



OSUN STATE SECURITY OUTLOOK

MAPPING THE FLASHPOINTS, POLITICAL
TENSIONS AND EMERGING RISKS
SHAPING OSUN'S

15 AUGUST GOVERNORSHIP
ELECTION

2026

INTRODUCTION

Ahead of the upcoming gubernatorial election in Osun State, with political parties, electoral stakeholders and security agencies intensifying preparations for the polls, the security landscape requires continued assessment to support a peaceful and credible electoral process. While the state generally maintains a stable security outlook, the assessment identifies localised risk factors that may influence the electoral environment if left unaddressed. Of the 30 LGAs in the state, two LGAs (Osogbo and Irewole) are assessed as critical risk, eleven LGAs (Iwo, Ilesa West, Obokun, Boripe, Isokan, Ilesa East, Ife Central, Ife North, Ede North, Ifedayo, and Irepodun) as high risk, and six LGAs as exhibiting emerging risk indicators requiring close monitoring. These findings are underpinned by four interrelated dynamics.

- Recurrent organised political violence linked to party-aligned thugs and youth groups;
- The unresolved dispute over control of LGA secretariats, which continues to heighten tensions;
- Criminal actors exploiting the political environment for targeted attacks and intimidation; and
- An increasingly active ecosystem of misinformation, disinformation and hate speech capable of triggering panic and reprisals.

Key Concerns Ahead of the Election

1. Escalating Political Tensions and Violence

The current pattern of political violence suggests a shift from isolated confrontations to more deliberate and organised acts of intimidation linked to the electoral contest. The nature of these incidents indicates a level of planning, coordination and targeted execution that extends beyond spontaneous clashes between rival supporters. Increasingly, politically affiliated actors appear willing to deploy violence not only to intimidate opponents but also to disrupt political activities, weaken local party structures, and influence perceptions of territorial control within key electoral strongholds.

Equally concerning is the widening profile of those affected. Rather than being confined to political candidates or senior party officials, the violence increasingly impacts grassroots party functionaries, community mobilisers, transport union actors, relatives of political actors and, in some instances, uninvolved civilians. This broadening of targets heightens insecurity within affected communities, discourages political participation, and increases the likelihood of self-help security arrangements and retaliatory violence.

The persistence of these incidents, coupled with the absence of visible accountability, risks normalising political violence as a tool of electoral competition. Where perpetrators perceive a low likelihood of arrest, prosecution or sanction, the deterrent effect of law enforcement is significantly weakened, creating incentives for further attacks as political competition intensifies. This environment also increases the potential for isolated incidents to trigger wider communal or politically motivated reprisals, particularly in areas with existing political rivalries or histories of electoral violence.

As election activities intensify, campaign rallies, political processions, party primaries, stakeholder engagements and other high-profile political events are likely to become focal points for confrontation. The convergence of large political crowds, heightened partisan rhetoric, and the mobilisation of supporters increases the risk of clashes, particularly where rival political activities occur in proximity or where local grievances remain unresolved.

Consequently, particular attention should be paid to early warning indicators such as the movement of armed or suspected political thugs into flashpoint communities, the mobilisation of large political convoys, inflammatory rhetoric by political actors and their supporters, the increasing visibility of cult or transport union groups in political activities, reports of targeted threats against political actors, and any rise in small-scale violent incidents capable of escalating into broader electoral violence if not promptly addressed.

Incidents

■ 27 November 2025 – Ilesa (NURTW Chairman)

On 27 November 2025, in Ilesa, Adeboye Ademoroti, chairman of NURTW Unit 4, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen at the Olomilagbala area, with police confirming that no arrest had been made and the circumstances remained unclear. The targeting of a transport union official, rather than a formal party officeholder, suggests that election-related violence may extend beyond political actors to individuals occupying influential positions within organisations that often play important roles in political mobilisation.

■ 8 May 2026 – Ikire (Kolade Eluyera)

On 8 May 2026 in Ikire, Irewole, Kolade Eluyera, son of the Accord Party's Irewole Women's Leader, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen near Onireke Mosque. Police confirmed the recovery of the body with gunshot wounds and stated that investigations were ongoing, while the Accord-aligned Imole Campaign Council alleged that prior complaints, security reports, and intelligence alerts regarding threats to Accord members in the area had been lodged with security agencies without decisive action. The victim was a relative of a party official rather than the official herself, suggesting that individuals perceived to be associated with political actors may also face heightened exposure during periods of political tension.

