#FixINEC, #FixNigeria Report: Part III

The Roadmap to Reform

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# **Executive Summary**

The journey towards credible, transparent, and efficient elections in Nigeria has reached a critical moment. For over two decades, Nigeria’s electoral process has struggled with systemic failures that have eroded public trust, undermined democratic ideals, and perpetuated cycles of ineffective leadership. The 2023 elections, while offering opportunities for innovation and progress, highlighted enduring issues such as voter disenfranchisement, logistical inefficiencies, and the faltering performance of critical electoral technologies like BVAS and IREV. These failures reaffirmed the sobering reality that Nigeria’s aspirations for democratic consolidation remain contingent upon comprehensive and sustained electoral reforms.

This report, **Part III: The Roadmap to Reform**, builds upon the foundations laid in the first two installments of the #FixINEC, #FixNigeria Report series. In **Part I**, we examined the urgent need for reform, emphasizing how the Independent National Electoral Commission’s (INEC) underperformance has enabled the emergence of unaccountable and ineffective leaders. **Part II** provided an in-depth review of INEC’s performance from 2003 to 2023, identifying recurring issues such as political interference, technological failures, and poor voter education. Together, these reports highlighted the imperative for systemic reform as the cornerstone of Nigeria’s democratic progress.

This third installment transitions from problem diagnosis to actionable solutions. It presents a comprehensive blueprint for reforming Nigeria’s electoral system, detailing the legislative changes required in the 1999 Constitution, the 2022 Electoral Act and the 2020 Police Act while delineating the roles of key stakeholders in the reform process. This roadmap is not merely a policy document; it is a call to action for all Nigerians—citizens, civil society organizations, political actors, and the international community—to unite in transforming the electoral system into a beacon of integrity and accountability.

### **The Purpose of This Roadmap**

At its core, this document seeks to achieve three critical objectives:

1. **Legislative Clarity**: To outline specific amendments to the 1999 Constitution, the 2022 Electoral Act and the 2020 Police Act that will address INEC’s structural and operational challenges, strengthen its independence, and enhance its capacity to deliver credible elections.
2. **Stakeholder Mobilization**: To identify and assign clear roles to the judiciary, legislature, civil society, media, security agencies, and the electorate in driving electoral reforms.
3. **Actionable Steps**: To provide a clear sequence of next steps that aligns with the responsibilities of each stakeholder, ensuring the implementation of reforms is both systematic and collaborative.

### **The Case for Urgency**

The cost of inaction is profound. Without reform, Nigeria risks perpetuating the vicious cycle of electoral malpractice, weak governance, and public disillusionment. The failures of the 2023 elections are not isolated incidents but symptoms of a broader systemic issue. Electoral reform is not just about improving INEC’s performance; it is about restoring faith in Nigeria’s democratic institutions, promoting national unity, and unlocking the country’s vast potential for socio-economic development.

### **Our Collective Responsibility**

Reforming Nigeria’s electoral system requires a united front. While INEC remains the focal institution, the success of these reforms hinges on the active participation of all stakeholders:

* **The National Assembly** must enact constitutional and legislative amendments to address electoral irregularities and strengthen INEC’s independence.
* **The Judiciary** must ensure the timely resolution of electoral disputes to uphold the rule of law.
* **Civil Society Organizations and Media** must advocate for transparency, educate voters, and hold institutions accountable.
* **Security Agencies** must ensure a safe and conducive environment for elections.
* **The Electorate** must demand accountability and actively participate in the democratic process.

### **A Roadmap to Getting it Right**

This roadmap envisions a Nigeria where elections are a true reflection of the will of the people, where leaders are chosen based on merit and integrity, and where governance is synonymous with progress and inclusivity. Achieving this vision requires bold, decisive action, guided by the principles of transparency, fairness, and accountability. As we embark on this journey, let this roadmap serve as both a guide and an inspiration. Together, we can fix INEC. Together, we can fix Nigeria.

# Chapter 1: Optimizing INEC’s Performance within the Democratic Trilemma

Elections are the cornerstone of democracy, yet their effective administration requires balancing three critical pillars: inclusiveness (ballot access), integrity (security and transparency), and cost efficiency (financial sustainability). This delicate balance is referred to as the Democratic Trilemma, where prioritizing one aspect can often impact the others.

For Nigeria’s Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), this challenge has been particularly complex. Efforts to expand voter access sometimes lead to higher operational costs and logistical inefficiencies. Strengthening electoral security may restrict access for certain voters, while focusing on cost reductions risks compromising electoral transparency and trust.

This chapter presents a strategic operational roadmap to enhance INEC’s performance by leveraging technology, governance reforms, and innovative solutions to achieve a sustainable balance. The recommendations aim to reduce election costs, enhance electoral integrity, and expand voter participation while ensuring transparency and credibility. By addressing key weaknesses in logistics, security, technology deployment, and election financing, INEC can establish an efficient, transparent, and financially sustainable electoral system that strengthens Nigeria’s democracy.

## 1.1 Expanding Electoral Access: Strategies for a More Inclusive Democracy

An inclusive electoral process is the foundation of a thriving democracy. When barriers such as **voter suppression, logistical inefficiencies, security concerns, and systemic discrimination** prevent eligible citizens from participating, democracy itself is weakened. To build a truly representative system, Nigeria must adopt **proactive measures to enhance voter access, improve election-day logistics, and ensure marginalized groups—such as women, youth, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and rural populations—can fully exercise their right to vote.**

This section outlines **strategic recommendations to improve electoral inclusiveness**, ensuring that every Nigerian, regardless of location, socio-economic status, or demographic background, has an equal opportunity to participate in elections. By leveraging **technology, policy reforms, and voter education**, these strategies will help dismantle barriers, boost voter turnout, and strengthen public confidence in Nigeria’s electoral system.

### 1.1.1 **Short-Term Solutions (Before 2027 Elections)**

1. **Expand PVC Collection Centers** – Facilitate easier voter access to Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) by allowing collection at **banks, post offices, and online verification centres**.
2. **Enhance Election Day Logistics** – Deploy **mobile voting stations** in underserved and remote areas to ensure accessibility for all eligible voters.
3. **Strengthen Security Measures** – Establish **independent election security teams** to prevent voter intimidation and ensure a safe voting environment.
4. **Launch Voter Education Campaigns** – Implement AI-powered voter education chatbots targeted at **youth, women, and marginalised groups** to improve electoral awareness and participation.

### 1.1.2 **Long-Term Reforms**

1. **Implement Multi-Day Voting** – Reduce polling unit congestion and enhance voter access by allowing elections to be conducted over **multiple days**.
2. **Legal Quotas for Women & Youth** – Mandate **30% representation** for women and youth in political party nominations to improve inclusiveness in governance.
3. **Permanent Digital Voter ID System** – Transition from physical PVCs to **secure, mobile-compatible digital voter IDs** for a seamless electoral process.
4. **Diaspora Voting** – Allow **Nigerians abroad** to vote electronically through a secure and blockchain-authenticated online system.

### 1.1.3 **Inclusive Electoral Reforms**

1. **Mobile Voting for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and Diaspora Nigerians:** Increase accessibility and reduce reliance on physical polling stations. Pilot **SMS and USSD-based voting** for PWDs who cannot travel to polling stations. Implement **secure online voting** for Diaspora Nigerians, incorporating **two-factor authentication** for security. This will expand voter inclusion without significantly increasing election costs.
2. **Election Day as a National Public Holiday:** Reduce workplace-related disenfranchisement and increase voter participation. Enforce **mandatory work-free policies** for private and informal sector workers on Election Day. This reform can increase voter turnout, especially among low-income earners and those in the informal workforce.
3. **Youth and Women’s Political Leadership Incubator** Addresse systemic barriers preventing women and youth from securing political leadership positions. Provide **state-funded campaign grants** for young and female candidates to level the playing field. Implement a **youth mentorship pipeline** to groom future political leaders. Increase **political party quota mandates** for women and young people to ensure broader representation. impementing this reform expands political representation and encourages the active participation of underrepresented groups in governance.

## 1.2 Strengthening Electoral Integrity: Strategies for a Transparent and Credible Electoral System

**Ensuring Free, Fair, and Trustworthy Elections in Nigeria**

Electoral integrity is essential for sustaining public trust in democracy. When elections are marred by **vote rigging, result manipulation, voter suppression, and security threats**, citizens lose faith in the democratic process, leading to increased apathy and political instability. Strengthening electoral integrity requires **robust transparency measures, legal enforcement mechanisms, and technological safeguards** to prevent fraud and ensure that every vote genuinely reflects the will of the people.

This section outlines **key recommendations to enhance electoral integrity**, including **strengthening election technology, preventing voter suppression, combating electoral fraud, and implementing accountability measures**. By ensuring a fair and credible process, Nigeria can rebuild trust in its elections and reinforce democratic governance.

**1.2.1. Strengthening Electoral Technology & Transparency**

1. **Fix BVAS and IReV Failures**

* Conduct an independent forensic audit of BVAS and IReV performance in 2023.
* Implement real-time monitoring dashboards for BVAS, with automated public alerts when failures occur.
* **Biometric voter accreditation without manual backups eliminates multiple voting and impersonation, making BVAS the only means of accreditation** with no manual override options. use multi-factor authentication (fingerprint + face scan + unique pin).

1. **Deploy AI and Blockchain for Election Monitoring**

* Use AI-powered fraud detection systems to flag anomalies in voter accreditation and result collation.
* Deploy AI tools to analyse voting patterns and flag inconsistencies.
* Use AI-powered real-time election monitoring dashboards for observers.
* Detect vote-buying trends through financial transaction tracking.
* Implement blockchain-based election result storage to prevent manipulation and ensure tamper-proof verification.

1. **Mandate Live Result Transmission and Blockchain-Based Verification**

* INEC must legally enforce the real-time digital transmission of results from polling units to prevent manipulation at collation centres.
* Ensure all polling units upload results in real-time, with auto-flagging of discrepancies.
* Allow citizens and observers to verify polling unit results online via a transparent public ledger such as IREV.

1. **Setup Chain of Custody Protocols and Tracking**

* Clearly define **roles and responsibilities** for **INEC officials, vendors, and security agencies** to enhance accountability.
* Implement a **tracking system** to identify points of failure in election operations.
* Ensure **officials and vendors who act wrongly are litigated swiftly**.

### 1.2.**2. Combating Voter Suppression & Electoral Violence**

1. **Establish an Independent Election Security Task Force**

* Ensure police and military remain neutral and do not intimidate opposition voters.
* Train special election officers to protect voters in violence-prone areas.

1. **Implement Multi-Day Voting & Extended Polling Hours**

* Reduce voter suppression by allowing elections to be held over 2-3 days in high-turnout zones.
* Extend voting hours into the evening, especially in urban areas where INEC officials arrive late.

1. **Legal Penalties for Voter Suppression**

* Any INEC official or security personnel found delaying voting or intimidating voters should face immediate removal and legal action.

### 1.2.**3. Ending Vote Buying & Election Fraud**

1. **Strengthen Financial Transparency in Elections**

* Enforce strict campaign finance audits and introduce real-time political donation tracking.
* Limit cash transactions at polling units, using AI-powered financial monitoring to detect vote-buying patterns.

1. **Establish an Electoral Offences Tribunal**

* Ensure fast-track prosecutions for vote-buying, ballot snatching, and result falsification.
* Implement mandatory prison sentences for politicians caught engaging in electoral fraud.

1. **Introduce Whistleblower Rewards & Protection**

* Offer financial incentives for INEC staff who expose electoral malpractice.
* Offer financial rewards for verified whistleblower reports on vote buying, result falsification, or underage voting.
* Protect whistleblowers from retaliation by corrupt political actors.

### 1.2.**4. Long-Term Structural Reforms**

1. **Decentralize INEC’s Power & Appointments**

* The INEC Chairman should be appointed through a bipartisan process, not by the President.
* State INEC branches should have more autonomy to prevent federal-level manipulation.

1. **Pilot E-Voting and Diaspora Voting**

* Introduce secure electronic voting for diaspora Nigerians as a pilot program.
* Gradually phase in electronic voting for urban areas, ensuring tamper-proof implementation.

1. **Civic Education & Voter Awareness**

* Leverage AI-powered chatbots to provide real-time voter education in local languages.
* Conduct nationwide public debates to increase awareness of electoral reforms and INEC policies.

## 1.3 Roadmap For Cost-Efficient Election Reforms (2024 – 2027)

**Objective:** Reduce election costs by **30% or more** while maintaining **transparency, security, and inclusiveness.**

## 1.3.1. Technology Cost Reduction & Digitizing Election Processes

**Target:** Reduce administrative and voter registration costs by **50% through digital transformation.**

Proposed Reforms**:**

* Implement a **permanent digital voter register**, eliminating the need for mass re-registration every election cycle.
* Develop a **National Digital Voter ID system** linked to **NIN and BVN** to replace PVCs, saving billions in card production and distribution.
* Introduce **secure electronic voting for diaspora Nigerians**, reducing the cost of physical ballot printing and logistics.
* Pilot **e-voting** in **urban centres**, reducing ballot production costs by **30-50%.**
* **Open Source Election Software and Local Development by** encouraging **Nigerian software developers** to build election solutions, reducing dependency on foreign election technology, and exploring the use of **open-source election software** to cut licensing costs and improve transparency.

**Expected Savings:**

* **₦30 billion saved** by eliminating repeated voter registration costs.
* **₦20 billion saved** by cutting PVC production and distribution expenses.
* **Long-term savings** from reduced software dependency and technology ownership.

## 1.3.2. Optimising Election Logistics

**Target:** Reduce logistics spending by **40% through improved planning and technology.**

Proposed Reforms**:**

* Strengthen INEC’s regional hubs' logistics system for ballot printing and material distribution to reduce last-minute transport costs.
* Deploy **AI-driven election logistics management software** to optimise resource allocation and reduce inefficiencies.
* Use **blockchain technology for digital ballot tracking**, reducing losses and fraud risks.
* Pilot **mobile voting stations** for **rural and hard-to-reach areas**, reducing transportation costs.

**Expected Savings:**

* **₦28 billion saved** by cutting election material transportation costs by 40%.
* **₦10 billion saved** by reducing emergency ballot reprinting needs.

## 1.3.3. Reducing Security-Related Expenditures

**Target:** Reduce security spending by **30% while improving election security.**

Proposed Reforms**:**

* Introduce **community-based election security monitors** to reduce reliance on heavily armed forces.
* Implement a **biometric accreditation system for election security personnel**, ensuring only vetted and non-partisan officers are deployed.
* Deploy **AI-driven surveillance drones** in conflict-prone areas to monitor and prevent election violence.
* **Set up early warning systems.** Establish an **election conflict prevention unit** using **predictive analytics such as social media sentiment analysis** to intervene in potential violence hotspots before election day.

**Expected Savings:**

* **₦15 billion saved** by reducing excessive military deployment.
* **₦10 billion saved** by minimising post-election crisis management costs.

## 1.3.4. Minimizing Legal Costs & Election Reruns

**Target:** Reduce post-election litigation and rerun costs by **50%.**

Proposed Reforms**:**

* Strengthen **INEC’s digital result transmission (IReV)** to eliminate manual collation fraud and prevent unnecessary legal battles.
* Introduce **strict penalties** for election officials involved in result falsification, deterring malpractice.
* Implement **independent election audit teams** to resolve disputes before they reach the courts.
* Launch an **Electoral Mediation & Conflict Resolution Center** to settle disputes before they escalate into full litigation.

**Expected Savings:**

* **₦5 billion saved** by eliminating 70% of post-election court cases.
* **₦10 billion saved** by preventing unnecessary rerun elections.

## 1.3.5. Human Resource Training And Capacity Building

Reduce training costs by **transferring responsibilities to the private sector and universities.**

Proposed Reforms**:**

* **Introduce University Courses for Election Officers:** Develop final-year university courses to prepare graduates as **INEC polling unit officers and collation officers.** Ensure certification from INEC upon completion to create a **ready pool of trained professionals**.
* **Involve the Private Sector in Certification Programs:** Establish **certification programs** where citizens and political parties pay to train as INEC agents and polling unit officers. Allow third-party institutions to offer **standardised election training**, reducing INEC’s direct training costs.
* **Cost-Effective Training Models:** Shift the **cost burden of training from INEC to citizens and the private sector** through **subsidised and competitive certification models**. Establish an **online learning platform** for self-paced election training, reducing logistics costs.
* Leverage Ai assisted learning and chatbots to provide lowcost training.

