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THE ELECTORAL HUB



FACTSHEET ON IMO STATE 2023 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

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About The Electoral Hub

The Electoral Hub, an affiliate of the Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD), is a knowledge and advocacy hub which seeks to provide solutions to improve the credibility and integrity of the electoral process. It is committed to promoting electoral knowledge, integrity, and accountability in Nigeria. Our aim is to strengthen electoral governance and accountability in Nigeria through the provision of critical and contextualized process. We believe that the integrity of the electoral process is crucial in improving electoral governance and sustaining democracy in Nigeria. We also believe in solutions rooted in the principles of justice and equity.

Our core values are knowledge-exchange, inclusion, justice, equity, transparency and accountability.

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Introduction

The Imo State Governorship Election is scheduled to hold on November 11, 2023 (11/11/2023). The election is to elect the governor of the state for a four year-term. The Imo State governorship election is one of the off-cycle governorship elections conducted after the general election. It is the latest of governorship elections outside of the main general election due to Supreme Court judgement on 14 January 2020 sacking of PDP Hon. Emeka Ihedioha who was declared winner of the March 9, 2019 governorship election.[1] The election would be the seventh governorship election to be conducted in the state since the transition to democratic rule in 1999. There are a number of issues and factors around the Imo State election worth mentioning such as:

- The election is happening after the 2023 general election and against the backdrop of judicial judgements on the 2023 presidential election adjudication. Therefore, it gives key electoral stakeholders the opportunity for lessons learned during the election to be deployed and effected.
- It provides an opportunity for the new Electoral Act implementation to be further tested.
- The prevalence of violence in the state caused by activities of 'unknown' gunmen, kidnappers, and violent secessionist agitators[2]. Imo State tops in violence in the south east geopolitical zone.
- Impact of violence on INEC facilities. INEC has experienced a series of attacks on its offices in the state which most times had led to the suspension of relevant activities such as the Continuous Voters Registration (CVR) process[3]. According to a report by INEC, there had been 50 attacks on its offices across the nation in four years and Imo State tops the chart with eleven (11) recorded cases[4].

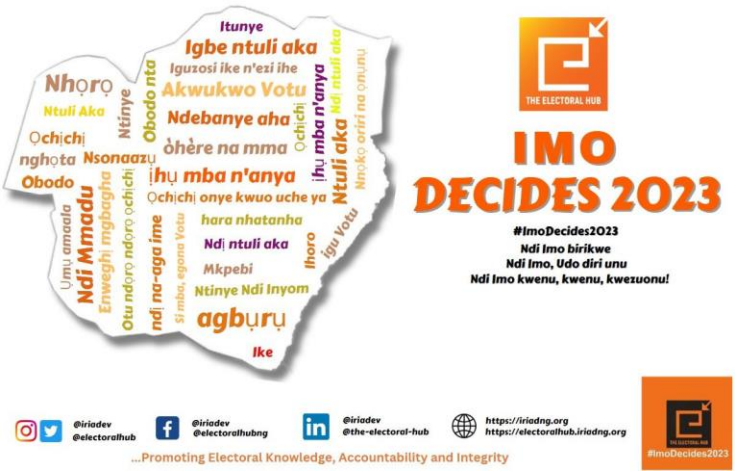
There are several steps that need to be taken to improve electoral governance and integrity in Nigeria and achieve better results for the Imo State Governorship Election, including resolving issues that arose prior to, during, and after the general election and implementing lessons learnt from the conduct of the general election. Some of these issues as captured

[1] https://www.premiumtimesng.com/politics/372610-breaking-supreme-court-sacks-imo-governor-ihedioha.html?tztc=1
[2] https://thenextier.com/the-eastern-hotspot/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=the-eastern-hotspot
[3] Adenekan S. (2023), Imo Attack: INEC suspends CVR in more centres as missing staffers are found. Premium Times. https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/524030-imo-attack-inec-suspends-cvr-in-more-centres-as-missing-staffers-are-found.html
[4] The Cable (2023), 50 Incidents in 15 States- INEC Details Attacks on its Office in 4 Years. https://www.thecable.ng/50-incidents-15-states-inec-details-attacks-on-its-offices-in-4-years

by The Electoral Hub's general election analysis include: logistical and operational issue, insecurity and electoral violence, misinformation, disinformation and fake news, weak political party agents, limited knowledge of legal framework, challenge with election technology, poor institutional strategic communication, heightened ethnic and regional fault lines, disenfranchisement and voter suppression, issues with result collation and transmission, and lack of accountability for electoral offences.[5]

For this election, **The Electoral Hub** is monitoring the process and documenting election-related violence against women and people with disabilities (PWDs); compliance with legal framework- the Electoral Act 2022. It will also observe election day activities as a member of the Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room)[6]. The Electoral Hub observation will focus electioneering, electoral, and post electoral periods, looking at issues such as: ***compliance with legal framework, RAC preparations and set-ups, security presence from RACs to PUs, youth, women and PWDs participation***, ***malpractices including vote trading and electoral violence, ad-hoc staff performance, collation process management, and post collation electoral environment/conduct of key stakeholders.*** These key areas would serve as basis for our analysis on the conduct of the election.

The Electoral Hub has prepared this factsheet to increase stakeholders' understanding of the context and dynamics in which the election will hold. The factsheet covers four broad thematic areas, namely: electoral background, political dynamics, civil environment, and electoral integrity measures.



[5] The Electoral Hub (2023). Electoral Accountability Matters: An Analysis of Nigeria's 2023 General Election.
[6] The Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room is a platform of 70 civic groups working on electoral reforms as well as addressing gaps in governance.

