



International Foundation  
for Electoral Systems

# **Election FAQs: Nigeria**

## *2023 General Elections*

### *February 25 and March 11, 2023*

Africa

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

2011 Crystal Drive | Floor 10 | Arlington, VA 22202 | USA | [www.IFES.org](http://www.IFES.org)

February 14, 2023

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Election Snapshot.....	1
When is Election Day? .....	1
What time will voting take place? .....	2
Why are these elections important? .....	2
Who are citizens voting for on Election Day? .....	3
What is the electoral system? .....	3
What is the legal framework for conducting the elections? .....	3
Who is eligible to run as a candidate?.....	6
What are the campaign expenditure and donation limits? .....	6
What is the election management body? What are its powers? .....	7
What is the election management body doing to strengthen its technology and procedures to resist vulnerabilities and counter foreign interference?.....	8
What is the Independent National Electoral Commission doing to ensure that citizens have all the information they need to participate in the electoral process? .....	8
Who can vote in these elections?.....	9
How many registered voters are there? .....	9
What provisions are in place that support the equal rights of women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups?.....	9
Is out-of-country voting allowed?.....	10
Who can observe during Election Day? How can they get accreditation? .....	10
When does the campaign start? Is there a campaign silence period? .....	11
Who is managing security on Election Day? .....	11
Where are vote counting and tabulation held? .....	11
When will official results be announced?.....	12
How will election disputes be adjudicated? .....	12
Resources.....	13
About IFES in Nigeria.....	13
Disclosure .....	13

## Election Snapshot

- **Election Day:**
  - February 25, 2023: Presidential and National Assembly elections
  - March 11, 2023: Governorship and State Houses of Assembly elections
- **States and local government areas (LGAs):** 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory; 774 LGAs
- **Registered voters:** 93,469,008
  - Males: 49,054,162 (52.5 percent)
  - Females: 44,414,846 (47.5 percent)
  - Persons with disabilities: 85,362 (data from the 2021–22 registration exercise)
  - Youth (aged 18–34) years: 37,060,399 (39.65 percent)
- **Registration areas/wards:** 8,809
- **Polling units:** 176,846
- **Available seats:**
  - One presidential constituency (36 states and the Federal Capital Territory)<sup>1</sup>
  - 28 governorship seats (28 states)<sup>2</sup>
  - 109 senatorial district seats
  - 360 House of Representatives seats
  - 993 State Houses of Assembly seats
- **Political parties:** 18 registered political parties<sup>3</sup>
- **Candidates:** 15,309
  - Men: 91.7 percent
  - Women: 8.3 percent
  - Youth: 28.6 percent
- **Campaign expenditure limit:** Based on the type of position competed for
  - 5 billion Nigerian Naira (NGN) for presidential candidates (\$10,848,800 USD equivalent)
  - NGN 1 billion for governorship candidates (\$2,169,760 USD equivalent)
  - NGN 100 million for Senate candidates (\$216,976 USD equivalent)
  - NGN 70 million for House of Representatives candidates (\$151,883 USD equivalent)
  - NGN 30 million for Houses of Assembly candidates (\$65,092 USD equivalent)

## When is Election Day?

Nigeria will hold general elections on Saturday, February 25, 2023, for presidential and National Assembly elections. Elections for 28 of the 36 governorships and State Houses of Assembly will follow on Saturday, March 11.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Final-List-of-Candidates-for-National-Elections-1.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Final-List-of-Candidates-for-National-Elections\\_SHA-14.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1LNy45Ga9UvZkdjINF-NATw6FZtQKj-PXG68not5wGSdYZYHJrtBSA4V8](https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Final-List-of-Candidates-for-National-Elections_SHA-14.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1LNy45Ga9UvZkdjINF-NATw6FZtQKj-PXG68not5wGSdYZYHJrtBSA4V8)

<sup>3</sup> <https://inecnigeria.org/political-parties/>

## What time will voting take place?

Voting will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in 176,846 polling units across the country. Any voter present in the queue by 2:30 p.m. will be allowed to vote. Voting will continue until the last voter in the queue casts his or her vote.