**Expected Savings:**

* **₦8 billion saved** by reducing INEC’s direct spending on training.
* **₦5 billion saved** by leveraging private institutions for certification and capacity building.

| Category | 2023 Cost (NBillion) | Projected 2027 Cost (NBillion) | Cost Savings (N Billion) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Election Technology (BVAS, IReV) | 120 | 80 | 40 |
| Election Logistics & Transport | 70 | 42 | 28 |
| Security Deployment | 50 | 35 | 15 |
| Voter Registration & PVCs | 30 | 10 | 20 |
| Election Staff & Training | 15 | 10 | 5 |
| Ballot Printing & Distribution | 10 | 5 | 5 |
| Legal & Electoral Disputes | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| Miscellaneous & Overheads | 5 | 3 | 2 |

# 

# Chapter 2.0 The National Legal Framework On Elections: Targeted Recommendations Required For Reforming INEC

A robust and coherent legal framework is the foundation of any credible electoral system. In Nigeria, the conduct of elections is governed by a comprehensive set of laws, regulations, and guidelines designed to ensure transparency, fairness, and accountability in the electoral process. At the core of this framework are the **Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999)** and the **Electoral Act 2022**, supplemented by laws such as the **Police Act (1943)** and specific guidelines issued by key institutions like the **Police Service Commission** and the **Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)**. Together, these instruments form the backbone of Nigeria’s electoral process, outlining the roles, responsibilities, and operational protocols of various stakeholders.

Despite the existence of this elaborate framework, Nigeria’s electoral system continues to struggle with critical challenges, including inconsistent implementation, overlapping mandates, gaps in legislative provisions, and weak enforcement mechanisms. These issues not only undermine the credibility of elections but also diminish public trust in the democratic process. The failures observed in recent electoral cycles, particularly in the 2023 general elections, have highlighted the urgent need for targeted legal reforms to address these gaps and strengthen the institutional framework that governs elections.

This section focuses on **legislative clarity and targeted recommendations** to reform the national legal framework on elections, with a particular emphasis on transforming INEC into a truly independent and effective electoral body. By addressing structural weaknesses and operational deficiencies in the existing legal instruments, these recommendations aim to provide a clear pathway for strengthening the integrity and efficiency of Nigeria’s electoral process.

## 

## 2.1 The 1999 Constitution: Targeted Recommendations

The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, which serves as the foundation of the nation’s governance framework, has often been criticized for its inadequacies and limitations in addressing the country's unique socio-political and economic challenges. Despite its role in transitioning Nigeria from military to civilian rule, the Constitution has been described as a flawed document, drafted without broad-based consultation or the full consent of the Nigerian people.

For decades, various groups, including civil society organizations, legal experts, and political analysts, have called for targeted reforms to address key issues such as electoral integrity, federalism, separation of powers, and inclusivity. These challenges have contributed to systemic inefficiencies, weak institutions, and a lack of accountability in governance.

This section outlines strategic recommendations to amend or review specific provisions of the 1999 Constitution. The aim is to create a more inclusive, transparent, and effective governance framework capable of meeting the aspirations of all Nigerians. By addressing these constitutional gaps, we can lay the foundation for a Nigeria where democracy thrives, institutions function efficiently, and citizens' rights are respected and protected.

| **Section** | **Topic** | **Details** | **Recommendations** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sections 65(2)(b) and 106 of the 1999 Constitution | Qualifications for Elections | Section 65(2)(b) of the 1999 Constitution states that only political party members sponsored by their party can contest elections, effectively preventing independent candidacy. The proposed amendment to Section 65 and 106 seeks to allow individuals to contest elections as independent candidates, consistent with best democratic practices. | Sections 65(2)(b) and 106 of the 1999 Constitution should be amended to permit independent candidacy. |
| Sections 158 and 202 of the 1999 Constitution | Independence of Certain Bodies | Concerns about INEC’s lack of independence stem from perceived influence by the ruling party and the executive. | Amend the 1999 Constitution to ensure INEC's independence by:   1. Modifying the appointment terms of INEC officials 2. Granting financial independence to INEC 3. Giving INEC control over staff appointments, discipline and removal, subject to written regulations. |
| Section 154 of the 1999 Constitution | Appointment of Chairman and Members | Section 154 empowers the President to appoint the INEC Chairman and members in consultation with the National Council of State, subject to Senate confirmation. Many see this as compromising INEC’s impartiality. The report suggests appointments be handled by a neutral and non-partisan agency. | Amend Section 153 of the Constitution to:  (a) Remove INEC from the list of Federal Executive Bodies.  (b) Restructure INEC’s board to include representatives of CSOs, labour organizations, Nigerian Bar Association, women’s organizations, and the media, ensuring diverse representation. Appointments should be advertised by the NJC, with nominations shortlisted and confirmed by the Senate. |
| Section 155 of the 1999 Constitution | Tenure of office of members | The tenure and conditions of appointment for INEC members lack transparency. The absence of a defined removal procedure affects their security of tenure and perceived independence. International standards for good governance are not met under the current provisions. | Amend the 1999 Constitution to ensure that:  (a) INEC members may only be removed by the Senate upon recommendation by the NJC with a two-thirds majority, including at least 10 minority party members.  (b) Amend Section 155 to stipulate a 5-year renewable term for INEC members.  (c) The renewal process must be approved by the Senate upon NJC recommendation. |
| Sections 81 and 84 of the 1999 Constitution | Funding of INEC | Sections 81 and 84 of the 1999 Constitution provide the framework for INEC’s funding. Public demand for adequate funding has been persistent. Delays in fund disbursement have affected election schedules. | It is proposed that INEC’s funds should be first-charge on the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation to ensure financial independence.  It is proposed that Section 84 is amended to include a subsection (8) stating that INEC's election and recurrent expenditures, including salaries and allowances, shall be first-charge on the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation. |
| Sections 71 - 73 and 112 - 115 of the 1999 Constitution | Delimitation of Constituencies | Sections 71, 72, and 73 of the Constitution empower INEC to divide and periodically review senatorial districts and constituencies. Sections 112-115 allow the creation and review of State constituencies. INEC currently lacks the skills, resources, and political will to manage this sensitive task. Aggregating expertise from federal agencies is proposed as a solution. | Establish a Constituency Delimitation Commission with representation from INEC, National Population Commission, National Boundary Commission, Office of the Surveyor-General, National Bureau of Statistics, and National Identity Management Commission to handle delimitation and related complaints. |
| Section 222 of the 1999 Constitution | INEC's Power to Register Political Parties | Paragraph 15(b) of the Third Schedule and Section 222 of the Constitution empower INEC to register and monitor political parties. INEC has struggled to manage these responsibilities effectively. Proliferation of political parties and lack of robust monitoring of their operations, finances, and campaigns remain concerns. | 1. Amend Section 222 of the 1999 Constitution to require associations to:  (i) Maintain functional offices in at least two-thirds of the States;  (ii) Include 20% women in all Governing Bodies.  2. Establish a Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission to:  (i) Register political parties;  (ii) Monitor their finances and operations;  (iii) Audit party funds;  (iv) Regulate campaigns;  (v-vi) Accredit domestic and international observers;  (vii) Accredit media organizations observing elections. |
| Sections 132 and 178 of the 1999 Constitution | Dates of Presidential and Gubernatorial Elections | Sections 132(2) and 178(2) require elections for President and Governors to be held not earlier than one hundred and fifty days and not later than thirty days before the expiration of the term of office of the last holder of that office.  Current timelines make it difficult to resolve election petitions before swearing-in ceremonies. | (a) Amend Sections 132(2) and 178(2) to mandate Presidential and Gubernatorial elections six months before the expiration of current officeholders. |
| Sections 211 and 174 of the 199 Constitution | Prosecution of Electoral Offences | Section 211 of the Constitution gives the Attorney-General power to prosecute electoral offences but also allows withdrawal of charges (nolle prosequi), often leading to impunity. The lack of consequences for offenders undermines election integrity. | Amend Sections 174 and 211 to:  (a) Exclude electoral offences from the Attorney-General's power of nolle prosequi.  (b) Establish an Electoral Offences Commission tasked with enforcement, investigation, and prosecution of electoral crimes, adopting measures to eradicate malpractices, and collaborating with election observers and international partners to prevent fraud. |
| Section 14 of the Third Schedule of the 1999 Constitution | Appointment Process | Section 14 empowers the President and Senate to appoint INEC’s members and Chairman which will inevitably promote allegiance between appointees and the Federal Executive, thereby compromising INEC's independence. | The National Judicial Council (NJC) should handle the appointment of INEC’s Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and Board members by: (a) Advertising positions with clear qualifications. (b) Receiving applications/nominations from the public. (c) Shortlisting three candidates for each position. (d) Forwarding nominees to the National Council of State for selection and Senate confirmation. |

## 2.2 THE ELECTORAL ACT 2022: TARGETED RECOMMENDATIONS

The Electoral Act 2022 marked a significant milestone in Nigeria's efforts to strengthen its electoral processes and enhance the credibility of its elections. The introduction of innovations such as electronic transmission of results, stricter timelines for candidate substitution, and financial caps for campaign spending reflect a commitment to addressing long-standing gaps in the country’s electoral framework.

However, despite these advancements, challenges persist in ensuring full implementation and addressing loopholes that undermine the integrity of elections. Issues such as voter suppression, vote-buying, and weak enforcement mechanisms remain significant obstacles to achieving free, fair, and credible elections.

This section provides targeted recommendations to further improve the Electoral Act 2022, focusing on closing existing gaps, ensuring robust enforcement, and aligning the legal framework with international best practices. By strengthening these provisions, Nigeria can build a resilient electoral system that fosters trust, encourages participation, and ensures that election outcomes genuinely reflect the will of the people.

| **Section** | **Topic** | **Details** | **Recommendations** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sections 3 - 5 of the Electoral Act 2022 | Financial Autonomy for INEC | Sections 3-5 of the Electoral Act establishes the Independent National Electoral Commission Fund and requires the Commission to manage the fund. However, INEC’s budget is controlled by the Executive which compromises its independence and affects the planning and execution of elections. | Amend the Electoral Act to include a mandate which makes INEC's funding a first charge on the **Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation** to ensure financial autonomy and independence. |
| Section 10 of the Electoral Act 2022 | Voter Registration and Verification | Section 10 of the Electoral Act, 2006 requires INEC to maintain a continuously updated Voter Register and display it 60 days before elections for verification. In 2007, INEC failed to comply, resulting in disenfranchisement due to late voter registration and inadequate logistics. Electronic voter registration was introduced but was poorly implemented due to insufficient equipment. | (a) Fully computerize voter registration using biometric data to eliminate multiple registrations.  (b) Continuously update the voter register to allow Nigerians to register upon reaching voting age.  (c) Conduct public verification of the register before elections to correct errors.  (d) Provide political parties with copies of the register in a timely manner and publish a breakdown of figures for transparency. |
| Section 22 of the Electorial Act 2022 | Electoral Malpractice | Buying, selling, and stealing voter cards undermines elections. Section 22 of the Electoral Act 2022 provides penalties for these offences but does not address the broader consequences of such actions on the democratic process. | Amend Section 22 to extend penalties for voter card offences to include **legal disability** (disqualification from participating in elections) for 10 years in addition to other sentences. |
| Section 40 of the Electoral Act 2022 | Polling Station Design and Accessibility | Section 40 of the Electoral Act, 2022 mandates INEC to establish polling units but does not specify details such as voter capacity, layout, or accessibility for disabled persons. This lack of detail compromises efficiency and inclusivity. | (a) Amend Section 40 to specify: - A maximum of 500 voters per polling units. - Layouts with separate entry and exit doors. - Accessibility for disabled voters.  (b) Locate polling units in institutional buildings like schools or community centers; where unavailable, set up temporary stations at permanent locations. |
| Section 75 of the Electoral Act 2022 | Registration and Monitoring of Political Parties | Section 75 of the Electoral Act 2022 empowers INEC to register and monitor political parties, including their finances and campaigns. Many political parties lack electoral value and merely exist legally. INEC lacks the capacity and will to fully execute its prescribed responsibilities. | (a) Remove INEC’s power to register and monitor political parties. Establish a **Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission** to handle these responsibilities.  (b) Add the following conditions for party registration:  i. Maintain functional offices in at least two-thirds of the States.  ii. Ensure 20% women representation in governing bodies. |
| Sections 95, 96 and 120 of the Electoral Act 2022 | Media Access for Campaigns | Inequitable access to public media during elections has been an issue. There is a need for regulations to ensure proportional access to public media and neutrality in campaign reporting. Serious breaches of regulations require appropriate sanctions. | (a) Develop regulations to ensure proportional access to media for all political parties and candidates.  (b) Clearly signpost paid political advertisements and campaign coverage.  (c) Enforce sanctions under Sections 95, 96 and 120 of the Electoral Act 2022 through the Electoral Offences Commission. |
| Sections 98 -113 of the Electoral Act 2022 | Elections to Area Councils | Part VI of the Electoral Act 2022 governs elections for Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Councilors. Contestants must be Nigerian citizens, registered voters, aged 25+ (Councillors) or 30+ (Chairman/Vice Chairman), hold a School Certificate or equivalent, and be members of a political party sponsored by that party. | Amend the Act to allow independent candidates to contest elections, under these conditions:  (a) Constituency-based nominations with 10 signatures from registered voters in each ward.  (b) Payment of financial deposit, refundable if the candidate scores at least 10% of valid votes.  (c) Fulfillment of other eligibility conditions stipulated in the Constitution, Electoral Act, or other laws. |
| Section 150 of the Electoral Act 2022 | Procedure for Local Government Elections | The procedure for Local Government elections is similar to Area Councils. States have their individual laws for conducting these elections, but under the doctrine of covering the field, the Electoral Act applies to all Local Government elections. | Apply the provisions of the Electoral Act 2022 to all Local Government and Area Council elections to ensure uniformity across states. |
| Sections 114 – 129 of the Electoral Act 2022 | Electoral Offences | Inadequate punishment and lack of prosecution of electoral offences undermine electoral integrity. Serious offences such as voter registration fraud and other electoral malpractices are not sufficiently penalized to deter offenders. | (a) Offences related to voter registration by candidates should carry a **10-year disqualification** from contesting elections upon conviction.  (b) Strengthen penalties for electoral offences to ensure compliance and deterrence. |
| Section 121 of the Electoral Act 2022 | Bribery and Conspiracy | Section 121 of the Electoral Act 2022 prescribes a fine of N500,000, 12 months imprisonment, or both for bribery and conspiracy aimed at influencing election outcomes. These penalties are deemed inadequate given the seriousness of the offence. | Amend section 121 of the Electoral Act 2022 to include a disqualification period of 10 years for candidates convicted under Section 121, in addition to other penalties prescribed. |
| Section 136 of the Electoral Act 2022 | Nullified Elections and Office Retention | Section 136 allows nullified election winners to remain in office during appeals, which delays tribunal decisions and incentivizes frivolous appeals. This practice has led to widespread public condemnation and undermines electoral justice. | (a) Amend Section 136 of the Electoral Act 2022 to provide that no elected person should assume office until all cases against them are resolved by the tribunal or court. |

## 2.3 POLICE ACT 2020: TARGETED RECOMMENDATIONS

The enactment of the Police Act 2020 represented a pivotal step in the reform of Nigeria's law enforcement framework, replacing the colonial-era Police Act of 1943. The updated legislation seeks to modernize police operations, promote accountability, and foster respect for human rights within the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). Key provisions include the establishment of community policing initiatives, clear guidelines for police conduct, and mechanisms for oversight and accountability.

Despite these positive strides, the implementation of the Act has faced significant challenges. Issues such as police brutality, insufficient training, lack of adequate funding, and poor oversight mechanisms have continued to undermine public trust in the police force. Additionally, gaps in the Act regarding the operational independence of the police, recruitment practices, and systemic corruption remain areas of concern.

This section provides targeted recommendations to enhance the Police Act 2020. These include strengthening accountability structures, improving funding and resource allocation, and ensuring full implementation of community policing principles. By addressing these gaps, the Police Act can serve as a cornerstone for building a professional, transparent, and citizen-focused police force capable of safeguarding democracy and upholding the rule of law.

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| **Topic** | **Details** | **Recommendations** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Police Role During Elections | The Police Act lacks comprehensive updates and provides wide discretionary powers to the police, risking abuse. Guidelines developed by the Police Service Commission outline key electoral roles for police officers, including ensuring voter and candidate safety, maintaining law and order, safeguarding electoral materials, and creating a fair environment for campaigns and voting. | (a) Incorporate the six functions of police officers on election duties into the Police Act.  (b) The **Inspector-General of Police** should be appointed by the President based on recommendations from the Police Service Commission and the National Police Council, with Senate confirmation. His/her removal should require a two-thirds Senate vote following an investigation.  (c) Introduce electoral roles into the police training curriculum based on these guidelines. |
| Ensuring Police Impartiality | Concerns about executive interference in police operations during elections undermine police impartiality. The Inspector-General’s lack of security of tenure is a key issue. Additionally, stakeholders cite inadequate logistics and failure to arrest and prosecute electoral offenders as major flaws in police electoral performance. | (a) Amend the Police Act to ensure independent operational control of the police.  (b) Provide adequate logistics to support police operations during elections.  (c) Mandate police training on their role in elections, using the Police Service Commission’s guidelines as a framework. |

# Chapter 3.0 Critical Stakeholders: Targeted Recommendations

The success of governance and institutional reforms, particularly in the context of electoral integrity, policing, and constitutional amendments, hinges on the active participation and cooperation of critical stakeholders. These stakeholders encompass a diverse range of actors, including government institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector, the international community, and, most importantly, Nigerian citizens.

