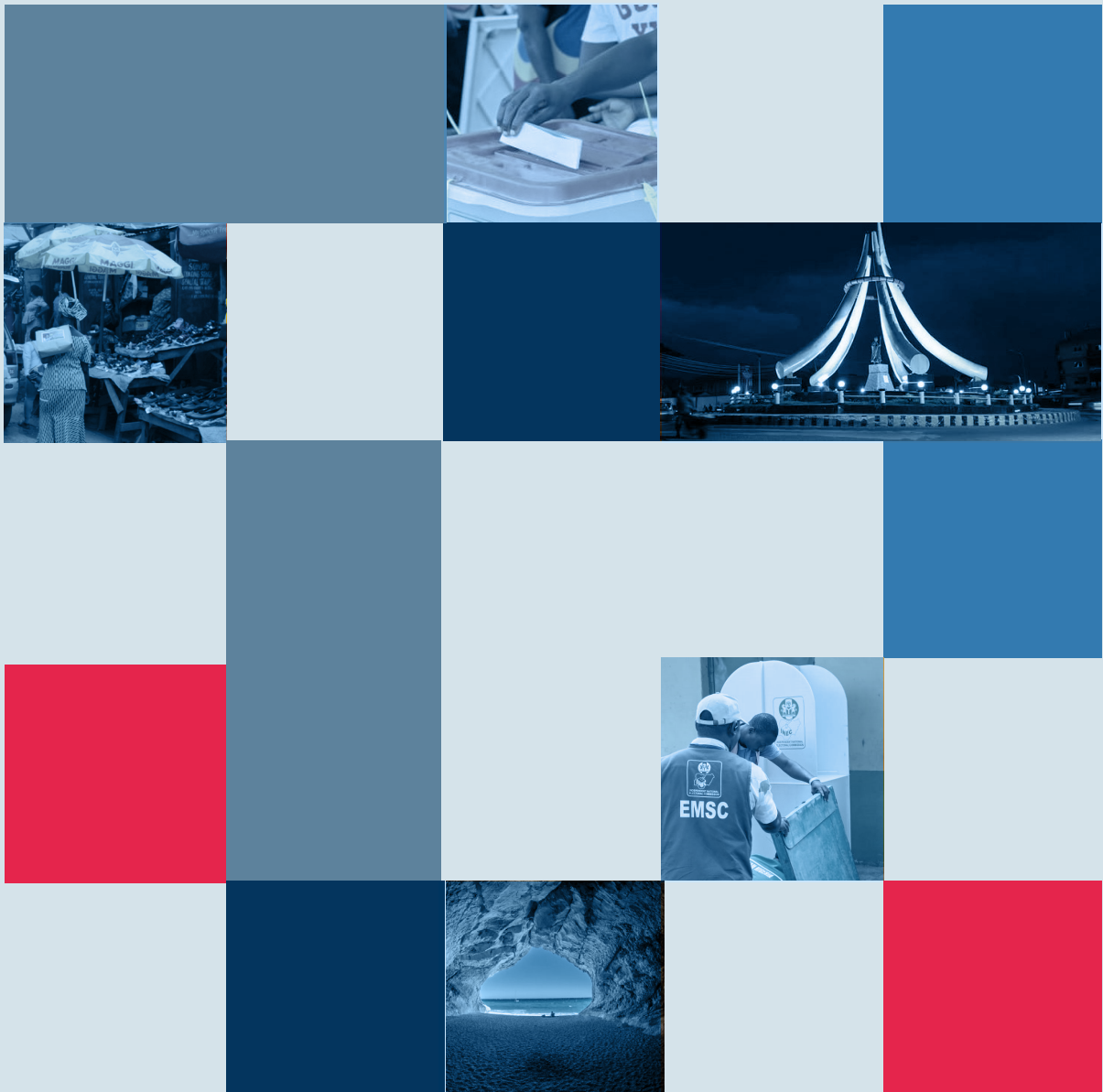


THE EARLY WARNING:

...assessing pre-election security risk
ahead of the 2025 Anambra off-cycle
Governorship Election.



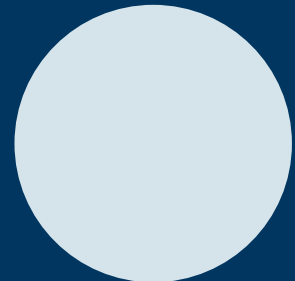
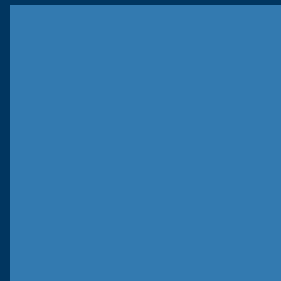
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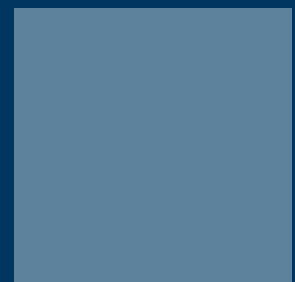
...assessing pre-election security risk
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CITIZENS



DEMOCRACY



DEVELOPMENT



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ABOUT KIMPACT

Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI) is a democracy, development, and civic tech think tank working to strengthen democratic development and good governance in Nigeria and across West Africa. Established in 2014, KDI deploys innovative programming, development research, data-driven advocacy, and technology-enabled solutions to promote electoral integrity and accountability, institutional reform, and citizen participation.

Through partnerships with electoral bodies, civil society, security agencies, and grassroots communities, KDI drives citizen-led accountability and creates pathways for inclusive governance.

OUR MISSION:

To inspire citizen-led democratic development that is anchored on the principles of participation, data-driven advocacy, strong democratic institutions, and public policies.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 Anambra State Governorship Election takes place in a complex socio-political environment shaped by historical electoral violence, heightened political competition, and evolving security dynamics. Recognising the interplay of structural and situational factors that could influence electoral integrity, the Election Security Risk Assessment (ESRA) was deployed to provide a comprehensive diagnostic of potential threats to safe, credible, and inclusive elections. The ESRA approach situates elections within broader societal processes, recognising that governance, socio-economic conditions, security environments, and information dynamics collectively shape electoral outcomes. By producing actionable intelligence, ESRA equips electoral stakeholders—including INEC, security agencies, political actors, civil society, media, and local communities—with tools to anticipate, prevent, and respond to risks in real time.

ESRA Overview and Methodology for 2025 Anambra

The 2025 Anambra ESRA was conducted statewide across all 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs) between July and August 2025. The assessment combined structural and situational approaches to capture both long-term risk drivers and emerging developments in the lead-up to the election.

Study Scope and Design: A mixed-methods approach was applied, integrating quantitative and qualitative research streams. The structural baseline measured key risk factors across six ESRA dimensions: Political Dynamics, Security and Community Tensions, Socio-Economic and Demographic Stressors, Electoral Management and Institutional Preparedness, Gender-Based Electoral Risks, and Media and Information Ecosystem. Complementing this baseline, the situational track monitored weekly developments including incidents, environmental constraints, and emergent trends.

Component	Purpose	Coverage	Frequency	Instruments
Structural Baseline	Capture long-term risk factors aligned with ESRA dimensions	21 LGAs	One-off survey	Random sample survey

Situational Track	Monitor emergent risks and shifts in the security environment	21 LGAs	Weekly	Observational checklists, incident logs
Qualitative Enquiry	Explore perceptions, experiences, and local dynamics	Statewide, purposive selection	Periodic	FGDs, KIs
Desk Review and Validation	Corroborate field data and contextualise findings	Secondary sources	Continuous	Reports, media, administrative data

Data Sources and Sample Profile:

- Quantitative survey: 2,057 respondents across 21 LGAs, achieving near gender parity, diverse age representation, and inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- Weekly observational assessments: LGA-based monitors reporting incidents and trends on a fixed schedule.
- FGDs and KIs: Purposefully selected stakeholders including electoral officials, security personnel, and community leaders.
- Desk review: Media reports, INEC documentation, and CSO analyses were continuously reviewed to validate field findings.

Key Findings

1. Political Violence Remains a Persistent Threat: Anambra's electoral history continues to influence voter perceptions, with lingering distrust stemming from past episodes of politically motivated violence.
2. Escalation of Non-Electoral Violence: Compared with the 2021 elections, violence in Anambra has intensified beyond the electoral cycle, reflecting structural grievances that may be activated during election campaigns.
3. Rivalries Intensifying Resentment: Competition among political actors is increasingly personalized, increasing the likelihood of tensions escalating if campaign communication is not carefully managed.
4. Public Distrust in Security Agencies: Many LGAs exhibit low confidence in state

security forces, creating vulnerabilities in electoral security enforcement and crisis management.

5. Community-Level Disputes as Escalation Triggers: Local disputes, though moderate in intensity, carry potential for rapid escalation during heightened electoral activity, particularly in urban and peri-urban LGAs.
6. Latent Identity Tensions: Ethno-religious and identity-based grievances exist beneath the surface and could be activated by misinformation, exclusionary narratives, or provocative political messaging.
7. INEC Credibility Under Pressure: Perceived deficits in transparency, preparedness, and responsiveness pose risks to public trust in the electoral process.
8. Youth Unemployment as a Structural Risk Multiplier: High levels of youth unemployment across LGAs increase susceptibility to political mobilization, vote-buying, and engagement in coercive electoral activities.
9. Gender-Based Risks Remain Under-Recognised: Women face intimidation, underrepresentation, and potential electoral violence, with insufficient monitoring mechanisms to mitigate these risks.
10. Media and Information Space is Highly Fragile: Bias, misinformation, and manipulation—amplified by digital platforms and generative AI—pose a significant threat to public trust and election credibility.

Hotspot Overview:

The ESRA analysis of Anambra State identifies a spectrum of risk across its 21 LGAs, reflecting a combination of historical patterns, socio-economic stressors, political dynamics, security conditions, and community tensions. LGAs were categorized by risk color (Red, Orange, Gold), which provides a clear visualization of where election-related vulnerabilities are most concentrated.

Severe Risk – Red LGAs

- Ihiala and Aguata stand out as the highest-risk LGAs.

High Risk – Orange LGAs

- Awka South, Ogbaru, Onitsha North, Anaocha, Ekwusigo, Idemili North, Idemili South, Nnewi North, Oyi, Orumba North, Orumba South, Anambra East, Awka North, Ayamelum, Dunukofia

Moderate Risk – Gold LGAs

- Onitsha South, Njikoka, Nnewi South, Anambra West

Recommendations

1. Enhance INEC Preparedness and Public Confidence: Operational drills, transparency in PVC distribution, real-time communication, and post-election grievance mechanisms.
2. Manage Political Dynamics and Campaign Conduct: Code of conduct enforcement, conflict-sensitivity workshops, and monitoring campaign financing to limit vote trading.
3. Strengthen Security Architecture: Adequate security deployments, coordination centres, and rapid response units in high-risk LGAs.
4. Mitigate Socio-Economic Risks: Community engagement programs for unemployed youth, monitoring vote-buying, and civic education initiatives.
5. Integrate Gender-Sensitive Interventions: Female security deployment, safe reporting channels, civic education for women, and community advocacy against patriarchal constraints.
6. Counter Media Manipulation: Verified election information campaigns, bias monitoring, rapid response to misinformation, and media literacy programs.
7. Institutionalize Community-Level Peacebuilding: Ward-level peace committees, reporting channels, and pre-election sensitization on non-violence and tolerance.
8. Conduct Post-Election Analysis: Hotspot audits, lessons learned documentation, and continuous stakeholder engagement for future electoral risk mitigation.

// *The 2025 Anambra Governorship Election faces intertwined political rivalry, socio-economic strain, and institutional fragility, with risks in some LGAs from fierce APGA-LP-APC competition, insecurity, and public distrust. Though separatist violence has waned, issues like unemployment and misinformation could spark unrest, requiring proactive, transparent coordination by INEC, security agencies, and CSOs to ensure credible, peaceful polls "*

Highlight of the 2025 Anambra ESRA

- 1. Political Violence is a Persistent Shadow:** Anambra's electoral history remains marred by episodes of violence, shaping public perception and undermining confidence in peaceful democratic competition.
- 2. Violence is Escalating Beyond Elections:** Compared to 2021, the current environment reveals a broader rise in violence. Non-electoral violence has become deeply woven into the political space, creating risks that extend beyond election day.
- 3. Political Rivalry is Tilting Toward Resentment:** Power struggles are intensifying, with a strong likelihood that rivalries could spiral into resentment unless campaign communication is deliberately managed to reduce tension.
- 4. Security Agencies are Facing a Trust Crisis:** Public trust in security institutions is dangerously low across many LGAs, marking a critical "red zone" for electoral security and institutional credibility.
- 5. Community-Level Disputes Carry Escalation Potential:** Identity-driven agitation and local disputes remain relatively low in intensity but could escalate rapidly as election activities heighten.
- 6. Latent Identity Tensions are Simmering Beneath the Surface:** Hidden grievances rooted in ethno-religious issues are evident. Though not yet violent, they could be activated by misinformation, provocation, or exclusionary narratives.
- 7. INEC's Credibility is Under Pressure:** Trust deficits in electoral administration are shaping local perceptions, highlighting the urgent need for INEC to strengthen transparency and consistency to rebuild confidence.
- 8. Youth Unemployment is a Structural Risk Multiplier:** Economic discontent, particularly among unemployed youth, is emerging as a cross-cutting driver of insecurity across Anambra's LGAs.
- 9. Gender Risks are Still Under-Recognised:** While risks of violence against women in elections (VAWIE) are acknowledged, gaps in documentation and recognition create blind spots in designing effective interventions.
- 10. The Information Space is a Battlefield:** Media trust is fragile, with heightened risks of manipulation, bias, and misinformation. This environment could fuel polarisation and disrupt the credibility of the electoral process.

01.

INTRODUCTION

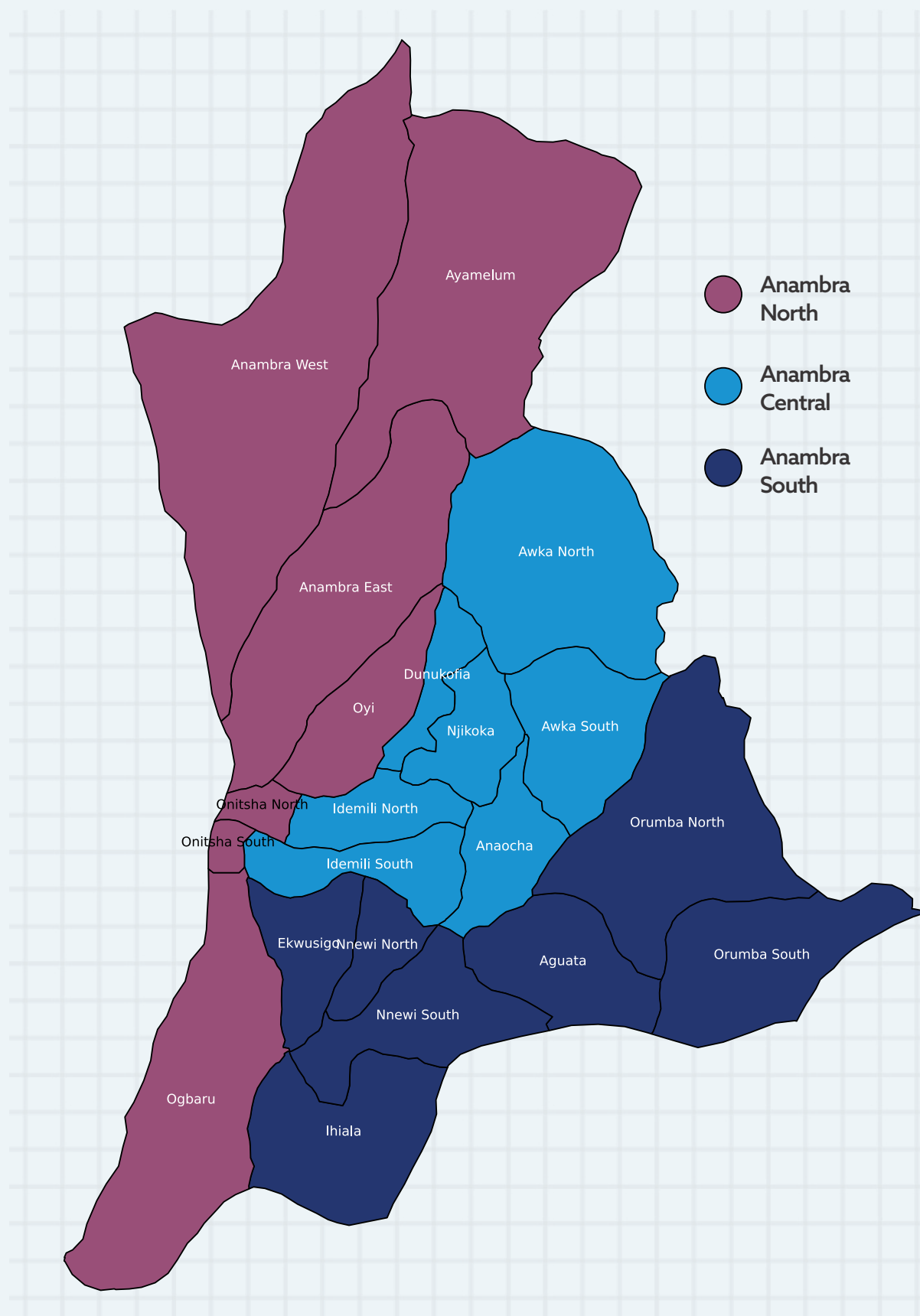
Elections remain one of the most visible tests of democratic consolidation, but in fragile or politically competitive environments, they can easily transform into flashpoints for instability. Anambra State, with its vibrant but turbulent political history, provides a compelling example of this duality. The November 2025 off-cycle governorship election is not simply another electoral contest. It represents a convergence of historical legacies, evolving party dynamics, security concerns, and structural vulnerabilities that together shape the prospects for peace and credibility.

The off-cycle nature of Anambra's governorship election is itself the product of judicial interventions that reshaped Nigeria's electoral calendar in the mid-2000s. Landmark rulings affirmed the judiciary's role in protecting electoral mandates but also underscored how intense competition in Anambra often spills beyond the ballot box into protracted disputes. These dynamics have contributed to an enduring perception of the state as a site of both political innovation and chronic volatility.

Item	Detail
Region	South East, Nigeria
Capital	Awka
Major urban centers	Onitsha, Nnewi, Awka, Ekwulobia
Land area	~4,844 km ²
Borders	Delta (W), Imo and Rivers (S), Enugu (E), Kogi (N)
River systems	Niger River; Omambala/Anambra River and floodplains
Climate	Tropical wet-dry; heavy rains Apr–Oct influence flooding and access

Item	Detail
Local Government Areas	21
Senatorial districts	Anambra North, Anambra Central, Anambra South
Population reference	4,177,821 (2006 census, official baseline)
Subnational Human Development Index (2022)	0.674 (rank: 6th/37) ¹
Executive leadership	Governor Chukwuma Charles Soludo (APGA); Deputy Gov. Gilbert Ibezim
Key transport assets	First and Second Niger Bridges; Onitsha–Enugu and Onitsha–Owerri expressways; Umueri cargo/passenger airport; proposed/partial Onitsha River Port operations ²

Anambra State Senatorial Districts and LGAs



Anambra's vibrant political competition intersects with an increasingly fragile security environment. The state has recorded a sharp decline in voter turnout, falling from 21 per cent in the 2017 governorship election to just 10.3 per cent in 2021, despite high levels of political awareness. This decline is closely tied to the activities of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and its armed wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), which have enforced sit-at-home orders, targeted security personnel, and threatened electoral participation.^{3 4} The 2021 election illustrated the gravity of these risks: insecurity in Ihiala Local Government Area was so severe that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) could not conduct voting there on election day, resorting instead to a supplementary poll⁵. Such patterns demonstrate how insecurity, whether directly targeted at the electoral process or ambient in the environment, suppresses participation, undermines logistical planning, and reinforces public apathy⁶.

The consequences extend beyond voter behaviour. Candidates often avoid volatile LGAs such as Ihiala, Orumba, or Nnewi South, limiting grassroots engagement⁷. Party agents and canvassers face intimidation risks in rural communities where security presence is weak⁸. Electoral officials, including youth corps members, may refuse postings to high-risk zones, creating logistical gaps. Civil society organisations also scale back observation in flashpoints, leaving areas with reduced oversight. These dynamics cumulatively erode electoral credibility and strengthen the perception that voting is "not worth the risk."

Fear itself becomes a political instrument. In tightly contested elections, parties and candidates can exploit insecurity in subtle ways, suggesting that rivals' victories may escalate violence or interpreting attacks in certain strongholds as deliberate suppression. Such narratives stoke conspiracy theories, fuel mistrust, and raise the risk of inflammatory rhetoric inflaming inter-party tensions. The 2025 governorship election, therefore, will not only test Anambra's institutional resilience but also the willingness of political actors to exercise restraint in an environment primed for volatility.

The stakes in November 2025 go beyond determining who governs Anambra for the next four years. A peaceful, credible election would demonstrate the state's ability to rise above its legacy of judicially mediated transitions and politically charged violence. A disrupted or boycotted election, however, would deepen voter alienation, erode institutional trust, and entrench cycles of instability. For these reasons, coordinated efforts by all stakeholders are indispensable to ensuring that the upcoming election strengthens, rather than undermines, democratic resilience in Anambra State.

Hence, the imperative for the Pre-Election Security Risk Assessment (ESRA), a structured framework developed by Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI) for understanding and mitigating the electoral security risks. ESRA identify emerging risks before they escalate, the tool supports stakeholders—INEC, security agencies, political parties, civil society, and international observers—in making informed decisions on resource deployment, stakeholder engagement, and risk mitigation. This approach is not limited to describing risks; it provides a basis for coordinated proactive responses that can safeguard both the process and its outcomes.



