THE ELECTORAL HUB



POLITICAL CONTEXT ANALYSIS:
2022 EKITI STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

The Electoral Hub Political Context Analysis Number 6/2022

POLITICAL CONTEXT ANALYSIS: 2022 EKITI STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

Copyright © 2022 The Electoral Hub, and the Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD). All rights reserved.

About The Electoral Hub

The Electoral Hub, an organ of the Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD), is a multidisciplinary strategic think-tank which seeks to provide solutions to improve the credibility and integrity of the electoral process. The Electoral Hub complements the roles and activities of the different institutions, stakeholders and drivers of the electoral process and governance. The Electoral Hub's aim is to strengthen electoral governance and accountability in Nigeria through research, documentation, electoral education, policy and legal influencing and impact advocacy. We believe that the integrity of the electoral process is crucial in improving the electoral governance and sustaining democracy in Nigeria. We also believe in solutions rooted in the principles of justice and equity.

Contact

The Electoral Hub
… promoting electoral knowledge, accountability and integrity
8A Remilekun Street, Kukwaba, Abuja, Nigeria
Phone: +234 912 155 1337 and +234 908 699 8850
Email: electoralhub@electoralhubng.org and electoralhub@gmail.com
Social Media Channels
Twitter: @electoralhub; Instagram: @electoralhub; Facebook: @electoralhubng
Websites: https://iriad.org and https://electoralhub.iriad.org

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 3
Acronyms 5
Introduction 8
Constitutional and Legal Background 10
Ekiti State Electoral System 13
Ekiti State Geography 16
Ekiti State Electorate 18
Political Environment 21
Contesting Political Parties 26
Inclusion and Representation 29
Main Political Actors and Political Dynamics 33
Security 34
Civil Society Organisations 38
Role of INEC 42
Election Observers 46
Conclusion 49

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Local Government Areas in Ekiti State…….. 13
Table 1: Key Provisions in the Electoral Act 2022 …… 11
Table 2: Electoral Statistics of Ekiti State..……...14
Table 3: Ekiti State Population Figures for 1991, 2006 and 2016 …….. 18
Table 4: Political Parties and Candidates ……26
Table 5: Governorship Position ……..……..29
Table 6: Deputy Governorship Position ..……30

Executive Summary

The Ekiti State governorship election is scheduled to hold on June 18, 2022. The Ekiti State governorship election is important for many reasons not only because it will be a pointer/signpost to what would happen in the forthcoming 2023 general election, but it also provides an opportunity for INEC to perfect the implementation of the new policy on expanded access polling units; functioning of its latest election technology - the BVAS, transmission of results and more importantly the implementation of the new Electoral Act 2022 which was signed into law on February 25, 2022.

The election is also happening within the context of end of tenure for the incumbent governor, party primaries and candidate nomination for the 2023 general election. In this regards all focus had been on who emerges presidential candidates and governorship candidates across the country. It is also worth mentioning that the incumbent governor Kayode Fayemi was a presidential aspirant and contested in the just concluded APC special convention to nominate its presidential flagbearer.

Against this background, The Electoral Hub, in line with its mission of promoting electoral knowledge, accountability and integrity has produced this political context analysis (PCA) to help stakeholders understand the contexts in which the Ekiti State governorship election will be conducted.

The following are our observations:

- This is the first election to be conducted under the new Electoral Act 2022. So far, the provisions of the Act have been adhered to by key stakeholders – the EMB and political parties and candidates.

- The election is happening against the backdrop of party primaries and candidates' nominations for the forthcoming 2023 general election in which the incumbent governor of the state contested to be a presidential flagbearer.

- The election is happening less than eight months before the general election and would be a pointer to what would be expected at the general election.

- It is also happening amid rising cost of living, collapsing national electricity grids and acute electricity shortage, fuel scarcity as well as protracted Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike

- Intra-party conflicts, rivalry and crises within the ruling party APC and main opposition party PDP. Post-primary grievances have resulted in inter-party defections and realignments. This might give opposition parties better chances of winning the election.

- The geography of the Ekiti State, particularly the topography and inherent difficult terrains must be taken into consideration. This is because Ekiti State is land of many hills. These hills typically have poor road networks, with some areas completely inaccessible by vehicles. This will have an impact on logistics for the election - delivery of election materials and transportation of election officials.

- Based on the experience in recent elections, there is a real risk that COVID-19 protocols will not be followed on election day. This is further worsened by the fact that Nigerians now go about their daily lives without following these rules, and in many public places these rules are no longer strictly enforced.

- There is concern of possible low voter turnout, particularly considering the recent attacks in Ondo and Kogi states.

- There is persistent and rising spate of voter inducement in the state popularly known as '*dibo ko sebe'* which means -vote and cook soup.

- There is a poor level of women, youth, and PWD representation among the candidates for the election. This raises serious questions about the core democratic principles of inclusivity and representation. However, women deputy governorship representation is particularly impressive at 43.7%.

- The Ekiti election is being conducted against the background of rising insecurity and emerging trends of insecurities across the country. There have been reports of banditry, kidnapping, farmer-herder conflicts, and new trends of house-house kidnappings. Bye-elections in Ekiti also proven very violent. However, there are hopes that efforts by various stakeholders to mitigate violence will prove effective including the signing of the Peace Accord by Candidates.

- Electoral stakeholders, including CSO Situation Room, Kimpact Development Initiative, Centre for Citizens with Disabilities, New Initiative for Social

Development, Coalition of Ekiti State Civil Society Organisation, Balm in Gilead Foundation, Gender Relevance Initiative Promotion, Yiaga Africa, and The Electoral Hub, have been working to secure the integrity and credibility of the Ekiti State governorship election. INEC has also approved 79 domestic observer groups and 8 international observer group to observe the election. Given that the acceptance of observers is evidence of the openness of the electoral process, there is hope that CSOs and observers, both local and foreign, will help ensure credibility and integrity.

- While INEC can be commended for innovations, particularly in increasing access to PUs, these have been under-utilised by the public so far as observed in the FCT and Anambra elections.

- Finally, given that this is the first major election to be conducted since the new Electoral Act 2022 was passed into law. Some of the innovations to look out for should include: mode of transmission of results (Section 50), how overvoting is implemented (Section 51), assistive devices to PWDs (Section 54(2)), and review of forced declaration (Section 65). As well as how INEC will address the issue of electoral offences and offenders.

Acronyms

A	Accord Party
AAC	African Action Congress
ADC	African Democratic Congress
ADP	Action Democratic Party
APC	All Progressives Congress
APGA	All Progressive Grand Alliance
APM	Allied Peoples Movement
APP	Action People Party
ASUU	Academic Staff Union of Universities
BVAS	Bi-Modal Voter Accreditation System
CCD	Centre for Citizens with Disability
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CVR	Continuous Voter Registration
FC	Federal Constituency
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
GRIP	Gender Relevance Initiative Promotion
ICCES	Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IRIAD	Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development
KDI	Kimpact Development Initiatives
LGA	Local Government Area
LP	Labour Party
NCDC	Nigeria Centre for Disease Control
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NIMET	Nigerian Meteorological Agency
NISD	New Initiative for Social Development
NNPP	New Nigeria Peoples Party
NRM	National Rescue Movement
PCA	Political Context Analysis
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
PLAC	Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre
PRP	Peoples Redemption Party
PU	Polling Unit
PVCs	Permanent Voter Cards
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
RA	Registration Area

SC	State Constituency
SCR	Smart Card Readers
SD	Senatorial District
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SIECs	State Independent Electoral Commissions
TEH	The Electoral Hub
YPP	Young Progressives Party
ZLP	Zenith Labour Party

Introduction

On June 18, 2022, the Ekiti State governorship election is scheduled to hold to elect a new governor. This would be the sixth governorship election since the return to civil rule in 1999. Governorship elections were held on January 9, 1999; April 19, 2003; April 14, 2007[1]; June 21, 2014; and July 14, 2018. It is also one of the major off-cycle elections conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The Ekiti State governorship election is important for many reasons not only because it will be a pointer/signpost to what would happen in the forthcoming 2023 general election, but it also provides an opportunity for INEC to perfect the implementation of the new policy on expanded access polling units; functioning of its latest election technology - the BVAS, transmission of results and more importantly the implementation of the new Electoral Act 2022 which was signed into law on February 25, 2022.

The election is also happening within the context of end of tenure for the incumbent governor, party primaries and candidate nomination for the 2023 general election. In this regards all focus had been on who emerges presidential candidates and governorship candidates across the country. It is also worth mentioning that the incumbent governor Kayode Fayemi was a presidential aspirant and contested in the just concluded APC special convention to nominate its presidential flagbearer.

Against this background, The Electoral Hub, an organ of the Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD), has produced this political context analysis (PCA). In line with the mission of The Electoral Hub to promote electoral knowledge, accountability and integrity from supporting interventions that strengthen the electoral process, this pre-election analysis seeks to help stakeholders understand the contexts in which the elections will be conducted in Ekiti State.

This analysis contains an overview of the legal, socio-political and institutional factors and conditions that may affect the outcome of the election; the key actors and interest groups shaping events leading up to the election; the election management body and the electoral system; the threats and obstacles to a credible process; as well as the external and internal entities that can help strengthen and protect the integrity and credibility of the electoral process.

This analysis is based on unbiased research into the trends in previous elections and the

[1] The 2007 election was nullified in October of 2010, Segun Oni removed as governor and Dr Kayode Fayemi sworn-in as governor after a long court battle. This caused Ekiti State governorship elections to become off-cycle election.

tendency for relapse or change; the political and social dynamics currently within the country in general (such as party primaries and candidate nomination for the general election next year) and Ekiti State in particular; as well as the perception of political observers and the electorate about the upcoming election.

This analysis should serve as a stakeholder's guide to the distribution of power, the range and interests of the various actors, the formal and informal rules that govern the electoral process; and how all these can either make or mar the electoral process.

Constitutional and Legal Background

An election is a legal activity backed by laws. The Electoral Legal Framework is made up of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), The Electoral Act, 2022, and Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Elections issued by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The provisions in these legal frameworks will govern the conduct of the 2022 Ekiti State governorship election.

Electoral reforms are a continuous, unending process. Shortly after the 2019 General Elections, various proposals were made for the amendment of the Constitution and the Electoral Act, 2010. These reforms led to the passing into law of the Electoral Act 2022 on February 25, 2022 when the president assented. The new Electoral Act 2022 brought new innovations into the process. Some of the proposals to the amendment of the Constitution however failed, mostly proposals that had to do with inclusion by creating additional seats at the National and States Houses of Assembly[2]. The Bill for amendment of the Constitution proposed new seats exclusively for women including 37 seats in the Senate, 2 for each State at the House of Representatives, and 3 additional seats for each State House of Assembly[3]. In the same vein, the Bill for the creation of an Election Offences Tribunal passed in 2021 but it is yet to be harmonized and sent for Presidential assent.

In terms of electoral reform, the Electoral Act 2022 which repealed and replaced the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) made a number of new innovative provisions aimed at improving transparency, accountability, inclusion, and the overall integrity of the electoral process. These include measures to release election funds early, give INEC the powers to determine the mode of voting and results transmission, improve political party structure and operations, give parties the discretion to determine the mode of primaries to conduct, promote gender equality and social inclusion, clarify the definition of over voting, and adjust timelines in the electoral process.[4] The new Act also allows INEC to infuse technology into the electoral process in the areas of accreditation, voting and transmission of results. Some of the innovations include the use of Smart Card Reader and other technological devices for accreditation and the use of means to be determined by INEC for transmission of results[5].