IMO STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION. 2023

2,419,922
Registered Votres

305
Registered Areas

2,318,919
PVC Collection



27
LGAs

18
Candidates

4,758
Polling Units

YOUR VOTE

#ImoDecides2023
#Ndi Imo Birikwe
#Ndi Imo Ekelemuooo
#Ndi Imo Kwenu, Kwenu, Kwezuono

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S/N	ISSUES	FEATURES
	ELECTORAL BACKGROUND	
1	**The Election**	— The governorship election is to take place on November 11, 2023[7]. — Since the return to democratic rule in 1999, this election will be the seventh governorship election to be conducted in the state. — The previous governorship elections were held on January 9, 1999, April 19, 2003, April 14, 2007, April 26, 2011, April 11, 2015, and March 9, 2019. — The election is to elect the governor and the deputy governor to govern the state for four years. — The election is also important as it provides another platform for implementing the Electoral Act, 2022, as well as implementing and deploying lessons learned in the 2023 general election which was conducted on February 25 and March 18[8], 2023. — It gives INEC and other important stakeholders an additional opportunity an additional opportunity to improve their institutional capacity, electoral process integrity and to strengthen Nigeria's electoral democracy.
2	**Constitutional and Legal Framework**	— The conduct of elections in Nigeria is governed by the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) and the Electoral Act 2022. — Section 176 (1) and (2) of the 1999 Constitution provides for the Office of the Governor. — Section 177 of the Constitution outlines the qualifications for candidate contesting for election to the Office of the governor as follows: ¬ Must be a citizen of Nigeria by birth; ¬ Attained the age of thirty-five years; ¬ A member of a political party and is sponsored by that political party; ¬ Educated up to at least School Certificate level or its equivalent.

[7] https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/TIMETABLE-FOR-2023-KOGI-BAYELSA-IMO-GOVERNORSHIP-ELECTION-1.pdf
[8] Initially slated for March 11, 2023, but was postponed due to technical issues. https://punchng.com/just-in-inec-postpones-gov-election-by-one-week/

		— The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), the Electoral Act, 2022, and INEC Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Elections, 2022, constitute the legal frameworks governing the conduct of the November 11, 2023 election. — The conduct and management of the election will be handled by INEC, the Federal Electoral Management Body (EMB) of Nigeria with the legal authority to plan, carry out, and oversee all elections for the offices of President and Vice President, Governor and Deputy Governor of a State, the National Assembly (the Senate, and House of Representatives) and House of Assembly of each State of the Federation (State House of Assembly)[9].
3	**Electoral Delimitations**	— Imo State is delimited into 27 Local Government Areas, 305 Electoral Wards/Registration Areas, — It has 3 Senatorial Districts namely: Imo East, Imo North, and Imo West. 10 Federal Constituencies: Aboh Mbaise/Ngor Okpala, Ahaizu Mbaise/Ezinihitte, Ehime Mbano/Ihite-Ubona/Obowo, Ideato North/Ideato South, Ikeduru/Mbaitoli, Isiala Mbano/Okigwe/Onuimo, Isu/Njaba/Nkwere/Nwangele/ Oguta/Ohaji-Egbema/Oru-West, Oru East/Orsu/Orlu, Owerri Municipal/Owerri North/Owerri West. — Imo State also has 27 State Constituencies. — There are 2,419,922 registered voters[10] and 4,758 polling units[11]. During the 2022 voter access expansion exercise carried out by INEC, 1,235 new polling units were created and added to the existing 3,523 Polling Units[12] bringing the total number of polling units in Imo State to 4,758.

[9] See Third Schedule Item F Paragraph 15(a) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended)
[10] https://www.channelstv.com/2023/10/11/5-4m-voters-registered-for-kogi-imo-bayelsa-polls-inec/
[11] https://punchng.com/inec-deploys-40000-staff-for-november-elections/
[12] https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/05/inec-creates-1235-new-polling-units-in-imo/

		— Leading to the election, INEC had stated that elections would not be held in 38 Polling Units that has no registered voters[13]. Therefore, the election would be conducted in 4,720 out of the 4,758 polling units in the state.
4	**Imo State Geography**	— Imo State is situated in the South Eastern part of Nigeria, occupying an area of 5100 square kilometers between the upper-middle Imo River and the lower River Niger.[14] Some other source states that Imo State covers an area of 5,530 square kilometer[15]. — It is bordered by Anambra State to the North, Abia State to the East, River Niger to the West, and Rivers State to the South and West. — It was created at Ngwoma from East- Central State on February 3rd, 1976 by the then Head of State, General Murtala Muhammad, and named after the Imo River[16]. It has its capital as Owerri, which is also the largest city in the state[17]. — The meetings for creation of Imo State began 1970 at the end of the Nigerian Civil War[18]. These meetings were chaired by Chief S. E. Onukogu[19]. — While English is the official language like other parts of Nigeria, Imo State is predominantly Igbo speaking with Igbo people constituting 98% of Imolites. Christianity is the predominant religion split amongst Catholic, Anglican and Pentecostals[20]. — The Imo River is the major river in the state, and drains into the Atlantic Ocean through Abia State, where it is joined by Aba River from the North. — Other major rivers are: Orashi River, Njaba River, Oguta Lake, Utu River and Awbana River, Otamiri River and its 9.2 km length tributary, Nworie River. Smaller rivers and creeks include: Onas Creek in Ohaji/Egbema, Okitankwo River in Umudi, and Ohia and Efuru Rivers in Okigwe.

