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BEFORE THE BALLOT:

NIGERIA'S 2026 PARTY PRIMARIES AS A TEST
OF ELECTORAL CREDIBILITY

An Assessment of Political Party Primaries and their Implications



REPORT

September 2026

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I. Executive Summary

1. Nomination shortcomings carry a credibility burden into the 2027 elections.

Nigeria entered the campaign with nomination disputes that remained unresolved when INEC published the final federal lists on 12 September 2026. The primaries exposed a connected set of problems: inaccessible party records, unverifiable monitoring, financial barriers, restricted participation and influential networks controlling selection. Disputed decisions were difficult to scrutinise or challenge, reinforcing distrust in the institutions responsible for administering elections and providing remedies.

The cumulative burden of procedural shortcomings, unresolved disputes and weakened public confidence could still be partly mitigated before polling. Parties would need to explain selection and appeal decisions, INEC to make its findings and handling of disputed nominations open to scrutiny, and courts to deliver timely, reasoned and consistent judgments. Campaign conduct and administrative preparations must reinforce that effort through fair treatment and visible correction of deficiencies. Improved election-day administration and verifiable results collation can contribute to rebuilding confidence when the preceding stages visibly address the failures exposed during nominations.

2. The presidential lists include Tinubu, Atiku and Obi; NDC's registration remains disputed.

INEC's authoritative lists include President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Kashim Shettima for APC, Atiku Abubakar and Rotimi Amaechi for ADC, and Peter Obi and Rabiu Kwankwaso for NDC, alongside 15 other presidential tickets. Earlier fears that Atiku or Obi would be excluded have not materialised in the published field. NDC's registration case nevertheless remains unresolved, leaving its candidates and supporters to commit campaign resources while the party's participation is legally contested. This could complicate fundraising, planning and mobilisation; an adverse judgment could affect the entire NDC slate, including the presidential ticket. Chapter VII examines that continuing exposure and other proceedings capable of changing the candidate field.

3. The primaries reshaped an already asymmetric party landscape through contested nominations and realignment.

APC entered the primaries with incumbency and an expanding network of governors and legislators. Newcomers and established cadres competed for a fixed number of tickets, while opposition leaders lacked agreement on a common presidential candidate, zoning, religious and ethno-regional balance, succession and coalition control. The Ibadan summit had left those issues unresolved.

The subsequent nominations incorporated incoming governors and established federal officeholders into APC's slate. National review in Benue and Ondo reversed some governors' preferred Legislative nominations, demonstrating the continuing influence of rival networks through the national leadership. Some displaced aspirants continued litigation or obtained other parties' tickets; support for Tinubu could coexist with opposition to an APC Legislative nomination. PDP produced an official slate without settling its factional division, while PDP governor Makinde's Oyo network secured APM candidacies. ADC's settlement with Amaechi resolved his primary dispute within the coalition remaining after Obi and Kwankwaso left for NDC. NDC brought their movements together with other established networks, alongside disputed constituency nominations. Labour retained its Abia governing base after losing national figures; NNPP's former Kano governing coalition split across APC and NDC.

The nomination process thus redistributed candidates and organisational resources while preserving many of the personal and state-level relationships through which access to office was negotiated. Broader candidate coverage did not itself establish internal cohesion or greater influence for members. The movement of leaders also leaves open how far supporters accepted the new alignments and whether competing groups would cooperate in campaigning.

4. The primaries were the first major legitimacy test of the 2027 cycle.

The primaries unfolded against a backdrop of economic hardship, insecurity and very low institutional trust. Poverty and rising living costs deepened dependence on patrons and vulnerability to inducement. Insecurity complicated participation across wards and communities where movement, local organisation or venue access was constrained. In that environment, irregularities could reinforce existing perceptions of institutional capture and predetermined outcomes. The primaries therefore mattered well beyond internal party affairs: they were the point at which voters' eventual choices were first narrowed or protected. Their credibility depended on whether members could participate freely and verify how candidates were selected.

5. Reforms changed procedures while party leaders retained control over selection.

Nigeria entered the 2026 primaries after nearly two decades of inconclusive electoral reform, from the Uwais Committee through constitutional amendments, successive Electoral Acts, INEC regulations and election technology. The cases reviewed show legal reform advancing further than changes in political practice and enforcement. Elite bargaining, patronage, executive influence and monetisation continued through the selection processes examined. The Electoral Act, as enacted, abolished indirect primaries, allowed direct primaries or consensus, and made membership registers central to eligibility. Party leaderships and influential patrons retained control through registers, screening, consensus records, venue management, accreditation, certification and submission. Members' formal opportunities to participate therefore depended on access to information and decisions still controlled by those organising the process.

6. A more formalised framework did not make compliance independently verifiable.

Parties had to maintain digital membership registers, notify INEC, publish procedures, document primaries and submit candidates electronically. These obligations created records against which compliance could be tested. Yet current party constitutions, primary guidelines, registers, accreditation figures, result forms, internal appeal decisions and INEC monitoring findings remained largely inaccessible to aspirants, members and observers. The assessment could therefore verify only parts of the nomination process. Claims of compliance by party leaderships or INEC were frequently unsupported by evidence available for independent scrutiny, and participants lacked records needed to challenge disputed decisions effectively.

7. INEC's monitoring responsibilities and the compressed calendar exposed accountability gap.

INEC monitors party primaries; it does not conduct them. The framework gave it extensive documentation and oversight duties without a sufficiently clear procedure for turning evidence of non-compliance into a timely, reasoned response before candidate submission. Late regulations and unpublished submission dates compounded the pressure of the primary timetable. Monitors could be present without checking the relevant register or observing the complete process. Federal campaigning opened on 19 August, before the final lists on 12 September were released by INEC; state campaigns opened on 9 September, ahead of lists scheduled for 10 October. Unresolved nomination questions thus entered campaigning and preparations, with further amendments still possible.

8. Direct primaries and consensus left decisive choices with party leaderships.

The move away from delegate conventions broadened formal participation. In the selected Abuja and Oyo exercises, however, late venue information, unclear accreditation, unavailable registers and absent aspirant representation restricted members' effective choices. Consensus depended on voluntary agreement among cleared aspirants; screening determined who reached that stage. Across the cases examined, access to forms, clearance, withdrawals and certification could shape the outcome before or after voting. Inter Party Advisory Council's chairman, Yusuf Dantalle acknowledged pressure on some aspirants to withdraw, restricted availability of forms and late schedules, attributing these partly to the demands of direct primaries. The evidence places the quality of access, information and consent at the centre of assessing either method.

9. High nomination costs restricted participation and reinforced dependence on sponsors.

Presidential form costs reached ₦100 million, while APC's Senate and House charges were ₦20 million and ₦10 million. Screening, appeals, mobilisation, security and litigation added to the published fees. These costs filtered aspirants before their support among members could be tested, and income from forms gave parties an incentive to maintain high charges. The political significance of the fee also depends on the organisation and resources the party can provide. Form purchase could secure a place in negotiations over tickets or later accommodation. The potential for recovering expenditure through office or patronage links barriers at entry with accountability over party finance and public resources.

10. Candidate selection often continued after primary day.

Local declarations were not always the final stage of candidate selection. Internal appeals, national party certification, factional recognition, withdrawal and replacement, and access to INEC's submission portal could still determine whose name reached the official lists. APC revised a number of Legislative nominations after appeals, while in the PDP leadership dispute recognition of the Mohammed-led leadership determined which faction could submit candidates electronically. These developments do not by themselves establish that the resulting nominations were unlawful. They show that the quality of a primary cannot be assessed from voting day alone: the chain from the announced result through appeal, certification and submission also needs to be transparent and verifiable.

11. Violence and disruption put participation and verification at risk.

The media cases in Chapter V include a reported fatal confrontation at an APC primary in Plateau and the abduction of an INEC official and removal of ballot boxes during an ADC primary in Cross River. Disruption can threaten participants and the evidence needed to verify an outcome, particularly where monitors or agents cannot complete their work. Responsibility and subsequent official responses require case-by-case assessment. These incidents reinforce the need for impartial security, protection of participants and monitors, and transparent investigation of alleged abuses during the campaign.

12. Litigation continued on candidate selection and placed further demands on electoral justice.

Party registration, leadership authority, primary results and replacements remained subject to litigation. Nomination challenges generally have to be brought by affected aspirants within 14 days of the disputed act or decision, using evidence often held by the party or INEC. Restrictions on who may sue and difficulty obtaining records can leave alleged breaches unexamined. Candidate qualification is no longer a separate ground for challenging the election result, making early scrutiny particularly important. Aspirants have only a short period to challenge nomination decisions, often while the records needed to substantiate their complaints remain inaccessible.

Waiting for INEC's final lists may leave them too late to challenge an earlier primary or replacement decision.

The 16 July judgment removed a statutory barrier to obtaining a new-party nomination after an unsuccessful bid elsewhere and thus reopened the door for party swaps for the purpose of getting nominated: absence from the membership register previously submitted to INEC no longer automatically excluded a candidate. Such aspirants could therefore be validly nominated by another party, provided they met the remaining membership and nomination requirements. The six new-party candidacies documented in this report illustrate the practical significance of that change. The judgment did not settle separate disputes over competing primary outcomes or the replacement of previously submitted candidates. INEC appealed the judgment to the Supreme Court, which heard the appeal on 16 September and reserved judgment.

Courts can correct unlawful nominations, but cannot halt primaries or elections while nomination suits are pending. Trial and appeal periods can therefore carry disputes well into the campaign and electoral preparations. The revised Practice Directions seek to reduce delay and improve scrutiny of disputed evidence; later judgments may still require changes to published lists. Concerns raised by party representatives and legal professionals about conflicting decisions and partisan use of litigation make the quality of adjudication important beyond individual cases. Public confidence depends on timely, independent and reasoned decisions, consistency across courts, respect for appellate orders, and prompt explanation and implementation of their consequences. Chapter VII examines the outstanding cases and their electoral implications.

13. Women continued to face structural barriers to nomination.

Fees, screening, consensus bargaining, access to finance and intimidation restricted women's participation before final lists were produced. Formal eligibility and fee concessions did not give women comparable access to the bodies allocating tickets and resources. Women comprise 346 of the 3,560 House candidates, or 9.7 per cent, compared with 9.2 per cent in the 2023 publication; 160 constituencies have no woman candidate. The final count needs to be read alongside exclusion at earlier nomination stages. The special-seats proposal had not been enacted by the review cut-off. Support for existing candidates and continued work on structural inclusion measures address different parts of this problem.

14. Youth and disability participation remain inadequately documented.

The evidence on younger aspirants and persons with disabilities remains limited. Fee reductions and formal safeguards do not show whether they could influence selection or obtain the resources needed to participate. There is no verified national age profile in the assessment. Seven House candidates have a disability recorded in the published list; this measures disclosure, not the prevalence of disability among candidates. Identifiable health information needs protection. Better protected data across nomination stages would help identify barriers and provide practical assistance.

15. The findings provide practical priorities before 2027 and for the following electoral cycle.

INEC's monitoring records, candidate information, dispute-resolution mechanisms and existing participation initiatives provide a basis for action. The immediate priorities are to explain disputed decisions, improve public communication, protect inclusive and peaceful campaigning, and support timely, consistent remedies. EU-SDGN can contribute through technical assistance, stakeholder dialogue and information support. Work during 2027–2031 should address membership-based party governance, nomination costs, internal appeals, inclusion and the relationship between nomination and litigation timetables. A manageable programme with

sustained funding and follow-up would connect the lessons of the primaries with changes in how subsequent nominations are conducted.

Table 1. Available mechanisms, published outcomes and outstanding requirements

Available records and mechanisms	What remains unresolved
Digital registers, party rules and nomination records.	Access, verification and protection of personal information.
INEC monitoring and judicial remedies.	Public findings, explained decisions and timely correction.
18 presidential tickets; 1,303 Senate and 3,560 House candidates. Legislative candidates increased by 15.2% from 2023.	All Legislative seats are contested. APC alone has full coverage; pending cases may still affect participation.
At least 79 senators and 258 House members are candidates again for their respective chambers.	Unresolved nomination disputes within parties and between parties and legal adversaries.
Inclusion initiatives, dialogue and civic scrutiny.	Participation, safety and follow-through on reported problems.
EU-SDGN can support convening and ICT-based transparency tools.	Women, youth and PWD remained structurally excluded from competitive nominations.

Why this assessment matters

This assessment is useful because it turns a diffuse set of complaints about the 2026 primaries into a structured, evidence-based map of exactly where the 2027 process is exposed, party registers and screening, INEC's enforcement chain, opposition legal status, and public confidence in the courts, while there is still time to act. Two things make the exercise worth the effort. First, it is diagnostic rather than adversarial: by tracing how each weakness travels from the primaries into the general-election timetable, it shows INEC, the parties, the courts, security agencies and civic actors precisely which decisions in the coming months will determine whether 2027 is seen as legitimate, rather than waiting to litigate legitimacy after the fact. Second, it is actionable: because the primaries already tested the same registers, monitoring mechanisms and legal processes that will govern the general election, the openings identified above including auditable digital registers, transparent INEC monitoring, litigation tracking and targeted technical assistance, are immediate and concrete, not aspirational.

For EU-SDGN and other external partners, the assessment also provides a shared, defensible evidence base for engagement, allowing support to be targeted at specific institutional weaknesses rather than general capacity-building, and giving all stakeholders a common reference point for tracking whether these risks are being addressed as the 2027 calendar advances. The exercise is useful, in short, not because it predicts an outcome, but because it narrows the space for surprise, replacing diffuse anxiety about 2027 with a specific, sequenced set of decisions that Nigeria's institutions can still take.

II. Methodology

Purpose, guiding question and analytical framework

This report was prepared in two analytical stages. The first assessed the legal and institutional framework, the preparations for and conduct of the 2026 political party primaries, and their immediate aftermath, with an evidence cut-off in early July 2026. The second updated and, where warranted, revised that assessment through 12 September 2026, when INEC released the final lists of candidates for the Presidency and the National Assembly. The extended review period made it possible to test initial findings against subsequent political, administrative and judicial developments and to analyse the candidate lists.

The second stage also incorporated findings from two Nigerian colleagues who, on behalf of the Kukah Centre, observed selected primaries and followed developments through mid-August 2026. Their findings were reviewed alongside the original field material and integrated into the relevant chapters and illustrative case accounts. The update further included targeted review of Nigerian newspaper reporting on post-primary developments and direct analysis of relevant court rulings. Intermediate working files produced in the course of this research — including compilations of defections, withdrawals and candidate replacements — served only to organise and analyse the underlying evidence and are not treated as independent research sources.

The report assesses the 2026 political party primaries as the first major legitimacy test of Nigeria's 2027 electoral cycle. Party primaries determine which candidates voters can choose from in the general election. They are therefore the first stage at which party rules, membership participation, internal competition or consensus are converted into legally valid nominations.

Where this process is opaque or disputed, voter choice may be narrowed before election day. Unresolved nomination questions can also affect candidate submission and upload, final candidate lists, party cohesion, litigation and public confidence in the electoral process. The assessment therefore treats primaries as a central component of electoral integrity and democratic credibility rather than as events whose significance ends with internal party selection.

Previous observation and reform processes have documented recurring weaknesses in Nigerian party primaries, including delegate capture, monetisation, elite bargaining, weak membership records, factional control, exclusion of women, youth and Persons with Disabilities, limited access to party rules and post-primary litigation. The 2026 framework changed this environment by abolishing indirect primaries and limiting nomination to direct primaries or consensus. This addressed the most visible delegate-market problem, while increasing the importance of less visible stages of the nomination process: who appears on the party register; who is cleared to contest; how venue and accreditation information is communicated; whether consensus withdrawals and endorsements are genuinely voluntary and properly documented; how results are certified; and whose name is ultimately submitted to INEC.

The assessment is guided by one overarching question: to what extent did the 2026 party primaries translate legal reform into more transparent, inclusive and contestable candidate selection; where did effective control remain or shift to less visible legal, administrative and organisational gatekeeping points; and what do the remaining gaps mean for electoral credibility and for action that EU-SDGN and Nigerian stakeholders can still take before 2027?

This question is examined through three tests. First, formal legality: whether parties and INEC complied with the Electoral Act, INEC regulations, notification rules, membership-register obligations, consensus requirements and candidate-submission procedures. Second, procedural

contestability: whether aspirants and party members had access to information, participation, complaints and appeals. Third, democratic legitimacy: whether the primaries produced genuine political choices or mainly converted elite settlements into legally valid nominations.

