

2020



# **COVID-19 AND ELECTIONS: MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON POLITICAL PARTIES' ACTIVITIES AND THE INTEGRITY OF ELECTIONS**

ELECTORAL HUB TECHNICAL BRIEF 3/2020

## INTRODUCTION

Today, as COVID-19 is spreading rapidly across the globe, it constitutes the most urgent and serious challenge to both the health of humanity and democratic institutions. Election stakeholders all over the world are pondering how to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, and how to address some of the risks associated with organizing elections during the pandemic. This is because the risks that COVID-19 pandemic poses to voters and election workers are overwhelming if the traditional electoral processes are still followed. Elections are considered as super spreaders events that can fuel the pandemic. For some countries, drastic actions had to be taken such as postponing scheduled elections, while few countries braved the odds and proceeded with theirs. Between February and May, about sixty-two countries and territories have postponed elections and referendums due to the COVID-19 pandemic, among which are ten African countries<sup>1</sup>.

Beyond the concerns for the logistics involved in conducting elections during a pandemic, countries are worried about the numerous implications to public health, electoral system, electorates participation, and even its democracy. Periodic elections certainly are one of the important foundations of institutional democracy. They are also the means through which political leaders and representatives emerge<sup>2</sup>. Without a doubt then, political parties, as the major participants in elections, would be seriously affected by the changes caused by the pandemic<sup>3</sup>. From political campaigns to political mobilizations, political meetings to party nominations, political parties would have sought alternative ways to engage with members and implement its activities. Numerous experts have suggested that countries should not necessarily pick the option of postponing their elections unless it is far riskier to go ahead with same<sup>4</sup>. This suggestion would be apt for the Nigerian situation, where all the relevant election and health stakeholders can work together towards ensuring credible elections during this period without putting the political class, poll workers and voters in any form of risk.

In this technical brief, the Electoral Hub would be evaluating the effects and implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on Nigerian political parties – particularly with regards to the forthcoming Edo and Ondo governorship elections. While there have recently been several writings on the predictable effects of the pandemic on voters and the Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), only a few have extensively discussed the role that the political parties could play during this period. It is therefore imperative that political parties should not just be bystanders in the process of reviewing the electoral process, but they should initiate actions that can benefit the political and electoral system.

## POLITICAL PARTY SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

The party system in Nigeria is based on the provisions of the 1999 Constitution (as amended)<sup>5</sup> and the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended)<sup>6</sup>. There is no other separate Act on political parties in Nigeria like other common law or commonwealth countries. The system can be best described as a “multi-party system” where the number of parties allowed to participate in the electoral process is not limited. However, one can say that the regulation of the registration and operations of political parties is somewhat prescriptive. This is because the 1999 Constitution (as amended) stipulates stringent conditions for an association or group to qualify as a political party. In 2002, the Supreme Court ruled in the famous case of *INEC v. Musa*<sup>7</sup>, that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) could not impose additional requirements to the provisions of the constitution and that once an association meets the basic requirements of the constitution, such association must not be denied registration.

Primarily, Section 40 of the Constitution ensures the freedom of foundation of and the right of membership in any political party. This right is subject to a constitutional barrier as well as a legal reservation and is limited to lawful parties, according to the Constitution. The requirements for political parties as well as their function are stipulated in detail under Sections 221 to 229. According to Section 229, a political party is “any association whose activities include canvassing for votes in support of a candidate for election to the office of President, Vice-President, Governor, Deputy Governor or membership of a legislative house or a local government council”. Curiously, this very narrow definition reduces the essence of political parties to just canvassing for votes. Whereas political parties are platforms for various divergent activities and objectives. Also, party affiliation is the prerequisite for all candidates wanting to participate in elections<sup>8</sup>. Hence, “independent candidates” are not allowed under the Nigerian electoral system.

Furthermore, Section 80 of the Electoral Act provides that an association must be registered as a corporate body before it can register as a political party. They must be registered with their unique symbols or emblems<sup>9</sup>. These symbols should not be offensive or objectionable. The Symbols would be used by INEC on ballot papers or other information for the particular political party<sup>10</sup>.