■ 31 May 2026 – Iwo (Accord Party Primary)

On 31 May 2026 in Iwo, violence disrupted the Accord Party House of Representatives primary for the Ayedire, Iwo, Ola Oluwa Federal Constituency, held at Iwo Town Hall between rival camps backing incumbent Lukman Mudasiru and aspirant Ayodeji Bello. One person was initially reported dead amid the chaos. The deceased was later identified as Mrs Taliat Simbiat, who collapsed during the violence; a follow-up investigation by her family and attending physician attributed her death to an underlying medical condition triggered by shock rather than direct physical injury, complicating the causal attribution of the fatality to the violence itself, even as approximately thirty others were confirmed injured. The violence occurred during a single party's primary process, suggesting that electoral tensions are not confined to competition between political parties but may also arise from intra-party rivalries. While the precise cause of the reported fatality remains contested, the incident underscores the potential for internal party contests to generate significant security risks.

■ 3 June 2026 – Osogbo (Asimiyu Ajibola)

On 3 June 2026, along the MDS area of Osogbo, Accord Party Osogbo Chairman Asimiyu Ajibola was shot multiple times by two-armed men on a motorcycle while travelling in a vehicle with associates and was hospitalised in a stable but initially critical condition. The targeting of a local party chairman while in transit suggests that politically exposed individuals may remain vulnerable beyond formal campaign activities or designated political venues.

■ 9 June 2026 – Osogbo (Coordinated Shootings)

On 9 June 2026, coordinated shootings occurred across multiple Osogbo neighbourhoods, including Aregbe Junction, Aregbesola, Owode-Ede, Olaiya, Old Garage, and Oke-Fia, with armed men firing at the ADC campaign headquarters at Oranmiyan House, Aregbe Junction, before moving through an adjoining NURTW park and other locations. At least three people were injured, including a bus driver struck by a stray bullet, and the Accord and APC campaigns traded blame for the attacks. The dispersed nature of the shootings across multiple locations suggests an apparent escalation in the geographical spread and operational coordination of election-related violence compared with earlier isolated attacks.

■ 21 June 2026 – Ilobu (Ezekiel Olapade)

On 21 June 2026 in Ilobu, Irepodun, a group led by a suspect identified as Saheed Tanfeani opened fire near the Irepodun Local Government Secretariat after an apparent attempt to enter the building, striking a man wearing

a political party-coloured cap and fatally wounding 14-year-old Ezekiel Olapade, who was struck while attempting to help his mother after she fell during the panic. Police confirmed the death and stated that a manhunt for the named suspects, who numbered eight in a subsequent petition to the Inspector-General of Police, was ongoing, with no arrests made as of the most recent reporting. The involvement of a minor and an apparent unintended victim suggests that the effects of election-related violence are increasingly extending beyond political actors to members of the wider community.

■ **23 June 2026 – Esa-Oke (Aderogba Ajayi)**

On 23 June 2026 in Esa-Oke, Ward 7, Obokun, Accord Party member Aderogba Ajayi, known as Rogba, a planner of an Accord rally scheduled for the following day, was shot and fatally attacked with machetes by men described by his wife as wearing black suits after being lured to a meeting point by a local youth leader. The Accord-aligned Imole Campaign Council alleged the involvement of a federal lawmaker and an APC campaign official, who denied any connection and described the allegation as premature. The killing occurred immediately before a political rally the victim was involved in organising, a sequence of events that heightened political tensions in the area. However, the motive remains under investigation, and responsibility continues to be contested and unconfirmed by security agencies.

Implications

The pattern suggests that political violence in the current electoral cycle is increasingly organised, recurrent, and targeted. The widening profile of victims including political actors, their associates, transport union figures, and bystanders indicates that the risk extends beyond direct political competitors. Where accountability remains limited, the deterrent effect of law enforcement may be weakened, increasing the likelihood of further incidents as the election approaches. Accordingly, the movement of large political convoys, mobilisation of suspected political thugs or cult groups, and unusual political gatherings in identified flashpoint LGAs should be treated as key early warning indicators.

