Sarah Brierley. (2020). (Do endorsements by traditional leaders affect voter attitudes?, https://www.theigc.org/collections/do-endorsements-traditional-leaders-affect-voter-attitudes

Post-electoral disputes, exemplified by court rulings and protests, continue to shape the landscape. The 2006 Court of Appeal decision that nullified the 2003 gubernatorial election remains a reference point for electoral volatility, emphasizing the need for dispute resolution mechanisms that bolster credibility and stability. Some key trends in this regard include among others, progressively changing pattern in voter turnout. For instance, between 2003 and 2007, Anambra's elections were marred by judicial interventions during Dr. Chris Ngige's turbulent tenure, marked by kidnappings, arson, and political godfatherism, with court rulings nullifying results and resetting the electoral calendar. From 2010 to 2017, under Peter Obi and Willie Obiano, APGA solidified gubernatorial dominance, ensuring relative stability despite persistent voter apathy. This decline worsened in 2021 when voter turnout fell to a historic low of 10.2%, Nigeria's lowest, mainly due to insecurity and IPOB's sit-at-home orders; earlier elections in 2013 and 2017 had higher but declining turnouts of 24% and 22% (INEC, 2022). The trend continued into the 2023 general election, with low turnout, logistical delays, and intimidation at polling units, reflecting broader national insecurity and undermining civic confidence. The August 2025 by-election, plagued by violence, ballot snatching, and electoral manipulation, exposed institutional weaknesses and foreshadowed challenges for the November gubernatorial election, highlighting both actors' disruptive capacity and the fragility of Anambra's electoral infrastructure.

Rise of Youth Participation and Civil Society Engagement

The youth demographic, constituting over 60%[19] of the population, is increasingly mobilized through social media, advocacy campaigns, and grassroots activism. This rising engagement fosters a more participatory political culture, emphasizing accountability and transparency. Nonetheless, challenges such as voter apathy, vote-buying, and disillusionment persist. Youth leaders often support candidates offering financial incentives, undermining genuine democratic participation[20]. Addressing these barriers through civic education, reduced nomination fees, and targeted inclusion initiatives is critical for fostering a more inclusive democracy.

Legal, Institutional, and Candidate Selection Challenges

The legal environment in Nigeria has historically been a double-edged sword. While judicial bodies are instrumental in resolving electoral disputes, delays in judicial processes and perceptions of bias can undermine public trust in the electoral system. Recent controversies over campaign finance and billboard levies further emphasize the urgent need for comprehensive legislative reforms aimed at enhancing transparency and fairness. Additionally, logistical challenges—such as delays in deploying election materials and environmental factors like flooding—particularly affect flood-prone Local Government Areas (LGAs) such as Ogbaru and Anambra West, thereby complicating efforts to uphold electoral integrity[21].

[19] Olufemi Ariyo. (2024). Youth Activism in the Digital Age: Leveraging Social Media for Sustainable Change https://medium.com/@roariyo/youth-activism-in-the-digital-age-leveraging-social-media-for-sustainable-change-955694dd2918

[20]Chinedu O. Onyewuchi. (2024). Youth Political Participation: Obstacles and Pathways to Increased Youth Engagement in the Nigerian Political Process, file:///C:/Users/Aluko%20Ahmad/Downloads/31+Twist+v19i4p284%20(4).pdf

[21]Vanguard report by Tony Edike (2013). Anambra: Over 1000 voters who lost cards to 2012 flood may vote- https://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/11/anambra-1000-voters-lost-cards-2012-flood-may-vote/#google_vignette

Candidate selection and intra-party primaries also play a crucial role in shaping electoral outcomes. The legitimacy of candidates largely depends on transparent and democratic intra-party processes, yet Nigeria's party systems often suffer from weak structures that lead to disputes and internal crises[22]. For the November 2025 election, sixteen parties fielded candidates, including the incumbent Charles Soludo (APGA), whose unopposed nomination reflects intra-party unity[23]. Conversely, candidates like Jude Ezenwafor (PDP) and Nicholas Ukachukwu (APC) secured nominations amid internal conflicts, though with substantial party backing. The internal democratic processes within parties and the profiles of the candidates will significantly influence electoral perceptions, support, and legitimacy[24] (Agbaenyi & Nwagbo, 2016).

Political Candidates and Campaign Strategies

The upcoming election features a diverse array of candidates with distinct profiles and campaign approaches. Incumbent Charles Soludo (APGA) leverages his economic credentials and established networks to maintain support but faces ongoing security concerns and opposition challenges. George Moghalu (LP), an opposition figure with religious appeal, seeks to capitalize on the national Obidient momentum by consolidating party support and expanding his base. Jude Ezenwafor (PDP), with a business background, must mobilize beyond core party loyalists to gain broader appeal. Nicholas Ukachukwu (APC), backed by strong internal party support, is focused on consolidating his existing support base and gaining wider recognition.

These candidates' campaign strategies and their ability to mobilize supporters and navigate security or intra-party issues will play a critical role in shaping the electoral landscape and perceptions of legitimacy. [25].

Socio-Economic and Security Landscape in Anambra

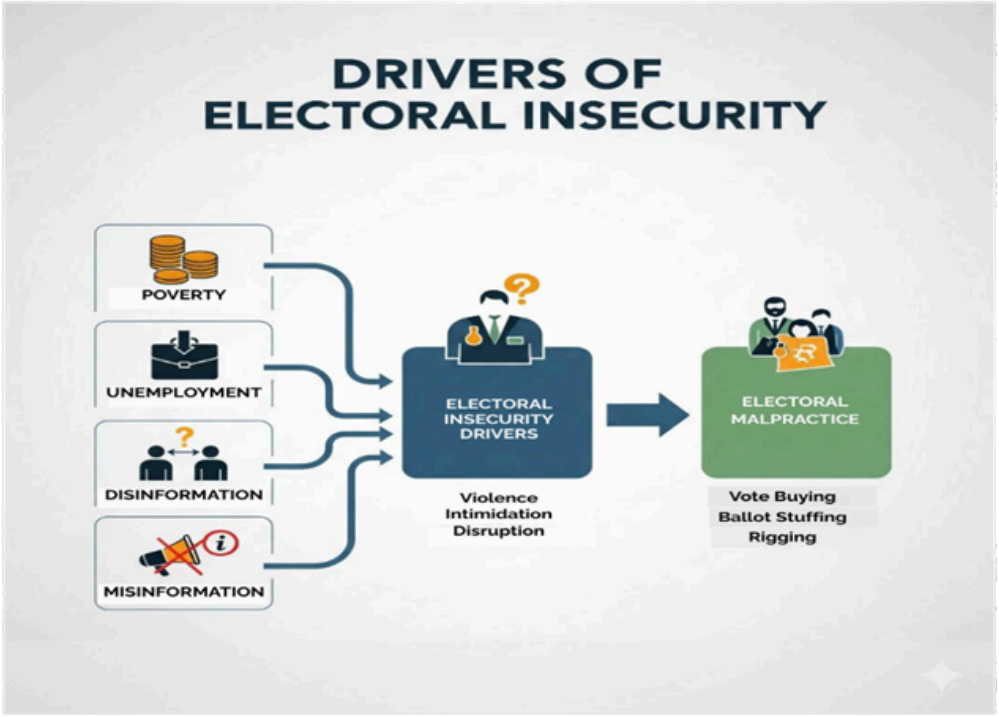
With a population of approximately 4.2 million and over 60% under the age of 25, Anambra's youthful demographic presents both significant opportunities and notable challenges. The high literacy rate of 92.11% fosters entrepreneurial activity, particularly in urban centers like Onitsha and Nnewi, contributing to economic vibrancy. However, infrastructural deficits, inconsistent power supply, and environmental issues such as flooding and land degradation hinder sustainable development. Socio-economic disparities, poverty, and unemployment influence voter behaviour, often leading to transactional voting and social unrest, which can destabilize the electoral process (Demographics, Economic Trajectory). Coupled with these socio-economic factors, the security environment remains complex; threats range from IPOB's sit-at-home protests, communal clashes, kidnapping, and armed robbery to politically motivated violence. While Anambra is relatively more peaceful compared to other southeastern states, recent incidents—such as attacks on security personnel and violence linked to IPOB—highlight escalating vulnerabilities. The proliferation of illegal arms, organized crime, and youth unrest—fuelled by socio-economic frustrations—continue to pose significant threats to electoral integrity and social stability. (Anambra State Ministry of Justice).

[22]Convenant Journals of Politics and International Affairs. (2017). Party Primaries, Candidate Selection and Intra-Party Conflict in Nigeria: PDP in Perspective https://journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cujpia/article/view/466

[23] Premium Times Report. (2025). Major combatants for 2025 Anambra governorship election emerge https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/786016-major-combatants-for-2025-anambra-governorship-election-emerge.html?tztc=1

[24]Albert Uyiekpen Usuanlele. (2025). Internal Democracy among Political Parties and the Quest for Democratic Deepening in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of APC and PDP - https://www.researchgate.net/publication/392506685_Internal_Democracy_among_Political_Parties_and_the_Quest_for_Democratic_Deepening_in_Nigeria_A_Comparative_Study_of_APC_and_PDP

[25]Albert Uyiekpen Usuanlele. (2025). Internal Democracy among Political Parties and the Quest for Democratic Deepening in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of APC and PDP - https://www.researchgate.net/publication/392506685_Internal_Democracy_among_Political_Parties_and_the_Quest_for_Democratic_Deepening_in_Nigeria_A_Comparative_Study_of_APC_and_PDP



The drivers of insecurity are interwoven with poverty, unemployment, political exclusion (particularly of women, youth, and persons with disabilities), and the monetisation of elections through vote trading. Gender exclusion also compounds these vulnerabilities: women and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) remain grossly underrepresented in candidate lists and decision-making platforms, even though they constitute critical voting blocs (UN Women, 2023). These socio-economic drivers intersect with political competition to create fertile ground for vote trading, political thuggery, and disinformation campaigns. Recently, disinformation further inflames tension by circulating false narratives that delegitimise INEC and candidates.