Prepared under EU-SDGN II, the report also identifies practical entry points for support before and after the 2027 elections. These include clearer INEC communication and monitoring, structured dialogue among key stakeholders, litigation tracking, alternative dispute-resolution guidance, inclusion support, accessible party and candidate information for voters, and citizen engagement.

Research design and evidence base

Methodologically, the assessment combines legal, political, institutional and field-based analysis. It draws on constitutional, statutory and regulatory materials; INEC publications, statements and candidate lists; civil society materials; available party documents; previous EU EOM/EFM findings; Nigerian newspaper reporting; stakeholder consultations; interviews with aspirants, party actors, INEC officials, civil society representatives, and experts; and direct observation of selected primaries and preparatory processes in the states of Lagos, Oyo, Abia, Anambra and the FCT Abuja.

For the second analytical stage, this evidence base was supplemented by the Kukah Centre observers' report, further targeted media review, relevant party and INEC statements and publications, and analysis of court rulings affecting nominations, party disputes and the post-primary process. The certified candidate lists published by INEC on 12 September were analysed both as an outcome of the nomination process and as a means of checking earlier claims about candidacies, withdrawals, replacements and exclusions.

The research was not a comprehensive nationwide observation of all party primaries. The team's direct field observations in Lagos, Oyo and the FCT plus Abia and Anambra observations by the Kukah-Centre colleagues remain a selected observation sample. Cases outside this sample are thus used analytically to identify recurring patterns and vulnerabilities across the nomination chain.

Constraints, triangulation and limits of comparison

The assessment faced significant constraints, principally the absence of publicly accessible primary-source documentation for important parts of the nomination process. This included parties' updated nomination guidelines and adjusted constitutions; membership registers and information on their verification by INEC; register-submission timestamps; notices and selected nomination methods submitted to INEC; INEC monitoring reports; Form EC 16B; candidate-upload records; accreditation figures; screening and appeal records; and consensus withdrawal or endorsement documents.

These constraints were mitigated through triangulation of field observations, interviews, the Kukah Centre observers' findings, public reporting, legal and regulatory review, court rulings, INEC statements and publications, and available party information. Newspaper accounts are treated as reported information and, where possible, checked against other reporting, official statements, court records or the final candidate lists. The report distinguishes, where relevant, between directly observed facts, information contained in public or official records, findings reported by other observers, reported allegations, and issues that could not be independently verified.

III. How the country went into the Primaries

Main Findings

- 1. The primaries took place in a stressed political environment.** Economic hardship, insecurity and institutional distrust increased the operational difficulty of organising credible primaries and made irregularities more likely to be read as evidence of capture rather than as isolated procedural failures.
- 2. The party landscape entered the primary period in an asymmetric condition.** The APC benefited from incumbency, defections and state machinery, while the opposition struggled with fragmentation, platform uncertainty, leadership disputes and unresolved coalition bargaining.
- 3. Nigeria's reform trajectory remained ambitious in diagnosis but selective in implementation.** The Uwais-era reform agenda, EU recommendations, INEC proposals and civil-society demands continued to converge around familiar problems, but reforms that would redistribute gatekeeping power remained the most politically difficult.
- 4. Legal uncertainty was already embedded before voting began.** Party registration and deregistration cases, factional leadership disputes, INEC timetable litigation and uncertainty around membership-register obligations meant that some parties entered primaries without settled clarity on actors, deadlines, authority or ballot access.

1. Political Context – Fragmented political landscape and contested state authority amid weak institutional legitimacy

The 2026 party primaries were conducted in a context of formal constitutional continuity but declining democratic legitimacy. Nigeria's federal order remains intact and elections still structure political competition; yet the institutions expected to convert competition into legitimacy, political parties, INEC, the judiciary, security agencies and elected representatives entered the cycle with sharply weakened credibility.

Economic hardship formed the immediate social backdrop: national poverty rose from 40.1 per cent in 2018/19 to 56 per cent in 2022/23 and approximately 62 per cent in 2026¹, while falling purchasing power, unemployment and rising costs of living increased vulnerability to patronage and informal barriers to participation.²

These pressures were compounded by insecurity. Since 2015, insecurity has expanded from the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East into multiple, unevenly intense theatres across all six geopolitical zones, ranging from jihadist and bandit violence in parts of the North, farmer–herder and communal conflict in the Middle Belt, separatist and criminal violence in the South-East, oil-related and criminal networks in the South-South, to kidnapping, cultism and urban criminality in the South-West. The crisis now shapes the political economy beyond local conflict zones: it constrains movement, economic activity and local organisation, severely affecting an estimated 12–18 per cent of the population and significantly affecting a further 18–25 per cent. In several

¹ The 2018/19 and 2022/23 figures were calculated by the World Bank, based on the results of two consecutive Nigerian Living Standards Surveys, conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics in conjunction with the World Bank. The figure for 2025 has been extrapolated by the World Bank, based on previous data and current trends, see: the World Bank's October 2025 Nigeria Development Update, slide 16.

² According to the World Bank, prices for food items, consumed by poor households, have increased fivefold between 2020 and 2024 Nigeria Development Update, slide 18.

areas, the state's monopoly of force has eroded into a hybrid security order in which federal agencies cooperate with local outfits or are challenged by jihadist, criminal or communal armed actors.

The result is a widening gap between democratic demand and democratic supply. Afrobarometer data show that in 2024, 64 per cent of Nigerians still preferred democracy to any other form of government and 74 per cent wanted leaders chosen through regular, open and honest elections. At the same time, more than 80 per cent did not trust key institutions such as the President, INEC, the National Assembly and the police; almost 93 per cent believed the country was going in the wrong direction, 30 percentage points more than in 2017; 82.4 per cent were “not at all” or “not very” satisfied with the way democracy works; and only 6.1 per cent described Nigeria as a full democracy. The legitimacy crisis is not new, but the depth and simultaneity of decline over the past seven years mark a qualitative deterioration rather than another cyclical downturn.

Implications for the Political Party Primaries

This context imposes an operational and a legitimating burden on the primaries. Economic hardship increases dependence on political patrons, governors and wealthy aspirants, strengthening incentives for inducement, vote buying and manipulation of party membership. Insecurity raises the costs of organising inclusive primaries across wards and communities. Direct primaries under the Electoral Act 2026 are especially demanding because ordinary party members, not only delegates, must participate; where movement is unsafe, party structures are weak or coercive actors control access to venues, participation becomes geographically selective and results easier to manufacture. This disadvantages smaller or internally divided parties and favours parties controlling state governments, local networks, finance and security access.

The deeper challenge is legitimacy. In a low-trust environment, irregularities are unlikely to be read as isolated failures; they reinforce the perception that institutions are captured and outcomes predetermined. Primaries must therefore be not only formally compliant but transparent, competitive and demonstrably free from coercion to get public support. Reliable membership records, advance publication of rules, neutral security and disaggregated results could make direct primaries a mechanism for broader participation. Conversely, inflated turnout, centrally announced results or consensus arrangements that mask elite pressure would entrench party oligarchy and the perception thereof rather than correct it.

Failure would extend beyond internal party affairs. Opaque or coercive primaries narrow voter choice before the general election, shift nomination power to governors, financiers and executives, fuel defections and parallel structures, invite litigation and increase the risk of factional violence. Under the 2026 Act, non-compliance with law or party nomination rules can lead to the exclusion of a candidate from the election. More fundamentally, even a well-run general election cannot compensate for undemocratic nominations: the 2026 primaries were therefore the first major legitimacy test of the 2027 cycle. Credible primaries could help reconnect democratic demand with institutional supply, while failed primaries would carry the current crisis of confidence into the general election and make outcomes harder to legitimise.

2. The Political Party Landscape

Nigeria entered the 2026 primary cycle with an increasingly asymmetric party system: a presidency consolidating power across the federation and an opposition that was fragmenting, realigning and attempting to rebuild while several parties faced legal disputes threatening their very existence. President Tinubu combined incumbency with the co-optation of opposition governors, legislators and regional power brokers through coercion and incentives. By the start of the primaries, the APC

held approximately 87–88 of the currently filled 106 Senate seats and an estimated 302 of 360 House of Representatives seats, while 31 of 36 state governors were APC members aligned with the President.

This consolidation is politically effective but democratically costly. Defecting governors bring state finances, local-government networks, legislators and nomination machinery, and usually expect recognition as the party's main authority in their states. Their incorporation weakens rival parties, expands presidential influence over viable candidacies and risks turning electoral competition into intra-dominant-party bargaining. APC control of more than four-fifths of occupied Senate seats also weakens legislative checks on executive power. Co-optation does not remove conflict; it relocates it inside the APC, where incoming governors and defectors seek control of state executives, nominations and succession arrangements while established cadres resist displacement.

The PDP appeared as the principal institutional casualty. Its unresolved 2023 zoning dispute, the G5 rebellion and Nyesom Wike's incorporation into Tinubu's cabinet left it divided between actors seeking to rebuild an autonomous opposition party and a Wike-aligned network able to influence the PDP while cooperating with the federal government. Losses of governors, senators and state structures deprived it of finance and organisational reach, while Seyi Makinde and Bala Mohammed retained important but not nationally uncontested platforms. Continuing disputes over party leadership and recognition meant the PDP entered the primary period with competing factions rather than a settled national command.

The ADC, Labour Party and NNPP offered possible vehicles for opposition renewal but are also internally divided. After 2023, Atiku Abubakar, Peter Obi and Rabiu Kwankwaso gradually moved from parallel strategies towards cooperation. In July 2025, leading opposition figures adopted the ADC as a common platform under former Senate President David Mark; Atiku later joined ADC, while Obi also moved from the Labour Party to ADC before migrating to the Nigeria Democratic Congress. By March–April 2026 the ADC remained disputed, the coalition had not agreed on ticket leadership, and the NNPP's Kano base had fragmented, with Governor Abba Yusuf and some federal legislators moving to APC while former Kano governor, Kwankwaso and others gravitated towards opposition cooperation (ADC and later NDC).

The Ibadan opposition summit on 25 April 2026, two days after the start of the primaries, acknowledged this problem but did not resolve it. Leaders associated with the PDP, ADC, NNPP and other parties agreed in principle to explore support for a single presidential candidate against Tinubu. Yet the hierarchy of ambitions among Atiku, Obi, Kwankwaso, Rotimi Amaechi and others remained unsettled. Atiku framed 2027 as his final presidential attempt; Obi's one-term pledge sought to ease concerns over another extended southern presidency; and Kwankwaso remained central because a northern Muslim politician with an organised Kano-based movement could broaden any opposition ticket's territorial reach. But his autonomous organisation and presidential ambition made a subordinate role difficult without guarantees on succession, appointments and coalition control.

The zoning logic further complicated opposition coordination. As a South-Western president, Tinubu's second-term bid benefits from the informal expectation that the presidency should remain in the South until 2031 after Buhari's eight northern years. Obi therefore needed not only to broaden his South-Eastern, Christian, urban and youth-oriented base, but also to reassure northern power brokers. Unless the opposition could convert agreement in principle into a single candidate, integrated state structures and enforceable elite bargains, the primaries would formalise competing opposition candidacies rather than resolve the opposition's dilemma,

repeating its 2023 structural disadvantage: broad dissatisfaction dispersed across several tickets while a consolidated APC prevails without necessarily commanding an absolute majority.

The 2026 primaries therefore became an early test of whether the 2027 cycle could move beyond formal reform. The danger was not only open non-compliance, but formal compliance that preserved elite capture, monetisation and exclusion. Without transparent party documentation, INEC monitoring records, dispute resolution, civil society scrutiny and security conduct, the primaries would carry the existing crisis of confidence into the general election.

3. An Unfinished Reform Agenda – Nigeria's Electoral Reform Trajectory, 2008–2026

Institutionally, Nigeria is a federal presidential republic governed by the 1999 Constitution. The Constitution establishes the framework for elections and political parties: it allocates powers among the National Assembly, executives and courts; creates INEC as the election management body; defines election windows, tenure, party status and access to political participation; and fixes the basic architecture for election litigation. Since 1999, this framework has been repeatedly revised: five constitutional alteration packages, 25 alteration Acts and six principal Electoral Acts have changed rules, timelines and institutions. Yet the way electoral power is acquired, defended and reproduced has adapted more than it has changed. Elite bargaining, patronage, weak enforcement, coercion and disputed legitimacy have persisted across successive reforms.³

The 2026 primaries therefore took place within an unfinished reform process that began with the Uwais Committee after the flawed 2007 elections. The reform cycle has been familiar: disputed elections produce pressure for change; selective legal or technological reforms follow; expectations rise; implementation exposes unresolved institutional weaknesses; and a renewed legitimacy crisis restarts the process. The deeper objectives - independent electoral administration, transparent appointments, credible prosecution of offences, inclusive participation and timely dispute resolution - remain unrealised or only partly achieved.⁴

Reform without transformation

The Uwais agenda targeted the political foundations of electoral malpractice: presidential influence over INEC appointments, weak funding guarantees, party regulation inside INEC, poor prosecution of electoral offences and disputes that outlasted elections. These structural proposals have been the most resistant to implementation. The relatively credible elections of 2011 and 2015 showed that professional leadership, administrative competence and political restraint can produce progress under existing law; they also showed how fragile such progress remains when it depends on officeholders rather than enforceable institutional safeguards.

The expansion of electoral technology illustrates the same tension. Biometric accreditation and the public results portal improved the technical architecture and raised expectations of transparency. The 2023 elections nevertheless showed that technology cannot compensate for weak collation, poor communication, insecurity, inconsistent publication of results and low institutional trust. Technology increases auditability, but when implementation fails it also makes failures more visible and politically damaging.

The obstacles are therefore political and institutional, not simply technical. Powerful actors have limited incentives to reduce executive discretion, constrain party elites, strengthen campaign-

³ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, ss 1, 4, 5, 6, 14, 40, 42, 76, 116, 132, 153, 178 and 285; Third Schedule, Part I, para 15. Nigeria has had five constitutional alteration packages, 25 alteration Acts, and six principal Electoral Acts since 1999.

⁴ Electoral Reform Committee chaired by Justice Mohammed Lawal Uwais, Report of the Electoral Reform Committee, 2008; key proposals included reform of INEC appointments, an Electoral Offences Commission, a Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission, independent candidacy, improved funding and stronger dispute-resolution timelines.

finance enforcement or accept sanctions that might later be used against them. Electoral integrity is fragmented across INEC, the legislature, executive, parties, security agencies, prosecutors and courts, so improvement in one institution is often undermined elsewhere. Reforms are also frequently introduced late in the cycle, leaving little time for testing, training, public education and party adaptation.

The 2024-2026 reform process

The current reform initiative began after the 2023 general elections and developed through a broad consultative process involving the National Assembly, INEC, civil society and electoral stakeholders. It formally opened with the first joint public engagement of the Senate and House Committees on Electoral Matters in Lagos on 13 February 2024, convened with PLAC support. Civil society later consolidated its position through the Citizens Memorandum, presented to the National Assembly in September 2024 and further discussed with lawmakers in October. The Memorandum combined EU EOM recommendations, INEC proposals, domestic observer findings and long-standing Uwais-era reforms.⁵

The EU has observed all Nigerian general elections since 1999 and has consistently recommended reforms aligned with many domestic priorities. The 2023 EU EOM again stressed independent and professional electoral administration, enforcement against offences, timely electoral justice, inclusion and transparent results management, while adding emphasis on real-time results publication, technology scrutiny, voter-register integrity, media protection, accessibility and observer access. In October 2025, the EU Election Follow-up Mission found only modest progress: one of 23 recommendations fully implemented, two partially implemented, ten ongoing, two too early to assess and eight not implemented. The process still appeared formally open, but the political likelihood of passing the most sensitive reforms was already limited.⁶

The reform agenda then under discussion drew from overlapping sources. Some proposals directly reflected EU priorities: mandatory electronic transmission, shorter litigation timelines, affirmative action for women and removal of legal ambiguities. Others came from the Uwais lineage, including an Electoral Offences Commission, a political-party regulatory body, independent candidacy and INEC appointment reform. Further proposals gained traction through dialogue among civil society, INEC and the National Assembly, including early voting for election-duty personnel, inmate voting, alternatives to compulsory PVC use, single-day principal elections, improved funding timelines and stronger statutory grounding for electronic transmission. The breadth of the agenda reconfirmed a long-standing pattern: Nigeria has not lacked reform proposals; it has lacked sustained political ownership for reforms that constrain power.

From broad agenda to selective statutory reform

The narrowing of the reform agenda occurred in stages. In October 2025, the ordinary-law reform package around the Electoral Bill 2025 remained relatively broad. It covered issues such as earlier release and audit of INEC funds, stronger oversight of Resident Electoral Commissioners, prisoner voting, digital voter identification, party membership registers, party-primary rules, candidate withdrawal and substitution, campaign finance, electoral offences, media access and the legal status of result transmission.

