



NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

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REPORT OF THE NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION (NBA) ELECTION WORKING GROUP ON THE OSUN STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION HELD ON SATURDAY, 15 AUGUST 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), in furtherance of its longstanding commitment to democracy, constitutionalism, the rule of law, human rights and credible electoral processes, deployed an Election Observation Group to Osun State to observe the conduct of the Osun State Governorship Election on Saturday, 15 August 2026.

The deployment was part of the NBA's ongoing efforts to strengthen democratic governance, promote public confidence in Nigeria's electoral system, and support elections that are peaceful, transparent, inclusive, credible, and consistent with constitutional and legal standards.

Mr Festus Okoye, Chairman of the NBA Election Working Group, and Dr Mobolaji Ojiibara, Esq., General Secretary of the NBA, led the Election Observation Group. Other members of the NBA Election Working Group who participated in the exercise were Khalid A. Khalid, Esq.; Amah Lawal, Esq.; Chika Henry Eze, Esq.; and John Opaoluwa, Esq.

The Group was supported by officials of the NBA National Secretariat, namely Oti Edah, Esq., Head of the Programmes Department; Stella Charles Akupue, Esq., Communications Officer; and Chioma Onyeje, Programme Officer. Also, members of the NBA Osun State Branches led by their respective chairman were supportive.

PRELIMINARY ISSUES

The tenure of the incumbent Governor of Osun State will expire on 27 November 2026. By virtue of the powers conferred on it by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), and by section 28(1) of the Electoral Act, 2022, the Commission issued the Notice of

NATIONAL OFFICERS:

Mazi Afam Josiah Osigwe, SAN - President

Dr. Mobolaji Idris 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; Ebiero Emmanuella Ekpese - Assistant Publicity Secretary

Elections and released the Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the conduct of the election.

Originally set for 8 August 2026, the election was rescheduled to 15 August 2026 by the Independent National Electoral Commission following the re-enactment of the Electoral Act and the Electoral Act, 2022 coming into force. This was set out in the revised Timetable and Schedule of Activities issued by the Independent National Electoral Commission on 26 February 2026.

DELIMITATION AND VOTER REGISTRATION DATA.

The Governorship election took place across the 30 Local Government Areas of Osun State. Delimitation and voter registration data indicate 332 Registration Areas (Wards) and 3,763 Polling Units. The total number of Registered Voters stood at 2,339,233, while the number of PVCs collected stood at 1,906,390.

PRE-ELECTION ISSUES

Ahead of the Osun State Governorship Election, the President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, led a high-powered delegation to secure firm commitments from key stakeholders to ensure a free, fair, credible, and peaceful election.

The NBA delegation first paid a courtesy visit to Mrs Oluwatoyin O. Babalola, the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Osun State.

The NBA President urged Mrs Babalola to remain a worthy ambassador of the legal profession by faithfully fulfilling her constitutional responsibilities with integrity, impartiality and courage.

In response, the REC assured the delegation that INEC was fully prepared for the election, noting that extensive training had been conducted for election personnel to minimise human error and safeguard the integrity of the electoral process.

The NBA delegation also met the Osun State Commissioner of Police, during which they met the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, DIG Mohammed Ishaku, and other senior police officers overseeing election security.

Ishaku assured the delegation that the Nigeria Police Force had implemented comprehensive security arrangements to guarantee a peaceful and credible election. He disclosed that a large-scale deployment of police personnel had begun across the state, with additional officers expected to arrive before election day to ensure adequate security coverage.

The stakeholder engagements culminated in a press conference at the NBA Osogbo Bar Centre, where the NBA President addressed the media alongside the Chairmen and Secretaries of all NBA branches across Osun State.

The President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, called on all institutions and individuals involved in the electoral process, including electoral officials, security agencies, political actors, and public office holders, to remain strictly neutral and refrain from using their offices, powers, or influence in favour of any candidate or political party.

The NBA President also appealed to all political actors to place the interests of the state above partisan considerations, warning that Osun must not be allowed to go up in flames and that no life should be lost in the pursuit of political power.

DEPLOYMENT OF NBA-EWG

To ensure broad geographical coverage and facilitate the collection of first-hand information from across the State, the NBA observers were organised into seven teams, each assigned specific Local Government Areas (LGAs) and towns as follows:

Team One: Osogbo, Olorunda, Egbedore, Irepodun, Orolu, Ede North and Ede South.