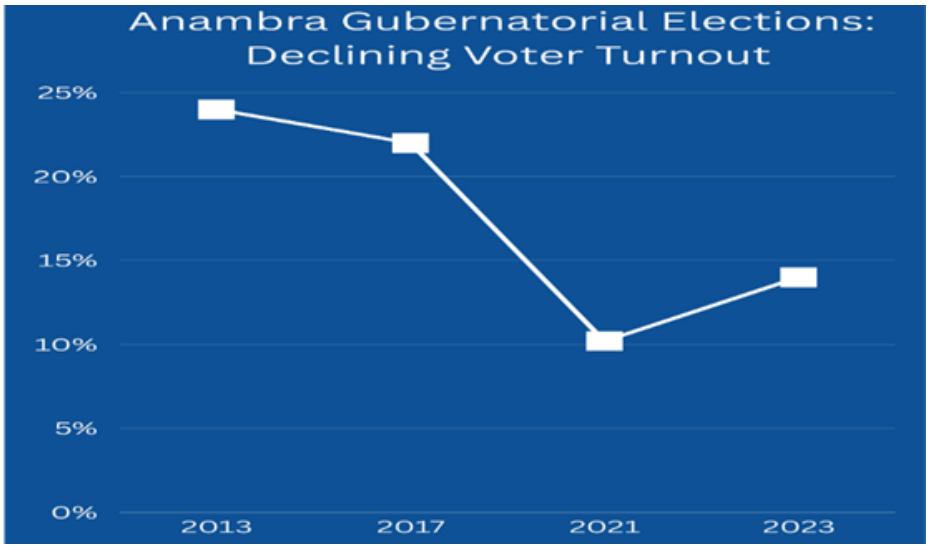
Environmental and Security Vulnerabilities

Climate-related disruptions, especially flooding and land degradation, have a tangible impact on electoral logistics and social stability[26]. The 2025 bye-election faced logistical setbacks due to environmental factors, exemplifying how climate vulnerabilities can influence electoral outcomes and deepen social tensions. These environmental challenges are compounded by security concerns: incidents of violence, kidnapping, communal clashes, and the activities of secessionist groups like IPOB threaten stability.

Organizations like IPOB's sit-at-home protests have significantly reduced voter turnout, with a record low of 10.2% in 2021[27], illustrating the profound influence of security disruptions on electoral legitimacy.

[26] Angela Oyilieze Akanwa, et. Al., (2019). Journal of ecology and Natural Resources: Changing Climate and the Effect of Gully Erosion on Akpo Community Farmers in Anambra State, Nigeria.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330514105_Changing_Climate_and_the_Effect_of_Gully_Erosion_on_Akpo_Community_Farmers_in_Anambra_State_Nigeria_Changing_Climate_and_the_Effect_of_Gully_Erosion_on_Akpo_Community_Farmers_in_Anambra_State_Nigeria

[27] Anambra 2021: Sit-At-Home Order Threatens Election's Credibility As Candidates Failed To Condemn IPOB, Human Angle Report. (2021)
https://humanglemedia.com/anambra-2021-sit-at-home-order-threatens-elections-credibility-as-candidates-failed-to-condemn-ipob/

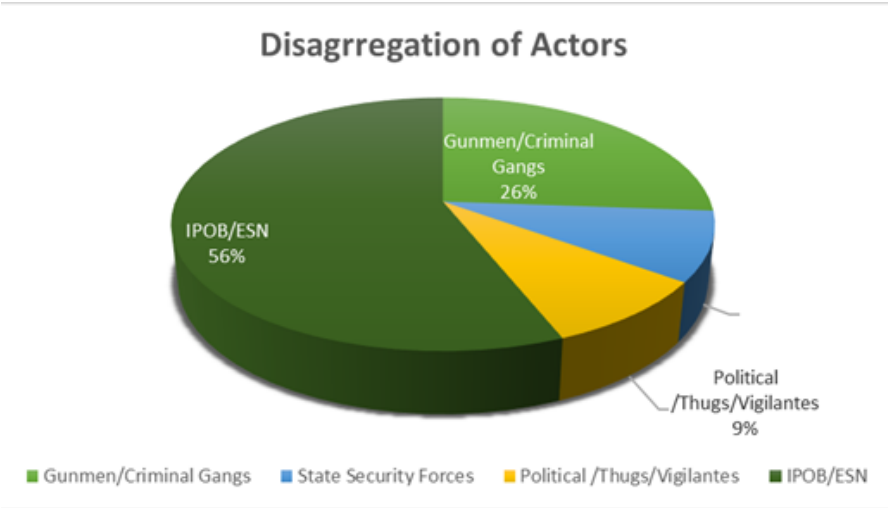


The Peak of Voter Apathy in Anambra State. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 muted political mobilisation but exacerbated socioeconomic fragilities. Criminal groups exploited weakened state presence, foreshadowing vulnerabilities that would disrupt the 2021 cycle. That year marked the peak of voter apathy in Anambra State. The governorship election of November 2021 recorded a turnout of only 10.2%, the lowest in Nigeria's electoral history. The unprecedented drop was linked directly to insecurity, as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) enforced sit-at-home orders that paralysed movement. This crystallised the fusion of separatist agitation with electoral fragility.

Security Challenges and Efforts to Promote Peace

While Anambra remains comparatively peaceful within Nigeria's southeastern states, escalating threats demand comprehensive strategies. Incidents of political violence, cultism, and organized crime—fueled by socio-economic issues like unemployment—highlight the need for strengthened security frameworks. The involvement of non-official security outfits such as vigilantes and the controversial Agunaechemba security team raises concerns about neutrality and abuse.

Stakeholders advocate for community-led peace initiatives, stronger electoral institutions (like INEC and electoral offenses agencies), and technological tools such as AI surveillance and CCTV to enhance security and social cohesion.



Pathways to Credible Elections

Addressing these intertwined challenges requires a multi-pronged approach. Electoral reforms must focus on strengthening legal frameworks, improving logistical planning, and deploying technology to ensure transparency. Civic education and community engagement are vital for rebuilding trust, especially among youth and marginalized groups. Promoting responsible media practices and combating misinformation—amplified by social media and AI—are equally important[28].

Furthermore, fostering inclusivity, particularly for women and persons with disabilities, will help deepen democratic legitimacy and social cohesion[29]. As the 2025 elections approach, concerted efforts to reform campaign financing, ensure security, and promote transparency are essential for delivering credible, peaceful, and representative electoral outcomes.

In summary, Anambra's electoral and political environment is characterized by a dynamic mixture of historical legacies, current political realignments, socio-economic challenges, environmental vulnerabilities, and security concerns[30]. Addressing these issues holistically through community participation, institutional reforms, technological innovations, and environmental resilience is vital for fostering sustainable democracy and peace in the state.

Pathways to Peace and Credibility in Anambra

The socio-economic and security landscapes of Anambra are deeply intertwined with the challenges facing the upcoming elections. The youthful demographic, while a source of dynamism and entrepreneurial potential, also contributes to heightened vulnerabilities—especially in the context of socio-economic disparities, unemployment, and environmental hardships such as flooding and land degradation[31]. These factors often fuel social unrest, youth frustration, and criminal activities, which are further exacerbated by the proliferation of illegal arms and organized crime. The security environment remains complex, with threats ranging from IPOB's sit-at-home protests, communal clashes, and politically motivated violence to criminal activities like kidnapping and armed robbery[32]. Although relatively peaceful compared to other southeastern states, recent incidents underscore escalating vulnerabilities that threaten electoral integrity and social stability.

These challenges are compounded by logistical difficulties caused by poor infrastructure, environmental hazards, and environmental disruptions, which hinder the movement of election materials and access to polling stations. Additionally, technological issues such as glitches in the BVAS system and the spread of misinformation via social media undermine public confidence in the electoral process. Legal and institutional weaknesses, including judicial delays and disputes over candidate nominations, further diminish public trust and credibility in the electoral system.

[28] Niam Yaraghi. (2019). Brookings: How should social media platforms combat misinformation and hate speech? https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-should-social-media-platforms-combat-misinformation-and-hate-speech/

[29] Willan Global: How to Build a More Inclusive Nigeria for Women, Youth and Persons Living with Disability. (2025). Women in Leadership Advancement Network. https://wilanglobal.org/how-to-build-a-more-inclusive-nigeria-for-women-youth-and-persons-living-with-disability

[30] Fairy godfathers and magical elections: understanding the 2003 electoral crisis in Anambra State, Nigeria, Published online by Cambridge University Press. (2010). https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-modern-african-studies/article/abs/fairy-godfathers-and-magical-elections-understanding-the-2003-electoral-crisis-in-anambra-state-nigeria/19072E9EC9337C28386FE61D2684F55A

[31] Supper Okijie. (2023). Youth Demographics and their Role in Sustainable Development: Emphasis on the 2030 Agenda- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/375758929_Youth_Demographics_and_their_Role_in_Sustainable_Development_Emphasis_on_the_2030_Agenda

[32] Boniface Umoh E., (2025). From IPOB to Killer Herdsmen: A Multi-Dimensional Study of Insecurity and Its Economic Consequences in South-East Nigeria- https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5377622

Addressing these interconnected issues requires a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach focused on promoting peace and electoral integrity. Efforts should include strengthening electoral institutions like INEC and electoral offenses agencies, promoting community-led peacebuilding initiatives involving traditional rulers, religious leaders, and civil society, and enhancing security coordination, intelligence gathering, and resource allocation[33]. Civic education programs are vital to combat misinformation and voter apathy, while investments in resilient infrastructure can mitigate environmental disruptions that threaten the electoral process[34]. Ultimately, fostering peace, transparency, and confidence in the electoral system hinges on collaborative efforts to address socio-economic disparities, security threats, and institutional weaknesses holistically.

Building a Resilient Democratic Future

Anambra State's electoral environment is shaped by a confluence of historical legacies, socio-cultural dynamics, legal frameworks, and security realities[35]. While the state has demonstrated vibrant political participation, persistent challenges—ranging from violence to socio-economic disenfranchisement—necessitate comprehensive, coordinated responses. Emphasizing transparent candidate selection, inclusive participation, peacebuilding, and infrastructural resilience will be vital in ensuring elections that are credible, peaceful, and truly representative of Anambra's diverse populace.

Electoral and Security Dynamics in Anambra State

Since Nigeria's return to democratic governance in 1999, Anambra State has remained a politically vibrant, yet complex environment characterized by intense competition, deep-rooted socio-cultural loyalties, and multifaceted security challenges[36] (Akinboye, 2010; Obi, 2019). The state's political landscape is shaped by a rich history of regional identity, traditional authority, party rivalries, and socio-economic factors—all of which influence electoral outcomes and stability (Nwosu, 2015).

Recent preparations for the November 8, 2025, gubernatorial election have brought critical issues affecting electoral integrity and peace to the forefront. Stakeholder engagements—including traditional rulers, religious leaders, civil society organizations, security agencies, media practitioners, and political actors—have highlighted both opportunities and vulnerabilities within the electoral process[37] (INEC, 2024; OSAA, 2024).

Socio-Political Context and Electoral Environment

Anambra's political life is deeply rooted in ethno-regional loyalties. The dominant party, APGA, leverages regional identity and traditional authority to maintain influence, but the landscape is increasingly contested by parties such as PDP, APC, and LP, especially following national political shifts like Peter Obi's presidential bid[38] (Ezeani, 2022). These dynamics have intensified political competition, sometimes escalating into violence, vote-buying, and misinformation[39] (Amadi, 2023).