⁵ PLAC, National Assembly electoral-reform updates, 2024-2025; Citizens Memorandum for Reform of the Electoral Legal Framework, 2024/2025; EU Election Follow-up Mission to Nigeria, Final Report, 20 October 2025, reform and stakeholder-roundtable sections.

⁶ EU EOM Nigeria, Final Report, 2023, Recommendations; EU EFM Nigeria, Final Report, 20 October 2025, Executive Summary and Implementation Status Matrix. The EFM assessed one recommendation as fully implemented, two partially implemented, ten ongoing, two too early to determine and eight not implemented.

The Electoral Act 2026, signed on 18 February 2026, became the principal statutory framework for the 2027 cycle, but it should not be presented only as an expansion of safeguards. It was also a selective and, in some respects, regressive recalibration of the electoral calendar. Compared with the Electoral Act 2022 and the October 2025 reform proposals, the 2026 Act narrowed several important planning windows. Most significantly, the deadline for releasing election funds to INEC was reduced from one year before the general election to six months, despite the October 2025 Bill's attempt to preserve and strengthen the one-year rule. This weakens the value of early financial certainty for INEC, particularly because critical pre-election activities, including party primaries and related disputes, begin before the six-month funding deadline arrives. The Act also reduced the notice-of-election period from 360 to 300 days, the deadline for party submission of candidate lists from 180 to 120 days, and the publication of final candidate lists from 150 to 60 days before election day. These changes give government, INEC and political parties greater formal flexibility, but they also compress public scrutiny, reduce certainty for voters and observers, and place heavier pressure on parties and INEC in the first election cycle under the new law.

The table provides a quick overview over the timeline reductions:

Table 2: shortened timelines – Electoral Acts 2022 and 2026 compared⁷

Issue	Electoral Act 2022	Electoral Act 2026	Critical implication
INEC election funds	One year before general election	Six months before general election	Weaker early financial certainty
Notice of election	360 days before election	300 days before election	Shorter formal notice window
Candidate-list submission	180 days before election	120 days before election	More party flexibility, less certainty
Final candidate list	150 days before election	60 days before election	Less time for public scrutiny
Party membership register	30 days before primaries, congresses or conventions	21 days before primaries, congresses or conventions	Shorter window despite heavier register obligations
Campaign commencement	150 days before election	150 days retained	Now begins before nominations fully close
Publication of candidate particulars	7 days after receipt	21 days after receipt	More processing time for INEC, slower public access

Substantively, the Act made four changes especially relevant to the primaries and the credibility of the 2027 cycle. First, it gave statutory recognition to electronic transmission of polling-unit results to IReV, while preserving the signed paper result sheet as the primary source for collation where electronic transmission fails. Second, it required political parties to maintain digital membership registers and made the register submitted to INEC the basis for determining who may vote or be voted for in party primaries, congresses and conventions. Third, it abolished indirect primaries and limited candidate nomination to direct primaries or consensus, with consensus requiring the written consent of all cleared aspirants. Fourth, it shifted several candidate-qualification and nomination disputes further into the pre-election phase by expanding the grounds and procedures through which aspirants and parties may challenge false information, withdrawal, substitution or non-compliance with party-primary rules.⁸

⁷ A more comprehensive and detailed table, including also the reform proposals under consideration in the NASS by October 2025, is available as an annex to the report.

⁸ However, the final Act did not carry the full October 2025 reform agenda into law. Some proposals were diluted. For example, the earlier proposal for the release of INEC funds one year before elections was reduced to six months. Some proposals were omitted

The constitutional track narrowed separately. By mid-2026, out of approximately 260 proposals the Constitution Review process had prioritised a first batch of 37 Constitution Alteration Bills. Among those the women's special-seats proposal is the most plausible constitutional reform that could still affect 2027, because the draft bill envisages an indirect electoral-college model and provides that the first election into the additional seats would take place at the first general election after commencement, subject to an implementing Act being in place before that election. It would require unusually rapid passage, whereas constitution alteration bills with its requirements for ratification (2/3 majority of both houses of National Assembly), approval (at least two-thirds of State Houses of Assembly, i.e. 24 states) and final adoption and promulgation then by the NASS usually take several months. Other components of the 37 package bills include provisions for independent candidacy, SIEC reform and the establishment of an Electoral Offence Commission. Because of the time needed for necessary subsequent legislative adaption and implementation these reforms will not affect the 2027 elections even if the alteration package is passed within the next month or so.

Other reforms remained outside both the Electoral Act 2026 and the published first batch of 37 Constitution Alteration Bills. These included a full redesign of INEC appointment procedures, a Political Parties Regulatory Commission, the transfer of INEC's party-registration and party-monitoring powers to another body that would be established (Political Party regulatory Commission).⁹ Their exclusion confirms a familiar pattern: reforms that improve procedure but do not fundamentally redistribute political gatekeeping power are more likely to pass, while reforms that constrain parties, incumbents, financiers or appointment authorities move more slowly or fall out of the immediate reform package.

The current reform trajectory redistributes electoral governance across institutions (INEC, political parties and the judiciary). This is not a complete departure from past practice: in 2022, INEC already monitored primaries, received notices, registers, delegate information, party guidelines and candidate data, but EU reporting found that the monitoring methodology was not public, the documents submitted to INEC were not open to scrutiny, and the Commission's actual supervisory powers over party primaries remained inadequate. The reform trajectory will therefore improve election administration only if reduced judicial intervention is matched by stronger transparency obligations on parties, timely publication of party rules and registers, clearer INEC procedures for recording non-compliance, and effective coordination with the proposed Electoral Offences Commission.

4. A Plethora of Legal Uncertainties

Political party litigation

The primaries opened in a legal environment marked by unusually high uncertainty. The Electoral Act 2026 altered the nomination architecture, but litigation over party registration, deregistration, factional leadership, INEC's timetable and membership-register obligations meant that the actors, rules and deadlines of the primary process were not fully settled. The uncertainty affected which parties could participate, which leaderships could issue notices to INEC, which registers governed

altogether, including prisoner voting and QR-code-based digital voter identification. Others were addressed only partially: the Act raised campaign-spending ceilings, set a ₦500 million limit on individual or entity donations to a candidate, and required parties to file and publish audited election-expense returns, but it did not introduce dedicated campaign-finance accounts, real-time disclosure, independent campaign-finance audits or a stronger enforcement institution.

⁹ Other electoral reforms that were not included in the prioritised 37 bill package include diaspora voting, dedicated campaign accounts, public audits of election technologies, stronger enforceable observer-access provisions, and special seats for persons with disabilities.

participation, whether INEC's compressed timetable could lawfully curtail statutory rights, and whether candidates from disputed processes could later be uploaded, accepted or excluded.

Party registration and deregistration had already become part of the legal uncertainty surrounding the cycle. The NDC entered the official party framework in February 2026 after INEC complied with a Federal High Court judgment of 10 December 2025 ordering its registration; INEC announced compliance on 5 February and presented the certificate on 23 February. The NDP followed through a separate Federal High Court judgment delivered on 16 February 2026. At the same time, a suit by the National Forum of Former Legislators sought to compel INEC to deregister ADC, Accord, AA, APP and ZLP for alleged failure to meet constitutional electoral-performance thresholds. The case was pending before the primaries and was politically significant because ADC had become a principal opposition platform. The immediate issue was not yet a final deregistration order, but that parties expected to conduct primaries while their legal status was under challenge.¹⁰

The consequences for parties were potentially serious. A party whose registration is uncertain may mobilise aspirants, sell forms, conduct primaries and declare candidates, but every step remains vulnerable if its status is later invalidated or suspended. Aspirants may spend resources in a party that ultimately cannot field candidates; coalitions may form around an insecure ballot vehicle; and INEC may monitor activities while also facing litigation over whether the party should remain registered. For smaller parties this is damaging because capacity is already weak; for opposition platforms such as ADC it also affects public confidence in whether the party can serve as a national vehicle.

A second layer of uncertainty concerned factional authority. Although leadership disputes are often described as internal party matters, in primaries they have direct legal effects. Recognised leadership controls notices to INEC, screening panels, nomination forms, primary committees, appeal structures, portal access and litigation strategy. ADC entered the primary period with unresolved leadership-recognition litigation, while the PDP remained divided between competing factional claims and convention-related disputes. A primary conducted by one faction may be politically meaningful but legally vulnerable if another faction is later recognised as the competent authority.¹¹

Factional uncertainty can produce parallel primaries, rival candidate lists, competing claims to the same ticket and contradictory communications to INEC. It can also affect consensus arrangements, because the authority that negotiates withdrawals or certifies written consent may later be challenged. Even where a court does not invalidate a nomination, the uncertainty weakens party cohesion, encourages defections and allows opponents to frame the party as legally unstable and electorally unprepared.

Litigation over INEC's timetable

A third source of uncertainty arose during the primaries from litigation over INEC's timetable and regulatory discretion. On 20 May 2026, while parties were operating under INEC's 23 April-30 May primary window, the Federal High Court in *Youth Party v INEC* nullified aspects of INEC's compressed timetable affecting primaries, membership-register submission and candidate-nomination timelines. Six days later, in the SDP case, another Federal High Court affirmed INEC's general power to issue and adjust timetables, but held that such power must remain within the

¹⁰ Electoral Act 2026, ss 75-76; *Takori Mohammed Sanni & Ors v INEC*, FHC/LKJ/CS/49/2025; *Ada Okwori & Ors v INEC*, FHC/ABJ/CS/2796/2025; *Incorporated Trustees of the National Forum of Former Legislators v INEC & Ors*, FHC/ABJ/CS/2637/2025; Constitution, s 225A.

¹¹ ADC leadership-recognition proceedings reportedly including FHC/ABJ/CS/1819/2025 and related state-executive litigation; PDP leadership and convention litigation including FHC/ABJ/CS/1159/2026, CA/IB/86/2026 and SC/CV/164/2026.

Electoral Act. The judgments did not remove INEC's authority to administer elections, receive notices, monitor primaries or sequence activities. They did, however, question whether INEC could use administrative timetables to abridge statutory periods.¹²

The practical implications were far-reaching. Parties that had rushed to comply with INEC's timetable could face claims by excluded aspirants that the compressed calendar unlawfully denied them fair participation. Parties that delayed or sought to revise their processes could argue that statutory time had reopened. Membership-register uncertainty entered the litigation environment not through challenges to specific party registers, but through the broader question of whether INEC could lawfully impose compressed register-submission deadlines. The result was a process in which parties were expected to meet operational deadlines while the legal status of some deadlines remained unsettled.

For political parties, the consequences extend beyond primary day. A candidate who emerges from a primary may still be challenged if their name did not appear in the register submitted to INEC; a late defector may be politically attractive but legally vulnerable; and a replacement primary may become difficult where the only viable substitute was not in the original register. Without public registers, party guidelines, accreditation records and INEC monitoring reports, disputes are likely to focus on whether a candidate emerged through a lawful method, from a lawful register, before a lawful party organ and within lawful time.

Judicial remedies and the risk of strategic litigation

Judicial remedies were also structurally limited. The 2026 Act restricts ordinary court intervention in internal party affairs and prevents courts from stopping primaries or general elections pending determination of suits. This may reduce abusive litigation and prevent court orders from paralysing the calendar, but it also means many disputes will be corrected only after the political process has moved forward. A party may conduct a primary, announce a candidate, enter reconciliation talks and prepare for upload to INEC while the legality of the process remains unresolved. Courts therefore become more corrective than preventive, increasing the likelihood that primary disputes spill into candidate submission, final-list publication and the campaign.¹³

The legal uncertainty entering the primaries had systemic consequences. It affected party access to the ballot, factional authority, the validity of notices and primaries, aspirant eligibility, substitutions and the stability of candidate lists. It also strengthened incentives to treat litigation as part of nomination strategy rather than merely as a remedy for wrongdoing. Judicial intervention remains essential to the rule of law, but the concentration of high-profile cases affecting opposition parties has fuelled perceptions that courts are being used as instruments of political competition. Whether justified or not, that perception is politically significant. The credibility of electoral justice depends not only on legally sound decisions but also on public confidence that courts operate independently, consistently and free from political influence.

Several of these uncertainties, and parts of the legal framework described above, were subsequently narrowed or reshaped by appellate decisions after the primary window closed, while others migrated into candidate certification, substitution and party-authority disputes. These post-primary developments, the changes they produced in the applicable legal framework and the new uncertainties arising from them are examined in Chapter VII.

¹² Youth Party v INEC, FHC/ABJ/CS/517/2026, judgment reportedly delivered 20 May 2026; Social Democratic Party v INEC, FHC/ABJ/CS/720/2026, judgment reportedly delivered 26 May 2026; Electoral Act 2026, ss 29, 31-33, 77, 82, 84 and 98.

¹³ Electoral Act 2026, ss 83(5)-(6), 88(2) and 88(4); Constitution, s 285(14); PLAC, Monitoring Political Parties and Jurisdictional Limits: INEC Oversight and Court Intervention under the Electoral Act 2026, March 2026.

IV. The Political Party Primaries 2026

Main Findings

- 1. The 2026 framework made nominations more formal, but not necessarily more verifiable.** Digital registers, notices, direct primaries, consensus documentation, party guidelines, INEC monitoring and candidate upload created a more document-heavy process, but much of the decisive documentation remained inaccessible to aspirants, members and observers.
- 2. INEC's role became more evidentiary, but its corrective authority remained incomplete.** INEC receives documents, monitors processes and holds important records, but the framework does not clearly establish how a finding of non-compliance becomes a timely and binding consequence for candidate upload or party eligibility.
- 3. The compressed calendar turned legal duties into transparency risks.** Parties were required to meet new register, notice, guideline and primary obligations shortly after the Act came into force, while INEC's late regulations and the absence of party-by-party publication of submission timestamps made compliance difficult to verify.
- 4. The key benchmarks of legality remained controlled by parties and INEC.** Party constitutions, primary guidelines, registers, Expression of Interest and nomination-fee schedules, Form EC 16B, monitoring reports and upload records became central to legality, but were not made available in a way that allowed systematic public scrutiny.
- 5. High Expression of Interest and nomination fees remained a form of financial gatekeeping before the primary itself.** By setting costly thresholds for access to forms, parties filtered aspirants before membership support, programme quality or internal popularity could be tested; they also created incentives for patron dependence, cost recovery from public office and strategic form-buying as a route to intra-party bargaining. This is especially consequential because, in the absence of independent candidacy, party fees operate as an indirect barrier to ballot access and narrow the choices eventually available to voters.
- 6. Financial barriers are most consequential where a ticket offers a viable route to office.** Strong party structures and a substantial Legislative presence can increase the political value of nomination and the demand on which high entry charges depend.

This chapter examines the legal and administrative framework as enacted and applied during the primary period. Subsequent appellate decisions affecting that framework, including the membership-register and nomination-method provisions, are addressed in Chapter VII.

1. A more formalised legal framework, but party control remains central

Nigeria's constitutional framework places political parties at the centre of access to elective office. Freedom of association protects political participation, but candidature is effectively mediated through party membership and party sponsorship. Parties retain organisational autonomy, yet once internal procedures select candidates for public elections, those procedures acquire a public-law dimension and must comply with the Constitution, the Electoral Act, INEC Regulations and the party's own operative rules. Regional case law has left Nigeria's party-sponsorship model intact but cautions against treating party control over nominations as a rights-free zone.¹⁴

¹⁴ Constitution 1999, ss. 40, 221-223 and 228; Third Schedule, Part I, para. 15(c). ECOWAS Court: Ugokwe v Nigeria, 7 Oct. 2005; Umeh v Nigeria, 1 July 2020; Kenneth Roberts v Nigeria, 27 Oct. 2021; African Court, Mtikila v Tanzania, 14 June 2013.

The Electoral Act 2026 recast candidate nomination by abolishing indirect or delegate-based primaries and recognising only direct primaries and consensus. Direct primaries are conducted under party guidelines. Consensus is lawful only where all cleared aspirants give written consent, voluntarily withdraw, endorse the consensus candidate and have the choice ratified through the prescribed party process. The reform addresses delegate capture and imposed consensus, but places greater weight on party guidelines, registers, screening and documentation.¹⁵

The membership register is the central compliance instrument. Parties must maintain digital registers containing specified personal data, submit them to INEC not later than 21 days before the relevant primary, congress or convention, and use no other register. Only listed members may vote or be voted for; failure to submit the register within the statutory period makes the party ineligible to field a candidate. This is defensible as a safeguard against fictitious membership, opportunistic defections and post-primary platform shopping. It also creates new gatekeeping risks: where party leaders or factions control the register, they can shape the selectorate¹⁶ before voting begins. Digital membership registers could become a key evidentiary record for nomination compliance if timely submission is matched by clear verification procedures, including de-duplication checks, eligibility parameters, technology used and timelines, together with a public interface enabling aspirants, members and observers to verify who was entitled to participate, vote and be voted for.