Each stakeholder group plays a unique and indispensable role in fostering accountability, transparency, and inclusivity in Nigeria's democratic processes. However, the lack of coordination, misaligned priorities, and, in some cases, resistance to change have often hampered progress. It is essential to identify tailored strategies that engage these stakeholders effectively, align their interests with national goals, and foster collaboration for sustainable reform.

This section outlines targeted recommendations for engaging and empowering critical stakeholders, ensuring their roles are optimized for maximum impact. By leveraging the strengths and resources of these actors, Nigeria can create a cohesive and resilient framework for governance and institutional accountability, laying the foundation for a more equitable and prosperous future.

## 3.1 National Assembly : Recommendations

The National Assembly, Nigeria's main law-making body, plays a crucial role in shaping governance, promoting democratic values, and ensuring the rule of law is upheld. It consists of two chambers: the Senate and the House of Representatives. Its responsibilities include drafting legislation, overseeing the executive branch, and representing the interests of citizens.

Despite its significance, the National Assembly often faces criticism for inefficiencies, lack of transparency, and limited public engagement. Challenges such as weak oversight of the executive, delays in passing important reforms, and partisan politics have hindered its ability to effectively fulfill its mandate.

This section presents specific recommendations to improve the performance of the National Assembly, focusing on enhancing accountability, streamlining legislative procedures, and building public trust. Addressing these issues would enable the Assembly to better function as a cornerstone of Nigeria's democracy and promote meaningful reform.

| **Topic** | **Details** | **Call to Action** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Legislative Powers and Responsibilities | The National Assembly comprises two chambers: the Senate (109 members) and the House of Representatives (360 members). Members serve a four-year term. The National Assembly is empowered by Section 58 of the 1999 Constitution to make laws for the peace, order, and good governance of Nigeria. Its powers include oversight of electoral processes and INEC, as well as enacting laws to ensure free and fair elections. | (a) Undertake a **comprehensive review** of the 1999 Constitution, Electoral Act 2022, and other laws to implement reforms ensuring free and fair elections.  (b) Address gaps in laws regarding the appointment, qualifications, and autonomy of INEC Chairman, members, and Resident Electoral Commissioners. |
| Gaps in Legal Framework | Despite its critical role, the National Assembly has not sufficiently addressed gaps in the legal framework for credible elections. Key issues include:  - The involvement of the President in appointing the INEC Chairman and members, which compromises INEC's autonomy.  - Funding for INEC coming from the Executive, reducing its financial independence.  - Inadequate clarity on electoral offences and their enforcement. | (a) Amend the 1999 Constitution to ensure INEC's funding is a **first charge on the Consolidated Revenue Fund** for financial autonomy.  (b) Create robust laws addressing electoral offences, their enforcement, and punishments.  (c) Legislate reforms in the appointment process of INEC members to ensure neutrality and independence. |
| Key Areas of Legislative Reform | The National Assembly should focus on:  - Reforming the **appointment process** for INEC officials and Resident Electoral Commissioners to remove Executive influence.  - Ensuring **financial independence** for INEC through direct appropriation of funds.  - Strengthening laws governing electoral processes, dispute resolution, and enforcement of penalties for electoral offences. | (a) Amend the Constitution to allow independent funding of INEC, ensuring that its budget is not subject to Executive interference.  (b) Codify robust mechanisms for appointing INEC members to guarantee autonomy and impartiality.  (c) Strengthen laws on electoral offences and ensure their enforcement to deter malpractice and corruption during elections. |

## 3.2 The Executive: Recommendations

The Executive arm of government plays a pivotal role in implementing policies, ensuring national security, and driving economic and social development. Comprising the President, Vice President, Ministers, and other key appointees, the Executive is responsible for setting the nation's agenda and coordinating efforts across various sectors to achieve sustainable growth and governance outcomes.

However, the Executive in Nigeria has often faced criticism for issues such as policy inconsistency, lack of transparency, excessive centralization of power, and weak accountability mechanisms. These challenges have contributed to inefficiencies in service delivery, corruption, and a disconnect between government priorities and the needs of the people.

This section provides targeted recommendations to strengthen the Executive's capacity to deliver on its mandate. Emphasis is placed on fostering transparency, enhancing accountability, decentralizing decision-making, and ensuring that the Executive operates in alignment with the principles of good governance and the public interest. By addressing these systemic issues, the Executive can more effectively drive the reforms needed to improve governance and uplift the lives of all Nigerians.

| **Topic** | **Details** | **Recommendations** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Overbearing Executive Role in Elections | The Executive exerts significant control over the appointment of INEC Chairman and Commissioners, INEC's funding, and state resources, including state media, public funds, and government infrastructure. This control gives incumbent political parties an unfair advantage over opposition parties. The Executive also controls security agencies, which are critical to the election process. | (a) Amend the **1999 Constitution** to guarantee INEC's independence. (b) Prohibit agencies under the Executive (e.g., security bodies, public service) from being used to undermine free and fair elections. (c) Strengthen and enforce provisions of the Electoral Act 2006 that address abuse of incumbency, including misuse of official powers and resources during elections. |
| Strengthening Electoral Integrity | Abuse of incumbency and executive powers has been a persistent issue in Nigerian elections. Examples include misuse of state-owned media, vehicles, civil servants, public funds, and aid programs. These practices distort the fairness of elections, giving undue advantage to incumbents. | Strengthen enforcement of the Electoral Act's provisions prohibiting abuse of incumbency and misuse of official resources to ensure a level playing field for all political parties during elections. |

## 3.3 The Judiciary : Recommendations

The Judiciary is the cornerstone of justice and the rule of law in Nigeria, serving as the arbiter of disputes and the guardian of constitutional order. Its independence, integrity, and efficiency are crucial for ensuring that laws are applied fairly, rights are protected, and governance remains accountable.

Despite its constitutional mandate, the Nigerian Judiciary has faced persistent challenges, including allegations of corruption, delays in the judicial process, inadequate funding, and limited access to justice for vulnerable populations. These issues have eroded public confidence in the Judiciary and undermined its ability to function as an impartial and effective institution.

This section offers targeted recommendations aimed at strengthening the Judiciary to fulfill its vital role in Nigeria’s democratic framework. Key areas of focus include enhancing judicial independence, streamlining case management processes, increasing access to justice, and implementing robust accountability measures. By addressing these challenges, the Judiciary can restore trust, uphold justice, and contribute to a more equitable and transparent governance system.

| **Topic** | **Details** | **Call to Action** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Judicial Powers | Section 6 of the 1999 Constitution vests judicial powers in the courts. The judiciary ensures compliance with the Constitution and laws at the federal and state levels, playing a crucial role in resolving electoral disputes and ensuring the credibility of elections. | The judiciary must ensure the **prompt and just resolution** of electoral disputes by increasing efficiency and effectiveness in election petition adjudication. |
| Challenges in Electoral Dispute Resolution | - Lengthy periods for determining election petitions reduce public trust.  - Candidates are sworn in despite pending petitions, creating unhealthy practices.  - Overreliance on technicalities often results in judgments that undermine justice.  - Petitioners bear the burden of proof, which is considered unfair given INEC’s role as the election umpire.  - INEC often obstructs petitioners’ access to critical evidence. | (a) Increase the number of election petition tribunals to handle rising petition numbers.  (b) Consolidate petitions for efficient resolution.  (c) Amend the **Electoral Act 2022** to shift the burden of proof from petitioners to INEC, requiring INEC to prove elections were free and fair.  (d) Simplify evidence production procedures to accelerate hearings. |
| Common Issues Raised in Petitions | Grounds for petitions include:  - Candidate disqualification.  - Malpractices (rigging, violence, falsification, underage/multiple voting).  - INEC’s non-compliance with the Electoral Act.  - Indictment of successful candidates by judicial or administrative panels.  - Exclusion of lawful votes.  - Corrupt practices and unlawful collusion.  - Election date changes without adequate public notice. | * Ensure tribunals address issues transparently and expeditiously by implementing specific procedural rules and increasing transparency in the hearing and judgment processes. * Focus on eliminating reliance on technicalities in judgments to ensure decisions are based on substantive merit, restoring public confidence in the electoral dispute resolution process. |
| Analysis of Election Petition Judgments | A total of **1,475 petitions** were filed during the 2007 elections. From an analysis of 426 judgments:  - 96 petitions succeeded.  - 222 petitions failed for lack of merit.  - 108 petitions were dismissed on technicalities. |  |
| Complaints and Appeals Process | - INEC lacks clear and accessible procedures for lodging complaints.  - There is inadequate transparency in appeals, including disputes over the voters’ register, candidate nomination, and de-certification of candidates.  - INEC’s involvement in appeals has been criticized as compromising its neutrality. | (a) Amend the **Electoral Act 2022** to clearly define where and how complaints should be lodged and resolved.  (b) Establish time limits for lodging and addressing complaints.  (c) Maintain a **centralized record** of complaints and appeals for public accountability.  (d) Prohibit INEC from appealing election petitions to maintain its neutrality as an umpire. |
| INEC’s Role in Election Petitions | INEC’s conduct is often the subject of disputes, yet it participates in election petition appeals, raising concerns about its neutrality. It is often seen as siding with specific parties or candidates. | INEC should not have the right to appeal election petition rulings. As an umpire, it must maintain neutrality and avoid appearing to support any political party or candidate. |
| Judicial Accountability | Enhance the Judicial Council's capacity to monitor judges; introduce transparent appointment and discipline processes; conduct performance audits. | Reform the Judicial Council to ensure transparency, and implement a robust monitoring and ethical audit system. |
| Curbing Judicial Corruption | Judges have been implicated in bribery and backroom deals, leading to conflicting judgments and loss of public trust in the judiciary. | Establish a zero-tolerance policy for corruption, with stricter enforcement of existing anti-corruption laws and ethical codes. |
| Transparent Case Allocation | Implement technology-driven random case assignment systems to prevent manipulation of which judges hear high-stakes election-related cases. | Deploy automated case allocation software to eliminate human interference in case assignments. |
| Public Accountability Mechanisms | Create a system where judges must publicly disclose their assets and major financial transactions annually to deter corrupt practices. | Mandate annual public asset declarations by judges, audited by an independent anti-corruption body. |
| Conflict of Interest Checks | Conduct independent reviews of judges’ personal and professional relationships to detect and prevent conflicts of interest in cases. | Set up a dedicated judicial ethics commission to review potential conflicts of interest before major cases. |
| Strengthening Oversight Bodies | Empower judicial oversight bodies with the authority and resources to investigate and sanction judges involved in unethical behavior. | Expand the authority and resources of judicial oversight bodies, and ensure transparency in disciplinary actions taken. |

## 3.4 Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC): Recommendations

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is pivotal to the functioning of Nigeria's democracy, tasked with organizing, conducting, and ensuring the integrity of elections. As the primary institution responsible for safeguarding electoral processes, INEC’s effectiveness directly impacts the credibility of elections and the emergence of accountable leadership.

Despite notable progress, INEC continues to grapple with significant challenges, including voter disenfranchisement, logistical inefficiencies, cybersecurity risks, and weak enforcement of electoral laws. These issues undermine public trust in electoral outcomes and hinder citizen participation in the democratic process.

This section provides targeted recommendations to strengthen INEC’s capacity to deliver free, fair, and credible elections. Priorities include enhancing operational efficiency, leveraging technology for transparency, enforcing electoral laws rigorously, and fostering greater independence from external influences. By addressing these gaps, INEC can rebuild trust in Nigeria’s electoral system and serve as a catalyst for democratic consolidation and governance reform.

| **Topic** | **Details** | **Recommendations** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Issues with INEC Operations | - Public perception of INEC as being subject to Executive influence.  - Failure to conduct credible elections due to poor logistics, biased voter registration, and manipulation by the ruling party.  - Presidential dominance in appointing INEC members and RECs.  - INEC’s involvement in intra-party disputes and unnecessary litigations. | Amend the **1999 Constitution** to make INEC truly **independent, impartial, and professional**. Implement structural and procedural changes to strengthen its autonomy and public trust. |
| Constitutional Amendments for Independence | - Amend Section 153 of the 1999 Constitution to remove INEC from the list of federal executive bodies.  - Delete references to INEC in Sections 153-158 to reflect its new independent structure. | Implement structural and legal changes to reinforce INEC’s independence, impartiality, and professionalism. |
| **Constitutionally Mandated Responsibilities** | Paragraph 15, Third Schedule of the 1999 Constitution outlines INEC’s functions, including: - Conducting elections for federal and state offices (President, Vice-President, Governors, Deputy Governors, Senate, House of Representatives, and State Assemblies). - Registering voters and political parties. - Monitoring political parties (finances, campaigns, and operations). - Reviewing electoral constituencies. | Assign some of INEC’s functions to specialized agencies, such as a   1. **Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission** and an 2. **Electoral Offences Commission**, to reduce INEC’s workload and enhance its focus on managing elections. 3. **Constituency Delimitation Commission**  handle tasks like reviewing and adjusting electoral boundaries periodically. |
| **Electoral Offences Commission** | The **Electoral Offences Commission** should:  - Investigate and prosecute electoral offences (fraud, political violence, thuggery).  - Prevent and eradicate electoral malpractices.  - Collaborate with international agencies to exchange technical knowledge and strategies.  - Identify and prosecute individuals, electoral officers, and organizations involved in electoral offences. | Establish the Commission to ensure accountability and justice for electoral malpractices. Its composition should include:  - Chairman and Deputy Chairman (non-partisan).  - Representatives from each geo-political zone, Attorney-General, and Inspector-General of Police.  - Members appointed by the President with Senate confirmation for a renewable five-year term. |
| **Constituency Delimitation Commission** | A **Constituency Delimitation Commission** should include representatives from INEC, National Population Commission, National Boundary Commission, National Bureau of Statistics, and others to handle tasks like reviewing and adjusting electoral boundaries periodically. | Establish the Commission to ensure transparent and data-driven constituency delimitation, reducing INEC’s workload in this area. |
| **Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission** | The **Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission** should:  - Register and monitor political parties.  - Audit party finances and publish reports. - Monitor campaigns and accredit election observers.  - Provide rules for national and international media covering elections. | Establish the Commission as an independent agency to oversee party registration, monitoring, and campaign regulations, relieving INEC of these responsibilities. |
| Membership Structure of INEC | - Chairman (unquestionable integrity).  - Deputy Chairman (different gender from Chairman).  - Six members (one from each geo-political zone, including two women). - One nominee each from Civil Society Organizations, Labour Organizations, Nigerian Bar Association, Women’s Organizations, and the Media.  - Members must be non-partisan, experienced professionals aged 40-50 years. | (a) Advertise all positions and screen candidates through the **National Judicial Council (NJC)**.  (b) Final nominations should be approved by the **Senate** after recommendations from the **National Council of State**. |
| Centre for Democratic Studies | Establish a **Centre for Democratic Studies** to provide civic and political education to legislators, political office holders, security agencies, politicians, political parties, and the general public. | Launch the Centre to promote democratic principles, voter education, and political awareness across all levels of governance and society. |
| Factors Affecting Performance | - Broad and demanding functions leading to inefficiency.  - Corruption among INEC officials.  - Inadequate funding and delays in fund release. - Poor infrastructure (electricity, transport, communication).  - Lack of transparency in procurement processes. - Hostility towards civil society organizations and lack of public accountability. | a) Strengthen INEC's independence and ensure timely release of funds.  (b) Address corruption and improve transparency in operations, particularly procurement and resource allocation.  (c) Collaborate with civil society and foreign organizations for improved capacity building and accountability. |
| Secure Ballot Design and Handling | Concerns exist over the integrity and security of ballot papers and boxes during elections. Instances of ballot tampering, theft, and poor logistics have been observed. | - Ballot papers should have **watertight security features** and transparent tracking systems.  - Ballot boxes should be placed in full view of the Presiding Officer but away from officials and party agents.  - Enhance the security of ballot boxes using seals and locks.  - Ensure secure storage and distribution of ballot papers and boxes, under protection of security agencies and electoral officials. |
| Transparency and Accuracy in Results | Poor transparency and delayed result collation have eroded public confidence. Issues include lack of contingency planning, insufficient information dissemination, and failure to publicly display detailed results. | - Develop **contingency plans** for alternative power supply at collation centres.  - Swiftly and publicly display detailed election results, including polling station-level data.  - Continue to ensure election results at polling stations and provide signed copies to accredited party agents, Police, and SSS  - Publish **presidential election results down to the lowest level** to ensure accuracy and compliance with constitutional requirements. |
| Building Confidence and Collaboration | Stakeholders in the electoral process, including political parties, civil society, and the public, often have doubts about INEC’s impartiality. Increased interactions and consultations between INEC and stakeholders can help build trust, reduce suspicion, and enhance collaboration in fulfilling complementary roles in elections. | INEC should continue to engage in **regular consultations** with stakeholders, including political parties, civil society, and the media, to promote transparency, build confidence, and ensure effective collaboration. |
| Training and Deployment of INEC Staff | Issues with inadequate training and deployment of electoral officers have been observed in past elections. Electoral staff often fail to follow established guidelines, contributing to irregularities and inefficiencies. | - Ensure election officials closely follow the **manual for election officials** at polling stations.  - Deploy the **stipulated number of INEC staff** to each polling station.  - Use the **INEC Electoral Institute** to maintain a pool of well-trained electoral trainers for continuous training of staff.  - Recruit and train election officials, including ad-hoc staff, in good time for professional handling of elections. |
| Accountability and Training of Temporary Staff | The use of ad-hoc staff has raised concerns about their accountability and partisanship. Instances of late arrival of election materials at polling stations and non-compliance with guidelines have been common. | - Continue to use **National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members** and public servants as ad-hoc staff.  - Publish the **list of ad-hoc staff** before elections to allow public objections to individuals with questionable character or partisan interests.   * Implement public objections to adhoc staff with questionable character or partisan interest.   - Monitor ad-hoc staff to ensure compliance with election guidelines.  - Ensure election materials arrive at polling stations on time to avoid delays and disruptions. |
| Accreditation and Training | Party agents often lack proper identification or understanding of their roles, leading to inefficiencies or conflicts during the electoral process. | - Provide **clear official identification** for party agents.  - Train agents on their **roles and responsibilities**.  - Ensure party agents are accredited **at least 14 days before elections** and authenticated before election day begins. |
| Structure of State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs) | Paragraph 3, Third Schedule (Part II) of the 1999 Constitution mandates the establishment of SIECs to conduct elections for Chairmen and Councilors into Local Government Councils. SIECs are composed of:  (a) A Chairman  (b) 5–7 other members appointed by the **State Governor** and confirmed by the **State House of Assembly**. | Reorganize SIECs to function as part of the INEC structure for greater efficiency and autonomy. This will require **constitutional amendments** and integration into INEC’s framework to address current issues of partisanship and inefficiency. |
| Issues with SIECs' Performance | SIECs are widely perceived as tools of State Governors and ruling parties. Local government elections conducted by SIECs in 2004 and 2008 overwhelmingly favored ruling parties, with candidates often winning all seats.  Election results managed by SIECs often do not align with voting patterns in federal elections, raising credibility concerns. Local governments lack autonomy and are seen as extensions of State Governors’ authority. |
| Importance of Local Government Tier | Local governments are the closest level of government to citizens and are critical for democratic governance. They provide direct representation, political participation, and address citizens' basic needs. However, the current lack of autonomy and democratic governance at this level undermines its purpose and erodes public trust in local government institutions. | Ensure the local government tier is strengthened to function as an independent and democratic institution that addresses the needs of citizens. Reforming SIECs is a necessary step toward achieving this goal. |
| Integration of SIECs into INEC | To address inefficiencies and ensure autonomy, the structure of SIECs should be reorganized and integrated into INEC. This would allow for better coordination of activities at the state level and alignment of processes for all elections, reducing the influence of State Governors and ruling parties. | - Amend the **1999 Constitution** to integrate SIECs into INEC.  - Introduce statutory provisions to coordinate activities between state-level INEC offices and SIECs for managing all elections, ensuring fairness, independence, and credibility at the local government level. |