A cross section of participants at the ESRA methodology review meeting



ABOUT ESRA

The Election Security Risk Assessment (ESRA) is a holistic pre-election diagnostic framework designed to analyse and interpret the wide spectrum of risks that could trigger electoral violence or undermine electoral integrity. It approaches elections not only as political events, but also as complex societal processes influenced by governance, security, socio-economic, legal, and cultural dynamics.

By combining structural indicators with situational monitoring, ESRA functions as a Composite Risk Intelligence System that enables the anticipation, mapping, and mitigation of electoral risks. Its methodology integrates both long-term historical patterns and emerging developments, ensuring that preventive measures and interventions are rooted in evidence and local realities.

The core goal of ESRA is to strengthen electoral violence prevention by equipping stakeholders, including the INEC, security agencies, political actors, civil society organisations (CSOs), the media, and community networks with actionable intelligence. Through hotspot identification, early warning dissemination, and citizen-driven monitoring, ESRA supports the creation of tailored security and civic engagement strategies that foster safe, credible, and inclusive elections.

The Election Security Risk Assessment (ESRA) tool has played a crucial role in supporting credible and peaceful elections across Nigeria by enabling early warning, coordinating a response, and strategically deploying security and electoral resources. Since its introduction, the tool has been successfully applied in elections in Nigeria since the 2019 General Elections, helping to identify and mitigate potential flashpoints across the country. It was further deployed in several politically competitive off-cycle elections between 2019 and 2024, where it supported targeted interventions and preventive measures.

Objectives of ESRA



The core objectives of ESRA are:

1. To enable the early identification and mapping of high-risk areas by analysing both historical trends and current local dynamics, thereby guiding targeted and preventive electoral security interventions.
2. To provide electoral stakeholders with integrated, real-time and structural risk insights that enhance situational awareness, support coordinated decision-making and facilitate the timely dissemination of early warning signals for proactive response.
3. To mobilise communities, peace infrastructures, and CSOs to implement grassroots mitigation strategies that complement state-led security interventions.

DIMENSIONS OF ESRA

ESRA, based on its methodology, assesses risk across eight interrelated dimensions that together provide a comprehensive view of the electoral security environment:

Dimension	Scope of Analysis
1. Political Dynamics and Contestation	Examines the nature of competition among political actors, intra- and inter-party disputes, candidate selection processes, campaign conduct, and the use of inflammatory rhetoric.
2a. Security Dynamics and State Response	Evaluates the operational readiness, neutrality, and responsiveness of security agencies, as well as patterns of violence, criminality, and the potential militarisation of the process.
2b. Community-Level Conflict and Tensions	Assesses local disputes, communal rivalries, vigilante activities, and micro-level tensions that could spill over into the electoral arena.
2c. Ethno-Religious Tensions	Reviews identity-based divisions, religious endorsements, and historical fault lines that may fuel electoral polarisation and violence.
3. Electoral Management and Institutional Preparedness	Measures the capacity, neutrality, and credibility of INEC and allied institutions in logistics, voter register integrity, election technology, and dispute resolution mechanisms.
4. Legal and Judicial Triggers	Analyses the likelihood of pre- and post-election litigation, tribunal credibility, and the use of courts as arenas of political contestation.
5. Socio-Economic Stressors	Captures poverty, unemployment, vote buying, and other economic incentives that heighten vulnerability to electoral manipulation or violence.
6. Early Warning and Peace Infrastructure	Evaluates the availability and functionality of community peace committees, early warning systems, and local mediation mechanisms for de-escalation.
7. Gender-Based Risks	Tracks patterns of Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWIE), structural barriers to women's participation, and gender-specific forms of electoral intimidation.
8. Media and Information Ecosystem	Assesses the influence of traditional and digital media, the spread of misinformation and disinformation, partisan reporting, and the potential role of media in inflaming or calming tensions.

The 2025 Anambra State Election Security Risk Assessment (ESRA) was conducted as a statewide diagnostic covering all 21 Local Government Areas between July and August 2025. The research design combined structural and situational tracks to capture both long-term electoral risk drivers and real-time developments that could influence the security environment in the lead-up to the election. This section sets out the scope, design, and data of the assessment.

Study Scope and Design: The ESRA applied a mixed-methods approach that integrated quantitative and qualitative research. The structural baseline was established through a one-off survey designed to measure risk factors across six ESRA dimensions. These dimensions were selected from the broader ESRA framework, with the exclusion of “Legal and Judicial Triggers” and “Electoral Peace Infrastructure and Early Warning Systems.” To complement the structural baseline, a situational track provided weekly observational data that captured incident reports, environmental constraints, and emerging trends.



ESRA Dimensions: The assessment applied six dimensions of the ESRA framework, adjusted for operational clarity. Security and Community Tensions were treated as an integrated domain with three subcomponents: Security Dynamics and State Response, Community-Level Conflict and Tensions, and Ethno-Religious Tensions.

Data Sources: The ESRA design combined quantitative and qualitative data streams to ensure triangulation and reliability. The quantitative stream drew from a random sample household survey and weekly observational assessments. The qualitative stream involved FGDs, KIIs, and desk reviews.

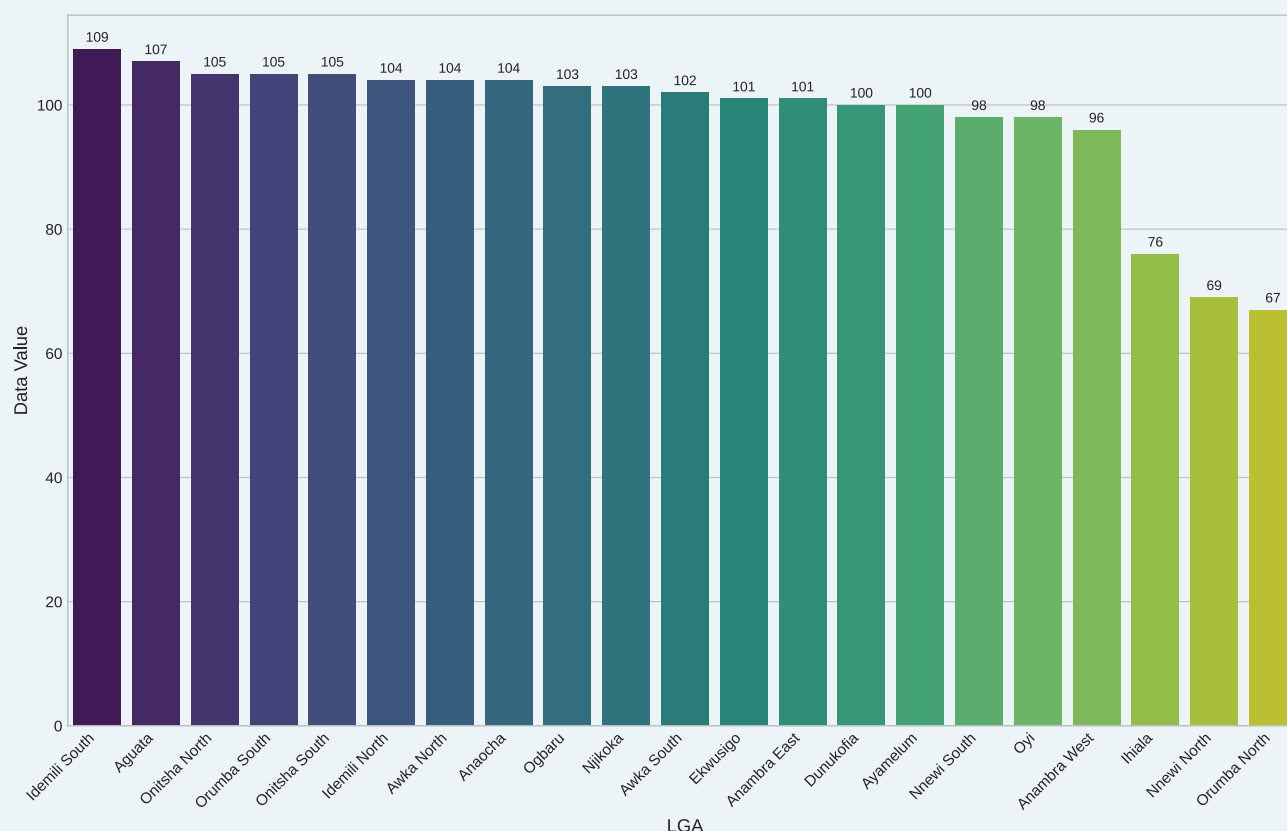
Table 3. Data Sources and Collection

Source	Modality	Sampling or Selection
Statewide Survey	Quantitative	Random sampling across 21 LGAs, proportional by urban, peri-urban, and rural
Weekly Observational Assessments	Quantitative	LGA-based monitors on fixed schedule
FGDs and KIIs	Qualitative	Purposive selection of groups: electoral officials, security agencies, and community leaders
Desk Review	Secondary	Media, INEC reports, CSO briefs

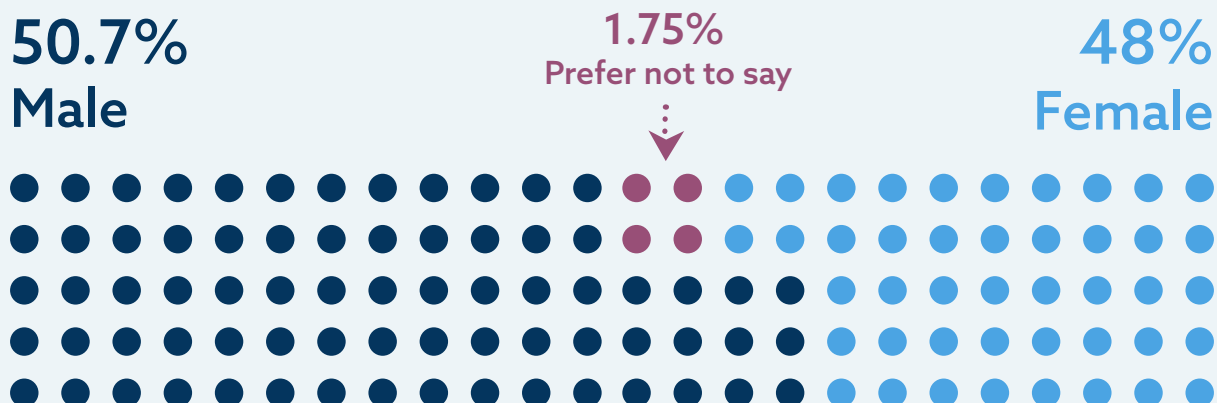
Sample Profile:

The structural survey included 2,057 respondents across the 21 LGAs. The sample achieved near gender balance, wide age coverage, and notable inclusion of persons with disabilities.

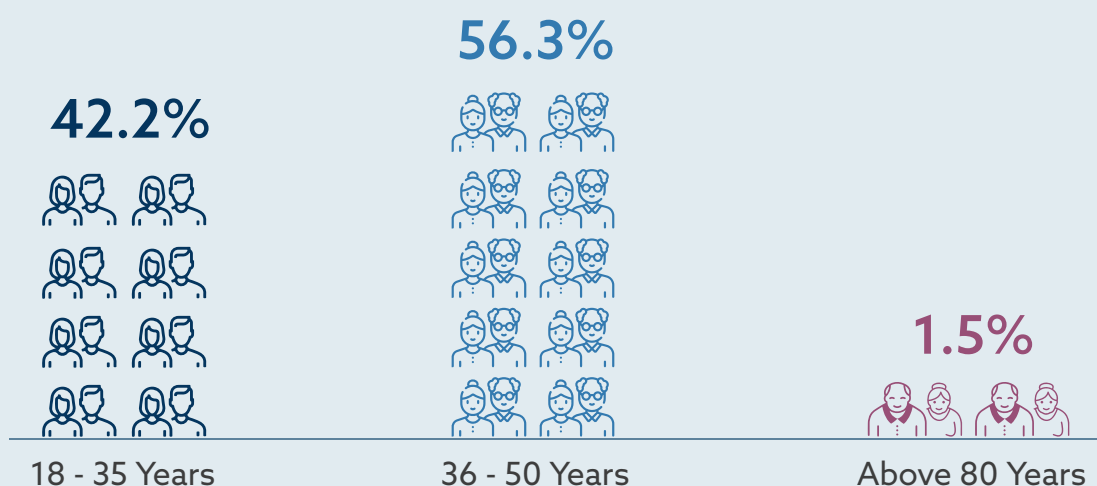
LGA REPRESENTATION OF RESPONDENTS



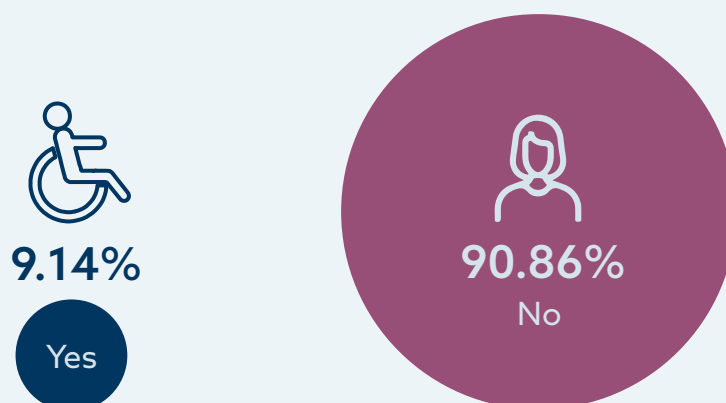
Gender Distribution of the Respondents



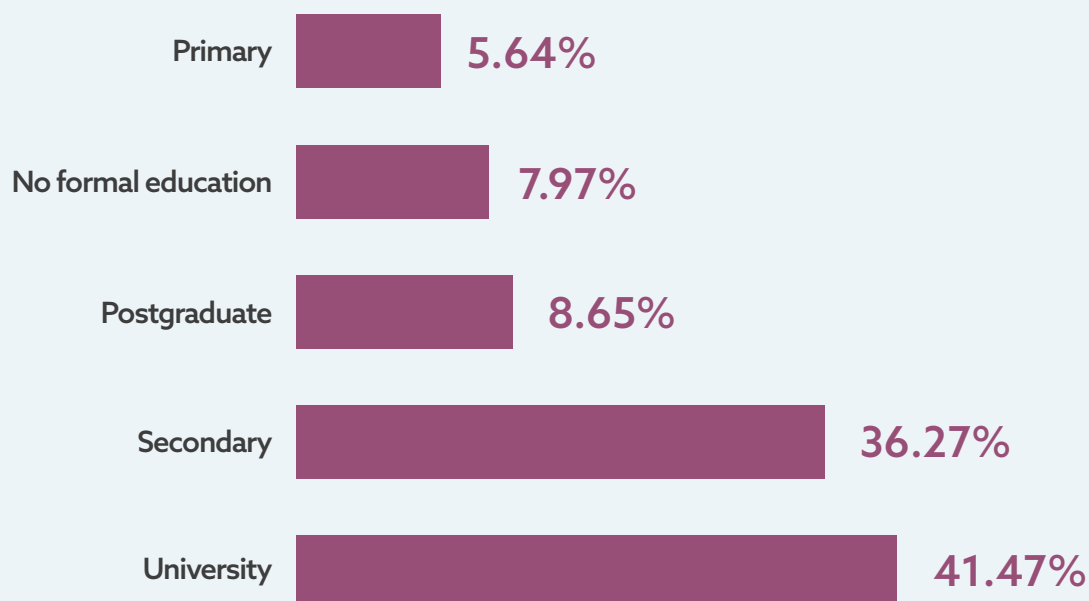
Age Distribution of the Respondents



Disability Distribution of the Respondents



Gender Distribution of the Respondents



Stakeholder contributing to the conversation at the ESRA validation meeting

02.

KEY FINDINGS

Security Context in Anambra State



Insight 1: Anambra State has a history of political violence.

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH English **DONATE NOW**

April 17, 2007 8:00PM EDT | News Release

Nigeria: Polls Marred by Violence, Fraud

(Port Harcourt, April 17, 2007) – Voting on April 14 in key Nigerian states including Rivers and **Anambra** was so marred by fraud, intimidation and violence that the results in at least those states should be canceled and the polls re-run, Human Rights Watch said today. Nigeria’s regional and international partners should press the Nigerian government to make all necessary changes to hold a free and fair presidential election on April 21, Human Rights Watch said.

Human Rights Watch researchers monitoring the conduct of elections in both Rivers State, Nigeria’s largest oil producer in the restive Niger Delta, and **Anambra** State in southeastern Nigeria, observed the open rigging of an electoral process that deprived voters of the opportunity to cast their ballots in many areas. Voting failed to take place in many areas where Nigeria’s Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) later reported voter turnout in excess of 90 percent. In several areas of Rivers State, local observers and foreign journalists watched ballot boxes being stuffed with ballots marked in favor of the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) in full view of the public. The extremely high voter turnout as reported by INEC was not borne out by the situation witnessed on the ground, indicating that the elections in those two states were systematically rigged in favor of the PDP.

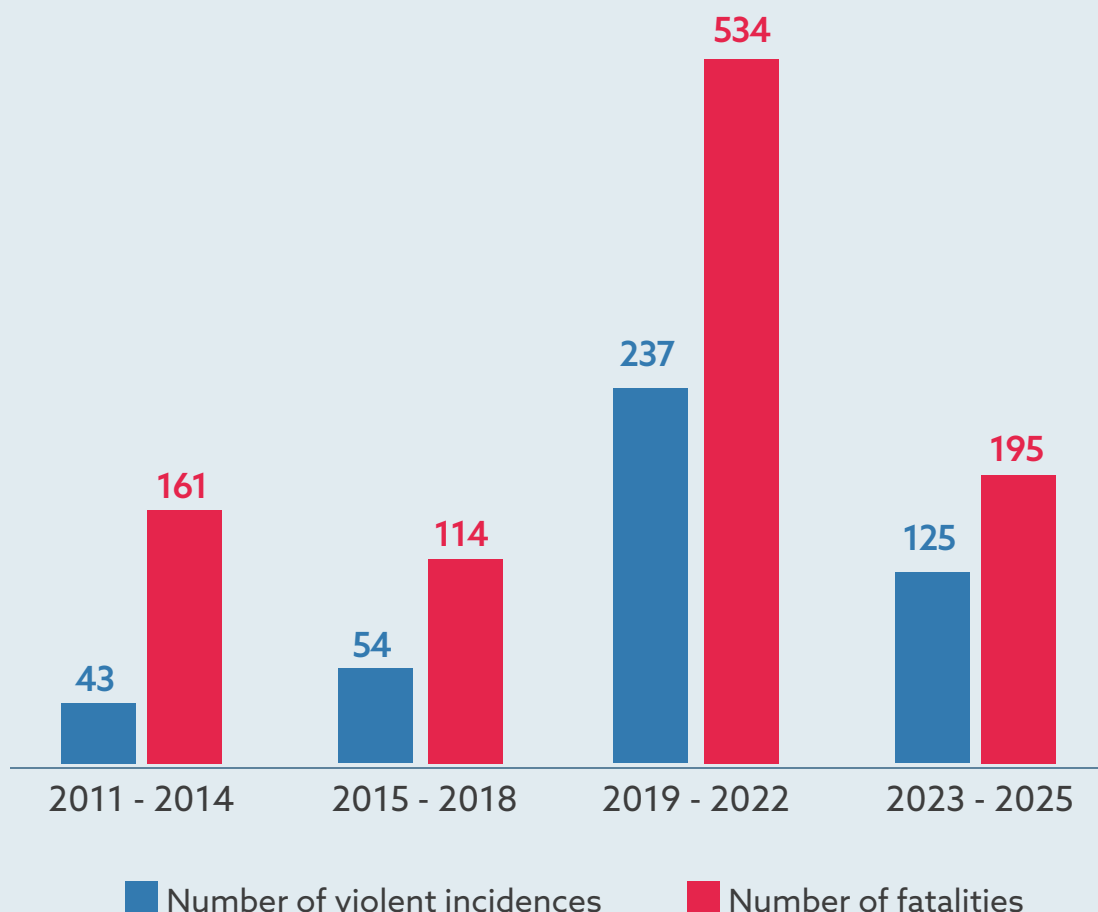
“In several key states, the Nigerian government failed completely in its obligation to conduct a free and fair election,” said Peter Takirambudde, Africa director at Human Rights Watch. “Unless the government dramatically changes course, next weekend’s presidential elections will be undermined by the same

Anambra State has a well-documented history of political violence, shaped by elite rivalries, institutional weakness, and the entrenchment of patron-client politics. Each wave of unrest feeds into subsequent crises and embeds electoral insecurity deep within the political culture of the state.

In the early 2000s, electoral competition grew increasingly volatile. During the 2003 gubernatorial election, observers reported numerous violent incidents

across the region. Candidates and their supporters became targets of beatings, abductions, and property destruction. In one case, a candidate's driver and cousin were murdered, while ballot-snatching and assault featured in other locations. Houses burned in Ezza South exemplified the destruction that took place alongside intimidation and direct violence^{9 10}.

Disaggregation of Political Violence in Anambra State



By 2007, political violence had become systemic. Human Rights Watch documented a gubernatorial election marked by widespread vote-rigging, largely exclusionary design. In many communities polling did not commence; intimidation and fraud dominated. Observers reported that civil unrest followed the rigged outcome, including riots and arson targeting government and INEC infrastructure. The aftermath saw the Supreme Court overturn the election and annul the result—but without prosecuting powerful actors behind the violence and fraud¹¹.