The socio-political fabric varies across zones, influencing electoral behavior and risk profiles:

[33]Ojo Akinwunmi Idowu; 2Mbah Clement C. & 3Agary Nwokoye. (2025) Enhancing Electoral Security: Analysis of the Determinants of Effective Security Agency Performance in Electoral Processes in Nigeria chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.seahipublications.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/IJILPS-S-8-2025.pdf

[34] Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Pierre Lauofo., (2023). The Influences of Civic Education on Youth Political Participation- chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://cpaaus.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Samoa-The-influences-of-civic-education-Hon-LAUOFO.pdf

[35]Anambra 2025: The Issues, Challenges, Party Dynamics. https://www.ndr.org.ng/anambra-2025-the-issues-challenges-party-dynamics/

[36 Uchenna OKAFOR. et., al., (2025). IInternal Party Factionalization and Electoral Performance of Political Parties in Nigeria: An Analysis of APGA in Anambra State, https://journals.aphriapub.com/index.php/SS/article/view/3187

[37]Nigerian Guild of Editors. (2023). Post-2023 General Elections: Assessing the Roles played by the Media, INEC, Security Agencies and others -https://ngeditors.org.ng/post-2023-general-elections-assessing-the-roles-played-by-the-media-inec-security-agencies-and-others/

[38] Idrees Mahmud Gana. Wukari International Studies Journal. (2024). Beyond one party state dominance: A review of recurrent issues in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, https://www.academia.edu/127261932/Beyond_One_Party_State_Dominance_A_Review_of_Recurrent_Issues_in_Nigerias_Fourth_Republic

[39]Michael Bratton. (2008). Vote Buying and Violence in Nigeria Election Campaigns, Electoral Studies - https://www.researchgate.net/publication/222574461_Vote_Buying_and_Violence_in_Nigeria_Election_Campaigns

- Anambra North (Onitsha Zone): Traditional and religious leaders hold significant sway, but their influence is often compromised by inducements and bias. Youths are frequently swayed by money, with insecurity driven by cultism and boundary disputes[40]. Vigilantes and hired thugs are commonly used for intimidation, undermining electoral fairness[41] (Security Report, 2024). Systemic barriers—such as high nomination costs and poor accessibility for PWDs—further hinder participation[42] (INEC, 2024). High-risk areas include Oyi, Anyamelum, Umuleri, and Aguleri.

- Anambra South (Nnewi Zone): Religious dynamics, especially between Catholics and Anglicans, influence political alignments. Threats from unknown gunmen, cult violence, and kidnappings are prevalent, particularly in Ihiala and Orumba South[43]. The political climate is tense, with online hostility and vote trading common (Online Poll, 2024). Women and youths face barriers such as high nomination costs and systemic disincentives, while PWDs are especially vulnerable[44]. Key hotspots include Ihiala and Orumba South'

- Anambra Central (Awka Zone): Violence linked to cultism, youth gangs, and sit-at-home orders hampers economic and political activities[45] (Amadi, 2023). Money politics and widespread vote-buying, driven by unemployment and disenchantment, dominate the landscape[46]. INEC faces criticism over logistical issues and potential manipulation, fueling.

- Recurrent flashpoints like Idemili North require targeted civic mobilization[47]. Stakeholders emphasize the importance of involving traditional rulers, religious leaders, and law enforcement to foster peace.

[40] Punch Newspaper report. (2025). Land disputes, cultism fuelling insecurity in Anambra – Truth commission https://punchng.com/land-disputes-cultism-fuelling-insecurity-in-anambra-truth-commission/

[41] Gloria Chinyere Chukwujama (2024) Insecurity in the South East and its Possible Solutions: using Anambra State Nigeria as a Focus, 1999-2023, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/393962566_Insecurity_in_the_South_East_and_its_Possible_Solutions_using_Anambra_State_Nigeria_as_a_Focus_1999-2023

[42] Agora Policy. (2024)., Despite Recent Progress, Nigeria Needs More Action on Disability Inclusion https://agorapolicy.org/research/policy-platform/210-despite-recent-progress-nigeria-needs-more-action-on-disability-inclusion.html

[43] The Guardian Newspaper report. (2025)., Group worried over escalating kidnapping, killings in Anambra https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria/metro/group-worried-over-escalating-kidnapping-killings-in-anambra/

[44] Christine Bigler. (2025)., Are we leaving women with disabilities in the Global South behind? How the reinforcement of different forms of violence leads to unsustainable development., Women's Studies International Forum - https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277539524001894

[45] Ikenna Mike Alumona. et. al.,Youth cultism, crime and lethal violence in Nigerian cities: African Renaissance publication-https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334034346_Youth_cultism_crime_and_lethal_violence_in_Nigerian_cities

[46] Oupa Lucky. (2014)., Money Politics and Vote Buying in Nigeria: The Bane of Good Governance., Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences-https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290838500_Money_Politics_and_Vote_Buying_in_Nigeria_The_Bane_of_Good_Governance

[47] Kimpact Development Initiative, KDI., THE EARLY WARNING: …assessing pre-election security risk ahead of the 2025 Anambra off-cycle Governorship Election., chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://kimpact.org.ng/storage/publications/anambradecides25_esra/AnambraDecides25_ESRA_Report.pdf

Security Challenges and Risks

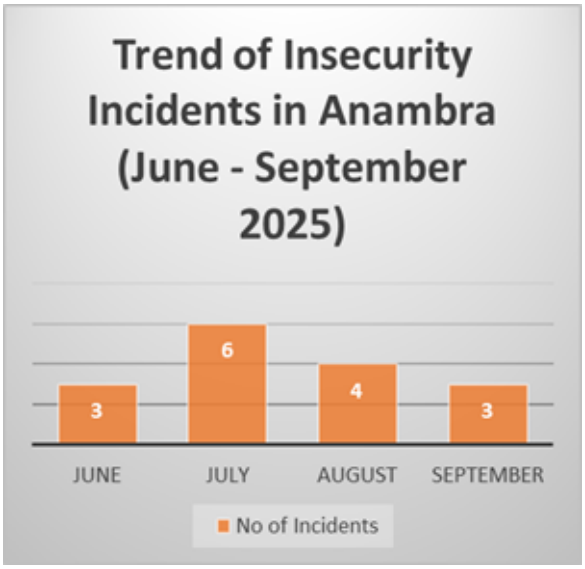
Across all zones, insecurity remains a significant obstacle to credible elections. Common threats include cultism, land disputes, political violence, and organized violence such as kidnappings[48] (Amadi, 2023). The use of vigilantes hired thugs, and political thuggery further undermines neutrality and trust in the electoral process[49]. Misinformation—particularly fake news and AI-driven disinformation—exacerbates tensions, often manipulated by malicious actors seeking to destabilize the environment[50] (Tech Watch, 2024).

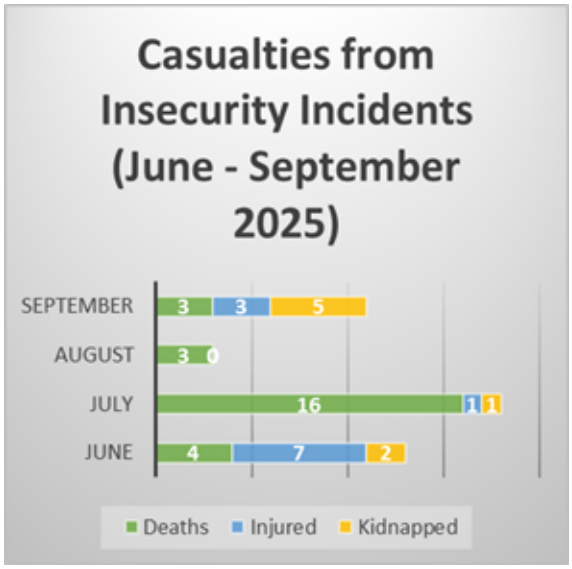
Certain vulnerabilities are more pronounced in specific areas:

- Anambra North: Land disputes, poverty, and distrust in security agencies contribute to violence, especially in LGAs like Ogbaru and Oyi, where communal conflicts over resources are common[51] (Okezie, 2022).

- Anambra South: Ethnic and religious tensions, coupled with vigilante involvement and politically motivated violence, are prevalent, notably in Ihiala and Orumba South[52] (NDLEA, 2023).

- Anambra Central: Logistical failures, intra-party conflicts, and recurrent electoral violence—particularly in Onitsha and Nnewi—persist, often intensifying during campaigns and election days (INEC, 2024).





[48] Centre for Democracy and Development, CDD., NigeriaDecides2023: How insecurity may affect elections https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/583728-nigeriadecides2023-how-insecurity-may-affect-elections-cdd.html?tztc=1

[49] International Crisis Group. (2023)., Mitigating Risks of Violence in Nigeria's 2023 Electionshttps://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/311-mitigating-risks-violence-nigerias-2023-elections

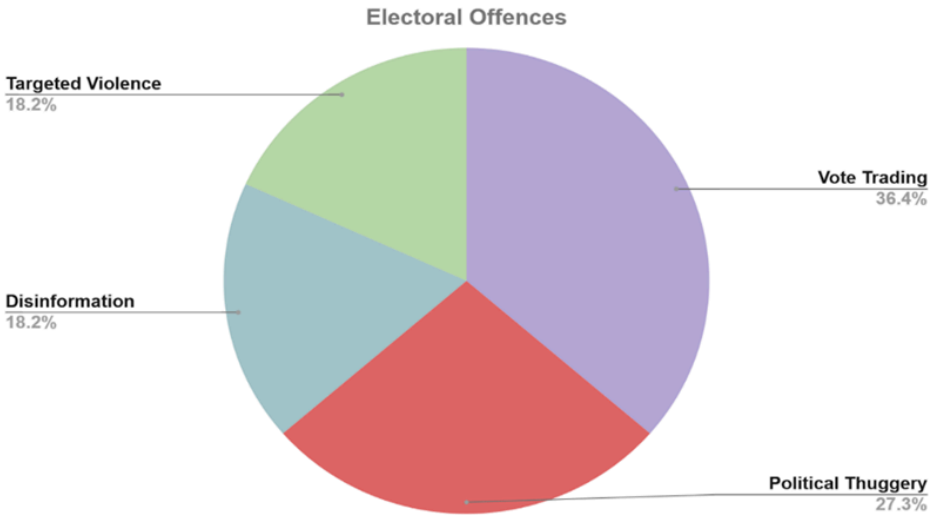
[50] Masabah Bint E Islam., et. Al., AI Threats to Politics, Elections, and Democracy: A Blockchain-Based Deepfake Authenticity Verification Framework., https://www.mdpi.com/2813-5288/2/4/20

[51] Onwuegbusi, Chike Abden., (2021)., Impact of Land Dispute on Economic Well Being of Conflicting Communities in Anambra State., https://www.slideshare.net/slideshow/impact-of-land-dispute-on-economic-well-being-of-conflicting-communities-in-anambra-state/250212028

[52] Gloria Chinyere Chukwujama., (20240., Insecurity in the South East and its Possible Solutions: using Anambra State Nigeria as a Focus, 1999-2023- http://ojs.aeducia.org/index.php/ijces/article/view/189

These charts summarize electoral insecurity in Anambra State (June–September 2025), with 36 incidents across seven LGAs, leading to 24 deaths, 8 injuries, and 4 kidnappings. Though limited in number, high-profile assassinations and targeted attacks had outsized impacts, disrupting markets, silencing leaders, and weakening voter confidence.