[13]Sahara Reporters (2023), There will be no Election in 38 Polling Units in Imo State- Electoral Body, INEC. https://saharareporters.com/2023/10/12/there-will-be-no-election-38-polling-units-imo-state-electoral-body-inec
[14] https://southeast.ng/the-region/imo-state/
[15] Ibid
[16] https://www.facts.ng/nigerian-states/imo/
[17] https://southeast.ng/the-region/imo-state/
[18] Ibid
[19] Ibid
[20] https://www.facts.ng/nigerian-states/imo/

		— One of the unique geographical features in Imo State is the Ada Palm Plantation Complex which is thought to be one of the largest and most prosperous oil palm plantations in the world[21]. — Prior to the discovery of crude oil, the palm plantation, which was built in 1974, was one of the Nigeria's main sources of Gross National Income[22]. It now covers roughly 4,310 hectares of land and includes a housing development[23]. — Other unique features of Imo State include Oguta Lake Holiday Resort with its sand beaches, the rolling hills of Okigwe, the Amusement Park at Owerri, the Nekede Botanical Zoological Gardens, the Palm Beaches Tourist Village at Awomama[24]. — The Rolling Hills of Okigwe has several endearing traits that place it among the top tourist destinations in Imo State and around Nigeria[25]. The Hill is made up of a string of rising hills that range in height and roughness[26]. — The major occupation of the people is farming, producing cash crops such as oil palm, raffia palm, rice, groundnut, melon, cotton, cocoa, rubber, and maize[27]. Food crops including yam, cassava, cocoa yam, and maize are produced in large quantities[28]. — Major cities and towns in Imo State include Owerri, Isu, Okigwe, Oguta, Orlu, Atta Ikeduru, Akokwa, Mbaise, Mbaitoli, Mbieri, Ohaji/Egbema, Orodo, Nkwerre, Ubulu, Ngor Okpala, Omuma, Mgbidi, Awo-Omamma, Izombe, Orsu, and Isu/Umuozu[29]. — Mineral resources in Imo State include Gypsium, Lead/Zinc, Lignite, Limestone, Marcasite, Oil/Gas, Phosphate and Salt[30], and White Clay[31]

[21] https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/06/5-things-you-probably-didnt-know-about-imo/
[22] Ibid
[23] Ibid
[24] https://www.facts.ng/nigerian-states/imo/
[25] https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/06/5-things-you-probably-didnt-know-about-imo/
[26] Ibid
[27] https://www.aziza.com.ng/read/2019/10/imo-state-and-local-government-area/
[28] https://dbpedia.org/page/Imo_State
[29] https://www.aziza.com.ng/read/2019/10/imo-state-and-local-government-area/
[30] https://foreignaffairs.gov.ng/nigeria/natural-resources/,
[31] https://www.facts.ng/nigerian-states/imo/

		— It is crucial to highlight that the geography of the state affects electoral planning, logistics, and deployment, and as such, it should be considered throughout election preparations.
5	**Imo State Electorate**	— Imo State is homogenous in terms of culture, tradition, and language with majority of the electorate predominantly Igbos. — The National Bureau of Statistics NBS (2016) population projection places, Imo State's population as 5,549,300 at 2.1% annual population change[32]. From the 2006 population census, Imo State had a population of 3,927,563 (males- 1,976,471 and females- 1,951,092)[33]. — The percentage of Persons with Disability (PWDs) in Imo State is 2.44% for men and 2.73% for women[34]. — Its workforce is 55.3% of the total population[35] and 75.5% of households receive remittances, including 12.9 remittances internationally and 72.2 remittances domestically[36]. — According to the Human Development Index, 83.21% of people use better sources of drinking water, 96.43% of the people are literate, infant mortality is 84.44%, and the total fertility rate is 5.52%[37]. In addition, 55.3 % of households are connected to the national grid and 69.6% of households have access to electricity[38]. — Imo State's poverty headcount rate for 2018/2019 is 28.9%, the poverty income gap is 0.069, and the Gini coefficient is 27.2[39]. — Imo State has an average household size of 4.53 family members[40].

[32] https://www.citypopulation.de/en/nigeria/admin/
[33] https://citypopulation.de/en/nigeria/admin/NGA017__imo/
[34] NBS (2020) Nigeria Living Standards Survey 2018/2019, page 42 https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/1123
[35] NBS (2020) Nigeria Living Standards Survey 2018/2019, page 49 https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/1123
[36] Ibid Page 62
[37] https://nigeria.opendataforafrica.org/
[38] NBS (2020) Nigeria Living Standards Survey 2018/2019, page 87 https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/1123
[39] The World Bank (2022) Nigeria Poverty Assessment 2022: A Better Future for All Nigerians. Accessed from https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099730003152232753/pdf/P17630107476630fa09c990da780535511c.pdf
[40] NBS (2020) Nigeria Living Standards Survey 2018/2019, page 9 https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/1123

		— According to the Nigeria Living Standards Survey 2018/2019, Imo State has a dependence ratio of 0.97 and an average proportion of 27.5% of households with female heads[41]. — World Bank 2022 Poverty Assessment indicates that Imo State has a Median deflated consumption per person/year of ₦ 181,130[42], and 28.4 are multidimensionally poor[43]. — According to the Universal Basic Education Commission 2018, 17% of the total school-age population in Imo State is out-of-school children[44]. — Tertiary institutions in Imo State include Federal University of Technology, Owerri; Imo State University, Owerri; Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri; Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike; Maranathan University, Mgbidi; Hezekiah Universiy, Umudi-Nkwerre; Kingsley Ozumba Mbadiwe University, Ogboko; and University of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Umuagwo.
6	**Key Electoral Dates**	— Notification of Polls – 14 November 2022 — Party Primaries – 27 March 2023 – 17 April 2023 — Submission of names of candidates by Political Parties – 5 May 2023 — Publication of Personal Particulars of Candidates by INEC – 12 May 2023 — Publication of the final list of candidates by INEC - 9 June 2023 — Publication of official Register of Voters for the election by INEC – 12 October 2023 — Publication of Notice of Poll by INEC – 16 October 2023 — Campaign by Political Parties in Public – 14 June 2023 – 9 November 2023 — The Election will be held on 11 November 2023
7	**INEC and Stakeholders' Engagement**	— On July 25, 2023, Professor Mahmood Yakubu, the Chairman of INEC, and National Commissioners of the electoral umpire met with leaders of political parties[45].

