FINAL STATEMENT

On the August 16, 2025 Bye-elections in Nigeria

19th August, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KIMPACT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE'S (KDI'S) FINAL STATEMENT ON THE AUGUST 16, 2025, RE-RUN AND BYE-ELECTIONS IN 13 STATES ACROSS NIGERIA

Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI) presents its comprehensive assessment of the bye-elections conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Saturday, August 16, 2025. The exercise comprised sixteen (16) constituencies across twelve (12) states, Adamawa, Anambra, Edo, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Kogi, Ogun, Oyo, Niger, Taraba, and Zamfara, alongside rerun polls in Enugu and Kano States , totaling thirteen (13) states nationwide. The necessity for these bye-elections emerged primarily due to the unfortunate occurrences of deaths and resignations that followed the 2023 general elections, along with the outcomes of subsequent litigation.

This statement builds on KDI's preliminary statement issued at 2pm on election day, drawing from reports provided by our trained observers deployed to selected polling units across the states where the election took place, as well as analysis from our Election Day Data Room (EDDR). The statement covers critical aspects of the process, including voting, counting, collation, and the announcement of results, highlighting positive practices that should be institutionalised and recurring gaps that demand urgent attention. KDI reiterates its longstanding position: *credible elections serve as the foundation of democratic governance*. The quality of electoral administration, the conduct of political actors, the professionalism of security personnel, and citizens' ability to vote free of coercion or inducement collectively determine whether elections reflect the will of the people.

KDI'S MONITORING APPROACH

To strengthen its monitoring of the electoral process, KDI set up an Election Day

Data Room (EDDR), which became operational on August 16, 2025. The EDDR was designed to track and analyse developments throughout the election-day cycle, with a focus on documenting incidents of electoral violence as they occur, evaluating the overall security and integrity of the polls, and offering timely information to stakeholders to support rapid responses.

The Data Room draws on real-time updates from 357 trained monitors deployed across all 357 wards in the 13 states where byelections and re-run elections were conducted. These observers reported on critical aspects such as the election administration, election result management, election security, and general incidents within the polling environment. Together, their reports provided a holistic picture of the conduct and atmosphere of the election. KDI's EDDR facilitated and documented 70 calls along with more than 800 incident reports. During the 2025 bye-elections and re-run elections, the EDDR recorded a total of 522 verified reports. These reports encompassed a diverse array of developments across polling units, addressing incidents of violence, operational challenges, and elements that could potentially lead to violence.

KDI, in its preliminary press statement, found that the August 16, 2025, bye-elections reflected both progress and persisting gaps in Nigeria's electoral process. BVAS largely functioned well across polling units, boosting accreditation credibility, though **isolated** cases of low battery, device freezes, and biometric challenges were observed; fixing of faults or replacement of the devices were done in record time. Despite these improvements, late commencement of polls was widespread, with some units not opening until well after 10:00 a.m., reducing voting time and heightening the risk of disorder. In Kaduna and Edo, there were significant delays, whereas in Kano, the presence of Yan-Banga groups wielding sticks and dane guns created an atmosphere of intimidation for both officials and voters. Security agencies typically exhibited a commendable level of professionalism, contributing to the maintenance of order in many areas. However, there were concerning instances in Kogi where alleged collusion between security personnel and party affiliates hindered the voting process, enabled ballot manipulation, and restricted participation in certain areas of Okura Constituency.

KDI's EDDR documented sixteen violent incidents across Kogi, Anambra, Ogun, Enugu, Kaduna, and Kano, including ballot box snatching, clashes between cult groups, and attacks on party agents. While fatalities were avoided, the persistence of violence entrenches fear as a political tool. Generally, the elections demonstrated

incremental progress in technology and security deployment, but entrenched malpractices, vote buying, violence, late openings, and disinformation continue to undermine credibility. KDI emphasises the importance for Nigeria to aspire beyond mere relative improvement, advocating for elections that meet the essential standards of transparency, inclusiveness, safety, and credible competitiveness that are fundamental to a thriving democracy.