For an association to be registered as a political party, its headquarters must be in the capital city of Abuja according to Section 222(f) and the names and addresses of national officials<sup>11</sup> as well as a copy of the constitution of the party must be registered with INEC. Goals and programmes of the party should follow Chapter II of the Constitution<sup>12</sup> – which

places a lot of obligation on the State (i.e. government) to provide for the welfare of citizens. This makes almost all political parties in Nigeria have social democratic manifestoes. Thus, these party manifestos elicit little interest or debate because the parties simply provide them to satisfy a constitutional obligation. Furthermore, political parties are to be democratically organized and must represent within its Executive Board or any other body the “Federal character” of Nigeria<sup>13</sup>.

Parties are subject to the control of the INEC according to Sections 225 and 226 and are accountable to it, especially concerning income and expenses. Regulations regarding the funding of parties can be found in the Constitution<sup>14</sup> and the Electoral Act<sup>15</sup>. Every party must submit an annual detailed report to the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) regarding the sources of their assets and their analysis together with a statement of expenditure<sup>16</sup>. Section 89 of the Electoral Act expands on this and requires a statement of liabilities.<sup>17</sup> According to Section 225(3) of the Constitution, parties may not own or maintain funds or other assets outside of Nigeria neither can they refund such assets. Also, Section 225(4) provides that all monies or other assets which the party receives from outside of Nigeria must be paid or transferred to INEC within 21 days. Foreign funding is therefore not allowed.

Private funding to a party is done through monetary or assets donations, either by an individual or a group of persons. Such is bound by the limitations imposed by the Commission as prescribed under section 90 of the Electoral Act.<sup>18</sup> According to section 93(1) of the Electoral Act, parties may neither accept nor own anonymous monetary donations or other contributions, gifts, or other assets from any source. According to section 93(3), no monetary donation or other donation of more than NGN100,000.00 may be accepted, unless the party can disclose the origin of the donation to the Commission.

Aside from registration of political parties, the Fourth Alteration to the Constitution<sup>19</sup> empowers the Commission to deregister political parties. Before the Fourth Alteration, the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) had provided for the de-registration of political parties. Based on this provision, the Commission, between 2011 and 2013, deregistered 39 political parties<sup>20</sup>. However, several of the parties challenged the power of INEC to deregister them, particularly on the ground that the Electoral Act was inferior to the Constitution and that deregistration infringed on their fundamental rights under the same Constitution. Subsequently, the courts ordered the Commission to reinstate the parties<sup>21</sup>. For this reason, the National Assembly amended the Constitution to allow the Commission to de-register political parties for the following purposes<sup>22</sup>, as provided for in Section 225A:

1. Breach of any of the requirements for registration as a political party.

2. Failure to win at least 25% of the votes cast in one State of the Federation in a Presidential election or 25% of the votes cast in one Local Government Area of a State in a Governorship election.
3. Failure to win at least one ward in a Chairmanship election, one seat in the National or State Assembly election or one seat in a Councillorship election

On February 6, 2020, INEC de-registered 74 political parties for failure to meet constitutional requirements that determine the continuous existence of political parties in Nigeria, as provided by section 225A of the Constitution<sup>23</sup>. The affected parties objected to the new de-registration order and approach the Federal High Courts for intervention<sup>24</sup>. In recent days, the courts have dismissed all suits filed against INEC challenging the Commission's power to deregister parties that failed to meet the threshold of Section 255A of the constitution<sup>25</sup>. Thereby, reaffirming the position of the Constitution and the powers of INEC. Nigeria had 90 political parties before the de-registration of the 74 parties – which reduced the total number of political parties to 16.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON POLITICAL PARTIES ACTIVITIES IN EDO AND ONDO STATES GOVERNORSHIP ELECTIONS

In a functional democracy, political parties play complementary roles with voters – in that when political parties contest elections, they allow citizens to have a choice in governance<sup>26</sup>. They can also act as opposition, holding the government accountable for policies and governance. Political parties also contribute to ensuring electoral integrity by engaging in voters' education campaign to raise the consciousness of voters of the key issues ahead of any election, thereby ensuring voter turnout. While most of the activities of political parties are left to the internal machinations of the individual group, the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) provides guidelines to some of the key activities such as nomination process<sup>27</sup>, election campaigns<sup>28</sup>, campaign finance<sup>29</sup> and accreditation of party agents for the polls<sup>30</sup>. Now there are 18 registered political parties in Nigeria after de-registration of 74 political parties by INEC on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020<sup>31</sup>.

