



NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

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PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE NBA ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION ON THE EKITI STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION HELD ON 20 JUNE 2026

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), in furtherance of its commitment to promoting democracy, constitutional governance, electoral integrity, and the rule of law, deployed a high-level team to observe the Ekiti State Governorship Election on Saturday, 20 June 2026.

The delegation was led by Mr Festus Okoye, a distinguished legal practitioner and former National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), who previously chaired INEC's Information and Voter Education Committee.

Other members of the delegation included Mr Sebastine Anyia, First Vice President of the Nigerian Bar Association; Dr. Mobolaji Idris Ojibara, the General Secretary of the Association; Mrs Bridget Edokwe, National Publicity Secretary; Mr Auta Nyada, National Welfare Secretary; and several other experienced legal practitioners from across the country.

In addition to the national delegation, the NBA deployed election observers across the various branches of the NBA in Ekiti State, including polling units, Registration Areas, and Local Government Areas, to observe the conduct of the election.

This preliminary report presents the findings of the NBA Election Observation Mission, based on reports from observers deployed across the State during the setting up, accreditation, voting, counting, and early collation phases of the election.

SCOPE OF OBSERVATION

The Mission monitored electoral activities in the 16 Local Government Areas of Ekiti State, particularly at polling units in Ado Ekiti, Ayekire, Gbonyin, Ekiti South West, Ekiti West, Oye, Ilejemeje and Ekiti East, Ekiti West, Ikole Local Government Areas, Irepodun/Ifelodun, Ido/Osi,

NATIONAL OFFICERS:

Mazi Afam Josiah Osigwe, SAN - President

Dr. Mobolaji Ojibara - General Secretary; Sebastine Anyia - 1st Vice-President; Mrs. Bolatumi Olasunbo Animashaun - 2nd Vice President; Zainab Aminu Garba - 3rd Vice-President; Blessing Imo Udofa-Poromon - Treasurer; Nyada Auta - Welfare Secretary; Bridget Ijeoma Edokwe - Publicity Secretary; Henry Barnabas Ehi - Assistant General Secretary; Ebire Emmanuella Ekpese - Assistant Publicity Secretary

Ijero, Ise/Orun, Ikole, Emure, Iyin, Igede, Awo, Iropora, Esure, Eyio, Iworoko, Are and Afao communities, and other Local Government Areas.

Special focus was given to:

- Deployment of election officials and materials;
- Functionality of BVAS and accreditation procedures;
- Compliance with electoral laws and guidelines;
- Conduct of political parties, party agents and voters;
- Security arrangements;
- Electoral malpractice and voter inducement;
- Counting and collation procedures.

PRELIMINARY ISSUE

The Ekiti State Governorship Election was held on Saturday, 20th June 2026, with a total of 1,059,360 voters, compared with 987,647 registered voters in 2023. The number of PVCs collected rose from 958,052 in 2023, representing a collection rate of 97.0 per cent, to 1,028,929 in 2026, representing 97.1 per cent of registered voters.

DEPLOYMENT OF ELECTION OFFICIALS AND MATERIALS

Observers reported that election officials and materials were generally deployed effectively across the State.

Election materials arrived early in several polling units monitored by the Bar Association across the 16 Local Government Areas.

Most polling units visited had the required complement of Presiding Officers and Assistant Presiding Officers. Accreditation and voting commenced around 8:30 am in most locations.

However, isolated delays were reported at a few polling units due to technical issues with accreditation devices.

VOTER TURNOUT

Observers recorded a marginally fair voter turnout in several locations, including polling units in rural and semi-urban centres, and a low voter turnout in urban centres. However, in a few polling units in the urban centres, voter turnout was fair, including at St. Michael Primary School, B.K. II/Water Works Area, Adebayo Estate Polling Unit, Pa Ologbesere's Compound Polling Unit, Open Space Eremide Market Polling Unit, all in

Ado Ekiti, and several polling units in Ayekire/Gbonyin, Ekiti South West, Ekiti West and Irepodun/Ifelodun Local Government Areas.

Additional reports from Ekiti South West Local Government Area indicated average voter turnout in some polling units, while turnout was relatively low in parts of Ise/Orun, Emure, Ijero, and in some polling units in Ado-Ekiti.

Female participation was particularly impressive in Ayekire/Gbonyin and Ekiti South West Local Government Areas, where women constituted between 60% and 65% of voters observed in several polling units.