[41] Ibid
[42] The World Bank (2022) Nigeria Poverty Assessment 2022: A Better Future for All Nigerians, Page 28. Accessed from https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099730003152232753/pdf/P17630107476630fa09c990da780535511c.pdf
[43] Ibid, Page 44
[44] Akinpelu Y. (2021), Special Report Kano, Akwa Ibom, Eight other States Housed Most of Nigeria's Out-Of-School Children. *Premium Times*. https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/483619-special-report-kano-akwa-ibom-eight-other-states-housed-most-of-nigerias-out-of-school-children.html?tztc=1
[45] Channels (2023), INEC Chair, Party Leaders Review 2023 Elections. https://www.channelstv.com/2023/07/25/inec-chair-party-leaders-review-2023-elections/

— The meeting was aimed at reviewing the 2023 general elections and preparing for the off-cycle governorship elections in Imo, Kogi, and Bayelsa States[46].
— On July 28, 2023, INEC held a meeting with the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES)[47]. During the meeting, the Chairman of INEC stated the need for Security agencies to take decisive action against promoters of violence and other anti-democratic behaviours such as vote-buying, assaults on election officials, and interference with the electoral process while upholding absolute impartiality[48].
— On August 24, 2023, INEC released the Guide for Media Accreditation for 2023 Imo, Bayelsa, and Kogi States Governorship Election. The portal was also opened for media organisations intending to deploy journalists to cover any or all the three governorship elections to apply via the designated website; https://imap.inecnigeria.org[50].
— On August 31, 2023, INEC opened the portal for ad hoc staff recruitment for the three governorship elections[51].
— On September 27, 2023, INEC led by National Commissioner Mal. Mohammed Kudu Haruna, held meeting with media executives in Imo State[52]. During the meeting, the National Commissioner urged the media to be factual, impartial, and professional in their reporting of pre-election, election, and post-election Commission's activities[53].
— On October 24, 2023, INEC met with representatives of political parties to discuss and address various issues relating to the elections[54].

[46] Ibid
[47] Ogunseyin O. (2023), INEC Wants Security Improved for Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi Governorship Elections. *Guardian*. https://guardian.ng/news/inec-wants-security-improved-for-bayelsa-imo-kogi-governorship-elections/
[48] Ibid
[49] https://imap.inecnigeria.org/accreditation-guide
[50] https://imap.inecnigeria.org/accreditation-guide
[51] Egobiambu E. (2023), Apply: INEC Begins Recruitment of Ad-hoc Staff for Imo, Bayelsa and Kogi Polls. *Channels TV*. https://www.channelstv.com/2023/08/31/apply-inec-begins-recruitment-of-ad-hoc-staff-for-imo-bayelsa-kogi-polls/, https://inecnigeria.org/?page_id=12870
[52]INEC Twitter (2023), {@inecnigeria}, https://twitter.com/inecnigeria/status/1707085745079431650
[53] Ibid
[54]INEC Twitter (2023), {@inecnigeria}, https://twitter.com/inecnigeria/status/1716772084058079282

		— On October 25, 2023, INEC held its quarterly consultative meeting with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) at the INEC conference room, in Abuja[55]. During the meeting, Professor Mahmood Yakubu revealed that the Commission had accredited 145 organizations deploying 7,896 observers[56]. He also stated that the Commission would continue to engage stakeholders in the electoral process[57]. — On October 26, 2023, INEC held the Quarterly Consultative Meeting with the Media, at the INEC Conference Room, Abuja. During the meeting, the INEC Chairman, stated that 94 media organizations deploying 1,255 personnel, have been accredited for the elections[58]. He urged media organizations to uphold the standards of professional ethics and address false information in discharging their election duties[59]. — On October 27, 2023, the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) meeting held at the Conference Room of the Office of The National Security Adviser (ONSA), Abuja[60]. During the meeting, Alhaji Nuhu Ribadu, National Security Adviser (NSA), affirmed commitment to fairness and security of the governorship elections in the states of Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi on November 11, 2023.
8	**Training/Electoral Personnel Engagement**	— On September 25, 2023, the Electoral Institute organized a training programme for Imo State's Electoral Officers, Assistant Electoral Officers (operations), and Head of the Legal Department as a preemptive measure[61]. — The main goal of the training was to make sure that participants understood a strategic managerial approach, were aware of the legal environment, kept up with technical advancements, and were proficient in the processes and procedures necessary for the smooth running of elections[62].

[55]INEC Twitter (2023), {@inecnigeria}, https://twitter.com/inecnigeria/status/1717137305301848421, https://von.gov.ng/imo-kogi-and-bayelsa-states-elections-critical-inec/
[56]Ibid
[57]Ibid
[58]INEC Twitter (2023), {@inecnigeria}, https://twitter.com/inecnigeria/status/1717506708962963770
[59] Ibid
[60] INEC Twitter (2023), {@inecnigeria}, https://twitter.com/inecnigeria/status/1717890699679383842
[61]INEC Twitter (2023), {@inecnigeria}, https://twitter.com/inecnigeria/status/1706609094029668549
[62] Ibid

		— The Electoral Institute (TEI) also held an Electoral Security Training workshop for Election Security Personnel (ESP) for the governorship elections in the Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi States[63]. — The Workshop also sought to increase participants' awareness of the ethical and legal principles that govern their activities and to improve the professionalism of ESP conduct before, during, and after elections[64]. — On October 14, 2023, INEC held a Training of Trainers (ToT) meeting in preparation for the governorship elections in Kogi, Imo, and Bayelsa States[65]. The training was to ensure that participants understand their roles and duties as stakeholders in the electoral process and to inform them of the initiatives and innovations implemented by INEC[66]. — On October 13, 2023, INEC held an Election Monitoring and Support Centre (EMSC) Amber Zone Baseline Workshop for Electoral Officers, Assistant Electoral Officers, and other INEC senior staff in Imo State Office[67]. — INEC in partnership with the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria and DAI, held a two-day capacity-building workshop for members of the INEC Press Corps on ethics, safety procedures, and important issues surrounding the governorship elections of Bayelsa, Kogi, and Imo States[68].
POLITICAL DYNAMICS		
9	**2019 Governorship Election**	— The last governorship election was conducted on March 9, 2019 with seventy (70) political parties fielding candidates for the election[69]. — The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidate, Emeka Ihedioha, and former Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives was declared the winner of the election[70].