## 3.5 Security Agencies: Recommendations

Security agencies play a critical role in maintaining law and order, ensuring national security, and safeguarding democratic processes, including elections. Their effectiveness and impartiality are essential for upholding the rule of law, protecting citizens, and fostering an environment conducive to sustainable development and good governance.

In Nigeria, security agencies have faced widespread criticism for issues such as human rights abuses, politicization, inadequate training, poor funding, and a lack of accountability. These challenges have not only undermined public trust but also compromised their ability to fulfill their mandates effectively, particularly during elections.

This section offers targeted recommendations to reform security agencies to enhance their professionalism, neutrality, and operational efficiency. Emphasis is placed on strengthening oversight mechanisms, improving training and resources, addressing systemic corruption, and fostering collaboration with other institutions. By addressing these challenges, security agencies can contribute to a safer and more secure Nigeria, where citizens’ rights are protected, and democratic processes are respected.

| **Topic** | **Details** | **Recommendations** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Security Agencies' Role in Elections | Security agencies, including the police, armed forces, and other law enforcement bodies, play a critical role in ensuring free and fair elections in Nigeria. Their responsibilities include safeguarding election officials, materials, and voters, maintaining public order, and preventing violence at various stages of the electoral process. | - Clearly define the roles of each security agency in elections.  - Effectively coordinate the work of security agencies to avoid overlap or inefficiencies. |
| Duties of the Police | The NPF is the primary civil security force responsible for maintaining safety and order during elections. Key responsibilities include:  - Safeguarding election personnel, materials, and venues.  - Ensuring peaceful conditions for campaigns and voting.  - Protecting sensitive election materials during transport and at polling stations.  - Enforcing provisions in the **Electoral Act 2022** (e.g., preventing bribery, disorderly conduct, and voter intimidation). | - Include training on democracy, elections, and constitutional provisions in the **police curriculum** at all levels.  - Strengthen the police force with better communication, transport, and weaponry for election duties.  - Guarantee the **independence of the police force** to reduce political interference and intimidation. |
| Allegations and Inefficiencies | The police have faced criticism for:  - Alleged partiality in favor of ruling parties.  - Functional inefficiencies (e.g., inadequate personnel, poor logistics, and lack of training).  - Unprofessional conduct (e.g., harassment, brutality, collusion with politicians to manipulate results, and ballot tampering).  - Discrimination in granting rally permits to opposition parties. | - Organize **pre-election training and workshops** for police officers.  - Issue a **Code of Conduct** for officers on election duty, monitored by civil society and human rights organizations.  - Enforce sanctions for officers violating the Code of Conduct. |
| Preventing Violence During Elections | Elections in Nigeria have been marred by violence at various stages, including voter registration, party primaries, campaigns, polling, and result declaration. Such violence discourages voter participation and undermines the credibility of elections. | - Increase the size of the **Nigeria Police Force** (currently 371,000 officers) to provide sufficient personnel for the 120,000+ polling stations nationwide.  - Ensure the police maintain a **neutral stance** and refrain from intimidating opposition parties or voters.  - Prohibit police from carrying weapons at polling stations and limit their role to maintaining order. |
| Adequate Provisions for Police | Lack of transportation, communication tools, and welfare for deployed officers has hindered their effectiveness during elections. | - Provide adequate funding for police operations during elections.  - Ensure safety, transportation, and feeding of security personnel to reduce susceptibility to bribery and corruption.  - Make **contact numbers of supervising police officers** publicly available to enable swift response to security issues during elections. |
| Enhancing Security Collaboration | Coordination between security agencies, INEC, and other stakeholders is essential for public safety and order during the electoral process. | - Establish a joint strategy by the **Inspector-General of Police and INEC** for election security.  - Inform the public of security arrangements to build confidence in the process.  - Provide adequate protection for election officials, materials, and voters to prevent electoral fraud and violence. |
| Professionalism and Accountability | The lack of professionalism and accountability among security personnel has eroded public trust in their role during elections. | - Develop and enforce a **Code of Conduct** for security agencies during elections.  - Monitor compliance with the Code through a team comprising members of the **Police Service Commission** and civil society organizations (e.g., Nigerian Bar Association, human rights NGOs). |
| Avoiding Interference in Elections | Security agencies, particularly the police, have been accused of tampering with election results and materials. Their role in polling units and collation centers should be restricted to maintaining law and order. | - Prohibit security personnel from interfering with election results or materials.  - Ensure a 20-meter radius around polling units and collation centers is free of armed security personnel, politicians' personal security, or any unauthorized individuals. |
| Role of Other Security Agencies | Various security agencies have specific functions that can assist in ensuring free and fair elections. These agencies play roles in intelligence gathering, monitoring illegal activities, and preventing electoral malpractices such as ballot manipulation, voter fraud, and violence. | - Enact a law strengthening oversight of security agencies by the **National Assembly**.  - Ensure that civic education is intensified to promote democratic values among security personnel. |
| Intelligence Gathering | The State Security Service (SSS) gathers intelligence to prevent violations of electoral laws, including manipulation based on ethnicity and religion, arming of thugs, corruption, and imposition of candidates on the electorate. | Ensure timely and appropriate use of intelligence gathered by the SSS to prevent electoral violations and maintain the integrity of the electoral process. |
| Monitoring and Prevention | The Nigeria Customs Service monitors and prevents the importation of unauthorized items such as fake ballot boxes, ballot papers, arms, and ammunition that could subvert elections. | Strengthen collaboration with other security agencies to detect and intercept contraband electoral materials or weapons at the borders. |
| Preventing Illegal Immigration | The Nigerian Immigration Service prevents the illegal entry of non-Nigerians from neighboring countries who may attempt to register or vote fraudulently in Nigerian elections. | Deploy additional personnel to border regions during voter registration and elections to prevent illegal entry and voter fraud. |
| Financial Oversight | These agencies monitor the financial transactions of individuals in strategic political, public, and economic positions. They ensure that violations of financial laws related to elections, including corruption and illegal campaign financing, are prosecuted according to the rule of law. | Intensify monitoring of political campaign funding to detect illegal transactions. - Prosecute violators of financial regulations swiftly to deter future malpractice. |
| Supporting Electoral Security | The FRSC complements the police by checking vehicles for illegal possession or transportation of electoral materials, arms, and ammunition during elections. | Enhance the FRSC’s capacity to identify and prevent unauthorized transportation of electoral materials and weapons. |
| Strengthening Security Agencies | Security agencies must undergo reforms to improve their professionalism, impartiality, and coordination during elections. Measures include civic education, personnel screening, and avoiding interference in the balloting process. | - Armed orderlies should not be in uniform at polling areas.  - Personnel mobilized for elections should be rigorously screened for values, discipline, competence, and integrity.  - Dignitaries should be restrained from moving with armed security details on election day. |
| Inter-agency Collaboration | Effective coordination among various security agencies is essential to ensure smooth election operations and discourage impunity. | - Promote inter-agency cooperation to provide proactive, impartial, and effective policing.  - Deploy adequately equipped and briefed personnel in a timely manner to curb electoral violence. |
| Maintaining Neutrality | Security agencies should not interfere in the voting process but must ensure that voters feel safe and free to exercise their rights. Security agencies must not be under INEC's direction during elections to maintain independence and impartiality | - Security agencies should work cooperatively with other stakeholders to enforce laws without bias.  - Ensure security personnel do not interfere with the balloting process but focus on maintaining order and voter safety.  - Prohibit INEC from directly managing security agencies during elections to prevent perceptions of bias. |

## 3.6 Armed Forces in Elections: Targeted Recommendations

The role of the Armed Forces in elections is a sensitive yet critical aspect of maintaining security and ensuring the credibility of democratic processes in Nigeria. While the primary mandate of the military is to safeguard national sovereignty and provide security against external threats, their involvement in elections has often been necessitated by challenges such as electoral violence and insecurity.

However, concerns about the impartiality, misuse, and overreach of the Armed Forces during elections have raised questions about their appropriate role in a democratic context. Instances of voter intimidation, undue interference, and alignment with political actors have, in some cases, eroded public confidence in the electoral process.

This section presents targeted recommendations to clearly define the role of the Armed Forces in elections, ensure their neutrality, and promote adherence to democratic principles. Key priorities include establishing robust frameworks for military deployment during elections, enhancing oversight mechanisms, and promoting coordination with other security agencies. By addressing these concerns, the Armed Forces can effectively contribute to securing elections without undermining democratic integrity.

| **Topic** | **Details** | **Recommendations** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Role of the Armed Forces | The armed forces were mobilized during the 1999, 2003, and 2007 elections to assist the police in providing security. They primarily aided in transporting election materials and officials to difficult-to-reach areas. However, their involvement should not intimidate voters or suggest bias toward the ruling party. Statements made by military leaders in the past have raised public concerns about intimidation and bias. | - The **armed forces** should assist with logistics such as transporting officials and materials to difficult areas.  - The leadership of the armed forces should avoid statements that may intimidate opposition parties or voters. |
| Support for Electoral Processes | The armed forces can provide legitimate assistance during elections by transporting voter registration materials, election officials, and supplies to areas with challenging topography or limited access. The Navy and Air Force can also contribute to logistical support and surveillance. | - The **Navy** should assist in transporting electoral materials and officials in difficult or dangerous areas.  - The **Air Force** may provide aerial surveillance to help detect areas of disorder during elections. |
| Neutrality and Professionalism | The military has been perceived as intimidating voters and endorsing ruling parties due to public statements and acts like show-of-force convoys. Such actions are seen as psychological warfare and undermine confidence in the electoral process. | - Armed forces personnel should not be deployed to polling stations or centers.  - The military should refrain from "show of force" patrols in convoys of armored vehicles or large troop movements near election days to avoid intimidating voters. |
| Restrictions on Military Engagement | Members of the armed forces should exercise their rights to vote but must not be involved in the administration or conduct of elections. Their presence at polling stations can create a perception of bias or intimidation. | - Armed forces personnel should not participate in the conduct of elections.  - The armed forces' role should be limited to logistical support and assisting the police or electoral body as required. |
| Ensuring Neutrality | As Commander-in-Chief, the President plays a crucial role in ensuring the neutrality of the armed forces during elections. The perception of bias or favoritism in deploying the military for election purposes undermines the credibility of the process. | - The President should take concrete measures to ensure the **neutrality of the armed forces** during elections and promote public confidence in the process. |

## 3.7 Media: Targeted Recommendations

The media is a cornerstone of democracy, serving as a conduit for information, a platform for public discourse, and a watchdog against abuse of power. In Nigeria, the media plays a vital role in shaping public opinion, exposing electoral malpractice, and holding institutions accountable during the electoral process and beyond.

Despite its potential, the Nigerian media landscape faces challenges such as bias, sensationalism, insufficient fact-checking, and undue influence from political and financial interests. These issues hinder the media's ability to function as an impartial and reliable source of information, thereby affecting public trust and informed citizen participation in governance.

This section provides targeted recommendations to enhance the media's role in promoting transparency, accountability, and democratic engagement. Priorities include fostering media independence, improving journalistic standards, combating misinformation, and leveraging technology to expand reach and inclusivity. By addressing these challenges, the media can strengthen its role as a critical stakeholder in Nigeria’s democratic development.

| **Topics** | **Details** | **Recommendations** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Media's Role in Democracy | The media is constitutionally recognized as a critical civil society actor. Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution mandates the media to uphold the accountability of the government to the people, while Section 39 guarantees freedom of expression and press freedom, including ownership of media outlets for disseminating information, ideas, and opinions. | Media practitioners should be trained in electoral law provisions to appropriately enlighten the public and adhere to journalistic ethics. Institutions like the **Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ)** and **National Broadcasting Commission (NBC)** should conduct these training programmes. |
| Role of Media in Elections | The Political Parties (Registration and Activities) Decree No. 35, 1998 outlines the media's role in elections: enlightening citizens on constitutional provisions, promoting political participation, educating voters on their rights and duties, and advocating issue-based politics. The **NBC's Broadcasting Code** prevents inciting materials and promotes fair coverage. | The **NBC** and **Nigerian Press Council** should be strengthened to effectively monitor media activities and ensure compliance with electoral laws. Violations should be sanctioned promptly and in accordance with the law. |
| Media's Conduct in Elections | - Media accused of biased and inequitable coverage of political parties.  - Government media favour ruling parties, while private media show ethnic and regional biases.  - Media can exacerbate societal tensions due to partisan ownership.- Enforcement of legal provisions and broadcasting regulations is weak. | - The media should play an advocacy role, focusing on dialogue, debates, and manifestos.  - Promote issue-based politics, avoid sensationalism, and highlight unifying factors such as peace, security, and national integration.  - Abide by the **Code of Ethics** for Nigerian journalists and adhere to international standards of integrity. |
| Promoting Equity in Media Coverage | - The media should expose electoral law violations and promote inclusive and balanced political coverage.  - Access and equal opportunity must be given to all political parties and candidates, including independents.  - Denial of access constitutes a punishable offence with fines ranging from N1,000,000 to N5,000,000 for repeated violations. | - **State and Private funded media** should allocate equal airtime to all political parties and candidates to ensure fairness.  - Provide impartial voter education campaigns aired during peak times, focusing on voting processes and electoral integrity. |
| Encouraging Responsible Journalism | - The media should temper passionate reporting with respect for truth and journalistic integrity.  - Avoid undue sensationalism, name-calling, or divisive narratives.  - Act as a buffer against tensions created by political actors and present issues accurately.  - Highlight the unity of the country over divisive narratives. | - Encourage rigorous public debate in a non-partisan manner.  - Media outlets should provide the public with accurate, unbiased information.  - NBC should monitor and enforce balanced and responsible reporting practices. |
| Promoting Press Freedom | - The government should demonstrate a genuine commitment to press freedom and avoid actions that undermine the media's independence.  - Publicly funded media should prioritize voter education and fair access during elections.  - Media personnel should not face sanctions for providing fair access to all political parties and candidates. | - Government and stakeholders must take proactive measures to promote and protect press freedom.  - Develop policies and programs that strengthen media independence and integrity. |
| Addressing Media Violations | - Media outlets denying equal access to parties or candidates face fines of **N200,000,000** for the first violation.  - Ensure impartiality in publicly funded media by mandating equal airtime for all political stakeholders. | - The **NBC** should enforce fair allocation of airtime and content neutrality among publicly funded media.  - Violations should be penalized transparently to maintain credibility in the electoral process. |
| Informing Citizens | The media should engage in impartial voter education campaigns, explaining voting processes and electoral rights. These should air during peak times to maximize reach and understanding. | Media should collaborate with electoral and civil society organizations to amplify public awareness of electoral processes and responsibilities. |

## 3.8. Political Parties, Independent Candidature, and Party Democracy: Targeted Recommendations

Political parties are the cornerstone of any democratic system, serving as vehicles for political participation, representation, and governance. Sections 221–229 of the 1999 Constitution establish the legal framework for the formation, regulation, and operation of political parties in Nigeria. These provisions are intended to promote inclusivity, accountability, and transparency in the political process. However, despite the detailed stipulations, the effectiveness of these provisions in promoting democratic values and ensuring credible electoral processes remains a challenge.