Ahead of the off-cycle governorship elections in Edo and Ondo States, INEC released the Timetable and Schedule of activities for the elections on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020<sup>32</sup>. Subsequently, in a statement<sup>33</sup> issued on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, the Commission suspended regular activities in its offices and meetings with stakeholders as well as its monitoring of political parties activities such as congresses as provided by law as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, pending when it becomes safe to resume such activities. While the rate of spread of the coronavirus has been on the increase in Nigeria, the rate of spread of the virus in the Edo and Ondo states have been on the low side according to current statistics by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). Whereas Edo state has a total number of 336 active cases, Ondo state has only 12 cases<sup>34</sup>. Both State Governors have adopted the Quarantine Regulations 2020 of the Federal Government, especially on the issue of social gatherings and restrictions of inter-state movements, and this we believe, has contributed to the reduced rate of infections. INEC has stated that unless there is an escalation of the spread of the virus, there would be no need for postponement of the elections.

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic will have a unique and unprecedented impact on the pre-election and election day activities of political parties in Nigeria, particularly as they prepare for the forthcoming governorship elections. Some of the activities that may be affected include the political party primaries and nomination process, political campaigns and voters' mobilization as well as party activities on the Election Day. These areas shall be examined in-depth in the following sections.

## POLITICAL PARTY PRIMARIES AND NOMINATION

On the Timetable and schedule of activities for the Edo and Ondo governorship elections, Political parties will be involved in two main activities before Election Day. These are the nomination of candidates for elections, and political campaigns. Other activities include submission of list of Party agents. Additionally, with the Edo and Ondo elections slated for 19<sup>th</sup> September and 10<sup>th</sup> October 2020 respectively, activities for the Edo election were to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 with the Notice of Election issued and political party primaries scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> June 2020. For the Ondo election, the Notice is to be issued on 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2020 and political parties' primaries slated for 2<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> July 2020. The last day for submission of candidates for elections for Edo and Ondo is 29<sup>th</sup> June and 28<sup>th</sup> July, respectively.

During primary elections, party members gather to cast their votes whether directly or indirectly through selected delegates<sup>35</sup>. The Electoral Act outlines the procedures for the conduct of primary elections and submission of the nominated candidates afterwards<sup>36</sup>. The primaries could either be “indirect”<sup>37</sup> or “direct”<sup>38</sup>. While the Act does not mandate any particular format to be adopted, it however, provides that parties must follow their internal guidelines and notify INEC of the proposed date of the primary. Additionally, political parties have to comply with the extant provisions of the Quarantine Regulations 2020 when conducting their respective primary elections. They are expected to ensure that the primaries do not violate the social distancing protocols as well as other public health requirements. This would pose great financial and logistical costs to political parties. While the traditional bigger parties may not have problems with the increased financial outlay, the smaller parties would be greatly disadvantaged.

Furthermore, there is the consequential risk of parties devising prejudicial nomination procedures that could shut out or alienate members of the parties from properly participating in the primaries. This could result in unbridled rancour during the primaries, heating up of the state polity and even increased political violence. Over the years, we have witnessed incessant acrimonious political primaries and the pandemic might further intensify the volatile internal party democracy.

Also, the question of enforcement of the provisions of the Quarantine Act and its 2020 Regulations would be put to the test during primaries. Issues such as how the regulations are enforced on political parties would need to be evaluated. Which person or persons would be liable to a breach of the provisions – would it be the National Working Committee

of the parties, the State Chapters leadership or the persons who individually default at the primaries? In all, the enforcement of the Quarantine Act and its 2020 Regulations may become very problematic if the conflagrating ambiguities are not sorted by the appropriate authorities.