2. Local Government Control Dispute

Unlike many elections in Nigeria, where political tensions are often shaped by zoning arrangements or candidate selection, the principal structural driver of insecurity in Osun is the unresolved contest between the major political parties over the control and legitimacy of local government councils. The dispute originates from competing claims arising from the 2022 local government elections, subsequent judicial decisions, and the 2025 local government elections, resulting in rival political parties asserting lawful authority over the same local government institutions.

Beyond their administrative responsibilities, local government councils serve as important centres of political influence, grassroots mobilisation, and access to public resources. Consequently, control of the councils has become a strategic political objective, with the dispute extending beyond the courts into the broader political and security environment. Divergent interpretations of judicial decisions, competing claims to office, and repeated attempts by rival political actors to exercise authority over council secretariats have sustained political tensions and heightened the risk of confrontation across several local government areas.

Rather than conclusively resolving the dispute, successive legal developments have, at different stages, reshaped the political landscape and generated new points of contention, with each party relying on its interpretation of judicial pronouncements to justify its claim to legitimacy. As a result, routine administrative activities, including attempts to resume office or access council facilities, have increasingly assumed political significance and carry the potential to trigger confrontation between supporters of the rival parties.

While security interventions have, on several occasions, prevented further escalation, the continued reliance on security deployments to manage competing claims underscores the absence of a mutually accepted legal or political resolution. With appellate proceedings still pending, the dispute remains a significant structural risk that could intensify partisan mobilisation, heighten tensions around public institutions, and intersect with the gubernatorial election to generate localised security incidents.

Incidents

■ 17 February 2025 – Local Government Secretariat Clashes

On 17 February 2025, a Court of Appeal ruling reinstating APC-elected chairmen and councillors sacked by the PDP-led state government triggered clashes as the sacked APC officials attempted to resume office at council secretariats across the state. In Ikire, Irewole, sacked chairman Remi Abass was shot dead by hoodlums reported by the state government to be PDP-aligned as he attempted to enter the secretariat; reports of the overall death toll vary by source, ranging from six to eleven fatalities across multiple local government areas, including Boripe, where two PDP-aligned individuals died, and Oluwa and Isokan, where additional deaths were reported, with the state government and the APC disputing the count and the attribution of responsibility. The scale and simultaneous occurrence of violence across multiple local government areas suggest that disputes over control of council secretariats have the potential to trigger coordinated and geographically dispersed political violence.

■ 15 June 2026 – Federal High Court Judgment

On 15 June 2026, the Federal High Court in Osogbo, presided over by Justice Adefunmilola Demi-Ajayi, dismissed a tenure-elongation suit filed by APC-elected chairmen from the 15 October 2022 local government election, ruling that their three-year tenure had expired in October 2025 regardless of interruptions caused by the 2025 violence. The state government interpreted the ruling as validating the PDP-aligned chairmen elected on 22 February 2025 and directed police to withdraw protection from the sacked APC chairmen, while the APC disputed this interpretation and filed an appeal with an application for stay of execution. The differing interpretations of the judgment by the principal political actors suggest that judicial pronouncements on the dispute have continued to shape the political and security environment, rather than producing a mutually accepted resolution of competing claims to local government authority.

■ 19–21 June 2026 – Attempts to Resume Office

Between 19 and 21 June 2026, PDP-aligned chairmen and Accord-aligned officials attempted to resume duties at several LGA secretariats, including Olorunda, Ifelodun, Ede North, Ede South, Iwo, Ila, and Ifedayo, while APC-aligned officials resumed or remained at others, including Boripe, Obokun, Oriade, and Ilesa East. At the Olorunda secretariat in Igbona, Osogbo, a shouting match occurred between police and PDP officials attempting to gain entry, after which the gate was locked, and the officials withdrew following discussions with security personnel; no casualties were reported. The absence of casualties suggests that timely security intervention helped prevent escalation on this occasion. However, the continued attempts by rival political actors to assert control over council secretariats indicate that the underlying dispute remains unresolved and retains the potential to generate further political tension.