Based on the foregoing, KDI finds it prudent to benchmark the findings of its election observation against international best practices for elections. KDI's assessment of the election includes, election technology, election result managament, election logistics and administration, vote buying and peaceful conduct of the election:

KEY ASSESSMENTS

1. Election Technology: Kimpact Development Initiative observed that the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) was deployed in virtually all polling units visited and functioned effectively. The system improved voter accreditation and strengthened confidence that ballots were tied to actual registered voters. Malfunctions occurred, but these were relatively contained, stemming from low batteries, device freezes, or biometric capture challenges and these represent 3.5% of the entire reports received from the 356 wards. In many cases, ad-hoc officials were able to troubleshoot or receive replacements quickly, avoiding disenfranchisement of voters.

The Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) Results Viewing Portal (IReV) has once again provided the viewing of polling unit results in real time for Nigerians and observers, enabling citizens to verify figures against those ultimately announced. However, in contrast to the recent Ondo 2024 governorship election, where INEC successfully achieved a 97% upload of polling unit results on IReV by 9:30 PM on election day, thus ensuring timely and reliable public access to the result of the election, the Saturday August 16 bye-election did not meet this standard. As of 6 PM on August 19, 2025, the results upload on IReV indicated that only 4 out of 16 bye-election constituencies, and 2 re-run election constituencies had achieved 100% upload 3 days after the election. The table below provides the details:

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS UPLOADS ON INEC IREV

S/NO	CONSTITUENCY/ STATE	NUMBER OF POLLING UNITS	NUMBER OF RESULTS UPLOAD	PERCENTAGE OF UPLOADS
1.	Ganye SHoA (Adamawa)	198	192	96.97%
2.	SHoA, Onitsha North 1 (Anambra)	198	51	30.72%
3.	Anambra Senatorial (Anambra South)	1934	1905	98.50%
4.	Edo Senatorial (Edo Central)	744	732	98.39%
5.	Edo (Ovia North East/ Ovia South West), House of Representatives	487	481	98.77%
6.	Jigawa (Babura/ Garki), House of Representatives	386	386	100%
7.	Kaduna, SHoA (Zaria, Kewaye)	296	282	95.27%
8.	Kaduna, SHoA (Basawa)	142	137	96.48%
9.	Kano (Shanono/ Bagwai), SHoA	352	317	90.06%
10.	Kaduna (Chikun/ Kajuru), House of Representatives	731	724	99.04%

11.	Kogi (Okura), SHoA	138	138	100%
12.	Niger (Munya) (SHoA)	119	119	100%
13.	Ogun (Ikenne/ Shagamu/Remo North), HOR	557	552	99.10%
14.	Oyo (Ibadan North), HOR	512	512	100%
15.	Zamfara (Kaura Namoda), SHoA	109	105	96.33%
16.	Taraba (Karim-Lamido), SHoA	131	125	95.42%
17.	Enugu (Enugu South I)	124	8 (All cancellations)	6.45%

While BVAS and IReV have contributed positively to the transparency framework, it is important to note that the integrity of the election may be compromised if INEC is unable to achieve full upload, including details of cancelled polling units (Form EC40G), within 2 days following the election. This concern is particularly worrying in instances where results have already been declared, and certificates of return have been issued to winners. Transparency must be comprehensive. To strengthen the electoral process in Nigeria, it is important for INEC to meticulously document, quantify, and clarify any instances of disruption and cancellation. In the absence of this, the perception of selective transparency may jeopardise public trust in what are otherwise major improvements in accountability.

2. Election Result Management: The preliminary analysis of the uploaded results on IREV under the KDI Ballot Integrity project and methodology indicates cases of overvoting, arithmetic error in the tabulation of some polling unit results, and irregular clusters in some constituencies, particularly in the results from

Edo, Anambra and Kogi states. Considering the inconclusive elections in certain constituencies as declared by INEC, we urge INEC to review some of the results in the afore mentioned states to ensure the integrity of the process.

3. Election Logistics and Administration: The bye-elections held on August 16 highlighted certain systemic weaknesses that continue to require attention. KDI noted that the election began later than scheduled in 9 states (Adamawa, Anambra, Edo, Enugu, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Taraba, and Zamfara) among the 13 states where the bye-election occurred on Saturday, August 16, 2025. Elections typically commenced between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m., with some instances extending beyond 10:30 a.m. In the registration areas of Kujama and Nasarawa wards in Kaduna State, the delayed arrival of officials resulted in voters getting agitated.