## Why are these elections important?

The 2023 general election is the seventh consecutive general election since Nigeria re-established its democracy in 1999. The elections mark 24 years of uninterrupted democracy—the longest span in Nigeria's history. They will serve as a critical transfer of power, as President Muhammadu Buhari has served two mandates and is ineligible to seek another four-year term.

The upcoming general elections will be the first nationwide elections conducted within the framework of the new Electoral Act, which President Buhari signed into law in February 2022. Continuing Nigeria's reputation for using advanced technology in elections, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) will utilize two technological innovations to improve the integrity and transparency of the electoral process. The Bi-modal Voting Accreditation System (BVAS) verifies and authenticates voters, and the INEC Results Viewing Portal is a public-facing voter tabulation system that the INEC will deploy nationwide.

One challenge that Nigeria faces in these elections is voter turnout. Turnout was at record lows in the previous election cycle—only about 35 percent of registered voters. However, INEC reported a high number of registered voters for the upcoming elections. As of the date of publication, the total was 93,469,008, over 9 million more than in the last general elections in 2019. Election observers will pay close attention to the number of registered voters who collect their permanent voter's cards and turn out to vote.

Security issues also present a significant challenge for the 2023 general elections. Since 2019, nearly 50 incidents of vandalism and attacks were recorded against INEC offices and personnel by spoilers including terrorist activity in the North East states, banditry in the North West states, and a secessionist movement in the South East geopolitical zone. Attacks on INEC offices across the country reflected greater security problems in the country, including insurgencies in northern Nigeria and secessionist movements in the southeastern region. Nigeria faced unprecedented levels of insecurity during the country's republican periods, demonstrating the dissatisfaction of a significant percentage of Nigerians with the conduct of their democratic institutions.<sup>4</sup>

The 2023 general elections will have regional implications for West Africa, as successful elections within Nigeria can provide a positive electoral template in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region. Since 2020, the West African region has faced democratic backsliding, with the ECOWAS governments of Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso toppled by military juntas.<sup>5</sup> A successful election in Nigeria could counter negative perceptions of governance

---

<sup>4</sup> See "[The Promise and Peril of Nigeria's 2023 Elections](#)," n.d. Council on Foreign Relations, and "[Violent Attacks Threaten Nigeria's Upcoming 2023 Elections](#)," 2022. AP NEWS. December 9, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> [Deutsche Welle](#). n.d. "ECOWAS Criticized over West African Coups | DW | 05.05.2022." DW.COM.

within the region. Successful elections in Nigeria will also set a positive example for the continent, given they will be the first and largest African elections in 2023.<sup>6</sup>

## Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?

The general elections will decide the presidency of Nigeria, the governors of 28 of the country's 36 states, parliamentarians (109 senators and 360 members of the Federal House of Representatives), and 993 members of State Houses of Assembly.

In total, 1,491 positions are open across the country at the national and state levels. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission's published list of candidates,<sup>7</sup> all 18 registered political parties are fielding candidates for the general elections.

## What is the electoral system?

Nigeria's president is elected by a qualified plurality vote to serve a four-year term. To be elected in the first round, a candidate must receive the highest number of votes cast and at least 25 percent of the votes in two-thirds of the states (spread). If no candidate wins in the first round, a second round is held between the top two candidates (that is, the candidate receiving the highest number of votes in the election and the candidate receiving the majority of votes in the largest number of states). If a second round of necessary, it will be held 21 days after the first round.

The 109 members of the Senate are elected to four-year terms by simple majority vote in single-member constituencies. Each of the 36 states is divided into three senatorial districts. One senator is elected from each of those 108 districts and the Federal Capital Territory. The House of Representatives has 360 members serving for four-year terms, with seats for each state allotted based on population size. Lagos and Kano have the highest number of seats, with 24 each. The State Houses of Assembly have 993 members who are elected to four-year terms by a simple majority vote in single-member constituencies.<sup>8</sup>

## What is the legal framework for conducting the elections?

The legal framework for conducting the elections consists of:

1. The Nigeria 1999 Constitution,<sup>9</sup> as amended;
2. The Electoral Act, 2022;<sup>10</sup> and
3. Independent National Electoral Commission Election Regulations and Guidelines for the conduct of elections, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