Team Two: Ifelodun, Boriipe, Odo-Otin, Ila, Ifedayo and Boluwaduro.

Team Three: Ilesa East, Ilesa West, Oriade and Obokun.

Team Four: Atakunmosa East and Atakunmosa West.

Team Five: Ife Central, Ife East, Ife North and Ife South.

Team Six: Ejigbo, Iwo and Ola-Oluwa.

Team Seven: Aiyedade, Ayedire, Irewole and Isokan.

Opening of Pool, Accreditation and Voting.

In most of the Polling Units visited, election duty staff arrived on time and set up before the 8-30 am time scheduled by the Commission for the commencement of accreditation and voting.

The Group observed key stages of the electoral process, including the deployment and opening of polling units, accreditation and voting, the operation and use of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), the presence and conduct of security personnel and party agents, voter participation, the general conduct of voters, and the commencement of the collation process in locations covered by the observers.

This Preliminary Report presents the findings of the NBA Election Observation Group, based on reports from observers deployed across the designated LGAs and polling units. It provides an initial assessment of the election's conduct, highlights positive developments, identifies observed challenges and incidents, and sets out preliminary recommendations to strengthen future electoral processes.

The observations contained in this report are limited to the locations visited and observed by the NBA teams and should therefore be understood within the scope of the Group's geographical coverage.

2. DEPLOYMENT OF INEC OFFICIALS, ELECTION MATERIALS AND OPENING OF POLLS

The Group received generally positive reports on the deployment of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) officials and election materials, particularly from the teams covering Ede North and Ede South. However, in Ede North LGA, PU 013, Agbala, near the cooperative building,

the number of registered voters was 626; the election commenced late, at about 9:45 am, because the BVAS had issues booting, which delayed voting.

INEC officials were reported to have arrived at several polling units early, with some officials arriving as early as 7:30 a.m. Election materials were also reported to have been delivered promptly and were generally available at the observed polling units.

In most of the locations covered, electoral activities commenced between approximately 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. There were no significant reports of prolonged delays due to the late arrival of INEC officials or the unavailability of essential election materials.

The Group considers the early deployment of election officials and materials a positive development, as the timely arrival at polling units facilitates the prompt start of electoral activities and helps minimise unnecessary waiting time for voters.

The NBA encourages INEC to sustain and further strengthen this practice in future elections.

3. ACCREDITATION AND VOTING PROCESS

The accreditation and voting process was generally peaceful and orderly across most of the locations observed. However, the Group identified operational challenges, particularly the speed and functionality of the BVAS, the siting of polling units in inappropriate locations, and the disproportionate number of voters in most polling units.

In Olorunda Local Government Area, observers reported that the BVAS was slow to process voter accreditation. The system also struggled to capture the fingerprints and facial images of some voters, which delayed the accreditation process.

Similar challenges were recorded at St Georges Primary School, PU 006, in the Egbedore Local Government Area, with 1,114 registered voters. Although voting and accreditation commenced at 8:30 am, the faulty BVAS slowed the process because some voters encountered difficulties with biometric and facial authentication. The Group observed that some voters

could not complete accreditation because the BVAS failed to capture their fingerprints or facial images. As a result, the affected voters could not proceed to vote.

At a polling unit in Ifetedo, the electoral process reportedly remained peaceful, but the BVAS reportedly stopped functioning after processing several voters. This interruption temporarily disrupted accreditation.

In Alajuweto, Ede South Local Government Area, Polling Unit 005, which reportedly had 1,134 registered voters, the BVAS encountered significant operational difficulties. Although the system was functional at times, it reportedly performed poorly and was slow. The Group further observed that accreditation was relatively seamless at some locations but considerably slower at others.

A recurring concern across the affected polling units was the BVAS's difficulty capturing the fingerprints and facial images of elderly voters.

The Group therefore notes that although BVAS was operational at a substantial number of the locations observed, its processing speed, biometric capture capability and ability to handle large volumes of voters efficiently remain areas requiring further attention.

4. PERFORMANCE OF THE BVAS

The BVAS's performance emerged as the most significant operational issue identified by the Group.

In Okunni, Olosunsogbo/ofatode, PU 003, Osun Bukola, Ward 010, the BVAS had issues with exporting.