In its recent policy for conducting elections during a pandemic, INEC has provided an alternative means of submission of nomination – which would be done through online submissions<sup>39</sup>. This is a positive step by the commission. With this, it is left for Political parties to decide on safe, affordable methods of conducting primary elections while minimizing the risk of COVID-19 spread to its members and the general public.

## POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS AND VOTER MOBILIZATION

Campaigns are important pre-election activities. Campaigns are the means through which the candidates and political parties present their manifestoes and garner support and votes<sup>40</sup>. For the Edo and Ondo elections, public campaigns are to commence on 21<sup>st</sup> June and 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020 respectively – which is the statutory 90-day period before the day of the election<sup>41</sup> – and end 24 hours prior to the Election Day. Usually, public rallies and town hall meetings are the methods used by political parties and their candidates to pitch their campaign policies and promises. However, this would be untenable as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Political parties will need to consider new methods of campaigning to attract potential voters before the Election Day, particularly with the restrictions to large gatherings placed by both the Federal and States governments. This would involve increased spending on traditional and new media, as seen in other jurisdictions that have held elections in this coronavirus pandemic. With the very tight campaign expenses limit set by the Electoral Act – which is pegged at Two Hundred Million Naira<sup>42</sup> - it would be very tough, if not impossible, for political parties and candidates to legally manage their expenses within the stated amount. This brings up another issue of concern: the monitoring and enforcement of campaign finance provisions by INEC. Ever since the enactment of the first Electoral Act in 2006, one of the weakest areas of election administration by INEC has been campaign finance monitoring<sup>43</sup>. With the potential re-direction of campaign expenses to new media, it would be very difficult for INEC to follow up on parties' expenses due to some of the commission's obvious internal impediments.

While the Electoral Act enjoins equitable distribution or allocation of public traditional and electronic media<sup>44</sup>, the ruling parties in the respective states still dominate the media platforms. Unlike states like Lagos or Rivers where private media have a larger reach than state-run outlets, the media in Edo and Ondo are basically under the indirect control or influence of the state government. There is the fear that the ruling party may try to sabotage the message or campaign of other competing parties. With observers, domestic and international, noting the regulatory weaknesses of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) in enforcing the equity rules on media in past elections, the media platforms may be used to serve only the interests of the governor in power.

The social media platforms and messaging applications such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp etc. would play bigger roles in the forthcoming governorship elections as

political parties seek to pitch their message or campaign promises to the electorate. Aside from the general provision of the Electoral Act prohibiting hate messages while campaigning, no guidelines are regulating the posting of election or campaign related information on these social media platforms. Like the 2019 general elections, misinformation, false partisan information, and online attacks would be the order of the day.

## ELECTION DAY

Unless the National Assembly amends the Electoral Act 2010 before the elections, voting would be done manually using ballot papers which are then deposited in ballot boxes. With a pandemic, this method can increase the risk of infections to voters, party agents and poll officials. All major stakeholders, including political parties, are quite aware of these dangers to the voting and are expected to ensure that their activities should encourage safe participation of voters during the elections. In a recent survey conducted in Edo and Ondo States conducted by Kimpact Development<sup>45</sup>, majority of likely voters stated that they would vote if they are confident preventive measures are being put in place by the government for the elections. The survey explicitly showed that there is still great enthusiasm amongst voters to turn out for the elections if they know they would be safe while performing their constitutional duties. Political parties should, therefore, be in the frontline advocating for safer alternative voting methods such as early voting, online voting or staggered voting.

The INEC policy on the conduct of elections during COVID-19 pandemic is one of the first steps towards ensuring safe elections through the incorporation of mandatory public health practices and safety protocols in dealing with both political parties and the electorate. More detailed guidelines on the various aspects of the election stages would be issued by INEC in the following months and it is hoped that political parties would be fully engaged in the process. Just like INEC, political parties also have the onerous duties of educating their supporters and party workers on the safety guidelines and voting procedures that may be adopted ahead of the elections.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This section highlights areas of the electoral process which the Electoral Hub believes deserve the highest priority and consideration by political parties to support all other efforts at promoting the integrity and credibility of the electoral process. These recommendations are for all political institutions and agents under the political party system particularly the parties themselves and candidates. The recommendations cover political party primaries and nominations; political campaigns; voter education and mobilization; and Election Day.