Subsequent elections continued to witness tensions, often linked to fierce intra- and inter-party competition. The 2010 and 2013 polls saw allegations of vote-

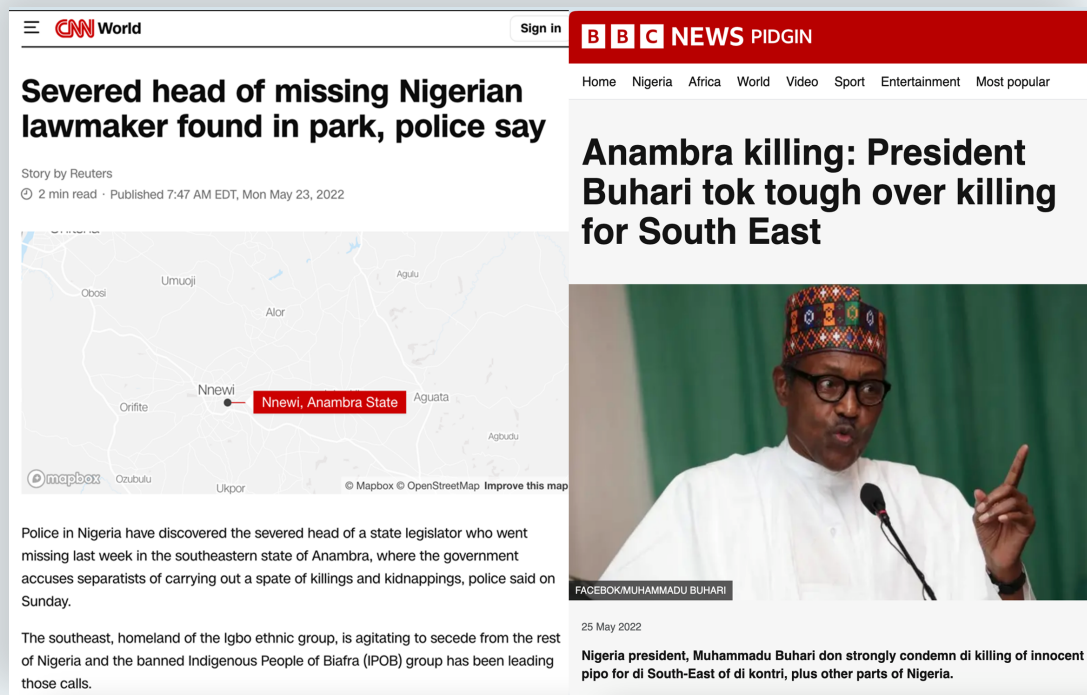
buying, intimidation of voters, and targeted attacks on party agents, although without the scale of state-wide disruption experienced in the Ngige-Uba era. From 2017 onwards, security risks became increasingly intertwined with broader regional instability. The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and its armed wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), began enforcing “sit-at-home” orders across the South-East, including Anambra, often through threats or violence. These actions disrupted economic activity, restricted movement, and created an atmosphere of fear during electoral periods.¹²



The 2021 Anambra governorship election was one of the most security-challenged in Nigeria's recent history. In the lead-up to the polls, multiple INEC offices were attacked and set ablaze, security personnel were ambushed, an attack on APGA candidate Charles Soludo in his hometown resulted in the deaths of three police officers, and violent clashes occurred between separatists and state forces.¹³ Voter turnout collapsed to an unprecedented 10.3%, and INEC was unable to conduct the election in Ihiala LGA on the main voting day, forcing a

supplementary poll that underscored the operational fragility of the process.¹⁴

In the post-election environment, violence began taking broader and more disturbing forms. In May 2022, suspected militants linked to the pro-Biafra IPOB group targeted civilians—including a pregnant woman and children, as well as a state lawmaker—resulting in multiple murders. These attacks fueled communal fear and unrest, leading to displacement and further delegitimizing security structures¹⁵.



Into 2023, as another election year approached, patterns of violence became more sophisticated and politically intertwined. Observers tracked attacks on INEC facilities and security structures. In early February, for instance, a vigilante patrol was ambushed, offices were burned, and ballot materials destroyed. Coordinated attacks targeted electoral infrastructure and poll-related operations, while boundary disputes in Ayamelum LGA resulted in multiple fatalities¹⁶.

These incidents show that violence in Anambra has evolved from candidate-centered skirmishes and vote fraud into more entrenched systems of intimidation, including non-electoral and ethno-political violence. Each election season deepens the risk environment, creating cycles of looming threats that both precede and follow ballots. Unsolved past atrocities, archaic vote-brokering practices, and growing distrust in institutions continue to feed public fear and unsettle electoral integrity.

Evolution of Political Violence in Anambra

Period	Event or Pattern	Electoral Connection
2003	Candidate's relative killed, ballot-snatching, arson	Violence directly disrupted electoral competition and voting
2007	Systemic rigging, arbitrary exclusion, riots, arson	Electoral process manipulated through intimidation and fraud
2021 Pre-election	INEC headquarters burned; materials destroyed	Security breach disrupted electoral administration
2021 Election Day	Equipment failure, vote buying, coercion, intimidation of women	Process disruption and compromised credibility
2022 post-election	Targeted killings by suspected militants	Political violence extending into communal and identity-based dynamics
Early 2023	Attacks on INEC offices, ambush of vigilantes, fatal boundary conflicts	Escalated pre-election threats to infrastructure and civic actors

“ These incidents show that violence in Anambra has evolved from candidate-centered skirmishes and vote fraud into more entrenched systems of intimidation, including non-electoral and ethno-political violence. **”**

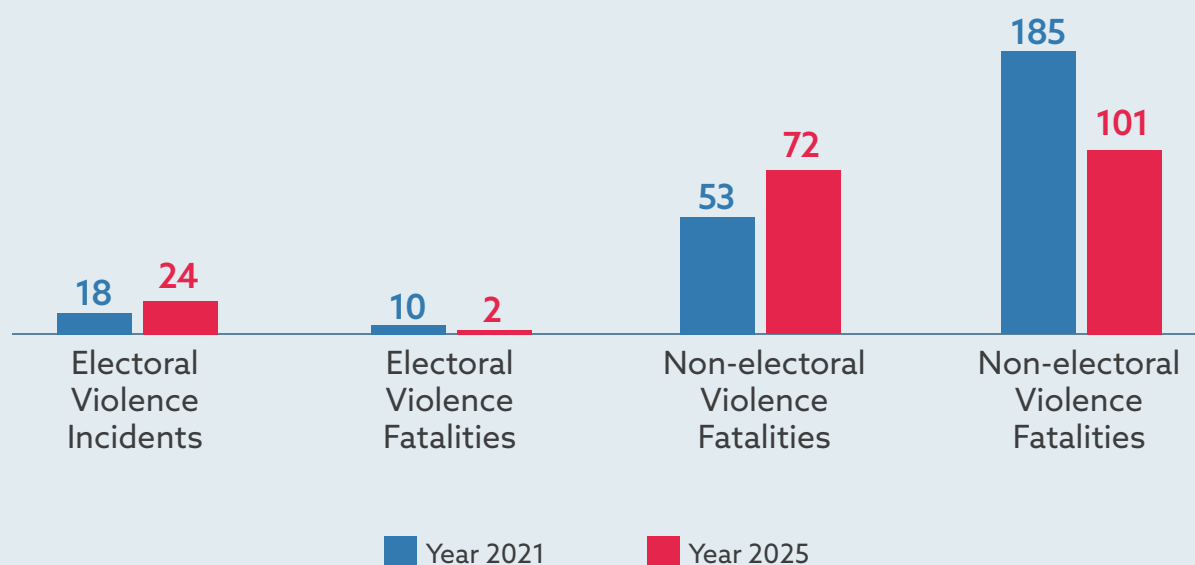


Insight 2: The current state of violence in Anambra State shows that political and electoral violence is increasing compared to 2021, especially non-electoral violence is more prevalent in the political landscape.

The security landscape in Anambra State ahead of the 2025 elections reflects a complex dynamic where both electoral and non-electoral violence are prevalent, though the severity and patterns differ from previous cycles. Available data shows that while the absolute number of violent incidents is rising in 2025 compared to 2021, the lethality of such events has declined, creating a paradox where insecurity is persistent but appears less acute than in the past.

A comparative view of incident trends underscores this shift:

Comparison of Violence Monitoring data in the year 2021 and year 2025 towards the Governorship Election



The data suggests that insecurity in Anambra is not necessarily tied directly to elections but is rooted in broader political, socio-economic, and separatist tensions. The relatively low fatality counts in 2025 compared to 2021 can be attributed to many factors and one of which is the decline in large-scale enforcement of separatist orders. In 2021, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), acting under the influence of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), enforced

weekly sit-at-home orders with brutal consequences. These orders frequently disrupted electoral and governance processes, leading to widespread fear and high casualty levels.^{17 18}

By contrast, in 2025, while incidents of violence remain high, the enforcement of separatist directives is inconsistent, less coordinated, and often challenged by security forces. This has resulted in fewer mass-casualty events but has not diminished the frequency of politically linked attacks, kidnappings, and targeted killings. The perception that “nothing is happening in Anambra” stems from the relative reduction in dramatic, large-scale fatalities, but the persistence of attacks shows that the political environment remains volatile.

Importantly, the rise in non-electoral violence poses a serious challenge to election security. These incidents include politically motivated assassinations, attacks on party officials, and community-level violence, which indirectly shape electoral participation and undermine confidence in the democratic process. The subtle but pervasive nature of this violence complicates both early warning and response strategies.



NIGERIA ELECTION VIOLENCE EDUCATION AND RESOLUTION

#AnambraDecides2025

REPORT DATE

January 1, 2025 - August 7, 2025

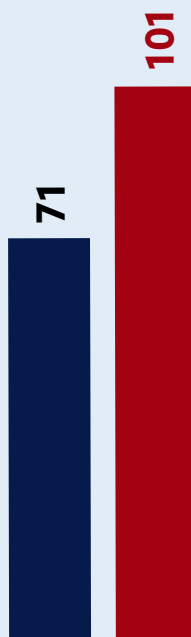
Anambra Summary Page

Anambra Analysis

Comparative Analysis of Neighbouring State

- Incident
- Fatalities

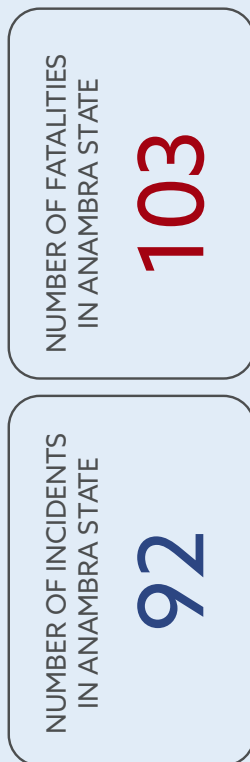
NON ELECTION RELATED VIOLENCE



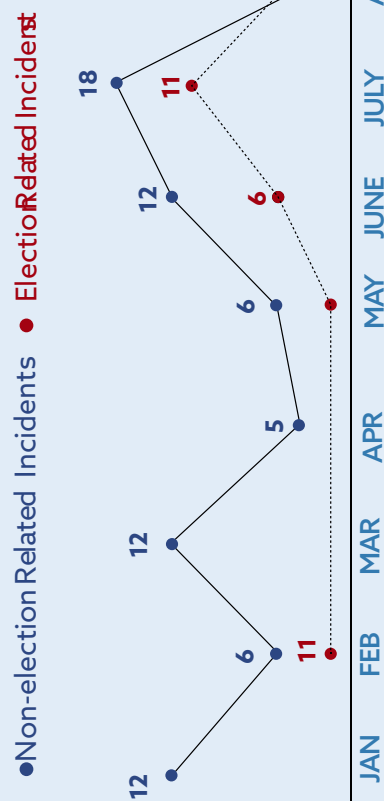
ELECTION RELATED VIOLENCE



SUMMARY OF INCIDENTS



VIOLENCE TRENDS PER MONTH



The evolution between 2021 and 2025 highlights that while overt political violence during election periods may appear subdued, the underlying insecurity has not abated. Instead, it has diversified into more dispersed and less spectacular forms of violence that still influence the political landscape. For security planning, this means that the absence of mass-fatality events should not be mistaken for stability, as the frequency and unpredictability of attacks continue to pose risks to both electoral stakeholders and the electorate.

Elections in Context: Insecurity's Impact on Conduct, Security, and Participation in the 2025 Anambra Governorship Election

Elections in Anambra will not unfold in isolation; they occur within a broader ecosystem where non-electoral violence exerts concrete effects on election security, administrative integrity, and citizen engagement. In 2025, these indirect but potent dynamics are deeply interwoven into the electoral process. These dynamics include:

- **Tainted Electoral Environment and Elevated Operational Fragility:** Persistent non-electoral violence heightens the fragility of the election environment. When communities endure criminal incursions or separatist-infused unrest, electoral infrastructure and logistical planning suffer.
- **Erosion of Voter Confidence and Lower Turnout:** Even when non-electoral violence does not directly coincide with polling, its proximity breeds fear, especially among vulnerable demographics. Research confirms that widespread insecurity and the fear of violence dampen citizen participation: "voter participation in the electoral process is hampered by widespread violence and feelings of insecurity, resulting in abstention and apathy".
- **Strategic Displacement and Voter Suppression:** Non-electoral violence often forces internal displacement, rendering many citizens unable to access polling units. Households fleeing unrest may not return in time to vote, and the net result is localised voter suppression, unintentional perhaps, but politically weighty.
- **Stress on Security Deployment and Resource Diversion:** Security agencies and electoral authorities will face dual pressures: protecting the election and responding to general violence. This overlapping mandate stretches security resources thin and forces tradeoffs. In 2025, if non-electoral incidents escalate, forces may prioritise general protection over securing polling stations, making election-day response slower and less exacting.

In 2025, the implication is clear: non-electoral violence, though not targeted at the election itself, may pervade and compromise it.

Political Dynamics and Contestation



Insight 3: The likelihood of political rivalry becoming resentful may become high because of power interests. Except that campaign communication is managed to avoid heightened tension.

Political contestation in Anambra's 2025 governorship race carries a tangible risk of animosity. ESRA data across LGAs indicate significant undercurrents of rivalry that are not yet erupting but are rumbling due to deeply entrenched power interests. However, where campaign communication is disciplined and civic, elevated risks may remain muted.

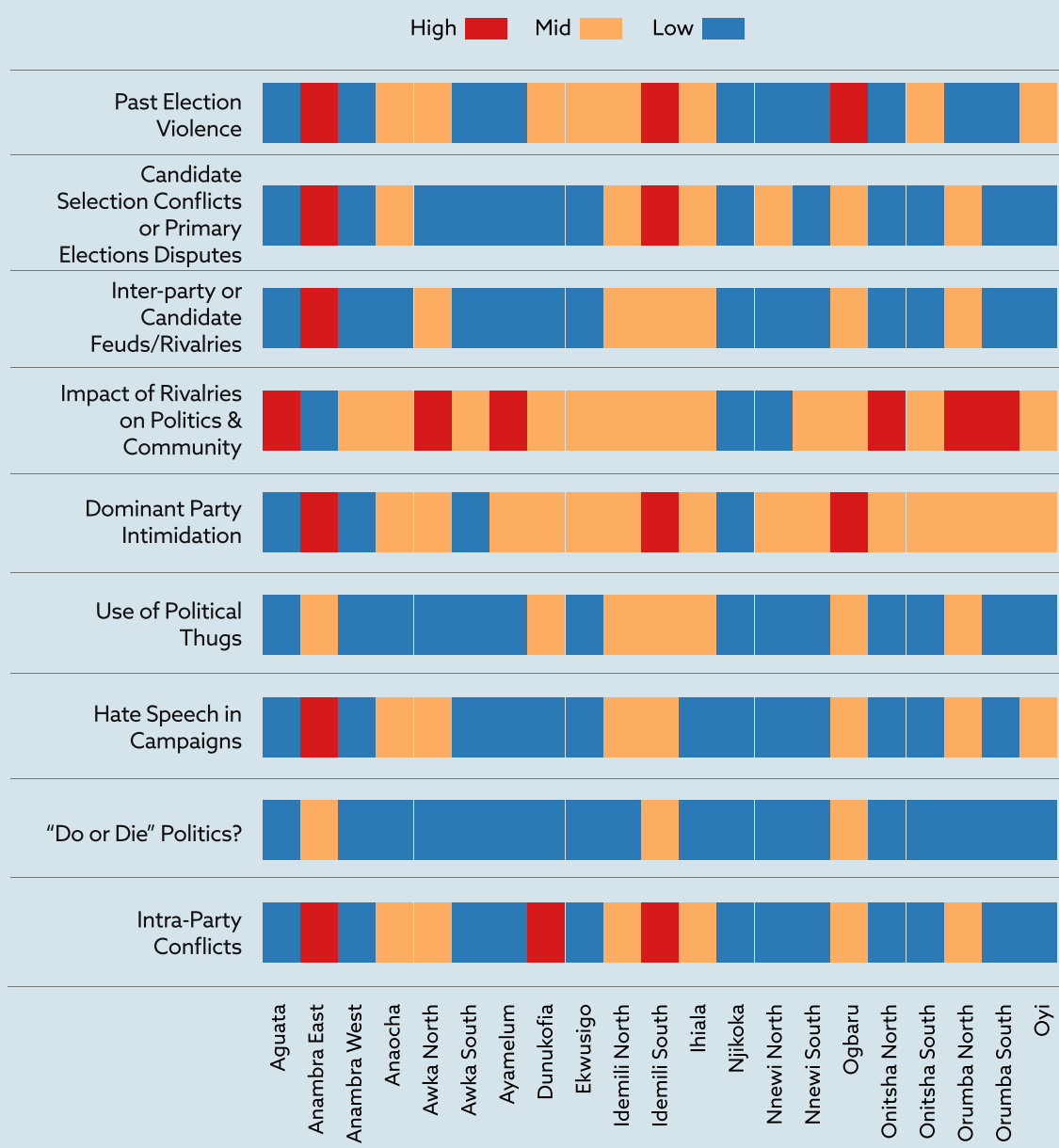
Contribution of each question to average risk score in dimension 1



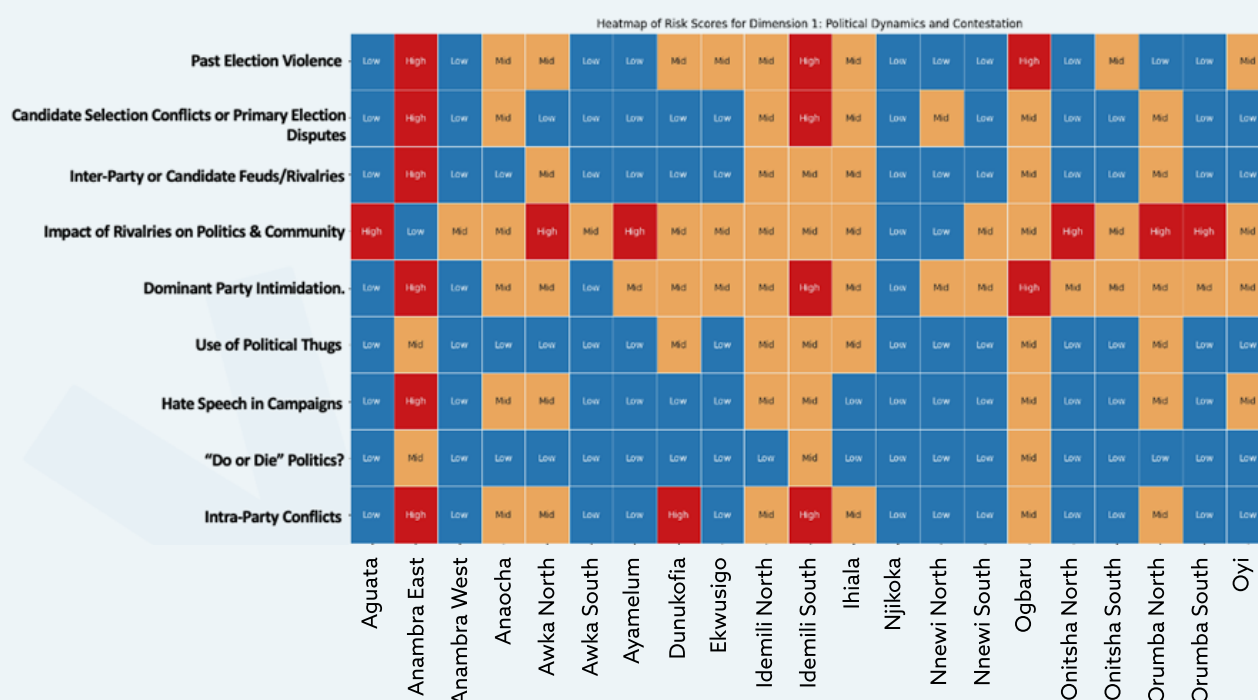
The assessment confirms that in a substantial number of LGAs, constituents are concerned about political disputes, party-controlled power, and consequence-laden primaries. Such stress points do not necessarily translate into violence. However, they heighten the likelihood of resentments hardening if campaign rhetoric becomes aggressive.

At the time of this report, campaign messaging is a bit controlled. Governor Soludo, representing the APGA campaign message, has emphasised continuity and institutional development rather than inflammatory positioning. A reconciliation drive by “Anambra Patriots for Soludo” is working to pacify aggrieved party members ahead of the election, reinforcing a narrative of unity rather than division.¹⁹ APGA national leadership dismisses external threats to Soludo, projecting confidence in its ground strength²⁰.

Heatmap of political dynamics and contestation risk dimension across all LGAs



Heatmap of political dynamics and contestation risk dimension across all LGAs



The APC, meanwhile, is uncompromisingly positioning itself. Party leaders, including the national leadership structure, have declared Soludo's tenure would end in 2025, signalling intent to break APGA's long-standing hold.²¹ APC aspirants frame the contest as a bid to restore security and federal integration. This competitive posture raises the stakes, heightening the potential for rivalry to move beyond political manoeuvring into resentment.