Implications

The unresolved contest over control of local government councils remains one of the most significant structural drivers of election-related insecurity in Osun State. What began as a legal dispute has evolved into a highly contested political struggle between rival parties, with each claiming legitimate authority over the same local government institutions. This competing claim to legitimacy has transformed council secretariats into potential flashpoints, where routine administrative actions, judicial pronouncements, or attempts by either party to assert control could trigger political confrontation and violence. The persistence of the dispute, despite ongoing judicial proceedings, demonstrates that legal processes alone have not resolved the underlying political tensions. As the gubernatorial election approaches, the continued mobilisation of rival party supporters around council secretariats, developments in the pending Court of Appeal proceedings, and any perceived shift in control of local government institutions should be regarded as priority early warning indicators requiring proactive security and conflict prevention measures.

3. Security Sector Neutrality

The perceived neutrality of security agencies remains a critical factor in shaping public confidence in the electoral process. In closely contested elections, allegations of selective law enforcement, unequal protection of political actors, or inconsistent responses to security incidents can become significant sources of political tension, regardless of whether such allegations are ultimately substantiated. In Osun, competing political parties have increasingly advanced conflicting narratives regarding the conduct and impartiality of security agencies, reflecting broader concerns over the role of state and federal security institutions in managing politically sensitive situations.

The coexistence of federal security agencies and state-backed security structures further complicates the security landscape. Differences in operational mandates, public perceptions, and political expectations have the potential to create mistrust among political actors, particularly where enforcement actions, deployments, or operational decisions are perceived to disproportionately benefit one party over another. In such an environment, routine security operations may become politicised, with operational decisions interpreted through partisan lenses rather than viewed as impartial law enforcement measures.

As political competition intensifies, sustained public confidence in the professionalism, neutrality, and operational independence of security agencies will be essential to preventing security-related grievances from escalating into broader electoral tensions. Any perception of selective enforcement, delayed intervention, or unequal protection of political actors has the potential to undermine trust in the electoral process, heighten political polarisation, and increase the likelihood that parties or their supporters resort to self-help measures or retaliatory actions, particularly in identified flashpoint areas.

Incidents

■ **30 September 2025 – Akinlalu, Ife North (Amotekun Incident)**

30 September 2025 in Akinlalu, Ife North, operatives of the Osun Amotekun Corps opened fire on residents after a dispute over the theft of farm produce and the seizure of two rifles from Amotekun personnel a day earlier. Amotekun's own statement described the deaths as the result of an ambush by hoodlums, while community accounts and a subsequent police investigation found that Amotekun personnel themselves fired on unarmed residents, killing at least three people, by some community accounts four, including members of a single family, and injuring between nine and fourteen others. The Police's Intelligence Response Team (IRT) later arrested more than twenty Amotekun operatives and sealed the corps' operational bases, while five suspects were subsequently identified in connection with the attack. The incident suggests that the conduct of state-backed security actors can become a source of public concern where the use of force is contested, underscoring the importance of accountability and adherence to professional standards in maintaining public confidence in security institutions.

■ **22 June 2026 – Allegations Against the Police**

On 22 June 2026, Governor Ademola Adeleke alleged that police officers present at the scene of the Ilobu shooting that killed Ezekiel Olapade, documented above under Key Concern 1, failed to intervene and described this as evidence of growing police complicity in political violence, further alleging that police were providing protection to sacked APC local government chairmen and accompanying APC-aligned thugs in the field. The victim's father separately alleged that police operatives stationed near the secretariat witnessed the attack but did not intervene. The APC disputed the governor's characterisation, arguing that he had pre-empted the police investigation by attributing blame before its conclusion. The competing accounts surrounding the incident illustrate how allegations concerning the conduct of security agencies, irrespective of whether they are ultimately substantiated, can become a source of political contestation and influence public perceptions of security sector neutrality during the electoral process.

Implications

Irrespective of whether the allegations are ultimately substantiated, perceptions of partiality within the security sector can themselves become a source of electoral risk. In a politically polarised environment, allegations of selective

enforcement, delayed intervention, or preferential protection of political actors may diminish public confidence in the impartiality of security agencies, reinforce partisan grievances, and heighten mistrust between political parties and state institutions. Such perceptions may encourage political actors and their supporters to question the legitimacy of security operations, resist lawful directives, or resort to self-help security arrangements, thereby increasing the risk of confrontation and undermining the peaceful conduct of the electoral process.

4. Risk of Misinformation and Disinformation

The spread of misinformation and disinformation has become an increasingly important feature of the electoral environment in Osun State. As political activities intensify, unverified information, misleading narratives, and false claims have the potential to shape public perceptions, heighten anxiety, and influence political behaviour. The widespread use of social media and instant messaging platforms has further accelerated the speed at which such information circulates, often outpacing official verification and public clarification.