The register rule is incomplete in two important respects. Consensus is regulated mainly through consent, withdrawal, endorsement and ratification, but the framework does not clearly explain who may participate in the ratification congress or whether the consensus candidate must already appear in the submitted register. Replacement candidates raise a second timing problem: where a candidate withdraws, the party must hold another primary and submit a substitute within 14 days, while the register rule ordinarily requires submission 21 days before any primary. The law does not clarify whether the replacement exercise may use the original register, a later register or only candidates already listed in the original submission.¹⁷

The Act also shifts candidate-qualification disputes further into the pre-election phase. False information in nomination documents remains challengeable, but principally by an aspirant within the pre-election framework and constitutional time limit. Qualification is no longer an ordinary post-election petition ground. This clarifies some boundaries, but increases the burden on early detection, documentation and litigation; genuine defects may become difficult to remedy if not challenged in time.¹⁸

2. Electoral calendar and implications for the primary process

These rules operated within a compressed calendar. The Act reduced some statutory deadlines, while INEC's timetable front-loaded primaries and closed candidate upload well before the statutory outer limits. Parties therefore had to compile registers, choose direct or consensus

¹⁵ Electoral Act 2026, ss. 84(1)-(2), 86 and 87; PLAC, Candidate Nomination by Political Parties under the Electoral Act 2026: Key Changes and Implications, March 2026.

¹⁶ "Selectorate" is a political-science term formed by analogy with "electorate" — from "select" + "electorate". It refers to the body of persons entitled or practically able to select a leader or candidate. In party-nomination contexts, it can refer to delegates, party members entitled to vote in a direct primary, or a smaller group of party officials and power brokers where selection is controlled internally. The term is used here to distinguish between the formal selectorate — party members legally entitled to participate in candidate selection — and the effective selectorate — those whose access, accreditation, information and organisational leverage actually determine the nomination outcome, see: Collins English Dictionary / Dictionary.com, "selectorate"; Cambridge Dictionary, "selectorate"; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival* (MIT Press, 2003).

¹⁷ Electoral Act 2026, ss. 31, 33 and 77; INEC, Regulations and Guidelines for Political Parties 2026, cls. 4(1)-(6), 22(4), 24(4)-(5) and 28(5).

¹⁸ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, s. 285(9) and (14); Electoral Act 2026, ss. 29(5)-(7), 88 and 138; PLAC, Candidate Qualification in the Electoral Act 2026: From Post-Election Petitions to Pre-Election Scrutiny, April 2026.

methods, resolve disputes and prepare candidate particulars within weeks of the Act's assent, a challenging exercise under enormous time pressure.¹⁹

Table 3. Electoral timetable

Stage	Statutory outer frame after 2026 reform	INEC 2027 timetable choice	Compression shown
Notice of election	Notice reduced from 360 to 300 days before polling.	Applied to polls fixed for 16 Jan. 2027 and 6 Feb. 2027.	60 days removed from the outer electoral frame.
Party primaries and disputes	No fixed April-May statutory window; process only had to fit within the nomination framework.	23 Apr.-30 May 2026 for primaries, including dispute resolution.	Administrative front-loading soon after enactment.
Candidate upload	Latest statutory candidate submission: 18 Sept. 2026 for Pres./NASS and 9 Oct. 2026 for Gov./SHA.	Federal portal: 27 Jun.-11 Jul., extended to 14 Jul. 2026. State-level portal: 18 Jul.-8 Aug., extended to 11 Aug. 2026.	Upload closed roughly two months before the statutory outer deadline.
Publication of candidate particulars	Under s.29(3), INEC must publish candidate particulars within 21 days of receipt. If receipt occurred only on the latest date permitted under s.29(1), the derived latest dates would be 9 Oct. 2026 for Pres./NASS and 30 Oct. 2026 for Gov./SHA.	Pres./NASS: 1 Aug. 2026. Gov./SHA: 29 Aug. 2026.	Public scrutiny began well before the latest dates theoretically possible under the statutory outer frame. The 21-day period is receipt-based, so actual compliance must be assessed against the date INEC received each completed submission.
Withdrawal / replacement	Latest statutory withdrawal point: 18 Oct. 2026 for Pres./NASS and 8 Nov. 2026 for Gov./SHA.	INEC date: 22 Aug. 2026 for Pres./NASS and 19 Sept. 2026 for Gov./SHA.	Replacement route brought forward.
Final nomination documents	Latest statutory candidate-submission deadline: 18 Sept. 2026 for Pres./NASS and 9 Oct. 2026 for Gov./SHA.	INEC date: 29 Aug. 2026 for Pres./NASS and 26 Sept. 2026 for Gov./SHA.	Formal nomination documentation required before the last day allowed by the Act.
Publication of final list of candidates	Under s.32(1), INEC must publish the final list not later than 60 days before polling: 17 Nov. 2026 for Pres./NASS and 8 Dec. 2026 for Gov./SHA.	Pres./NASS: 12 Sept. 2026. Gov./SHA: 10 Oct. 2026.	Final-list publication was brought forward by roughly two months compared with the statutory outer limit, providing earlier administrative certainty while litigation and legally required corrections could still continue.

Note: Pres./NASS = Presidential/National Assembly; Gov./SHA = Governorship/State House of Assembly.

The transparency design was uneven. Registers contained sensitive data, including NINs, photographs and disability status, yet the non-sensitive documents needed to verify legality - party constitutions, primary guidelines, notices, selected method, monitoring reports and Form EC 16B - were not placed in a public repository. The framework therefore risked protecting elite-controlled documentation while leaving participants unable to assess legality.²⁰

Publication of the final presidential and National Assembly candidate lists on 12 September 2026 has provided greater administrative certainty over the field of contestants, but it does not necessarily establish legal finality. Pending and still-possible proceedings concern, among other issues, party registration and authority to nominate, disputed primary outcomes and post-primary substitutions; these cases and their possible effects on individual candidacies and party

¹⁹ Electoral Act 2026, ss. 28-33, 60, 62, 77 and 98; PLAC, The 2027 Electoral Calendar: Legal Timelines, Administrative Choices and Implications, March 2026; Youth Party v INEC, FHC/ABJ/CS/517/2026, judgment reportedly delivered 20 May 2026; SDP v INEC, FHC/ABJ/CS/720/2026, judgment reportedly delivered 26 May 2026.

²⁰ Electoral Act 2026, s. 77(2); INEC Regulations 2026, cls. 4(1)(k) and 24(4); Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023.

participation are examined in Chapter VII. A subsequent court judgment may therefore still require INEC to amend a published list. The recent Osun governorship election illustrates the operational implications: following a Federal High Court judgment requiring the inclusion of an additional SDP candidate, INEC had to adjust the candidate field and reproduce election materials shortly before the 15 August poll.²¹ A comparable late judicial change affecting a 2027 candidature – particularly in the presidential election or across a large number of constituencies – cannot yet be excluded. The earlier publication of the final lists therefore provides a more stable administrative basis for preparations, but does not remove the need for timely resolution of outstanding litigation before ballot production becomes operationally difficult and costly.

3. INEC's legal role: monitoring without a complete enforcement chain

INEC's role is broad but constitutionally bounded. It organises and supervises public elections, but it monitors rather than conducts political party primaries. The 2026 framework nevertheless gives INEC a dense documentary role: it receives registers, notices, guidelines and candidate submissions; deploys monitors; keeps records of party activities; and may seek information or clarification where party conduct appears contrary to law, regulation or party rules.

This role has long contained a tension between monitoring, information control and corrective authority. The Constitution gives INEC important responsibilities in relation to political parties, including registration, monitoring of party organisation and operation, and monitoring of conventions, congresses and primaries. It also recognises INEC's power to deregister parties that fail to meet constitutional thresholds. Yet the point at which monitoring becomes binding corrective action has never been fully settled. Earlier frameworks already showed this ambiguity: INEC could observe, request information and issue regulatory guidance, while many decisive questions about candidate validity, primary non-compliance and party authority remained dependent on courts. The 2014 Regulations expressed a more interventionist compliance ambition, including stronger language on party-primary rules, fees, guidelines and monitoring, but such provisions were vulnerable where treated as final powers to invalidate primaries or exclude candidates without a clear statutory procedure.

Seen against the 2022 primary cycle, the 2026 process shows continuity beneath a changed legal architecture. In 2022, a more prescriptive framework already placed INEC at the centre of primary documentation and monitoring, yet the compliance record remained largely internal: INEC's monitoring methodology was not public, and party documents submitted to the Commission were not open to scrutiny. The 2026 Act changed the nomination model by abolishing indirect primaries and making direct primaries, consensus and membership registers central, but it did not resolve the same public-audit deficit. Opacity shifted from delegate eligibility, delegate lists and convention procedures to register submission, accreditation, venue information, consensus records, Form EC 16B, monitoring reports and candidate upload. In both cycles, compliance could be asserted by INEC or party leaderships, while aspirants, members and observers lacked timely access to the evidence needed to test it. The 2022 EEM had already identified this problem, noting that INEC did not disclose its monitoring methodology and that documents furnished to INEC were not open to public scrutiny.

The monitoring chain is document-heavy. Parties must notify INEC at least 21 days before nomination meetings, transmit primary guidelines ten days before the primary, publish venue, date, time, guidelines and procedures, and make core documents available to monitors. Monitors are expected to check planning committees, aspirant lists, guidelines, accreditation, voting method

²¹ Channels Television, interview with INEC Commissioner Kunle Ajayi, 14 August 2026. The report identifies the underlying judgment as 22 July; it also records late receipt/verification of the order. [channelstv.com]

and security arrangements. In consensus processes, written consent forms must be presented and annexed to the monitoring report. Results are to be recorded on Form EC 16B before authorised national party officials submit candidate particulars through the INEC Candidate Nomination Portal.²²

The central defect is the missing institutional step between breach and consequence. Failure to submit a register within the statutory period makes the party ineligible to field a candidate; failure to give statutory notice renders the exercise invalid. But neither the Act nor the Regulations identify the INEC organ or procedure that makes a binding, reasoned determination of ineligibility or invalidity. There is no prescribed notice to the party or aspirants, evidentiary standard, deadline, internal review mechanism or rule explaining whether INEC should refuse upload, accept it subject to challenge, seek clarification or await a court order. A fine for refusal to cooperate with INEC is not a substitute for a determination that a primary is invalid.²³

This ambiguity exposed INEC from both directions. An observation of non-compliance could remain an internal file while a party proceeded to upload nominees. An attempt to enforce an unstated decision procedure could expose the Commission to an allegation of unlawful interference in internal party affairs. Comparative experience in Kenya, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Uganda and South Africa shows how party autonomy, external regulation and party-list arrangements can each leave substantial control in elite hands. In Nigeria, detailed rules surrounded elite-controlled processes without a sufficiently clear enforcement procedure for turning evidence of a breach into timely corrective action.²⁴

The problem is aggravated where routine communication between INEC and political parties weakens. In earlier cycles, regular consultative engagement appears to have helped parties understand INEC's operational constraints and allowed INEC to explain its timetable, documentation and compliance expectations. Where that relationship deteriorates, administrative disagreement is more likely to become litigation strategy.

The resulting risk is a regulatory gap at the intersection of party autonomy, INEC monitoring and judicial control. INEC may hold the evidence of compliance, parties control much of the process, and courts remain the principal forum for binding correction. For the next primary cycle, the priority should be to make INEC's monitoring role publicly intelligible and legally usable through a clear methodology, timely publication of non-sensitive party documentation, party-specific submission records, summary findings, litigation tracking and structured dialogue before disputes harden into court action.

4. A compressed timetable turned legal duties into transparency risks

The first use of the new framework was exceptionally compressed. INEC required registers between 1 and 21 April and primaries, including dispute resolution, between 23 April and 30 May, shortly after the Electoral Act was assented to in February. Parties had to compile data-intensive registers, adjust to the removal of indirect primaries, align internal rules and organise constituency-level exercises within weeks. The pressure was greatest on smaller and administratively weaker parties.²⁵

²² Electoral Act 2026, ss. 82, 84 and 87; INEC Regulations 2026, cls. 10, 20, 22-24 and 26-28.

²³ Electoral Act 2026, ss. 77(4), 77(7), 82(1), 82(2), 82(6) and 83(4); EU EOM Nigeria 2023 Final Report, pp. 23-24; EU EFM Nigeria 2025 Final Report, p. 13; PLAC, Monitoring Political Parties & Jurisdictional Limits, March 2026.

²⁴ Electoral Reform Committee chaired by Justice Mohammed Uwais, Report, 2008; Citizens Memorandum for Reform of the Electoral Legal Framework, 2025; Kenya Elections Act 2011, s. 27; Sierra Leone Political Parties Act 2022.

²⁵ INEC, Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the 2027 General Election, as summarised by PLAC, The 2027 Electoral Calendar, March 2026; Electoral Act 2026, assented to 18 Feb. 2026.

The compression was aggravated by the late availability of INEC's operational rules. The Regulations were signed on 23 April, the first day of the primary window, were not publicly available on INEC's website throughout the process, and party representatives were trained on them only during an SDGN workshop in Lagos from 12 to 15 May. The Regulations supplied practical detail on notices, publication of procedures, venue or method changes, consensus documentation and monitoring records. For early and mid-window primaries, several regulatory deadlines had already expired, or were about to expire, before the rules were publicly available to those expected to comply or challenge non-compliance.²⁶

INEC later extended its administrative deadline for membership-register submission from 21 April to 10 May and stated on 15 May that all 22 registered parties had submitted registers by 8 May. The extension did not waive the statutory requirement that the relevant register be submitted at least 21 days before each party's primary. A party submitting only on 8 May could comply only for primaries held at the end of the window; a party submitting only on 10 May had, at most, a marginal lawful window. INEC did not publish party-by-party timestamps for registers, notices, venues, selected method or guidelines. Its aggregate statement proved eventual receipt, not timely compliance for each primary.²⁷

Table 4. Primary dates and latest possible 21-day submission dates

Party / platform	Primaries conducted	21-day register and notice materials due by	Public-record assessment
APC	16–23 May 2026	25 April–2 May 2026	Not publicly verifiable; high legal risk unless earlier party-specific submission is shown.
ADC	22–27 May 2026 for assessable entries	1–6 May 2026	Not publicly verifiable unless earlier submission is shown; some dates remain unverified.
NDC	29 May 2026	8 May 2026	Register timing appears compatible with INEC statement; notice timing still requires verification.
PDP	17–28 May 2026	26 April–7 May 2026	Not publicly verifiable; high legal risk unless earlier party-specific submission is shown.
PDP/APM	28 May 2026 for assessable entries	7 May 2026	Not publicly verifiable unless relevant APM/PDP-aligned materials were submitted by 7 May.

The table shows the evidentiary gap. INEC's aggregate statement showed eventual receipt, not whether each party submitted the relevant register and notice before its own primary, or whether the constituency-specific register required for a direct primary was used for accreditation.

Electronic implementation added another layer of opacity. Notices and guidelines were to be transmitted through a designated portal, but the Regulations did not specify when the portal had to operate or when parties received credentials. The express access-code provisions concern later

²⁶ INEC, Regulations and Guidelines for Political Parties 2026, Foreword and Part 9; team information from INEC-PLAC SDGN workshop, Lagos, 12–15 May 2026. The team's working copy was not available on INEC's public website at the opening of primaries.

²⁷ INEC, Press Statement, Submission of Political Parties' Membership Registers, 15 May 2026; PUNCH, 27 March 2026; TheCable, 27 March 2026; team confirmation from INEC, 2 June 2026.

candidate submission through the INEC Candidate Nomination Portal, not the pre-primary notice/guideline portal. These systems should not be conflated.²⁸

5. Party rules became the benchmark, but remained publicly inaccessible

Because direct primaries depend on party guidelines and consensus depends on proof of consent, withdrawal, endorsement and ratification, party constitutions and primary guidelines became the practical benchmark for legality. In principle, this could have strengthened party responsibility: parties would design procedures, submit them to INEC, publish them for members and aspirants, and be held to them. In practice, for the principal parties examined, the team did not find current constitutions or primary guidelines on party websites, in two national newspapers, or on INEC's public website. Interlocutors generally did not have copies either.²⁹

The absence of these documents obstructed scrutiny of obligations that were central to the nomination process. Parties had to publish primary venues, dates, times, guidelines and procedures at least ten days before a primary, transmit guidelines to INEC and make documents available for monitoring. Monitors were expected to compare actual conduct with party constitutions, guidelines and other submitted materials. INEC stated that parties had submitted relevant documents, without publishing them, disclosing party-specific submission records or releasing monitoring findings. Those assurances left aspirants and members unable to verify compliance.