Beyond APGA and APC, the political landscape remains fluid. The LP retains symbolic strength in Anambra due to Peter Obi's residual popularity from the 2023 presidential election—even though formal influence is unclear because it remains indistinct whether he will join the ADC coalition or he will return to the PDP based on National politics. Also, we have seen the National Rescue Movement (NRM), a new entrant pulling defectors from APGA, PDP, and others, introducing new unpredictability²².

In this environment, political rivalry is robust and layered with potential to become acrimonious if not deliberately contained. Disciplined communication, institutional cohesion, and reconciliatory moves by parties will prevent escalation. The risk remains, however, that if attacks become personal or insurgent narratives grow, these undercurrents may coalesce into outright hostility.



THE
ANDOVE
HOTEL

Community and Identity-Based Conflict



Insight 4: There is a low intensity of Identity-driven agitation and community disputes in some areas that can potentially escalate as the election moves closer.

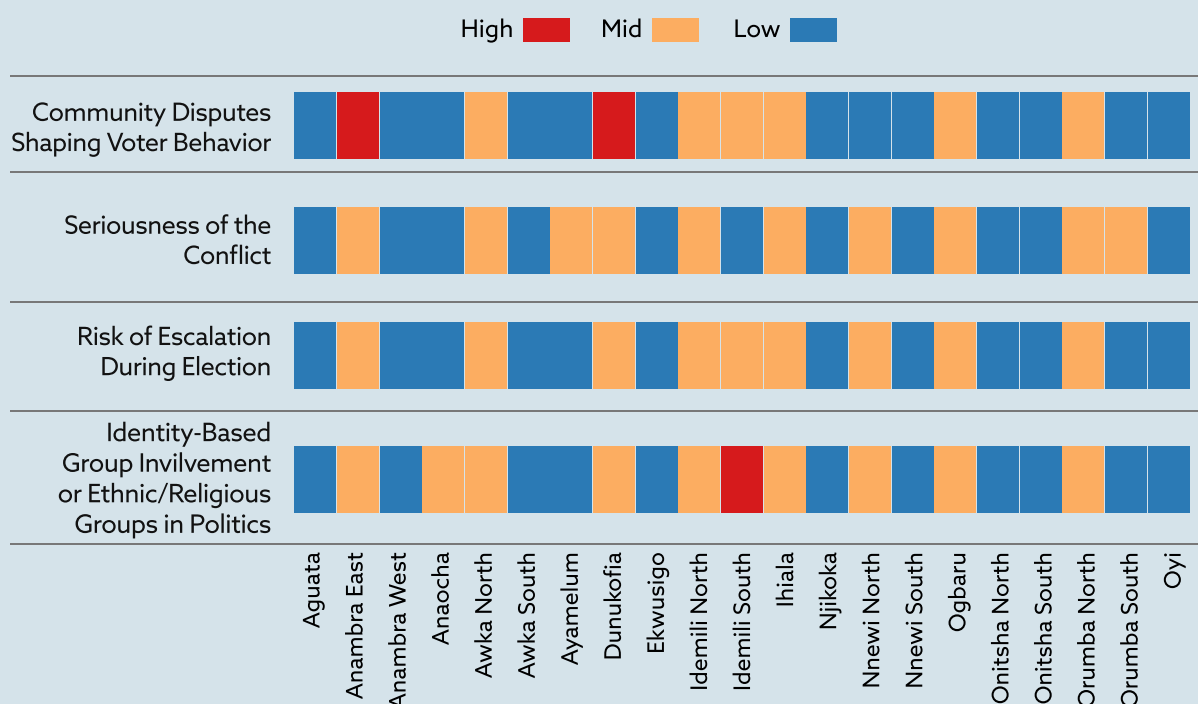
Community and identity-based disputes in South East Nigeria are deeply rooted. Since colonial times, the indirect rule policy by the British has entrenched ethnic divisions²³. The Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) and its aftermath left scars of marginalisation despite promises of reconciliation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction²⁴. Many in the South East feel politically and economically sidelined²⁵, fuelling the waves of secessionist agitation. Groups such as the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB, founded in 1999) and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) (founded in 2012) leveraged grievances of exclusion to mobilise support. IPOB's sit-at-home orders and confrontations with state forces became central features of Anambra's security environment in the past elections.²⁶ The sit-at-home cycle that began in 2021 left a record of fatalities and economic harm. By mid-2025, an SBM Intelligence study reported more than 700 deaths linked to sit-at-home enforcement across the region and trillions of naira in losses.²⁷

Identity-driven conflict and community-level disputes continue to shape the security and political landscape in Anambra State ahead of the 2025 governorship election. While large-scale agitation, particularly from IPOB and its armed wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), appears less pronounced than in 2021, the underlying tensions remain potent. The nature of these conflicts has shifted from overtly organised agitation to more fragmented and entrepreneurial forms of violence involving groups commonly described as "unknown gunmen." These actors have engaged in kidnappings, informal taxation of communities, and sporadic violent attacks, sustaining a climate of fear, especially in rural areas.



Historic marginalisation and secessionist grievances continue to shape Anambra's security. Though IPOB's agitation has waned, fragmented violence by 'unknown gunmen'—kidnappings, extortion, and attacks—sustain fear ahead of the 2025 governorship election. //

Heatmap of community-level conflict and tensions dimension across all LGAs



Community Disputes and Electoral Dynamics:

Assessment reveals that several LGAs in Anambra, such as Anambra East (71.29%), Awka North (68.93%), Dunukofia (70.10%), and Idemili South (58.55%), are experiencing significant levels of community-level disputes, many of which are latent but capable of escalating during elections and are potent enough to influence voter turnout. The disputes commonly arise from traditional leadership tussles, land ownership conflicts, and boundary disagreements. These disputes take on greater significance during elections when political candidates are perceived to align with one faction, or when voting blocs organise along community fault lines.

LGA Example	Key Conflict Drivers	Electoral Implications
Anambra East	Boundary disputes, leadership tussles	Risk of boycotts or violent clashes if factions polarize around candidates
Dunukofia	Town union rivalries and politicisation	Potential voter intimidation or protest voting
Orumba North, Anambra West and parts of Ihiala	Chieftaincy succession crises and land demarcation	Likely to generate localized violence if political actors exploit disputes
Obosi (Idemili North)	Town unions adopting political parties	Alienation of dissenting community members, leading to protest voting or reduced turnout

For instance, in Obosi, community leaders and town unions have openly endorsed certain political parties. This decision has sparked resentment among members who were not consulted, with some describing it as undemocratic. In practice, this creates pressure on residents to conform to leadership choices while exposing dissenters to intimidation or political exclusion.

The assessment also gathered that the incumbent governor has also upgraded the town union to the Township Council, giving them greater power than they previously had. This dynamic may result in clashes between supporters of rival factions, voter intimidation, or the destruction of election materials. More subtly,

it may also manifest in reduced voter turnout as residents avoid participation for fear of violence or due to dissatisfaction with the role of the state in addressing their grievances.

Identity Politics and Zoning: The 2025 governorship race also reflects the continuing salience of zoning, which aligns with the unwritten rule but influential practice of rotational governance, a political convention whereby key positions, including the governorship, are rotated among different senatorial zones, ethnic blocs, or geopolitical regions in case of presidency to promote equity and foster inclusion. Since 1999, governorship power has rotated among Anambra's three senatorial districts:

Senatorial District	Past Governors
Central	Chris Ngige, Peter Obi
North	Willie Obiano
South	Chukwuma Soludo (incumbent)

The positive side of this identity politics in Anambra is that the zoning balance may be distorted with the dynamics of the 2025 governorship election because, currently, all major candidates, those of APGA, PDP, APC, YPP, and LP, hail from Anambra South, which has served only one term since 1999.

Geographical Distribution of Top Contenders

Party	Position	Candidate Name	Local Government Area (LGA)	Senatorial District
APGA	Governor	Charles Chukwuma Soludo	Aguata	Anambra South
	Deputy Governor	Onyekachukwu Gilbert Ibezim	Awka South	Anambra Central
PDP	Governor	Ezenwafor Jude	Aguata	Anambra South
	Deputy Governor	Okeke Francis Chukwudi	Anaocha	Anambra Central

APC	Governor	Ukachukwu Nicholas	Aguata	Anambra South
	Deputy Governor	Ekwunife Uche Lilian	Nnewi North	Anambra South
YPP	Governor	Chukuma Paul Chukwuka	Nnewi North	Anambra South
	Deputy Governor	Okagbue Uzuegbuna Izuchukwu	Anaocha	Anambra Central
LP	Governor	Moghalu George Nnadubem	Ekwusigo	Anambra South
	Deputy Governor	Okaro Ifeoma Veronica	Oyi	Anambra North

While political actors agreed that the Anambra South should complete its second term, the downside of this is that most mainstream political parties chose their running mates from the central except for the LP, which denotes that Anambra North would be the battleground where most parties will jostle for votes to be able to have the majority of lawful votes cast. Also, cumulatively, the LGAs in the Anambra North senatorial district are the second-highest district in terms of registered voters.

Community and identity-based conflicts in Anambra State, though currently of low to moderate intensity, represent latent risks that could escalate as the election approaches. The combination of unresolved communal disputes and the activities of armed groups poses significant challenges to electoral security and inclusiveness. Without proactive mitigation—such as dialogue with community leaders, equitable security deployment, and transparent engagement by the INEC- these tensions could undermine both participation and the credibility of the 2025 governorship election.

While Anambra South is expected to complete its second term, major parties—except LP—picked running mates from the central, making Anambra North the battleground with high voter strength. Yet, unresolved communal disputes and armed group activities risk escalating tensions, threatening participation and credibility unless INEC ensures dialogue, fair security, and transparent engagement ahead of 2025.

Ethno-Religious Tensions



Insight 5: There is a reflection of latent identity tensions in Anambra State that may not yet be violent but could become active under provocation or misinformation.

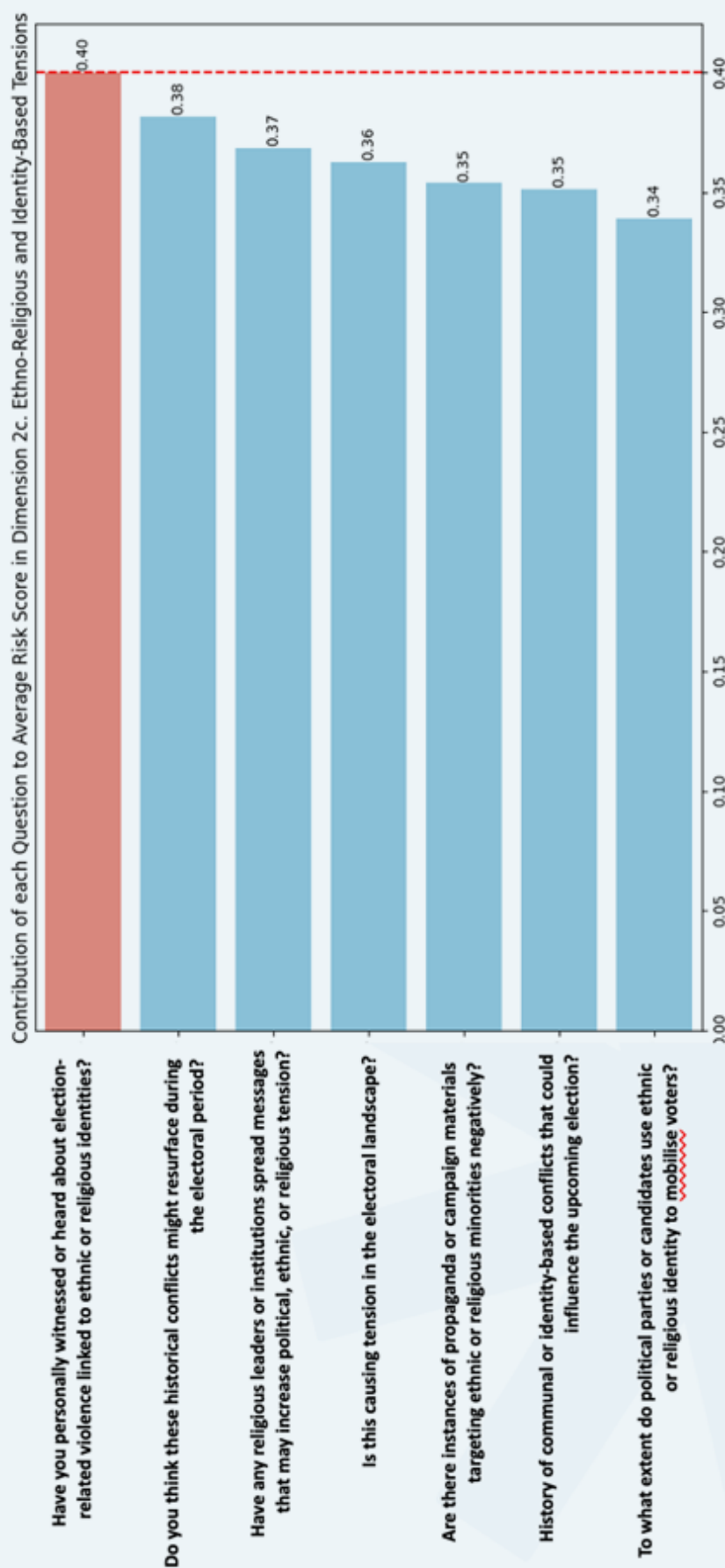
Ethno-religious pressures in Anambra State remain latent rather than acute, however, ESRA signals a credible risk of activation under provocation, polarising campaign rhetoric, or coordinated misinformation. The state's religious profile is overwhelmingly Christian, split mainly between Catholic and Anglican communities with vibrant Pentecostal congregations, alongside recognised traditional religion practitioners. Intra-Christian competition periodically spills into the political arena through symbolic alignments, pulpit rhetoric about governance, or congregation-level mobilisation. Academic and policy work has long observed denominational rivalry shaping political behaviour in Anambra, including sharp competition among Catholic, Anglican and Pentecostal blocs over public influence and access to state resources.^{28 29}

Beyond the aforementioned, there have been situations where public religious actors still shape the climate through platform access, pastoral messaging on civic duty, and visible appearances with candidates at religious events, which voters may read as tacit signals.

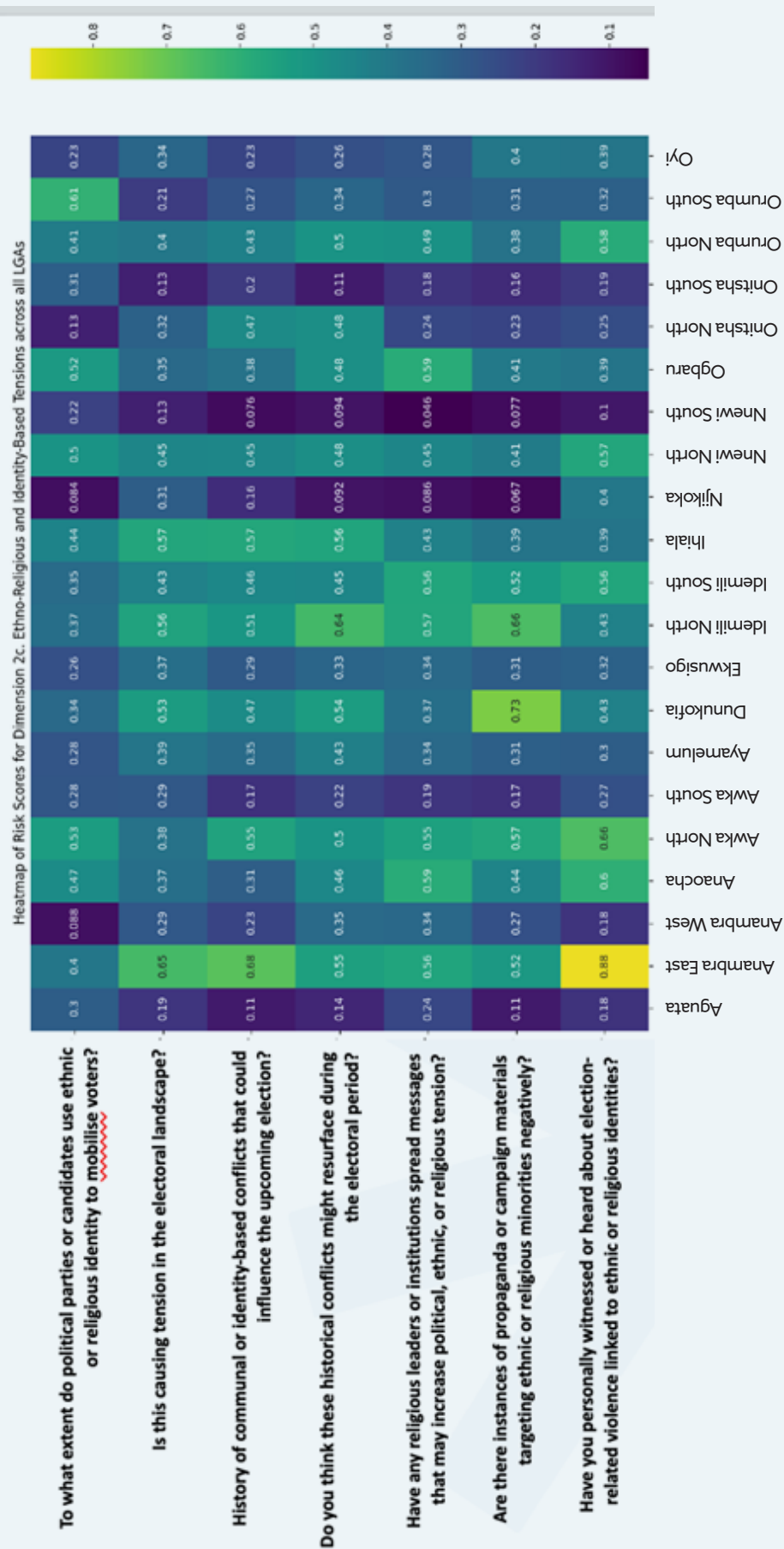
In Anambra, there have been instances of the Catholic Church in Anambra, explicitly rejected claims of them giving transactional political conditions or blanket institutional support. Anglican leaders have issued open appeals for manifesto-driven, non-violent campaigning, reinforcing norms but also demonstrating the clergy's agenda-setting capacity during the campaign season.³⁰ Traditional religion stakeholders have also entered the arena. In June 2025, a statewide coalition of traditionalists publicly endorsed the incumbent, positioning moral authority and community networks behind continuity. This development widens the field of identity-based signalling beyond church denominations and adds another vector for mobilisation that can be co-opted by partisan actors or misrepresented online.³¹

The ESRA shows location-specific vulnerabilities.

Overall Ethno-Religious and Identity-Based Tensions Factor



Heatmap of ethno-religious and identity-based tensions dimension across all LGAs



These patterns indicate that low-grade identity narratives are already circulating and could harden if instrumentalised during peak campaign periods with misinformation and provocative statements. Qualitative data had shown a sinister narrative flying about the Catholic Church in Anambra, which the mission had explicitly rejected, such as claims of them giving transactional political conditions or blanket institutional support for any candidate, framing such stories as propaganda. That denial reflects sensitivity to reputational risks and a preference for issue-based engagement³². This mix of symbolic cues, rumour markets, and selective amplification on social media, especially as associated with the Catholic Church, can shift perceptions quickly, especially in LGAs already reporting tension triggers. If Anambra's political communication environment is not well managed, it could heighten these risks.