The bye-election on August 16 highlighted the potential risks associated with the delayed commencement of the electoral process. In certain constituencies, the delayed arrival of sensitive materials hindered the timely opening of polling units, resulting in voters experiencing inconvenience and dissatisfaction. In regions where polling units were moved, such as Niger State,   insufficient communication exacerbated the circumstances, leaving citizens uncertain about their voting locations. Delays of this nature can inadvertently hinder voter participation, foster an atmosphere of mistrust, escalate tensions at polling units, and allow for the proliferation of misinformation.

4. Vote Buying: Central to the essence of democratic choice is the principle that voters should be able to make decisions freely, without coercion or financial inducement. Regrettably, KDI's observations indicate that the August 16 bye-elections faced considerable challenges due to the prevalence of vote trading. Our observers noted the financial inducement offered to voters, with amounts up to N4,000 per ballot, along with the distribution of in-kind items, including food products and snacks. In Kaduna, law enforcement officials apprehended an individual found with over N25.9 million, which is purportedly intended for voter inducement.   This incident, while currently under investigation, highlights the considerable scale involved in the practice. What was particularly concerning was that in some polling units, the practice of vote buying took place openly, seemingly without any regard for the presence of security personnel, observers, or even cameras. This boldness indicates an increasing acceptance of inducement, undermining the capacity of citizens to exercise their voting rights without constraint.

5. Peaceful Conduct of the Election: The August 16 bye-elections presented a notable paradox, characterised by the commendable professionalism exhibited by some security agents alongside significant breaches occurring in some constituencies. In numerous polling units, security personnel upheld order, provided reassurance to voters, and effectively prevented minor disputes from developing further. Their presence enhanced the overall perception of safety, and in some instances, the election unfolded without notable disturbances. Nevertheless, in certain constituencies, the process was unfortunately affected by instances of violence and intimidation. KDI recorded 16 incidents of election violence, with Kogi State identified as the state with the highest number of occurrences. In Anyingba, there was sporadic gunfire and incidents involving the assault of party agents. We express our concern regarding the disruption that took place during the bye-election in Ogun State on August 16. At Ward 5, Polling Unit 2, Wesley Primary School, Iperu,   an incident occurred as armed individuals entered the premises, discharged firearms, and snatched ballot boxes. Such acts of violence compromise the integrity of our elections, disenfranchise voters, and pose a significant risk to democratic stability. In Enugu, a party agent experienced a physical assault, while in Kaduna, armed Yan-Banga groups conducted patrols that instilled fear among voters and officials.

Although there were no recorded fatalities, which is a favourable outcome in comparison to previous cycles. It is important to recognise that violence can still pose a significant threat to democracy, even in the absence of lethal consequences. Every instance of intimidation or disruption diminishes participation, fosters apathy, and strengthens a political environment where fear takes the place of constructive dialogue. The tranquility of an election ought to be assessed not merely by the lack of fatalities but by the establishment of secured environments that empower citizens to cast their votes with confidence and without intimidation. The elections held on August 16 demonstrated success in several areas, yet there were notable shortcomings in others.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The bye-elections held on August 16, 2025, highlighted notable advancements driven by technology, such as the use of BVAS for accreditation and IReV for public access to polling-unit results. Additionally, there was a commendable display of professionalism by security agencies across various locations. Concurrently,

late openings of polls, election violence and intimidation, as well as established practices of vote trading, pose significant challenges to the integrity of the electoral process. The overall picture that emerges presents a nuanced perspective, credible processes are evident in numerous locations, while some environments face challenges, and the narrative remains somewhat accommodating of inducement and disruption.

KDI cautions strongly against lowering the bar for what counts as a "good" election. Comparative improvement against past Nigerian elections is not the standard of democratic excellence. The benchmark must remain the legal framework, international best practices adapted to local realities, and the lived experience of voters who deserve elections that are transparent, inclusive, safe, and genuinely competitive.

CONCLUSION

The August 16 re-run and bye-elections underscore both Nigeria's progress and unfinished work. Technology, transparency tools, and professional security deployments can create the scaffolding for credible polls, but they cannot, by themselves, neutralise entrenched practices like inducement and orchestrated disruptions. Credibility rests on the sum of the voter's experience, arriving at a polling unit that opens on time, being accredited without undue delay, casting a secret ballot without intimidation, and watching results transparently counted, posted, and reflected faithfully up the collation chain.