S/N	THEME	RECOMMENDATIONS
1	<b>Political Party Primaries and Nominations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Make use of indirect primaries instead of direct primaries to reduce the number of persons that would vote at the primaries.</li> <li>b. Adopt all COVID-19 safety protocols as issued by the Federal Government, State Government, NCDC and WHO in all party activities</li> <li>c. Institute compulsory use of Face masks and provision of handwashing facilities as well as sanitizers at all party buildings or facilities.</li> <li>d. Use of online platform to disseminate the activities of the parties during the primaries to encourage transparency.</li> <li>e. Consider adopting electronic or remote voting for the primary election.</li> <li>f. Party Poll officials should be provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during primaries if physical voting is adopted.</li> </ul>

		g. Provide PPE for delegates who are unable to make use of the non-physical ballot papers/electronic voting
<b>2</b>	<b>Political Campaigns</b>	<p>a. Use of radio jingles in official and local languages to reach voters in rural localities or areas without access to television sets.</p> <p>b. Use of jingles on TV and social media in official and local languages to disseminate campaign messages and other election information.</p> <p>c. Build and Deploy temporary billboard structures, with the approval of the relevant agency, to display campaign messages and other election information</p> <p>d. Invest resources in modern technologies for political campaigning on different electronic and social media platforms.</p> <p>e. The door-to-door campaign should be minimized, and use of posters placed around strategic points maximized. Where sharing of campaign bulletins, flyers or documents is necessary, party activists or volunteers must be provided with protective gears.</p> <p>f. While campaigning, political parties and candidates must make use of those platforms to sensitize voters on the need to adhere to the new guideline for conducting elections as provided by INEC.</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>Voter Education and Mobilization</b>	a. Political parties should aggressively engage in disseminating safety information about COVID-19 and providing valuable resources and information to electorates. One of the ways that this could be done is for parties to integrate public health and safety information into their campaign posters or flyers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Political parties should use the numerous e-learning platforms to continue their mobilization and education of the electorate. In this context, they should collaborate with other stakeholders, especially CSOs, on ways to integrate information on election issues and information on public health. This ensures that the party members and supporters know how to participate in the elections and remain safe.</li> <li>c. Political parties should open dedicated or specialized groups on any of the online messaging apps such as WhatsApp or Telegram for the purpose of disseminating important campaign, election-related or public health messages.</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Election Day</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Political parties should provide protective gears for all agents at all polling units and collation centres.</li> <li>b. Parties, in collaboration with the relevant agencies, should conduct public health and safety training for its staff and party agents that would be assigned for Election Day duties.</li> <li>c. The Political Parties may consider providing protective gears or safety materials to supporters to enable them to vote on Election Day, particularly the elderly who are at greater risk of contracting COVID-19.</li> <li>d. Liaise with INEC to increase the period of polling on Election Day. With all the precautions being taken for safe voting on Election Day, accreditation and voting may take longer hours as a result of the processes. Increase voting time would prevent eligible voters from being disenfranchised.</li> </ul>

## CONCLUSION

The goal ahead of the governorship elections should not be the singular conduct of safe elections; this pandemic should serve as a basis for structural and institutional improvements in electoral and democratic practices in Nigeria. While it is evident that the path to Election Day may be a difficult one for political parties since there has never been elections conducted during a pandemic. It, therefore, behooves the parties to effectively and efficiently manage their affairs in line with the existing laws and international best practices. In the preceding headings, we have noted the challenges that the COVID-19 poses to party activities and the attendant consequences to the elections. We have also presented some recommended changes that can be introduced by parties that can reduce the risks while still encouraging the enough participation of its members and electorate in the election activities. The crucial responsibility lies with the political parties in ensuring that the credibility and integrity of the electoral process are not undermined. Also, aside the recommendations proffered, political parties must find effective ways to carry out their activities without compromising the provisions of the law and risking the public health of citizens. The conduct of political parties and candidates will be therefore, a determinant of the integrity and credibility of the elections.