The consequences were substantial. Aspirants could not reliably know the rules governing screening, accreditation, consensus, venue changes, voting, collation or appeals. Members could not verify who was eligible to participate or whether the procedure used matched the rules. Observers could not assess compliance with party frameworks. INEC's presence at a venue could therefore be invoked as evidence of compliance without allowing the underlying claim to be tested.

Overall, the 2026 reform created a more formalised nomination architecture but did not resolve the central governance problem. It weakened the delegate market but shifted control to administrative stages before and after voting: registers, screening, access to forms, consensus documentation, venue information, certification and portal submission. This could have supported internal democracy if accompanied by timely rules, public documents, verifiable registers, transparent monitoring and clear enforcement. Instead, compression, late regulations, inaccessible party rules and incomplete enforcement mechanisms displaced manipulation into less visible and more technical stages of nomination.

6. Nomination related fees remain exceptionally high

High Expression of Interest and nomination fees restricted access to the 2026 primaries, especially where a ticket offered a credible prospect of election. High charges filtered aspirants before membership support, programme quality or internal popularity could be tested. Revenue from form sales also creates an institutional incentive to retain high fees, reinforcing the need for transparent schedules, disclosure of their use and effective party-finance oversight.

The official fee schedules reviewed show high entry costs across the main parties. Presidential aspirants faced total form costs of ₦100 million in APC, ₦90 million in ADC, ₦60 million in NDC, ₦51 million or ₦100 million in the two PDP factions, ₦35 million in APM, ₦50 million in LP and ₦75 million in SDP. Governorship costs ranged from ₦21 million in one PDP faction to ₦50 million in

²⁸ INEC Regulations 2026, cls. 22(1), 23(2), 25(3) and 28(1); Electoral Act 2026, s. 77(4).

²⁹ Electoral Act 2026, ss. 82 and 86; INEC Regulations 2026, cls. 22(3), 23(2), 26 and 27; team interviews and document review, Abuja, Lagos and Oyo, May-June 2026.

APC, while Senate and House of Representatives forms reached ₦20 million and ₦10 million respectively in APC.. In some cases, parties did not provide a clear breakdown between Expression of Interest and nomination fees, limiting scrutiny of what portion of the payment related to administrative processing, political screening or general party revenue.

The political value of a nomination is central to the effect of these charges. APC, with the strongest incumbency networks and Legislative presence, imposed the highest Senate and House fees among the parties reviewed. Major opposition platforms also charged substantial sums for access to tickets capable of attracting significant support. Parties can draw on demand for a viable nomination when setting entry costs, so financial exclusion is particularly consequential in constituencies where their structures make the ticket competitive. Lower fees on a less established platform may offer formal access to the ballot without providing comparable organisational resources or prospects of winning.³⁰

MEDIA-REPORTED CASE

Borno: reported cash transfers to APC executives

In its 15 June editorial, PUNCH described videos of a senator distributing ₦135 million to APC executives in Borno and a House member distributing ₦26 million among 442 party executives in the state. The account did not identify the two officeholders or establish the terms attached to the payments. Transfers to party officials during the primary period are relevant because those officials help organise access, information and mobilisation. Their timing and scale warrant scrutiny of recipients, declared purpose and funding, while the available account does not establish a specific exchange of money for votes.³¹

The Expression of Interest form imposes an initial, often non-refundable cost before any substantive democratic test has taken place. Screening charges, appeal fees, secretariat levies, mobilisation, security, media and possible litigation expenses add to the published nomination fee. The schedule consequently understates the full financial burden of contesting and obscures parts of the party-finance relationship. Aspirants who invest heavily may seek to recover those costs through office, contracts, appointments, patronage networks or influence over public resources, linking exclusion at entry to later risks for procurement integrity and public accountability.

The Expression of Interest stage also provides a means of entering intra-party bargaining. Aspirants may purchase forms to demonstrate a support base, align with a faction, weaken a rival or secure a place in negotiations. Those who stand aside may subsequently obtain appointments, board positions, campaign roles, contracts or other political accommodation. Such arrangements are difficult to document systematically because they are rarely public. They are consistent with the report's finding that access to candidacy can purchase influence within patronage networks as well as an opportunity to seek nomination.

Because party sponsorship is required for access to the ballot, high fees also narrow voters' choices. Viable tickets accessible chiefly to wealthy aspirants, incumbents and patron-backed contenders reinforce dependence on financiers. Discounts for women, youth and persons with disabilities leave substantial screening, mobilisation and litigation costs. Financial access therefore forms part of the wider gatekeeping chain, alongside registers, screening, consensus, certification and submission.

³⁰ Official nomination-fee schedules reproduced in the report's fee annex; APC Senate and House totals are ₦20 million and ₦10 million. The relationship between fee-setting and the political value of a ticket is an analytical interpretation of those schedules and the party structures described in Chapters III and VI; no statistical ranking of parties' winning probabilities is asserted.

³¹ PUNCH, "Party primaries of discontent", 15 June 2026. The editorial describes the payments but does not identify the officeholders or establish a quid pro quo. PUNCH editorial [punchng.com]

V. Administration and Conduct of the Primaries

Main Findings

- 1. Direct primaries expanded the formal electorate but left effective participation dependent on operational control.** Venue information, accreditation, access to registers, aspirant-agent presence, security, collation and result certification determined whether members could actually exercise choice.
- 2. INEC presence at a venue did not, by itself, establish compliance.** Monitoring was necessary, but not sufficient, where monitors lacked access to registers, did not observe the full process, or where monitoring reports were not translated into public compliance findings.
- 3. Consensus and screening were decisive points of pre-voting control.** Consensus could manage conflict where genuinely voluntary, but also certified prior settlements; screening could remove aspirants before members had any opportunity to choose.
- 4. Candidate emergence often continued after primary day, and the subsequent submission process confirmed the importance of recognised party authority.** Local declaration, party certification, appeals, factional recognition and submission to INEC did not always form a transparent chain. Once nominations moved to the candidate-submission stage, control of the recognised party credentials and access to INEC's portal determined which factional decisions could enter INEC's official process. The PDP leadership dispute illustrates how control over the recognised party structure translated directly into control over candidate submission, determining which faction's nominees could enter INEC's official process.

1. Direct primaries: formal participation, practical control

Direct primaries were introduced to replace the delegate-convention system that had concentrated control around delegate lists, convention organisation, restricted access to party documents and monetary inducement. The 2026 framework removed that visible delegate market by limiting nomination to direct primaries or consensus, but it also made the process operationally more demanding. Ordinary members now had to be informed, accredited and enabled to participate across wards, constituencies and states.³²

Lagos similarly showed how operational opacity could also serve succession management, incumbent discipline and internal power restructuring ahead of 2027.³³

These observations show how operational decisions can restrict participation without openly denying the vote. Abuja exposed weak accreditation and aspirant representation; Ibadan North showed how late venue relocation filtered participation through insider information; Lagos showed that party processes could be formally organised and INEC-attended while remaining difficult to locate, observe and verify.³⁴ Uncertainty over lower-tier primaries also appeared in NDC contests reviewed by the team. In AMAC/Bwari, Emeka Ike said aspirants still lacked authoritative information on venue and conduct the night before the scheduled 29 May primary. Joshua Chinedu

³² EU Election Expert Mission, Nigeria 2022 Final Report, May–June 2022, pp. 16–21. The report noted uncertainty over delegate eligibility, lack of public scrutiny of documents furnished to INEC, unclear monitoring methodology, and EFCC raids at APC and PDP presidential conventions over allegations of delegate vote buying.

³³ Team observation, APC gubernatorial direct primary, Ibadan North, Oyo State, May 2026; Lagos rights-risk note; The Africa Report, 27 Apr. 2026; Vanguard, June 2026; PUNCH, 25 May 2026.

³⁴ Team field notes, Lagos, May 2026.

Obika had publicly moved to NDC on 6 May, making inclusion in the NDC register by 8 May possible but not verifiable. By 8 June, Obika's public materials described him as the NDC consensus candidate, while other aspirants continued to contest the process.³⁵

Abuja: open voting without verifiable accreditation

At an APC House of Representatives direct primary in Wuse II, Abuja, party supporters waited for several hours with little information on when or how the process would proceed. Local party officials arrived only in the late afternoon. INEC was present, but the team did not observe the relevant membership register being used to verify eligibility. Participants displayed papers described as party membership cards and later formed lines behind photographs of aspirants held by agents. Only aspirants with agents present at the venue were available as effective choices. One group of women, led by an elderly party member, left after more than ten hours when the aspirant they intended to support was not represented.

Similar concerns appeared in Anambra and the FCT. In Idemili North/South, Chiogo Constance Ikoku warned that consensus should be earned rather than imposed and later petitioned the NDC appeal panel, alleging that no valid direct primary took place, that members received conflicting venue information, that accreditation and supervision were inadequate, and that violence affected the process.³⁶ Aisha Yesufu's FCT senatorial bid (also NDC) pointed in the same direction: she said she had not received authoritative venue information by the night of 28 May and did not withdraw from the race despite contrary media reporting; available press material recorded her allegation that no proper primary was held and that a direct-primary process was replaced by closed affirmation.³⁷

Ibadan North: non-compliant venue relocation and reconstructed participation

In Ibadan North, the team was informed by INEC of an APC gubernatorial direct-primary venue on the preceding day. On the day of the exercise, INEC informed the team that the venue had changed. The change was communicated well after the seven-day notice period required by the Regulations for any change of date, venue or time. At the new venue, party actors said the process had already been completed before the previously communicated start time. After the team arrived, persons at the venue stood up, displayed membership cards and re-formed lines behind aspirant agents. Shortly afterwards, the team encountered APC members who had gone to the original venue, found no activity and were proceeding to the new location in an agitated mood.

Security concerns intersected with these operational weaknesses. In Oyo, the team received reports of disruption during APC gubernatorial primaries, including destruction of a vehicle, gunshots in another ward and harassment of an INEC officer. These accounts require further corroboration before being treated as established facts, but they align with direct observations that late venue changes and heated exchanges created a volatile environment.³⁸ Media reporting also documented disruptions affecting opposition organisation, including an attack on an ADC

³⁵ Team interview with Emeka Ike, Abuja, May 2026; Guardian Nigeria, 6 May 2026; Authority, 13 May 2026; Joshua Chinedu Obika public statement, 8 June 2026.

³⁶ Vanguard, "Consensus must be earned, not imposed — Constance Ikoku", 11 May 2026; Vanguard, "No election held in Idemili North/South Reps primary, Ikoku tells NDC appeal panel", 30 May 2026.

³⁷ Team interview with Aisha Yesufu, Abuja, May 2026; Nigerian Tribune reporting on Aisha Yesufu as summarised in the team press archive; Vanguard reporting on Aisha Yesufu as summarised in the team press archive.

³⁸ Team observation and interviews, Oyo State, May 2026; The Africa Report, Oladimeji Ramon, "Intimidation and violence grow as Nigeria heads into 2027 campaign season," 15 April 2026.

event in Bakassi, Cross River, where canopies were pulled down and equipment damaged, and the burning of the party's Ward 8 secretariat in Ubima, Rivers, shortly before a scheduled party registration exercise.³⁹ Direct primaries require multiple voting points, member movement, agent presence, security neutrality and credible transmission of results; disruption or intimidation at any stage can reduce participation even where an exercise is formally held.

MEDIA-REPORTED CASE

Plateau: delayed administration and fatal violence at a primary venue

Sani Abdullahi, a resident of Kasuwan Ali in Mangu, was reported killed during the APC House primary on 16 May. The Sun's account, published the following day, quoted eyewitness Ibrahim Sale: the expected electoral officers had not arrived; party members protested and blocked officials from leaving; stones were thrown during an attempt to disperse the crowd, and security personnel opened fire. The report attributed Abdullahi's death to a bullet fired during that confrontation. The assessment did not establish responsibility independently. The reported sequence connects delayed administration, suspicion of manipulation, confrontation over control of the venue and a lethal security response.⁴⁰

2. INEC monitoring in practice: presence without public assurance

INEC monitoring was legally significant but not sufficient as public assurance of compliance. A primary conducted without proper INEC notification is invalid, and an unmonitored process is legally vulnerable. Yet INEC's presence does not prove that an exercise complied with the Act, the Regulations or party rules. The problem is sharper in factional disputes: INEC normally monitors the process conducted by the party officers it recognises at the time, while a later court decision may shift recognition to another faction whose process INEC did not observe. The framework does not explain how such conflicts should be resolved before candidate upload.

Field observations showed that monitors could be present without possessing the register needed to verify membership, without observing the full process, or without access to the aggregation chain. INEC officials in Oyo and the FCT said reports were being compiled for transmission within the Commission. That internal record may have evidentiary value, but it does not provide aspirants or members with timely public information. National reporting also shows INEC as timetable-setter, portal gatekeeper, party-recognition actor and final-list authority rather than as a public primary-integrity monitor. The Osun final-list case, where PDP and Labour were absent after failing to complete primaries and candidate upload, illustrates how recognition and upload decisions can determine whether party activity becomes ballot access.⁴¹

³⁹ Channels Television, "Police Confirm Disruption Of ADC Secretariat Launch In Cross River," 15 March 2026; Premium Times, "We don't want any party here apart from APC': Hoodlums attack ADC event in Cross River," 16 March 2026; Premium Times, "Gunmen set ablaze ADC secretariat, block Amaechi convoy in Rivers," 6 March 2026; PUNCH, "Amaechi seeks probe as thugs attack convoy, ADC secretariat," 7 March 2026. Police confirmed the Cross River disruption and the burning of the Rivers secretariat; responsibility for the incidents was not conclusively established in the reporting.

⁴⁰ The Sun, Jude Owuamanam, "One killed at reps APC primary election in Plateau", 17 May 2026. The sequence and shooting allegation are attributed to an eyewitness; this assessment did not independently establish responsibility. The Sun report [\[thesun.ng\]](https://thesun.ng)

⁴¹ TheCable, "PDP, LP missing as INEC releases final list for Osun guber," 5 March 2026; Vanguard, "Nigeria Democratic Congress receives INEC registration certificate," 23 February 2026; PUNCH, "Court sets aside judgment recognising NDC, orders fresh hearing," 26 June 2026.

MEDIA-REPORTED CASE**Cross River: abduction of an INEC official during the Yakurr primary**

TheCable reported that armed men disrupted an ADC primary at Wummy Hotel in Ekori, Yakurr, at about 11.15 p.m. on 22 May. Citing security-source reporting, it said an INEC official was forced into a vehicle and compelled to transfer ₦70,000, while another group removed ballot boxes. Troops reportedly intercepted the vehicle, rescued the official and arrested three suspects. The alleged coercion affected both the person present on INEC's behalf and the materials needed to establish the result, exposing a vulnerability in the evidentiary basis of monitoring.⁴²

A credible direct-primary monitoring template would record the notified and actual venue, the register used, whether accreditation was checked against the submitted register, accredited-member figures, aspirant agents present, voting method, ward-level results, complaints, disruptions, consensus consent forms and collation chain. Without at least summary publication or an accessible compliance rationale, monitoring remains vulnerable to selective invocation by whichever faction claims INEC was “present”. The implication for 2027 is direct: members became the formal selectorate, but not necessarily effective decision-makers.

3. Consensus, screening and upstream gatekeeping

Consensus was designed as a lawful mechanism for avoiding divisive contests where all cleared aspirants voluntarily withdraw and endorse one candidate. It can manage conflict where agreement is genuine but can also certify a prior settlement reached by governors, state party leaders or national factions. The democratic test is whether aspirants could enter the race, campaign internally and seek support on equal terms, and whether members could participate meaningfully in candidate selection. This requires a visible record of who was cleared, who withdrew, who consented, how members participated and how the final name was documented for INEC.