In Egbedore LGA, Ataoja "E", PU 019, Ward 05, Okin Street, behind the Capital Hotel, there were 1,271 registered voters. Some elderly voters could not complete the accreditation process because the system failed to capture their biometric and facial information. At a polling unit in Ede South, Anuolu Junction PU 008, with 632 registered voters, the BVAS had issues capturing voter details, which agitated voters as they waited for the BVAS to be restored. This slowed down the accreditation and voting process at that PU.

The Group also received reports that some polling units lacked sufficient personnel to operate the accreditation equipment efficiently. Although the equipment may have been functional, a staff shortage contributed to delays in processing voters.

The team covering **Ifelodun, Boriipe, Odo-Otin, Ila, Ifedayo and Boluwaduro** reported that the BVAS functioned effectively in approximately **90% of the locations observed**. However, voter volume at some polling units placed considerable pressure on the accreditation process.

In Boriipe Local Government Area, some polling units reportedly had more than 1,000 registered voters. The high number of voters put considerable pressure on the accreditation process, leading to slower processing times. In these locations, the principal concern was not a complete technical failure of the BVAS, but rather the system's capacity and the availability of personnel to process a large number of voters efficiently within a reasonable period.

Similarly, in Ede North and Ede South, the BVAS was generally functional but slow at some polling units. A few locations also reported limited network-related issues. However, the principal concerns remained slow processing speeds and difficulties in capturing the biometric information of some elderly voters.

The experience underscores the need for INEC to assess the performance of election technology not only in terms of whether the equipment is operational, but also in terms of speed, reliability, capacity, user support and accessibility for voters who experience difficulties with biometric authentication.

5. VOTER TURNOUT AND PARTICIPATION

We observed varying but generally encouraging levels of voters' participation across the locations covered.

In **Osogbo, Egbedero**, ST. George's Primary School, PU 006, the Okinni Olorunsiyo turnout was assessed as moderate to good, with meaningful participation observed at several polling locations.

In Boripe, some polling units reportedly had more than 1,000 registered voters, leading to a significant voter presence and pressure on the accreditation process. In Osogbo, at Ajaoju E PU 02, Ward 05, voter turnout was impressive. However, in Obokun LGA in Ilesa, some units recorded low turnout.

The team covering Ede North and Ede South described voter turnout as particularly impressive. The team recorded strong turnout in Ajajue 11, Ede South. There was also impressive turnout at Ilesa East, Ilesa Grammar School PU 007. Both male and female voters participated in large numbers. The presence and participation of young voters were particularly noticeable, and elderly voters also took an active part in the electoral process.

The Group also received reports of significant voter turnout in Ifetedo, particularly around Onide Junction, with over 1,000 voters. The concentration of voters and election-related activities disrupted normal movement and traffic in the area. At Ife, the Group also recorded

Overall, voter participation was encouraging and reflected continued public interest in the electoral process.

6. PRESENCE AND CONDUCT OF POLITICAL PARTY AGENTS

Political party agents were present at most of the observed polling units and were generally reported to have behaved appropriately.

The Group did not receive any significant reports of disputes, confrontations or disruptions arising from the conduct of party agents in the locations covered.

The presence of party agents contributed to transparency at the polling-unit level and provided an important means for political parties to observe election conduct.

The NBA commends the generally responsible conduct of party agents observed during the exercise and encourages all political parties and their agents to continue to uphold the principles of peaceful participation and respect for electoral rules.

7. SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AND CONDUCT OF SECURITY PERSONNEL

The overall security situation at the locations observed was deemed satisfactory.

Security personnel were visibly present at several of the polling units visited. The security agencies represented included the Nigeria Police Force, the Armed Forces and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC).

The presence of security personnel helped maintain order and foster a generally peaceful environment for voters, election officials, party agents, and other stakeholders.

In parts of Odo-Otin, Ifelodun and Boriye, security personnel were reported to have worked effectively with election officials, party agents and other stakeholders to maintain order and ensure the smooth conduct of voting.

Importantly, the Group did not receive reports of any major security incidents in the locations covered. However, in Ife South LGA, Olode, Iyana Igboro, PU 15, there was a minor disruption, but the security personnel were able to calm the situation.

The NBA commends the security agencies for their deployment and urges security personnel to continue to uphold political neutrality, professionalism and respect for the rights of voters and other electoral stakeholders.

8. CONDUCT OF VOTERS

The conduct of voters across the locations observed was generally peaceful and orderly.

Voters largely complied with instructions at polling stations, and there were no significant reports of violence, confrontation or major disruption attributable to voter behaviour.