President Muhammadu Buhari signed the Electoral Act Amendment Bill into law on February 25, 2022, despite some opposition from political leaders.<sup>12</sup> President Buhari declined to sign an earlier

---

<sup>6</sup> [West Africa Elders' Forum Tasks Nigeria on Peaceful 2023 Polls – THISDAYLIVE](#)

<sup>7</sup> <https://inecnigeria.org/list-of-candidates-for-2023-elections/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/3100/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.nigeria-law.org/ConstitutionOfTheFederalRepublicOfNigeria.htm>

<sup>10</sup> <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Electoral-Act-2022.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> [https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/REGULATIONS-AND-GUIDELINES-FOR-THE-CONDUCT-OF-ELECTIONS-2022\\_updttd.pdf](https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/REGULATIONS-AND-GUIDELINES-FOR-THE-CONDUCT-OF-ELECTIONS-2022_updttd.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> [Analysis: Can Nigeria's new electoral law inspire a new era? | Muhammadu Buhari | Al Jazeera](#)

version of the bill due to disputes on how political parties selected their candidates. Other concerns about the bill included barring political appointees from contesting political elections and the introduction of the Results Viewing Portal voter tabulation system. Despite this opposition, the public and civil society strongly supported the Electoral Act Amendment Bill. Members of civil society expressed confidence that it would ease electoral processes and promote fairness and credibility in future elections. The National Assembly alleviated some concerns when it reworked the bill in January 2022, and President Buhari then signed it.

## How many political parties are participating in the elections?

All 18 registered political parties have fielded candidates for the elections. The parties are:

1. Accord
2. Action Alliance
3. African Action Congress
4. African Democratic Congress
5. Action Democratic Party
6. All Progressive Congress
7. All Progressive Grand Alliance
8. Allied Peoples Movement
9. All People's Party
10. Boot Party
11. Labour Party
12. New Nigeria Peoples Party
13. National Rescue Movement
14. Peoples Democratic Party
15. Peoples Redemption Party
16. Social Democratic Party
17. Young Progressives Party
18. Zenith Labour Party

## How many candidates are contesting for the various positions?

According to the Independent National Electoral Commission's published list of candidates,<sup>13</sup> a total of **15,309 people, including 14,043 (91.7 percent) men and 1,266 (8.3 percent) women**, are contesting for seats at the national and state levels. There will be **18 presidential, 1,101 Senatorial, 3,122 House of Representatives, 837 governorship, and 10,231 State Houses of Assembly candidates**.

Women account for only one in 10 candidates: **one** for the presidential election, **25** for governorships, **102** for deputy governorships, **92** for Senate seats, **286** for House of Representative seats, and **1,046** for State Houses of Assembly seats.

---

<sup>13</sup> <https://inecnigeria.org/list-of-candidates-for-2023-elections/>

## How does a winner emerge in the 2023 National and State Elections?

According to Section 66 of the Electoral Act, 2022,<sup>14</sup> and Sections 134 and 179 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,<sup>15</sup> to be declared winners in the election, presidential and governorship candidates must receive the largest number of votes cast and not less than one-quarter of votes in at least two-thirds of each of the states or the local government areas in the state, respectively. If no candidate receives these proportions, a second round will be held between the top two candidates.

For any national or state assembly election, a candidate must receive the largest number of votes cast in the ward, constituency, or senatorial district he or she is contesting (a simple majority) to be declared the winner.

## What technology is the Independent National Electoral Commission deploying for the elections?

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) will deploy the Bi-modal Accreditation System (BVAS), a handheld device that verifies and authenticates voters against the voter registry on Election Day using either fingerprint or facial capture. The BVAS will also be used to scan and electronically transmit election results from polling units to the INEC Results Viewing (IREV) portal.

INEC is deploying the IReV portal to improve the results management process, enhance transparency, and increase public confidence in the results collation process. The IReV portal will enable the public to view copies of polling unit election result sheets on Election Day.

## Who oversees the polling units and registration areas during elections, and what are their duties?

The presiding officer oversees a polling unit, supported by three other poll workers. They will issue ballot papers to voters upon accreditation using the Bi-modal Voting Accreditation System (BVAS).