Importantly, the Act provides a level playing field for contestants with the provisions in

[2] https://www.icirnigeria.org/209-reps-vote-against-bill-seeking-additional-seats-for-women-in-national-states-assemblies/
[3] https://placng.org/i/groundbreaking-bill-to-alter-constitution-and-create-special-additional-seats-for-women-passes-second-reading/
[4] See The Electoral Hub. (2022). *Merits of the Electoral Bill 2021*. https://electoralhub.iriad.org/merits-of-the-electoral-bill-2021/
[5] See Sections 47(2), 60(5) Electoral Act, 2022

Section 84 (12) for resignation of political appointees before they can participate in political primaries as voters and candidates. This however, is being highly contested by members of the executive. And the case is awaiting Supreme Court's determination[6].

Some of these key progressive provisions in the new Electoral Act that signpost the improvements in the electoral process includes:

Table 1: Key Provisions in the Electoral Act 2022

S/N	Section	Provision
1	Section 3(3)	Early release of INEC's funds
2	Section 8(5)	Political neutrality of INEC Staff
3	Section 28	Notice of election 360days to election[7]
4	Section 29 (1)	Early conduct of Party Primaries
5	Section 34	Substitution of candidates who dies during election
6	Section 37	Contested election of candidate nomination (validity of nomination)
7	Section 47 (2)	The legalization of electronic accreditation of voters
8	Section 50	Allows INEC to determine the mode of results transmission
9	Section 51	Redefined Overvoting focuses on the number of accredited voters
10	Section 54(2)	Inclusion of Persons with Disability
11	Section 65	Gives INEC Powers to review results declared under duress
12	Section 75(1)	Registration of parties terminates 12months before the general election[8]
13	Section 81(2)	Notice of merger of parties 9months to the general election
14	Section 84 (12)	Resignation of political appointees before they can participate in primaries as voters and candidates
15	Section 94 (1)	Extension of period of campaign to 150days before 24hours to the election

Compiled by The Electoral Hub[9]

[6] Section 84(12), Electoral Act 2022. See The Electoral Hub (2022). Electoral Landscape since the Assent of the Electoral Act 2022. www.electoralhub.iriad.org/blog/

[7] Section 28(3) provides for 14days notice of election before the date for bye-election

[8] This is particularly important in addressing the unwieldiness in number of parties on the ballot

[9] The Electoral Hub (2022). Electoral Landscape since the Assent of the Electoral Act 2022. www.electoralhub.iriad.org/blog/

As a result of the new Electoral Act 2022, INEC released new Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Elections[10] to conform to the new provisions of the Electoral Act. The Commission had also issued a COVID-19 policy on Conducting Elections in the context of COVID-19, which is yet to be amended to conform to the Federal Government lifting COVID-19 restrictions on midnight curfews and gatherings, in essence, INEC will maintain its policy on Conduct of Election in the Context of COVID-19 which includes social distancing maintained by voters at a distance of two meters (6 feet) on election day.

In April 2022, a Federal High Court delivered a judgment ordering the Federal Government to enforce the National Gender Policy which states that at least 35% of all public-sector appointments be reserved for women. This judgment is seen as a major win for inclusion especially considering the failure of amendments to that effect.

It is also worth noting that there have been calls for electoral reform in other areas including diaspora voting[11] and early voting for Nigerians with election-day duties, such as poll workers, emergency workers, security agents, accredited observers, and journalists.[12] There is also women's campaign[13] for a reconsideration by the National Assembly of the 'rejected' five gender bills which are important for achieving gender equity in Nigeria. Without these outstanding reforms, the legal and constitutional framework remains inadequate as "issues of inclusivity, disenfranchisement and fairness will continue to dog the legitimacy of elections in Nigeria"[14]. This is an important contextual aspect of the forthcoming Ekiti State governorship election which should be taken into any analysis of about the election.

[10] INEC (2022). Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Elections, 2022. https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/REGULATIONS-AND-GUIDELINES-FOR-THE-CONDUCT-OF-ELECTIONS-2022_updtd.pdf

[11] INEC. (n.d.). *INEC, NASS Make Case For Diaspora Voting*. https://inecnigeria.org/news-all/inec-nass-make-case-for-diaspora-voting/

[12] Obisesan, P. (2019, March 1). 2019 Presidential Election: improving the electoral process in Nigeria. *West Africa Think Tank (Wathi)*. https://www.wathi.org/opinion-election-nigeria-2019/2019-presidential-elections-improving-the-electoral-process-in-nigeria/

[13] https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/03/womanifesto-calls-for-immediate-passage-of-gender-bills/ ; https://punchng.com/gender-bills-were-ready-to-occupy-state-assemblies-says-women-group/ ; https://guardian.ng/news/women-groups-suspend-occupation-of-national-assembly-over-gender-bills/

[14] The Electoral Hub PCA on 2022 FCT Local Council Election

Ekiti State Electoral System

Nigeria is a federation where power is shared between the Federal government, the 36 state governments and the 774 local governments. As shown in the figure and table below, Ekiti State has three senatorial districts, six federal constituencies, twenty-six state constituencies, sixteen local government areas (LGAs), 177 registration areas (RAs), and 2,445[15] polling units (PUs). Ekiti State has six members at the House of Representatives representing the 6 Federal Constituencies; 3 Senators, one from each senatorial district to represent Ekiti in the Senate. Also, candidates are put forward from the local governments and wards for representation at the House of Assembly.

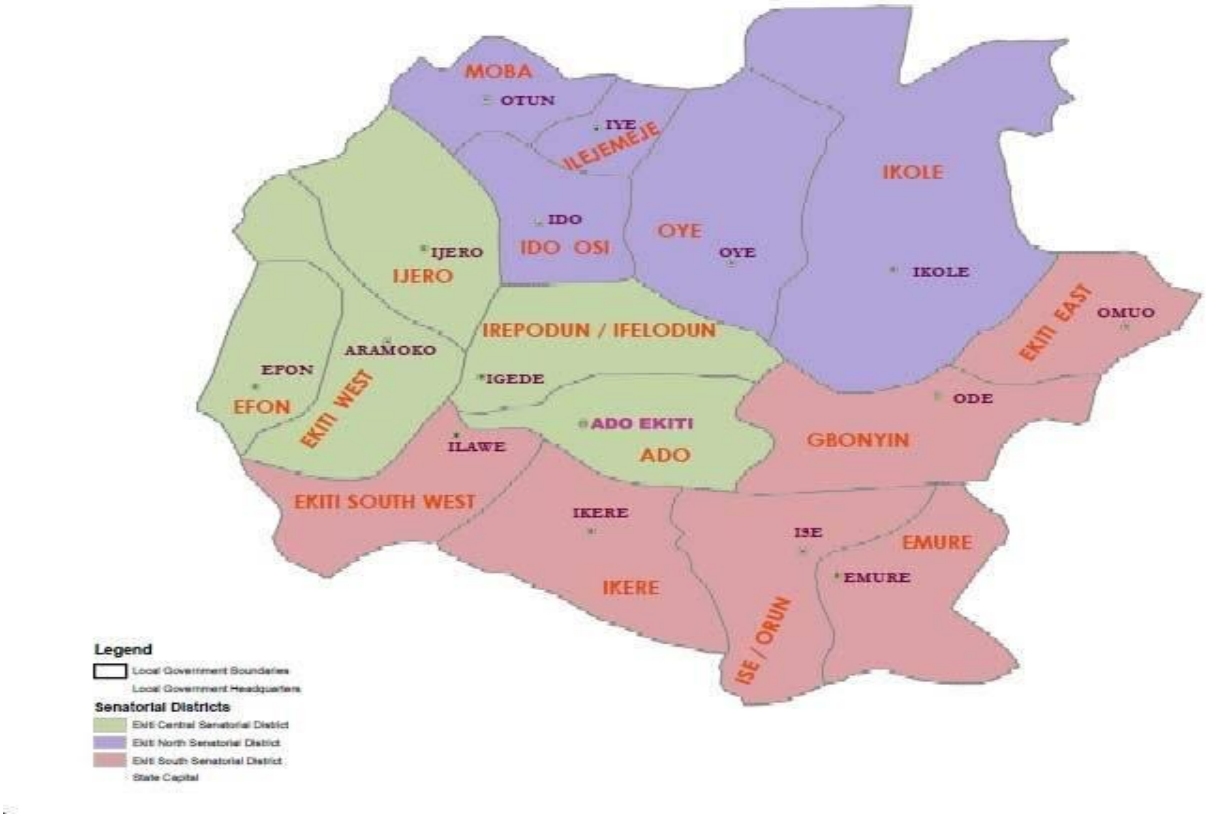


Figure 1: Delimitation of Ekiti State[16]

15

[16] Premium Times (2017, January 21). https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-west/222160-protest-ekiti-traditional-ruler-allegedly-shoots-resident-dead.html

Table 2: Electoral Delimitation/Statistics of Ekiti State

SEN. DISTRICT	FED. CONST.	LGA	HQ	RA/WARDS	PUs	VOTERS
EKITI NORTH	Ikole/Oye	Ikole	Ikole	12	189	71,971
		Oye	Oye	12	191	65,422
	Ido/Osi/Moba/Ilemeje	Ido-Osi	Ido	11	144	57,766
		Moba	Otun	11	116	53,293
		Ilejemeje	Iye	12	91	18,790
	2	**5**		**56**	**731**	**267,242**
EKITI CENTRAL	Ado Ekiti/ Irepodun-Ifelodun	Ado Ekiti	Ado	13	344	179,071
		Irepodun-Ifelodun	Igede	11	174	70,467
	Ijero/Ekiti West/Efon	Ijero	Ijero	12	145	64,524
		Efon	Efon	10	119	30,076
		Ekiti West	Aramoko	11	184	59,220
	2	**5**		**57**	**966**	**403,358**
EKITI SOUTH	Ekiti South West/Ikere/Ise-Orun	Ekiti South West	Ilawe	11	188	53,712
		Ikere	Ikere	11	125	65,651
		Ise-Orun	Ise	10	114	46,696
	Emure/Gbonyin/Ekiti East	Emure	Emure	10	94	37,122
		Gbonyin	Ode	10	115	53,785
		Ekiti East	Omuo	12	112	61,357
	2	**6**		**64**	**748**	**318,323**
GRAND TOTAL	**6**	**16**		**177**	**2,445**	**988,923**

Source: INEC[17]

[17] INEC. (n.d.). *Name of Senatorial Districts, Federal and State Constituencies Nationwide*. https://www.inecnigeria.org/downloads-all/name-of-senatorial-districts-federal-and-state-constituencies-nationwide/; Communication with INEC Staff.

Ekiti State is one of the states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Like other states in Nigeria, it has its political and administrative structure. For instance, it has its own executive, legislature (State House of Assembly) and judiciary.

The Governor is the head of the executive at the State level; the legislature is headed by a Speaker of the House of Assembly; and the judiciary by the Chief Judge. Governors are elected directly for a four-year term with a two-term limit. For a person to be qualified to contest for the office of the Governor, the Constitution, provides that:

- he/she is a citizen of Nigeria by birth;
- he/she has attained the age of thirty-five years;
- he/she is a member of a political party and is sponsored by that political party, and
- he/she has been educated up to at least School Certificate level or its equivalent[18].