AGENTS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Political party agents were present at virtually all monitored polling units.

Observers reported the presence of agents from major political parties, including the APC, PDP and ADC. In several polling units, three party agents were present and actively monitored the process.

While many agents conducted themselves appropriately, observers received reports from some locations alleging that party agents attempted to influence voters, questioned voters about their voting preferences, accompanied voters into voting areas, and engaged in activities that could compromise ballot secrecy.

VOTER DEMOGRAPHICS

The election saw broad participation from the electorate, including young people, women, older people, and people from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Observers noted particularly strong participation by women across several polling units, especially in Ayekire/Gbonyin and Ekiti South West Local Government Areas.

VOTERS' REGISTER

The voters' register was available and displayed at most of the polling units visited.

Observers confirmed that registers were displayed at polling units in Ado Ekiti, Ayekire/Gbonyin, Ekiti South West, Ise/Orun, Ijero and other Local Government Areas, allowing voters to verify their details before accreditation.

BVAS

The BVAS functioned satisfactorily in most of the polling units observed.

Successful accreditation using fingerprint and facial recognition was reported at numerous locations, including St. Thomas Primary School, Adebayo Estate Polling Unit, Pa Ologbesere's Compound Polling Unit, Ekiti South West, and the Emure and Ijero Local Government Areas.

Observers from Ekiti South West reported that BVAS devices functioned appropriately across all the polling units visited.

However, technical challenges were reported in some locations, including:

- Ojuoba/Idoore II, Ward 6 Unit 11, Agbado Ekiti;
- Ward 8 Unit 001, Odole Camp, Ise Ekiti;
- Oke Ese Polling Unit, Ado-Ekiti;
- Ogbon Omo Area Polling Unit;
- Open Space at Maternity, Ijafin;

Observers deployed to Oye, Ikole, and Ekiti East Local Government Areas reported BVAS challenges in Unit 10, Ward 4, and Unit 11, Ward 10, in Oye LGA; Unit 15, Ward 5, Unit 10, Ward 5, and Unit 23, Ward 4, in Ikole LGA; and Unit 2, Ward 7, in Ekiti East LGA. These challenges caused delays in voter accreditation in the affected polling units.

Network challenges and system downtime caused delays at some polling units, as Corp members had to use their personal internet connections to access BVAS.

SECURITY ISSUES

Security personnel were present at most of the monitored polling units.

Officers of the Nigeria Police Force and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) were observed maintaining order and ensuring the peaceful conduct of the election. In Ado Ekiti, Ekiti South West Local Government Area, observers reported the presence of armed and unarmed police officers and NSCDC personnel.

Observers covering Oye, Ilejemeje, Ikole, and Ekiti East Local Government Areas reported no significant security incidents during the observation period. Similarly, observers in Iyin, Igede, Iropora, Esure,

Eyio, Iworoko, Are and Afao reported a generally peaceful environment, save for concerns relating to electoral malpractice in parts of Awo.

Observers generally described the security arrangements as adequate and commendable. The election was largely peaceful throughout the State, with only isolated reports of disruption and interference.

CONDUCT OF VOTERS

Voters generally acted in a peaceful, orderly, and commendable manner.

Observers reported that voters complied with accreditation procedures and voting guidelines in most of the polling units visited. Reports from Ayekire/Gbonyin, Ekiti South West, Ijero and Ise/Orun Local Government Areas particularly commended the orderly conduct of voters throughout the exercise.

INFLUENCE OF MONEY AND ELECTORAL MALPRACTICES

The primary issue noted during the election was the widespread occurrence of vote-buying and voter inducements. Vote buying and selling took on a sophisticated and systemic dimension, involving the compromise of voting secrecy, the issuance of tallies to compromised voters, and the collection of money at designated locations.

Observers reported incidents of:

- Distribution of money to voters before and after voting;
- Vote-buying at Ward 7 Polling Unit 80;
- Vote-buying at Opopogboro Comprehensive Primary School II;
- Open inducement of voters at Town Hall Area, Awo;
- Vote-buying at St. Michael Primary School B.K. II/Water Works Area;
- Systematic vote-buying at St. Michael Primary School B.K. I/Water Works Area;
- Vote-buying at Idogun Area, Iworoko;
- Serious vote-buying at Open Space at Maternity, Ijafin;
- Reports of voters receiving money shortly after voting at Pa Ologbesere's Compound Polling Unit.

