



RELEASE DATE  
**JUNE 2026**

# ELECTORAL VULNERABILITY INDEX 2026-2027

## COUNTRY ANALYSIS

# NIGERIA

EVI RISK INDEX: 52.6 | PREDICTED PROBABILITY OF ANY ELECTORAL VIOLENCE: 91.9%  
REGIONAL RISK INDEX BASELINE (SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, EXCL. COUNTRY): 51.1

## GENERAL ELECTIONS: EXPECTED IN 2027

### BACKGROUND

Nigeria's EVI Risk Index of 52.6 places it close to the country-excluded Sub-Saharan African Risk Index baseline, while the absolute probability of any electoral violence remains high. This reflects Nigeria's scale, federal complexity, intense party competition, insecurity in several regions and a long pattern of localized violence around elections. Nigeria has repeatedly demonstrated administrative capacity to hold nationwide elections, yet each cycle exposes weaknesses in security coordination, trust in technology, vote buying, litigation and acceptance of results.

The 2023 general elections produced a contested victory for Bola Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress. Opposition candidates challenged the outcome, and public debate focused on the transmission of results, allegations of voter suppression, low turnout, and the credibility of the Independent National Electoral Commission. Although the post-election period did not produce a nationwide breakdown, institutional trust was damaged.

Security conditions vary sharply across the federation. The north-east remains affected by jihadist violence, the north-west by banditry and kidnapping, the Middle Belt by farmer-herder and communal conflict, and parts of the south-east by separatist-related insecurity.



Election periods can intensify these conflicts because parties rely on local power brokers, security agencies face simultaneous demands, and communities may interpret electoral outcomes through ethnic, religious or regional lenses.

Economic grievances also matter. Inflation, unemployment, currency pressures and subsidy reforms have increased public dissatisfaction. In a competitive campaign, socioeconomic anger can be mobilized by parties or become a source of protest if voters perceive that elections do not offer accountability.

The federal character of Nigeria's politics also means that national risk is the aggregation of many local contests. A peaceful presidential campaign can coexist with intense violence in selected states. At the same time, localized disputes can affect national legitimacy if they occur in strategic swing areas or suppress turnout among particular communities. This makes granular early warning especially important.

## UPCOMING ELECTIONS

Nigeria's next general elections are expected in early 2027, with public reporting indicating a January presidential and National Assembly election, followed by state-level contests. The official timetable should nevertheless be treated as the authoritative reference once finalized by INEC. The president is elected by plurality plus geographic distribution requirements: a candidate must win the highest number of votes and at least 25 percent of the votes in two-thirds of the states and the Federal Capital Territory. If no candidate meets the constitutional threshold, a runoff is required. INEC's official timetable should remain the controlling reference once published, and all external analysis should avoid treating preliminary public reporting as definitive.

The main national parties are expected to include the APC, the People's Democratic Party, Labour Party formations, and possible opposition alliances or new vehicles. President Tinubu's re-election bid will shape the campaign. Peter Obi's renewed candidacy and the positioning of other opposition figures suggest a potentially fragmented field unless coordination among the opposition improves. If the opposition fragments, the ruling party may benefit; if it consolidates, competition could sharpen and increase the stakes of primaries, alliances and collation.

Opposition fragmentation is a central political driver. A divided field could lower the risk of a single national confrontation while strengthening the incumbent's advantage; a coordinated opposition could increase competitiveness and raise the stakes of primaries, coalition negotiations, result collation and post-election litigation.

INEC's operational credibility will be central. The 2023 cycle raised expectations around electronic accreditation, the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System and electronic result viewing. Any perceived retreat from transparency, technical failure or inconsistent communication could trigger disputes. Voter registration, polling-unit logistics, ad hoc staff training, security deployment and collation transparency should be treated as conflict-prevention priorities.

The most sensitive moments are likely to be party primaries, candidate selection, voter registration disputes, election day in high-risk local government areas, and the collation period. Governorship and state assembly contests may produce more localized violence than the presidential race because they directly affect control over patronage, security relationships and local political machines.

Party primaries may be a major early trigger. In Nigeria, nomination disputes often produce defections, litigation and localized violence before the official campaign begins. Monitoring should therefore start well before the publication of final candidate lists, particularly in states where incumbent governors, senators or party godfathers compete for control of tickets.

## POTENTIAL DRIVERS OF CONFLICT

**According to the Electoral Vulnerability Index (EVI), these are the factors that contribute most to the increased potential for violence:**

**Localized armed and political violence:** Electoral competition can interact with existing insecurity. Politicians may mobilize armed groups or local gangs, while insurgent and criminal actors may attack polling stations or discourage turnout in areas where state presence is weak.

## POTENTIAL DRIVERS OF CONFLICT, CONT.

**Trust in electoral technology and collation:** Disputes over electronic transmission, accreditation or result upload could become national triggers. Confusion during the collation phase is particularly dangerous because it creates space for rumor and mobilization.

**Vote buying and coercion:** Poverty and patronage make vote buying a persistent risk. Where parties believe that competitors are buying votes or intimidating communities, retaliatory violence can follow.

**Identity and regional narratives:** Campaign rhetoric that frames the election as ethnic, religious or regional survival could heighten tensions. These narratives can be amplified online and become especially inflammatory in mixed communities or disputed states.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BODY)

- INEC should publish a detailed operational roadmap, strengthen communication on technology, and provide timely data on voter registration, polling units and result-management procedures. Transparency before the vote is essential to reduce suspicion during collation.

### SECURITY AGENCIES

- Security planning should be risk-based and coordinated with civil society early-warning networks. Rules of engagement should emphasize neutrality, proportionality and protection of voters, not crowd suppression.

### POLITICAL PARTIES

- Parties should commit to enforceable codes of conduct covering primaries, campaign rhetoric, vote buying and use of youth groups. Candidate selection disputes should be mediated before they generate local violence.

### NATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA

- Civil society and media should support voter education on result procedures, counter disinformation and monitor local incidents. Particular attention should be given to states with prior histories of election-day violence.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Independent National Electoral Commission; Constitution of Nigeria; Nigeria Electoral Act; CLEEN Foundation; Yiaga Africa; ACLED; International Crisis Group; Freedom House; V-Dem country data; Reuters; Associated Press.