A simple majority system is used to determine the winner of the governorship election: the winner must have a simple majority (plurality) of the votes cast and at least 25% of votes cast in at least two-thirds of all the local government areas of the state. Where no candidate meets these criteria, the contestants with the two highest numbers of votes compete in a run-off election until a winner emerges.

From the post 2019 continuous voter registration by INEC, there are 988,923 registered voters in Ekiti State[19]. The polling units increased to 2,445[20] polling units, an addition of 250 polling units after INEC's expansion of access to polling unit exercise. It is instructive to note that the Ekiti register of voters is more than some countries in the West African sub-region e.g. it is more than twice the register for Cape Verde's 398,865[21] and more than Gambia's 962, 157[22]. As of June 1, 2022, 739,747 people have collected their PVCs. This is approximately 75% of the registered voters[23].

[18] Section 177, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended)
[19] Latest registration figures from INEC
[20] 2,195 polling units and 913,334 registered voters for 2019 General Election, see INEC 2019 Election Report
[21] https://www.electionguide.org/countries/id/40/
[22] https://iec.gm/
[23] According to INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner for Ekiti State during a Dialogue with CSO Situation Room, June 4, 2022

Ekiti State Geography

Ekiti State is situated within the tropics and located in the Southwest region of Nigeria. It has a total land area of 5887.9 square kilometres[24]. Ekiti State was proclaimed as a State on October 1, 1996 by the military government of General Sani Abacha. Before this, it was part of the old Ondo State in the Southwestern region of Nigeria. The State shares boundaries with Kwara State in the North, Kogi State to the east, Osun State to the west, and bounded by Ondo State to the south. It is the 29th in size of Nigerian States[25]. Ado Ekiti which is located at the central area of the state is the capital city.

Ekiti State is a very homogenous state in terms of people, culture, tradition, and language[26]. The people speak the Ekiti dialect of Yoruba language with slight difference in dialects amongst them. The slight differences in dialects is influenced by the spatial locations[27]. Ekiti State's main towns are Ado, Ikere, Aramoko, Ode, Oye, Ikole, Ijero, Efon, and Ido[28].

An important feature of the state is the presence of many hills. Towns and villages are located on the many hills, valleys and around rivers that form part of the topography of the State. These hills typically have poor road networks, with some areas completely inaccessible by vehicles. In fact, the word 'Ekiti' is derived from the local term for a hill[29]. Election logistics must take into consideration the hilly topography of Ekiti and the ways it could affect movement and deployment of election officials, distribution of election materials, movement of materials and personnel[30].

It is predominantly an agrarian environment and rich in agricultural resources, with such products as cocoa, palm produce, timber, rubber, plantain, yam, cassava, etc. being cultivated. The State is also rich in mineral deposits which include granite, kaolinite, columbite, bulk clay, charnockite, iron ore, tin ore, tantalite, gneisses, feldspar, bauxite, beryl, aquamarine, phosphate, limestone, and gemstones such as tourmaline (green and pink), beryl, and gold[31].

A unique tourist feature of Ekiti State is the Ikogosi warm spring, which is a key tourist attraction for the state. It is also presently processed and packaged as bottled water for

[24] https://www.ekitistate.gov.ng/about-ekiti/
[25] https://taxaide.com.ng/2019/07/04/exploring-the-economy-of-the-south-west-ekiti-state/
[26] https://www.ekitistate.gov.ng/about-ekiti/people-culture/
[27] https://www.ekitistate.gov.ng/about-ekiti/people-culture/
[28] https://www.ekitistate.gov.ng/about-ekiti/people-culture/
[29] Ibid
[30] https://www.ekitistate.gov.ng/about-ekiti/people-culture/
[31] https://www.ekitistate.gov.ng/executive-council/mdas/office-of-solid-mineral-resources/

commercial purposes by UAC Nigeria, a private company. Ekiti State also has other tourist attractions such as Arinta waterfalls, Olosunta hills, Fajuyi memorial park, Egbe dam, Ero dam, and natural caves in Ikere- Ekiti. All of which contribute to the State's GDP and IGR.

Another important geographical feature of the State is flooding. In 2021, the State was placed on red flood alert[32]. The State office of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) had urged residents living in the state's riverine areas to relocate as they were expecting more incidences of flood in the coming months[33]. This warning followed information released by the Nigerian Meteorological Agency **(**NiMET). NIMET had predicted that climate change will lead to abnormal rainfall which will culminate to flood disasters which will affect 28 states and many local government areas of the federation[34].

Not long afterwards, the State experienced flooding after three days of rain, leading to the submerging of houses in Oke-Osun community and residents' displacement and relocation to Ado-Ekiti, after a river in the area overflowed its bank. Ado-Ekiti, the capital was also not spared as during this period flooding wreaked the city[35], destroying many communities and livelihoods, and causing displacements[36]. The worst affected areas were Balemo, Tinuola Areas, Afao Road, of the state's capital, where the flood had surged into over ten buildings and destroyed property worth millions of Naira[37]. Other areas with flood issues are Ajilosun, Odo Ado, Owode and Otete in Efon Alaaye, and Ikerre Ekiti.

These geographical features are important to consider, as they have an impact on electoral planning, logistics, and deployment including access to polling units, delivery of election materials, and transportation of election officials. As discussed later in this paper, INEC has increased the number of polling units in the State by 250 units, which should address the problem of accessibility, particularly for voters who reside around areas with poor road networks and difficult terrains. Nevertheless, the transportation of election workers and materials to the various polling units remains an issue. Although Nigeria is not currently in the rainy season, which makes the likelihood of flooding low, areas with poor road networks will still pose a challenge. Adequate time should be given for longer transportation routes in those areas that are not easily accessible.

[32] https://www.ekitistate.gov.ng/ekiti-on-flood-red-alert/
[33] Chime, V. (August 13, 2021) The Cable. ((https://www.thecable.ng/flood-nema-advises-residents-in-ekiti-riverine-areas-to-relocate
[34] Ibid
[35] https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-west/473954-flood-wreaks-havoc-in-ekiti.html
[36] https://tribuneonlineng.com/residents-dislodged-as-flood-wreaks-havoc-in-ekiti/
[37] https://tribuneonlineng.com/residents-dislodged-as-flood-wreaks-havoc-in-ekiti/

Ekiti State Electorate

As at 1991, Ekiti State had a population of 1,535,790 and under the 2006 census Ekiti State had a population of 2,384,212 (Male - 1,215,487 and Females - 1,183,470).[38] However, from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) population is projected to have risen to 3,270,800 in 2016[39] at 3.1% annual population change as shown in the table below. Also, data from INEC online Continuous Voter Registration (CVR), shows that an additional 168,478[40] persons have completed their registration in the state. This indicates an increase in the total number of Registered Voters for the June 18 election.

Table 3: Ekiti State Population Distribution/Statistics

S/N	LGA	Population (1991)	Population (2006)	Population (2016)
1	Ado Ekiti	156,122	313,690	427,700
2	Gbonyin	…	147,999	201,800
3	Efon	…	87,187	118,900
4	Ekiti East	…	138,340	188,600
5	Ekiti South West	140,183	165,087	225,100
6	Ekiti West	…	179,600	244,900
7	Emure	…	94,264	128,500
8	Ido-Osi	…	160,001	218,100
9	Ijero	95.365	221,873	302,500
10	Ikere	58.612	148,558	202,500
11	Ikole	119,796	170,414	232,300
12	llejemeje	…	43,459	59,300
13	Irepodun/Ifelodun	110,259	131,330	179,100
14	Ise/Orun	…	113,951	155,400
15	Moba	…	145,408	198,300
16	Oye	115,244	137,796	187,900
TOTAL		**1,535,790**	**2,398,957**	**3,270,800**

Source: www.citypopulation.de and National Population Commission[41]

[38] https://www.ekitistate.gov.ng/about-ekiti/; https://www.citypopulation.de/php/nigeria-admin.php?adm1id=NGA013

[39] https://www.citypopulation.de/php/nigeria-admin.php?adm1id=NGA013; https://nigeria.opendataforafrica.org/

[40] Weekly Update Online Voter Registration, Q4. No. 8 as at 7am Monday, 6 June 2022

[41] Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette. *Legal Notice on Publication of 2006 Census Final Results*.

Ekiti State is homogenous with indigenous inhabitants of ethnic composition largely from the Ekiti, a sub-group of the larger Yoruba ethnicity. Given the cosmopolitanism of the State, inhabitants from other parts of the country also reside in the State and like the rest of the country, the official language is English. There are a large number of Christians and Muslims as well as African Traditional worshippers with Christians making up the larger percentage.

Ekiti ranks high in development indices with 95.79% literacy and 75.57% using improved sources of drinking water[42]. Similarly, 2019 poverty headcount ratio placed Ekiti State at 28%, the poverty income gap is 0.062, and the Gini coefficient of 29.7[43]. however, Ekiti's poverty headcount ratio is the highest in the South-West despite being the 12th lowest in Nigeria. According to the World Bank 2022 Poverty Assessment, the median deflated consumption per person yearly in Ekiti is N187,837. While the multidimensional poverty rate across six key indicators is 40,50, with 34.1% multidimensionally poor[44]. While the NBS Living Standard Survey 2020, puts Ekiti State having the lowest average household size with 3.50 family members[45]. The State also has an average share of the female-headed household of 25.3% and a dependency ratio of 0.075[46].

Education is highly regarded in the State. It is therefore not surprising that it has approximately 96% literacy rate. From the latest statistics of 50,945[47] out-of-school children, Ekiti state is one of the states with the lowest number of out-of-school children in the country. Although Governor Fayemi has claimed that there are no out-of-school children in the state[48]. The low out-of-school children could be because of the measures the state put in place to address the problem. For instance, it has domesticated the Child Rights Act, and has a policy of prosecution of parents whose children are not in school

https://gazettes.africa/archive/ng/2009/ng-government-gazette-dated-2009-02-02-no-2.pdf; https://www.citypopulation.de/php/nigeria-admin.php?adm1id=NGA013

[42] https://nigeria.opendataforafrica.org/

[43] https://www.statista.com/statistics/1121438/poverty-headcount-rate-in-nigeria-by-state/ ,data released May 2020; https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099730003152232753/pdf/P17630107476630fa09c990da780535511c.pdf

[44]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

[45] National Bureau of Statistics (2020). Nigeria Living Standards Survey 2020. Accessed from https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/read/1123

[46] Ibid

[47] https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/483619-special-report-kano-akwa-ibom-eight-other-states-housed-most-of-nigerias-out-of-school-children.html. This is as of 2018

[48] https://www.thecable.ng/fayemi-you-find-any-out-school-children-ekiti; https://punchng.com/ekiti-threatens-to-jail-parents-who-dont-enrol-children-in-school/

amongst other measures. It is worth mentioning that Ekiti State is alleged to have the most number of professors by origin.

The state is largely agrarian with agriculture as the mainstay of the state economy, employing 75% of the state working population[49]. Because of the lack of industries, the State Government is the largest employer of labour- so a predominantly civil service state like other non-industrial and commercial states in Nigeria. For instance, Ado Ekiti, the capital of Ekiti, is a sleepy city with little commercial activities when compared to other capital cities in the region.

Ekiti's Internal Generated Revenue (IGR) as at 2018 was N6.47 billion[50]. Ekiti has reserves of various resources including granite, tin ore bauxite, among others. Majority of the population is into agriculture and mainly producing cocoa, cassava, maize, kolanut, and plantain, among others[51]. The state is also the biggest producer of rice in the south wes[52]t.