The Oyo PDP/APM arrangement shows how consensus, factional authority and platform transfer could merge into one nomination strategy. The Makinde-aligned PDP structure described candidates as settled for virtually all positions before the formal primaries; potential rivals did not take up forms and one agreed person emerged for each seat. A 14 May MoU at the PDP South-West Secretariat presented the arrangement as a PDP/APM alliance, while the Wike-backed PDP leadership rejected the event as unauthorised.⁴³

The subsequent APM primaries were reported mainly as affirmations, including Bimbo Adekanmbi as governorship candidate and legislative candidates described as aligned with Makinde's PDP faction. This raised a verification problem rather than merely a political one: if APM was the ballot vehicle, the relevant legal record was the APM register, cleared aspirants, consent or withdrawal documents, Form EC 16B and INEC monitoring report.⁴⁴ The arrangement also reflected the PDP

⁴² TheCable, Monsuroh Abdulsemiu, “Gunmen abduct INEC official during ADC primary in Cross River”, 24 May 2026, citing security-source reporting by Zagazola Makama concerning the 22 May incident. TheCable report [thecable.ng]

⁴³ PUNCH, Independent Nigeria and Vanguard, reports on PDP/APM MoU and Ibadan rally, 14-15 May 2026; PUNCH, Wike-backed PDP rejection of Ibadan event, 14 May 2026.

⁴⁴ Voice of Nigeria, “APM holds primary election in Oyo State”, 29 May 2026; Channels Television, “APM adopts Adekanmbi as consensus governorship candidate in Oyo”, 29 May 2026; Nigerian Tribune, “Oyo APM primaries: Olatunji clinches Reps ticket as Ilumoka emerges Assembly candidate”, 28 May 2026.

recognition crisis, since different routes carried different legal records and vulnerabilities to later court intervention.⁴⁵

MEDIA-REPORTED CASE

Kogi Central: screening clearance and a primary win amid ongoing trials

PUNCH reported on 17 May that the APC screening committee had cleared Yahaya Bello to contest the Kogi Central Senate primary, naming his two rivals. Subsequent reporting recorded his victory while corruption proceedings brought by the EFCC were continuing, including an allegation involving ₦110.4 billion. Those allegations remain distinct from a finding of guilt. For party accountability, the case raises the question of what information screening bodies disclosed about integrity concerns and how members were able to assess them before voting. The assessment makes no new determination of Bello's eligibility or the merits of the prosecution.⁴⁶

MEDIA-REPORTED CASE

Taraba: an active governorship aspirant facing a corruption prosecution

On 5 May, Premium Times described former power minister Saleh Mamman as an APC governorship aspirant opposing the proposed use of consensus in Taraba. He aligned with party actors demanding direct primaries and invoked his contribution to building the party's organisation. Reuters reported a 75-year sentence on 13 May in the money-laundering case involving ₦33.8 billion. The sequence shows an established political actor continuing to contest the organisation of nominations while facing a serious integrity challenge. The available evidence does not establish that he won the governorship ticket.⁴⁷

Other states show that consensus can settle competition before a vote or fail to contain it. In Ogun APC, the governorship ticket was publicly presented through consensus around Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola before the primary period had fully unfolded. In Ondo APC, national and state actors continued to speak of direct primaries where consensus failed, and later reporting focused on the disqualification of aspirants linked to the governor. The wider pattern is that the decisive stage was often management of the field before voting: endorsement, withdrawal, disqualification, or the decision to abandon consensus and proceed to direct primary.⁴⁸

Screening showed the same gatekeeping logic through a different mechanism. In Kwara APC, more than half of State House of Assembly aspirants were initially disqualified before the party reversed the decision and cleared all aspirants. The controversy continued after the primaries, when senators and governorship aspirants challenged processes across several offices, alleged exclusion of legitimate stakeholders and urged national leadership not to accept reported outcomes before complaints had been reviewed. Screening decisions, appeal outcomes and national acceptance of

⁴⁵ Team interview, Wike-aligned Oyo PDP chair, Ibadan, May 2026; Guardian Nigeria and TheCable reports on PDP primaries and parallel candidates, May-June 2026.

⁴⁶ PUNCH, Gbenga Odogun, "APC clears Yahaya Bello, others to run for senatorial ticket", 17 May; PUNCH editorial, 15 June, on the primary win and ongoing proceedings. Allegations are not findings of guilt. Screening clearance Primary and proceedings [punchng.com] [punchng.com]

⁴⁷ Premium Times, Chuwang Dungs, 5 May, reproduced by AllAfrica; Radio Nigeria, 7 May; Reuters, 13 May 2026. This records the historical sequence without assessing eligibility or later appeals. Political activity Conviction Sentence [allafrica.com] [radionigeria.gov.ng] [reuters.com]

⁴⁸ Premium Times, 13 Apr. 2026; ThisDay, 17 Apr. 2026; Vanguard, 12 May 2026; Guardian Nigeria, 16 May 2026.

results can become more consequential than local voting where reasons for clearance or disqualification are not public.⁴⁹

Rivers APC points to the same screening problem in a more factional form. After Governor Siminalayi Fubara's movement towards APC, reporting described the disqualification of aspirants linked to his camp while Wike-aligned actors advanced. The details require case-by-case verification, but the political effect was clear: the primary field could be reorganised before ordinary members were asked to participate. Screening became the point at which a new entrant's access to the ruling-party platform was tested against an older local power structure.⁵⁰

4. Candidate emergence after primary day

Result announcement and certification formed the final gatekeeping layer. Public announcement, party certification and legal nomination did not always coincide. In several contests, the public record consisted of local declarations, factional announcements, aspirant petitions, partial party lists and later claims that a result had been ratified by a national organ. The absence of complete public candidate matrices, EC 16B forms, appeal decisions and monitoring findings made it difficult to determine whether the person announced locally, endorsed by a faction, ratified by a party organ or eventually uploaded to INEC was the valid nominee. This was especially consequential for National Assembly and State Assembly nominations, where no major party appeared to publish a complete, searchable and authoritative list of nominees before the INEC nomination process.⁵¹ If linked to Form EC 16B, monitoring reports, appeal outcomes and party certification, candidate-upload procedures could create a traceable chain between the primary process and the final list of candidates.

Across these cases, consensus, screening and result certification became central instruments of upstream and downstream control. The 2026 reform removed the delegate-convention market but relocated decisive power to earlier and less visible stages: agreement before forms, screening before voting, recognition of who counts as cleared, venue information, accreditation, post-primary consensus certification, appeal management and final documentation submitted to INEC. Internal party democracy was weakened where aspirants and members could not see who had been cleared, who had withdrawn, who had consented and how a political settlement became a legal nomination.

5. Candidates on the final federal list

On 12 September 2026, INEC published the final lists of candidates for the presidential and National Assembly elections, which constitute the authoritative official record of the federal candidate field, subject to any subsequent changes required by law or court order. There are 18 presidential candidates, 1,303 Senate contestants and 3,560 House of Representatives candidates. The Legislative field therefore comprises 4,863 nominees for 469 seats. Of that less than 10 per

⁴⁹ PUNCH, "2027: APC reverses mass disqualification, clears all Kwara assembly aspirants", 20 May 2026; PUNCH, "Senators, gov aspirants intensify pressure over disputed Kwara APC primaries", 24 June 2026.

⁵⁰ TheCable, "APC clears 33 Rivers assembly aspirants, disqualifies 65 linked to Fubara", 11 May 2026; Guardian Nigeria, "Fubara-Wike rift deepens as APC rejects 32 gov-backed aspirants", 12 May 2026; Vanguard, "APC rejects 32 Fubara loyalists amid deepening rift with Wike", 11 May 2026.

⁵¹ Jide Ojo and Gad Peter, Report of 2026 Political Party Primaries and Court Judgments on INEC's Electoral Timetable, Kukah Centre observer report, §§2.1 and 5.1, pp. 4–5 and 13–14; Premium Times, "2027: APC drops ex-Gov Suswam, Elegbeleye, 24 others from final National Assembly candidates' list", 1 July 2026. These sources document post-primary review and candidate-submission disputes; they do not establish nationwide publication practice for every party. [Premium Times](#)

cent are women (for more details see Chapter VIII). Governorship and State House of Assembly nominations are not covered here as their lists will only be released in October 2026.⁵²

Presidential nominations

The APC list retains President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Vice-President Kashim Shettima. Atiku Abubakar, the PDP's presidential candidate in 2023, now heads the ADC ticket with Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi. Peter Gregory Obi, the Labour Party's 2023 candidate, heads the NDC ticket with Mohammed Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, who contested the previous presidential election for the NNPP. Oyo Governor Oluseyi Abiodun Makinde appears for the APM, with Lawal Musa Daura; the PDP ticket comprises Sandy Ojang Onor and Babangida Umaru. The full set of published tickets is shown below.⁵³

Presidential and vice presidential candidates

Party	Presidential candidate	Vice presidential candidate
AA	Rufai Adekunle Omo-Aje	Shehu Hussaini
ADP	Abbas-Bin Aliyu	Ike Chinazam
APP	Yusuf Kabiru	Ofordile Peace Egobia
AAC	Sowore Omoyele	Magashi Haruna Garba
ADC	Abubakar Atiku	Amaechi Chibuike Rotimi
APC	Tinubu Bola Ahmed	Shettima Kashim
APM	Makinde Oluseyi Abiodun	Musa Lawal Daura
BP	Adenuga Sunday	Mustapha Usman Turaki
DLA	Adebisi Moses Olusoji	Abubakar Nafisat Usaku
LP	Okereke Sunday Chibuzo	Konto Hajja Bintu
NDP	Okwori Ada Elizabeth Fredrick	Chukwuemeka Uchenna Anthony
NRM	Okereke Nkem Esther	Sulaiman Nasir Muhammed
NDC	Obi Peter Gregory	Musa Mohammed Rabi'u Kwankwaso
PDP	Onor Sandy Ojang	Umaru Babangida
PRP	Duke Donald	Rabi'u Kabiru
SDP	Adebayo Adewole Ebenezer	Bugaje Usman Muhammed
YPP	Agada Peter Ada	Key Patience Ndidi
ZLP	Nwanyanwu Daniel Daberechukwu	Hassan Khalid

Eighteen of the 22 registered parties have presidential tickets. Accord, APGA, NNPP and Youth Party are absent from the presidential list, although each has Legislative nominees. The number of presidential tickets is unchanged from 2023, when all 18 registered parties contested.⁵⁴

⁵² INEC, [2027 presidential final list](#); [2027 Senate final list](#); and [2027 House of Representatives final list](#), accessed 15 September 2026. Totals are calculated from the candidate entries. Publication date: Channels Television, [12 September 2026](#).

⁵³ INEC, 2027 presidential final list, pp. 1–3; INEC, [Final List of Candidates for National Elections 2023](#), presidential entries, pp. 5–7 (PDF pagination). Names in the table retain the order used in the 2027 list.

⁵⁴ INEC, [Registered Political Parties](#); 2027 presidential, Senate and House final lists; 2023 final list, introductory statement.

Legislative nominations and comparison with 2023

The published Legislative field is larger than in the previous cycle. INEC's September 2022 publication for the 2023 elections recorded 1,101 Senate and 3,122 House candidates, a combined 4,223. The 2027 lists contain 202 more Senate candidates and 438 more House candidates: an overall increase of 640, or 15.2 per cent. This compares the two published final-list snapshots, rather than attempting to reconstruct every later court-ordered amendment or withdrawal.⁵⁵

Published candidate numbers in the two election cycles

Contest	2023	2027	Change	Change %
Presidential tickets	18	18	0	0.0%
Senate	1,101	1,303	+202	+18.3%
House of Representatives	3,122	3,560	+438	+14.0%
National Assembly total	4,223	4,863	+640	+15.2%

All 22 registered parties appear in the Legislative candidate list, but their coverage differs substantially. The APC alone has a nominee in every one of the 109 Senate districts and 360 House constituencies. The ADC has the next widest coverage, with 108 Senate and 346 House nominees. The PDP has 101 and 316, respectively; the NDC has 99 and 330. The APM has 104 Senate and 312 House nominations. The political implications of party coverage and candidate movement are examined in Chapter VI.⁵⁶

Legislative coverage of selected parties

Party	Senate nominees 109 seats	House nominees 360 seats
APC	109	360
ADC	108	346
APM	104	312
PDP	101	316
NDC	99	330
SDP	95	257
ADP	92	256
LP	68	170
Other 14 parties combined	527	1,213
All parties	1,303	3,560

Every Legislative seat has more than one candidate: the field ranges from five to 20 candidates in Senate districts and from three to 21 in House constituencies. The ADC's one Senate and 14 House gaps do not overlap with the NDC's ten Senate and 30 House gaps. At least one of the two parties therefore has a nominee in every Legislative contest.

⁵⁵ INEC's statement of 20 September 2022, reported by the News Agency of Nigeria in The Guardian, [INEC publishes final list of candidates](#), 21 September 2022; calculations from the 2027 Senate and House lists.

⁵⁶ Calculations from INEC's 2027 Senate and House final lists. Coverage counts identify at least one listed candidate for the party in each distinct constituency; they do not measure organisational strength or electoral competitiveness.

Incumbent nominees and other serving officeholders

The working comparison of current Legislative membership with the final lists identifies at least 79 sitting senators nominated again for the Senate and at least 258 sitting House members nominated again for the House. These figures correspond to 72.5 per cent of the Senate's 109 seats and 71.7 per cent of the House's 360 seats. Five additional sitting House members appear as Senate candidates, bringing the identified total of incumbent parliamentarians with a nomination in either chamber to 342.⁵⁷ These are minimum counts from a working comparison, not an official INEC incumbency total.

Identified incumbent parliamentarians on the final lists

Current office and nominated contest	Identified nominees
Sitting senator nominated for the Senate	79
Sitting House member nominated for the House	258
Sitting House member nominated for the Senate	5
Total unique incumbent parliamentarians identified	342

Among the 79 identified Senate return nominees, 57 appear under the APC, eight under the PDP, seven under the ADC and three under the NDC; Accord, APGA, LP and PRP each account for one. Among the 258 House return nominees, 189 appear under the APC, 14 under the NDC, 12 under the ADC, ten under the APM, eight each under Accord and PDP, seven under LP, four under APP, two each under APGA and PRP, and one each under SDP and YPP. These are the parties printed beside the candidates in the final lists, irrespective of the party under which they entered the current legislature.

New-party candidacies following unsuccessful APC bids

Six documented cases link an unsuccessful APC bid or screening exclusion with a subsequent new-party candidacy on INEC's final federal lists. Five followed unsuccessful bids; Garba Musa Maidoki was excluded at screening.

Politician	Earlier outcome and subsequent move	Entry on 12 September final list
Samaila Dahuwa Kaila	Lost the APC Bauchi North Senate primary; moved to PRP in late May.	PRP — Bauchi North Senate list, p. 19 ⁵⁸
Ovie Omo-Agege	Lost the APC Delta Central Senate nomination; resigned on 27 May and announced his NDC move on 28 May.	NDC — Delta Central Senate list, p. 34 ⁵⁹
Saliu Mustapha	Unsuccessful APC governorship bid in Kwara; moved to PDP in August and received its Senate nomination.	PDP — Kwara Central Senate list, p. 79 ⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Assessment team's working match of names and constituencies against the 2027 final lists, using the National Assembly Library Trust Fund's [Senate roster](#) and [House roster](#), the [2023 members-elect lists reported by TheCable](#), and identified later entrants. Membership changes and unmatched names still require reconciliation. Percentages use the full statutory chamber sizes, not the number of candidates.

⁵⁸ Premium Times, Bauchi APC primaries: Buba, Dahuwa and Kashuri exits, 26 May 2026. INEC, 2027 Senate final list, p. 19. [Report](#)

⁵⁹ NAN / P.M. News, Omo-Agege announces NDC defection after APC Senate defeat, 28 May 2026. INEC, 2027 Senate final list, p. 34. [Report](#)

⁶⁰ Channels Television, Saliu Mustapha on his move to PDP and substituted Senate nomination, 21 August 2026; TheCable, initial APC Senate nomination outcomes and unsuccessful incumbents. INEC, 2027 Senate final list, p. 79. [Report](#) [Report](#)

Politician	Earlier outcome and subsequent move	Entry on 12 September final list
Olubiyi Fadeyi	Lost the APC Osun Central Senate primary; his return and PDP nomination were publicly confirmed in July.	PDP — Osun Central Senate list, p. 99 ⁶¹
Rabilu Bala (Kashuri)	Lost the APC Jama'are/Itas-Gadau House nomination; resignation letter dated 21 May, with the PRP move reported on 26 May.	PRP — Jama'are/Itas-Gadau House list, p. 43 ⁶²
Garba Musa Maidoki	Excluded at APC screening for Kebbi South; ADC move announced in the Senate on 23 June. The effective joining date was not established.	ADC — Kebbi South Senate list, p. 73 ⁶³

The six cases are a documented minimum, not a national total or a basis for calculating the proportion of defectors who secured tickets. The final lists establish the published candidacies; they do not by themselves establish compliance with every membership, nomination or replacement requirement. The legal assessment is set out in Chapter VII.