[63]INEC Twitter (2023), {@inecnigeria}, https://twitter.com/inecnigeria/status/1710078585904439597
[64] Ibid
[65] INEC Twitter (2023), {@inecnigeria}, https://twitter.com/inecnigeria/status/1713054007717978123
[66] Ibid
[67] INEC Twitter (2023), {@inecnigeria}, https://twitter.com/inecnigeria/status/1712868991125918151
[68] INEC Twitter (2023), {@inecnigeria}, https://twitter.com/inecnigeria/status/1714209563690389738
[69] Okpara C. (2019), In Imo State 70 Candidates Want Okorochas Job. *Guardian*. https://guardian.ng/politics/in-imo-state-70-candidates-want-okorochas-job/
[70]Alabi M. (2019), Breaking: PDPs Ihedioha Wins Imo Governorship Election. *Punch*. https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/319665-breaking-pdps-ihedioha-wins-imo-governorship-election.html?tztc=1

		— He got a total of 273,404 votes while his closest contender, Uche Nwosu, the Action Alliance candidate got a total of 190,364[71]. — Following the declaration, some candidates who contested in the election rejected the outcome asserting that there were numerous anomalies throughout the election and did not substantially adhere to the provisions of the 1999 Constitution and the Electoral Act 2010 (As Amended) [72]. — Some of the political parties that rejected Ihedioha's win include Peoples Party of Nigeria (PPN), Mass Movement of Nigeria (MMN), Advanced Congress of Democrats (ACD), Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), Save Nigeria Congress (SNC), Nigerian Peoples Congress (NPC), Democratic Alternative, KOWA Party, National Democratic Party (NDP), Legacy Party of Nigeria (LPN) and Independent Democrats (ID)[73]. — Senator Hope Uzodinma, All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship candidate, Mr. Uche Nwosu, Action Alliance (AA) governorship candidate, and Ifeanyi Ararume, All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) governorship candidate, appeared before the tribunal to contest the declaration of Emeka Ihedioha, the PDP candidate as the winner of the Imo State governorship election[74]. — The governorship election petition tribunal presided over by Justice Umar Dogondaji rejected two petitions contesting the election victory of Governor Emeka Ihedioha as being without merit[75]. — In the final judgment by the Election Tribunal, the election that saw the emergence of Governor Emeka Ihedioha was upheld, and the three petitions filed by the opposition parties were dismissed on the bases of lacking merit[76].

[71] Ibid

[72]Olowolagba F. (2019), Imo Guber: 47 Political Parties Reject Ihedioha's Victory Head for Tribunal. *Daily Post*. https://dailypost.ng/2019/03/21/imo-guber-47-political-parties-reject-ihediohas-victory-head-tribunal/

[73] Ibid

[74] Vanguard (2019), Tension in Imo as Governorship Election Petition Winds Up Proceedings. https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/09/tension-in-imo-as-governorship-election-petition-winds-up-proceedings/

[75] Channels TV (2019), Imo Election: Tribunal Dismisses Two Petitions Against Ihhttps://www.channelstv.com/2019/09/21/imo-election-tribunal-dismisses-two-petitions-against-ihedioha/

[76]Daily Post (2019), Imo Guber: Ihedioha Floors Nwosu, Uzodinma, Ararume at Tribunal. https://dailypost.ng/2019/09/22/imo-guber-ihedioha-floors-nwosu-uzodinma-ararume-tribunal/

		— The Supreme Court on January 14, 2020 overturned Emeka Ihedioha's election victory that the PDP Ihedioha did not receive a majority of the valid votes in the March 9 election[77]. The APC candidate for governor, Hope Uzodinma, was directed to take his place by being sworn in as the state's elected governor[78]. — The Supreme Court acknowledged in its ruling, which was read by Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun, that the results from 388 polling units were improperly left out when the final governorship election results for Imo State were tallied[79]. — With the results from the 388 Polling Units included, Justice Kekere-Ekun ruled that Mr. Uzodinma received a majority of the valid votes and should have been declared the winner of the election by INEC[80]. — Senator Hope Uzodinma took the oath of office on January 15, 2020. He was sworn in by Paschal Nnadi, the State Chief Judge at the Heroes Square Arena in Owerri, the state capital[81]. — Due to the Supreme Court sacking of Governor Emeka Ihedioha and the declaration of Senator Hope Uzodinma as governor on January 14, 2020, Imo State would be holding its first off-cycle election in November 2023[82].
10	**Political Parties, Candidates and Inclusivity**	— 18 political parties will be participating in the election including: ¬ All Progressive Congress (APC) – Ruling party ¬ Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) – Major Opposition party ¬ Labour Party (LP) – Minor Opposition party **Candidates**

[77]Omohomhion F. (2020), Supreme Court declares APC-Uzodinma winner of Imo governorship election. Business Day. https://businessday.ng/politics/article/update2-supreme-court-declares-apc-uzodinma-winner-of-imo-governorship-election/, https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/372652-why-supreme-court-sacked-ihedioha-declared-apcs-uzodinma-winner-in-imo.html?tztc=1
[78] Ibid
[79] Ibid
[80] Ibid
[81]Okeoma C. (2020), Hope Uzodinma Sworn in as Imo Governor. *Punch*. https://punchng.com/hope-uzodinma-sworn-in-as-imo-governor/
[82] https://elections.civichive.org/2023/09/19/2023-off-cycle-elections-everything-you-need-to-know/

— The final list of candidates was approved by INEC on Tuesday, 6 June 2023 for the Imo State governorship election[83].
— The Imo State governorship election has 18 governorship and 18 deputy governorship candidates in the race[84].