The State's tertiary institutions include Federal University Oye-Ekiti; Federal Polytechnic Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State University; Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science, and Technology; Afe Babalola University. These will provide a large pool of youth and lecturer who can be mobilized to fill the required 22,244 ad-hoc staff announced by INEC to conduct the election.

Ekiti State Electoral Delimitation and Demography[53]

Number of LGAs	**16**
Number of RAs	177
Number of Senatorial Districts	3
Number of Federal Constituencies	6
Number of State Constituencies	26
Total Number of Polling Units	2,445
Total Number of Registered	988,923
Total Number of Parties Contesting	16
Total Number of Candidates	16

[49] https://www.slideshare.net/EkitiState/profile-of-ekiti-state ; https://ekdipa.com.ng/sector/agriculture
[50] https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/pdfuploads/Internally_Generated_Revenue_At_State_Level_Q4_2018.pdf
[51] https://taxaide.com.ng/2019/07/04/exploring-the-economy-of-the-south-west-ekiti-state/
[52] https://ekdipa.com.ng/sector/agriculture
[53] INEC Media Fact sheet for Governorship Election, Ekiti State

Political Environment

Ekiti governorship is one of the off-cycle governorship elections held as a result of court judgments disrupting the cycle. In comparison to other States, Ekiti usually has relatively peaceful elections, however, this Governorship election is happening against the backdrop of election violence during the Ekiti East state constituency (position in the state house of assembly) bye-election in March 2021 leading to the death of three voters and many being injured[54]. In fact, this bye-election will be conducted along with the governorship election. It will also be fifth time INEC is conducting this election since 2019 general election as it was forced on more than one occasion to stop the process due to violence.

During the Local Government elections in December 2021[55], the political environment was been rife with low voter turnout. This election unlike previous governorship elections will be conducted with the INEC COVID-19 policy still in place. Also, unlike other governorship elections, there have been limited numbers of pre-election cases in Ekiti State. The disputes recorded are centered around party factions, intra-party conflicts and crises. This section will explore these various features of Ekiti's political environment and the implications for the elections.

COVID-19 Emergency

In 2020, while INEC was preparing for The Edo and Ondo governorship elections, the Federal Government went on a lockdown including closing borders to reduce the spread of COVID-19. As a result of the pandemic, INEC[56] and the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)[57] released guidelines for the conduct of elections in the context of COVID-19. Some of the provisions of the guidelines include the mandatory use of facemasks to polling units, social distancing of 2 metres, use of sanitisers, and use of mentholated spirit to clean the accreditation machines and other surfaces among other COVID-19 protocols. The reality is that voters rarely comply with these rules. In the November 2021 Ekiti governorship election, there was minimal compliance to COVID-19 mandate.

The guidelines are still applicable, even though the Federal Government relaxed some of the COVID-19 rules; INEC and the NCDC are yet to revise theirs. Like the other elections that have held within the context of COVID-19, there is a likelihood of non-compliance

[54] https://placng.org/Legist/ekiti-bye-election-violence-breeds-anxiety-ahead-of-2023/. This bye-election will be conducted along with the governorship election.
[55] Local Government Elections are conducted by the State EMB, Ekiti State Independent Electoral Commission (EKSIEC)
[56] https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/INEC-POLICY-ON-CONDUCTING-ELECTIONS-IN-COVID19.pdf
[57] https://covid19.ncdc.gov.ng/media/files/ElectionsDuringCOVID-19July2020.pdf

with the rules. Generally, Nigerians have resumed living as they did pre-covid19; a lot of public spaces have loosened masks and hand washing mandates.

Voter Apathy

Voter education is pertinent to free, fair and credible elections. It is also a continuous process that goes on even on Election Day. It is involves sensitisation, awareness creation and mobilization of voters to participate in the electoral process. During the 2018 governorship elections in Ekiti State, of the 909,585 registered voters, 405,861 voters were accredited to vote, that is over 43% of registered voters[58]. Kimpact Development Initiative in its pre-election security and risk assessment in Ekiti and Osun States survey predicts a voter turnout of at least 43% and probably 49%, this will be higher than the Anambra elections that had 10% voter turnout[59]. Unlike Anambra where there was fear of activities of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) group threatening that elections will not hold, Ekiti is relatively safe three of the precursors to violence as identified by Kimpact are inter-party clashes, intra-party issues and kidnapping[60]. In the last one week, two of the States Ekiti borders, that is Kogi[61] and Ondo[62] have seen terrorist attacks in the last one-week and there is reasonable fear it may spill over. Security agencies must ensure the safety of voters, election personnel and materials to encourage voter turnout.

Intra-Party Conflicts and Crises

While the primaries and nomination of governorship candidate were relatively peaceful in the **All Progressives Congress**, like other parties, it resulted in internal party crises. Biodun Oyebanji emerged winner out of the eight aspirants. Aspirants who participated accused the party of conducting a fraudulent primary governorship primary election. One of these aspirants, Mr. Kayode Ojo alleged that figures were concocted for those who emerged candidates even when there was no election.[63] The process that produced the candidature of Biodun Oyebanji was thus rancorous and also produced seven aggrieved aspirants namely: Senator Opeyemi Bamidele, Former Minister of State for works Senator Dayo Adeyeye, House of Representatives member Femi Bamisile, Former House of Representatives Bamidele Faparusi, Former Governorship Aspirant Kayode Ojo, Aviation expert Demola Popoola, and Oluwasola Afolabi. During the primary, the group of seven

[58] https://www.kdi.org.ng/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FINAL_KDI_PEEA_OSUN-x-EKITI.pdf
[59] https://www.kdi.org.ng/ekiti-and-osun-pre-election-security-risk-assessment-final/
[60] https://www.kdi.org.ng/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FINAL_KDI_PEEA_OSUN-x-EKITI.pdf
[61] https://www.thecable.ng/iswap-claims-responsibility-for-explosion-at-kogi-festival
[62] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-61697409
[63] PMNews (2022), Ekiti APC governorship primaries fraudulent: Kayode Ojo, https://pmnewsnigeria.com/2022/01/28/ekiti-apc-governorship-primary-fraudulent-kayode-ojo/

governorship protested against the list of local government and ward electoral committees, stating that the electoral officers are supporters of Biodun Oyebanji, who was alleged to be the anointed candidate of the incumbent Governor Kayode Fayemi. This group had urged the APC leadership to compel the Badaru-led committee to suspend the nomination process in the interest of the party[64]. Similarly, another group under the umbrella of APC Unity Group petitioned the Mai Buni-led National Caretaker Committee against Governor Kayode Fayemi's alleged relationship with ex-governor Ayodele Fayose of PDP to impose an anointed candidate on the state in the forthcoming governorship election.[65]

However, in response to these grievances, APC Ekiti State set up a reconciliation committee to address the grievances of aggrieved governorship aspirants over the outcome of the governorship primary[66]. The reconciliation committee was headed by Ekiti State Former Deputy Governor Otunba Bisi Egbeyemi with Mr. Bunmi Adelugba as secretary. From the committee's work, three aspirants: Senator Opeyemi Bamidele, Mr. Femi Bamisile, and Mr. Bamidele Faparusi agreed to work for the party's victory in the election. The committee is expected to appease the remaining aspirants and seek their support for the party during the June 18 governorship election.

In the **Peoples Democratic Party**, the primaries also met with dissatisfaction resulting in internal crises. Senator Biodun Olujimi and some other governorship aspirants who participated in the primary complained about manipulations and irregulates during the exercise. Segun Oni accused the party of cheating[67]. This resulted in the withdrawal of Senator Biodun Olujimi from the primary and the defection of former governor Segun Oni to SDP.[68] PDP further suffered huge setback with the defection to same SDP of four close associates of the former Governor Ayo Fayose. These are the former Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Mr. Owoseni Ajayi and Obafemi Adewale (SAN); ex-Chief of Staff Dipo Anisulowo and former Commissioner for Works Mr. Kayode Oso[69]. It is alleged that there were spirited efforts to prevent Senator Olujimi and her supporters from leaving

[64]Punch (2022), Gov Poll: Ekiti APC, PDP in fresh post primaries crises, https://punchng.com/gov-poll-ekiti-apc-pdp-in-fresh-post-primary-crises/
[65]Independent (2022), https://independent.ng/ekiti-guber-group-petitions-apc-caretaker-chairman-over-fayemi-fayosealleged-secret-deal/
[66]Vanguard (2022), Ekiti 2022: Will Bamidele's Sheathing Sword Save APC https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/02/ekiti-2022-will-bamideles-sheathing-of-sword-save-apc/
[67] https://www.thecable.ng/segun-oni-i-left-pdp-because-i-dont-collaborate-with-cheats
[68] The Guardian (2022). Ekiti APC, PDP shadow election crises strengthen SDP: https://guardian.ng/politics/ekiti-apc-pdp-shadow-election-crises-strengthen-sdp/
[69] https://dailypost.ng/2022/03/30/ekiti-guber-fayoses-associates-defect-to-segun-onis-sdp-party-claims/

the PDP. It is worked as Senator Olujimi is presently the senatorial candidate for the 2023 general election.

Beyond the recent primary election, it is worth mentioning that the PDP have lacked cohesion and have been fragmented since it lost power in the State. The fragmentation was the result of the alleged imposition of an unpopular candidate by the then Governor Ayo Fayose.

The winner from these crises so far is the **Social Democratic Party**. Besides the close associates of former Governor Fayose that defected to the SDP to allegedly support Oni to win, some APC aggrieved aspirants are said to have aligned forces with Segun Oni to strengthen the SDP in the state. The exit of Oni and others from the PDP to SDP, and alignment of these APC aggrieved aspirants with Oni's forces present the third force in Ekiti State. Particularly, Oni is believed to enjoy enormous support at the grassroots. According to the political pressure group, Ekiti Build Back Better, these defections to SDP is confirmation of Oni's popularity, and that Oni has become a movement and force to reckon with in the election[70]. The group also alleged that many backers of the governorship candidates of APC and PDP, were actually supporting Oni as the outcome of the election will prove.

The **African Democratic Party** is also riddled with internal post-primary crises like the other parties in the state. The party has similarly lost some of its main actors and players to other. For instance, on 12 May 2022, the deputy governorship candidate, Idowu Afuye defected to APC[71]. Mr. Idowu stated that his reason for leaving the party was because he realized that the governorship candidate Kemi Elebute-Halle lacks the competence to be a good leader. In reaction to the defection, governorship candidate Kemi Elebute stated that it was illegal and it negates the provisions of the Electoral Act[72]. The internal crisis has further deepened with suspension of the state chairman of the party, Pastor Olakunle Abegunde who responded to his suspension with defection to another party taking other executive members of the party with him. He accused the national leadership of the party

[70] See statement of the political pressure group, Ekiti Build Back Better at https://dailypost.ng/2022/03/30/ekiti-guber-fayoses-associates-defect-to-segun-onis-sdp-party-claims/
[71]The Whistler (2022), ADP Deputy Governorship Candidate Defects to APC Days to Ekiti Election, https://thewhistler.ng/adp-deputy-governorship-candidate-defects-to-apc-days-to-ekiti-election/
[72]Premium Times (2022), Ekiti 2022: My Deputy's Defection to APC Is Illegal-ADP Governorship Candidate. https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/530049-ekiti-2022-my-deputys-defection-to-apc-illegal-adp-governorship-candidate.html

of dictatorship[73]. Their defection happened few days after that of the deputy governor candidate, thereby literally emptying out the party and creating a leadership void.