The supervisory presiding officer supervises the conduct of polls in a cluster of polling units in a registration area (RA). He or she collects, distributes, and retrieves election materials within that RA.

### Poll Officials

Polling Team	Polling Responsibilities
Presiding officer	Ballot paper issuance/overseer
Assistant presiding officer (APO) I	BVAS verification of permanent voter card
APO II	Register: check, inking, and statistics
APO III	Queue controller and permanent voter checker

<sup>14</sup> <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Electoral-Act-2022.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.nigeria-law.org/ConstitutionOfTheFederalRepublicOfNigeria.htm#Chapter\\_6](http://www.nigeria-law.org/ConstitutionOfTheFederalRepublicOfNigeria.htm#Chapter_6)

## Collation Officers

1	Local government area collation officer	Receive original copies of results from RA/ward, and collate results to obtain local government area summary
2	State constituency returning officer	Collate, declare results, and return the names of winners of governorship and state elections
3	Constituency returning officer	Collate, declare results, and return the name of the winner with the largest number of valid votes cast for the federal constituency election
4	Senatorial district collation/returning officer	Collate, declare results, and return the name of the winner with the largest number of valid votes cast at the senatorial district election
5	Chief returning officer	Collate results from state collation officers, declare results, and return the name of the winner as president-elect of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

## What is Independent National Electoral Commission doing to safeguard the elections and voters in a pandemic?

The election administration will follow current health protocols as well as the Independent National Electoral Commission Voting in Safety Guide, which regulates the conduct of elections during a pandemic. Voters, observers, and authorized representatives of candidates will be required to maintain a physical distance of two meters. Queues will be demarcated with ropes and other markings.

## Who is eligible to run as a candidate?

Candidacy requirements differ slightly for different positions. All candidates must meet the minimum requirements of citizenship and be registered voters. They must show proof of education through at least school certificate level or its equivalent, such as a high school diploma, and must be sponsored members of a political party before they can run for any political position. Accordingly, there are no legal provisions that allow for independent candidates. Senate candidates must be at least 35 years old, and House of Representative candidates must be at least 30 years old. According to Section 84 (10) of the Electoral Act 2022,<sup>16</sup> no actively serving political appointee at any level may serve as a candidate for any position.

## What are the campaign expenditure and donation limits?

The Electoral Act 2022<sup>17</sup> defined expenditure limits for all candidates. All candidates are required to submit financial reports that document their campaign income and expenditures no later than seven days after Election Day.

<sup>16</sup> <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Electoral-Act-2022.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Electoral-Act-2022.pdf>



Candidates may accept financial donations from citizens but are prohibited from receiving any support or funds from foreign or illegal sources. Section 88 of the Electoral Act 2022<sup>18</sup> set the following limits for election expenses that political candidates may incur:

- NGN 5 billion (\$10,848,800 USD equivalent) for presidential candidates;
- NGN 1 billion (\$2,169,760 USD equivalent) for governorship candidates;
- NGN 100 million (\$216,976 USD equivalent) for Senate candidates;
- NGN 70 million (\$151,883 USD equivalent) for the House of Representatives candidates; and
- NGN 30 million (\$65,092 USD equivalent) for State Houses of Assembly candidates.

No individual or other entity may donate more than NGN 50 million to a candidate. The Independent National Electoral Commission is responsible for monitoring political parties<sup>19</sup> and established the Election and Party Monitoring Department to monitor party finance activities.

### **What is the election management body? What are its powers?**

Nigeria's election management body is the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The functions of the INEC as contained in Section 15, Part 1 of the Third Schedule of the 1999 Constitution, as amended<sup>20</sup> and Section 2 of the Electoral Act 2022, as amended<sup>21</sup> include the following:

1. Organize, undertake, and supervise all elections to the offices of the president and vice-president, the governor and deputy governor of a state, and the membership of the Senate, House of Representatives, and House of Assembly of each state of the federation;
2. Register political parties in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Act of the National Assembly;
3. Monitor the organization and operation of the political parties, including their finances, conventions, congresses; and party primaries;
4. Arrange for the annual examination and auditing of the funds and accounts of political parties, and publish a report on such examination and audit for public information;
5. Arrange and conduct the registration of persons qualified to vote and to prepare, maintain and revise the register of voters for the purpose of any election under the Constitution;
6. Monitor political campaigns and provide rules and regulations that govern the political parties;
7. Conduct voter and civic education;
8. Promote knowledge of sound democratic election processes; and
9. Conduct any required referendum pursuant to the 1999 Constitution or any other law or Act of the National Assembly.