1. Okere Johnjude Uchenna, Accord Party (A)
2. Ogunewe Lincoln Keonyemere Jack, Action Alliance (AA)
3. Awulonu Emmanuel Ifeanyi, African Action Congress (AAC)
4. Okoroma James Otumbadi, Action Democratic Congress (ADC)
5. Nwoge Onyekachi Steve, Action Democratic Party (ADP)
6. Uzodimma Odidika GoodHope, All Progressives Congress (APC)
7. Ejiogu Anthony, All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA)
8. Edoziem Clinton Chibuike, Allied Peoples Movement (APM)
9. Achelike Anderson Obieze, Action Peoples Party (APP)
10. Iwuanyanwu Isaac, Boot Party (BP)
11. Achonu Nneji, Labour Party (LP)
12. Odunzeh Uche Ben, New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP)
13. Okwara Lawrence Cole, National Rescue Movement (NRM)
14. Anyanwu Samuel Nnaemeka, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
15. Uchechukwu Ishiodu, Peoples Redemption Party (PRP)[85]
16. Ekwebelem Obinna Bright, Social Democratic Party (SDP)
17. Opara Kemdi Chino, Young Progressive Party (YPP)
18. Andy Chibuike, Zenith Labour Party (ZLP)

[83] https://inecnigeria.org/?page_id=12836
[84] https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/List-of-Candidates-Imo-State.pdf
[85]He was added to the list after a Court Order that mandated INEC to include the party as a candidate for the Governorship election in the State. https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/AMENDEMENT-N-O-1-AMENDED-LIST-OF-CANDIDATES-FOR-2023-IMO-STATE-GOVERNORSHIP-ELECTION-PURSUANT-TO-COURT-ORDERS.pdf

		— There are 18 male governorship candidates, 16 male deputy governorship, 2 female deputy governorship candidates, and one PWD governorship candidate[86]. — The female deputy governorship candidates are: 1. Ottih Vivian Ogechi- ADP 2. Ekomaru Chinyere Ihuoma- APC
11	**Pre-election Litigations**	**Labour Party** — Some Labour Party (LP) members protested at the party's state headquarters, calling for the removal of the State Chairman, Ambrose Onyekwere, on the grounds that he was leading the party to destruction as well as following the lead of the party's Senatorial Candidate, Ezenwa Onyewuchi, who they claimed was unscrupulously replacing duly elected party leaders with his allies.[87] — The crisis continued as the party produced two governorship candidates at the primaries. The Abure-led faction produced as the party flagbearer, Senator Athan Achonu, who received 134 votes to defeat Lincoln Ugunewe, who received 125.[88] While the Apapa-led faction produced Ikechukwu Ukaegbu as the party's governorship candidate.[89] — Following the event of the Labour Party primary, Basil Maduka, contested Achonu's candidacy at both the Federal High Court and the Court of Appeal.[90] However, the case was dismissed on both accounts for lacking jurisdiction. — The Supreme Court rejected the appeal made by Basil Maduka based on locus standi, therefore validating Athan Achonu's candidacy.[91]
12	**Power Dynamics**	**PDP**

[86] Ibid
[87]Osuiji C. (2022), Imo LP members protest, demand sack of Chairman over alleged compromise. *Guardian*. https://guardian.ng/news/imo-lp-members-protest-demand-sack-of-chairman-over-alleged-compromise/
[88]Sun News (2023), LP Crisis Deepens as 2 Governorship candidates Emerge in Imo. https://sunnewsonline.com/lp-crisis-deepens-as-2-governorship-candidates-emerge-in-imo-2/?expand_article=1
[89] Ibid
[90] Punch (2023), Supreme Court Affirms Imo LP Governorship Candidate. https://punchng.com/supreme-court-affirms-imo-lp-governorship-candidate/
[91]https://www.arise.tv/imo-guber-supreme-court-affirms-achonus-candidacy-legitimises-abures-lp-leadership/

— On March 28, the former Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha made public, his intention to leave the party.[92]
— Ihedioha's conflict with Samuel Anyanwu, who ultimately won the governorship ticket by receiving 802 votes out of the 915 delegate votes cast in the primary, had been highlighted to play a role in his decision to leave the party.[93]
— Following Anyanwu's announcement as governorship candidate, some PDP groups wanted Anyanwu to step down as the party's National Secretary; nevertheless, he continued in that role, citing no violations of the party's laws.[94]
— As a result, members of PDP State Working Committee (SWC) such as Collins Opuruozor, Publicity Secretary, Ray Emeana, Secretary, Greg Nwadike, Youth Leader, Martin Ejiogu, Deputy State Chairperson, Maria Mbakwe, Women Leader, Josiah Eze, Treasurer, Chibuisi, Vice-Chairperson of Orlu Zone resigned their positions.[95]
— According to them, their resignation decision was informed by the actions of the governorship candidate Samuel Anyanwu which includes frustration of the efforts of the executives.[96]

APC

— There is a prolong leadership crisis in Imo State chapter of the APC. For instance, leading to the election there was the circulation of two letters which identified different persons as the state chairman.[97] One signed by Sen. Iyiola Omisore, former National Secretary of the APC, which ordered that the Chief Dan Nwafor-led administration be reinstated in compliance with Supreme Court ruling.[98]

[92] Yakubu D. (2023), Defections and PDPs Battle for Victory in Imo Governorship Election. *Punch*. https://punchng.com/defections-and-pdps-battle-for-victory-in-imo-gov-election/
[93] Ibid
[94] Ibid
[95]The Cable (2023), Crisis Hits Imo PDP as Seven State Executive Members Resign. https://www.thecable.ng/crisis-hits-imo-pdp-as-seven-state-executive-members-resign, https://dailytrust.com/crisis-rocks-imo-pdp-as-7-swc-members-resign-dump-party/
[96] Ibid
[97] Leadership (2023), Imo APC Factions in Battle of Supremacy. https://leadership.ng/imo-apc-factions-in-battle-of-supremacy/
[98] Ibid