The **Action People's Party** is not left out in intra-party crises. The party had called on INEC to effect changes to its governorship and deputy governorship candidates in line with order of the court[74]. This became necessary as according the state chairman, Moses Awogbemi, the former governorship candidate Olatawura had written as mandated by the law her voluntary withdrawal as the party's candidate. The State chairman stated that the Ekiti State High Court had ordered INEC to recognize Adeyinka Alli as the governorship candidate and Christiana Olatawura as the deputy governorship candidate.

All of these developments evidence the high level of intra-party rivalry, conflicts and crises within many of the contesting parties in this election. The good news is that the new Electoral Act 2022 discourages substitution by strict provisions with tighter conditions. This thus ensures that INEC's activities are not disrupted by frequent substitutions as was the case previously under a relaxed law. INEC's planning and logistics will therefore not be affected, particularly regarding the printing of ballot papers and other sensitive materials and this will ensure a safeguard of the process.

[73]This Day Live (2022), Crisis Hits Ekiti ADP as Chairman Defects Over Alleged Dictatorship, https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/05/18/crisis-hits-ekiti-adp-as-chairman-defects-over-alleged-dictatorship/

[74]Tribune (2022), Ekiti 2022: Election Invalid Without Our Candidates Name on Ballot APP Tells INEC, https://tribuneonlineng.com/ekiti-2022-election-invalid-without-our-candidates-name-on-ballot-app-tells-inec/

Contesting Political Parties

Under the law, only political parties can canvass for votes and present candidates at an election[75]. Membership of a political party and sponsorship by it is a requirement for running for political office. Candidates have been presented by sixteen (16) of the eighteen (18) registered political parties for the Ekiti State governorship election. These are: Accord Party (A), African Action Congress (AAC), African Democratic Congress (ADC), Action Democratic Party (ADP), All Progressive Congress (APC), All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), Allied Peoples Movement (APM), Action People Party (APP), Labour Party (LP), New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), National Rescue Movement (NRM), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Social Democratic Party (SDP), Young Progressives Party (YPP) and Zenith Labour Party (ZLP).[76]

The sixteen political parties and candidates for the Ekiti governorship election are as follows[77]:

Table 4: Political Parties and Candidates

Party	Position	Candidate	PWD	Age	Sex
A	Governor	Reuben Boye Famuyibo	X	63	M
	Dep. Governor	Olumide Ezekiel Falana	X	67	M
AAC	Governor	Ajagunigbala Moses Olajide	X	57	M
	Dep. Governor	Oludele Oluwabunmi	X	44	F
ADC	Governor	Oluwole Olumayokun Oluyede	X	57	M
	Dep. Governor	Popoola Hidiat Simbo	X	47	F
ADP	Governor	Elebute-Halle Josephine Kemi	X	40	F
	Dep. Governor	Afuye Idowu Sunday	X	41	M
APC	Governor	Abiodun Abayomi Oyebanji	X	54	M
	Dep. Governor	Afuye Monisade	X	63	F
APGA	Governor	Benjamin Olufemi Obidoyin	X	46	M
	Dep. Governor	Oluwafemi Anthony Faeji	X	61	M
APM	Governor	Fagbemi Peter Adegbero	X	59	M
	Dep. Governor	Akinyeye Oluwatosin Eunice	X	46	F
APP	Governor	Christiana Modupe Olatawura	X	62	F

[75] Section 221, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended)
[76] Olufemi, A. (2022, March 14). INEC releases final list of candidates for Ekiti governorship election. *The Cable* https://www.thecable.ng/in-full-inec-releases-final-list-of-candidates-for-ekiti-governorship-election
[77] INEC, Nigeria; https://www.channelstv.com/2022/03/14/inec-releases-final-list-of-ekiti-governorship-election-candidates/

	Dep. Governor	Ibukun Solomon Owolabi	X	38	M
LP	Governor	Daramola Roland Olugbenga	X	61	M
	Dep. Governor	Onile Ibrahim Yusuf	X	54	M
NNPP	Governor	Fatomilola Oladosun Abiodun	X	47	M
	Dep. Governor	Ade-Ajayi Oluwatoyin Hannah	X	52	F
NRM	Governor	Iyaniwura Tope Ifedayo	X	36	M
	Dep. Governor	Arowolo Kayode Williams	X	45	M
PDP	Governor	Olabisi Kolawole	X	64	M
	Dep. Governor	Kolapo Olugbenga Kolade	X	55	M
PRP	Governor	Agboola Olaniyi Ben	X	52	M
	Dep. Governor	Ogidan Tolulope Oluwatoyin	X	46	F
SDP	Governor	Olusegun Adebayo Oni	X	67	M
	Dep. Governor	James Oladipo Owolabi	X	68	M
YPP	Governor	Adebowale Oluranti Ajayi	X	62	M
	Dep. Governor	Olaseni Nureni Babatunde	X	48	M
ZLP	Governor	Adeolu Kolade Akinyemi	X	43	M
	Dep. Governor	Damilola Akintoye	X	36	F

The APC and PDP have alternated the Governorship position in the last 3 elections. Both parties have a stronghold in the State.

The APC is strong in the state as both the ruling party at the State and the federal level of government. It has produced the Governor twice[78] out of the five elections held so far. The present governor is from the APC as well as two of the Senators[79], 6[80] members of the House of Representatives, and 26 members of House of Assembly. The APC is also incumbent party at the federal level of government.

PDP is also a strong party in the State. It used to be the dominant party, having produced the President from 1999 to 2015, and the Governor in four[81] out of the five elections held so far for governorship in Ekiti State including the immediate past governor of the state. However, PDP's dominance has been reduced since 2015 when the APC produced the President and took control of more than two-thirds of the states in the country. PDP is still able to produce a senator. This shows that the party still has some standing in the State and

[78] 2010 -2014 after court judgement nullified the election of then PDP incumbent governor, and 2018 -2022
[79] https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/ELECTED-SENATORS-FOR-THE-9TH-ASSEMBLY-1.pdf
[80] Kehinde Agboola of PDP only stayed one month of June 2019 before losing ticket to Peter Owolabi of APC in July 2019.
[81] The third time, 2007 -2010 was truncated by court judgement and opposition took over the position

is expected to present a strong show at the governorship election.

SDP is also an important party in Ekiti State. Although it has never produced the government at the federal level. The SDP is one party to look out for at the election as they presented a former governor of the State, Olusegun Adebayo Oni, as candidate[82].

The remaining political parties who have presented candidates are relatively unknown in the state and have not been in the limelight or featured much state political discourse. While the ZLP is popular in neighbouring Ondo state, it is not so in Ekiti. There is however, is limited information available about these other opposition parties' primaries, candidates, and campaigns. This lack of information might negatively affect the parties' chances during the election.

Based on current trends, the incumbent party -APC, major opposition party -PDP, and minor opposition party-SDP, have the strongest chances of winning the election and producing the next governor of the State. However, the race seems to be between APC and SDP and the odds seem to favour the incumbent party while the SDP will put up a strong show[83]

[82] Segun Oni was a governor under PDP from 2007 -to 2010 when the court nullified his election and removed him
[83] Informed by observations from the field and current power dynamics

Inclusion and Representation

Inclusion and representation are key principles of a representative democracy. In Nigeria, women, youth and PWDs have largely been marginalised from the electoral process due to structural and socio-cultural barriers. A breakdown of the candidates contesting the Ekiti election provides insights on the level of inclusion and representation of these groups.

Table 5: Governorship Position

S/N	PARTY	CONTESTANTS	M	F	PWD	YOUTH*
1	A	Reuben Boye Famuyibo	√		-	
2	AAC	Ajagunigbala Moses Olajide	√		-	
3	ADC	Oluwole Olumayokun Oluyede	√		-	
4	ADP	Elebute-Halle Josephine Kemi		√	-	√
5	APC	Abiodun Abayomi Oyebanji	√		-	
6	APGA	Benjamin Olufemi Obidoyin	√		-	
7	APM	Fagbemi Peter Adegbero	√		-	
8	APP	Christiana Modupe Olatawura		√	-	
9	LP	Daramola Roland Olugbenga	√		-	
10	NNPP	Fatomilola Oladosun Abiodun	√		-	
11	NRM	Iyaniwura Tope Ifedayo	√		-	√
12	PDP	Olabisi Kolawole	√		-	
13	PRP	Agboola Olaniyi Ben	√		-	
14	SDP	Olusegun Adebayo Oni	√		-	
15	YPP	Adebowale Oluranti Ajayi	√		-	
16	ZLP	Adeolu Kolade Akinyemi	√		-	√
TOTAL						

Source: INEC[84]

[84] INEC, Nigeria; https://www.channelstv.com/2022/03/14/inec-releases-final-list-of-ekiti-governorship-election-candidates/ ; https://www.thecable.ng/in-full-inec-releases-final-list-of-candidates-for-ekiti-governorship-election

Table 6: Deputy Governorship Position

S/N	PARTY	CONTESTANTS	M	F	PWD	YOUTH*
1	A	Olumide Ezekiel Falana	√		-	
2	AAC	Oludele Oluwabunmi		√	-	
3	ADC	Popoola Hidiat Simbo		√	-	
4	ADP	Afuye Idowu Sunday	√		-	
5	APC	Afuye Monisade		√	-	
6	APGA	Oluwafemi Anthony Faeji	√		-	
7	APM	Akinyeye Oluwatosin Eunice		√	-	
8	APP	Ibukun Solomon Owolabi	√		-	√
9	LP	Onile Ibrahim Yusuf	√		-	
10	NNPP	Ade-Ajayi Oluwatoyin Hannah		√	-	
11	NRM	Arowolo Kayode Williams	√		-	
12	PDP	Kolapo Olugbenga Kolade	√		-	
13	PRP	Ogidan Tolulope Oluwatoyin		√	-	
14	SDP	James Oladipo Owolabi	√		-	
15	YPP	Olaseni Nureni Babatunde	√		-	
16	ZLP	Damilola Akintoye		√	-	√
TOTAL						

Source: INEC[85]

*In these tables, youth are defined as persons aged 35 or below.

From the tables above, it is clear that the level of inclusion and representation, particularly for youth and PWDs, is very poor.

In terms of Youth Representation, only the Governorship candidate of the NRM is below 40 years old despite the Constitution requirement for the position being 35 years. This is dismal 6.25%. There are two deputy governorship candidates below 40 years. This is 12.5% and also very poor.

Among all the groups, PWD representation is the worst, as there is no single PWD among any of the governorship and deputy governorship candidates There is no person with disability (PWD) represented in any of the party. So, zero % representation in either categories. This makes representation for PWDs non-existent and youth very poor.

[85] Ibid

However, women representation is particularly encouraging with two governorships and seven deputy governorship candidates giving a 28% representation of the 32 candidates (16 governorship and 16 deputy governorship). Two candidates out of sixteen is 12.5% women representation this is way below the 35% stipulated in the National Gender Policy (NGP). The deputy governorship women representation is impressive at 43.8%, approximately 9% more that the NGP figure.

The Constitution, The Electoral Act 2022, the PWD Act and National Youth Policy provides the enabling environment for inclusion of historically marginalised groups such as women, youth and PWD. It is worth noting, however, that it is one thing for a member of these groups to be given the party ticket to contest elections, and quite another for them to be able to contest on a level playing field with their counterparts. Despite laws and policies, the group is still faced with structural, social and economic barriers. For instance, in at different meetings organised by women groups as well research conducted by the Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development with support from Partners West Africa, Nigeria, part of the challenges identified by women politicians, both old and younger women were poor financial base and logistic support[86]. This reflects the fact that women candidates are less likely to have as much access to financial resources or sponsorship as their male counterparts. Indeed, the same can be said for other marginalised groups, including PWDs and youth. This is why, beyond advocating for more women, youth, and PWDs to contest elective offices, it is also important to address the financial and structural challenges they face by reducing the influence of money in the electoral process.