---

<sup>18</sup> <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Electoral-Act-2022.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> [https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Political\\_Party\\_Finance\\_Handbook.pdf](https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Political_Party_Finance_Handbook.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.nigeria-law.org/ConstitutionOfTheFederalRepublicOfNigeria.htm#IndependentNationalElectoralCommission>

<sup>21</sup> <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Electoral-Act-2022.pdf>

INEC is not involved in local government elections, except that of the Federal Capital Territory for the chair and counselors of its six area councils. State independent electoral commissions manage local elections.

### **What is the election management body doing to strengthen its technology and procedures to resist vulnerabilities and counter foreign interference?**

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) pilots all technologies extensively before large-scale deployment. This includes conducting stress testing, identifying vulnerabilities, and developing local solutions.

With IFES's support, INEC developed an information communications and technology (ICT) policy that includes cybersecurity best practices implemented across the election management body as standard operating procedures. INEC recently conducted a cybersecurity assessment of its ICT infrastructure ahead of the 2023 general election to identify and plug gaps. INEC also trained staff on the Bi-modal Voting Accreditation System device to ensure effective utilization of this technology.

### **What is the Independent National Electoral Commission doing to ensure that citizens have all the information they need to participate in the electoral process?**

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) opened the INEC Citizens' Contact Center (ICCC), through which members of the public can make inquiries and request information. The ICCC is designed to enhance transparency and public participation in the electoral process. It is open daily between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. and, as the elections near, will scale up to 24-hour service. The ICCC offers real-time responses to inquiries, incident reports, complaints, and information about any aspect of the electoral process. The ICCC:

- Facilitates access to election-related information and knowledge;
- Contributes to voter education efforts;
- Provides information on how voters can transfer their registration; and
- Facilitates verification of voters' status.

Contact information for the ICCC is below:

- Telephone: 07098116381, 07098115257, 07098117563, or 07098110916
- E-mail: [iccc@inec.gov.ng](mailto:iccc@inec.gov.ng)
- Website: [www.inecnigeria.org](http://www.inecnigeria.org)

## Who can vote in these elections?

Section 12 (1) of the Electoral Act 2022, as amended,<sup>22</sup> states that a person shall be eligible to vote if she or he is a citizen of Nigeria; 18 years or older; resides, works in, or originates from a local government area, council, or ward covered by a registration center; applies in person to the registration officer of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for registration as a voter; is not subject to any legal incapacity to vote under any law, rule, or regulation in force in Nigeria; has a permanent voter's card; and is listed on the electronic voter's register.

Section 12 (2) of the Electoral Act 2010, as amended, states that a person cannot register at more than one registration center or register more than once in the same registration center, as this amounts to an electoral offense punishable by law.<sup>23</sup> As such, Section 12 (3) of the Electoral Act 2010<sup>24</sup> and the Electoral Act 2022, as amended,<sup>25</sup> warned the public that, if convicted, offenders are subject to a fine of up to NGN 100,000 equivalent to \$216.98 USD, up to a year of imprisonment, or both.

Voting by proxy is not allowed. A voter is expected to physically be present at the polling unit with a permanent voter's card to be accredited, and permitted to vote.

## How many registered voters are there?

There are 93,469,008 registered voters in the national voter registry that will be used in the 2023 general elections. Of those voters, 52.5 percent are men and 47.5 percent are women.

By age group, 39.65 percent of registered voters are aged 18 to 34 years, 35.75 percent are aged 35 to 49 years, 18.94 percent are aged 50 to 69 years, and 5.66 percent are 70 years and above. A total of 9,518,188 first-time voters are registered.

## What provisions are in place that support the equal rights of women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups?