ELECTORAL OFFENCES



Vote Trading

These charts summarize electoral insecurity in Anambra State (June–September 2025), with 36 incidents across seven LGAs, leading to 24 deaths, 8 injuries, and 4 kidnappings. Though limited in number, high-profile assassinations and targeted attacks had outsized impacts, disrupting markets, silencing leaders, and weakening voter confidence.

Political Thuggery

In the recent electoral cycle, cult groups and vigilante outfits, reportedly patronised by political elites, were observed actively harassing opponents and disrupting campaign rallies in Awka South, Ihiala, and both Orumba North and South (Vanguard, 2025; Punch, 2025). Witnesses described instances in which gatherings were forcibly dispersed, with threats and intimidation directed at both candidates and supporters. Local sources indicated that these actors were often deployed strategically to assert dominance in highly contested wards, creating an atmosphere of fear and constraining the free conduct of political activities.

Disinformation

In the recent electoral cycle, cult groups and vigilante outfits, reportedly patronised by political elites, were observed actively harassing opponents and disrupting campaign rallies in Awka South, Ihiala, and both Orumba North and South (Vanguard, 2025; Punch, 2025). Witnesses described instances in which gatherings were forcibly dispersed, with threats and intimidation directed at both candidates and supporters. Local sources indicated that these actors were often deployed strategically to assert dominance in highly contested wards, creating an atmosphere of fear and constraining the free conduct of political activities.

Targeted Violence

The shooting of Chief Jude Ezenwafor, a PDP candidate, which is currently under investigation, underscores the vulnerability of political actors in Anambra's election environment. The attack occurred amid heightened political tension, drawing attention to the persistent risks of candidate-targeted violence. Such incidents not only endanger individual aspirants but also erode public confidence in the safety of the electoral process. They illustrate how informal political actors and local militias operate outside the reach of institutional safeguards, making candidate protection a critical election security concern.

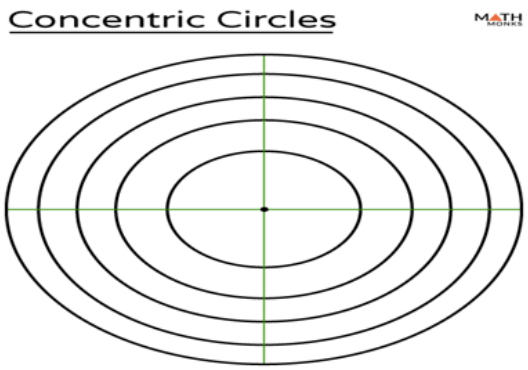
These violations expose the widening gap between rhetorical endorsement of the Peace Accord and its enforcement in practice.

3.0 STAKEHOLDER FRAMEWORK IN ANAMBRA'S ELECTORAL CONTEXT

A comprehensive understanding of the diverse actors shaping Anambra's electoral landscape is essential for effective peacebuilding and safeguarding electoral integrity. Recognizing that each stakeholder's influence, interests, and roles vary significantly, this framework visualizes these actors as concentric circles around the National Peace Committee (NPC)—the key mediator, moral authority, and primary convener in the process.

This layered model not only highlights the central role of the NPC in orchestrating peace efforts but also underscores the varying degrees of influence and interest among other stakeholders. By mapping actors in this manner, it becomes possible to design targeted engagement strategies, allocate resources efficiently, and foster coordinated actions that align with each stakeholder's level of impact and stake in ensuring credible and peaceful elections in Anambra State.

It then makes the point that visualizing stakeholders arranged in concentric circles around the NPC, which occupies the core as the primary mediator and moral authority, reflects their varying influence and interest in attaining electoral peace and integrity:



- Inner Circle (High Influence, High Interest): These actors are central to electoral credibility and peace. Their actions directly shape the electoral environment.
- Middle Circle (High Influence, Lower Interest): These stakeholders possess significant sway but are less directly involved in daily electoral processes.
- Outer Circle (Lower Influence, High Interest): Comprising community actors, civil society, and vulnerable groups, these stakeholders are highly interested but wield limited influence.

Targeted Violence

At the heart of this framework is the Nigerian Peace Committee (NPC), positioned as the impartial facilitator and moral compass. Its responsibilities include fostering dialogue, mediating disputes, and promoting peace—especially vital in areas like Onitsha, where unrest linked to IPOB protests has occurred. The NPC's moral authority and neutrality are essential in building trust among diverse stakeholders, acting as a catalyst for credible and peaceful elections.

Inner Circle: Key Stakeholders

Inner Circle: Key Stakeholders

INEC is central to organizing elections, ensuring transparency, and maintaining electoral credibility. Despite facing trust deficits, capacity constraints, and past infractions, its unwavering commitment to upholding electoral integrity is essential for fostering public confidence in the process

Security Agencies (including the Police, Military, and the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Electoral Security - ICCES):

The Police and other security bodies, working under the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), are responsible for maintaining law and order during elections. Their neutrality and professionalism are essential to ensuring public trust, yet past incidents of politicization and misuse of force—particularly in volatile areas like Onitsha and the Anambra Central Senatorial Zone—have undermined confidence. Through coordinated planning, intelligence sharing, and impartial deployment of personnel, ICCES provides a cohesive framework for preventing violence and safeguarding a secure electoral environment.[53]

Traditional Rulers

Serving as custodians of local authority and mediators within their communities, traditional rulers possess legitimacy and influence that are vital for peace and social cohesion at the grassroots level. Their active engagement can facilitate community buy-in and conflict mitigation.

[53] INTER-AGENCY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON ELECTION SECURITY (ICCES)., chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CODE-OF-CONDUCT.pdf

Religious Leaders

Religious leaders wield considerable influence over their followers and can serve as powerful advocates for peace, social cohesion, and ethical conduct during elections. Their involvement in civic education and peace messaging can counteract divisive narratives and promote unity[54].

Middle Circle: Influential but Less Direct

Religious Leaders

Including Catholic Church and Anglican bishops - possess moral authority that can sway public sentiment. They can either promote peace or contribute to tension, depending on their stance[55].

Targeted Violence

observe the electoral processes, advocate for transparency, and mobilize voters to exercise their franchise. Their work enhances accountability and civic participation.

Media Outlets - shape public perception through information dissemination. As a matter of fact, responsible reporting is critical to countering misinformation that can incite violence.

Outer Circle: Highly Interested but Limited Influence

Youth Representatives and Student Groups - are active voters whose participation can significantly influence electoral outcomes. Youth activism can be a force for social change or unrest.

Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and Vulnerable Groups - seek accessible electoral processes, advocating for inclusivity and fair representation.

Local Community Groups - focus on grassroots peace and development issues, playing key roles in maintaining community harmony, especially in conflict-prone areas.

Core Role of the National Peace Committee (NPC)[56]

The National Peace Committee (NPC) is a non-governmental, non-partisan institution formed ahead of the 2015 general elections to strengthen Nigeria's democracy through peaceful and credible electoral processes. It brings together respected statesmen, religious leaders, and civil society actors whose collective influence lends moral weight to Nigeria's democratic journey.

The National Peace Committee (NPC) has distinguished itself through the facilitation of National Peace Accords, where political parties and candidates pledge to uphold non-violence, respect the rule of law, and accept electoral outcomes. These accords have become a cornerstone of Nigeria's democratic stability, reducing political tensions and reinforcing public trust. Beyond this, the NPC engages in preventive diplomacy, mediates political disputes, and provides a trusted platform for dialogue during periods of heightened uncertainty. Through these interventions, the Committee has consistently de-escalated conflict, safeguarded transitions of power, and fostered a culture of accountability and peace in Nigeria's democratic process.

[54] Huma Haider., (2016)., chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://gsdrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/HDQ1366.pdf., Religious leaders and the prevention of electoral violence

[55]National Peace Committee (NPC)., Peace breeds Stability and National Development., https://nationalpeacecommittee.org/

Stakeholder Influence Matrix

Stakeholder Analysis with Influence Dynamics

The electoral landscape in Anambra is shaped by a complex web of influence and interest. Effective peacebuilding and electoral integrity hinge on strategically engaging stakeholders according to their influence levels, harnessing their capacities, and addressing their concerns. Recognizing and managing these influence dynamics is vital to fostering an environment conducive to credible, peaceful, and inclusive elections[56] (Ibrahim & Musa, 2020).

Building on the foundational stakeholder landscape and participatory insights, a nuanced understanding of the electoral environment in Anambra reveals critical influence dynamics among key actors, shaping the prospects for peaceful and credible elections[57] (Davis & Smith, 2018).

Stakeholder Influence Matrix

Stakeholder Group	Level of Influence	LEVEL OF Interest	Comment
Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	High	High	Responsible for election logistics, integrity, and credibility.
Political Parties (APGA, PDP, APC, LP)	High	High	Key players in contesting and influencing electoral outcomes.
Security Agencies (Police, Army)	High	High	Critical for maintaining order and neutrality during elections.
Traditional Leaders	Medium	High	Influential opinion leaders shaping community attitudes and peace efforts.
Religious Leaders	Medium	High	Significant moral authority impacting community peace and social cohesion.
Civil Society Organizations	Medium	High	Advocacy, voter education, and election monitoring roles.
Media Practitioners	Medium	High	Responsible for information dissemination and shaping public perception.