The Electoral Act 2022 which repealed and replaced the 2010 Act, did not adequately address the issue of electoral expenses to encourage marginalised and excluded groups. The cap for election expenses to be incurred by a candidate in respect of governorship election is ₦1 Billion[87]. This spending cap will further exclude marginalised groups and place them at a greater disadvantage. In order to level the playing field and give these groups a better chance of winning, there is need to have downward review of spending caps for different positions as well as put in other special measures that can facilitative increased representation of these groups.

[86] IRIAD (2021) *Women Political Representation in Nigeria: Closing the Gender Gap in Representation,* www.iriad.org/publication/ . See also SDN (2019) Women's Political Participation and Representation in Niger Delta, http://www.stakeholderdemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/More-women-in-governance.-Report.-2019.-DIGITAL.pdf ; https://von.gov.ng/women-seek-sustainable-representation-in-nigerias-leadership-space/

[87] Section 88(3)

In addition, INEC, political parties, CSOs, and the media have key roles to play in advocating for the inclusion and representation of marginalised groups. For its part, INEC has launched its revised gender policy[88] and developed a framework on access and participation for PWDs[89]. INEC has also committed to providing priority voting and assistive devices to PWDs during the elections[90]. Some commendable advocacy efforts have also been made, such as the Womanifesto Gender Bills Movement[91]. A movement of over 300 women groups across the country pushing for the reconsideration by the National Assembly of the rejected Constitutional Amendment Bills on gender. Reserved/Special Seat for Women advocacy championed by a number of CSOs including Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC), one of major proponents. The aim is to increase women representation at the National and State Assemblies through legislative quotas. Also, there is 'Run to Win' campaign organised by Yiaga Africa, which aims to bring support to youth candidates in elections.[92] When combined with an enabling legal framework, these advocacy efforts are likely to yield more effective results.

[88] https://www.blueprint.ng/inec-unveils-revised-gender-policy-preaches-inclusivity/
[89] https://www.inecnigeria.org/news-all/inec-framework-on-access-and-participation-of-persons-with-disabilities-pwds-in-the-electoral-process/
G See INEC's Regulations and Guidelines on Elections, 2022
[91] https://guardian.ng/news/gender-bills-equality-others-top-agenda-as-nigerians-mark-intl-womens-day/
[92] Amaza, M. #RunToWinNG: Yiaga Africa Galvanizes Support for Young Candidates Ahead of FCT Polls. *Yiaga Africa*. https://yiaga.org/yiaga-africa-calls-for-more-youth-participation-in-politics-hosts-youth-and-women-candidates-in-the-2022-fct-area-council-elections/

Main Political Actors

Kayode Fayemi is the present governor of Ekiti State, served between 2010 and 2014 for his first tenure, contested for a second term and lost to the PDP candidate in 2014. Contested again in 2018 and won for a second time. He is completing his second term. As an incumbent, he is influential and there has been little complaint about his tenure as Governor. The APC however has become less popular in general as a result of general insecurity and economic woes around the country[93].

Ayodele Fayose is also a former governor of the State who served between 2003 and 2006 and 2014 to 2018. He is generally liked because of his populist ideas but there was great dissatisfaction with his tenure as governor, this may be why the PDP lost governorship elections in 2018. He is still an influential figure within the PDP[94].

Olusegun Oni was elected Governor of Ekiti State in 2007 in an election later marred by malpractices, under the PDP. In 2010, a judgment of the Court of Appeal removed him from office. He is contesting for Governor under the SDP. As a former Governor, it is presumed he should have political structures on the ground. He is one of the major candidates in this election[95].

Abiodun Abayomi Oyebanji is the candidate of the APC in the forthcoming governorship elections. He is a former Secretary to the Government of Ekiti State. He is a trained Political Scientist and has worked in both private and public sectors[96]. He is one of the forerunners in the elections.

Olabisi Kolawole is a former Chairman of the PDP, former member of the Ekiti State House of Assembly and a former Commissioner under the Ayodele Fayose government 2014 to 2018. He is a major candidate in this election and enjoys the support of Ayodele Fayose[97].

Other notable personalities are **Chief Afe Babalola, CON, OFR, SAN** owner Afe Babalola University and **Wale Olanipekun, SAN**

[93] https://www.mynigeria.com/person/Kayode-Fayemi-2366
[94] https://www.mynigeria.com/person/Peter-Ayodele-Fayose-2297
[95] https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/02/ekiti-2022-segun-oni-joins-sdp-to-contest-guber-election/
[96] https://www.abiodunoyebanji.com/
[97] https://newswirengr.com/2022/05/21/bisi-kolawole-biography-age-wife-political-career-and-more/

(In) Security and Violence

In the Nigerian context, Ekiti is one of the States with the least incidents of insecurities. Ekiti is bordered by 4 states including Kogi and Ondo States, which had terrorist attacks recently. There is a potential that it crosses over into Ekiti in the build-up to the election. In 2021, during the Ekiti East I Constituency bye-election in March, violence broke out which led to the death of three people and the injury of more. Election materials were destroyed; security and election personnel were attacked and injured[98]. A 2009 rerun election also saw several voters killed and INEC local office burnt to ashes by thugs[99]

According to the KDI pre-election assessment carried out five months before the elections, there have been 3 deaths, 31 kidnappings and 13 other forms of violence. The report concludes that in comparison to Anambra 5 months before the election, Ekiti is relatively safe[100].

However, during this electioneering period, in the build-up to the election, several incidences of election violence have been reported. Harassments, 'unlawful' arrests, intimidation of the opposition, physical attacks, and inter-party supporters' violent conflicts have been reported. These conflicts have left some dead and many injured. These include:

- On June 11, 2022, supporters of the APC and SDP clashed in Itaji Ekiti, Oye LGA. This resulted in the death of one person and several injured[101].
- Clash between supporters of APC and SDP also resulted in the death of a member of the drivers' union leading to a blockade of major roads leading to places like Ijigbo, Odo-Ado, Okeyinmi, Atikankan, and Ajilosun areas, by the protesting drivers for the killing of their member[102].
- Political parties have claimed to be at the receiving end of the attack.[103]
- On June 12, 2022, tension rose in Ado Ekiti, the capital of Ekiti State over the fear of reprisal attack following the death of a member of the transporters' union, who was a supporter of the APC[104].

[98] https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/450208-inec-suspends-ekiti-bye-election-after-reports-of-violence.html
[99] https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/168673-breaking-violence-rocks-ado-ekiti-apc-secretariat-gov-fayemis-campaign-office-torched.html
[100] https://www.kdi.org.ng/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FINAL_KDI_PEEA_OSUN-x-EKITI.pdf
[101] https://newswirengr.com/2022/06/12/ekiti-2022-one-feared-dead-as-apc-sdp-supporters-clash-in-ekiti/
[102] https://www.blueprint.ng/ekiti-2022-tension-as-drivers-protest-killing-of-colleague/
[103] https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/536637-ekiti-2022-security-beefed-up-in-ekiti-as-drivers-protest-killing-of-colleague.html
[104] https://punchng.com/ekiti-killing-security-agencies-douse-tension-over-fear-of-reprisal/

- The SDP alleged unlawful arrest of its members by APC. The Deputy Governorship Candidate Otunba Ladi Owolabi reported that the party members have been harassed and attacked by the APC, stating the arrest of Seun Olarewaju a member of the party by the military at Ayetoro in Ido/Osi local government[105].
- The SDP campaign reported attacked on campaign members in Itaji and Egbe Ekiti in Oye and Gbonyin local government areas during a campaign rally in the towns[106].

Beyond Ekiti, three regions in Nigeria are going through various security challenges. With Boko Haram in the North-East, Unknown Gunmen/IPOB in the South-East, Bandit terrorists in the North West and spate of kidnapping around the country and ritual killings especially in the Southwest. As a result Ekiti is not totally isolated from the numerous insecurity challenges. It is important therefore that adequate security be mobilized for the protection of materials, voters and election personnel.

[105]The Nation (2022), SDP, APC Trade Words Over Alleged Unlawful Arrest of Supporters, https://thenationonlineng.net/sdp-apc-trade-words-over-alleged-unlawful-arrest-of-supporters/

[106]Premium Times (2022), Ekiti 2022: Political Thugs Attacking My Supporters-Segun Oni, https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/536370-ekiti-2022-political-thugs-attacking-me-my-supporters-segun-oni.html

Efforts at Mitigating Violence

In its usual practice, to ensure a credible election devoid of violence INEC has been conducting meetings with the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) to assess the security level and identify preventive measures. On May 31, 2022, INEC held a consultative meeting with the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) for final preparations on security for the election[107].

On May 13, 2022, the National Security Adviser (NSA), General Babagana Monguno directed heads of security and law enforcement agencies to scale up security and commence profiling of political actors who exhibit tendencies to subvert the electoral process.[108]

INEC led by the Chairman held meeting with the council of traditional rulers of the state on May 31, 2022 to get their commitment to maintain peace during the election. INEC also recruited and trained field agents on Election Violence Mitigation and Advocacy Tool (EVMAT) under the Electoral Institute[109]. The EVMAT is used in identifying and mapping possible areas of electoral violence which could occur along the electoral cycle - before, during or post-elections periods with the aim of providing effective preventive and/or mitigating measures to address occurrences.

The IGP, Usman Baba also gave reassurance of a violent free election during the election stakeholders meeting on June 14, 2022. IGP stated that measures were in place to ensure transparency and security as well as maintain a peaceful environment for the election including adequate security deployment to protect election materials, personnel, and voters[110]. However, the use of force during elections is discouraged as this does not do much to prevent violence so not an effective measure. Also, elections are civil affair and as such should not be overly securitized.

The Police deployed anti-riot men seven days before election day to address the electioneering violence[111]. The state Police Commissioner, Mr Morounkeji Adesina, the

[107] Ajayi, O. (2022, January 22). FCT Council Polls: INEC meets Security Chiefs, Media Executives. *Vanguard*. https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/01/fct-council-polls-inec-meets-security-chiefs-media-executives/
[108] Channels TV (2022): https://www.channelstv.com/2022/05/13/election-nsa-directs-law-enforcement-agencies-to-beef-up-security-in-ekiti-osun/
[109] https://dailypost.ng/2022/05/10/ekiti-guber-inec-takes-step-to-prevent-violence/
[110] https://punchng.com/were-ready-for-ekiti-gov-election-inec-igp-say/
[111] https://guardian.ng/news/police-deploy-anti-riot-men-in-ado-ekiti-over-pre-election-violence/

heavy deployment of anti-riot and plain-clothed policemen was to identify trouble spots across the state, and to prevent further violence or bloodshed[112].

On June 15, 2022, the governorship candidates despite reported clashes amongst their supporters signed Peace Accord "committing then to free, fair and credible poll" before General Abdulsalam Abubakar National Peace Commission (NPC). The NPC tasked candidates to maintain peace and ensure a violence-free election, INEC to ensure the election is free of rancour and rigging. NPC also urged the electorates to conduct themselves peacefully[113].