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) established its Gender and Inclusivity Department to promote the participation of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and internally displaced persons in the electoral process. Section 54 (1) of the Electoral Act, 2022, as amended,<sup>26</sup> states that INEC will provide persons with disabilities and special needs and vulnerable persons with suitable assistive devices, such as braille ballots, electronic devices, and magnifying glasses to ensure they are able to vote. INEC's policy documents guide its approach to enhance the participation of these groups in the electoral process.

These provisions include:

- Prioritization of persons with disabilities, the aged, visibly pregnant women, and nursing mothers to vote before others;

---

<sup>22</sup> <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Electoral-Act-2022.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> [EA2010.pdf \(inecnigeria.org\)](https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Electoral-Act-2022.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> [EA2010.pdf \(inecnigeria.org\)](https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Electoral-Act-2022.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Electoral-Act-2022.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Electoral-Act-2022.pdf>

- Making magnifying glasses available at the polling unit;
- Making available a braille ballot guide (a specially designed ballot paper assistive guide that enables voters with visual disabilities to vote independently);
- Use of INEC form EC.40H to capture data on persons with disabilities on Election Day; and
- Publication of the INEC EC.30E poster to provide guidance for deaf voters on how to vote at a polling unit.

## **Is out-of-country voting allowed?**

Nigerian law makes no provisions for out-of-country voting. However, Nigerians in the diaspora, civil society organizations, and the Independent National Electoral Commission continue to advocate for an amendment to the law that permits Nigerians living abroad to vote outside the country.

## **Who can observe during Election Day? How can they get accreditation?**

### **Election Observers**

Representatives of international observation missions, international organizations, civil society organizations, the media, and political parties may observe all electoral activities in Nigeria if they are accredited in accordance with Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) guidelines for election observation.

Civil society organizations and interested national and international organizations must formally apply to INEC's Election and Party Monitoring department in writing and receive approval to observe the elections. Each observer group is expected to submit a detailed list of its observers, including a photograph of each observer. Upon approval, observer groups will receive observer kits that include badges with photographs for each observer. Election observers are expected to wear their INEC-issued badges at all times during observation on Election Day or risk arrest.

Observers have the right to observe the entire voting process and the counting of ballots at polling stations, as well as the collation and declaration of results at the collation centers. They are not permitted to interfere with the conduct of elections. They may only observe the process and call the attention of officials to any irregularity without interfering with the process. It is unlawful for election observers to handle election materials.

### **Election Monitors**

Election monitors are INEC officials who are deployed to oversee the conduct of elections. Election monitors can interfere with the conduct of elections, especially if they notice that poll officials are not adhering to the approved procedures.

## **Political Party Agents**

A political party agent is an accredited representative of a political party or candidate who is designated to witness voter registration, the display of the voter registry, and the polling and counting processes on behalf of his or her political party or candidate at specified registration, polling, and counting venues. A party agent represents the interests of the party's candidate at the registration, polling, and counting venues. INEC allows only one agent per political party or candidate at each registration, polling, and counting venue.

A party agent present at a polling unit may demand to have votes recounted, but only once. The refusal of any party agent to countersign the result sheet will not invalidate the results of the poll.

## **Media**

Only accredited journalists are permitted to enter polling units on Election Day, and only under the condition that they do not interfere with the conduct of elections. Members of the media cannot announce election results before returning officers do so, as only the latter are permitted by law to declare the result of an election.

## **When does the campaign start? Is there a campaign silence period?**

Election campaigns are permitted to commence 90 days prior the Election Day. Campaigning must cease 24 hours before the election, on 8:30 a.m. on February 24, 2023.

## **Who is managing security on Election Day?**

The Nigeria Police Force, in close collaboration with other security agencies including the Nigerian Armed Forces and Paramilitary forces (such as Nigeria Civil Defence and immigration officers), will provide security on Election Day. The Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security will coordinate election security efforts at the national and state levels.

## **Where are vote counting and tabulation held?**

Results will be announced at each polling unit immediately after the collation, sorting, and counting of votes at the polling unit level. Following this announcement, the results will be transferred to and collated at collation centers at the ward, local government area, state, and national levels. The level of the final announcement of results depends on the type of seat. The results of the presidential election will be announced at the national Presidential Collation Center. The results of governorship, Senate, House of Representatives, and State Houses of Assembly races are announced at the state level.