6. Candidate submission and political recognition

These published outcomes were the endpoint of an earlier administrative contest over who was entitled to translate party decisions into nominations accepted by INEC. By the end of August, control over the candidate-submission process had therefore become politically decisive. APM uploaded Seyi Makinde's particulars, which INEC subsequently published. Makinde, governor of Oyo State and elected in 2023 to a second and final term on a PDP ticket, had moved onto the APM platform shortly before the primaries while his political network in Oyo remained closely tied to the PDP. Against the background of the PDP's internal divisions discussed in Chapter VI, APM offered an alternative platform through which his presidential candidacy could be secured. His case also illustrates the importance of control over the party machinery recognised by INEC: once candidate submission began, the national officers to whom INEC granted portal access could translate their faction's decisions into official submissions.⁶⁴

This link between recognised party authority and access to INEC's nomination system became particularly consequential in the PDP leadership contest. INEC did not recognise the Kabiru Tanimu Turaki-led group as the PDP leadership authorised to submit candidates and therefore did not give it the access codes required for electronic upload. The recognised submission channel remained with the Abdulrahman Mohammed-led, Wike-backed leadership. The Turaki group said that the refusal of portal access was the reason it delivered Goodluck Jonathan's nomination papers manually. INEC rejected that claimed route, maintaining that candidate submissions had to pass through the designated portal. The dispute thus concerned the authority to nominate on behalf of the PDP as well as the form in which papers were delivered.⁶⁵

⁶¹ PUNCH, initial Osun APC senatorial primary results, 19 May 2026; Ripples Nigeria, PDP confirms Fadeyi as Osun Central nominee, 24 July 2026. INEC, 2027 Senate final list, p. 99. [Report Report](#)

⁶² Premium Times, Bauchi APC primaries: Buba, Dahuwa and Kashuri exits, 26 May 2026. INEC, 2027 House of Representatives final list, p. 43. [Report](#)

⁶³ Premium Times, Maidoki moves to ADC following APC screening exclusion, 23 June 2026. INEC, 2027 Senate final list, p. 73. [Report](#)

⁶⁴ DAI, EU-SDGN II Monthly Political Report, August 2026 (internal report), §1.3, pp. 3–4; ThisDay, "APM Party Uploads Makinde, National Assembly Candidates on INEC's Portal", 13 July 2026; see also the report's earlier discussion of the PDP/APM arrangement in Oyo.

⁶⁵ DAI, EU-SDGN II Monthly Political Report, August 2026 (internal report), §1.3, p. 4; TheCable, "Turaki-led PDP: We manually submitted Jonathan's name after INEC denied us portal access", 31 July 2026; INEC Political Party Regulations 2026, cl. 25(3), on access through recognised national officers.

The Supreme Court's 30 April ruling nullifying the Ibadan convention had removed a claimed basis for the Turaki leadership's authority; on 17 July, the Federal High Court rejected the BoT-led attempt to compel recognition of its interim structure. The Turaki side announced an appeal. These proceedings explain the contested recognition through which portal access was allocated; their implications for outstanding nominations and further appeals are considered in Chapter VII.⁶⁶

INEC's 12 September list then confirmed the practical effect of the recognition decision: Makinde appeared for APM, the PDP was represented by Sandy Ojang Onor, and Jonathan was absent. The Turaki group's manual-submission claim therefore did not produce an entry on the published presidential list. The episode illustrates how recognition of party leadership and control of portal credentials can shape which internal party decisions become official nominations. The underlying litigation and any remaining avenues of challenge are examined in Chapter VII.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Supreme Court, SC/CV/164/2026, 30 April 2026, concerning the Ibadan convention; Federal High Court, FHC/ABJ/CS/1159/2026, 17 July 2026, concerning recognition of the Turaki-led interim structure; TheCable, "Turaki-led PDP to appeal judgment dismissing leadership recognition suit", 17 July 2026. The announced appeal is not treated as proof of filing or disposal.

⁶⁷ INEC, 2027 Presidential Final List, pp. 1–3, published 12 September 2026. The listed tickets establish INEC's published candidate field at that date, not the final judicial resolution of every potential challenge.

VI. Political Dynamics, Internal Party Democracy and Electoral Justice

Main Findings

- 1. APC's expanded coalition was reflected in its nominations.** Newly aligned governors secured tickets alongside established Legislative leaders. The resulting slate incorporated incoming state networks, while conflicts over legislative nominations remained unresolved in several states.
- 2. Nomination power was negotiated between state networks and the national party leadership.** Governor-led entrants secured accommodation, while established networks recovered some tickets through national review. The outcomes depended on access to these different centres of authority, rather than seniority of membership alone.
- 3. Opposition realignment dispersed officeholders and political networks across parties.** PDP's rival factions remained divided; ADC and NDC fielded separate presidential tickets, while APM accommodated politicians and supporters leaving the PDP. Changes in party affiliation and candidate coverage did not establish how far these groups had integrated their local structures.
- 4. Party switching followed different nomination histories.** Early moves secured a platform before selection; later transfers followed defeat or screening exclusion. The 16 July judgment changed the legal assessment of late entry, without establishing that every subsequent nomination complied with the remaining requirements.
- 5. Nomination grievances continued into campaign mobilisation.** Litigation, alternative-party tickets and disputes over campaign loyalty showed that some local networks remained unreconciled. Public support for a presidential candidate could coexist with continued opposition to the party's Legislative nominations.

1. The primaries as a test of party strength

The 2026 primaries showed how legal reform can shift the location of elite control without displacing it. Registers, screening, consensus, appeals and candidate submission became points at which competing networks defended access to office. The political consequences differed between parties: some gained officeholders and local networks, some lost established groups, and others acquired candidates without resolving how their supporters would work together. Candidate coverage, internal cohesion and members' influence therefore need to be assessed separately.

The APC entered the primary cycle with incumbency, presidential influence and an expanding network of governors and legislators. Defections increased the number of influential claimants without increasing the number of tickets available. Nomination consequently tested the terms on which newcomers had been admitted and the claims of established cadres to recognition and reward. For opposition parties, primary selection tested whether leadership agreements and recognised party structures could provide a sufficiently dependable platform to retain aspirants. These pre-existing conflicts acquired immediate electoral consequences as primaries and subsequent party decisions determined who would contest.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ See Chapters III–V on the pre-primary balance, observed selection practices and final-list outcomes; DAI, EU-SDGN II Monthly Political Report, August 2026 (internal report), §1.1, pp. 2–3.

2. APC: expansion, accommodation and unresolved conflict

APC's nomination outcomes incorporated many of the governors who had joined it before the primaries. Sheriff Oborevwori, Dauda Lawal, Abba Yusuf, Caleb Mutfwang, Umo Eno and Peter Mbah obtained governorship nominations, giving their state networks a direct stake in the APC campaign. Their accommodation also closed those tickets to established APC aspirants who had previously opposed them. Legislative selections produced more varied outcomes for the incoming governors' allies, individual defectors and longstanding members.⁶⁹

In Zamfara, the bargaining preceded and continued through the primary period. Dauda Lawal left the PDP for APC on 9 March 2026, joining former governors Bello Matawalle and Abdul-Aziz Yari. Accounts of the Tinubu-brokered arrangement described a second-term ticket for Lawal, an expected continuing federal role for Matawalle and another Senate bid for Yari. Agreement over the governorship did not settle the distribution of other positions: in a complaint reported on 22 April, Matawalle accused Lawal and Yari of allocating party posts without consulting him. His aide subsequently linked support for Lawal to a share of positions. Lawal received the APC governorship nomination on 21 May. Lawal's nomination implemented one part of the reported bargain; the other camps' expectations concerning appointments and influence remained unverified.⁷⁰

In Rivers, Siminalayi Fubara's move from PDP to APC in 2025 left him contesting nomination control with the network of his predecessor, FCT Minister Nyesom Wike. Wike-aligned politicians sought candidacies in both APC and PDP, and aspirants associated with Fubara were excluded at APC screening. Wike denied directing those decisions. Fubara subsequently withdrew, and Wike ally Kingsley Chinda obtained the APC governorship nomination. The party described the withdrawal as voluntary. Fubara's entry had therefore not secured his return ticket or displaced the rival network's influence over candidate selection. The episode also shows how allegiance to a patron could connect actors working through different party structures.⁷¹

Established cadres could also secure deferred rewards through a more cohesive state organisation. In Lagos, consultations involving Tinubu and the Governor's Advisory Council favoured Deputy Governor Obafemi Hamzat, who had stood aside in 2019. Hamzat subsequently obtained the nomination. The sequence illustrates how a settled succession bargain can coordinate party elites and reward loyalty while restricting the scope of competition before members vote.⁷²

Ifeanyi Okowa obtained the APC's Delta North Senate nomination ahead of sitting senator Ned Nwoko in the 18 May primary. Both had come from the PDP: Nwoko moved in February 2025, before Okowa and his successor as governor, Sheriff Oborevwori, entered with their state-level network in April. Their arrival brought competing expectations of accommodation into a party with only one ticket for the seat. In defending the result, Delta Commissioner Charles Aniagwu emphasised Okowa's longstanding ties to local stakeholders and said that Okowa and his allies had helped Nwoko win in 2023. Nwoko instead alleged that national party leaders had broken

⁶⁹ Premium Times, "How defections, zoning, consensus deals shaped emergence of APC's 28 governorship candidates", 23 June 2026. [Report](#)

⁷⁰ PUNCH, 9 March 2026; The Guardian, 22 April; Oladimeji Ramon, The Africa Report, "Inside Tinubu's delicate Zamfara pact: Peace deal or time bomb?", 1 May, pp. 2–7 of supplied copy; [Zamfara State Government, 22 May](#), reporting the nomination on Thursday, 21 May. Appointment expectations are reported terms, not confirmed allocations.

⁷¹ Oladimeji Ramon, The Africa Report, "Inside Wike's two-level strategy to stop Fubara's reelection in Rivers", 15 May 2026, pp. 3–7 of supplied copy; Channels Television, "Fubara's withdrawal from Rivers APC gov primary personal to him — Yilwatda", 25 May; Premium Times, 23 June 2026. [The Africa Report Channels](#)

⁷² Oladimeji Ramon, The Africa Report, "Ambode comeback talk tests Tinubu's grip on Lagos succession", 27 April 2026, pp. 2–5 of supplied copy; Premium Times, 23 June 2026. [The Africa Report](#)

assurances made before his defection. The two candidacies thus brought claims to incumbent protection and accommodation of the incoming governor-led bloc into conflict.⁷³

MEDIA-REPORTED CASE

Delta North: a contested declaration

The APC declared Ifeanyi Okowa winner of its Delta North Senate primary with 113,309 votes, against Ned Nwoko's 2,612 and Mariam Ali's 40. Delta Commissioner Charles Aniagwu rejected allegations of manipulated counting; Nwoko disputed the result and said assurances preceding his defection had been broken. Ward-level accreditation, voting and collation records are needed to assess the declared figures. Chapter VII examines the legal requirements for challenging primary outcomes and subsequent changes to nominations.⁷⁴

Accommodation also varied among incoming legislators. In Osun, Francis Fadahunsi obtained the APC ticket while fellow PDP defector Olubiyi Fadeyi lost his nomination bid and later returned to PDP. In Kebbi, Adamu Aliero and Yahaya Abdullahi secured governor-facilitated consensus tickets while Garba Musa Maidoki was excluded at screening and subsequently joined ADC. Both Fadeyi and Maidoki appear on INEC's final lists for their receiving parties. Both are among the six new-party candidacies recorded in V.5; their legal treatment is discussed in VII.4 and VII.5 respectively.⁷⁵

National review could reverse outcomes initially favourable to a governor's camp. In Benue, candidates backed by Governor Hyacinth Alia displaced figures associated with George Akume, the former governor and Secretary to the Government of the Federation. APC's National Working Committee (NWC) subsequently restored Emmanuel Udende and Titus Zam to the Senate slate in place of Gabriel Suswam and Benjamin Aber, alongside changes to House nominations. The dispute pitted an incumbent governor against an established network with federal access. Alia and Suswam later appeared together with Tinubu, and Suswam reaffirmed support for Tinubu and Alia while continuing his nomination case. Their public political alignment thus coexisted with the unresolved ticket dispute examined in VII.4.⁷⁶

In Ondo, national review likewise displaced governor-backed Legislative choices, restoring Adeniyi Adegbonmire and Olajide Ipinsagba. This limited Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa's control of federal nominations, while he remained central to state-level mobilisation. Challenges to the revisions continued, as discussed in VII.4. In September, Aiyedatiwa denied supporting former APC aspirants contesting through other parties and called for support for every APC candidate. At the same meeting, party officials welcomed increased allowances for ward and local-government chairmen. The controversy over campaign loyalty and the maintenance of local party structures showed that allocating tickets had left further organisational work to be done.⁷⁷

⁷³ Premium Times, 26 May 2026; Channels Television, interview with Charles Aniagwu, 21 May. These accounts document the timing of the PDP-to-APC transfers and competing explanations of the result; they do not establish intervention by Wike in the nomination.

⁷⁴ Channels Television, "Why Okowa polled 113,000 votes, defeated Nwoko in APC primary — Delta Commissioner", 21 May 2026; Premium Times, 26 May. Declared party figures and attributed allegations are not independently verified counts. Chapter VII addresses the legal framework for nomination challenges.

⁷⁵ PUNCH, "Incumbent senator loses Osun APC senatorial ticket", 19 May 2026; Channels Television, "Aliero, Abdullahi, Gajere emerge as APC senatorial candidates in Kebbi", 18 May; Premium Times, "Senator disqualified from APC screening defects to ADC", 23 June. INEC, final Senate list, pp. 73 and 99; see V.5 and VII.3–VII.5 for the later candidacies and outstanding compliance questions.

⁷⁶ PUNCH, 19 May and 6 July; Premium Times, revised APC list, 1 July; The Nation, 6 August 2026. See VII.4 for Suswam's continuing nomination case. Primary outcome July meeting August statement

⁷⁷ The Guardian, 15 and 17 July 2026 (NWC revisions and subsequent litigation); PUNCH, 8 September 2026 (Aiyedatiwa's denial and allowances). National review September meeting

The APC NWC revised 26 Legislative nominations across nine states in July, attributing the changes to its appeal process. In Benue and Ondo, that national authority over review and submission constrained governors' control of federal tickets. Governors nevertheless retained resources and local relationships important to campaign mobilisation. The resulting allocations left these different sources of influence in place, with several decisions still contested. Public commitments to Tinubu's re-election did not settle whether excluded aspirants and their supporters would work for the Legislative candidates selected by the same party.⁷⁸

Senior Legislative leaders, including Senate President Godswill Akpabio and House Speaker Tajudeen Abbas, retained APC candidacies, while serving governors' Senate bids brought executive networks into competition for legislative tickets. These outcomes placed both incoming state leaders and established federal officeholders within the party's candidate slate. The incumbent figures are presented in V.5.⁷⁹

3. Opposition parties: fragmentation and selective reconstruction

PDP's rival nomination processes exposed its continuing fragmentation. INEC's recognition of the Abdulrahman Mohammed-led, Wike-backed leadership gave that group control of the accepted submission channel, while the Turaki group could not secure acceptance of Goodluck Jonathan's papers through its claimed manual submission. As described in V.6, an official PDP slate emerged without a settlement between the competing leaderships. Politicians seeking other platforms took local supporters and officeholders with them. Control of the recognised party offices therefore settled who could submit the PDP list, while the question of who could mobilise its dispersed networks remained unresolved.⁸⁰

Governor Seyi Makinde's move with his Oyo network to APM preserved candidacies that the divided PDP could not securely deliver. His allies moved as a group, giving APM an immediate state-level base while retaining their political relationships. Adedeji Stanley Olajide, a PDP-elected House member, now contests the Oyo South Senate seat for APM against Aderemi Oseni, elected to the House for APC in 2023. APM acquired candidates backed by an existing network, while nomination decisions within that group remained centred on Makinde and his allies.⁸¹

ADC emerged with the Atiku–Amaechi presidential ticket and a coalition narrower than the one temporarily assembled in 2025. Obi and Kwankwaso had left before its presidential primary. Atiku's victory then attracted complaints from Amaechi and other coalition figures about the conduct of the contest. Amaechi's withdrawal of his suit on 17 July and subsequent inclusion as Atiku's running mate resolved that dispute within the remaining coalition. The settlement did not bring back the networks that had moved to NDC. ADC retained extensive Legislative coverage, while the earlier disagreement over a common presidential candidate had divided the original alliance.⁸²

⁷⁸ Premium Times, "2027: APC drops Ex-Gov Suswam, Elegbeleye, 24 others from final National Assembly candidates' list", 1 July 2026. APC attributed the changes to appeal-committee recommendations; their legal basis is examined in Chapter VII. [Revised list](#)

⁷⁹ INEC, final federal candidate lists, 12 September 2026; incumbent comparison in V.5. Nomination alone establishes neither election nor an agreed succession arrangement.