		— While another letter signed by the South-East National Vice Chairman, Dr. Ijeoma Arodiogbu instructed Dr. Macdonald Ebere to completely disregard the alleged letter of restoration of Nwafor-led executives.[99] — Conflicts rose as the Daniel Nwafor led party faction, loyal to the former governor Rochas Okorocha revealed that it would continue activities in the capacity of the party's State Chairman.[100] — To assess the merits of a lawsuit seeking to overturn the Abuja Court of Appeal's decision to remove Mr. Daniel Nwafor as the APC State Chairman, a five-member panel of the Supreme Court's Justices, chaired by Justice Kayode Ariwola, was set-up.[101] — The Supreme Court disregarded the suit seeking to remove Mr. Daniel Nwafor as the State APC Chairman and recognized him as the legitimate State Chairman of APC.[102] — The judgment by the Supreme Court settled the leadership crisis.
CIVIL TERRAIN		
13	**Community Stakeholders Engagements**	**Traditional Rulers Involvement** Imo State's traditional leaders are frequently consulted and endorse candidates running for elective seats. Examples include; — In Owerri North Area Council, traditional rulers in Obube Ancient Kingdom, endorsed the candidate of the All Progressives Grand Alliance, APGA, Tony Ejiogu for the 2023 Imo State governorship election during his visit to the community[103]. — During the visit, Chief Samuel Akujiuobi and Chief Ernest Onukogu praised Ejiogu's ambition as a positive start toward honoring the state's founding fathers[104].

[99] Ibid
[100] Alozie C. (2023), Crisis in Imo APC: Uzodimma, Okorocha factions lay claim on chairmanship. *Punch*. https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/02/crisis-in-imo-apc-uzodimma-okorocha-factions-lay-claim-on-chairmanship/
[101] https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/02/imo-apc-crisis-supreme-court-fixes-may-27-for-judgement-2/
[102] Channels TV (2023), Imo APC Leadership Crisis: Supreme Court Affirms Daniel Nwafor Chairmanship. https://www.channelstv.com/2022/05/27/imo-apc-leadership-crisis-supreme-court-affirms-daniel-nwafors-chairmanship/
[103] Alozie C. (2023), Imo Community Endorses APGA Candidate, Tony Ejiobgu. *Vanguard*. https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/10/imo-community-endorses-apga-candidate-tony-ejiogu/
[104] Ibid

		— The incumbent Governor, Hope Uzodinma, the candidate of the APC met with traditional rulers in the Orlu zone[105]. After the meeting, the Chairman of Imo State Council of Traditional Rulers, HRH Eze Emmanuel Okeke placed a curse on any Orlu indigene who does not vote for the incumbent Governor[106].
14	**Stakeholder's[107] Engagement with the Electoral Process**	Civil society engagement with the governorship election includes: — The Electoral Hub prepared a factsheet and Political Context Analysis to provide insight into the political and social environment ahead of the election[108]. — On November 7, 2023, The Electoral Hub also held a roundtable on Citizens' Rights and Impact of Insecurity on Elections[109]. This is part of its project supported by the **Open Society Foundations** and targeted at providing support to INEC through the production, policy dialogue and dissemination of three well-researched policy and briefing papers on the impact of insecurity on elections. — On August 16, 2023, the National Orientation Agency (NOA) launched its campaign to raise awareness of the new Electoral Act, civic engagement, and peaceful elections in Owerri, the capital of Imo State[110]. — YIAGA Africa prepared a report ahead of the off-cycle elections. The report was titled "Emerging Political and Security Trends in Bayelsa, Kogi and, Imo States". The report highlights risk factors that could likely impact the conduct of elections in the three states[111]. — The Center for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) held a one-day stakeholders meeting in Owerri on the governorship election[112].

[105] https://cddfactcheck.org/?p=22639
[106] Ibid, https://247ureports.com/2023/09/imo-monarchs-on-the-run-after-controversial-endorsement-of-gov-uzodinmas-second-term-bid-lions-appears-for-revenge/
[107] Includes CSOs, security agencies, MDAs
[108] www.electoralhub.org/publications
[109] https://electoralhub.org/news-and-events/gallery/
[110] Adedeji T. (2023), Imo Guber: Promote Peace eschew violence – NOA tells stakeholders, seeks support to end voter apathy. *Daily Post*. https://dailypost.ng/2023/08/16/imo-guber-promote-peace-eschew-violence-noa-tells-stakeholders-seeks-support-to-end-voter-apathy/
[111] https://yiaga.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Political-and-Security-Trends-in-Bayelsa-Kogi-and-Imo-state_web.pdf
[112] Onyejiuwa G. (2023), Imo Guber: Group to deploy 100 election observers. *Sun*. https://sunnewsonline.com/imo-guber-group-to-deploy-100-election-observers/

		— Open Arms Initiative for Sustainable Development (OPAISD), an Owerri based CSO actively engaged INEC with regular attendance at INEC stakeholders' briefings, and with support from INEC, conducted voter education activities - market sensitization, outreach and House to House campaign in Nwangele LGA for increased participation in the election. — Foundation for Livelihood Advancement (FLA), a worked in Orlu LGA and was engaged on general voter education. It conducted 'get out the votes campaign' in community markets of the LGA, good governance awareness campaigns among youths, election-no-be-war sensitizations in security risk and volatile communities in Orlu LGA, your PVC -your -power campaign for tertiary schools, FLA also actively participated in INEC/CSOs briefings.
15	**Media in Imo State**	**TV Channels/Houses:** — Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Owerri Channel 12: Located in Akanchawa Udenwa Avenue, Owerri, and owned by the Federal Government. — Imo Broadcasting Corporation (IBC), Channel 59: Located in Egbu Road, Owerri. It is owned and managed by the State Government. **Radio Houses:** — Heartland FM: Located in 47 Okigwe Road, Owerri. It is owned by the Federal Government, under the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) — IBC Orient FM: Located in Egbu Road, Owerri. It is owned and managed by the State Government. **Private FMs:** — Darling FM: Located in 48/56 Wetheral Road, Owerri. It is owned by Senator Dr Darlington Eze Ajoku. He is a former Senator, who represented Imo East Senatorial District in 2005.