After the presiding officer finalizes the sorting and counting votes at the polling units and transmits the polling unit results through the INEC Results Viewing (IREV) portal, collation will begin. Collation proceeds from the lowest level of collation, the registration area collation center, to the highest, either at the local government area, senatorial district, state, or national level depending on the type of election.

## When will official results be announced?

The Independent National Electoral Commission will announce election results once collation is complete at all levels. The announcement may occur on Election Day or in the days afterward, depending on the type of election. To this end:

- Councillorship elections will be declared from the RA/Ward collation centers;
- Chairman elections will be declared from LGA collation centers;
- State house of representative elections will be declared from the state constituency collation election centers;
- Federal house of representative elections will be declared from federal constituency collation centers;
- Senatorial elections will be declared from the senatorial district collation centers;
- Governorship elections will be declared from the state collation center; and
- Presidential elections will be declared from the presidential collation center.<sup>27</sup>

## How will election disputes be adjudicated?

Guided by Section 285 of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended)<sup>28</sup> and Section 130 of the Electoral Act 2022,<sup>29</sup> election tribunals are constituted in each state and at the national level to preside over pre-election disputes and the conduct of elections within Nigeria. Election tribunals must be constituted not later than 30 days before the day of the election.<sup>30</sup>

Only registered candidates or parties can challenge results. Section 131 (5, a) of the Electoral Act 2022, as amended,<sup>31</sup> notes that only registered candidates or parties can challenge results, which they must submit to a court within 21 days after the declaration of the election results. According to Section 134 (1) of the Electoral Act 2022,<sup>32</sup> candidates may challenge elections on any the following grounds: a candidate was not qualified to run at the time of the election, the election was invalid by reason of corrupt practices or noncompliance with the provisions of the Electoral Act 2022, or the respondent was not duly elected by the majority of lawful votes cast during the election.

Beyond challenges to electoral results, any voter, polling agent, and candidate can raise concerns regarding electoral offenses by submitting a written complaint to the nearest Independent National Electoral Commission local office. An electoral offense is any violation of a regulation or law concerning elections. Examples of electoral offenses on Election Day include vote buying, campaigning during the silence period, multiple voting, and voting despite ineligibility. The Election Appeal Tribunal will review each claim and will deliver a written judgement within 180 days from the filing of the petition.

---

<sup>27</sup> [Collation and Declaration of Results – INEC Nigeria](#)

<sup>28</sup> [Microsoft Word - Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.doc \(nigeriarights.gov.ng\)](#)

<sup>29</sup> <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Electoral-Act-2022.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.nigeria-law.org/ConstitutionOfTheFederalRepublicOfNigeria.htm#ElectionTribunals>

<sup>31</sup> <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Electoral-Act-2022.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Electoral-Act-2022.pdf>

## Resources

- [INEC Website](#)
- [INEC Facebook](#)
- [Nigeria Constitution](#)
- [Nigeria Electoral Act, 2022](#)

## About IFES in Nigeria

Since 1998, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has helped Nigerian election management bodies build their capacity to promote credible, inclusive, and transparent elections at the national, state, and local levels. Building on the Support for Electoral Reforms Project II funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), IFES will enhance transparency throughout the electoral process with the USAID- and United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)-funded Supporting Electoral Accountability and Transparency (SEAT) activity. Under SEAT, IFES is assisting Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission to advance and fulfill its mission as an effective, sustainable election management body that is prepared to lead free, fair, and credible elections. IFES also focuses on voter education campaigns that target women, youth, persons with disabilities, and internally displaced persons, along with the general electorate, at the national and sub-national levels. Those campaigns address the challenges of low voter participation. IFES helps to develop a primary school civic education curriculum, conducts national surveys, and monitors electoral dispute resolution via the USAID- and FCDO-funded Sustaining Electoral Engagement for Democracy project.

## Disclosure

These FAQs reflect decisions made by the Independent National Electoral Commission as of February 14, 2023, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any International Foundation for Electoral Systems policy or technical recommendations.

This paper is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the British people through the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The information herein is provided by the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government, or FCDO or the Government of the United Kingdom.