[56] Huma Haider., (2016)., chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://gsdrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/HDQ1366.pdf., Religious leaders and the prevention of electoral violence

[57] Abdulazeez Isah Phd., (2025).Auchi Polytechnic: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL OTHERING IN 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGNS AND VOTERS' PERCEPTION., (2025)., https://www.researchgate.net/publication/389534432_TEXTUAL_ANALYSIS_OF_POLITICAL_OTHERING_IN_2023_PRESIDENTIAL_ELECTION_CAMPAIGNS_AND_VOTERS'_PERCEPTION

Stakeholder Group	Level of Influence	LEVEL OF Interest	Comment
Youth and Women Groups	Low/Medium	High	Responsible for information dissemination and shaping public perception.
Persons with Disabilities (PWD)	Low/Medium	Medium	Represent marginalized groups whose participation and behavior influence peace.
Voters (General Population)	Low/Medium	Very High	The ultimate decision-makers; their engagement determines legitimacy
Unregulated Security Outfits (Vigilantes)	High Potentially	Low/Medium	Risk of undermining state authority if involved improperly.

Implications for Electoral Peace and Credibility

Understanding these influence levels underscores the importance of targeted engagement strategies:

- Prioritize collaboration with high-influence, high-interest stakeholders like INEC, security agencies, political parties, traditional, and religious leaders to ensure their commitment to neutrality, professionalism, and peacebuilding[58] (Udo, 2020).

- Leverage medium-influence, high-interest actors such as civil society, media, youth, and women groups for grassroots mobilization, voter education, and early conflict warning[59] (Ojo & Balogun, 2021).

- Monitor and mitigate risks posed by high-influence but low-interest groups, notably unregulated security outfits, through strict oversight and community engagement[60] (Nwachukwu & Obi, 2022).

- Empower voters and marginalized groups by ensuring accessible voting procedures, reducing barriers like high nomination fees, and fostering inclusive participation to bolster legitimacy and community buy-in[61] (Amadi, 2019).

[58] Shaibu Leonard., et. al., (20240., The Roles of Selected Stakeholders in Effective Communication Usage for Insecurity Reduction in Ekiti State, Nigeria., file:///C:/Users/Aluko%20Ahmad/Downloads/The+Roles+of+Selected+Stakeholders+in+Effective+Communication+Usage+for+Insecurity.pdf
[59] Lawan Modu., (2020)., TOWARD THE ROLES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN VOTER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA., Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362126766_TOWARD_THE_ROLES_OF_CIVIL_SOCIETY_ORGANIZATIONS_IN_VOTER_EDUCATION_IN_NIGERIA
[60] Premium Times Publication., (2025)., Vigilante operatives, others barred from Anambra by-elections, https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/814457-vigilante-operatives-others-barred-from-anambra-by-elections.html
[61] Spaces for Change., (2023). ENHANCING THE PARTICIPATION OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES., https://spacesforchange.org/enhancing-the-participation-of-marginalized-groups-in-electoral-processes/

Actor and Conflict Drivers and Dynamics in Anambra State

Anambra State's conflict landscape is shaped by a complex web of political, ethnic, social, and economic factors, with diverse actors influencing both stability and unrest. Despite its reputation for economic vitality and political activism, persistent insecurity, political violence, land disputes, and socio-economic marginalization threaten peace and development.

Insecurity is driven by groups such as unknown gunmen, cultists, communal militias, and ethnic factions engaged in intercommunal clashes and land conflicts, especially in urban centers like Onitsha and Awka[62] (Alao, 2020). These actors often operate with limited oversight, challenging law enforcement and complicating peace efforts. Security agencies—police, military, intelligence—are tasked with maintaining order but sometimes exacerbate tensions through perceived bias or heavy-handed tactics, eroding public trust[63].

The electoral process is highly contentious, with parties like APGA, PDP, and APC competing fiercely through both legal and extra-legal means. Political elites leverage patronage networks and traditional authorities to consolidate influence, often resulting in electoral violence, vote-buying, and intimidation. Militia groups, criminal networks, and thugs are often involved in electoral manipulation and organized crime, further destabilizing the process[64] (Oseni & Agbaje, 2019). When security agencies are perceived as compromised or partisan, electoral irregularities and violence tend to escalate.

Land disputes, fueled by rapid urbanization and demographic pressures, are another critical driver of conflict. These disputes frequently involve ethnic militias, traditional rulers, and local communities fighting over land rights and boundaries[65] (Eze, 2021; Oguejiofor, 2022). Politicization of land and traditional authority further intensifies tensions, sometimes escalating into violence.

Socio-economic disparities—poverty, unemployment, and marginalization—also deepen conflicts. Disenfranchised youths often turn to cultism, gangs, and electoral violence, while civil society groups and youth organizations advocate for reforms. Frustration over inequality and political exclusion can lead to protests, unrest, or violence. Social media amplify ethnic tensions through misinformation and hate speech, undermining social cohesion and electoral integrity[66] (Ikechukwu & Nnamani, 2020; Akinyemi, 2021; Ogunleye & Adeyemi, 2022).

Indigenous and secessionist movements, notably IPOB and ESN, driven by grievances of marginalization, contribute to instability through protests, violent confrontations, and attacks on infrastructure. Security responses to these groups can further escalate tensions[67] (Onyema & Nnamdi, 2020; Nwankwo & Chijioke, 2021). Traditional leaders, once mediators of disputes, are increasingly politicized—some accepting inducements or aligning with factions—thus fueling intra-community conflicts[68] (Okeke & Eze, 2021). Meanwhile, criminal networks exploiting land disputes, electoral violence, and organized crime continue to operate with impunity, undermining peace efforts[69] (Obi & Okechukwu, 2022).

[62] Anambra: European Union Agency for Assylum (EUAA) (n.d)., https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-nigeria-2021/anambra

[63] Amnesty International. (2021). Amnesty International Report 2020/21: The state of the world's human rights. https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/english.pdf

[64] Transition Monitoring Group (TMG). (2020). Preliminary report on the Edo election. https://penpushing.com.ng/for-the-record-preliminary-report-on-the-edo-state-governorship-election-of-september-19-2020-released-by-the-transition-monitoring-group-tmg/

[65] Bentina A Mathias., (2021)., Impact of Land Dispute on Economic Well-Being of Conflicting Communities in Anambra State., International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development., https://www.academia.edu/113007092/Impact_of_Land_Dispute_on_Economic_Well_Being_of_Conflicting_Communities_in_Anambra_State

[66] Medinat Abdulazeez Malefakis., et. al., Social media and violent and non-violent mobilisation in Nigeria: What role for mediation? Conciliation Resources, https://www.c-r.org/accord/still-time-talk/social-media-and-violent-and-non-violent-mobilisation-nigeria-what-role

[67] Sit-at-Home Protest in Southeast Nigeria: (2025) Exploring the Socio-Economic and Security Impact, https://kujenga-amani.ssrc.org/2025/05/30/sit-at-home-protest-in-southeast-nigeria-exploring-the-socio-economic-and-security-impact/

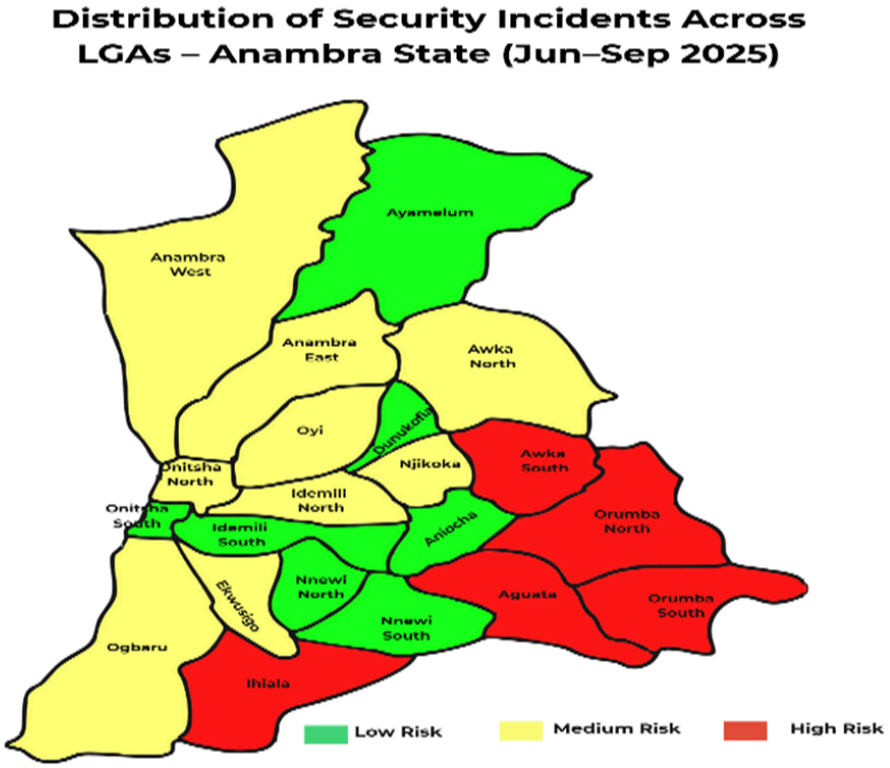
[68] Aghanenu Oghenemudiakevwe., (2024)., CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN PEACE BUILDING: A CASE OF UMUEBU AND AMAI – NIGERIA., International Journal of Peace and Development Studies ., https://academicjournals.org/journal/IJPDS/article-in-press-abstract/challenges_and_opportunities_of_traditional_leaders_in_peace_building_a_case_of_umuebu_and_amai_nigeria

[69] 55. Gloria Chinyere Chukwujama (2024) Insecurity in the South East and its Possible Solutions: using Anambra State Nigeria as a Focus, 1999-2023, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/393962566_Insecurity_in_the_South_East_and_its_Possible_Solutions_using_Anambra_State_Nigeria_as_a_Focus_1999-2023

Civil society and media play vital roles in promoting transparency and countering misinformation but often face limitations due to intimidation, resource constraints, and politicization. The spread of fake news and hate speech exacerbates ethnic tensions and diminishes trust in institutions, making conflict resolution more challenging[70] (Adebayo & Oladipo, 2021).

In summary, systemic issues—land disputes, poverty, political patronage, weak institutions, and social divisions—interact with a range of actors whose actions frequently escalate tensions. Effective peacebuilding requires a nuanced understanding of these dynamics, emphasizing impartial security, inclusive governance, transparent land and electoral processes, and socio-economic development. Recognizing the motivations and roles of all actors is essential for designing interventions capable of breaking cycles of violence and fostering long-term stability.

4.0 FLASHPOINT ANALYSIS OF ANAMBRA POLITICAL LANDSCAPE



The map illustrates the geographic distribution of security incidents across Anambra State between June and September 2025, revealing a pattern of concentrated volatility. Hotspot LGAs, highlighted in red, such as Orumba, Aguata, Awka South, and Ihiala, emerged as epicentres of violence where recurring attacks, assassinations, and ballot snatching disrupted community life and political activity. Surrounding LGAs, shown in yellow, experienced intermittent but disruptive incidents, ranging from targeted assaults on security actors to intimidation at rallies, demonstrating that insecurity is not confined to a single corridor but radiates across zones. Areas marked in green remain without recorded incidents, yet their proximity to volatile flashpoints underscores the risk of spillover. Taken together, the map highlights how insecurity is clustered in specific zones but carries implications for the entire state, shaping perceptions of safety, voter confidence, and electoral integrity ahead of the November 2025 polls.