		— Hot FM: Located in Plot 12 Musa Yar' Adua Way, New Owerri. It is owned by Senator Chris Anyanwu, who represented Imo East Senatorial District at the 2007 -2011 Senate on the PDP platform[113]. — The Reach FM: Located at Concord Avenue New Owerri. It is owned by the former Governor of Imo State, Senator Rochas Okorocha. — Gold FM: Located in Okigwe Road Owerri. It is owned by Amb. Uche Ogbuagu, a Member of the State House of Assembly representing Ikeduru State Constituency. He is the House Committee Chairman on Budget and Appropriation. — Zanders FM: Located in lkenegbu Layout, Owerri, and owned by Chief Kennedy Zanders. He once served as the Senior Special Assistant to Imo State Governor. **Newspaper Houses:** — Imo Trumpeta: Located in Ikenegbua, Owerri and jointly owned by journalists Henry Ekpe, Kelechi Mejuobi and Gerry Ogu. — The Leader Newspapers: Located in Industrial Layout, Onitsha Road, Owerri and owned by the Catholic Archdiocese of Owerri — Nigeria Horn: Located on Mdumere St, Owerri and owned by Chief Bright Chimezie. — Eastern Lead Express: Located on Uratta Road Owerri. It is owned by Declan Chimezie.
INTEGRITY MEASURES		
16	**Integrity Measures for Imo State Electoral Process**	— INEC has complied with the timing, schedule, and adequate public disclosure of rules and guidelines for the election. Therefore, encouraging certainty and stability. — INEC effectively interacts with stakeholders. Through several meetings, INEC has regularly discussed its objectives and election preparations. — INEC has also consistently engaged in communication with the electorate and the public by publishing information on its website and engaging in traditional and social media actions. — Voter education activities were carried out using both offline and online strategies, including social media interactions and in-person events, at the grassroots level.

[113] https://m.facebook.com/490491614335172/photos/sen-chris-anyanwu-senator-federal-republic-of-nigeriaborn-christiana-ngozi-diala/557246967659636/

		— All election-related information has been made available to both the public and all significant stakeholders. E.g., the public can learn about issues such as political party candidate lists, PVC collection, election technology, and voter registration. — The implementation of the results viewing portal (IReV) by INEC strengthens the process' integrity as measures of transparency and accountability. — CSOs and other electoral stakeholders have the freedom to participate in the process and engage with INEC. — The Commission conducted a test run on uploading PU results to the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV) and the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) for accreditation. This was done on Saturday, October 14, 2023, between the hours of 8.30 am and 2.30 pm[114].

[114] Suleiman Q. (2023), INEC to Hold Mock Accreditation Ahead of Bayelsa, Kogi and Imo Polls. *Premium Times*. https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/628182-inec-to-hold-mock-accreditation-ahead-of-bayelsa-kogi-imo-polls.html

Conclusion

The 2023 Imo State governorship election will play a critical role in shaping the future of the state. In view of its importance, this factsheet has provided insight on the numerous facets of this momentous event, which is set to take place on November 11, 2023.

Understanding the circumstances of the election is critical. It is the seventh governorship election in Imo State since civilian government was restored in 1999. It provides a chance to implement the newly approved election Act of 2022, so strengthening the Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) capacities and increasing Nigeria's election integrity. Furthermore, the general elections in 2023, which were held earlier in the year, provide excellent insights for ensuring a smoother and more transparent electoral process. Imo State's distinct topography, cultural diversity, and demography will all play a role in defining the election. The participation of political parties and candidates is also notable. The political scene is dynamic, with 18 political parties competing, including the ruling All Progressives Congress, and LP as well as the PDP as Major oppositions. Power dynamics and their possible influence on election results is also notable.

The engagement of community stakeholders and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) is critical on the civil front. The influence of traditional leaders, as well as the vigilance of CSOs working with security authorities, are critical for a calm election atmosphere. Finally, integrity safeguards have been put in place to ensure openness and trust. These initiatives, such as the results viewing portal, observation groups, and a test run of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), attempt to improve the integrity of the voting process.

Finally, as Imo State prepares for the 2023 governorship election, the lessons learned from previous elections, active stakeholder involvement, and the adoption of integrity measures will all contribute to a more transparent, credible, and peaceful electoral process. The people of Imo State and the rest of the country are anxiously awaiting the results of this crucial election, which will surely impact the state's leadership for the next four years. It is our common hope that this election would mark a step forward towards improved credibility and integrity in Nigeria's electoral process and democratic journey.

INITIATIVE FOR RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND ADVOCACY IN DEVELOPMENT

...promoting electoral knowledge, accountability, and integrity

ABOUT THE ELECTORAL HUB

The Electoral Hub, an affiliate of the Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD), is a knowledge and advocacy hub which seeks to provide solutions to improve the credibility and integrity of the electoral process. It is committed to promoting electoral knowledge, integrity, and accountability in Nigeria. Our aim is to strengthen electoral governance and accountability in Nigeria through the provision of critical and contextualized analysis, and solutions to improve the credibility and integrity of the electoral process. We believe that the integrity of the electoral process is crucial in improving electoral governance and sustaining democracy in Nigeria. We also believe in solutions rooted in the principles of justice and equity.

Our core values are knowledge-exchange, inclusion, justice, equity, transparency, and accountability.

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