KDI calls on all stakeholders, INEC, security agencies, political parties, civil society, the media, and citizens, to treat the lessons from these elections as a springboard for bolder reforms ahead of future cycles of election. This includes decisive action on enforcement against inducement and violence, institutionalisation of rapid-response logistics, sustained improvements in technology, and higher verification standards in our information ecosystem.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To INEC

1. **Enhance Logistical Efficiency and Ensure Timely Openings of Polls.** Improve the delivery phase and reporting systems to make sure that officials and

materials arrive on time.

2. **BVAS Readiness and Rapid Response:** INEC should consolidate the progress made with BVAS by institutionalising robust contingency measures. This includes prepositioning spare devices and power banks in strategic clusters, scaling up technical hotlines and mobile troubleshooting teams for swift intervention. Such measures will not only minimise accreditation disruptions but also strengthen accountability and public trust in technology.

3. **IReV Completeness and Consistency:** Sustain prompt uploads; publish reconciliation notes where announced results diverge from PUs' posted figures; flag and explain Form EC40 series (disruptions/overvoting) at collation.

4. **Secrecy of the Ballot:** Rigorously enforce polling-booth layouts that protect ballot secrecy; sanction parties and agents who compromise secrecy through coaching or intimidation at the voting cubicle.

To Security Agencies

5. **Uniform Professionalism and Zero Collusion:** Investigate reported collusion, particularly in Kogi, and sanction perpetrators irrespective of affiliation; maintain a visible, impartial presence that reassures voters and officials alike.

6. **Pre-emptive Hotspot Management:** Use early-warning indicators to inform deployments to violence-prone wards; coordinate "clean corridor" escorts for material movement to and from RACs and sensitive PUs.

7. **Evidence-Led Prosecutions: W**here arrests take place, such as in cases of alleged vote buying, it is essential to conduct thorough investigations that maintain the integrity of the chain of custody and to ensure that suspects are charged in a timely manner to discourage any sense of impunity.

To Political Parties and Candidates

8. **End Vote Trading and Thuggery:** Issue enforceable internal directives prohibiting inducement and the deployment of armed groups; sanction members who finance or facilitate electoral malpractice.

9. **Respect for Process and Redress Mechanisms:** Channel disputes through formal petitions; refrain from inciting narratives that delegitimise lawful

processes or incite violence.

10. **Agent Conduct and Training:** Retrain agents on lawful duties at PUs and collation centres from interference with ballot secrecy and voter coercion.

11. **Scale Voter Education:** Intensify voter education among members, polling and voting procedures, and reporting channels for irregularities.

To Civil Society and the Media

12. **Elevate Verification Standards:** Collaborate with fact-checkers to verify claims before amplification, especially on security incidents or arrests that can shape turnout and acceptance of the election outcomes.

13. **Crowdsourced Incident Mapping:** Expand citizen incident-reporting channels with verification initiatives to combat misinformation and disinformation.

Signed
Bukola Idowu
Team Lead, Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI)

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Data Report of the **August 16th, 2025**
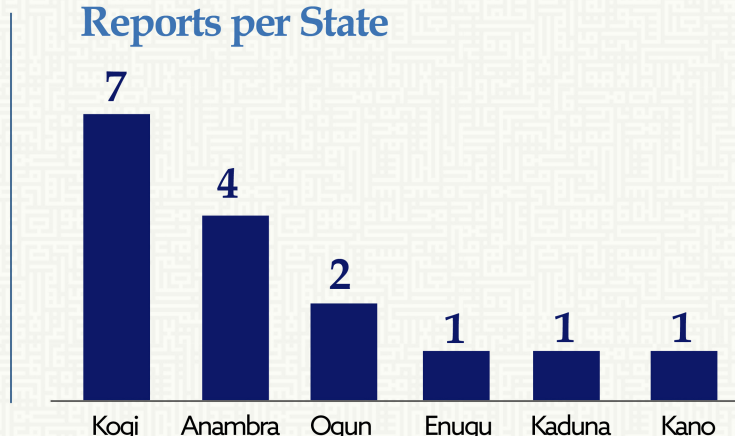# **Bye-elections** in Nigeria