CSOs have also made peace interventions in the form of advocacy, engagement with stakeholders, and community sensitization. An example is the Youth Voices against Electoral Violence CAMPAIGN which sensitises young people to shun electoral violence. CSOs have also organised programmes for youth on non-violent participation in the elections[114].

Given these numerous efforts from various stakeholders, there is hope that the election will be peaceful. Security agencies are urged to treat their role in maintaining peace and order during election as sacrosanct.

[112] Ibid

[113] https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-west/537249-ekiti-2022-parties-sign-peace-agreement-despite-bloody-clashes.html ; https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/06/15/2022-11-ekiti-guber-candidates-sign-peace-accord/

[114] Interviews with Executive Director, NISD

Civil Society Organisations

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are key stakeholders in political and electoral processes in Nigeria. Their support and contributions to the overall enrichment of the electoral process is immense[115]. CSO contribution to the electoral process cuts across research, voter education, advocacy for electoral reform, and capacity building of key institutions and stakeholders among others. In Ekiti State, some of the contributions by CSOs include:

a. Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI)

KDI has been carrying out extensive work in relation to elections in Nigeria, including trainings, advocacy meetings with stakeholders, and voter education. KDI produced the pre-election security risk assessment for Ekiti and Osun States, which contained studies and a survey of voters in both states, as well as an in-depth pre-election assessment identifying causes of voter apathy, pre-election violence and the effect on the Ekiti elections[116].

b. YIAGA

Under its watching the vote programme, Yiaga Africa has released three pre-election observation reports for the Ekiti Governorship election targeting different aspects of the elections including voter education, campaigns, assessment readiness of INEC, voter inducement, voter apathy among others[117]. Yiaga also runs other election-related programmes, including Ready to Run, The Power of 18, and Fix Elections NG. Yiaga Africa deployed and trained Long Term Observers to monitor the pre-election atmosphere in the 16 Local government Areas of the State.[118]

c. The Electoral Hub

The Electoral Hub carries out work on elections through research, documentation, policy and law influencing, public education, and impact advocacy. It works towards providing solutions to improve the credibility of the electoral process. The Electoral Hub has provided trainings both on and offline for young people participating in elections and will also send in observers to collect data in the election. It is a member of the Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room.

---

[115] Electoral Hub (2022) Political Context Analysis for Ekiti State 2022 Governorship Election. www.electoralhub.iriad.org/publication/

[116] https://www.kdi.org.ng/ekiti-and-osun-pre-election-security-risk-assessment-final/

[117] http://yiaga.org/ekiti-2022-yiaga-africa-second-pre-election-observation-report

[118] http://yiaga.org/ekiti-2022-yiaga-africa-second-pre-election-observation-report

In order to enable stakeholders, understand the electoral landscape, power dynamics, and security in Ekiti State, The Electoral Hub has produced this political context analysis as well as a factsheet and several infographics to educate the public about the election. The Electoral Hub will also observe the election under the umbrella of the CSO Situation Room. After the election, it will produce a detailed post-election report and results analysis to highlight strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations for the future.

d) Situation Room

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room, convened by the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC), is a coalition of more than 70 CSOs, which maximise their various resources for information sharing, anticipation of problems during elections and responding rapidly when they occur. In preparation for the Ekiti elections, the Situation Room organized a dialogue session with the Resident Electoral Commissioner of Ekiti State on June 4, 2022[119]. It has also provided various online resources for voter education purposes[120]. As well as sponsored candidates' town hall debate which aired live on Channels TV.

Other CSO -led programmes and activities include:

- ≠ On April 11, 2022, Search for Common Ground, an international peacebuilding organisation trained various CSOs on *Conflicts and Hate Speech Management* ahead of the June 18 Ekiti State governorship election[121].
- ≠ On April 26, 2022, IFES supported training workshop on voter education and publicity implementation was organised for Electoral Officers (EOs), Assistant Electoral Officers (AEOs), and Gender Desk Officers in Ekiti state[122].
- ≠ During the workshop, the Deputy Country Director of IFES, Mr. Obaje Uke, stated that IFES will support INEC in the successful implementation of the voter education plan and conduct of the Ekiti governorship election.
- ≠ The Coalition of Ekiti State Civil Society Organisations (COESCSOs) Observed the primary elections of various parties in Ekiti State[123].

---

[119] https://situationroomng.org/situation-room-holds-dialogue-session-with-inec-ekiti-state-rec-ahead-of-the-governorship-election/

[120] https://situationroomng.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Ekiti-Gov_Candidates.jpeg ; https://situationroomng.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Ekiti-State-2022-Governorship-Election.pdf

[121] Independent Nigeria (2022): https://independent.ng/ekiti-2022-international-peacebuilding-org-trains-csos-on-conflictshate-speech-management/

[122] https://www.blueprint.ng/ekiti-election-ll-be-record-to-beat-rec/

[123] https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/02/01/ekiti-apc-pdp-primaries-peaceful-but-dominated-by-godfathers-say-csos/ ; https://www.premiumtimesng.com/tag/coalition-of-ekiti-state-civil-society-organisationscoescsos; https://dailytrust.com/godfathers-influenced-ekiti-apc-pdp-primaries-observers

- ≠ On June 2, 2022, the CSOs reported that the Primaries did not witness bloodshed, killing, and violence making it better than the previous year's exercises.[124]
- ≠ On June 4, 2022, CSO Situation Room organised a dialogue session with the Ekiti State REC.
- ≠ CSOs such as Kimpact Development Initiatives (KDI), YIAGA Africa, and the Centre for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) conducted pre-election observations and assessments for the June 18 election.
- ≠ Ajoro Ekiti, a social pressure group embarked on an election security campaign to sensitize the people on how to use their smartphones as "Election Security Surveillance," to deter rigging and crimes during the election
- ≠ The Commissioner of Police in Ekiti State commended the roles played by CSOs in the electoral process and stated that the Nigerian Police Force will collaborate with CSOs in forthcoming Elections[125].
- ≠ On May 13, 2022, the National Security Adviser (NSA), General Babagana Monguno directed heads of security and law enforcement agencies to scale up security and commence profiling of political actors who exhibit tendencies to subvert the electoral process.[126]
- ≠ On June 4, 2022, CSO Situation Room organised a dialogue session with the Ekiti State REC on INEC's plans and preparation for the governorship election.
- ≠ Situation Room also sponsored a Town Hall Debate in collaboration with Channels TV for candidates to present their manifestos to the electorate. It also provides a platform for the electorate to know the candidates better.
- ≠ The UN Women collaborated with CSOs on "Women-focused voters' sensitization and education, monitoring, and reporting ahead of the election[127].
- ≠ CSOs such as Adopt A Goal, also conducted civic engagements to encourage citizens' participation in the election including roadshows to sensitize citizens not to sell their votes (awareness and sensitization on vote selling and buying).
- ≠ CSOs such as Breach Repairers Organisation for Sustainable Healthcare and Development (BROSHCAD) conducted community sensitization, and grassroots mobilisation to encourage grassroots participation in the election.

[124] This Day (2022): https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/02/01/ekiti-apc-pdp-primaries-peaceful-but-dominated-by-godfathers-say-csos/
[125] https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/03/ekiti-2022-cp-commends-yiaga-africas-role-in-election-observation-integrity/
[126] Channels TV (2022): https://www.channelstv.com/2022/05/13/election-nsa-directs-law-enforcement-agencies-to-beef-up-security-in-ekiti-osun/
[127] https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/programme-implementation/2022/05/call-for-proposals-unw-wcaro-wpe-cfp-2022-001-voters-sensitization-education-monitoring-and-reporting-nigeria

≠ There are other CSOs on the ground working on the electoral process including engaging the REC on issues of concern[128]. These CSOs are also collaborating with the CSO Situation Room to observe the election and are: New Initiative for Social Development, Balm in Gilead Foundation, Gender Relevance Initiative Promotion, Centre for Better Health and Community Development, and New Generation Girls and Women Development Initiatives

These CSO-led programmes and activities are expected to enhance public confidence, accountability and the transparency of the electoral processes.

[128] Situation Room Dialogue with Ekiti State REC June 4, 2022

Role of INEC

INEC is the body constitutionally charged with conducting Governorship elections among others[129]. It will therefore oversee and conduct the Ekiti State governorship election.

1. Use of Bi-Modal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS)

The Bi-Modal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) to replace the Smart Card Readers (SCR) which were used previously and would be used for Ekiti Governorship election. BVAS also replaces the Zpad that was previously used in results upload to the Result Visualisation Portal (IReV). The Anambra election was the first major election in which the BVAS was used. The BVAS uses fingerprint recognition and facial recognition and also conducts other functions. For the election, the BVAS would be performing three functions: voter registration, voter accreditation, and uploading of election results. With electronic accreditation getting a nod in the Electoral Act, the use of BVAS for accreditation has gotten legal backing. INEC will deploy 3,346 BVAS for the election.

2. Increasing Access to Polling Units

To ensure easier access for voters and reduce long queues and wait times, INEC embarked on a project to increase access to polling units. These new polling units are to increase service delivery and improve voters' experience. For Ekiti State, 250 polling units were added to 2,195 that existed previously, making a total of 2,445 polling units. This new figure takes into account the new demography, rapid urbanisation, changing and expanding settlements pattern since the creation of polling units in 1996, more than two decades ago. The expansion of polling units is aimed at ensuring easier access for voters and reducing long queues and wait times.

It is yet to be seen how well these new polling units would be utilised in Ekiti State. Given previous reports of new polling units under-utilization in FCT[130]. Same experience was observed in the Anambra November 6, 2021 governorship election, where some of the new polling units had little to no voters on election day. For the Ekiti election, it is important for INEC supported by CSOs and the media to highlight this innovation and encourage voters to transfer to the polling units that are closest to them.

[129] Third Schedule, part I, Paragraph F, Section 15 (a), CFRN, 1999 (as amended)

[130] For the February 12, 2022 local council election, 593 of the 2,822 polling units (21% of the total) did not have voters and were referred to as zero polling units.

3. Voter Registration

INEC innovatively began the CVR exercise virtually in June 2021 through the cvr.inecnigeria.org platform in response to the global public health pandemic -Covid-19. Voter registration have both the pre-registration online component and complete registration offline component involving biometrics capture that requires physical presence at INEC's local offices. Because of the election, CVR was devolved to all 177 wards of the state to encourage more registration and participation in the process[131]. In March 2022 election, INEC suspended CVR in Ekiti State, in line with Section 9 (6) of the Electoral Act 2022 requirement that voter registration should stop no later than 90 days before an election. Distribution and collection of Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) is also done across INEC's local offices.

The total register of voters for the election is 988,923. Data from INEC online Continuous Voter Registration (CVR, total applications including transfers, updates, reviews and request for reprint of PVC show an additional 168,478[132] persons undertook these processes. Out of this figure, 124,963 were fresh registration. This indicates an increase in the total number of Registered Voters for the June 18 election. However, INEC has said in the process of cleaning up the voter register in preparation for the Ekiti election, it encountered 47,633 double registrations which were removed leaving 77,330 valid registrants added to the 2019 figure. As of June 1, 2022, a total of 739,747 PVCs have been collected accounting for a 75% collection rate. PVC collection is scheduled to end on June 16, - two days before the election.

Innovations in the Electoral Act

The Electoral Act brought about a number of new innovations including the powers of INEC to determine mode of election and results transmission. This means INEC now has powers to transmit results electronically, which has not been done before. It will be interesting to see how INEC plans on implementing this policy. In Ekiti, INEC plans to also deploy collation support through the use of Excel spreadsheets down to the RA level as a means of reducing the computation of results[133].