The Constitution mandates that elections be contested through political parties, with party membership open to all citizens irrespective of ethnicity, religion, or gender. It further requires parties to elect their leaders democratically, reflect federal character in their leadership structures, and maintain proper financial records. Additionally, political parties are prohibited from receiving foreign funding or utilizing armed groups, safeguarding the sovereignty and security of the nation’s democratic process.

While these constitutional safeguards provide a solid foundation, gaps and inconsistencies in enforcement, coupled with systemic flaws in party governance, have undermined the democratic essence of Nigeria’s political system. Issues such as lack of internal democracy, excessive monetization of politics, and the absence of provisions for independent candidacy have limited political participation and weakened public trust in political parties. This section outlines targeted recommendations to strengthen party democracy, enhance accountability, and introduce independent candidacy to broaden the political landscape. The proposed amendments seek to reform Sections 221–229 of the Constitution, addressing the structural and operational deficiencies in party governance while promoting a more inclusive and transparent political system.

| **Topic** | **Details** | **Recommendations** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Party Ideologies and Programmes | Political parties are responsible for:  - Canvassing votes for candidates.  - Aggregating public interests and linking government with the people.  - Recruiting individuals into public office.  - Promoting participation, enlightenment, and political integration.  - Setting societal goals and values.  Parties often fail to elect leaders democratically, relying on coercion and "consensus candidates."  - Lack of distinct ideologies and manifestoes.  - Poor financial accounting and failure to submit finance reports to INEC on time.  - Use of armed groups and youth wings for political violence. | The **1999 Constitution** and **Electoral Act** should be amended to improve accountability, promote inclusiveness, and ensure adherence to the rule of law. Strengthen enforcement mechanisms to prevent contraventions of these provisions by political parties.  1. Political parties must have clear ideologies that align with **Chapter II** of the Constitution (Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy).  2. Parties should establish think tanks to generate ideas and develop responsive manifestos.  3. Encourage issue-based politics instead of personality-driven campaigns.  4. Ensure all parties operationalize open and monitored primary elections with clear rules. |
| Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission (PPRRC) | A **Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission (PPRRC)** should be established, independent of INEC, to:  - Register political parties.  - Monitor their organization, finances, and operations.  - Audit party accounts annually.  - Monitor campaigns and enforce regulations on party activities.  - Accredit election observers and media. | Amend Sections **221-229** of the 1999 Constitution to replace all references to INEC's party regulation roles with the PPRRC. The PPRRC should also have the authority to appoint, dismiss, and exercise disciplinary control over its own staff. |
| Structure of the Commission | The PPRRC should consist of:  - A Chairman and Deputy Chairman (of unquestionable integrity and different genders).  - Six persons of integrity, two of whom must be women and one from each geopolitical zone.  - Appointed via an open and transparent process by the **National Judicial Council (NJC)** and confirmed by the Senate. | The **NJC** should advertise positions, screen applicants, and recommend appointments to the President for Senate confirmation. Members should serve a renewable 5-year term, with removal from office subject to NJC recommendations for misconduct or incapacity. |
| Criteria for Registering Political Parties | In addition to existing laws, associations seeking registration as political parties must:  - Maintain functional and verifiable offices in at least two-thirds of the states.  - Ensure that at least 20% of members in all governing bodies are women. | Amend the **Electoral Act** and the 1999 Constitution to incorporate these additional requirements. Non-compliant parties should face suspension or deregistration. |
| Financial Transparency and Reporting | Political parties must:  - Maintain proper financial accounts.  - Submit election finance reports within stipulated timeframes.  - Allow the PPRRC to audit accounts and monitor their finances. | The PPRRC should conduct regular audits and publish party finance reports to ensure transparency. Severe penalties should be introduced for financial mismanagement, including suspension of parties. |
| Public Funding of Parties |  | 1. Political parties must publicly disclose all funding sources to INEC, including donations.  2. Funding ceilings for individuals supporting elections should be as follows:  - President: ₦20M  - Governor: ₦15M  - Senate: ₦10M  - Reps: ₦5M  - State Houses: ₦2.5M  - Chairmanship: ₦3M  - Councillorship: ₦500K  3. Parties scoring at least 2.5% in general elections should qualify for public grants.  4. The Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission (PPRRC) should ensure full enforcement of financing laws and audit party finances publicly. |
| Eliminating Armed Groups | The use of armed groups or youth wings for violence, coercion, or electoral manipulation is prohibited under Section 227 of the Constitution. | The PPRRC and security agencies should strictly enforce the prohibition on armed groups. Political parties found to engage in violence should face suspension or deregistration. |
| **Independent Candidates** | | |
| **Topic** | **Details** | **Recommendations** |
| Legal Framework for Independent Candidates | Public input suggests strong support for independent candidates. This allows individuals without party affiliation to contest elections, promoting inclusiveness and expanding electoral choices. | Amend the Constitution and Electoral Act to include provisions for independent candidates, with clear eligibility criteria such as constituency-based nominations, financial deposits, and compliance with all electoral laws. |
| Independent Candidature | 1. Allow independent candidates to contest elections under the following conditions:  - Constituency-based nomination with verifiable signatures of 10 registered voters in each ward.  - Payment of a financial deposit (refundable if the candidate scores at least 10% of total valid votes).  - Fulfill all constitutional and electoral eligibility criteria.  2. Amend the Constitution and Electoral Act to incorporate provisions for independent candidates. |

## 3.9. Traditional and Religious Leaders: Targeted Recommendations

Traditional and religious leaders hold a unique and influential position in Nigerian society, often serving as trusted voices within their communities. Their authority, rooted in cultural and spiritual traditions, allows them to mobilize citizens, mediate disputes, and promote values that strengthen social cohesion.

However, despite their significant potential to contribute to governance and democratic processes, these leaders are sometimes underutilized or, conversely, co-opted for partisan purposes. Challenges such as perceived biases, lack of alignment with national priorities, and limited engagement in policy advocacy have hindered their ability to fully support democratic reforms and good governance.

This section outlines targeted recommendations to empower traditional and religious leaders as agents of positive change. These include fostering their active participation in civic education, leveraging their influence to promote peaceful elections, and ensuring their independence from political manipulation. By engaging these leaders strategically, they can play a critical role in bridging the gap between government and citizens, fostering trust, and advancing national development.

| **Observations** | **Recommendations** |
| --- | --- |
| - Traditional and religious leaders have effectively mobilised the electorate for participation in past elections.  - Traditional rulers, often state-paid, were coerced or induced by political parties to support certain candidates, undermining free and fair elections. | - Promote the role of religious and traditional leaders in public enlightenment, civic and voter education, and mass political participation.  - Religious leaders should use their moral authority to encourage political parties to avoid violence and uphold the Constitution and Electoral Law.  - Traditional leaders should remain non-partisan and neutral while educating their communities on peaceful and active electoral participation. |

## 3.10. Civil Society Organizations: Targeted Recommendations

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are vital stakeholders in advancing democratic governance, promoting accountability, and amplifying citizen voices. In Nigeria, CSOs have played an essential role in advocating for electoral reforms, monitoring governance processes, and empowering marginalized communities through civic education and grassroots mobilization.

Despite these contributions, CSOs face several challenges, including limited funding, restrictive regulations, political interference, and fragmentation within the sector. These obstacles often undermine their ability to sustain impactful initiatives, engage effectively with policymakers, and mobilize citizens at scale.

This section presents targeted recommendations to strengthen the role of CSOs in fostering good governance and democratic accountability. Key priorities include enhancing capacity-building initiatives, fostering collaboration among CSOs, securing sustainable funding sources, and improving engagement with government institutions and citizens. By addressing these challenges, CSOs can maximize their impact, serve as watchdogs for democracy, and catalyze systemic reforms that benefit all Nigerians.

| **Category** | **Observations** | **Recommendations** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Role of Civil Society in Elections** | - Civil society organizations (CSOs) have played significant roles in Nigeria’s electoral process, including voter education, electoral monitoring, exposing fraud, and advocating for reforms.  - They have worked to build the capacity of disadvantaged groups to participate in the electoral process. | Electoral laws should ensure CSOs participate in all relevant stages of the electoral process, such as  - monitoring campaign financing,  - electoral violence, and the enforcement of sanctions for electoral violations.  - CSOs should expand civic and voter education efforts, especially regarding voter registration and its significance to democracy. |
| **Electoral Monitoring** | CSOs have successfully monitored elections and party primaries, observed voter registration processes, and issued critical reports on electoral misconduct. | CSOs should coordinate their election observation efforts to maximize coverage of the process.  - The Electoral Act should be amended to clearly establish criteria for accreditation of domestic observers. |
| **Civic Education** | CSOs have been effective in sensitizing and mobilizing voters, educating them on democratic rights, and promoting electoral reforms. | - CSOs should take advantage of their capabilities to educate voters on the importance of elections and the mechanisms for registering and voting.  - The right of domestic observers to monitor the entire election process should be guaranteed by law. |
| **Watchdog Function** | CSOs have exposed flaws in electoral processes and held political institutions accountable. | CSOs should strengthen their role as watchdogs, working to hold politicians and political institutions accountable throughout the electoral process. |
| **Litigation Support for Electoral Law Violations** | NGOs can play a critical role in providing litigation support to pursue cases of electoral malpractice, including voter suppression, bribery, and ballot tampering | Establish legal aid networks to support individuals or groups affected by electoral law violations, ensuring justice and deterrence. |
| **Capacity Building for Legal Practitioners** | NGOs can train lawyers and paralegals on electoral laws, evidence gathering, and litigation strategies to build a skilled workforce for handling election-related cases. | Partner with legal training institutes and bar associations to organize workshops and capacity-building sessions. |
| **Documentation and Reporting of Violations** | NGOs can develop systems to document and report electoral law violations, providing credible evidence for legal action. | Create a robust framework for collecting and verifying evidence, including digital tools and community reporting mechanisms. |
| **Public Interest Litigation (PIL)** | NGOs can leverage PIL as a tool to challenge systemic issues related to electoral malpractice and demand institutional reforms through the courts. | Identify systemic electoral challenges and initiate strategic litigations to set legal precedents and push for reform. |
| **Partnerships with Civil Society and Media** | NGOs can collaborate with civil society organizations and media to amplify cases, inform the public, and pressure authorities to act on electoral violations. | Establish coalitions and joint advocacy campaigns to increase public awareness and mobilize action against electoral fraud. |
| **Support for Whistleblowers** | NGOs can provide legal protection and support to whistleblowers who expose electoral fraud and corruption. | Advocate for whistleblower protection laws and create safe channels for reporting electoral malpractice. |

## 3.11. International Organisations and NGOs: Targeted Recommendations

International organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are critical partners in Nigeria's journey toward democratic consolidation, institutional reform, and sustainable development. Through funding, technical assistance, advocacy, and capacity-building initiatives, these entities have supported electoral reforms, governance improvement, and social development programs across the country.

However, the impact of international organizations and NGOs can sometimes be limited by challenges such as misalignment with local priorities, ineffective coordination with domestic stakeholders, and limited understanding of the sociopolitical context. Additionally, regulatory barriers and perceptions of external interference can hinder their ability to operate effectively.

This section offers targeted recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and alignment of international organizations and NGOs in Nigeria. Emphasis is placed on fostering stronger partnerships with local stakeholders, prioritizing long-term capacity building, aligning programs with national and community-driven priorities, and promoting transparency in their operations. By addressing these areas, international organizations and NGOs can become even more effective collaborators in Nigeria’s quest for sustainable reform and development.

| **Category** | **Observations** | **Recommendations** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Role of International Organisations** | - In emerging democracies, international organisations provide human, financial, technical, and material assistance for elections.  - They act as election observers and provide civic education and technical training to electoral bodies and civil society organisations.  - Examples include UNDP, USAID, African Union, ECOWAS, European Union, and Commonwealth of Nations.  - International NGOs such as IFES, NDI, IRI, and Carter Center offer technical assistance, train electoral staff, and observe elections.  - Organisations like Human Rights Watch and International Crisis Group monitor and report on the credibility of elections and conditions before, during, and after the electoral process. | - Contributions of international organisations and NGOs should be recognized and utilized to improve the electoral process in Nigeria.  - Accreditation of international organisations and NGOs as observers should be encouraged. |
| **Global Standards** | International organisations promote adherence to global standards for democratic elections, such as those established by the African Union and ECOWAS. | INEC should maintain full independence and should not receive funds from international bodies to avoid compromising its autonomy. |
| **Transparency and Accountability** | Financial and material contributions from international organisations have significantly supported elections in Nigeria, but there is a need for transparency in managing these resources. | INEC should ensure proper accounting and transparency in the use of financial and material contributions received from international organisations. |

# 4.0 Next Steps: The Role of various Stakeholders in Ensuring INEC Reforms.

To ensure the outlined reforms are successfully implemented, the next steps for various stakeholders would involve coordinated efforts, strategic actions, and accountability mechanisms.