Security developments also interact with identity narratives. Rights monitoring in 2023–2025 documents abductions, targeted killings, and intimidation incidents in Anambra and neighbouring states that periodically involve clergy or religious spaces. Even when not electorally motivated, such incidents feed a sense of siege and can be reframed through identity lenses by local entrepreneurs of violence or disinformation networks.³³

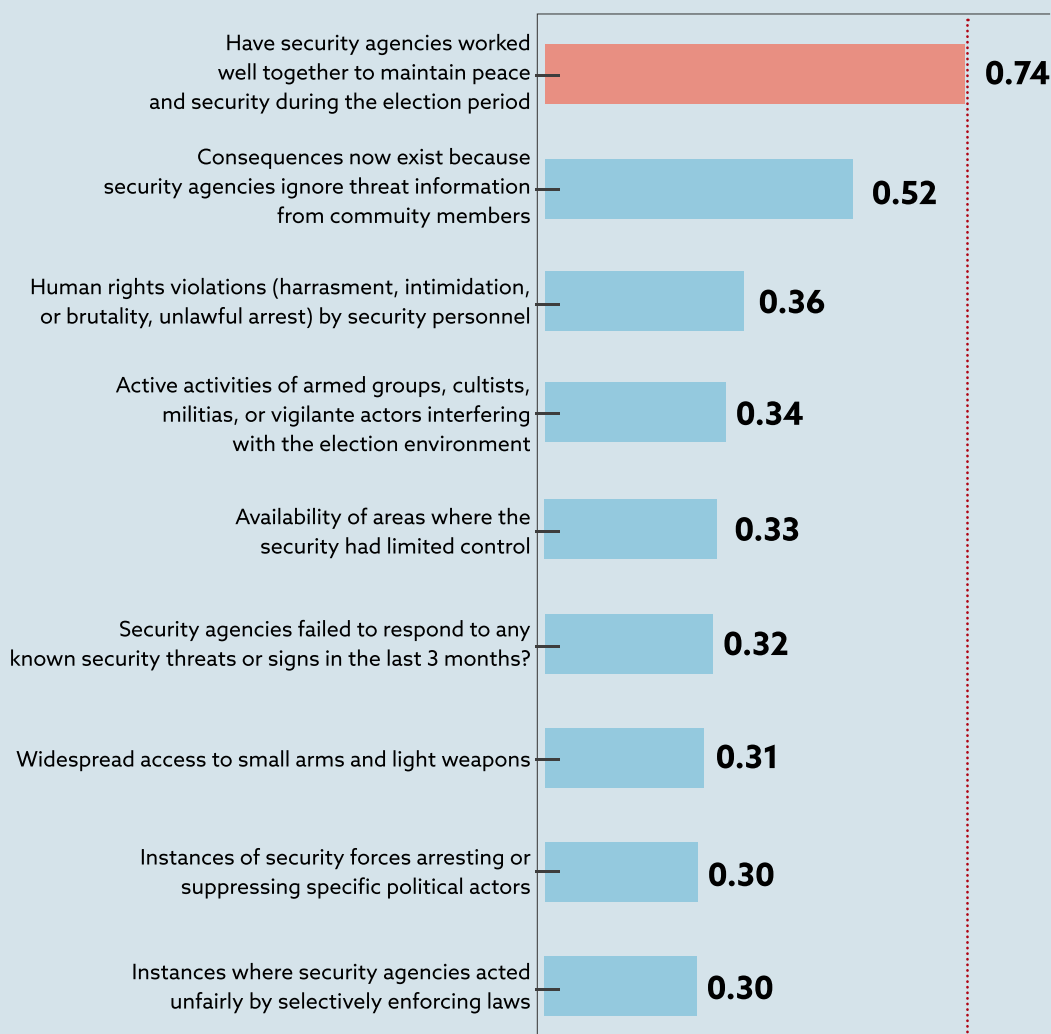
Institutional Trust and Security Agencies



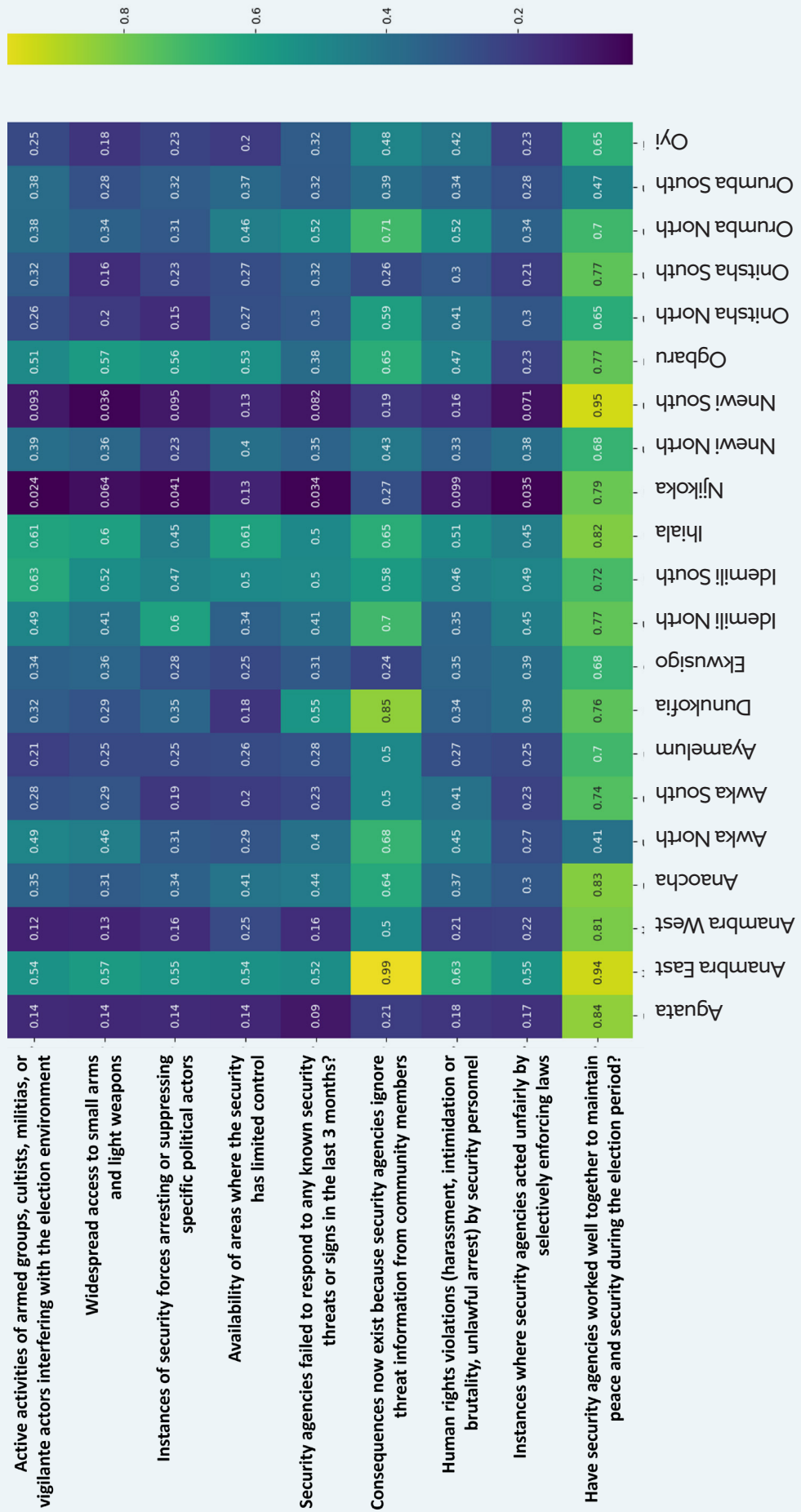
Insight 6: Trust in security agencies is severely lacking, marking this as a red zone for institutional legitimacy in many LGAs.

Public confidence in security institutions in Anambra is fragile and uneven across LGAs. ESRA data show high perceived presence of armed groups and weapons in several LGAs, reports of selective enforcement, and areas where security has limited control.

Overall Security Environment and State Response Risk Factor




Heatmap of security environment and state response risk dimension across all LGAs



These views are not only perceptual. They align with independent documentation of abuses by state actors in the South East and with evidence of a persistent grey-zone security environment that blurs lines between crime control, counter-insurgency, and election security. Amnesty International's August 2025 assessment for the South East details extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and enforced disappearances involving both security forces and armed non-state actors since 2021, underscoring a structural deficit of accountability that depresses trust ahead of elections.^{34 35} The 2024 United States Human Rights Report on Nigeria reaches similar conclusions about nationwide patterns of police and military abuse and weak redress.³⁶

Within Anambra, concrete episodes have reinforced public mistrust. In February 2023, Governor Charles Soludo acknowledged the seriousness of allegations against three police officers accused of illegal arrests, torture, extortion, and killings, promising prosecution if found guilty.³⁷ Follow-up reporting in November 2024 found that victims identified by the Anambra Judicial Panel still lacked justice two years after its report, a gap that fuels cynicism toward official remedies.³⁸ Investigative reporting in 2025 has also chronicled multiple abuses by Agunchemba-branded operatives, including the fatal shooting of a woman in Nnewi in April 2025, intensifying concerns about impunity among security and auxiliary forces.³⁹




The executive governor of Anambra state, Charles Soludo. [PHOTO CREDIT: Facebook page of Mr Soludo]

Soludo speaks on three police officers accused of extra-judicial killings in Anambra

A Nigerian blog published a report accusing the officers of engaging in the illegal arrest, torture, extortion and extra-judicial killings of their victims.

By **Chinagorom Ugwu** — February 19, 2023 Reading Time: 2 mins read

Governor Charles Soludo of **Anambra State** has pledged to ensure that three



27-11-2024 ENDSARS WATCH

No Justice for Police Brutality Victims 2 Years After Anambra Judicial Panel Report

Published 27th Nov, 2024

By **Akinjide Adebawale**

The victims of brutality and murder are yet to receive justice two years after a judicial panel found the police in Anambra State culpable.

Following the 2020 EndSars protest killings, the state government set up a panel to look into various cases of police brutality that victims suffered at the hands of policemen. The **Nigeria Police Force (NPF)** also set up an investigative committee.

In March 2022, the Anambra investigative panel submitted its report to Willie Obiano, the former governor of Anambra.

Legacies from past deployments shape current attitudes. The Southeast “Python Dance” era established a template of heavy-handed operations that residents associate with harassment and rights violations. Recent research on the recalibration of special operations against neo-Biafra groups finds that militarized responses have often widened the legitimacy gap between state forces and communities, even as they degraded some armed networks⁴⁰.

Firearms proliferation compounds the trust problem. Anambra has long been identified with the craft production of small arms, colloquially labelled “Awka-made” guns, which are inexpensive and accessible. While federal crackdowns occur periodically, reporting and research continue to note the persistence of artisanal manufacturing and illicit flows that feed criminal and political violence. Regional press in May 2024 highlighted SALW proliferation as a driver of insecurity in the South East⁴¹. When citizens believe that armed actors can readily procure weapons, they tend to doubt that election-period security will be fair or effective.

These macro-drivers intersect with the patterns recorded at the LGA level. Several LGAs show sizeable shares of respondents who have witnessed security favouritism, human rights violations, or non-response to threats. In Ihiala, Idemili South, Ogbaru, and parts of Orumba, ESRA flags both reduced effective control and higher reports of abuses. The presence of non-state armed actors and vigilante formations further complicates command and control, raising the risk of non-state actors acting in the capacity of the state and trained actors. Most times, these untrained actors are part of the joint task forces, which makes citizens link them to formal security outfits. When they act independently, citizens may not know the details of such operations and believe they are men of the formal security outfits.

Practical implications for the 2025 governorship poll

Risk facet	Current manifestation in Anambra	Likely election-period effect
Perceived bias and selective enforcement	ESRA data show non-trivial reports of favoritism and targeted arrests in several LGAs	Reduced official incident reporting, accusations of intimidation, heightened candidate grievance
Grey zones and limited control	Respondents in Ihiala, Idemili South, Ogbaru and others report hard-to-police areas	Vulnerable logistics routes, late opening, early closure or cancelled polls

SALW(Small and Light Weapon) availability	Persistent craft-production and illicit flows in and around Awka, plus cross-border leakage with neighboring states	Higher lethality in otherwise low-scale disputes, weapon display for voter intimidation
Unresolved abuses and impunity	Cases from 2023–2025 remain emblematic in public discourse	Low trust in security presence at PUs, observer harassment complaints
Sit-at-home order	Enforcement and threat narratives persist despite formal denials	Turnout suppression on sensitive dates, transport paralysis for ad hoc staff

The cumulative effect is a credibility gap at exactly the moment when INEC and security agencies need broad public cooperation for logistics, queue management, and incident reporting. Where citizens anticipate unfair treatment or fear reprisals, they are less likely to share early warnings, appear at sensitive polling units, or accept contentious results. Amnesty's 2025 regional synthesis and multiple corroborating sources emphasise how unresolved abuses weaken willingness to engage authorities, even when those authorities are tasked with protecting polling procedures.⁴²

The path to restoring confidence is operational rather than rhetorical. Security agencies should identify contact points for parties and observers, and adopt an incident transparency protocol that logs detentions, use-of-force events, and response times. Independent hotline escalation with civil society and media observers can validate rapid corrections. Where auxiliary formations operate, the chain of command must be explicit and public. Recent cases in Nnewi and elsewhere show how opaque auxiliary operations can unravel trust gains from professional policing.

Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) should also incorporate community-based risk intelligence. Weekly, public brief-backs that summarise threats and actions taken can narrow the expectation gap without compromising operations. Given regional SALW realities and the historical memory of heavy-handed tactics, de-escalation training and visible adherence to rules of engagement are essential. External reporting underscores that when communities see concrete steps to deter abuse and sanction offenders, cooperation improves during sensitive phases like results transmission and collation.

Electoral Management and INEC Preparedness



Insight 7: There is a pressing need for INEC to rebuild public trust through transparency and performance consistency, particularly because trust deficits appear to be influencing local perceptions.

Public sentiment captured in the ESRA data reflects a fragile confidence in electoral administration in Anambra. Across LGAs, the share of respondents who said they trust INEC to conduct a free and fair election clustered around the mid-50s per cent on average, with wide dispersion across locations.

Overall Electoral Management and Institutional Preparedness Risk Factor

Has there been any delays or issues in the distribution of Permanent Voter Cards (PVC) or other election materials in your area?

0.68

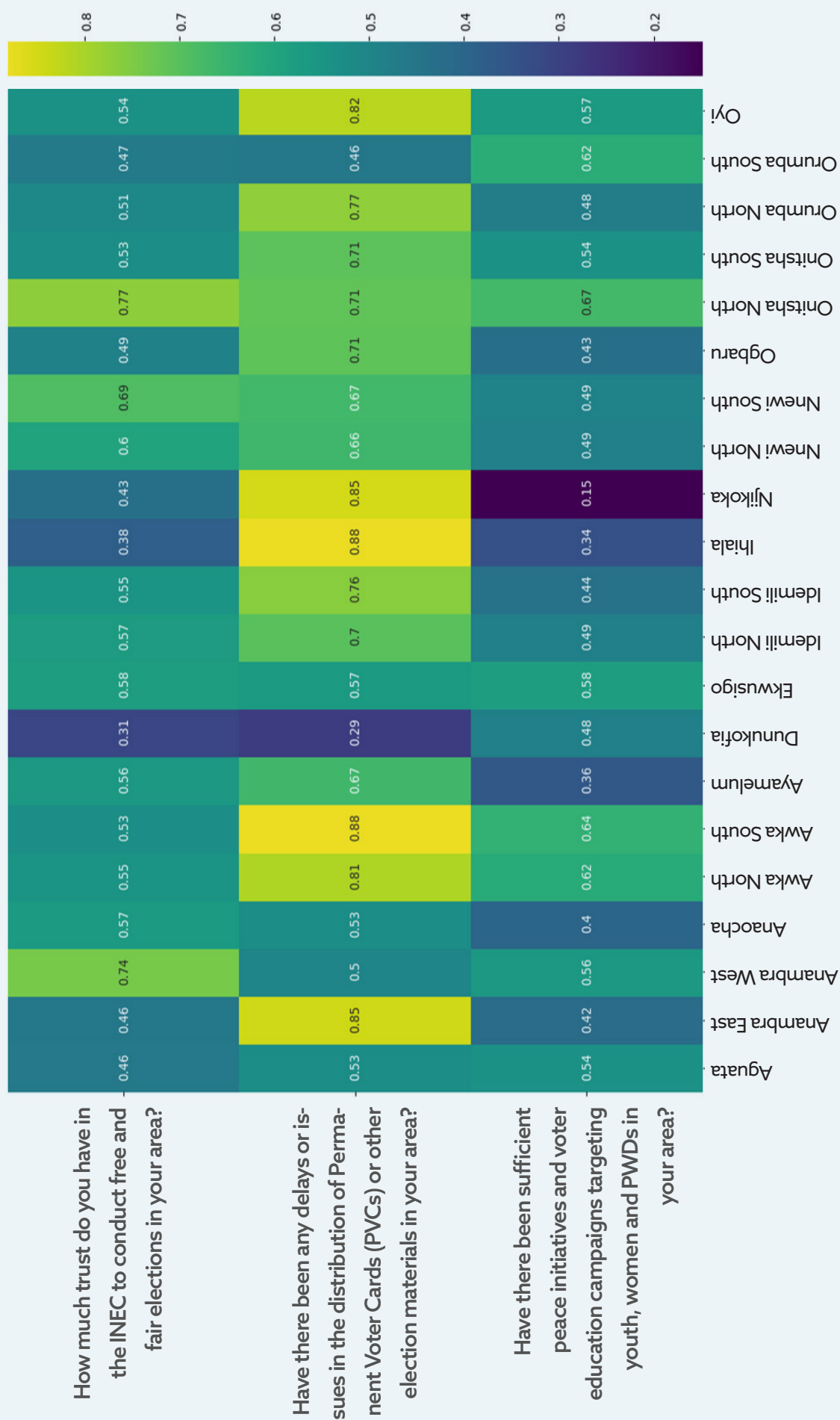
How much trust do you have in INEC to conduct free and fair elections in your area?

0.54

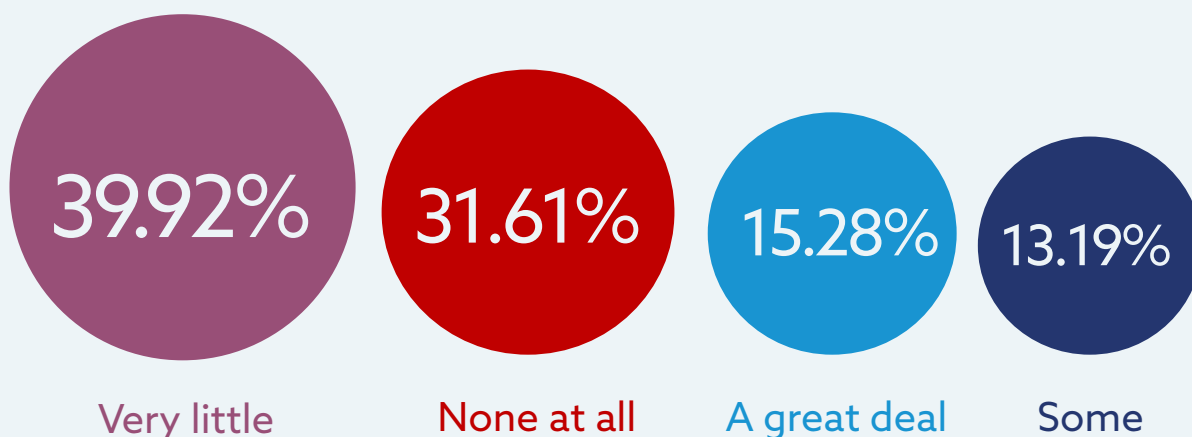
Has there been sufficient peace initiatives and voter education campaigns targeting youth, women, and PWDs in your area?

0.49

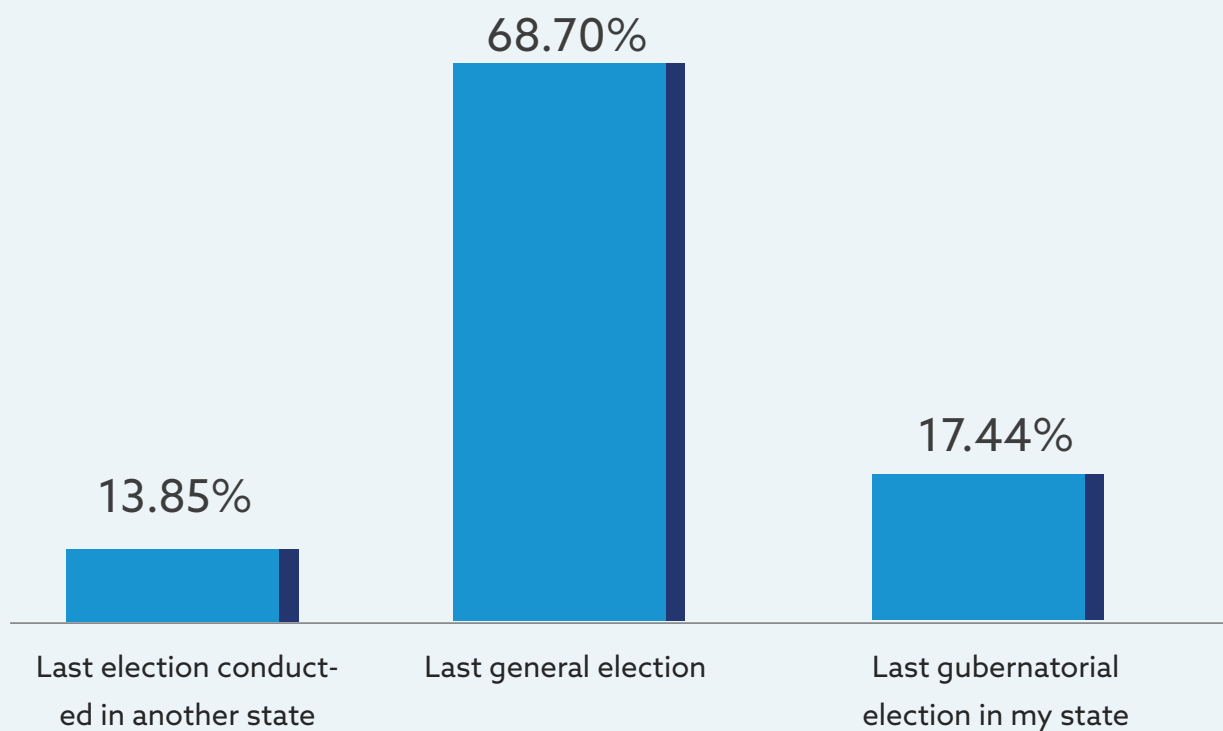
Heatmap of electoral management and institutional preparedness dimension across LGAs



How much trust do you have in the INEC to conduct free and fair elections in your area



What specific actions or events have influenced your level of in INEC



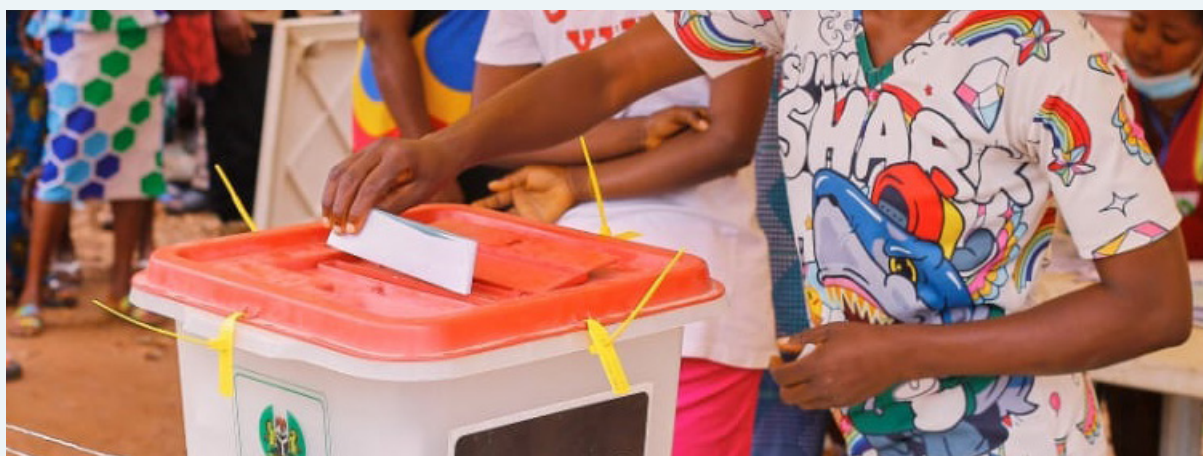
When opinions of the citizens in Anambra were elicited outside of security connotations, respondents reported very little trust at 39.92 per cent and none at all at 31.61 per cent, while only 15.28 per cent expressed a great deal of trust and 13.19 per cent some trust.