---

[131] https://radionigeriaibadan.gov.ng/2022/03/02/inec-takes-voters-registration-to-ward-level-in-ekiti/ ; https://nnn.ng/inec-devolve-cvr-ward-level/

[132] Weekly Update Online Voter Registration, Q4. No. 8 as at 7am Monday, 6 June 2022. Completed registration does not mean valid registration as INEC does cleaning of the register to remove double registrations.

[133] INEC interviews

4. Movement of Personnel and Material

INEC has a longstanding Memorandum of understanding with the National Union of Road Transport Workers where vehicles belonging to their members are used to move election personnel and materials. These vehicles are to complement INEC's internal capacity.

5. Engagement with Stakeholders

Engagement with stakeholders is an important component of the electoral process and a core responsibility and expectation for EMBs. In line with this principle, and in preparation for the election INEC, both at the Abuja headquarters and Ado-Ekiti State Office carried out a series of stakeholders' engagements with different electoral stakeholders and citizens. These engagements are aimed at ensuring a credible and peaceful election in Ekiti State. Some of the stakeholder meetings ahead of the Ekiti governorship election include:[134]

- On May 12, 2022, The Electoral Institute (TEI) of INEC organized a '*Policy Dialogue on the Ekiti State Governorship Election: A Litmus Test for Election Administration in Nigeria Under the New Electoral Act, 2022*'[135].
- On 30 May 2022, INEC held a readiness assessment meeting with the management of INEC Ekiti State
- On 31 May 2022, INEC had a consultative meeting with Ekiti State traditional rulers to appeal for a peaceful election
- On 31 May 2022, INEC organized a consultative meeting with the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES)
- On May 23, 2022, Ekiti State INEC organized a meeting on '*Discourse by INEC/CSO for Peaceful Ekiti Governorship Election*' in Ado -Ekiti. During the meeting, INEC solicited CSOs' support in conducting an election that would be peaceful, inclusive, and acceptable to all stakeholders.[136]
- On 1 June 2022, INEC organized a meeting with all the Electoral Officers (EOs).
- On 1 June 2022, INEC organized a training for the Supervisory Presiding Officers (SPOs).

[134] Unless otherwise stated, this information has been gathered from INEC's Twitter page: https://twitter.com/inecnigeria.
[135] https://tribuneonlineng.com/ekiti-2022-look-beyond-polling-units-to-stop-vote-buying-inec-tells-security-agencies/
[136] Nigeria Tribune (2022). Ekiti 2022: INEC engages CSOs, seeks peaceful, inclusive election. https://tribuneonlineng.com/ekiti-2022-inec-engages-csos-seeks-peaceful-inclusive-election/

- On 2 June 2022, INEC organized an Election Risk Management workshop for stakeholders.
- On 3 June 2022, INEC organized a consultative meeting the Media.
- On 4 June 2022, INEC organized Capacity Building/Training for Journalists on Constitutional and Legal Issues with Special Emphasis on Electoral Act, 2022.
- On 14 June 2022, INEC organized a consultative meeting with election stakeholders.
- On 14 June 2022, INEC met with officials of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) to discuss logistics for the election.
- On 15 June 2022, INEC organized a Peace Accord signing with the candidates and parties under the auspices of the National Peace Committee.

6. Other Activities

On the Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the Ekiti state elections, some of the other activities of the Commission include publishing notice of elections, the final list of candidates, election and party monitoring, accreditation of journalists and election observers, registration of party agents, and recruitment and training of ad hoc staff. All of these processes except training of ad-hoc staff have been moved online through the use of dedicated portals.

Election Observers

As noted in other PCAs of The Electoral Hub, electoral observation is an integral part of democratic and electoral processes. Election observation adds to the credibility of the election and by extension the electoral process. Election observation deters fraud and identifies the irregularities in the elections among others. Allowing observers in an election is an indication that the Election Management Body is willing to conduct credible elections. It is also one of the easiest ways to gather credible data from an election[137]. Observers play important roles in enhancing the transparency and credibility of elections and, in the acceptance of election results.[138] Furthermore, the acceptance of observers is evidence of the openness of the electoral process. Observers' election assessment also legitimises elected administration.

INEC approved 79 domestic observer groups and 8 international observer groups for the governorship election in Ekiti[139].

The international observers are:

1. British High Commission
2. Canadian Embassy
3. Embassy of the United States of America
4. European Union
5. International Foundation for Electoral Systems
6. National Democratic Institute
7. International Republican Institute
8. Pan African Women Project

The Domestic Observers accredited by INEC are:

1. Action Aid
2. Advocacy for Quality Leadership and Health Awareness Foundation
3. Advocate for People's Right and Justice
4. Africa for Millennium Change Initiative
5. Akai for Youth Sustainable Development Foundation
6. Association of Technology Inclined Visually Impaired Persons of Nigeria
7. Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria

[137] https://openelectiondata.net/en/guide/electoral-integrity/election-observation/
[138] African Union. (2013). *Election Observation Manual*. https://www.eisa.org.za/pdf/au2014EOMmanual.pdf
[139] https://inecnigeria.org/list-of-accredited-observers-for-2022-ekiti-and-osun-governorship-elections-scheduled-for-june-18th-2022-and-july-16th-2022-respectively/

8. Centre for Credible Leadership & Citizens Awareness
9. Centre for Grassroots Development and Crime Prevention
10. Centre for Positive Change and Civic Responsibility
11. Centre for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD)
12. Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)
13. Centre for Strategic Conflict Management (CSCM)
14. Centre for Strategy, Ethics & Value
15. Centre for Transparency Advocacy
16. Citizen's Right for Peace and Non-Violence Initiative
17. Citizens Rights and Leadership Awareness Initiative
18. Citizens Rights for Peace and Good Leadership Initiative
19. Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR)
20. Conscience Women of Africa Initiative
21. Diaspora Advocacy for A New Dawn Initiative in Nigeria
22. Gender Concerns Awareness Initiative
23. Global Development Centre for Rescue Mission in Nigeria
24. Global Hope and Justice for the Less privileged
25. Global Policy Advocacy and Leadership Initiative
26. Grassroot Development and Peace Initiative
27. Grassroot Development Centre for Peace and Social Justice
28. Grassroot Empowerment Initiative for Positive Change and Development
29. Human Rights Monitor
30. Ilimu Wal Hikmah Islamic Foundation
31. Initiative for Promotion of Civic Obligation and Sustainable Peace
32. Initiative for the Promotion of Women Development
33. Initiative for the Youth Transformation & Positive Change
34. Inspire Nigerian Youth Initiative for Peace and Empowerment
35. Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution
36. Intercontinental Leadership Initiative
37. International Organization for Sustainable Development
38. Justice Development and Peace Commission (Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria)
39. Justice, Development and Peace Makers' Centre
40. Kimpact Youth Development Initiative
41. Lotus Initiative for the Blind
42. National Committee of Patriots (NCOP)
43. National Council for Women Societies Nigeria
44. National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies, National Assembly

45. National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies
46. National Orientation Agency
47. New Dawn for Development Initiatives
48. Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre- PLAC)
49. Nigerian Bar Association
50. Nigerian Women Trust Fund
51. Northern Patriotic Front
52. Organization of Justice for Equity Sustenance
53. Patriotic Women Foundation
54. Police Service Commission
55. Polling Unit Ambassadors of Nigeria
56. Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism
57. Project Victory Call Initiative
58. Public Complaints Commission
59. Rosxy White Care Foundation
60. Savera Africa
61. Support Center for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of Nigeria
62. The Adaobi Enemuoh Initiative for Development
63. The Albino Foundation
64. The Inclusive Friends Association
65. The African Centre for Human Advancement, Social and Community Development
66. United Nigeria Peace Foundation
67. Vote Count Campaign Organization
68. Waterlight Save Initiative
69. Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre
70. Women and Youth Pathfinders Initiative
71. Women Arise for Change Initiative
72. Women Education Advocacy and Development Initiatives (WEADI)
73. Women with Disabilities of Nigeria Support Foundation
74. Women Right and Peace Protection Initiative for Africa
75. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Nigeria
76. Womenfest for Betterlife Living Initiative
77. Yiaga Africa Institute
78. Your Vote is Your Voice Africa Initiative
79. Youth Initiative for Better and Great Nigeria

Reports from observer groups are usually viewed as credible records of the conduct of elections.

Conclusion

From observations of the current dynamics in Ekiti State, it can be inferred that:

a. Election planning and logistics must take into consideration the hilly topography of Ekiti State and the ways it could affect the movement and deployment of election officials, distribution of election materials, and movement of materials and personnel.

b. Current collapsing national electricity grids and acute electricity shortage, fuel scarcity, as well as protracted Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike, might have an impact on logistics and deployment on election day. ASUU strike could create Ad-hoc personnel shortage, particularly at the level of collation officers.

c. Intra-party conflicts, rivalry and crises within the ruling party APC and main opposition party PDP. Post-primary grievances have resulted in inter-party defections and realignments with SDP being the greatest beneficiary. This might give SDP better showing in the election.

d. There is a real risk that COVID-19 protocols will not be followed on election day

e. Fear of voter apathy especially with the recent terrorist attacks in Kogi and Ondo States.

f. There is a poor level of women, youth, and PWD representation among the candidates, but women's deputy governorship representation is impressive.

g. There is hope that both the domestic and foreign CSOs and observers, will help ensure the credibility and integrity of the election.

h. High concerns about voter inducement by major candidates and parties. Voters are already being induced via the campaign of '***dibo ko sebe'***, vote and cook soup

i. While INEC can be commended for innovations, including in expanding access to PUs, these new polling units could be under-utilized by the public in Ekiti just as was observed during the FCT and Anambra elections.

Furthermore, given that this is the first election to be conducted since the new Electoral Act 2022 was passed into law. Some of the innovations to look out for in relation to implementation should include:

1. **Transmission of results**: Whether transmission of results will be done electronically and what methods would be used in line with provisions of Section 50 that allow INEC to determine the mode of results transmission. Are we going to see results in Excel formats etc.?

2. **Overvoting**: Section 51 redefinition and clarification on overvoting to focus on the number of accredited voters and not the number in the register of voters. How will this be done by the presiding officers taking into consideration issues of adequate training and knowledge about this Section

3. **Inclusion of PWD:** Section 54(2) compels INEC to provide assistive devices to PWDs at the polling units. How well will poll officials comply with this requirement? Particularly looking at issues of competence of poll officials

4. **Powers to Review Results Declared Under Duress:** Section 65 provides for a seven days duration for INEC review of declaration and return made involuntarily and contrary to the law. Desperate politicians may try to manipulate the result collation process by compelling a false declaration at the different collation points. It is therefore important to watch out for this.

5. **Result Visualisation Portal**: The new Electoral Act empowers INEC to deploy technologies and innovations in the electoral process. How will INEC utilise the new Act in relation to the existing INEC result-visualisation portal? How will it play out?

6. **Electoral Offences and Offenders**: In line with the new legal provisions, do INEC have a developed plan/strategy for preventing electoral offences? Will INEC prosecute more election offenders than before? What are some of the methods INEC seeks to explore to make this possible?



CONTACT

8A Remilekun Street, Kukwaba, Abuja, Nigeria
Phone: +234 912 155 1337 and +234 908 699 8850
Email: @electoralhub@gmail.com
Social Media Channel
Twitter/ Instagram: @electoralhub Facebook: @electoralhubng
Websites: https://electoralhub.iriad.org