### **4.1. Government Institutions (Executive, Legislature, Judiciary, and INEC)**

1. **Executive:** The Executive Branch plays a pivotal role in driving and sustaining electoral reforms in Nigeria's democratic system. Their responsibilities encompass three main areas: championing reforms, resource allocation, and strengthening law enforcement, each crucial for ensuring effective electoral processes.
   * **Champion Reforms:** The President and Governors must publicly endorse and prioritise these reforms, demonstrating political will. In championing reforms, the Executive Branch must take a proactive leadership stance through multiple channels. They lead public advocacy campaigns that clearly demonstrate their commitment to electoral integrity, while simultaneously issuing executive orders designed to strengthen electoral institutions. The establishment of inter-ministerial committees ensures coordinated implementation of reforms across government bodies. The Executive sets clear timelines and benchmarks to track reform progress, actively engages with international partners to incorporate global best practices, and implements strong anti-corruption measures throughout the electoral process.
   * **Allocate Resources:** Resource allocation forms another critical aspect of the Executive's responsibilities. This involves developing comprehensive budgeting strategies for electoral operations and ensuring INEC and related agencies receive timely funding. The Executive must establish emergency funding mechanisms to address unexpected electoral challenges as they arise. Their role extends to making strategic investments in electoral infrastructure development, supporting research and development in electoral technologies, and providing adequate resources for voter education programs that enhance public participation and understanding.
   * **Strengthen Law Enforcement:** The strengthening of law enforcement represents the third crucial area of Executive responsibility. This includes establishing specialized electoral security units equipped with modern technology and resources. The Executive ensures the development of comprehensive security training programs and creates effective inter-agency coordination mechanisms. They implement robust witness protection programs for electoral fraud cases and establish rapid response teams capable of addressing election-related emergencies promptly. These security measures work together to create a safer, more secure electoral environment.
2. **Legislature:** The Legislative arm of government serves as a cornerstone in Nigeria's electoral reform process, wielding significant influence through three primary functions: passing electoral reform laws, maintaining oversight, and promoting policy reforms that enhance democratic participation.
   * **Pass Electoral Reform Laws:** Expedite the review and passage of bills that strengthen election credibility and fairness. In passing electoral reform laws, the Legislature undertakes a comprehensive review of existing electoral frameworks to identify gaps and areas requiring improvement. This process begins with thorough examinations of current laws, followed by public hearings that gather input from various stakeholders. The Legislature works to harmonize conflicting electoral legislation, ensuring consistency and clarity across all electoral statutes. They modernize laws to accommodate technological advancements in the electoral process, while simultaneously strengthening penalties for electoral offenses to deter malpractice. The creation of legal frameworks for electronic voting and establishment of clear pre-election timelines further demonstrates their commitment to electoral modernization.
   * **Oversight:** Monitor the implementation of electoral reforms by INEC and other related bodies. The Legislature's oversight functions form a critical component of their role in electoral reform. They establish dedicated committees specifically tasked with electoral oversight responsibilities, conducting regular assessments of INEC's performance to ensure compliance with mandated standards. These committees review electoral budgets and expenditure, maintaining financial accountability while monitoring the implementation of electoral technologies. The Legislature investigates electoral malpractices when they occur, evaluates the effectiveness of security measures, and assesses compliance with international electoral standards to ensure Nigeria's electoral processes meet global benchmarks.
   * **Promote Policy Reforms:** Create laws that ensure accountability and inclusivity, such as quotas for women and persons with disabilities in politics.In promoting policy reforms, the Legislature focuses on creating an inclusive electoral environment that encourages broad participation across all segments of society. They develop comprehensive frameworks for inclusive participation and create legislation that supports youth involvement in the political process. The establishment of mechanisms for diaspora voting expands democratic participation beyond national borders, while campaign finance reforms ensure transparency and fairness in electoral funding. The Legislature supports political party reforms, creates guidelines for primary elections, and develops robust frameworks for election observation that enhance transparency and credibility in the electoral process.
3. **Judiciary: The Judiciary plays a crucial role in Nigeria's electoral reform process, operating through three essential functions: ensuring speedy resolution of election petitions, building judicial capacity, and strengthening institutional independence.**
   * **Speedy Resolution of Election Petitions:** Implement measures to expedite the adjudication of electoral disputes. In addressing the speedy resolution of election petitions, the Judiciary focuses on creating efficient systems and structures to handle electoral disputes promptly and effectively. This begins with the establishment of specialized electoral courts dedicated solely to handling election-related cases. The implementation of sophisticated time management systems helps track and expedite cases, while electronic case management systems modernize the handling of electoral disputes. The Judiciary develops comprehensive standard operating procedures to ensure consistency in case management and institutes alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to reduce case backlogs. Clear guidelines for evidence presentation and streamlined appeals processes further enhance the efficiency of electoral dispute resolution.
   * **Capacity Building:** Train judges on election-related laws and handling sensitive cases with impartiality. Capacity building represents another vital aspect of the Judiciary's role in electoral reforms. Regular judicial training programs ensure that judges remain current with evolving electoral laws and best practices. The development of specialized electoral law curricula provides focused education on handling complex electoral cases. Mentorship programs for judges facilitate knowledge transfer between experienced and newer judicial officers, while international exchange programs expose judges to global best practices. Technology training initiatives ensure the judiciary can effectively utilize modern tools in their work. The establishment of research and documentation centers, coupled with the development of best practice guidelines, creates a strong foundation for continuous judicial improvement.
   * **Strengthen Independence:** Safeguard against political interference and enhance transparency in judicial proceedings. Strengthening judicial independence forms the third pillar of the Judiciary's role in electoral reforms. This begins with establishing clear, merit-based appointment criteria for judicial officers and creating mechanisms for financial autonomy that shield the courts from external influence. The development of comprehensive ethics and conduct guidelines ensures high standards of judicial behavior, while robust transparency measures maintain public confidence in the judicial process. The creation of accountability frameworks balances judicial independence with responsibility, and protection mechanisms for judges enable them to make decisions without fear or favor. Well-defined conflict of interest policies further strengthen the integrity of judicial proceedings.

**iv. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC):**The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) stands at the forefront of implementing electoral reforms in Nigeria, executing its mandate through four critical areas: internal audit, technology implementation, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building.

* **Conduct Internal Audit:** Review and address identified gaps in the electoral process and infrastructure. In conducting internal audits, INEC undertakes comprehensive system reviews to identify strengths and weaknesses within its operational framework. This involves rigorous evaluation of staff performance metrics to ensure efficiency and effectiveness across all levels of the organization. The commission regularly assesses its technological infrastructure to maintain modern standards while reviewing operational procedures to streamline processes. Through careful analysis of past election challenges, INEC identifies areas requiring improvement and evaluates resource utilization to optimize performance. These assessments inform the development of targeted improvement strategies that enhance electoral operations.
* **Implement Technology:** Adopt innovative tools for voter registration, results transmission, and election monitoring. Technology implementation represents a cornerstone of INEC's modernization efforts. The commission deploys sophisticated biometric voter registration systems to ensure accurate voter records and implements secure electronic result transmission mechanisms to enhance result credibility. INEC develops robust election monitoring systems to track electoral processes in real-time and creates reliable voter verification platforms to prevent fraud. Strong data security measures protect electoral information, while comprehensive backup systems ensure operational continuity. The commission also creates technology training programs to ensure staff proficiency in using these systems.
* **Engage Stakeholders:** Work closely with political parties, civil society, and donor agencies to ensure transparency and credibility. Stakeholder engagement forms another crucial aspect of INEC's role. The commission establishes regular consultation mechanisms with various electoral stakeholders and creates effective feedback channels to maintain open communication. INEC develops partnership frameworks with relevant organizations and implements transparency initiatives to build public trust. Through targeted public awareness programs, the commission educates voters about electoral processes and develops strategies for engaging civil society organizations. The establishment of international cooperation mechanisms allows INEC to benefit from global best practices and support.
* **Capacity Building:** Train staff on updated electoral laws, technology, and conflict management. Capacity building ensures INEC maintains a skilled and competent workforce. The commission develops comprehensive training programs that address various aspects of electoral management and creates performance evaluation systems to monitor staff development. Knowledge management systems capture and share institutional expertise, while mentorship programs facilitate skill transfer between experienced and newer staff. INEC creates specialized skill development initiatives to address specific operational needs and develops leadership training programs to strengthen organizational management. The implementation of continuous learning frameworks ensures staff remain current with evolving electoral practices.

### **4.2. Political Parties**

The role of political parties in Nigeria's electoral reform process encompasses three vital areas: implementing internal reforms, demonstrating commitment to broader electoral reforms, and enhancing the capacity of party representatives. Here's a detailed examination of these responsibilities:

* **Internal Reforms:** Adopt transparent candidate selection processes and promote inclusion (e.g., women, youth, and persons with disabilities). In conducting internal audits, INEC undertakes comprehensive system reviews to identify strengths and weaknesses within its operational framework. This involves rigorous evaluation of staff performance metrics to ensure efficiency and effectiveness across all levels of the organization. The commission regularly assesses its technological infrastructure to maintain modern standards while reviewing operational procedures to streamline processes. Through careful analysis of past election challenges, INEC identifies areas requiring improvement and evaluates resource utilization to optimize performance. These assessments inform the development of targeted improvement strategies that enhance electoral operations.
* **Commit to Reforms:** Sign pledges and agreements to uphold reform principles. In demonstrating commitment to reforms, political parties must move beyond rhetoric to concrete action. This begins with formally signing and publicly committing to reform pledges and agreements that outline specific principles and standards of conduct. These commitments should address issues such as rejecting violence, avoiding hate speech, respecting electoral outcomes, and utilizing legal channels for dispute resolution. Parties must also demonstrate their commitment through practical actions such as participating constructively in inter-party dialogues, supporting INEC's reform initiatives, and holding their members accountable for violations of electoral laws and regulations.
* **Training:** Build the capacity of party agents on electoral laws and conflict resolution.The training component focuses on building the capacity of party agents and officials to effectively participate in the electoral process. This involves developing comprehensive training programs that cover current electoral laws, regulations, and procedures. Party agents must be thoroughly trained in monitoring elections, documenting irregularities, and following proper channels for raising concerns. Conflict resolution training is particularly crucial, equipping party representatives with skills to de-escalate tensions and resolve disputes peacefully. This training should also cover the use of new electoral technologies, ensuring party agents can effectively monitor modern electoral processes.

### **4.3. Citizens**

The role of citizens in Nigeria's electoral reform process is fundamental and multifaceted, encompassing active participation, grassroots mobilization, and vigilant monitoring of the electoral process. Here's a detailed examination of citizens' crucial responsibilities:

* **Demand for Reforms:** Engage in voter registration, elections, and public forums to demand reforms and accountability. Citizens' demand for reforms begins with active engagement in the democratic process through voter registration and participation in elections. This involvement extends beyond merely casting votes to include attending public forums, town halls, and community meetings where electoral issues are discussed. Citizens must articulate their concerns about the electoral system and propose solutions through available channels. Their participation in public consultations on electoral reforms helps ensure that reform measures reflect the genuine needs and aspirations of the electorate. Through consistent engagement, citizens create pressure for accountability and demonstrate the public's investment in electoral integrity.
* **Grassroots Advocacy:** Mobilise community members to advocate for reforms and hold leaders accountable.Grassroots advocacy represents a powerful tool for citizens to effect change in the electoral system. This involves organizing at the community level to raise awareness about electoral issues and mobilize support for reforms. Citizens work together to educate their neighbors about voting rights, electoral procedures, and the importance of participating in the democratic process. They form local advocacy groups, coordinate with civil society organizations, and develop strategies to hold their leaders accountable. This grassroots movement creates a strong foundation for reform by building public consciousness and demonstrating collective demand for electoral improvements.
* **Monitoring and Reporting:** Use platforms like social media and civil society reporting tools to expose electoral malpractice or failures in reform implementation. The monitoring and reporting role of citizens has been significantly enhanced by modern technology and social media platforms. Citizens now serve as watchdogs of the electoral process, using their smartphones and social media accounts to document and share evidence of electoral malpractice or reform implementation failures in real-time. They utilize various civil society reporting tools and platforms to expose irregularities, creating a transparent record of electoral conduct. This citizen journalism complements traditional election monitoring and helps maintain pressure for reform implementation.

### **4.4. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)**

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a vital role in Nigeria's electoral reform process through four key areas: advocacy campaigns, policy monitoring, voter education, and strategic partnerships. Here's a comprehensive analysis of their responsibilities:

* **Advocacy Campaigns:** Create widespread awareness of the need for reforms and mobilise public support. In leading advocacy campaigns, CSOs work to create and sustain public awareness about the necessity of electoral reforms. They design and implement targeted campaigns that highlight specific areas requiring improvement in the electoral system. These organizations utilize various communication channels, including traditional media, social media platforms, and community outreach programs, to disseminate information about reform initiatives. They organize public forums, rallies, and workshops to mobilize citizens and create momentum for reform implementation. Their advocacy efforts help translate public concerns into actionable policy demands and maintain pressure on relevant authorities to act on reform commitments.
* **Policy Monitoring:** Monitor the progress of reforms and report on the implementation gaps or successes.Policy monitoring represents another crucial aspect of CSOs' work. These organizations systematically track the progress of electoral reforms, from policy formulation through implementation. They conduct independent assessments of reform initiatives, identifying implementation gaps and highlighting successes. CSOs develop monitoring frameworks and indicators to measure progress objectively, producing regular reports that inform stakeholders and the public about the status of reforms. Their monitoring activities provide valuable feedback to electoral authorities and help ensure transparency and accountability in the reform process.
* **Voter Education:** Educate citizens on electoral processes, their rights, and the importance of accountability.Voter education forms a cornerstone of CSOs' contributions to electoral reform. They develop comprehensive education programs that help citizens understand electoral processes, their rights as voters, and the importance of holding leaders accountable. These programs often target marginalized groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities, ensuring inclusive participation in the electoral process. CSOs create accessible educational materials, conduct community-based training sessions, and use innovative approaches to reach diverse audiences. Their voter education efforts help build an informed electorate capable of participating effectively in the democratic process.
* **Partnerships:** Collaborate with international organisations, media, and local groups to amplify voices and demand action.Building and maintaining strategic partnerships enhances the effectiveness of CSOs' work. They collaborate with international organizations to access resources, expertise, and best practices in electoral reform. Partnerships with media organizations help amplify their messages and increase public awareness of reform issues. Working with local community groups extends their reach and ensures their initiatives respond to grassroots needs. These partnerships create synergies that strengthen the collective voice demanding electoral reforms and increase the impact of advocacy efforts.

### **4.5. Media**

The media plays a crucial role in Nigeria's electoral reform process through three primary functions: investigative journalism, public awareness campaigns, and facilitating public dialogue. Here's a comprehensive analysis of these vital responsibilities:

* **Investigative Journalism:** Expose challenges and failures in the implementation of reforms. In conducting investigative journalism, media organizations serve as watchdogs of the electoral reform process by uncovering and exposing challenges, irregularities, and implementation failures. Journalists investigate allegations of misconduct, analyze reform implementation patterns, and highlight systemic issues that require attention. Through detailed research and fact-finding, they provide in-depth coverage of reform-related issues, examining both technical aspects and practical impacts on the ground. This investigative work helps maintain transparency and accountability in the reform process by bringing important issues to public attention and pressuring relevant authorities to address identified problems.
* **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Disseminate information on reforms, their importance, and progress. Public awareness campaigns represent another critical aspect of media's role in electoral reforms. Media organizations utilize their platforms to disseminate accurate and timely information about reform initiatives, their significance, and implementation progress. They break down complex electoral reform issues into understandable formats for diverse audiences, using various channels including print, broadcast, and digital media. Through regular coverage and special features, they help maintain public interest in reform issues and ensure citizens understand how these changes affect their participation in the democratic process. The media also plays a crucial role in countering misinformation and providing factual, verified information about electoral reforms.
* **Host Public Dialogues:** Provide platforms for debates, town halls, and discussions to keep reforms in public consciousness.The media's role in hosting public dialogues creates essential spaces for democratic discourse about electoral reforms. They organize and moderate debates, town hall meetings, and panel discussions that bring together various stakeholders to discuss reform issues. These platforms enable direct interaction between electoral officials, political actors, civil society representatives, and citizens. Through talk shows, call-in programs, and interactive social media sessions, they facilitate public participation in reform discussions. These dialogues help keep reform issues in the public consciousness while promoting informed debate about reform priorities and implementation strategies.

### **4.6. Development Partners and Donors**

The role of Development Partners and Donors in Nigeria's electoral reform process encompasses three critical areas: technical assistance, funding support, and monitoring and evaluation. Here's a detailed analysis of their vital contributions:

* **Provide Technical Assistance:** Support capacity-building initiatives for INEC, judiciary, and security agencies.In providing technical assistance, development partners and donors play a crucial role in strengthening the capacity of key electoral institutions. They support comprehensive capacity-building initiatives for INEC, the judiciary, and security agencies through specialized training programs, knowledge transfer, and expertise sharing. These partners facilitate international best practices adoption by organizing study tours, workshops, and expert consultations. They provide specialized technical expertise in areas such as election technology, biometric systems, and results management. Their assistance helps institutions develop robust systems and procedures that enhance electoral integrity.
* **Funding Support:** Provide grants and funding for reform-related activities, such as technology adoption and voter education. Funding support from development partners and donors enables the implementation of crucial reform initiatives that might otherwise be constrained by resource limitations. They provide grants and financial assistance for various reform-related activities, including the adoption of new technologies, voter education programs, and institutional strengthening projects. This funding supports the modernization of electoral infrastructure, the development of voter registration systems, and the implementation of results transmission platforms. They also fund civil society initiatives, research projects, and public awareness campaigns that contribute to the reform process.
* **Monitor and Evaluate:** Assess the impact of reforms and recommend improvements. The monitoring and evaluation role of development partners and donors helps ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of reform initiatives. They conduct systematic assessments of reform implementation, measuring progress against established benchmarks and international standards. Through regular evaluations, they identify implementation challenges, assess the impact of various interventions, and recommend improvements. Their independent assessments provide valuable feedback to stakeholders and help guide future reform efforts. They also facilitate learning and knowledge sharing among different electoral stakeholders.

### **4.7. Private Sector**

The Private Sector's role in Nigeria's electoral reform process focuses on two key areas: supporting reform initiatives and promoting accountability through corporate social responsibility. Here's a detailed examination of these essential functions:

* **Support Initiatives:** Partner with CSOs and government to sponsor campaigns, voter education, and civic engagement. In supporting reform initiatives, the private sector serves as a crucial partner to both civil society organizations and government institutions. They provide financial and material resources for electoral reform campaigns, voter education programs, and civic engagement activities. Companies partner with CSOs to implement grassroots programs that raise awareness about electoral processes and reforms. They leverage their business networks and platforms to amplify reform messages and reach diverse audiences. Through sponsorship of electoral programs and events, they help ensure sustained funding for important reform activities that might otherwise lack resources.
* **Promote Accountability:** Use Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) platforms to advocate for good governance and institutional reforms.The private sector's role in promoting accountability through Corporate Social Responsibility platforms represents another vital contribution to electoral reforms. Companies use their CSR initiatives to advocate for good governance and institutional reforms, recognizing that a strong democratic system benefits business operations and economic growth. They develop programs that promote transparency and accountability in electoral processes, support anti-corruption initiatives, and encourage ethical business practices that complement electoral reforms. Through their CSR platforms, they create awareness about the importance of credible elections and institutional reforms among their employees, stakeholders, and the broader business community.
* **Share Expertise :** Private sector entities also contribute by sharing expertise in technology, management, and logistics that can enhance electoral processes. Their experience in implementing large-scale projects and managing complex systems offers valuable insights for electoral reform implementation. They can provide technical support for modernizing electoral systems, improving data management, and enhancing operational efficiency.