The Electoral Hub strongly believes the current challenges posed by COVID-19 to our electoral system are temporary. If political parties make concerted efforts with determination and take forward a science-based and targeted approach in their activities, it will help improve both our democracy and the electoral process. Political parties taking up this responsibility and supporting the efforts of other electoral stakeholders will not only strengthen the party system in Nigeria, it will also go a long way to making the electoral process and our democracy emerge stronger and more inclusive after the pandemic.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). “Global Overview of COVID-19: Impact on Elections.” International IDEA. Accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.idea.int/news-media/multimedia-reports/global-overview-covid-19-impact-elections>

<sup>2</sup> Ruchan Kaya and Michael Bernhard, “Are Elections Mechanisms of Authoritarian Stability or Democratization? Evidence from Postcommunist Eurasia,” *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 3 (2013): 734–752, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43279644>.

<sup>3</sup> Katherine Barbieri, “COVID-19 Impact: How the Pandemic Is Affecting Politics,” University of South Carolina, April 14, 2020, <https://www.sc.edu/uofsc/posts/2020/04/covid-impact-on-politics-barbieri.php#.XuIP1tVKjIV>.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Banbury, “Opinion: Elections and COVID-19 — What We Learned from Ebola,” Devex, April 8, 2020, <https://www.devex.com/news/opinion-elections-and-covid-19-what-we-learned-from-ebola-96903>; Thijs Berman, “Solving the Corona Crisis: Respect for Democracy Is the Key,” Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), May 18, 2020, <https://nimd.org/solving-the-corona-crisis-respect-for-democracy-is-the-key/>.

<sup>5</sup> Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999; last amended by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Fourth Alteration) Act, 2010 “CFRN 1999”

<sup>6</sup> Electoral Act, 2010; last amended by the Electoral (Amendment) Act, 2015

<sup>7</sup> Case Number: SC.228/2002, reported in law reports as INEC & Anor v. Balarabe Musa & Ors (2002) 3 NWLR (Pt 806) 72

<sup>8</sup> Sections 65, 106, 131, and 177, CFRN 1999

<sup>9</sup> Section 82(2), Electoral Act

<sup>10</sup> Section 83, Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Section 222(a), CFRN 1999

<sup>12</sup> Section 224, Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Section 223(1), Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Sections 225 and 228, Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Sections 88-93, Electoral Act

<sup>16</sup> Section 225(2), CFRN 1999

<sup>17</sup> Similar requirements in section 89(2) of the Electoral Act.

<sup>18</sup> Section 90, Electoral Act

<sup>19</sup> Section 225A, CFRN 1999

<sup>20</sup> Ogala Emmanuel, “INEC Deregisters 28 Political Parties, Okotie, Balarabe Musa Affected,” *Premium Times Nigeria*, December 6, 2012, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/110165-inec-deregisters-28-political-parties-okotie-balarabe-musa-affected.html>.

<sup>21</sup> *Hope Democratic Party v. INEC*. Case Number: SC.251/2007 reported in (2009) LCN/3716(SC)

<sup>22</sup> James Kwen, “Factsheet: Real Reasons INEC de-Registered 74 Political Parties,” *BusinessDay NG*, February 16, 2020, <https://businessday.ng/politics/article/factsheet-real-reasons-inec-de-registered-74-political-parties/>

<sup>23</sup> Omeiza Ajayi, “INEC Deregisters 74 Political Parties over Non-Performance in Elections,” Vanguard News, February 6, 2020, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/02/full-list-of-the-74-parties-deregistered-by-inec/>.