Observers in Ayekire/Gbonyin Local Government Area also reported allegations that a political actor was involved in vote-buying at Ward 6

Unit 2 (Maternity Centre), Agbado Ekiti, and allegedly prevented observers from observing the activity.

Further accusations of electoral malpractice were also levelled:

- Party agent's thumbprint ballot papers on behalf of voters;
- Attempts by party agents to influence voters within polling units
- Alleged voting by persons without voter cards after their names were found on the register;
- Interference with the secrecy of voting.

Observers in Ikole Local Government Area reported a more organised form of vote-buying, involving the issuance of tally slips to voters and the subsequent payment of cash inducements. Reports from Ward 4, Unit 15, in Ikoyi, Ikole LGA, alleged that voters received monetary rewards in exchange for their votes. Observers further noted that vote-buying in some locations had a systemic dimension, compromising ballot secrecy and post-voting verification mechanisms.

Observers in Irepodun/Ifelodun Local Government Area reported incidents of vote-buying and interference with the electoral process at Fakeye Hall and Awo Town Hall. Security personnel in those locations were reminded of their responsibilities after observers noted inadequate responses to the reported irregularities.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, observers in parts of Ekiti South West, Ijero, Emure, and Ise/Orun Local Government Areas reported no incidents of vote-buying during the observation period.

INTERFERENCE WITH ELECTORAL ACTIVITIES

Observers reported isolated instances of interference with the electoral process.

At Agbado Ekiti, voting activities were reportedly disrupted by political actors.

At St. Michael Primary School, B.K. II/Water Works Area, observers reported that vote counting was allegedly disrupted after an agent of a political party was taken away from the polling unit by unidentified persons.

These incidents warrant investigation by the relevant authorities.

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

Based on reports from observers across the State, the NBA notes that the election was generally peaceful across most monitored polling units.

Election materials arrived early in many locations. Electoral officials were adequately deployed, security personnel were present, and accreditation and voting processes largely proceeded in an orderly manner.

Reports from Ado Ekiti, Ayekire/Gbonyin, Ekiti South West, Ijero, Emure and Ise/Orun Local Government Areas generally indicated that the election was conducted peacefully, with adequate deployment of personnel and materials, satisfactory security arrangements, functional BVAS operations, and orderly voter behaviour.

However, widespread reports of vote-buying and voter inducement remain a significant concern. The Mission also received reports of BVAS-related challenges, alleged ballot interference by party agents, disruption of the counting process, and isolated incidents of interference with electoral activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The security agencies must investigate and bring to justice the major culprits involved in vote-buying and vote-selling, and INEC should set up the appropriate machinery for their prosecution.
2. Security agencies should intensify efforts to prevent, investigate and prosecute vote-buying and other electoral offences in future elections, as such offences can compromise free, fair and transparent elections and lead to democratic backsliding.
3. Political parties and their agents should strictly comply with electoral laws and avoid conduct that could compromise the secrecy and integrity of the ballot.
4. INEC should continue efforts to improve BVAS reliability and functionality, particularly in areas where recurrent technical challenges have been observed. Consideration should also be given to enhancing the design of voting cubicles to better protect ballot secrecy and to reduce opportunities for vote-buying and vote-verification schemes.

5. INEC should strengthen BVAS functionality, network support and contingency measures to minimise technical disruptions.
6. Electoral officials should continue to uphold neutrality and ensure strict compliance with electoral guidelines.
7. INEC and other relevant stakeholders should continue to explore technology-driven innovations to enhance electoral efficiency, transparency, accessibility and security. Consideration may be given to studying electronic and remote voting models adopted in other jurisdictions and by other institutions, where appropriate safeguards exist to protect the integrity and credibility of the electoral process.

CONCLUSION

The Nigerian Bar Association commends the people of Ekiti State for their generally peaceful conduct throughout the election.

While the election was largely peaceful and orderly across most monitored polling units, concerns about vote-buying, voter inducement, technical challenges, and isolated incidents of electoral malpractice underscore the need for continued reforms and stronger enforcement of electoral laws.

After the electoral process concludes, the NBA Election Observation Mission will issue a comprehensive final report with detailed findings, analysis, and recommendations.

Dated this 20th Day of June, 2026



Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN
President



Festus Okoye Esq.
Chairman, NBA Election Working
Group (NBA-EWG)