### **4.8. International Organisations**

The role of International Organizations in Nigeria's electoral reform process encompasses three critical areas: diplomatic advocacy, election observation, and capacity building. Here's a comprehensive analysis of their contributions:

* **Diplomatic Pressure:** Use diplomatic channels to advocate for the implementation of reforms. In exercising diplomatic pressure, international organizations utilize various diplomatic channels to advocate for meaningful electoral reforms. They engage with Nigerian authorities at multiple levels, from high-level diplomatic discussions to technical consultations, emphasizing the importance of implementing and sustaining electoral reforms. These organizations leverage their international standing to encourage adherence to democratic principles and global best practices. They also coordinate with other international partners to present a unified voice in support of reform initiatives, making it clear that credible elections are crucial for Nigeria's international relationships and standing in the global community.
* **Election Observers:** Deploy observers to monitor and report on electoral processes.The election observation function represents a critical aspect of international organizations' involvement in Nigeria's electoral process. They deploy both long-term and short-term observers who monitor various aspects of the electoral cycle, from pre-election preparations through post-election processes. These observers assess compliance with international standards, document irregularities, and provide independent evaluations of electoral conduct. Their reports carry significant weight in evaluating the credibility of elections and identifying areas requiring reform. Through their presence and reporting, they help enhance transparency and deter electoral malpractices.
* **Capacity Building:** Provide expertise and best practices to strengthen institutions and reform processes. In providing capacity building support, international organizations share expertise and best practices to strengthen Nigerian electoral institutions and reform processes. They organize training programs, workshops, and technical assistance initiatives that enhance the capabilities of electoral stakeholders. This includes sharing comparative experiences from other countries, providing specialized technical knowledge, and supporting the adoption of new electoral technologies. Their capacity building efforts help ensure that reforms are designed and implemented effectively, drawing on proven international experiences while adapting to Nigeria's specific context.

# 5.0 Key Milestones and Mechanisms for Tracking Progress

Tracking the progress of electoral reforms in Nigeria requires a comprehensive framework of milestones and monitoring mechanisms. Key components necessary for effective progress tracking include:

1. **Establish Reform Taskforces:** Set up multi-stakeholder committees to oversee the implementation of reforms. The establishment of Reform Taskforces serves as a foundational element in monitoring reform implementation. These multi-stakeholder committees bring together representatives from various sectors including INEC, civil society, political parties, and security agencies. They develop comprehensive implementation plans, set specific timelines, and establish clear performance indicators. These taskforces coordinate reform activities across different institutions, ensure alignment of efforts, and provide strategic direction for the reform process. Their composition ensures diverse perspectives are considered in monitoring progress and addressing challenges.
2. **Regular Reporting:** Publish periodic reports tracking reform progress, challenges, and recommendations.Regular reporting mechanisms provide systematic documentation and assessment of reform progress. These reports, published on a predetermined schedule, offer detailed analysis of achievements, obstacles, and areas requiring attention. They include quantitative metrics tracking specific reform objectives, qualitative assessments of implementation effectiveness, and stakeholder feedback. The reports serve as vital tools for maintaining transparency and accountability in the reform process, while providing evidence-based recommendations for improvement. They also help identify best practices and lessons learned that can inform future reform efforts.
3. **Accountability Platforms:** Create citizen-driven tools (e.g., websites, apps) to monitor progress and escalate issues. Accountability platforms powered by modern technology enable citizen participation in monitoring reform implementation. These digital tools, including websites and mobile applications, provide accessible channels for citizens to track reform progress and report concerns. They feature user-friendly interfaces that allow the public to access information about reform initiatives, submit feedback, and monitor implementation status in real-time. These platforms also facilitate direct communication between citizens and reform implementing bodies, creating additional pressure for accountability.
4. **Legislative Reviews:** Schedule annual legislative hearings to evaluate the status of reforms.Legislative reviews through annual hearings provide formal oversight of reform implementation. These sessions allow lawmakers to examine progress reports, question implementing agencies, and assess the effectiveness of reform measures. They create opportunities for public input through committee hearings and expert testimonies. The reviews result in formal recommendations for addressing implementation challenges and adjusting reform strategies as needed. They also help maintain political momentum for reform implementation through regular legislative attention and oversight.

By aligning efforts and taking specific actions, stakeholders can ensure that the outlined reforms move from vision to reality, leading to a more accountable and effective governance structure.

# ANNEXURE ONE

**THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA (AMENDMENT) ACT 2025**

A BILL FORAN ACT TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA 1999 SO AS TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN NIGERIA’S DEMOCRATIC FOUNDATION IN GENERAL AND, IN PARTICULAR, TO RAISE THE QUALITY AND STANDARD OF GENERAL ELECTIONS TOGETHER WITH THE REINFORCEMENT OF THE CROSS-CUTTING INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK ALREADY DELINEATED IN THAT BEHALF AND PROVIDE FOR OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED THEREWITH.

**AMENDMENTS**

**Amendment of Section 65(2)(b) and Section 106**

**Substitution:** For the existing Section 65(2)(b) and Section 106(d), substitute the following:

* **Section 65(2)(b):** “He is a member of a political party and is sponsored by that party, or he is an independent candidate who has been nominated by not less than ten (10) registered voters from each ward of the constituency, verified and certified by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Such independent candidates must meet all other eligibility criteria stipulated in the Constitution and any relevant law.”
* **Section 106:** “(d) Sponsored by a political party or nominated as an independent candidate by not less than ten (10) registered voters from each ward in the constituency, verified and certified by INEC.”

**Amendment of Section 154 (Appointment of INEC Members)**

**Substitution:** For the existing Section 154, substitute the following:

**(1)** The Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and members of INEC shall be appointed by the National Judicial Council (NJC), subject to confirmation by the Senate.

**(2)** The NJC shall publicly advertise all INEC vacancies, conduct a transparent screening process, and submit a shortlist of three (3) nominees for each position to the National Council of State.

**(3)** The National Council of State shall select one nominee for each position, subject to Senate confirmation.

**(4)** Appointments must reflect the federal character of Nigeria, ensuring representation from all geopolitical zones and at least 30% female inclusion in INEC leadership.

**Amendment of Section 155 (Tenure of INEC Members)**

**Insertion:** Add a new subsection (3) to Section 155:

* “(3) Members of INEC shall hold office for a single term of five (5) years, renewable only once upon recommendation by the NJC and approval by the Senate by a two-thirds majority vote.”

**Amendment of Sections 81 and 84 (INEC Financial Independence)**

**Substitution:**

* **Section 81:** “Any amount standing to the credit of INEC in the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation shall be paid directly to INEC as a first-line charge and shall not be subject to Executive approval.”
* **Section 84:** “The recurrent and capital expenditures of INEC, including salaries, allowances, and operational costs, shall be a direct charge on the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation.”

**Amendment of Section 222 (Regulation of Political Parties)**

**Substitution:** For the existing Section 222, substitute the following:

**(1)** A Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission (PPRRC) is hereby established to oversee the registration, regulation, and monitoring of political parties.

**(2)** Political parties must maintain functional offices in at least two-thirds of the states in the Federation and ensure that at least 20% of their governing body members are women.

**(3)** PPRRC shall have the authority to audit party finances, enforce campaign funding limits, and sanction violations.

**Amendment of Sections 132(2) and 178(2) (Election Timelines)**

**Substitution:** For Sections 132(2) and 178(2), substitute the following:

* “Elections for the offices of the President and Governors shall be held not earlier than 240 days and not later than 180 days before the expiration of the term of the incumbent. This timeline ensures adequate time for resolving electoral disputes before the swearing-in of newly elected officials.”

**Amendment to Section 147 (Election of Minister for the FCT)**

**Substitution:** Replace the existing provision in Section 147(3) with the following:

1. "The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) shall be elected by the residents of the Federal Capital Territory through direct elections conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)."

**Eligibility Criteria for Ministerial Candidates:**

1. To be eligible to contest for the office of Minister for the FCT, a candidate must:
2. Be a Nigerian citizen by birth;
3. Be at least 35 years of age;
4. Have been a resident of the Federal Capital Territory for a minimum of ten (10) years prior to the election;
5. Possess a minimum of a Bachelor's degree or its equivalent; and
6. Satisfy all other requirements as stipulated in the Electoral Act.

**Electoral Process:**

**(3)** Elections for the office of Minister for the FCT shall be conducted concurrently with the general elections for Governors and State Houses of Assembly.

**(4)** The elected Minister shall serve a four-year term, renewable for one additional term only.

**Vacancy in Office:  
(5)** In the event of a vacancy in the office of the Minister for the FCT, a by-election shall be conducted within ninety (90) days to fill the position.

**Transitional Provisions:  
(6)** The first election for the office of Minister for the FCT shall be conducted at the next general election following the enactment of this amendment.

**Amendment of Sections 174 and 211 (Prosecution of Electoral Offenses)**

**Insertion:** Add a new subsection (3) to both Sections 174 and 211:

* “(3) The Attorney-General of the Federation or State shall not exercise the power to discontinue prosecution (nolle prosequi) in matters relating to electoral offenses. Prosecution of such offenses shall be handled by an independent Electoral Offenses Commission established by an Act of the National Assembly.”

**Amendment of Section 14, Third Schedule (Composition of INEC)**

**Substitution:** For the existing provisions of Paragraph 14, Third Schedule, substitute the following:

**(1)** INEC shall comprise:

(a) A Chairman and Deputy Chairman, who shall not be of the same gender;

(b) Six members, one from each geopolitical zone, including at least two women;

(c) Representatives from civil society, labor organizations, and professional bodies.

**(2)** All appointments to INEC shall follow the procedure outlined in Section 154 of this Constitution.

**(3)** Members of INEC shall be non-partisan and possess demonstrable integrity and professional qualifications.

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

THIS BILL SEEKS TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA 1999 SO AS TO FURTHER REINFORCE NIGERIA’S DEMOCRATIC FOUNDATION WHICH, TO A LARGE EXTENT, CAN BE SUSTAINED THROUGH THE CONDUCT OF FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS. ON THAT AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS, THE BILL PROVIDES, AMONGST OTHER THINGS, FOR STRONGER AUTONOMY FOR THE INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION, EXTENDING TO THE DISPERSAL OF ITS NON\_CORE FUNCTIONS TO NEW AGENCIES, INDEPENDENT CANDIDACY, A MIXED-MEMBER PROPORTIONAL SYSTEM WHICH MAKES ROOM FOR PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN ELECTIONS, MAINSTREAMING OF WOMEN AND PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED PERSONS AS WELL AS THE STAGGERING OF GENERAL ELECTIONS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIRM TIMEFRAME FOR THE CONCLUSION OF ELECTION PETITIONS.

# ANNEXURE TWO

**THE ELECTORAL ACT (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2023**

A BILL FORAN ACT TO AMEND THE ELECTORAL ACT, 2022 SO AS TO REFLECT THE CONTEMPLATED RESTRUCTURING OF THE INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION, PROVIDE FOR GENERAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, INCLUDING THE ADJUDICATION OF DISPUTES AND PROSECUTION OF ELECTORAL OFFENCES, AND ALSO PROVIDE FOR OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED THEREWITH

**AMENDMENTS**

**Amendment of Section 3 (Establishment of the Independent National Electoral Commission Fund)**

**Insertion:** Add new subsections (4) and (5) to section 3:

**(4)** The funds allocated to INEC shall be a first-line charge on the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation and shall be released directly to INEC without approval or interference from the Executive.

**(5)** INEC shall submit periodic reports of its financial activities to the National Assembly for audit and public review.

**Section 3A: Prosecution of Electoral Offenses**

1. An independent Electoral Offenses Commission shall be established to investigate and prosecute individuals or entities involved in electoral malpractice.

**Section 3B: Delimitation of Constituencies**

1. A Constituency Delimitation Commission shall be established and mandated to review electoral boundaries every ten (10) years based on population data from the National Population Commission

**Amendment of Section 10 (Voter Registration)**

**Insertion:** Add new subsections (7), (8), and (9) to Section 10:

**(7)** The registration of voters shall be ongoing and computerized, utilizing biometric data to ensure accuracy and prevent duplication.

**(8)** INEC shall establish a simplified and comprehensive procedure for public verification of the voter register, providing eligible voters access to scrutinize the register for false entries or inaccuracies.

**(9)** INEC shall provide copies of the finalized voter register to political parties and publish a full breakdown of voter registration figures accessible to the public.

**Amendment to Section 12**  
 Add a section to **Part II** of the Electoral Act:  
 **“Section 12A: Performance Evaluations for INEC Staff”**

1. INEC shall implement regular performance evaluations for all staff, with adherence to operational standards and penalties for lapses.
2. Evaluations shall include feedback from civil society organizations and accredited observers.

#### **Amendment to Section 13**

**Insertion after Section 13 (INEC Officials):**

**Section 13A: Accountability and Sanctions for INEC Officials**

(1) INEC shall adopt a zero-tolerance policy for officials found colluding with political actors.

(2) Sanctions for misconduct shall include:

* + - (a) Immediate dismissal from office.
    - (b) Legal prosecution under the National Electoral Offenses Commission.

(3) Mechanisms for voters to report malpractice anonymously shall be established, with guarantees of follow-up actions and whistleblower protection.

**Insertion of Section 29A (Disqualification of Convicted Criminals and Dual Citizens from Contesting Elections)**

1. **Eligibility Criteria for Candidates:** Any Nigerian who has been convicted of a criminal offense or has on ongoing criminal case in a foreign country, which constitutes an offense under Nigerian law, shall be ineligible to contest any elective position in Nigeria. b) Any Nigerian with dual citizenship or recently denounced their citizenship no later than 4 years before an election, shall be ineligible to contest any elective position in Nigeria.
2. **Verification Mechanism: (a)** INEC shall require all candidates to submit a sworn affidavit declaring that they have not been convicted of any criminal offense in a foreign country. **(b)** INEC shall collaborate with international law enforcement agencies, including but not limited to INTERPOL, to verify the criminal records of candidates.  **(c)** INEC shall collaborate with local and foreign agencies, to verify the citizenship of candidates.
3. **Penalties for False Declarations:** Any candidate who provides false information regarding their criminal record or citizenship status shall: **(a)** Be disqualified from the election; **(b)** Be fined not less than N100,000,000; and **(c)** Be liable to imprisonment for a term of not less than fifteen (15) years.
4. **Application of Section:** This section applies to all elective offices at federal, state, and local government levels.

**Amendment of Section 53 (Use of Electronic Voting Machines)**

**Insertion:** Add subsection (2) in Section 53:

**(2)** INEC may deploy Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) for elections. The Commission shall determine the timing and locations for initial deployment as part of a phased implementation plan, transitioning to exclusive use of EVMs in all elections within five years.

**Amendment of Section 64 (Collation of Results)**

**Substitution:** For subsection (2) of Section 64, substitute the following:

**(2)** Every result form shall be signed and stamped by the Presiding Officer and countersigned by candidates or polling agents, both at the commencement and conclusion of voting. Copies of the result forms shall be given to accredited agents, security officers, and displayed publicly at polling stations.

**Amendment of Section 93 (Donations to Candidates)**

**Substitution:** For subsection (9) of Section 93, substitute the following:

**(9)** Donations to any candidate by individuals shall be lawful but subject to the following ceilings:

(a) Presidential election: N50,000,000.

(b) Governorship election: N20,000,000.

(c) Senatorial election: N15,000,000.

(d) House of Representatives election: N10,000,000.

(e) State House of Assembly election: N5,500,000.

(f) Local Government Chairmanship election: N3,000,000.

(g) Local Government Councillorship election: N1,000,000.

**Amendment of Section 121 (Bribery and Conspiracy)**

**Substitution:** For Section 121, substitute the following:

**(1)** Any person who engages in bribery, conspiracy, or undue influence to sway election outcomes commits an offense and shall:

(a) Be fined not less than N100,000,000 for state elective positions and N100,000,000 for national elections; and

(b) Be disqualified from contesting elections for fifteen (15) years;

(c) Be imprisoned for not less than five (5) years;

**(2)** Offenders convicted under this section shall also be disqualified from contesting elections for a period of ten (10) years.

**Amendment to Section 64**

**Insertion after Section 64 (Collation of Election Results):**

**Section 64A: Public Confidence Measures**

(1) INEC shall publicly disclose the timeline for uploading election results and provide real-time updates on its electronic portals during elections.

(2) Results from polling units and collation centers shall be made available to the public, with independent verification by accredited civil society organizations.

**Amendment of Section 120 (Dereliction of duty)**

**Insertion:** For Section 120 (3A), insert the following**:** Any Resident Electoral Commissioner, Collation Officer or INEC Official who make a false declaration of the result of an election or fails to follow INEC guidelines for collation and dispersing their duties commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a maximum fine of N500,000,000 and imprisonment for a term of 10 years.