- 
- <sup>24</sup> Adamu Abu et al., “NCP, Others Kick as INEC Deregisters 74 Political Parties,” *The Guardian Nigeria News*, February 7, 2020, <https://guardian.ng/news/ncp-others-kick-as-inec-deregisters-74-political-parties/>.
- <sup>25</sup> Dennis Erezi, “Court Dismisses Suit Challenging Deregistration of 32 Political Parties,” *The Guardian Nigeria News*, June 11, 2020, <https://guardian.ng/news/court-dismisses-suit-challenging-deregistration-of-32-political-parties/>.
- <sup>26</sup> National Democratic Institute, “Political Parties,” National Democratic Institute, August 4, 2016, <https://www.ndi.org/what-we-do/political-parties>.
- <sup>27</sup> Section 87, Electoral Act
- <sup>28</sup> Sections 94-96 and 100-102.
- <sup>29</sup> Sections 90-93
- <sup>30</sup> Section 45
- <sup>31</sup> Abdur Rahman Alfa Shaban, “Nigeria Officially Has 18 Political Parties as Election Body De-Registers 75,” *AfricaNews*, February 6, 2020, <https://www.africanews.com/2020/02/06/nigeria-officially-has-18-political-parties-as-election-body-de-registers-75//>.
- <sup>32</sup> INEC Timetable for Edo and Ondo Governorship Elections, 2020 - <https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Edo-State-Timetable-for-Governorship-Election-2020-1.pdf> and <https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Ondo-State-Timetable-for-Governorship-Election-2020.pdf>
- <sup>33</sup> Kunle Sanni, “Coronavirus: INEC Suspends Activities across Nigeria,” *Premium Times Nigeria*, March 23, 2020, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/383417-coronavirus-inec-suspends-activities-across-nigeria-coronavirus.html>.
- <sup>34</sup> Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, “NCDC Coronavirus COVID-19 Microsite,” Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, June 11, 2020, <https://covid19.ncdc.gov.ng/>. (The Covid-19 situation as at June 10, 2020);
- <sup>35</sup> Section 87, Electoral Act
- <sup>36</sup> Sections 31 and 87
- <sup>37</sup> In an indirect primary election, party members elect delegates who in turn elect the party’s candidates on their behalf. Delegates are a democratically elected group of voters elected at party congresses
- <sup>38</sup> In a direct primary election, registered members of the party just vote for who they want to be the flag-bearer of their party. Unlike with the indirect primaries, no delegates are involved, party members choose their representatives through polls like they would in a general election.
- <sup>39</sup> Independent National Electoral Commission, “Policy on Conducting Elections in the Context of the Covid-19 Pandemic” (Independent National Electoral Commission, 2020), p. 14 <https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/INEC-POLICY-ON-CONDUCTING-ELECTIONS-IN-COVID19.pdf>.
- <sup>40</sup> Open Election Data Initiative, “Section 3: Key Election Process Categories,” Open Election Data Initiative, accessed June 11, 2020, <https://openelectiondata.net/en/guide/key-categories/election-campaigns/>.
- <sup>41</sup> Section 99(1) Electoral Act
- <sup>42</sup> Section 91(3)
- <sup>43</sup> Emmanuel Ikechi Onah and Uche Nwali, “Monetisation of Electoral Politics and the Challenge of Political Exclusion in Nigeria,” *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 56, no. 3 (May 23, 2018): 318–39, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14662043.2017.1368157>.
- <sup>44</sup> Section 100(3)-(5), Electoral Act

---

<sup>45</sup> Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI), “Survey Report: Edo and Ondo Elections amid COVID-19” (Abuja: Kimpact Development Initiative, 2020), p. 2 <https://www.kdi.org.ng/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Kimpact-COVID-19-and-Election-Survey-Report.pdf>.



## ©2020 Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development

### About the Electoral Hub

The Electoral Hub (E-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. It is conceptualized to complement the roles and activities of the different institutions, stakeholders and drivers of the electoral process and governance. E-Hub’s aim is to strengthen electoral governance and accountability in Nigeria through the provision data and critical analysis supporting the credibility and integrity of the electoral process. Because we believe that the integrity of the electoral process is crucial in improving the electoral governance architecture and democracy in Nigeria. We also believe in contextual analysis for solutions rooted in the principles of justice and equity.

The Hub’s core values are knowledge-exchange, inclusion, justice, equity, transparency and accountability.

### Contact

IRIAD- The Electoral Hub

C/O 1 Sankuru Close

Maitama

Phone: +234 9092068680; email: [electoralhub@gmail.com](mailto:electoralhub@gmail.com)

Twitter: @electoralhub; Instagram: electoralhub