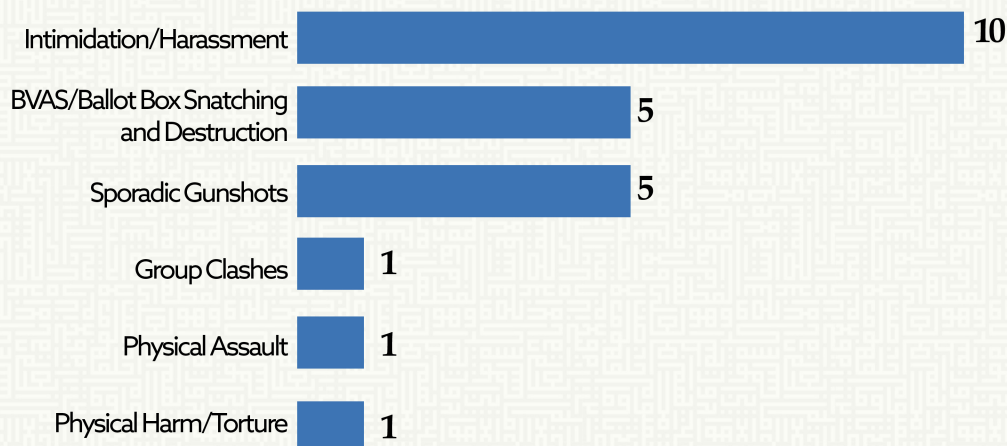KDI | KIMPACT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Violence Reports

16

Violent Incidents

Disaggregation of Violence Reports per State

State	Reports
Kogi	7
Anambra	4
Ogun	2
Enugu	1
Kaduna	1
Kano	1

Forms of Violence Reported

Form	Count
Intimidation/Harassment	10
BVAS/Ballot Box Snatching and Destruction	5
Sporadic Gunshots	5
Group Clashes	1
Physical Assault	1
Physical Harm/Torture	1

Targets of Violence

Human & Properties:	Properties:	Human:
1 Report	4 Reports	11 Reports

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Disaggregation of Perpetrators of Violence

Category	Value
Party Thugs	9
Party Members	4
Voters	1
Party Agents	1

Impact of the Violence

Category	Value
Voting Disrupted	10
Unable to Determine	4
Voting Stopped	2
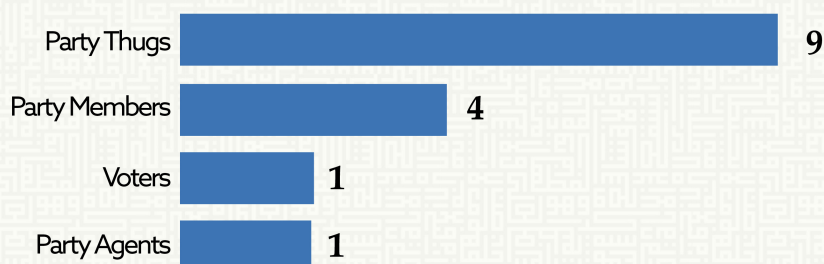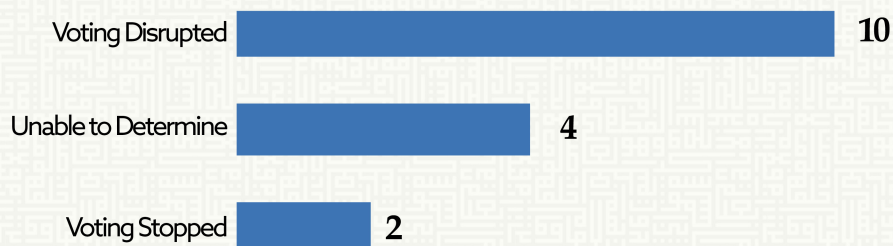
Was any arrest made by security agents?

18% Yes

82% No

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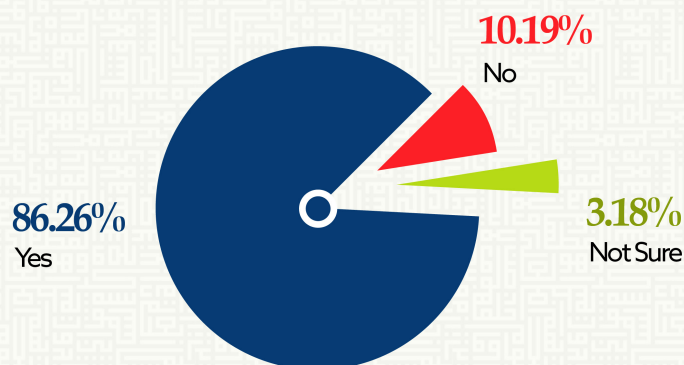KDI | KIMPACT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Arrival of INEC Officials

States where INEC Officials arrived Late

Kaduna, Oyo, Kano, Anambra, Adamawa, Edo, Taraba, Zamfara, Niger

Did Election Materials arrive at PUs properly and intact?