The generally peaceful conduct of voters contributed significantly to the orderly conduct of the electoral process.

The NBA commends voters for their peaceful participation and encourages continued compliance with electoral laws and regulations.

9. VOTE BUYING, INDUCEMENT AND OTHER ELECTORAL MALPRACTICES

Based on reports from observers deployed to the locations covered, the Group received reports of vote buying, voter inducement, and other electoral malpractices. In Elepo Square (PU004), Olofun in Orolu Local Government, some individuals followed eligible voters without disabilities to the voting cubicles and assisted them to vote.

10. INTERFERENCE WITH ELECTORAL ACTIVITIES

The Group did not observe significant interference with electoral activities in the polling units covered.

Election officials generally carried out their duties without substantial external interference. At the same time, voters, party agents, and other stakeholders participated in the process in an orderly manner.

11. KEY INCIDENTS AND CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

Although the election was generally peaceful and orderly in the areas observed, the Group identified several operational challenges that require attention.

The principal challenges were:

1. **Slow BVAS processing:** The BVAS operated slowly at several polling units, causing delays in voter accreditation.
2. **Biometric authentication difficulties:** Some voters had issues with fingerprint and facial recognition.
3. **Challenges affecting elderly voters:** Some elderly voters, particularly in Egbedore, Olorunda and Ede, reportedly experienced significant difficulties with biometric and facial authentication and, in some cases, were unable to complete accreditation.
4. **Temporary BVAS failure:** At least one polling unit in Egbedore reportedly experienced a complete BVAS stoppage after the system had initially processed some voters.

5. **High voter volumes:** Some polling units in Boripe reportedly had more than 1,000 registered voters, placing considerable pressure on the accreditation process.
6. **Insufficient personnel:** Some polling units reportedly lacked sufficient personnel to operate the BVAS and process voters efficiently.
7. **Limited network-related challenges:** A few locations reported network-related difficulties, but these were not identified as the dominant challenge across the State.
8. **Polling Units in Inappropriate Locations:** Some of the Polling Units are located in markets and in front of people's houses.

These challenges did not, in the locations observed, result in widespread disruption of the electoral process. Nevertheless, they have implications for the efficiency, inclusiveness and accessibility of future elections.

12. GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ELECTION

Based on the reports received from the NBA Election Observation Group, the Osun State Governorship Election was **generally peaceful, orderly and well managed in the locations observed.**

The Group recorded several positive features, including the relatively early deployment of INEC officials and election materials, generally orderly voter conduct, the presence of party agents, visible security deployment, and encouraging levels of voter participation.

In several locations, electoral activities commenced between approximately **8:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.**, indicating a timely start to the voting process.

The general security environment was satisfactory, and no significant security incidents were reported in the areas covered by the Group.

Political party agents also conducted themselves responsibly, with no major disputes or disruptions reported.

However, the BVAS's functionality, speed and operational capacity remain the principal areas of concern arising from the Group's observations.

The difficulties experienced by elderly voters and other voters whose biometric or facial information could not be captured also raise concerns about accessibility and the risk of eligible voters being disenfranchised by technological challenges.

The Group therefore considers it important that INEC undertake a detailed review of the BVAS's performance after the election, with a view to identifying the causes of the reported challenges and implementing appropriate corrective and upgrade measures.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the observations made by the NBA Election Observation Group, the following recommendations are made:

a. Comprehensive Pre-Election Testing of BVAS

INEC should conduct comprehensive testing of all BVAS devices well in advance of election day. Testing should cover not only basic functionality but also biometric capture, facial recognition, network connectivity, battery performance, processing speed, and the devices' ability to handle expected voter volumes.

Ahead of the 2027 general election, the Commission must consider upgrading the BVAS machines to meet contemporary technological standards.

b. Adequate Deployment of BVAS Devices

The deployment of BVAS devices should account for the number of registered voters assigned to each polling unit. Polling units with exceptionally high numbers of registered voters should have sufficient technological capacity to prevent bottlenecks and excessive delays during accreditation.

c. Creation of Additional Polling Units

The Commission should investigate why some polling units have more than 2000 registered voters, despite the creation of additional polling units nationwide. Ahead of the 2027 general elections, no polling unit should have more than 500 registered voters; for those with slightly higher numbers, deploy additional equipment and personnel to ensure a pleasant voting experience.

d. Polling Units in Inappropriate Locations

The Commission should ensure that polling units in unsuitable locations are removed. Some polling units are located inside markets, in derelict buildings, in corridors of people's houses, and in other places that are inaccessible, vulnerable, and difficult to manage for crowd control. Open Space Dagbolu III, Registration Area Olobu A in Irepodun Local Government Area, with 966 registered voters, is located in a market square.

e. Provision of Adequate Technical Support

INEC should ensure that trained technical support personnel are strategically deployed and readily available to respond promptly to equipment failures, biometric authentication issues, network problems and other technical challenges on election day.