Respondents attributed their current views primarily to the 2023 general election experience, with 68.70 per cent indicating that their trust levels were shaped by that cycle, followed by 17.44 per cent citing the last Anambra gubernatorial election and 13.85 per cent citing elections conducted in other states.

The popular experience of the 2023 general election provides a clear explanation for this sentiment. Majorly, the operational inefficiencies and technology glitches that the IReV experiences with no further explanation to Nigerians are somewhat responsible for this. INEC has formally acknowledged that its Result Viewing Portal experienced significant challenges during the presidential election, while domestic and international observer reports documented weaknesses in result management, logistics, and communication that undercut public confidence. The EU Election Observation Mission concluded that the process fell short of expectations in critical areas⁴³, and INEC's own 2023 election report details the scale and distribution of IReV uploads and the operational strain of reconfiguring BVAS devices between rounds, which even triggered a one-week postponement of the March 2023 governorship polls.^{44 45} These issues created durable narratives of unreliability that now colour expectations in Anambra⁴⁶.

Why perception matters as much as performance:

Citizens judge institutions on both delivered outcomes and visible fairness. In a competitive environment with active online narratives, even isolated failures can be generalised as systemic bias. The 2021 turnout collapse demonstrates how fear, apathy, and scepticism can converge in Anambra. The 2023 technology narrative shows how a single chokepoint can dominate public interpretation of an entire process. If Anambra's 2025 operations foreground reliability, speed of corrective action, and verifiable transparency, the same feedback loops can work in favour of peace and participation.

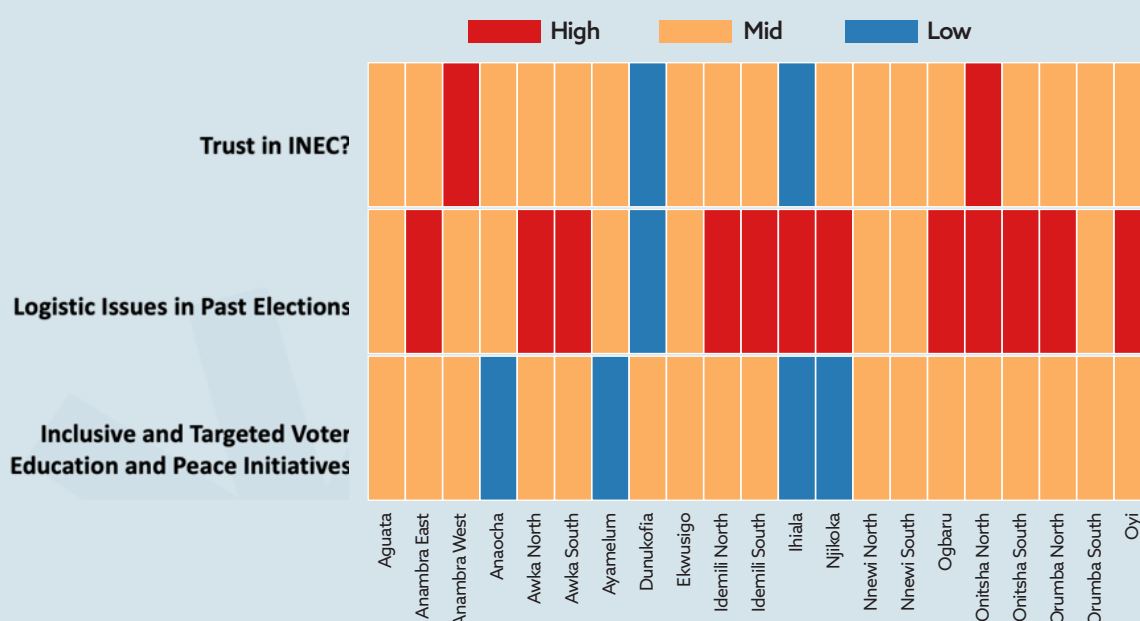


Delays and logistical failures signal more than inefficiency

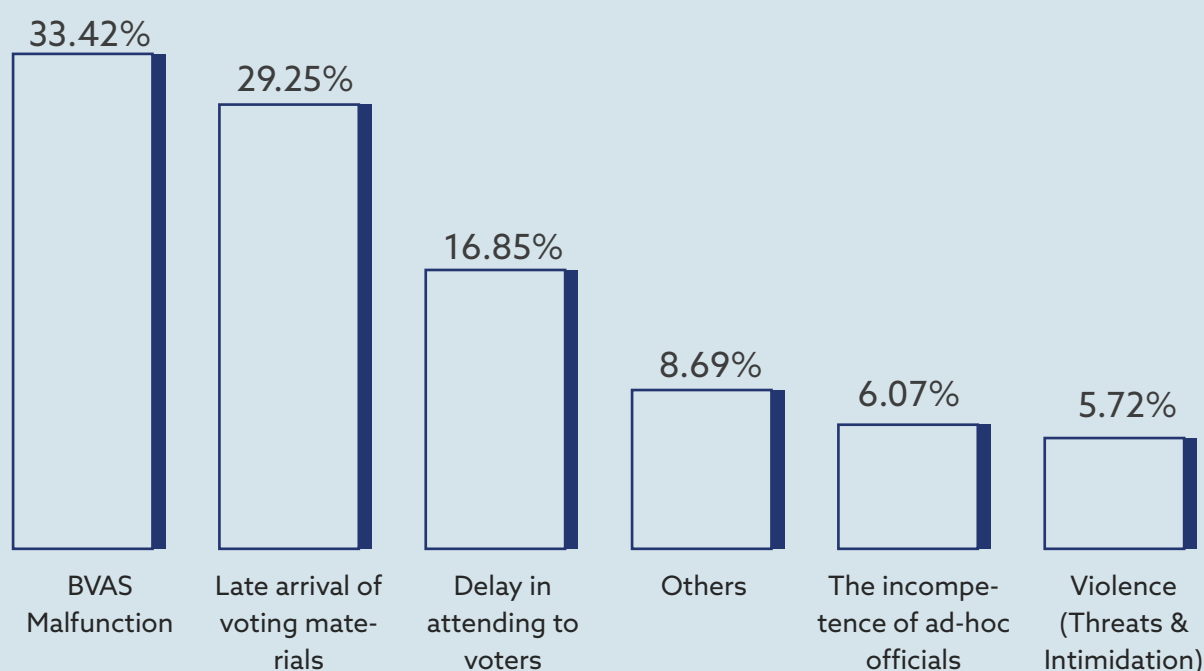
The ESRA data on preparedness and top difficulties people experienced in the last gubernatorial elections shows that:

"Delays and logistical failures signal more than inefficiency—they reinforce perceptions of political interference and raise the likelihood of escalated tensions."

Heatmap of electoral management and institutional preparedness dimension across all LGAs



TOP DIFFICULTIES THAT VOTERS FACED DURING THE LAST ELECTION



When residents were asked to recall top difficulties from the last election, BVAS malfunction ranked first at 33.42 per cent, followed by late arrival of materials at 29.25 per cent and delays in attending to voters at 16.85 per cent. These are precisely the kinds of operational frictions that escalate tension at polling sites, depress turnout, and invite disputes over results integrity.

These experiences sit alongside widespread reports of operational bottlenecks from Anambra's recent Continuous Voter Registration (CVR), including delays, device failures, overcrowding, and allegations of unofficial payments. Local media in July 2025 documented repeated CVR breakdowns and citizen frustration across multiple LGAs, reinforcing the perception that INEC's field operations remain uneven.⁴⁷ Reports described network failures in multiple LGAs, malfunctioning devices, shortages of registration materials, crowding, and isolated incidents of conflict around registration centers. Specifically:

- Oyi Ward 11 and Dunukofia witnessed registration delays, triggering visible tension among registrants.
- In Njikoka and Awka South, technical failures prevented returning residents from completing registration.
- System breakdowns—network failures and faulty machines—occurred in Awka North, Njikoka, Orumba South, and Ogbaru.
- Shortages of registration forms were observed in Njikoka Ward 11, Ekwusigo, Enugwu-Ukwu, and Oyi Ward 11.
- Allegations surfaced of unofficial fees charged in Njikoka Ward 4 at Amaenyi Hall.
- In Dunukofia Ward 4, reports surfaced of political interference in staff neutrality.
- Overcrowding in Ekwusigo (Ozubulu) and Dunukofia Ward 1 created safety and order concerns. A frustrated party supporter assaulted an INEC official at Ukpo Town, halting operations briefly.
- A verbal altercation occurred in Idemili South between APC and APGA supporters before being de-escalated.

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Ohanaeze youths slam failure of CVR exercise in Anambra

 **By:** Lawrence Njoku, Enugu  **Date:** 17 Jul 2025

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Ohanaeze Ndigbo

The narrative of inconsistent performance fuels speculation and rumour, particularly in a competitive multi-party environment. Without visible course corrections, this pattern can erode compliance with electoral rules, increase confrontation at collection and collation points, and heighten the probability of litigation and street-level unrest.

Why INEC preparedness is a core security variable: Operational reliability is not only an administrative outcome; it is a determinant of election security. When materials arrive late, queues grow, or devices fail repeatedly, the risk environment shifts in three ways. First, aggrieved voters and party agents are more likely to confront officials and opponents, raising the chance of intimidation, crowd crush, or clashes. Second, parties interpret inconsistencies as bias, which encourages aggressive monitoring tactics and increases the likelihood of interference with sensitive processes such as accreditation, sorting, and collation. Third, delayed or opaque transmission of results fosters rumour and disinformation, which can mobilise crowds or encourage targeted disruption of perceived opponent strongholds. Documentation from 2023 shows that technology and logistics problems created precisely this cascade of security vulnerabilities.

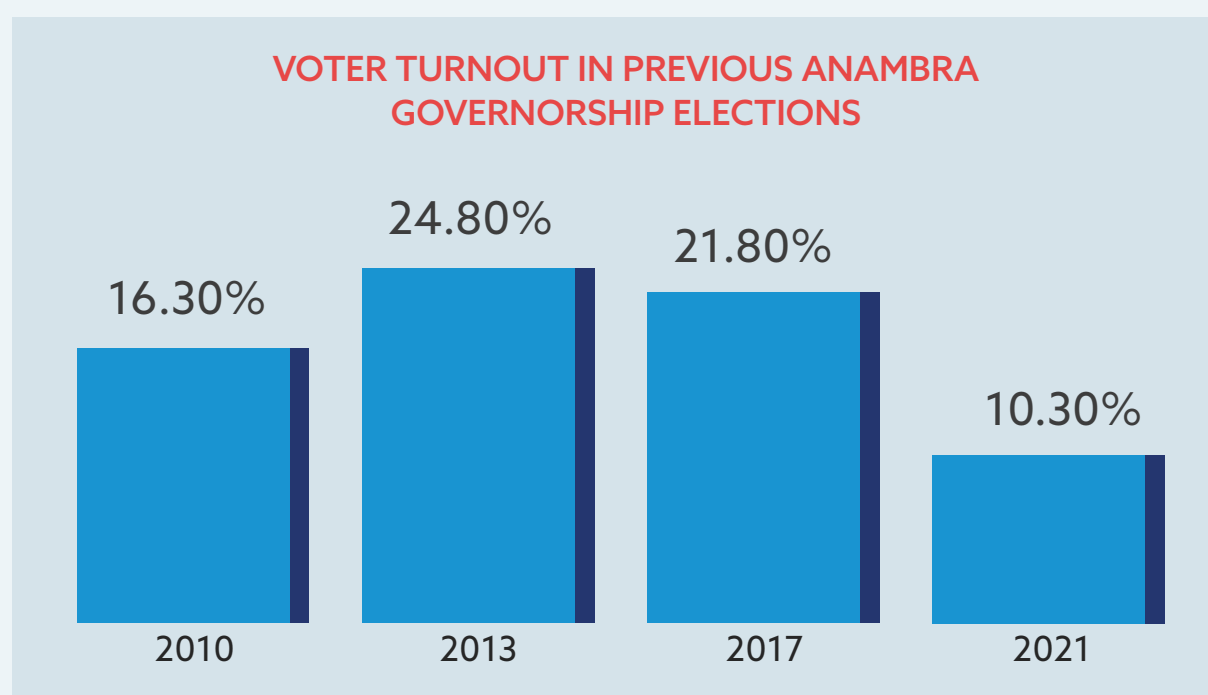
Illustrative risk pathway for Anambra 2025

Stage	Preparedness variable	Typical failure point	Immediate effect	Security and participation risk
Pre-election registration	CVR equipment, staffing, queue management	Device/network failure, shortages, poor crowd control	Frustration, allegations of bias, scuffles at centers	Lower registration completion, hardened distrust, mobilization of party supporters to "defend" access.
Poll opening	Logistics arrival, staff deployment	Late materials, absent ad-hoc staff	Delayed accreditation and voting	Confrontations with officials, attempts to bypass procedures, early violence triggers in dense wards.

Accreditation and voting	BVAS readiness, contingency kits	Device malfunction, battery failure	Long queues, repeat attempts	Intimidation of officials, opportunistic disruption by actors seeking to depress opponent turnout.
Result handling	IReV availability, collation integrity	Upload delays, opaque corrections	Rumors of manipulation	Crowd convergence at centers, targeted attacks on perceived partisan strongholds, post-result protests.

Issues around operational efficiencies or trust not only risk election security, it risk high citizen participation -

A longer view of participation underscores what is at stake. Anambra has struggled with turnout over the past decade and a half, recording 16.3 per cent in 2010, 24.8 per cent in 2013, 21.8 per cent in 2017, and 10.3 per cent in 2021, which media reports had described as a historic low. Persistent operational problems risk compounding cyclical apathy



and fear.

What INEC must get right to reduce the looming risk:

Anambra's ESRA profile links trust and security tightly. Three deliverables will matter most for bending risk downward. First, flawless basics on logistics, timeliness and staffing, with redundancy for high-volume wards. Second, stress-tested BVAS readiness and an incident-response playbook that authorises on-the-spot substitution and records each intervention publicly. Third, credible result management, including consistent IReV performance and observable collation integrity, with immediate publication of LGA-level summaries and a helpdesk for parties and observers. These steps address the same variables that respondents flagged in ESRA and in the separate trust questions. They also align with lessons drawn from the 2023 domestic and international observation.

Operational priorities for rebuilding trust:

The pathway to restoring confidence runs through professional delivery and transparency at each step. INEC should demonstrate consistent punctuality of poll opening, visible device readiness tests before accreditation, transparent incident logging, and proactive publication of contingency triggers and remedies. The Commission's communication must address both information and emotion; in 2023, information gaps were quickly filled by rumour. Real-time updates on platform status, queue management, and alternative arrangements when devices fail can interrupt escalation dynamics. Post-poll transparency on IReV uploads and audit trails remains central, given their symbolic weight after 2023. Observer access to collation centres and prompt publication of LGA-level results will further reduce speculation. These measures speak directly to the drivers of mistrust identified by respondents.



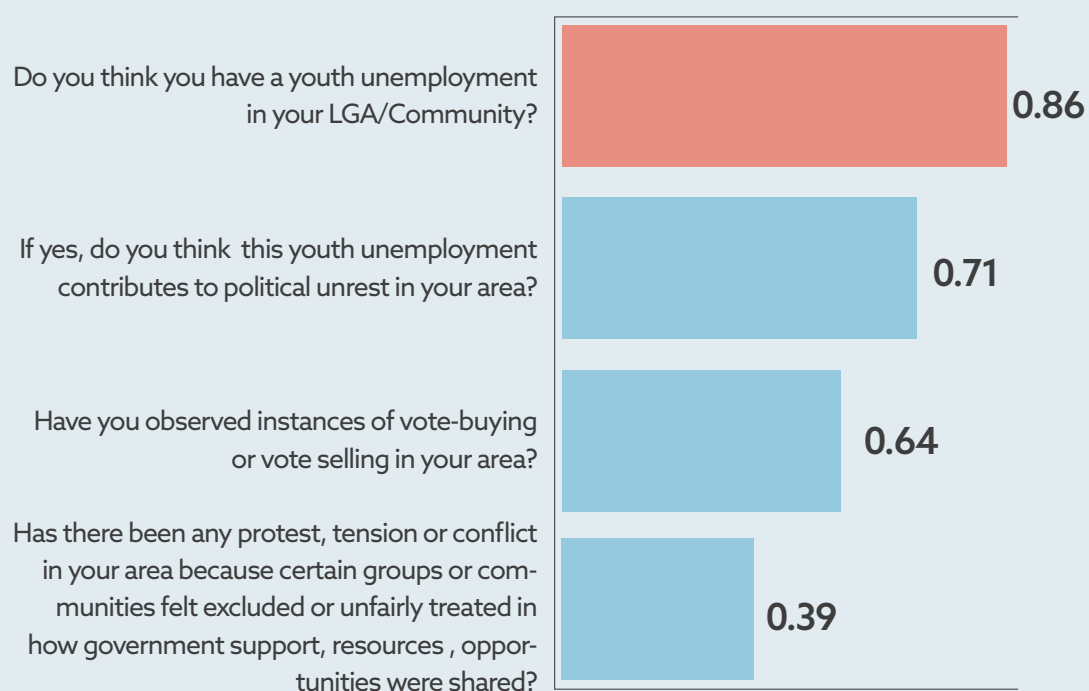
Socio-Economic and Demographic Stressors



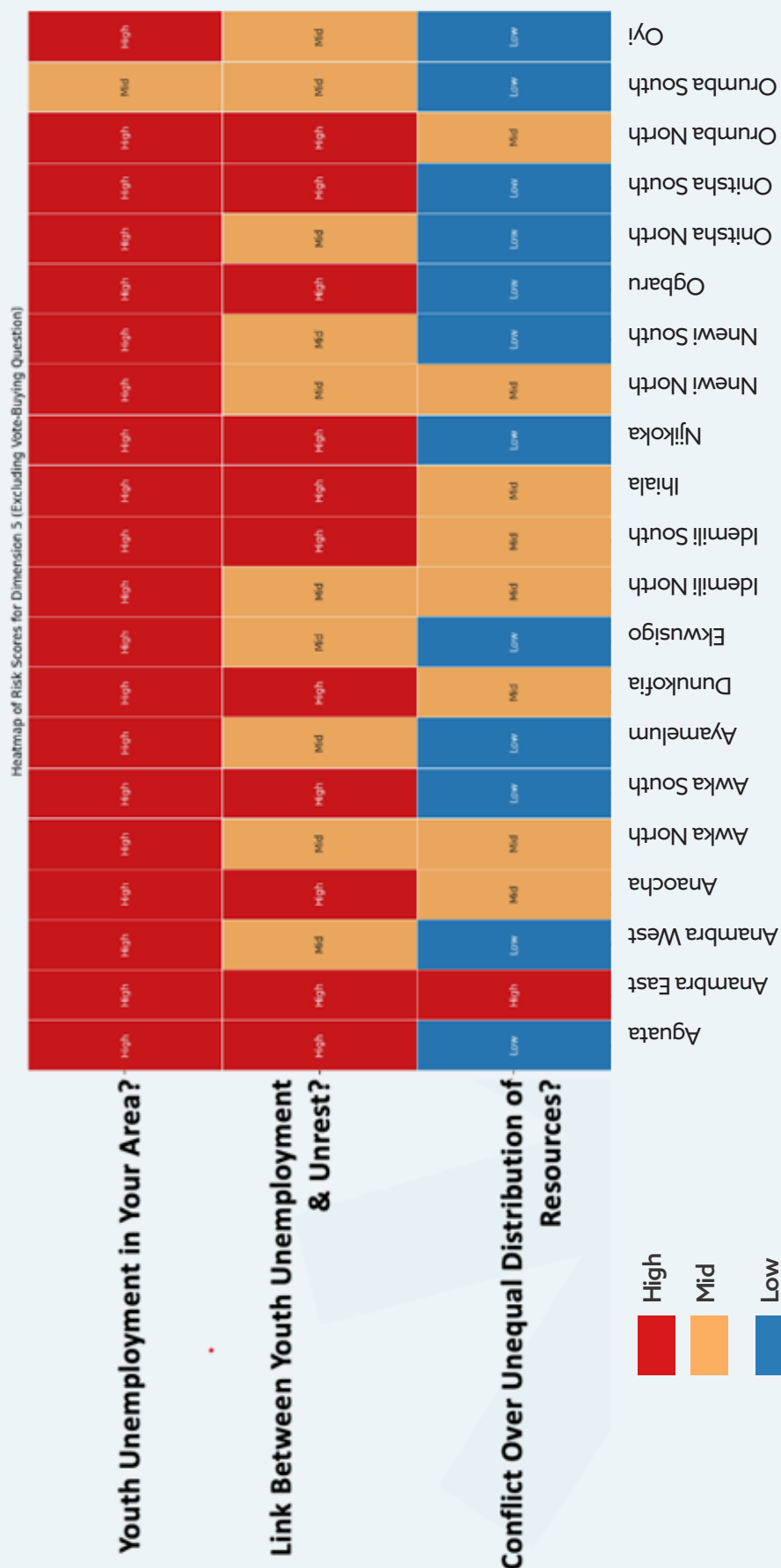
Insight 8: Economic grievance resulting particularly from youth unemployment is likely to be the most structurally embedded risk factor across LGAs.