10.19%
No

86.26%
Yes

3.18%
Not Sure

States where INEC Material were confirmed to have not arrived intact

93.8%
Kaduna

6.2%
Taraba

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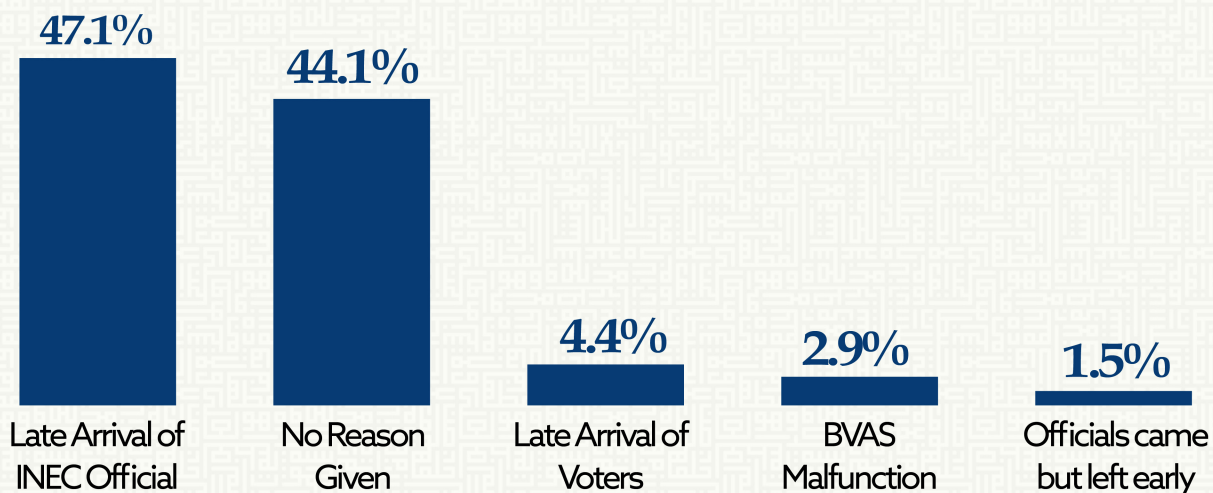**KDI** | KIMPACT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Commencement of Polls

States where there were late commencement of Polls

Adamawa, Anambra, Edo, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Oyo, Taraba and Zamfara States

Reasons Observed for Late Commencement of Polls

47.1% Late Arrival of INEC Official	
44.1% No Reason Given	
4.4% Late Arrival of Voters	
2.9% BVAS Malfunction	
1.5% Officials came but left early	

Disaggregation of Late Commencement of Polls per State

30.2% Between 8:45 and 9:00AM	
22.3% After 10:00AM	
21.1% Between 8:30 and 8:45AM	
10.5% Between 9:45 and 10:00AM	
9.2% Between 9:00 and 9:15AM	
6.6% Between 9:15 and 9:30AM	

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Bye-elections in Nigeria

BVAS Functionality

3.5%
Of the total reports were report on BVAS Malfunction.