**Substitution**: For Section 120(3), substitute the following:

**(3)** Any polling agent, political party, party agent, or any electoral officer who conspires with INEC to make a false declaration of the result of an election commits an offence without adhering to INEC’s Guidlines is liable on conviction to a maximum fine of N200,000,000 and imprisonment for a term of 15 years or both.

**Amendment of Section 125 (Disorderly conduct at elections)**

**Substitution**: For Section 125, substitute the following:

1. Any person who at an election acts or incites others to act in a disorderly manner commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a maximum fine of N100,000,000 and imprisonment for a term of 15 years or both.

**Amendment of Section 150 (Uniform Procedures for Local Government Elections)**

**Substitution:** For Section 150, substitute the following:

**(1)** The provisions of this Act shall apply uniformly to all Local Government and Area Council elections in the Federation to ensure consistency and compliance with national standards.

#### **Amendment to Section 52**

**Insertion after Section 52 (Conduct of Polls):**

**Section 52A: Strengthening Election Technology**

(1) INEC shall conduct regular stress testing of electronic voting systems, including BVAS and IReV, to address technical glitches and improve offline functionality.

(2) Independent technology auditors, in collaboration with accredited NGOs, shall assess and certify the readiness of INEC's systems before each election cycle.

**Amendment to Section 64**  
Add a clause to **Section 64 (Collation of Results)**:

“All election results from polling units and collation centers shall undergo independent verification by accredited civil society organizations, with reports made publicly accessible.”

**Amendment of Part VIII (Electoral Offenses and Penalties)**

**Insertion:** Add new sections to strengthen penalties for electoral offenses:

* **Section 130A:** Any person or politiical party found guilty of voter registration fraud or vote buying shall:

(a) Be fined N50,000,000 per polling unit;

(b) Be disqualified from contesting elections for fifteen (15) years;

(c) Lead to imprisonment for a minimum of Ten (10) years;

* **Section 130B:** Tampering with electronic voting machines or result transmission systems shall:

(a) Attract a fine of N100,000,000 per state;

(b) Lead to imprisonment for a minimum of Ten (10) years;

(c) Be disqualified from contesting elections for fifteen (15) years;

* **Section 137A: Burden of Proof in Election Petiions**

1. **Presumption of Regularity:** Election results announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) shall be presumed to be accurate and valid unless proven otherwise in accordance with this Act.
2. **Burden of Proof on INEC: (a)** In any election petition challenging the validity of results announced by INEC, the Commission shall bear the burden of proof to: (**b).** Defend the integrity and accuracy of the results announced; and  
   **(c)** Demonstrate full compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines in the conduct of the election.
3. **Obligations of INEC in Election Petitions: (a)** INEC shall be required to: a. Provide access to all election materials to a candidates, accredited NGOs and citizens, including but not limited to, certified copies of result sheets, voter registers, and electronic data, meta data, access to server logs, live bodycam recordings of collation centre agents, clear CCTV recording of state, local government and national Collation centres across the nation used in the collation and transmission 24 hours after annoucing a result and ensure it is accessible to petitioners; **(b)** Present comprehensive evidence of compliance with the Electoral Act, its guidelines, and any court orders related to the election; and **(c)** Cooperate fully with the petitioners tribunal or court hearing the petition.
4. **Burden of Proof on Petitioners: (a)** The petitioner shall: a. Establish prima facie evidence of irregularities, non-compliance, or fraud sufficient to shift the evidentiary burden to INEC; and **(b)** Specify the nature of relief sought, including requests for a rerun, cancellation, or other remedies under this Act.
5. **Standard of Proof: (a)** The standard of proof required for INEC to defend the announced results shall be on a balance of probabilities and strict adherence to its Guidelines.
6. **Failure to Satisfy Burden of Proof: (a)** If INEC fails to provide sufficient evidence to defend the validity of the election results, or strict observance of its electoral guideline for the electoral cycle the tribunal or court shall: **a.** Declare the election invalid; **(b)** Order a rerun.
7. **Failure to Satisfy Obiligations: (a)** If INEC fails to provide sufficient and timely access to all election materials to candidates and accreditted parties, the tribunal or court shall: (b). Declare the election invalid; **(c)** Order a rerun. (d) Fine the INEC Chairman and Electoral officers involved and ban them from any public office for 15years.
8. **Judicial Oversight: (a)** Tribunals and courts shall have the authority to issue directives to INEC to comply with the requirements of this section, including timelines for evidence submission and reporting.

**Addition of Section 76A (Independent Candidates)**

**Insertion:** Add new Section 76A:

* **76A.** An independent candidate shall qualify to contest elections if:

**(1)** Nominated by not less than ten (10) registered voters from each ward in the constituency.

**(2)** Pays a refundable deposit of:

* + - (a) N2,000,000 for presidential elections.
    - (b) N1,500,000 for governorship elections.
    - (c) N1,000,000 for senatorial elections.
    - (d) N500,000 for House of Representatives elections.
    - (e) N250,000 for State House of Assembly elections.

**(3)** Secures at least 10% of valid votes cast to qualify for a refund of the deposit.

**Part IV: Procedure at Elections**

**Insertion of Section 62A (Security and Transparency at Collation Centres)**

1. **Security at Collation Centres:** INEC shall ensure that all collation centres are secured by adequate security personnel to prevent unauthorized access and maintain order throughout the collation process.
2. **Representation at Collation Centres:** INEC shall allow the presence of representatives from: **(a)** All registered political parties contesting the election; **(b)**. Accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs); and **(c)**. Accredited domestic and international election observers.
3. **Transparency Measures: (a)** The collation and voting process shall be conducted in full view of the representatives listed above, with audio-visual coverage. (c) Collation officers shall wear body cams that record their activities during the dispersion of thier duties **(b)** INEC shall ensure the publication of polling centre results by its polling officer at the polling unit in the view of voters at the unit. (c) INEC shall ensure the publication of collation centre results in real-time on its official platforms.
4. **Code of Conduct for Collation Centres:** All representatives and observers at collation centres shall adhere to a code of conduct issued by INEC, which shall include provisions to prevent interference with the collation process.
5. **Penalties for Violations:** Any individual, official or group found disrupting the collation process or violating the rules of access to collation centres shall be liable to: **(a)**. A fine not exceeding N200,000,000; or **(b.)** Imprisonment for a term not exceeding five (10) years; or **(c)**. Both penalties.

#### **Amendment to Section 62**

**Insertion after Section 62 (Collation of Results):**

**Section 62A: Transparency at Collation Centers**

(1) All collation centers shall be equipped with CCTV cameras and bodycams to ensure transparency during result collation.

(2) INEC shall provide live feeds of collation activities, accessible to the public, on its official platforms.

**Insertion of Section 62B (Non-Compliance with INEC Guidelines)**

1. **Cancellation of Results for Non-Compliance:** Where it is established that a polling unit or collation centre failed to comply with INEC’s guidelines and regulations, or this act, the results from such polling units shall be declared invalid and cancelled.
2. **Mandatory Rerun:** INEC shall conduct a rerun election for any polling unit whose results have been cancelled due to non-compliance with its guidelines and regulations within 21 days of the initial election.
3. **Accountability:** INEC officials found culpable for failing to enforce compliance with guidelines and regulations at polling units, collation or in the delivery of their duties shall be subject to disciplinary measures, including: **(a)**. Suspension or dismissal; and **(b)**. Prosecution under applicable provisions of the Electoral Act.
4. **Transparency in Decision-Making:** INEC shall publish a detailed report on reasons for the cancellation of results from polling units, ensuring public access to the information.

**Insertion of Section 62C: Publication of Polling Unit Results**

1. **Mandatory Public Access to Results:** INEC guidelines shall require that immediately after the close of voting at a polling unit, the results of that polling unit shall be publicly announced from the polling unit in view all voters and shared with accredited Non Govermental Organisations, Media organisations and published online in real time for access by all Nigerians.
2. **Penalties for Non-Publication:** Where INEC fails to publish the results of a polling unit as required: a. The results from that polling unit shall be declared invalid and cancelled; and b. A rerun election shall be conducted within 21 days of the initial election.
3. **Transparency Assurance:** INEC shall maintain a secure and publicly accessible portal for the publication of polling unit results, with adequate measures to prevent tampering or unauthorized access.
4. **Accountability for Non-Compliance:** INEC officials responsible for non-compliance with this section shall be subject to: **(a)**. Suspension or dismissal; and **(b)**. Prosecution under applicable provisions of the Electoral Act. (c) 10 years of imprisonment.

#### **Amendment to Section 89**

**Insertion after Section 89 (Political Party Finances):**

**Section 89A: Mandatory Pre-Election Financial Disclosure**

(1) Candidates and political parties shall submit a detailed disclosure of funding sources and expenditures to INEC at least thirty (30) days before the election.

(2) Failure to comply with this requirement shall attract penalties, including:

* + - (a) Fines of up to N50,000,000 for political parties.
    - (b) Disqualification of candidates.

**Amendment to Section 90:**

**Insert the following new subsections:**

**Subsection 90(4):** Political parties shall annually disclose their finances, audited by independent bodies, and submit the audit reports to INEC.

**Subsection 90(5):** INEC shall maintain a publicly accessible database for voter scrutiny of campaign finances.

**Amendment of Section 95 (Media Access for Campaigns)**

**Insertion:** Add new subsections to ensure equitable media access:

**(5)** All political parties and candidates shall have equal access to state-owned and privately-owned media outlets.

(6) State-owned and privately-owned media outlets shall ensure publication fees are not greater that average cost of access per slot for 1 year before an election.

**(7)** Paid political advertisements and sponsored content must be clearly labeled to avoid misleading the public.

**(8)** Media regulatory institutions that regulate content shall ensure fair decision making regarding approval of the publication of such content and shall provide detailed clarity on their approval process and reasons for refusals.

**(9)** Breaches of media access rules shall attract penalties of:

(a) N200,000,000 for state or private media organizations per infraction.

(b) N5,000,000 for candidates or parties.

(c) 5 year imprisonment for heads of media regulatory institutions and public official responsible for granting approvals.

d) 5 year imprisonment for heads of state or private media organisation and their official responsible responsible for granting approvals for political advertisments.

**Amendment to Section 125**

Add a section under **Part VI (Electoral Offenses)**:  
 **“Section 125A: Anonymous Reporting Mechanisms”**

1. INEC and NEOC shall establish secure channels for voters and officials to anonymously report electoral malpractice.
2. Reports shall be tracked with guarantees of follow-up investigations.

#### **Amendment to Section 145**

**Insertion after Section 145 (Offenses and Penalties):**

**Section 145A: Establishment of the National Electoral Offenses Commission**

(1) The National Electoral Offenses Commission is hereby established as an independent statutory authority with the mandate to:

* + - (a) Investigate and prosecute electoral offenses.
    - (b) Develop specialized task forces for rapid investigation and prosecution of violations, supported by law enforcement agencies.
    - (c) Establish anti-vote-buying teams and encourage whistleblowing through protected channels.

(2) The NEOC shall collaborate with INEC, security agencies, and civil society organizations to ensure timely prosecution of electoral offenders.

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

This Bill seeks to amend the Electoral Act, 2022 as a consequence of certain improvements introduced into the electoral process by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Amendment) Act 2023, including independent candidacy, proportional representation and the creation of new agencies. Other modifications to the Act are in the nature of corrective measures flowing from the conduct of some recent general elections. It also provides for the unification of the conduct of Local Government and Area Council elections.

# ANNEXURE THREE

**THE NIGERIA POLICE ACT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025**

A Bill for an Act to Amend the Nigeria Police Act, 2020, to Enhance Police Accountability, Promote Human Rights, and Strengthen Community Policing; and for Related Matters.

**AMENDMENTS**

**Amendment of Section 2 (Specific Objectives)**

**Substitution:**

For the existing Section 2, substitute the following:

* **Section 2:** The specific objectives of this Act are to:

(a) Provide for a Police Force that is more responsive to the needs of the general public and operates with the values of fairness, justice, and equity.

(b) Reposition the Police Force to uphold and safeguard the fundamental rights of every person in Nigeria in its operations.

(c) Promote a positive change in the public perception of the Police Force by ensuring that its functions are performed in a manner sensitive to the needs and well-being of the general public.

(d) Empower the Police Force to effectively prevent crimes without threatening the liberty and privacy of persons in Nigeria.

(e) Strengthen the Police Force in the performance of its functions, including the safety and security of all persons, communities, and property in Nigeria.

(f) Ensure that the Police perform their functions by creating an enabling environment to promote cooperation and partnership between the Police and the communities they serve to effectively prevent, reduce, or eradicate crimes.

(g) Develop professionalism in the Police Force by providing relevant training in all police formations in Nigeria for enhanced performance.

(h) Respect the rights of victims of crime and understand their needs.

(i) Promote transparency and accountability within the Police Force to build public trust and confidence.

(j) Encourage the integration of modern technology and intelligence in policing to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

**Amendment of Section 4 (General Duties of the Police)**

**Substitution:**

For the existing Section 4, substitute the following:

* **Section 4:** The Police Force shall:

(a) Prevent and detect crimes, and protect the rights and freedoms of every person in Nigeria as provided in the Constitution, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and any other law.

(b) Maintain public safety, law, and order.

(c) Protect the lives and property of all persons in Nigeria.

(d) Enforce all laws and regulations without any prejudice to the enabling Acts of other security agencies.

(e) Discharge such duties within and outside Nigeria as may be required under this Act or any other law.

(f) Collaborate with other agencies to take necessary action and provide the required assistance or support to persons in distress, including victims of road accidents, fire disasters, earthquakes, and floods.

(g) Facilitate the free passage and movement on highways, roads, and streets open to the public.

(h) Adopt community partnership in the discharge of its responsibilities under this Act or any other law.

(i) Vet and approve the registration of private detective schools and private investigative outfits.

(j) Uphold and protect the human rights of all persons, ensuring that policing methods are in line with constitutional provisions and international human rights standards.

(k) Ensure accountability and transparency in all its operations and dealings with the public.

**Amendment of Section 5 (Duty of Police to Enforce Certain Constitutional Provisions, etc.)**

**Substitution:**

For the existing Section 5, substitute the following:

* **Section 5:**

(1) The Police Force is responsible for promoting and protecting the fundamental rights of persons in police custody as guaranteed by the Constitution.

(2) For the purpose of subsection (1), the Police Force shall collaborate with and maintain close working relationships with any government agency or relevant private initiatives in the establishment of schemes or mechanisms offering legal services to accused persons, detainees, or accused persons in police custody in need of legal services to ensure that they have full access to justice as laid down under the relevant provisions of Chapter IV of the Constitution.

(3) In addition to the provisions of subsections (1) and (2), the Police Force is also charged with the responsibility for promoting and protecting the fundamental rights of all persons as guaranteed under the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act and other international legal instruments on human rights to which Nigeria is a signatory.

(4) The Police Force shall establish a Human Rights Desk in all its formations to address complaints of human rights violations promptly and effectively.

(5) The Police Force shall ensure that all officers undergo regular training on human rights standards and the lawful use of force.

**Amendment of Section 6 (Establishment and Functions of the Nigeria Police Council)**

**Substitution:**

For the existing Section 6, substitute the following:

* **Section 6:**

(1) There is established for the Police Force the Nigeria Police Council (in this Act referred to as "the Council") which is the highest policy-making body in matters relating to the Police Force.

(2) The Police Council shall consist of:

(a) The President, who is the Chairman.

(b) The Governor of each State of the Federation.

(c) The Chairman of the Police Service Commission.

(d) The Inspector-General of Police.

(e) Two representatives from civil society organizations with a focus on human rights and police accountability.

(f) Two retired senior police officers, not below the rank of Assistant Inspector-General of Police.

(3) The functions of the Police Council include:

(a) The organization and administration of the Police Force and all other matters relating to the Police Force (not being matters relating to the use and operational control of the Police Force, or the appointment, disciplinary control, and dismissal of members of the Police Force).

(b) The general supervision of the Police Force.

(c) Advising the President on the appointment of the Inspector-General of Police.

(d) Receiving and deliberating on reports and advising the President or Inspector-General of Police on actions to be taken:

(i) Pertaining to policing matters from the States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja on any crucial decision of their security committee meetings held during the three months preceding a quarterly meeting of the Police Council.

(ii) On security concerns relating to policing from the States and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, and taking such action as it may consider appropriate.

(e) Ensuring that the Police Force adheres to principles of accountability, transparency, and respect for human rights in all its operations.

(4) The Police Council shall meet at least twice a year and may hold emergency meetings when necessary

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

This Bill seeks to amend the Nigeria Police Act, 2020, to address key areas critical to effective policing and public trust. The amendments aim to strengthen police accountability, uphold human rights, and embed community partnership in policing. It introduces provisions for ongoing voter registration, the establishment of human rights desks, and a restructured Nigeria Police Council. These changes align with international best practices and are intended to enhance transparency, efficiency, and public confidence in policing operations in Nigeria.

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