Anambra's ESRA data show that youth unemployment is widespread and perceived as a direct contributor to political unrest. Across LGAs the majority of respondents identify youth joblessness as endemic, and most believe it feeds recruitment into transactional politics or violent networks. This structural condition matters for election security because it shapes incentives, grievance channels, and political behaviour in ways that increase the probability of mobilised disorder, vote manipulation, and turnout distortion.

Overall Socio-Economic and Demographic Stressors

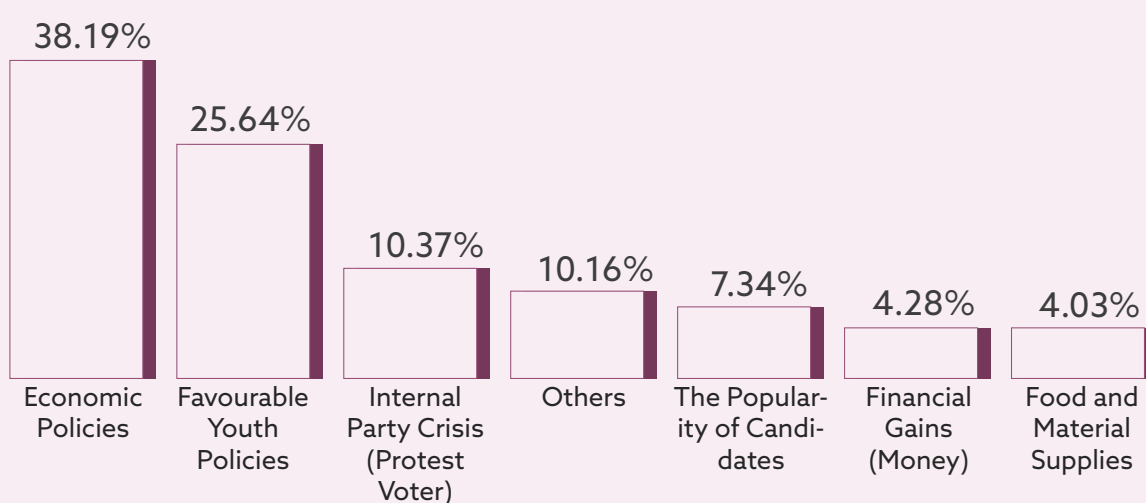


Heatmap of Socio-Economic and Demographic Stressors dimension across all LGAs



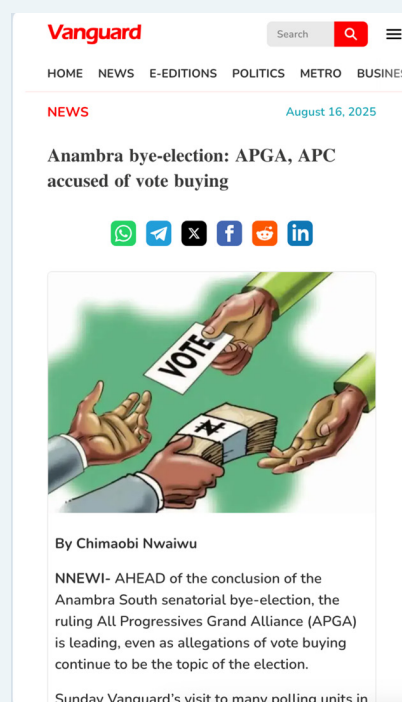
The pathway from youth unemployment to electoral risk is multi-layered. Young people with few livelihood options face stronger incentives to trade votes for immediate income or benefits, or to join partisan thugs and informal armed groups that provide both cash and status. The ESRA data align with these dynamics: very high percentages across LGAs report both unemployment and its link to unrest. When respondents weigh the issues that will shape voting, economic policy and youth policy dominate.

WHAT ISSUES WILL SHAPE AND INFLUENCE HOW YOU WILL VOTE DURING THE UPCOMING GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION IN YOUR STATE?



Even when voters put development and policy first, the empirical pattern shows vote trading rises as elections near and elite actors deploy targeted handouts or empowerment events that resemble clientelist inducements.

Electoral and political actors exploit these vulnerabilities. Recent by-election reporting from Anambra documents allegations of open vote buying during contests in 2025, showing how monetary inducements remain a live tactic to sway behaviour at the polling unit.⁴⁸ These episodes mirror patterns in previous elections in Nigeria, where intense competition and weak social safety nets make vote trading an efficient but corrosive strategy. Practical manifestations in 2025 include reported distributions of cash at polling units and the staging of last-mile



empowerment exercises that coincide with campaign windows, both of which distort genuine political choice and can provoke disputes when rival camps deny or contest delivery lists.⁴⁹

Clientelist or institutionalised votebuying overlaps with candidate-led “empowerment” drives and endorsements by transport and labour unions. In 2025 multiple driver and transport groups publicly endorsed the incumbent, offering the appearance of organised popularity that can translate into logistical advantages on election day. For example, the Anambra State Keke Drivers Forum formally endorsed the governor’s re-election bid in May 2025 and launched visible campaign paraphernalia; similar endorsements by tricycle and taxi unions concentrate vote-delivery capacity in pockets where livelihoods depend on organised transport networks.^{50 51} Such endorsements are not illegal per se, yet they create concentrated mobilising structures that can be repurposed for clientelist distribution, turnout operations, or pressure tactics in contested wards.

Practical election-security implications for November 2025 are concrete. First, vote buying depresses legitimacy because it produces outcomes that reflect market transactions rather than political preference, and it rewards actors willing to use money to win. Second, youth economic grievance raises the risk of mobilised disruption, both opportunistic criminality and organised intimidation, particularly in wards where turnout is low and monitoring presence is weak. Third, clientelist distribution can create post-result disputes when losers claim that cash or other inducements were used to manipulate specific units, thereby increasing the risk of localised protests or attempts to disrupt collation.

Gender-Based Electoral Risks



Insight 9: Although gender risks are acknowledged in the upcoming election, actual documentation and recognition remain limited, which risks creating blind spots in LGA-level interventions.

While there is recognition of gender-related risks, documentation and intervention remain limited. The absence of gender-sensitive risk mapping at the local level creates blind spots in early warning and response strategies. Women face challenges such as intimidation, underrepresentation, and gender-based violence, which are not yet fully integrated into the broader risk mitigation agenda.

The findings from the ESRA tool highlight that female participation in electoral

Overall, Gender-Based Electoral Risks



processes across Anambra State continues to be constrained by both visible and subtle forms of intimidation, discrimination, and targeted exclusion. While overt physical violence may not be the dominant form of repression reported, the cumulative impact of structural and situational pressures has created an environment in which women, particularly as voters, candidates, and party agents, face significant barriers to safe and equal participation. Data gathered through interviews and field observation across multiple LGAs suggests that female political actors have been subjected to gendered forms of intimidation, including verbal harassment, social ostracism, and strategic exclusion from decision-making spaces within party structures. For instance, women aspiring for elective office in major parties were reported to be intimidated into stepping down or edged out through internal party tactics, often under the guise of zoning arrangements or lack of financial capacity. These subtle coercions are rarely recorded as formal complaints but contribute deeply to political underrepresentation.

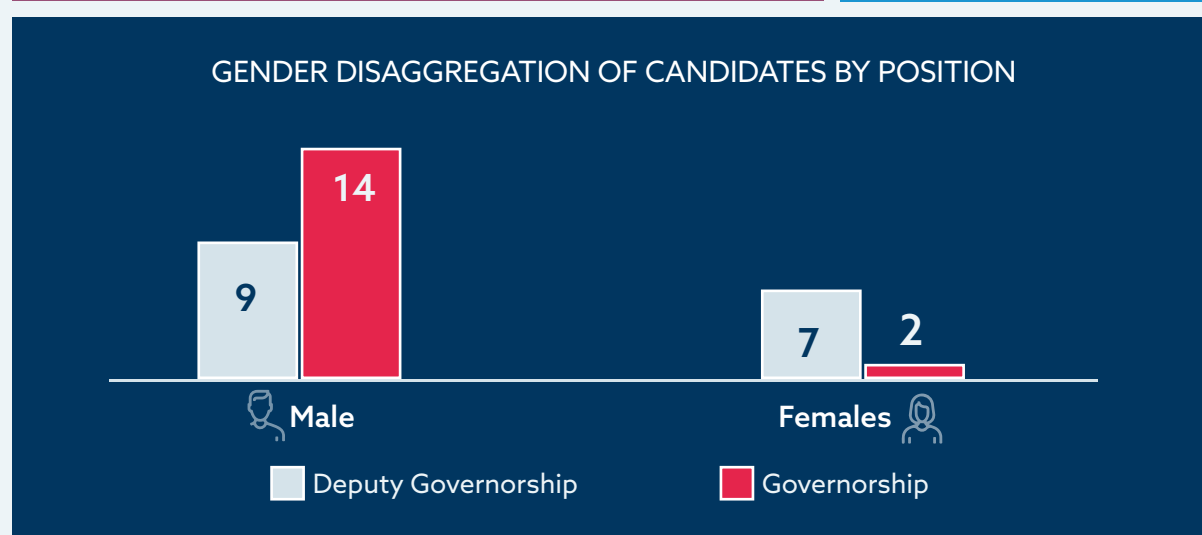
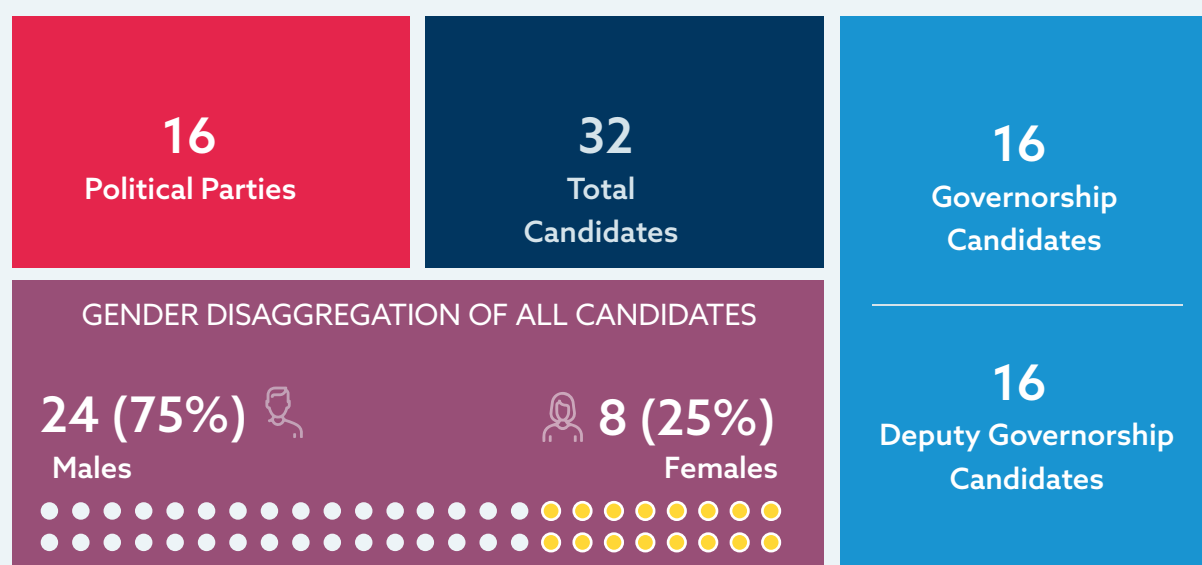
While direct physical attacks remain minimal, the absence of adequate protection mechanisms for women in the political process was evident in respondents' perceptions. In some cases, women reported avoiding active roles during elections due to the fear of being targeted or shamed, particularly in communities with strong patriarchal norms or heightened political tensions. Furthermore, analysis shows that Anambra's peace and political ecosystem lacks gender-sensitive infrastructure. Few LGAs have programs or security frameworks explicitly addressing threats against women. There is little evidence of sustained collaboration between electoral bodies, security agencies, and women-focused civil society organisations to mitigate gender-specific risks or to ensure safe

political environments for women.

The ESRA risk categorisation confirms that gender-related election risks are present in nearly all LGAs, with varying intensity. While the broader political environment in Anambra may not reflect widespread gender-based electoral violence, the structural vulnerabilities, historical sidelining, and localised cases of intimidation form a critical area of concern, particularly in the context of the 2025 off-cycle governorship election. Going forward, electoral stakeholders must recognise that gendered threats, whether overt or covert, undermine democratic participation and electoral credibility. Proactive steps, including gender-sensitive security planning, protection protocols for female party agents, and clear redress pathways for victims of electoral intimidation, are essential to ensure that women can fully participate in Anambra's electoral process without fear or coercion.

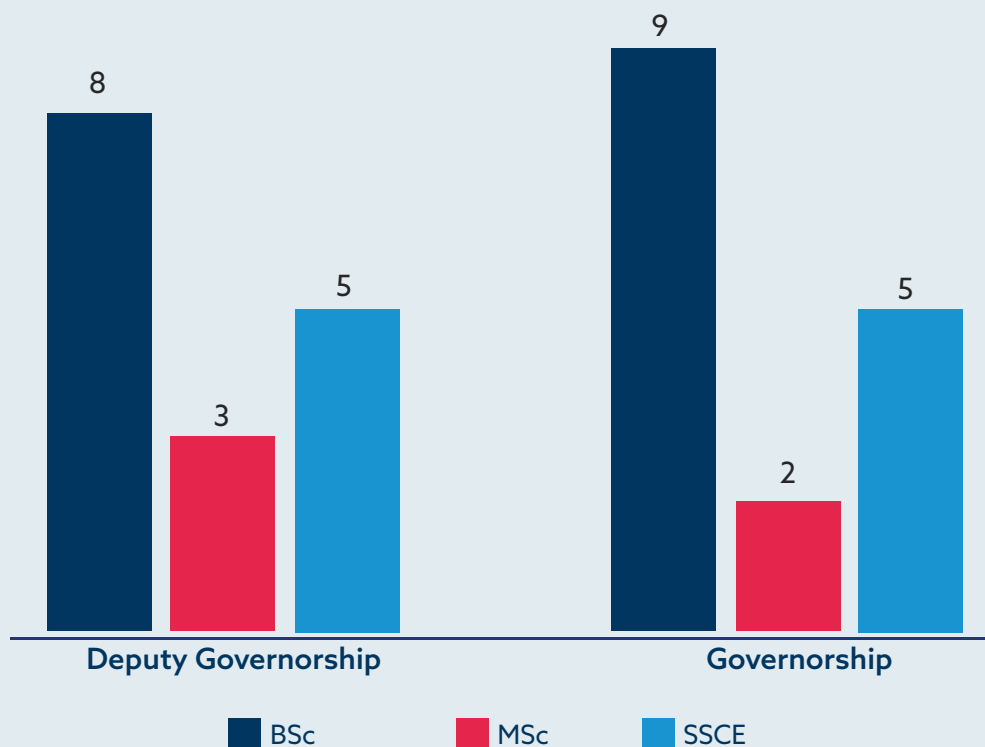


Candidate Demographics and Distribution in the 2025 Anambra Governorship Election



AGE DISTRIBUTION OF CANDIDATES		
	Governorship	Deputy Governorship
Lowest Age of Candidates	36	40
Average Age of Candidates	55	40
Highest Age of Candidates	71	67

DISTRIBUTION OF CANDIDATES BY ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION



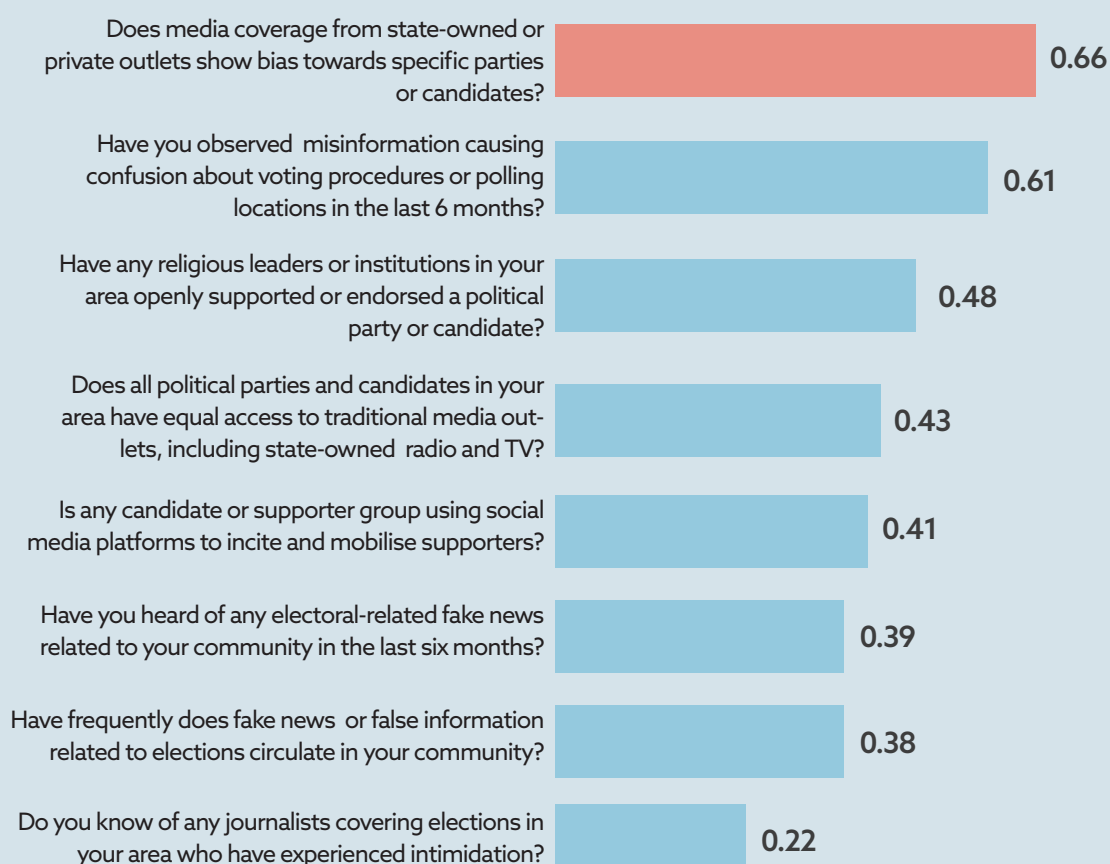
Women in Anambra's electoral process face subtle but pervasive intimidation, exclusion, and discrimination, limiting safe participation as voters, candidates, and party agents. While overt violence is minimal, structural pressures, patriarchal norms, and weak protection mechanisms deepen underrepresentation. Without gender-sensitive risk mapping, security planning, and redress pathways, women remain vulnerable, undermining inclusive democracy and electoral credibility in the 2025 governorship election. "

Media and Information Ecosystem



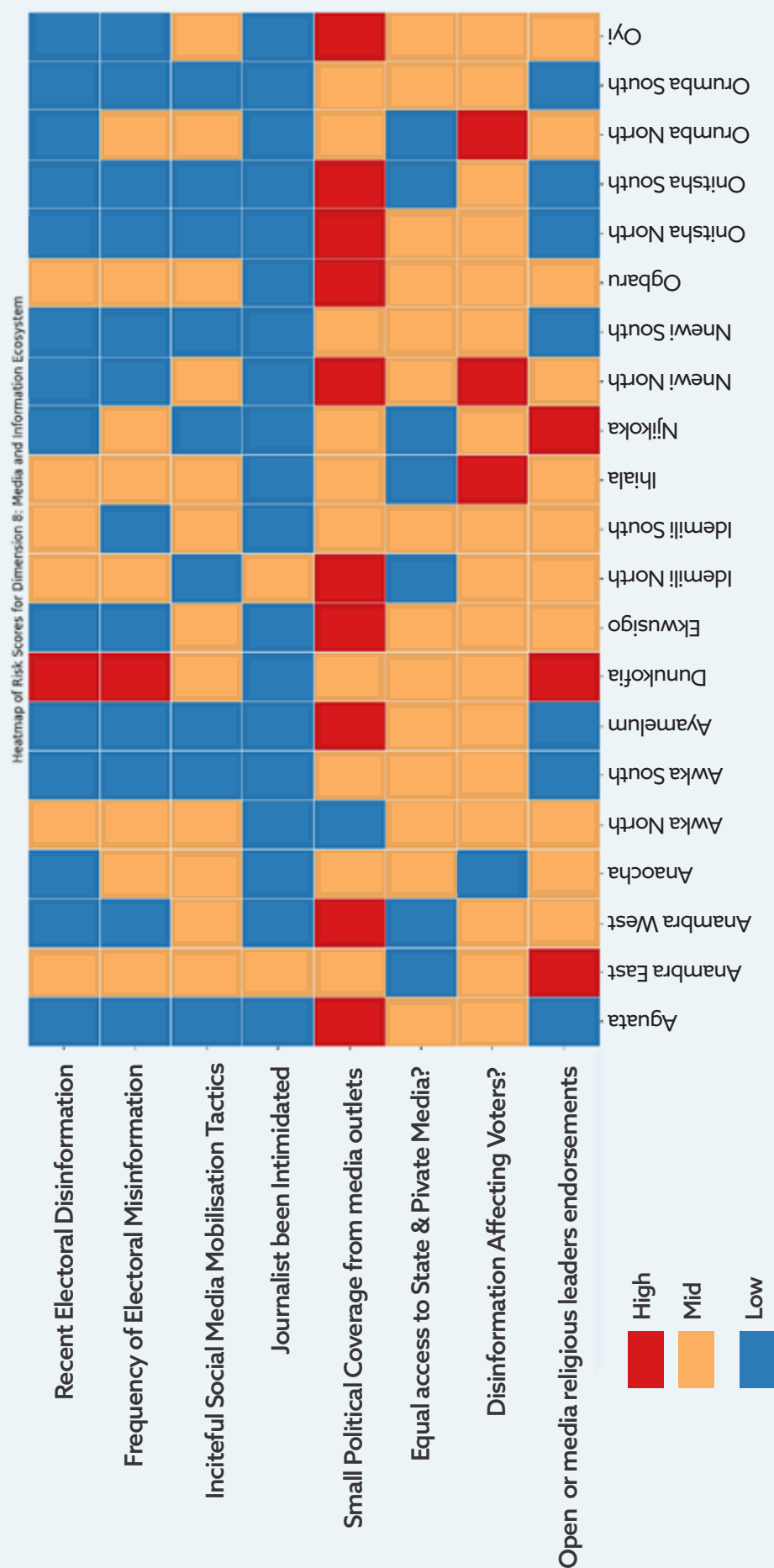
Insight 10: There is a high risk associated with media trust and manipulation, biased reporting and misinformation must be guarded against

Overall Media and Information Ecosystem Risks



Misinformation, partisan framing, and intimidation of information actors are converging into a significant risk channel for the 2025 Anambra governorship election. ESRA results show sustained exposure to false content across LGAs, frequent circulation of misleading claims about procedures and locations, and perceived bias across state and private outlets. These findings align with a broader 2024–2025 Nigerian information environment marked by rapid content virality, fragmented trust, and the growing use of synthetic media. Law-enforcement messaging during recent polls in the South East has already flagged the threat of fake news and online incitement, including for the 16 August 2025 bye-elections, underscoring risk salience in the pre-election window for Anambra⁵².