States where there were cases of BVAS Malfunction

Edo, Anambra, Adamawa, Jigawa and Kogi States

Average time of BVAS accreditation per voter

1 - 2 Minutes — **26.3%**

2 - 3 Minutes — **26.3%**

Over 5 Minutes: **47.4%**

Disaggregation of the forms of issues observed regarding BVAS

Issue	Percentage
Failure to Capture Voter (Fingerprint or Facial)	**46.2%**
No network / Slow Function	**23.1%**
System Malfunction	**15.4%**
Low Battery Level	**7.7%**
They were advanced	**7.7%**
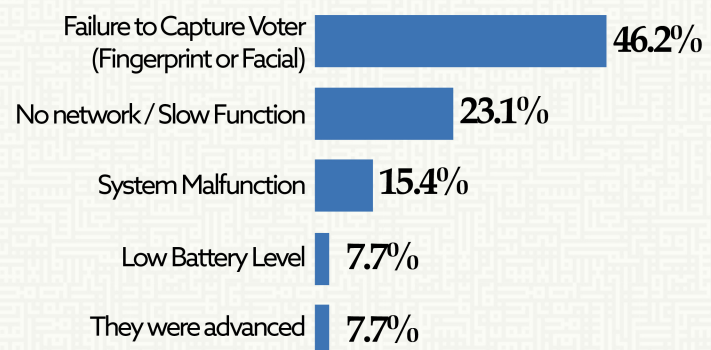
Proportion of BVAS Issues Resolved

50% Yes

25% No

25% Not Sure

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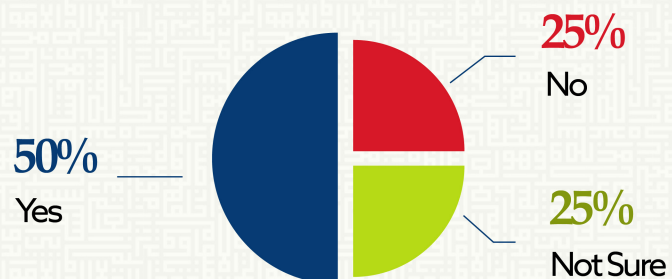
Vote Trading Reports

13.2%
Of the total reports were vote trading.

States where vote trading was reported:

Anambra, Edo, Niger, Adamawa, Jigawa, Kaduna, Ogun and Oyo States
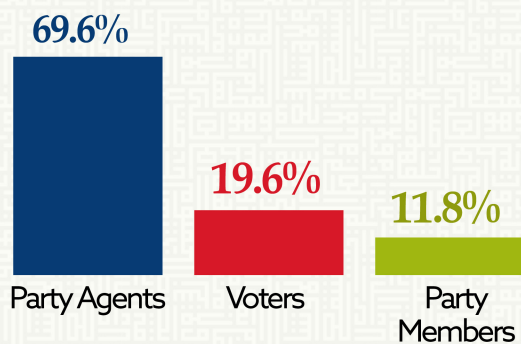
Elements involved in the vote trading:
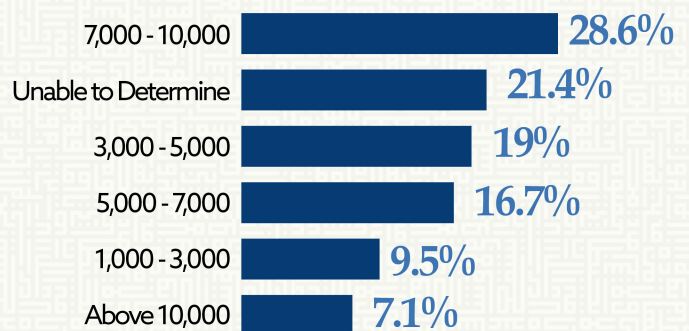
Money **97.7%**

Material Things **2.3%**

Disaggregation of Vote Buyers:

69.6% Party Agents

19.6% Voters

11.8% Party Members

Breakdown of cash value that votes were bought

7,000 - 10,000	28.6%
Unable to Determine	21.4%
3,000 - 5,000	19%
5,000 - 7,000	16.7%
1,000 - 3,000	9.5%
Above 10,000	7.1%

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About NEVR

The Nigeria Election Violence Report (NEVR) project is a citizen-led initiative designed to prevent electoral violence and strengthen Nigeria's democratic process. It seeks to build a robust, multi-stakeholder electoral security framework that tracks, documents, and mitigates violence before, during, and after elections. Through this, NEVER also functions as an early warning system, publishing disaggregated data to support stakeholders in developing effective mitigation strategies.

KDI, with support from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), currently implements the NEVR project. Using globally recognised indicators tested in more than 11 countries under the EVER methodology, KDI provides data-driven insights to stakeholders, including INEC, political parties, security agencies, and civil society organisations. Findings from our pre-election Security Risk Assessments (ESRA) have proven vital in highlighting electoral risk factors, triggers of violence, and areas requiring targeted interventions. This proactive approach continues to promote peaceful elections and strengthen public trust in democratic institutions.

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