[70] Alexander Romanishyn, et al., AI-driven disinformation: policy recommendations for democratic resilience, https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12351547/

Addressing the complex security and political challenges in Anambra necessitates localized, data-driven strategies that account for zone-specific dynamics. Tackling systemic issues such as poverty, land disputes, institutional bias, and misinformation is vital in breaking cycles of violence. Tailored, multi-stakeholder approaches—focused on high-incidence LGAs—are essential for fostering sustainable peace and social cohesion across the state.

Core issues identified across all Senatorial zones include:

The core issues across all zones of Anambra State are multifaceted and interconnected, demanding a comprehensive understanding for effective intervention. Predominant among these are insecurity and violence, which manifest through incidents involving unknown gunmen, cultism, kidnappings, and disputes over land and community resources, as documented by ACLED[71]. Recent data highlight that these incidents are recurrent, with Anambra experiencing an average of 0.8 security incidents per week in 2020, signalling persistent instability throughout the state[72]. These security challenges are compounded by the widespread practice of vote buying and the monetization of politics, deeply rooted in systemic poverty and corruption, which in turn fuel electoral violence and clientelism.[73]

Institutional weaknesses further exacerbate the situation, with security agencies and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) often perceived as biased or compromised, hampering effective response and breeding distrust among communities[74]. Traditional and religious leaders are sometimes co-opted or partisan, undermining their neutrality and community cohesion, which are crucial for peacebuilding[75] (Nwachukwu, 2023). The proliferation of misinformation and disinformation—fake news, hate speech, and social media toxicity—also inflames communal tensions and undermines electoral legitimacy. These dynamics contribute to voter apathy, especially among youth and women, driven by insecurity, distrust, and systemic exclusion, with marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) often facing tokenism or neglect, further deepening social divisions[76] (Shah & Khan, 2021).

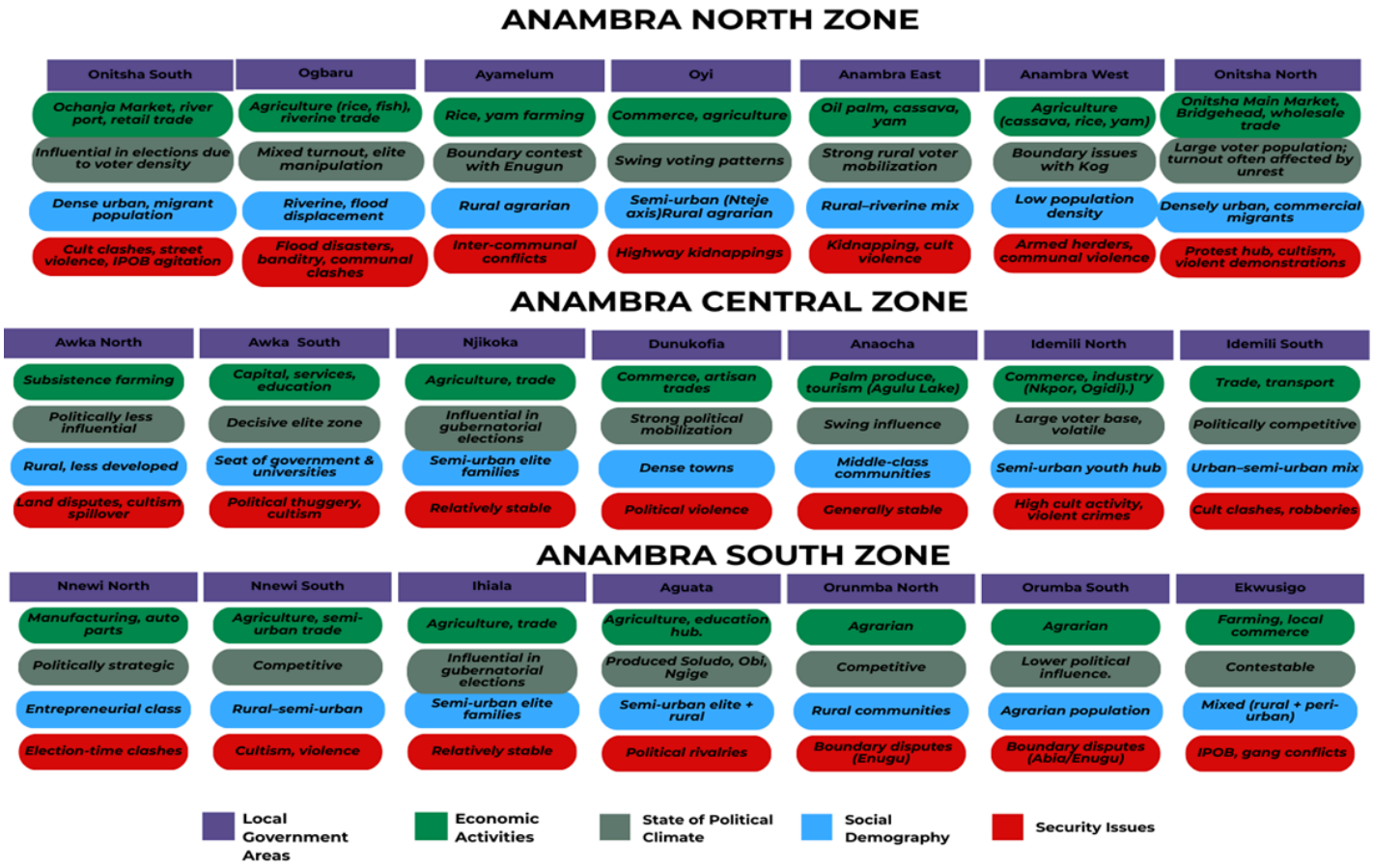
Analysing the spatial distribution of risks reveals zone-specific dynamics and vulnerabilities. In Anambra North for instance, land disputes, insecurity, and poverty are primary drivers of violence, with LGAs like Ogbaru and Oyi experiencing frequent conflicts and communal disputes, often linked to land and resource control[77] (ACLED, 2023). Trust in INEC is notably low here, and PWDs are particularly marginalized[78]. Anambra South is characterized by vigilante involvement—such as the Agunechemba group—and ethnic or denominational tensions, with LGAs like Ihiala and Orumba South frequently experiencing cult killings, kidnappings, and clashes fueled by political and communal toxicity[79].

[71] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) report: Clarity in Crisis (2023). https://acleddata.com/
[72] Anambra: European Union Agency for Assylum (EUAA) (n.d)., https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-nigeria-2021/anambra
[73] Aiyede, E. R. (2016). Corruption perception studies and anti-corruption in Nigeria. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307850517_Corruption_Perception_Studies_and_Anti-Corruption_in_Nigeria
[74] Human Rights Watch. (2017). World report: Reports of unrest and human rights concerns in Onitsha related to the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and related protests. https://www.hrw.org/
[75] Justina Nwazuni Osajie., (n.a.)., Religious Leaders as Agents of Peace and Security for Sustainable Development in Nigeria file:///C:/Users/Aluko%20Ahmad/Downloads/ajol-file-journals_442_articles_207302_submission_proof_207302-5245-515978-1-10-20210519.pdf
[76] Sukhvir Singh., (2025)., Socio-economic factors influencing the voting behavior of people with disabilities in developing nations., https://www.journal-iasssf.com/index.php/JGEDSIC/article/view/2060
[77] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) report: Clarity in Crisis (2023). https://acleddata.com/
[78] Anambra: European Union Agency for Assylum (EUAA) (n.d)., https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-nigeria-2021/anambra
[79] Human Rights Watch. (2017). World report: Reports of unrest and human rights concerns in Onitsha related to the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and related protests. https://www.hrw.org/

Actor and Conflict Drivers and Dynamics in Anambra State

Meanwhile, Anambra Central faces systemic logistical failures, intra-party conflicts, and electoral violence, especially in LGAs like Onitsha and Nnewi, where violence during elections remains high and security incidents are consistent with the national average[80] (ACLED, 2023; EUAA, 2021).

Comparative Analysis by Senatorial Zones



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BY ZONES

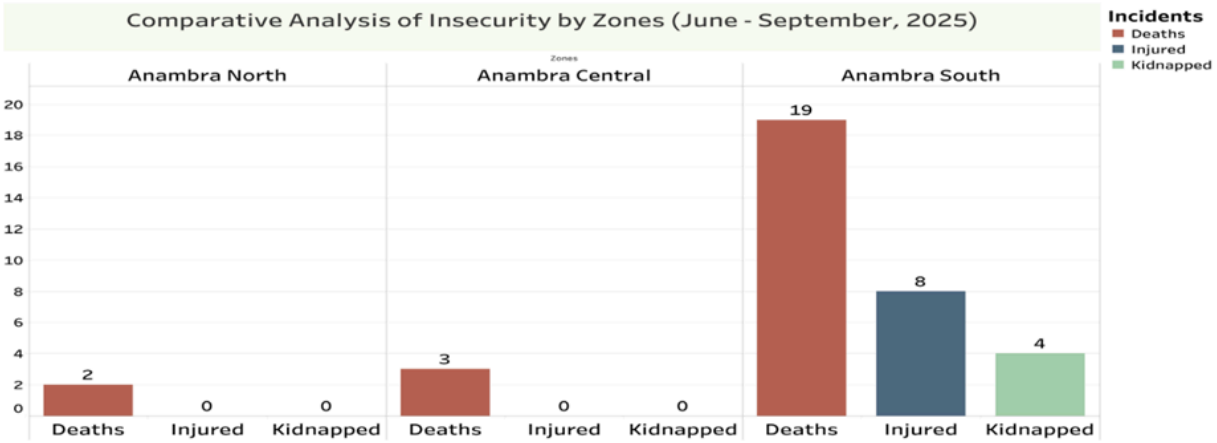
Insecurity between June and September 2025 was defined by firearms-driven attacks, cult-related violence, and intimidation by politicised vigilantes. The implications for elections are stark: violence undermines voter confidence, discourages turnout, disrupts campaign activities, and weakens INEC's operational capacity in flashpoints such as Orumba North and South, Aguata, Awka South, and Ihiala.