Heatmap of Media and Information Ecosystem dimension across all LGAs



Operational signals ahead of the Anambra poll point to three interlinked challenges. First, the volume and frequency of false electoral claims are non-trivial. ESRA respondents across multiple LGAs report hearing election-related fake news within the last six months and encountering frequent circulation of misleading content, including claims that confuse polling arrangements. Second, intimidation and pressure on journalists and citizen reporters reduce independent verification capacity. While not confined to Anambra, documented incidents in the South East during recent cycles include assaults, arrests, and equipment seizures around security and protest coverage, which have a chilling effect on local reporting networks relied upon on election day⁵³. Third, perceived media bias is pronounced. ESRA data show majorities in many LGAs view coverage as slanted, and respondents report unequal access to state and private platforms. Bias perception is a strong predictor of post-result contention when margins are narrow.



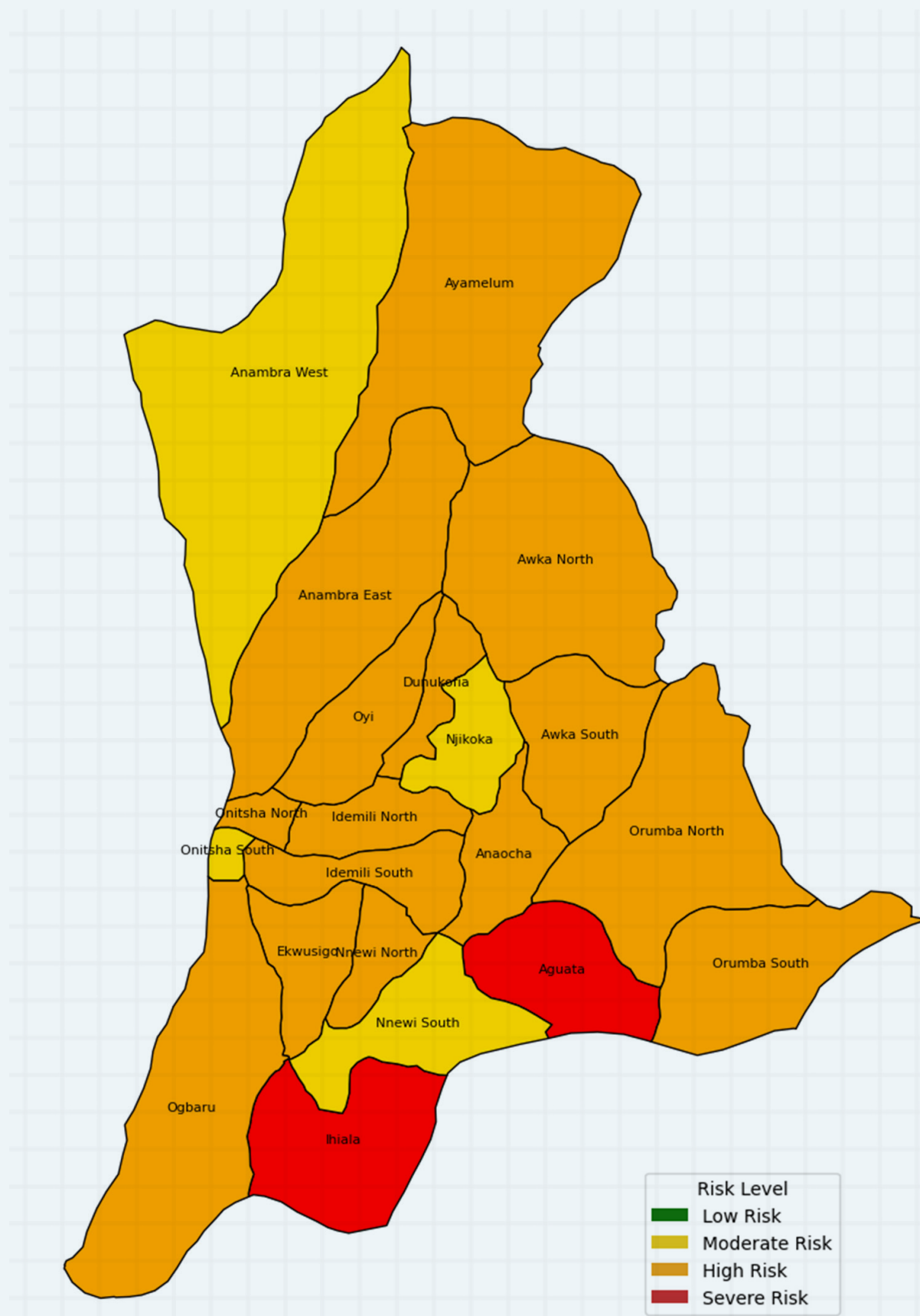
Evidence from the 2025 pre-election period illustrates how misinformation can quickly intersect with security. Police commands have issued repeated warnings in nearby South East operations about fabricated claims designed to provoke unrest, including old videos recirculated as new incidents. Fact-checking desks have also flagged fresh false narratives tied to party alignments and candidate endorsements in the 2025 cycle⁵⁴. These alerts matter because they mirror the kinds of rumours that can trigger spontaneous crowd movements at collation points and can undercut confidence in real-time INEC communications. Synthetic media risks now amplify these pressures. Nigeria's information space

has recorded political deepfakes that impersonate public figures and splice audio for persuasive effect. Analysts note that deepfakes do not need to be technically perfect to influence behaviour; their impact grows when they confirm existing partisan priors and circulate faster than corrections. For Anambra, this means that a convincingly narrated but false audio of a security directive, or a fabricated video announcing a last-minute change in polling logistics, could depress turnout in targeted wards or redirect crowds in ways that overwhelm specific stations. Preparedness therefore requires prior mapping of likely narratives, pre-approved correction scripts, and rapid cross-posting through trusted community and faith networks.

Religious endorsements and pulpit politics also affect the information terrain. ESRA reports notable shares of respondents who have observed overt support by religious leaders for parties or candidates. In a context where congregational messaging is widely trusted, such endorsements can be read as cues about legitimacy and can polarise precincts if opposing congregations counter-mobilise. National and regional monitoring from 2023 through 2025 documents instances of political messaging in sermons and faith media across the South East, with fact-checkers debunking fabricated clergy statements and misattributed videos during heated races. The 2025 cycle is therefore likely to see another round of claim-and-counter-claim content targeting church and fellowship audiences, especially in urban LGAs with dense media consumption.

The implications for election security and participation are direct. High misinformation prevalence correlates with confusion at polling sites, confrontation with officials, and disputes over closing and collation procedures. Perceived media bias can harden winner-loser gaps, particularly where party agents cite broadcast clips or viral posts to challenge incident reports or turnout numbers. Intimidation of journalists suppresses neutral observation, while online incitement can serve as a trigger for offline gatherings that stretch security deployments. Team-based mitigation should therefore integrate structured media monitoring into the ESRA situational track, combine it with rapid fact-check relays to ward focal points, and push verified updates through SMS and radio, which remain resilient channels during network disruptions.

“ *Anambra’s 2025 election faces intertwined risks of misinformation, journalist intimidation, and media bias. False claims, deepfakes, and pulpit politics could fuel confusion, disputes, and unrest—making rapid fact-checking, trusted communication, and media monitoring critical for security.* **”**



ranking highlight that risk is multidimensional, reflecting the interplay of voter density, socio-economic stressors, political rivalry, and security preparedness at the LGA level.

LGA	Risk Colour	Insight/Explanation
Ihiala	Red	Ihiala is a high-density LGA with a history of intense political rivalry, particularly between dominant parties. The area exhibits significant youth mobilisation and active local political thugs, which, combined with high perceptions of security lapses and voter dissatisfaction from prior elections, elevates its risk. Socio-economic stressors, especially youth unemployment, further contribute to volatility.
Aguata	Red	Aguata consistently experiences competitive elections with closely contested wards. Persistent vote-buying, historical disputes over local candidate selection, and limited trust in security agencies amplify electoral risk. Its voting strength makes it a strategic target for party mobilisation, increasing potential for conflict.
Awka South	Orange	Awka South is moderately contested but has significant urban centres, making logistical and crowd control challenges more likely. While violence has been limited in past elections, tensions around voter registration delays and perceived institutional partiality increase its risk profile.
Ogbaru	Orange	Ogbaru has pockets of low security control in riverine and hard-to-reach communities, contributing to potential grey zones. Though political rivalry is present, community cohesion in some areas mitigates extreme risk, placing it at moderate-high risk.
Onitsha North	Orange	Onitsha North combines urban density with intense political competition. Historical election-day disruptions and concentrated youth mobilisation raise the risk, but strong community engagement and INEC presence help contain it below severe.
Onitsha South	Gold	While still politically active, Onitsha South benefits from more stable urban governance and relatively higher institutional trust. Lower historical incidence of youth-fuelled violence and stronger security coordination contribute to a moderate-risk rating.

Anaocha	Orange	Anaocha has notable youth engagement and competition among local party elites. Past voter registration and election-day logistical issues contribute to moderate-high risk, though strong civil society involvement and peacebuilding efforts mitigate extreme escalation.
Ekwusigo	Orange	Ekwusigo shows moderate political rivalry across wards and occasional tensions between community groups. ESRA dimensions such as vote-buying and socio-economic grievances contribute to the risk level, though security presence and voter education help maintain it below severe.
Idemili North	Orange	Idemili North's risk is amplified by historical political factionalism and strong candidate interest. Youth unemployment and perceptions of uneven security deployment increase tension, balanced by active INEC engagement.
Idemili South	Orange	Similar to Idemili North, with added vulnerability due to incidents during prior voter registration exercises (CVR) and localized disputes between party supporters. Risk is mitigated slightly by high civic participation.
Njikoka	Gold	Njikoka demonstrates lower risk due to a smaller voting population, less intense party competition, and relatively effective local INEC operations during prior elections. Socio-economic grievances exist but are less mobilised for electoral manipulation.
Nnewi North	Orange	Nnewi North is commercially active, attracting intense political contestation. Previous elections indicate moderate incidents of vote-buying and youth mobilisation, raising risk to the high level.
Oyi	Orange	Moderate-high risk reflects a combination of youth unemployment, small-scale political thuggery, and competition over local offices. Security presence is adequate but not robust enough to offset all concerns.

Nnewi South	Gold	Though politically relevant, Nnewi South has demonstrated stable election conduct historically. Institutional trust and cohesive local structures contribute to a lower risk rating despite active political engagement.
Orumba North	Orange	Electoral risk arises from intra-party disputes and historical tensions between communities. Youth mobilisation and socio-economic grievances increase the likelihood of electoral incidents.
Orumba South	Orange	Similar to Orumba North, with additional concerns about security logistics in rural wards and sporadic reports of vote-buying. Local oversight mitigates escalation to severe risk.
Anambra East	Orange	Moderate-high risk reflects active political competition and voter mobilisation pressures, but limited historical election-day violence keeps the LGA below the highest risk level.
Anambra West	Gold	Lower political intensity, smaller voter base, and relatively stable security environment reduce risk despite some socio-economic challenges.
Awka North	Orange	Risk stems from moderate political rivalry, youth engagement in partisan activities, and sporadic security lapses. Urban and rural divide creates areas of vulnerability.
Ayamelum	Orange	Political mobilisation is significant but mostly concentrated in certain wards. Youth unemployment and occasional local disputes elevate risk to moderate-high.
Dunukofia	Orange	Prior CVR monitoring highlighted registration delays, unprofessional conduct, and interference by political actors. Combined with high youth participation, these factors place it at moderate-high risk.
Ihiala	Red	Urban density, youth unemployment, and historical political rivalry create multiple points of tension. Security gaps exacerbate the potential for electoral violence.

Risk Actors, factors and Actions that could generate tension or cause violence on the election day and post-election.

Ranking of the likelihood for actors to be responsible for election-related risks in the 2025 Anambra governorship election. (Rank 8 =highest risk)

Rank	Actor
8	Political parties (national/state actors)
7	Youth groups – Political thugs
6	INEC
5	Security forces
4	Judiciary
3	Vigilantes or Informal state security agencies
2	Media outlets
1	Traditional or religious leaders

Ranking of election risk factors in the 2025 Anambra governorship election. (Rank 8 =highest risk)

Rank	Risk Factor
8	Political dynamics and unhealthy campaigning
7	Weak electoral peace and early warning systems
6	Electoral Management and Institutional Preparedness
5	Security architecture and response
4	Community-level conflicts and disputes
3	Gender-based violence or intimidation
2	Media misinformation and biased coverage
1	Ethno-religious or identity-based tensions

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are designed to address each identified electoral risk, targeting both systemic and localised vulnerabilities. By linking interventions to actors, hotspots, and assessment-based insights, they aim to mitigate threats, enhance INEC preparedness, safeguard voter participation, and strengthen overall election integrity.

Strengthen INEC Preparedness and Public Confidence.

Linked Insights: 7 – Electoral Management and Institutional Preparedness; Risk Factors: Electoral Management, Institutional Weakness;

Actors: INEC; Hotspots: Ihiala, Aguata, Awka South, Ogbaru

- Conduct pre-election operational drills for PVC distribution, BVAS deployment, and CVR follow-up in high-risk LGAs to prevent technical delays and ensure smooth election day processes.
- Implement transparent communication strategies, including real-time updates on PVC availability, voter registration, and polling arrangements via SMS, local radio, and social media.
- Deploy special INEC monitors to monitor and manage election day operations in high-risk LGAs, ensuring immediate escalation of logistical challenges.
- Strengthen ad-hoc staff training and supervision, emphasising professionalism, neutrality, and conflict-sensitive engagement to reduce the risk of intimidation or bias.

Mitigate Political Dynamics and Unhealthy Campaigning.

Linked Insights: 1 – Political Tensions; Risk Factors: Political Rivalries;

Actors: Political Parties, Youth Groups; Hotspots: Ihiala, Aguata, Onitsha North/South, Awka South

- Enforce code of conduct agreements for political parties and candidates, with public commitments to peaceful campaigning and prohibition of hate speech.
- Conduct pre-election conflict sensitivity workshops for political actors and local influencers, especially in LGAs with high political mobilization and youth involvement.

- Engage youth leaders and political party coordinators in dialogue sessions to discourage the use of youth groups or thugs for coercion, intimidation, or vote-buying.
- Monitor campaign financing and candidate promises to limit opportunistic empowerment or material inducement that could exacerbate vote trading mechanisms before, during, and after the election.
- Engage community leaders and religious institutions to mediate disputes and defuse political tensions at the grassroots.
- Monitor hate speech, inflammatory narratives, and misinformation across social and traditional media, and alert INEC and law enforcement when thresholds for incitement are reached.
- Document and publicise best practices in peaceful electoral participation to inspire confidence and civic responsibility across the state.

Address Security Architecture and Operational Gaps

Linked Insights: 2 & 7 – Security Environment; Risk Factors: Security Gaps;

Actors: Security Forces, Vigilantes; Hotspots: Ihiala, Awka South, Aguata, Ogbaru

- Deploy adequately trained security personnel proportional to LGA risk rating, ensuring visibility in high-traffic polling centres and hotspot wards.
- Establish LGA-level coordination centres linking INEC, security agencies, and community leaders for rapid response to disturbances.
- Train security forces in non-partisan electoral security management, emphasizing the protection of voters, election staff, and critical infrastructure.
- Implement monitoring patrols and rapid response teams to prevent escalation of violence, particularly in areas with past political thuggery or youth mobilization incidents.

Reduce Socio-Economic Stress and Youth-Driven Electoral Risks

Linked Insights: 8 – Socio-Economic Stressors; Risk Factors: Youth Unemployment, Vote-Buying;

Actors: Political Parties, Candidates; Hotspots: Aguata, Awka South, Ihiala, Njikoka, Nnewi North/South

- Introduce community engagement programs targeting unemployed youth, providing civic education, skill acquisition, and non-partisan civic engagement opportunities prior to election day.
- Monitor and regulate vote-buying mechanisms at community level, particularly where candidates conduct last-minute empowerment or distribution exercises, with verification from INEC observers.
- Collaborate with civil society and youth organizations to establish reporting mechanisms for instances of inducement, intimidation, or coercion.
- Emphasize the link between youth empowerment and democratic participation, discouraging youth exploitation by political actors.

Integrate Gender-Sensitive Risk Management

Linked Insights: 9 – Gender-Based Electoral Risks; Risk Factors: GBV and Intimidation; Actors: INEC, Political Parties, Security Forces; Hotspots: Ihiala, Aguata, Awka South, Ogbaru, Onitsha North/South

- Ensure gender-sensitive monitoring at polling units, including the deployment of female security personnel and party agents.
- Promote safe reporting channels for women facing intimidation, harassment, or violence in the electoral process.
- Conduct targeted civic education campaigns for women, emphasizing participation as voters, candidates, and party agents.
- Implement community-based interventions with religious and traditional leaders to mitigate patriarchal barriers that suppress women's electoral engagement.

Strengthen Media Literacy and Counter Misinformation

Linked Insights: 10 – Media and Information Ecosystem; Risk Factors: Media Bias, Misinformation;

Actors: Media Outlets, Religious Leaders, Political Parties; Hotspots: Awka South, Onitsha North/South, Njikoka, Aguata

- Partner with local media, civil society, and digital platforms to run verified election information campaigns on voter education, polling logistics, and candidate platforms.
- Monitor and document bias in media coverage, including state-owned outlets, and enforce equal airtime for political actors to prevent perception of manipulation.
- Develop rapid-response teams for debunking fake news and deep fakes, particularly in high-risk LGAs, leveraging AI-based monitoring tools and social media engagement.
- Conduct community workshops on media literacy, equipping citizens to recognize misinformation and report incidents to relevant authorities.

Enhance Community-Level Peacebuilding and Early Warning Systems

Linked Insights: 3 & 6 – Community Tensions, Peace Efforts; Risk Factors: Weak Early Warning;

Actors: Traditional Leaders, Vigilantes, Civil Society; Hotspots: Awka South, Ihiala, Njikoka, Onitsha North/South

- Establish ward-level peace committees inclusive of youth, women, and religious leaders to monitor tensions, identify potential flashpoints, and engage in preventive mediation.
- Implement community conflict reporting channels, integrating local authorities, INEC, and security agencies, with timely escalation protocols.
- Conduct pre-election sensitization programs emphasizing non-violence, tolerance, and respect for election outcomes.

- Leverage existing civic networks, including CDS and youth associations, for grassroots early warning and voter education.

Institutionalize Post-Election Risk Analysis and Lessons Learned

Linked Insights: 1-10; Actors: INEC, Political Parties, Civil Society

- Conduct post-election audits of all identified hotspots to assess operational gaps, political tensions, and security responses.
- Document lessons learned from CVR, voter turnout, and risk mitigation measures, feeding into electoral reform strategies.
- Integrate gender, youth, and socio-economic risk assessments into future election planning to reduce structural vulnerabilities.
- Establish continuous stakeholder engagement, ensuring that political actors, security agencies, and civil society remain accountable for reforms and community trust-building.



END NOTES

- 1 <https://globaldatalab.org/shdi/maps>
- 2 <https://www.icrc.gov.ng/fg-reaches-commercial-close-for-n4bn-onitsha-port-concession-icrc/>
- 3 <https://www.icirnigeria.org/anambra-election-violent-enforcement-of-ip-obs-sit-at-home-biggest-threat-to-voter-turnout-cdd/>
- 4 <https://dailypost.ng/2021/11/08/anambra-election-ipob-responsible-for-low-voter-turnout-inec/>
- 5 <https://www.thecable.ng/anambradecides-security-operatives-clash-with-gunmen-in-ihiala-lga/>
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