Experience from the current electoral cycle indicates that false or misleading narratives can generate confusion, disrupt normal activities, and erode confidence in public institutions irrespective of their factual accuracy. In an increasingly competitive political environment, such narratives have the potential to deepen political polarisation, amplify existing grievances, and heighten tensions before, during, and after the election if not promptly addressed. This underscores the importance of timely institutional communication, proactive factchecking, and coordinated public information efforts to reduce the potential for misinformation and disinformation to contribute to broader security and electoral challenges.

Incidents

- **2 June 2026 – False Bandit Abduction Rumour**

On 2 June 2026, a rumour began in the Ila Orangun axis alleging that bandits had invaded the area and abducted a schoolgirl at Faaje village. The underlying abduction claim was subsequently found to be false, as the girl involved had reportedly gone into hiding to avoid attending school. The rumour spread to Ila, Odo Otin, Boripe, Osogbo, Olorunda, and parts of Ede, prompting schools, including Community Second Grammar School, Obaagun, and several institutions in Iree and Ikirun, to close before 11:00 a.m., with parents rushing to retrieve their children amid scenes of panic. A fact-check by the Nigerian Democratic Report found no evidence of any bandit invasion or kidnapping in the affected areas. Governor Adeleke's office described the episode as a false alarm orchestrated by opposition elements. The rapid spread of the rumour and the resulting public and institutional response suggest that unverified information can significantly influence public behaviour and disrupt normal activities before its accuracy is established.

- **6 February 2026 – Underage Voter Registration Claim**

On 6 February 2026 in Ede North LGA, a viral social media claim alleged that underage students in school uniform had been registered as voters at the INEC Local Government Office. INEC's Osun State office, through its Resident Electoral Commissioner, confirmed that students from YTD Grammar School, Ojoro Ede, had presented themselves at the office but were denied entry by the Electoral Officer, and that no underage person was registered. The prompt institutional clarification suggests that timely official communication can help address misleading narratives, reinforce public confidence, and reduce the potential for misinformation to generate unnecessary tension or undermine trust in the electoral process.

Implications

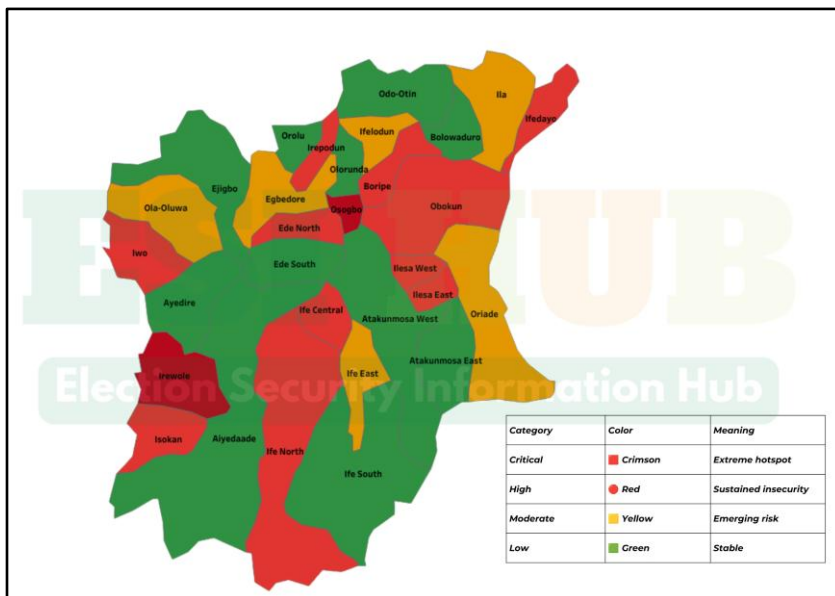
The incidents demonstrate that misinformation and disinformation have become significant risk multipliers within the electoral environment. Regardless of their underlying accuracy, false or misleading narratives can rapidly influence public behaviour, disrupt normal activities, and shape perceptions of insecurity before corrective information becomes available. Over time, repeated exposure to such narratives may erode confidence in electoral and security institutions, deepen political polarisation, and increase the likelihood that isolated incidents escalate into broader electoral tensions.