A rapid-response technical support mechanism should be established to minimise disruption when BVAS devices malfunction.

f. Enhanced Training of Election Officials

INEC should continue to provide comprehensive, practical, and scenario-based training for Presiding Officers and other election officials on BVAS operation.

Training should specifically cover procedures for handling failed fingerprint and facial recognition, equipment malfunctions, network interruptions, and other situations that may arise during accreditation.

The Commission must also ensure that trained election personnel are not replaced by untrained personnel, as this could jeopardise the conduct of elections in some polling units.

g. Protection of Elderly and Vulnerable Voters

Particular attention should be paid to elderly voters and others who may have difficulty with biometric or facial recognition.

INEC should ensure that technical difficulties do not unnecessarily prevent otherwise eligible voters from exercising their constitutional right to vote, in line with the applicable electoral procedures and safeguards.

h. Adequate Staffing of High-Volume Polling Units

The number of election personnel deployed to polling units should reflect the number of registered voters and the complexity of the electoral process.

Polling units with exceptionally high voter populations should have sufficient personnel to ensure orderly accreditation and voting and to reduce avoidable delays.

i. Sustain Early Deployment of Election Officials and Materials

INEC should maintain and further strengthen the early deployment of personnel and election materials observed at several locations covered by the Group.

Early deployment contributed to the timely start of electoral activities and should be institutionalised as a standard operational practice.

j. Strengthen Contingency and Escalation Mechanisms

INEC should strengthen its contingency arrangements for polling units where election technology fails or is unreliable.

INEC should provide election officials with clear escalation procedures so technical problems can be reported and resolved promptly, without unnecessary disruption to voters.

j. Continued Stakeholder Engagement

INEC, political parties, civil society organisations, professional bodies, and other electoral stakeholders should continue to conduct structured post-election reviews.

Such engagements will help identify systemic challenges and develop practical solutions to improve Nigeria's electoral process.

CONCLUSION

The NBA Election Working Group commends the voters, INEC officials, security personnel, political parties, candidates, party agents, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders whose efforts contributed to the generally peaceful conduct of the Osun State Governorship Election in the locations observed.

The Group particularly notes the generally peaceful and orderly conduct of voters, the presence of political party agents, the deployment of security personnel, the relatively timely arrival of INEC officials and election materials, and the absence of significant security incidents across the areas covered.

Voter participation in several locations was also encouraging, demonstrating continued public interest in the electoral process.

At the same time, the recurring operational challenges associated with the BVAS require urgent attention. While the technology was functional in many of the locations observed, slow processing, difficulties with fingerprint and facial recognition, temporary equipment failures, and the system's limited capacity to process large numbers of voters created avoidable delays in some polling units.

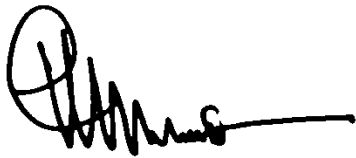
Of particular concern were reports of elderly voters who were unable to complete accreditation due to biometric authentication difficulties. The integrity of an electoral system depends not only on the availability of technology but also on its reliability, accessibility and ability to facilitate the effective exercise of the right to vote.

The experiences recorded in some polling units underscore the need for comprehensive testing, adequate deployment, appropriate staffing, effective technical support, and robust contingency measures for election technology.

The NBA therefore encourages INEC to conduct a comprehensive post-election review of the conduct of the election and, particularly, the performance of the BVAS, to address the challenges identified and strengthen future electoral processes.

The NBA reaffirms its unwavering commitment to democratic governance, constitutionalism, the rule of law, human rights, electoral integrity and peaceful political participation. The Association further encourages all political actors and electoral stakeholders to pursue any post-election grievances through lawful, constitutional and judicial channels.

Dated this day 16th August, 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Festus Okoye', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Festus Okoye Esq.
Chairman, NBA Election Working Group