- Anambra North – "The Riverine Frontier": Although incidents are fewer, vulnerabilities remain significant. Flooding in Ogbaru regularly disrupts logistics, while the killing of a vigilante commander and a police officer revealed both insecurity and the politicisation of security actors. Onitsha, the commercial hub, remains associated with cultism, while the Omambala boundary disputes continue to serve as flashpoints

[81]YIAGA, Africa., (2021)., Anambra: Threats, Acts of Violence Impedes Voter Education and Voter Mobilization., https://yiaga.org/anambra-threats-acts-of-violence-impedes-voter-education-and-voter-mobilization/

- Anambra Central – "The Political Nerve Centre": This zone carries the highest volatility. Awka South recorded the assassination of a business leader and hosted targeted disinformation campaigns undermining INEC. With multiple strong candidates and its role as the state capital, the Central zone remains the theatre of elite competition and institutional mistrust, where even routine incidents escalate quickly into political crises.
- Anambra South – "The Violent Heartland": The South has emerged as the epicentre of insecurity. The Ogboji killings, where 10 civilians died, underscored the volatility of rural flashpoints. Orumba and Ihiala remain hotbeds of ballot snatching, cult violence, and politicised vigilantism. The August 2025 senatorial by-election exposed institutional fragility, as attacks on officials and partisan armed groups undermined the process.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BY ZONES



5.0 ANAMBRA RISK MATRIX

Anambra State Electoral Risk Matrix

The electoral landscape in Anambra State reveals a complex interplay of statewide and zone-specific risks that necessitate nuanced and targeted mitigation strategies to promote free, fair, and peaceful elections[82]. Across all zones, several core issues have been identified, underscoring the pervasive nature of certain challenges, while distinct local dynamics further shape the electoral environment.

Risk Comparison Matrix

Risk Category	North	Central	South
Physical Violence	Mediun	High	High
Electoral Manipulation	Medium	High	High
Disinformation	Low	High	Medium
Environmental Disruption	High	Low	Low
Institutional Credibility	Medium	High	Meidum
Community Cohesion	Medium	Medium	High

State-wide Risks include widespread insecurity characterized by unknown gunmen, cultism, and kidnappings, which tend to escalate during election periods and are often rooted in local disputes, land conflicts, and political tensions. Systemic vote buying and monetization of the electoral process are deeply entrenched across all zones, driven by pervasive poverty and systemic corruption, though local factors influence their manifestations differently[83]. Trust deficits in security agencies and INEC, logistical challenges, and perceptions of bias undermine electoral integrity statewide, while social media platforms are rife with misinformation, disinformation, hate speech, and toxicity—particularly acute in the southern zones—fueling social divisions and voter apathy. These issues contribute to voter disenfranchisement, especially among women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs), threatening the legitimacy of electoral outcomes due to reduced participation.

[82] Accord Conflict Trends., (2018)., Practice and Perils of Vote Buying in Nigeria's Recent Elections., https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/practice-and-perils-of-vote-buying-in-nigerias-recent-elections/

[83] Kimpact Development Initiative, ,(2025). THE EARLY WARNING: …assessing pre-election security risk ahead of the 2025 Anambra off-cycle Governorship Election.chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://kimpact.org.ng/storage/publications/anambradecides25_esra/AnambraDecides25_ESRA_Report.pdf

At the **zone-specific level,** Anambra North is predominantly affected by deep-rooted land disputes, persistent poverty, and neglect of PWDs. Insecurity here is closely linked to communal conflicts and a notable trust deficit in security agencies. Anambra South faces challenges stemming from vigilante group involvement, toxic political rhetoric, and perceptions of government partiality, with violence and ethnic tensions influencing the electoral climate. Meanwhile, Anambra Central grapples with systemic failures such as logistical inefficiencies, systemic monetization, intra-party conflicts, and heightened violence during campaign periods and elections[84].

These diverse dynamics imply that interventions must be carefully tailored to address local realities: North requires strategies targeting land disputes and poverty alleviation; South demands efforts to counter toxic politics and vigilante influence; Central calls for reforms in logistics and systemic corruption. Moreover, strengthening trust in electoral institutions, fostering inclusive participation, and addressing socio-economic drivers are crucial to ensuring electoral processes that are transparent, equitable, and peaceful[85].

In sum, a comprehensive approach that recognizes both the common vulnerabilities across the state and the unique challenge of each zone is essential for building sustainable peace and enhancing electoral integrity in Anambra.

6.0 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEACEBUILDING IN ANAMBRA STATE

The National Peace Committee (NPC) can serve as a pivotal catalyst for peacebuilding by strategically leveraging existing community structures, faith-based organizations, civic platforms, and digital tools to amplify peace messaging, enhance civic education, and foster constructive dialogue[86] (Smith, 2020). These entry points are practical, community-centered, and adaptable to the dynamic electoral landscape, offering multiple avenues to promote sustainable peace across Anambra State.

One significant opportunity lies in engaging religious and traditional leaders as influential peace ambassadors. Collaborating with churches, mosques, and traditional councils allows the dissemination of messages emphasizing unity and reconciliation[87] (Johnson & Adeyemi, 2019). This can be achieved through organizing interfaith and traditional leader forums to develop unified peace messages, integrating these leaders into civic education campaigns to publicly denounce violence and misinformation, and utilizing sermons and community gatherings as platforms for peace advocacy[88] (Oke & Williams, 2018).

Expanding civic education through existing community platforms presents another vital opportunity. Partnering with women's groups, such as the August Meeting Women's Platform, youth organizations, and community-based associations, enables the integration of peace and civic education modules into their ongoing programs[89] (UNDP, 2021). Conducting targeted workshops on conflict resolution, electoral rights, and peace messaging during regular community meetings can deepen understanding and foster a culture of peace at the grassroots level[90] (Kumar & Singh, 2020).

[84] Therese Pearce Laanela., (2022)., IDEA., Pillars of Trust in Elections, https://www.idea.int/news/pillars-trust-elections

[85] Akeem Ayanda Araba, et al. (2025) THE INTERPLAY OF RELIGION AND CONFLICT: PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABLE PEACE BUILDING IN NIGERIA: Wukari international studies journal, https://wissjournals.com.ng/index.php/wiss/article/view/644#:~:text=These%20tensions%20are%20frequently%20compounded,conflicts%20and%20building%20lasting%20peace

[86] National Peace Committee., Count Down to Signing of the Ondo State Peace Accord – 2024- https://nationalpeacecommittee.org/

[87] International Dialogue Centre., (2022)., Tackling Historic Violence through Dialogue in Nigeria., https://www.kaiciid.org/stories/features/tackling-historic-violence-through-dialogue-nigeria

[88] UNPD., CiviC EduCation For YoutH., (n.a)., https://www.undp.org

[89] Building Peace from the Grassroots with Informal Peace Infrastructures: Experience from Ojoo Community, Ibadan, Nigeria., (2023)., Accordd., https://www.accord.org.za/ajcr-issues/building-peace-from-the-grassroots-with-informal-peace-infrastructures-experience-from-ojoo-community-ibadan-nigeria/

[90] Freedom House. (2023). Freedom in the world: Nigeria. https://freedomhouse.org/country/nigeria/freedom-world/2023

Strengthening the awareness and participation in the peace accord is also crucial. Extending outreach beyond initial signatories by using online platforms and social media campaigns can promote the peace agreement, counter disinformation, and stimulate dialogue[91] (Freedom House, 2022). Facilitating online town halls that involve youth, civil society, and political actors allows for open discussions on peace commitments, grievances, and collective efforts towards stability (Nwosu, 2020).

Engaging civil society organizations (CSOs) and media outlets offers additional avenues for peace advocacy. Partnering with CSOs specializing in peacebuilding, leveraging local radio, television, and social media channels can amplify messages promoting peaceful electoral conduct and conflict prevention[92] (Media Monitoring Africa, 2019). Particular attention should be given to reaching

marginalized and remote communities, ensuring inclusive peace messaging[93] (Amnesty International, 2021).

Creating spaces for dialogue and reconciliation remains fundamental. Establishing community peace forums—especially in volatile or conflict-prone areas—can serve as safe platforms for conflicting parties, community elders, and security agencies to engage in regular dialogue (UN Peacekeeping, 2018). Incorporating traditional and religious conflict resolution mechanisms can reinforce these efforts, providing culturally resonant pathways to peace.

Finally, mobilizing youth and women as key change agents presents a powerful opportunity. Supporting youth-led peace initiatives and dialogues provides platforms for young people to voice their concerns and contribute to peacebuilding efforts (UN Women, 2020). Similarly, organizing women-led peace campaigns emphasizes their vital role in sustaining peace and preventing violence, harnessing their influence to foster social cohesion and resilience.

Stakeholders Recommendations for Peace and Credible Elections

Following a consultative session with key stakeholders in the state, it was agreed that achieving credible elections in Anambra requires a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach.

- Strengthening Electoral Integrity: Implement reforms to regulate nomination fees, ensure transparency, and establish an Electoral Offences Commission to curb malpractices[94] (INEC, 2024; Electoral Reform Commission, 2023).
- Enhancing Security and Professionalism: Security agencies should operate professionally and neutrally, with vigilantes excluded from official roles. Deployment of biometric verification and surveillance technologies is vital to prevent vote-buying and intimidation[95] (Security Sector Reform, 2023).
- Community and Leader Engagement: Traditional, religious, and youth leaders must be actively involved in peacebuilding, promoting neutrality, and civic responsibility. Religious leaders should advocate for peace and stay neutral[96] (Interfaith Peace Committee, 2024).

[91]Mukhtar Bello., (2025)., Bayero University, Kano., Department of Political Science., CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOS), CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACEBUILDING IN NIGERIA: A LITERATURE REVIEW., JOURNAL OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE., file:///C:/Users/Aluko%20Ahmad/Downloads/JOPD+new+NO+2-145-155.pdf

[92]Amnesty International. (2021). Amnesty International Report 2020/21: The state of the world's human rights. https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/english.pdf

[23] Punch Newspaper., (2024). INEC proposes reforms to enhance electoral process., https://punchng.com/inec-proposes-reforms-to-enhance-electoral-process/

[24] The African Union (AU) Press Release: Security Sector Reform (SSR) Policy Framework A Decade of Implementation: Successes, Challenges, and Perspectives for the Future.(2023)., https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20231121/african-union-au-security-sector-reform-ssr-policy-framework-decade

[25] Interfaith Peacebuilding in Nigeria., Mission 21., https://www.mission-21.org/en/projects/interfaith-peace-promotion-in-nigeria/

[26] The World Bank In Gender:
We cannot end poverty on a livable planet with half the population excluded from opportunity., https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/gender/overview

- Addressing Socio-Economic Drivers: Youth and women empowerment, infrastructural development, and poverty alleviation are crucial to reducing economic incentives for violence and vote-buying. Lowering nomination costs can facilitate participation by marginalized groups[97] (World Bank, 2023).
- Countering Misinformation: Promoting media literacy, responsible journalism, and civic education will help combat fake news and AI-driven disinformation that fuel tensions[98] (Media Watch, 2024).
- Improving Logistics and Institutional Credibility: Efficient deployment of electoral materials, timely result transmission, and credible adjudication processes are essential to rebuild public trust[99] (INEC, 2024).