Consequently, the timely detection, verification, and public rebuttal of false information should be regarded as a critical component of election security and conflict prevention.

Critical Flashpoints (2 LGAs)

- **Osogbo (Osun Central Senatorial Zone):** Osogbo carries psychological and political significance as the seat of government, and control of the capital is treated by all camps as a marker of likely victory. The LGA is the epicentre of political rallies, state security coordination, and the most frequent site of organised political violence, with prevalent threats including political violence, cultism, assassination attempts, and misinformation.

- **Irewole (Osun West Senatorial Zone):** Ikire, located in Irewole LGA, is the hometown of APC governorship candidate Bola Oyebamiji and a recurring site of targeted political killings linked to the contested 2025 local government crisis, holding the highest casualty count of any LGA. Prevalent threats include political assassination, inter-party conflicts, and cultism.



High Risk Flashpoints (11 LGAs)

- **Iwo (Osun West Senatorial Zone):** Iwo faces tensions from unresolved LGA secretariat control and political primary violence, with prevalent threats of political violence and thuggery.
- **Ilesa West (Osun East Senatorial Zone):** Ilesa West is the principal locus of cult-related violence between Eiye and Aye factions, occurring independently of party structures. Other prevalent threats include inter-party conflicts, campaign assaults, and voter intimidation.
- **Obokun (Osun East Senatorial Zone):** Obokun is the site of two targeted political killings in the current cycle, both in Esa-Oke, and remains a key flashpoint for cult-related and political violence.
- **Boripe (Osun Central Senatorial Zone):** Boripe is a recurring site of campaign-material vandalism along contested rally routes and is home to a contested LGA secretariat held by APC-aligned incumbents, with prevalent threats of inter-party conflicts, political assassination, and thuggery.
- **Isokan (Osun West Senatorial Zone):** Isokan's prevalent threats are inter-party conflicts and campaign assaults.
- **Ilesa East (Osun East Senatorial Zone):** Ilesa East's prevalent threats are political assassination and pre-election violence.
- **Ife Central (Osun East Senatorial Zone):** Ife Central hosts the Obafemi Awolowo University community, making student safety and cult-related violence a recurring issue, with prevalent threats of cultism, armed robbery, and political violence.
- **Ife North (Osun East Senatorial Zone):** Ife North carries the unresolved grievance of the September 2025 Akinlalu killings, with the state's Amotekun Corps alleged as the perpetrator, and faces prevalent threats of banditry and extrajudicial killings.

- **Ede North (Osun West Senatorial Zone):** Ede North is the hometown of the incumbent Governor Ademola Adeleke and a recurring site of coordinated armed attacks; prevalent threats include cultism and civil unrest.
- **Ifedayo (Osun Central Senatorial Zone):** Ifedayo is a border community with Kwara State, making it vulnerable to cross-border kidnapping and banditry, with kidnapping as the prevalent threat.
- **Irepodun (Osun Central Senatorial Zone):** Irepodun's prevalent threats are recurring thuggery and mob attacks.

Moderate Risk Flashpoints (6 LGAs)

- **Ola Oluwa (Osun West Senatorial Zone):** Ola Oluwa's prevalent threats are inter-party conflicts and political assassination.
- **Oriade (Osun East Senatorial Zone):** Oriade's prevalent threats are communal clashes and kidnapping.
- **Ila (Osun East Senatorial Zone):** Ila's prevalent threat is cross-border criminal exposure
- **Egbedore (Osun West Senatorial Zone):** Egbedore's prevalent threats are political thuggery and localized violence
- **Ife East (Osun West Senatorial Zone):** Ife East's prevalent threats are civil unrest and historically contested
- **Ifelodun (Osun Central Senatorial Zone):** Ifelodun's prevalent threats are civil unrest and historically contested

Low Risk (11 LGAs)

The remaining eleven LGAs - **Atakunmosa East, Atakunmosa West, Ayedire, Ayedaade, Boluwaduro, Ede South, Ejigbo, Ife South, Odo Otin, Olorunda, and Orolu**, are currently assessed as low risk. Available information does not indicate significant security incidents or emerging trends likely to adversely affect the electoral process currently. Nevertheless, the dynamic nature of the electoral environment requires continued monitoring, as political activities, campaign developments, or localised incidents could alter the risk profile as the election approaches.