Electoral peace and stability in Anambra depend on the shared responsibility of all stakeholders. Despite ongoing challenges—such as insecurity, systemic barriers, misinformation, and entrenched political rivalries—targeted reforms, active community engagement, and institutional professionalism can foster an environment conducive to free, fair, and credible elections. The upcoming electoral cycle offers an opportunity to uphold democratic principles, strengthen social cohesion, and rebuild trust in electoral institutions. Collective effort and sustained commitment are vital to achieving these goals[100] (Democratic Governance Group, 2024).

7.0 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Roadmap for Peacebuilding and Electoral Integrity in Nigeria

The pre-election situation in Anambra shows that election-related insecurity is not just a one-time problem, but a recurring pattern driven by political interference, weak institutions, and fragile communities. Addressing it will require solutions that are layered, tailored to different stakeholders, and rolled out in phases. Based on this, the following recommendations are put forward for the National Peace Committee:

- Strengthen and Monitor Peace Accord Compliance: Establish a structured monitoring framework, working with civil society coalitions to track violations, intimidation, and disinformation. Findings should be verified, publicised, and regularly communicated through briefs and periodic reminders to reinforce accountability and deter escalation.
- Engage INEC on Logistical Preparedness: Convene structured dialogues with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to identify and address vulnerabilities in logistics and transparency, particularly in flood-prone local government areas such as Ogbaru and Anambra West. This will help build confidence in electoral integrity.
- Mobilise Religious and Traditional Leaders: Facilitate bilateral engagements with religious and traditional leaders to ensure that sermons, homilies, and community assemblies explicitly denounce vote trading and political violence. These practices should be framed as moral violations that undermine communal well-being.

[97] Combating fake news, disinformation, and misinformation: Experimental evidence for media literacy education., (2022) Cogent Arts & Humanities Published by Taylor & Francis., https://www.researchgate.net/publication/358416157_Combating_fake_news_disinformation_and_misinformation_Experimental_evidence_for_media_literacy_education

[98] REPORT OF THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTION., INEC., https://inecnigeria.org

[99] IDEA. (2021) Democratic governance as an effective and enduring response to the challenges facing Latin America- chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/democratic-governance-effective-and-enduring-response.pdf

- Mobilise Religious and Traditional Leaders: Facilitate bilateral engagements with religious and traditional leaders to ensure that sermons, homilies, and community assemblies explicitly denounce vote trading and political violence. These practices should be framed as moral violations that undermine communal well-being.
- Promote Adherence to the Spirit of the Accord: Use media engagements, public campaigns, and advocacy around the upcoming signing of the Accord to reinforce the expectation that political parties honour both the letter and the spirit of the accord. This will help deter symbolic compliance and foster genuine accountability.
- Advocate Security Sector Reform for Election Duty: Project the risks of insecurity to security institutions and advocate for the deployment of joint task forces in identified flashpoints such as Orumba, Aguata, and Awka South. Officers must receive pre-election briefings and training emphasising impartiality, professionalism, and the prohibition of extortion or harassment of voters.

Encouraging Non-Political Influencers: Leverage non-political figures, traders' associations, market leaders, diaspora unions to amplify messages on peace and voter safety. These actors enjoy credibility beyond partisan structures.



Short-Term (November 2025: Anambra Gubernatorial Election)

Goals: Ensure a peaceful, credible, and inclusive election; address immediate threats such as vote-buying, misinformation, and security concerns.

Key Stakeholder Actions:

- Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC):
  - Strengthen election logistics to ensure timely delivery of materials, building on recent positive experiences.
  - Implement targeted voter education campaigns emphasizing the importance of voting, dissuading vote-buying, and countering misinformation, especially via social media.
  - Exclude non-statutory security outfits (e.g., vigilantes) from election security roles; reinforce police neutrality and professionalism.

- Security Agencies:
  - Deploy sufficient, well-trained personnel committed to impartiality.
  - Conduct refresher training emphasizing respect for human rights, neutrality, and professional conduct.
  - Establish clear protocols to prevent infiltration or misuse of non-conventional security groups, such as vigilante or state-sponsored outfits.
  - Prioritize community engagement in high-risk areas like Oyi, Aguleri, and boundary communities to deter violence.

- Traditional and Religious Leaders:
  - Use their influence to promote peace and discourage divisive religious and denominational politics, especially the Catholic-Anglican dichotomy.
  - Actively participate in civic education, urging followers to reject violence, vote-buying, and misinformation.

- Civil Society and Media:
  - Launch multi-platform campaigns to raise awareness about responsible information sharing and the dangers of misinformation/disinformation.
  - Promote responsible journalism that upholds ethical standards; discourage sensationalism and partisan reporting.

- Political Parties & Candidates:
  - Reduce the cost of nomination forms to broaden participation, especially for women and youth.
  - Commit publicly to peaceful conduct, refrain from vote-buying, and respect the electoral process.

- Community and Town Union Leaders:
  - Advocate for non-partisan support for peaceful elections; avoid supporting or endorsing violence or bias.

Medium-Term (2026: Off-Cycle Elections & Building Resilience)

Goals: Strengthen electoral institutions and social cohesion to sustain peace, inclusiveness, and transparency.

Key Stakeholder Actions:

- Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC):
  - Institutionalize electronic voting systems where feasible to reduce vote manipulation and ballot tampering.
  - Enhance voter registration processes to improve inclusiveness, paying close attention to marginalized groups such as Persons with Disabilities (PWD).
  - Develop ongoing civic education programs focusing on electoral integrity, the importance of participation, and civic responsibility.

- Security Agencies:
  - Institutionalize community-oriented policing and early warning systems, especially in boundary communities and volatile zones.
  - Enforce the exclusion of non-statutory security outfits from electoral duties, strengthening police capacity and professionalism.

- Religious and Traditional Leaders:
  - Continue active peace advocacy, addressing unhealthy denominational politics and fostering interfaith harmony.
  - Promote social cohesion programs that mitigate ethnic, religious, and political tensions.
- Civil Society & Media:
  - Sustain fact-checking initiatives and digital literacy campaigns to combat misinformation.
  - Establish platforms for inter-party dialogue and early conflict resolution to prevent escalation.

- Political Parties & Candidates:
  - Advocate for reforms that reduce nomination fees and incentivize broad participation of women and youth.
  - Engage in capacity-building on conflict-sensitive campaigning and electoral dispute resolution.

- Community Groups:
  - Implement community-led peace education and reconciliation programs, especially in contested boundary areas.

Long-Term (2027: Next General Elections & Sustained Peace)

Goals: Deepen democratic practices, institutionalize peace mechanisms, and foster a culture of electoral integrity and inclusiveness.

Key Stakeholder Actions:

- IIndependent National Electoral Commission (NEC):
  - Fully adopt and integrate electronic voting and biometric verification nationwide to enhance transparency and reduce electoral disputes.
  - Embed civic education into school curricula and lifelong learning programs to cultivate a culture of civic responsibility from a young age.
  - Strengthen collaboration with agencies like the National Population Commission (NPC) and National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) to ensure accurate voter data.

- Security Agencies:
  - Institutionalize continuous training in conflict resolution, human rights, and election security protocols.
  - Maintain professional, impartial conduct, and strictly regulate the activities of non-statutory security outfits.

- Government & Policymakers:
  - Review and reform electoral laws to further reduce financial barriers, including nomination fees, especially for youth and women candidates.
  - Promote policies that address socioeconomic factors contributing to vote-buying and voter apathy—such as poverty alleviation and youth employment.

- Civil Society & Media:
  - Develop independent electoral dispute resolution mechanisms and oversight bodies.
  - Promote responsible media practices, uphold journalistic ethics, and advocate for media accountability.

- Traditional & Religious Leaders:
  - Institutionalize peacebuilding and social cohesion into traditional and faith-based platforms, making peace a cultural norm.
  - Actively participate in post-election justice and reconciliation processes, ensuring fair treatment for all candidates and stakeholders.

- All Stakeholders:
  - Foster a culture of justice and fairness in electoral disputes, ensuring grievances are resolved transparently and promptly, reinforcing trust in democratic institutions.

CONCLUSION

The electoral environment in Anambra State encapsulates a microcosm of Nigeria's broader political, social, and economic challenges. It is shaped by a complex nexus of intense political rivalry, socio-economic disparities, deep-seated social divisions, and emerging security threats. While the state's vibrant political culture, active civil society, and tradition of community engagement provide a solid foundation for democratic participation and reform, persistent risks such as electoral violence, voter apathy, misinformation, and systemic institutional weaknesses continue to threaten the integrity, credibility, and legitimacy of the electoral process.

Ensuring credible and peaceful elections in such a complex environment requires a holistic, multi-layered approach—one that not only addresses immediate security concerns but also tackles the root causes of conflict and disenfranchisement. It necessitates fostering inclusive participation across different social groups, especially marginalized communities, women, and persons with disabilities, to strengthen social cohesion and reinforce the democratic fabric. Engaging traditional rulers, religious leaders, community elders, and civil society as peace ambassadors can significantly bolster trust and reconciliation efforts.

Deploying impartial, well-trained security forces and leveraging innovative technology such as electronic voting and result transmission systems can enhance transparency and reduce opportunities for manipulation. Moreover, comprehensive civic education campaigns aimed at countering misinformation and promoting informed participation are essential to building public confidence.

Beyond the electoral process itself, systemic reforms aimed at reducing barriers to political participation, addressing socio-economic inequalities, and promoting economic empowerment are vital for long-term stability. These measures will help diminish vulnerabilities that often fuel electoral violence and social unrest, creating an environment conducive to sustainable peace and development.

This context analysis affirms that peacebuilding and safeguarding electoral integrity are shared responsibilities, requiring sustained collaboration among government agencies, security institutions, civil society, political actors, religious and traditional leaders, and the general populace. With strategic investments, unwavering commitment to justice and fairness, and a collective resolve to uphold democratic principles, Nigeria can demonstrate resilience in its electoral processes and reinforce its broader democratic renewal.

The upcoming election in Anambra State presents not only an opportunity to showcase electoral resilience amid complex challenges but also a pivotal moment to reaffirm Nigeria's commitment to democratic values, social cohesion, and inclusive governance. By seizing this opportunity, Nigeria can set a regional and continental example—building a legacy of peace, stability, and democratic maturity that inspires future generations and strengthens the nation's social fabric.