⁸⁰ See V.6 for INEC recognition and competing PDP submissions; DAI, August 2026 (internal report), §1.3, p. 4. The recognised submission channel does not establish the personal allegiance of every PDP candidate.

⁸¹ PUNCH, "Six Oyo Rep members dump PDP for APM", 2 June 2026; INEC, final Senate list, Oyo South, p. 104; 2023 House membership records used in V.5. Both candidates seek Senate seats; Oseni entered the House on an APC ticket. [Oyo defections](#)

⁸² Reuters, "Nigeria opposition alliance falters as two leading figures quit", 5 May 2026; team interview with Amaechi, 23 June; INEC, final presidential list, 12 September. Daily Post, "ADC primary: Amaechi withdraws suit against Atiku", 17 July 2026; see also Chapter VII and the litigation register. [Reuters](#)

NDC assembled the Obi–Kwankwaso ticket alongside established figures such as Seriake Dickson, whose Bayelsa network and party-building role gave it a base beyond the two presidential figures’ existing constituencies. It brought Obi’s supporters and the Kwankwasiyya movement under the same party label after their departure from ADC. That agreement at presidential level left local candidates competing for nominations within the new coalition. The constituency disputes described in Chapters V and VII show where screening, selection and replacement decisions remained contested. The NDC’s enlarged candidate network therefore coexisted with unresolved disagreements over how its members and aspirants were represented in those decisions.⁸³

The unresolved registration proceedings examined in VII.2 also leave NDC’s campaign exposed to a decision that could affect the party’s participation, including the Obi–Kwankwaso presidential ticket. Its candidates and supporters must make commitments on campaign spending and organisation while that question remains unsettled. This could complicate fundraising and mobilisation, even though INEC has included its candidates on the final lists.

Labour lost Obi and parts of its 2023 Legislative cohort, including Umeh to NDC and Kingibe to ADC. It retained a governing base under Alex Otti in Abia and gained Enyinnaya Abaribe from ADC, with his move to Labour announced in the Senate on 5 May 2026. Abaribe had won his 2023 Senate seat for APGA before passing through ADC. Labour’s loss of national figures therefore accompanied continued control of the Abia governorship and the acquisition of a sitting senator there.⁸⁴

In Kano, NNPP’s 2023 governing coalition split between rival parties. Governor Abba Yusuf and allied officeholders moved to APC, while Kwankwaso’s movement aligned with NDC. NNPP consequently lost both the governorship and the party affiliation of the political leader around whom much of its earlier mobilisation had been organised. The coalition through which NNPP had won the governorship was consequently divided between competing presidential campaigns, separating state executive resources from the Kwankwasiyya network.⁸⁵

These movements redistributed officeholders, supporters and candidate networks among opposition parties. ADC, NDC and APM fielded candidates drawn from several earlier platforms; PDP, Labour and NNPP no longer retained all the groups through which they had contested in 2023. The published lists establish these changes in affiliation and coverage. How far local supporters accepted the new alignments, and whether rival groups would cooperate in campaigning, cannot be inferred from the transfer of their leaders alone.

4. Timing, party switching and members’ influence

The timing of party changes is important. The Electoral Act enacted in February made inclusion in the submitted membership register consequential for nomination, giving aspirants an incentive to settle their platform before the primary. Some nevertheless moved after an unsuccessful bid in May or June, before the Court of Appeal’s 16 July judgment in *Zenith Labour Party v INEC*. The judgment removed the register’s statutory exclusivity, altering the legal assessment of those earlier nominations as well as subsequent transfers. Saliu Mustapha’s August move from APC to PDP followed the judgment; his replacement nomination is examined in VII.4. The six new-party

⁸³ Pius Adeleye, *The Africa Report*, “Seriake Dickson’s rise to kingmaker, as NDC bet pays off”, 7 May 2026, pp. 3–6 of supplied copy; INEC, final presidential and Senate lists; Chapters V and VII on contested NDC nominations. [The Africa Report](#)

⁸⁴ INEC, 2023 and 2027 Senate lists; Channels Television, “[Abaribe Defects To Labour Party, Umeh And Rufai Hanga Join NDC](#)”, 5 May 2026, reporting the announcement in the Senate of Abaribe’s move from ADC to Labour; NAN, 21 May, on his support for Otti’s record. The date refers to the Legislative announcement, not necessarily the first day of party membership.

⁸⁵ Oladimeji Ramon, *The Africa Report*, “Tinubu battles Kwankwaso for Kano’s 6 million votes”, 3 April 2026, pp. 3–7 of supplied copy; INEC, final presidential list, 12 September. The article documents officeholder transfers, not the subsequent choices of individual voters. [The Africa Report](#)

candidacies recorded in V.5 follow different chronologies, whose legal implications are addressed in VII.3–VII.5.⁸⁶

Across parties, access to alternative tickets depended on financial resources and relationships with those controlling candidate selection. The high costs described in IV.6 limited this flexibility for aspirants without finance or sponsors. Members could participate in direct voting while having little access to the records needed to contest screening, appeals or subsequent changes. Where parties changed a nomination without publishing the reasons and supporting evidence, members could not establish whether the decision corrected a procedural defect or implemented a political bargain. Publication of the final lists identified the candidates, while the records needed to scrutinise how they had been selected remained largely inaccessible.

5. From nomination settlements to electoral competition

The presidential and National Assembly campaign period opened on 19 August, before publication of the final federal lists on 12 September; state campaigns opened on 9 September, ahead of their scheduled final lists on 10 October. Tinubu began with a comparatively settled presidential ticket and coordinated incumbency networks. Contested Legislative nominations and rival claims to party authority exposed other campaigns to uncertainty over candidacy and the resources they could commit. The lists now provide the authoritative candidate record, subject to subsequent lawful changes discussed in Chapter VII.⁸⁷

Efforts to reunite the opposition continued after separate tickets had emerged. The G-100 summit on 31 August secured participation by six parties and a timetable for negotiations. It did not produce agreement on a common candidate or electoral vehicle. A workable arrangement would also require state organisations to cooperate, campaign costs to be shared and leaders with separate tickets to accept a reduced role. Until those decisions were made, each campaign retained incentives to protect its own candidates and organisation, limiting the practical effect of national declarations of cooperation.⁸⁸

The Peace Accord signed on 18 August secured public commitments to peaceful, issue-based campaigning, with different levels of personal participation. Peter Obi attended and signed. Tinubu was represented by George Akume; ADC subsequently stated that its National Legal Adviser, Oserheimen Osunbor, represented the party in Atiku's absence. Makinde did not attend, but his running mate, Lawal Daura, did. Representation kept those parties associated with the accord without the personal endorsement at the ceremony of all their presidential candidates. Following the contested nominations, implementation also required leaders to convey the commitments to local campaign structures and supporters of excluded aspirants. The INEC chairman specifically called for compliance at state, local-government and ward levels.⁸⁹

Unresolved nomination grievances make transparent electoral preparations especially important. INEC's accounts of improved administration in Osun and its planned mock accreditation require public explanations of tests, deficiencies and corrective action. Reports concerning its public websites do not establish interference with accreditation or results systems. Prompt clarification

⁸⁶ Electoral Act 2026, s. 77 as enacted; Zenith Labour Party v INEC, 16 July 2026, and the new-party nomination histories examined in VII.3–VII.5. The judgment's effect on earlier nominations and the surviving requirements are addressed there.

⁸⁷ DAI, August 2026 (internal report), Executive Summary, p. 2, and Electoral Calendar, p. 10; INEC final federal lists, 12 September, and timetable for final state lists, 10 October. Dates concern authorised campaign periods.

⁸⁸ DAI, August 2026 (internal report), §1.1, pp. 2–3. The summit account is taken from this internal assessment; its cited 22 August article predates the event and is not independent confirmation of the outcome.

⁸⁹ Leadership, 19 August 2026 (via AllAfrica), on the ceremony of 18 August, including Obi's attendance and Daura's presence; Politics Nigeria, 19 August, reporting ADC's clarification that Osunbor represented the party, contrary to initial accounts of no ADC representative; DAI, EU-SDGN II Monthly Political Report, August 2026 (internal report), §1.2, pp. 3–4.

is needed to prevent unanswered questions from reinforcing existing distrust. Campaign security, access for observers and journalists, and timely remedies remain essential to participation.⁹⁰

Party realignment and published nominations left unresolved questions about members' access to selection records and acceptance of candidates by excluded groups. Campaign conduct and the handling of complaints now form part of the same credibility test. Improvements in polling and verifiable results collation can contribute to rebuilding confidence alongside fair campaign conditions and transparent resolution of disputes carried forward from candidate selection.

⁹⁰ DAI, August 2026 (internal report), §§1.4, 2.1–2.2 and 3, pp. 4–8. Operational assessments are INEC's reported claims; website incidents do not establish unauthorised access to accreditation or results systems.

VII. Post-Primary Litigation

Main Findings

- 1. Litigation became a continuation of nomination politics.** Party registration, deregistration, leadership authority, screening, consensus, candidate qualification, registers and INEC's timetable all converged around the question of whose name could lawfully be submitted to and retained by INEC.
- 2. The 2026 framework limits disruptive interim relief without excluding judicial review.** Courts may no longer halt primaries or elections while nomination disputes are pending, but they remain central to reviewing legality and correcting unlawful nominations once the political process has advanced.
- 3. The timing of remedies creates a practical accountability gap.** Pre-election suits, appeal timelines and candidate-upload deadlines can leave disputed nominations legally alive for long periods, while genuine defects may become difficult to remedy if not challenged quickly.
- 4. Electoral justice now faces a perception challenge.** The concentration of high-profile cases around party recognition, opposition platforms and candidate validity risks turning courts into perceived arenas of political competition, regardless of the legal merits of individual decisions.

Electoral Justice and Post-Primary Litigation

By the close of the primary window, pre-election litigation had become a key part of the nomination environment itself. Party registration and deregistration, factional authority, screening, consensus, candidate qualification, membership registers, INEC's timetable and primary outcomes all converged around one practical question: whether a person announced by a party could become and remain, the legally valid candidate submitted to INEC. The primary period therefore did not close with voting or affirmation. It moved into a second phase in which courts, party organs and INEC's candidate-submission process became central to the survival of nominations.

The litigation that followed also tested the architecture of the Electoral Act 2026 itself. Some of the provisions that had appeared to create clear ex ante controls over party nominations were challenged almost immediately. Other disputes exposed an old problem in a new form: the law may prescribe short windows for filing and accelerated procedures, yet the political process continues while courts determine who was lawfully nominated. On 12 September, INEC published the final lists of candidates for the National Assembly elections. These are the official candidate lists, but individual entries may still be challenged in court where the legal requirements for such a challenge are met. Publication therefore does not by itself resolve disputes over the legality of the underlying nomination or replacement process.

1. Restricted intervention, continuing judicial control

The Electoral Act contains an express ouster clause for disputes pertaining to the internal affairs of political parties. At the same time, section 88(2) preserves Federal High Court jurisdiction where an aspirant alleges non-compliance with the Act or the party's guidelines in the selection or nomination of a candidate. Courts may not stop a primary or general election while such a suit is pending, so remedies are essentially corrective and may take effect only after the nomination process has advanced. "Purely internal" is problematic because it imports a distinction that the Act

itself does not make. It is also conceptually misleading because most nomination disputes have both an internal-party dimension and an external legal consequence. Screening, membership, party organs, appeals or certification may all be internal party matters, yet the resulting nomination determines whose name is submitted to INEC. The real legal distinction is therefore not between “purely internal” and “not purely internal”, but between matters caught by the internal-affairs ouster and the specific statutory jurisdiction preserved for an aspirant alleging non-compliance with the Act or party guidelines under section 88(2).

The constitutional timetable creates a particular sequencing problem. A pre-election matter must be filed within 14 days of the act or decision complained of; the trial court has up to 180 days from filing to deliver judgment; an appeal must be lodged within 14 days of judgment; and the appellate court has 60 days from filing to determine it. The system is therefore simultaneously compressed at entry and potentially prolonged in final resolution. A claimant has almost no latitude to delay, while the political and administrative process may move through candidate submission, final-list publication and campaigning before the dispute is finally resolved.

On 16 July 2026, the Court of Appeal set aside the 20 May Federal High Court judgment in *Youth Party v INEC* and upheld INEC’s revised timetable and guidelines. The Court held, among other grounds, that the Youth Party lacked locus standi because it had not shown how the challenged guidelines affected its own primary process or the submission of its candidates. The decision confirms that a party cannot challenge INEC’s timetable in the abstract; it must show that the contested measure affects its own legal interests. This may leave some alleged irregularities without substantive judicial determination where no claimant with the required standing brings the case. The separate appeal arising from *SDP v INEC*, heard by the Court of Appeal on 1 July, had no publicly reported determination as of the date of writing.⁹¹

Procedural rules have also been tightened. The Federal High Court (Pre-Election) Practice Directions 2026, effective from 26 June and amended in July, seek to protect the constitutional timetable from procedural delay. They provide access for weekend and public-holiday registry, electronic communication, virtual hearings, case transfers between divisions, strict limits on adjournments and costs for dilatory interlocutory applications. In disputes involving fraud, forgery or otherwise highly contested facts, the amended Directions require written depositions in addition to affidavits and permit cross-examination. This addresses a recurring difficulty in Nigerian pre-election litigation: originating summons is designed for documentary or substantially uncontested questions, yet primary disputes often turn on hostile facts about voting, accreditation, forged documents, competing returns or alleged manipulation. The procedural response is significant, but it does not remove the underlying evidential burden.

2. Party access to the ballot, deregistration and factional authority

Party registration and deregistration litigation acquired sharper consequences once primaries had been held. The Access Party case illustrated the temporal problem. On 10 June, the Federal High Court reportedly ordered INEC to reinstate the association’s registration process and issue the access code needed to complete its application. Even where such relief is legally justified, it does not by itself solve the electoral-calendar problem. A party restored or registered after the primary period still faces the practical consequences of already-expired notice, membership, primary and

⁹¹ *INEC v Youth Party*, Appeal No. CA/ABJ/CV/695, Court of Appeal, Abuja, judgment of 16 July 2026, setting aside *Youth Party v INEC*, Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/517/2026, Federal High Court, Abuja, judgment of 20 May 2026. *SDP v INEC*, Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/720/2026, Federal High Court, Abuja, judgment of 26 May 2026; appeal heard on 1 July 2026, with no publicly reported determination identified as of the date of writing.

candidate-submission stages. Judicial recognition of a right to registration therefore does not automatically translate into effective participation in the same electoral cycle.⁹²

The NDC litigation produced a more politically consequential form of uncertainty. NDC entered the official framework after INEC complied with an earlier Federal High Court judgment directing its registration, conducted primaries and submitted candidates. On 26 June, however, the Federal High Court in Lokoja set aside the earlier judgment on fair-hearing grounds, holding that a necessary party claiming an interest in the disputed logo had not been joined, and restored the parties to their pre-judgment position. The court did not finally determine the substantive registration claim; it reopened it for fresh hearing with the necessary parties joined. NDC announced an appeal and continued its political activities, while INEC continued operationally to process NDC nominations and, by September, to include NDC candidates in the candidate-list process. The consequence is not that NDC candidates can simply be treated as invalid. Rather, a systemic registration dispute continues in the background while INEC administratively treats the party as participating in the 2027 process.⁹³

The litigation concerning ADC, Accord, AA, APP and ZLP shows the importance of appellate hierarchy even more clearly. On 15 June, the Federal High Court ordered their deregistration under section 225A of the Constitution. The judgment was immediately controversial because the Court of Appeal had already ordered a stay of further proceedings. The Court of Appeal stayed execution on 16 June and, on 28 July, nullified the deregistration judgment. The episode matters not only because the parties remained registered. It demonstrates the institutional damage that can arise where a first-instance electoral judgment is delivered despite a subsisting appellate order. For parties conducting primaries and preparing candidate submissions, the distinction between a judgment that exists on paper and one that can lawfully be acted upon is not technical; it determines access to the ballot.⁹⁴

Factional-authority litigation created the same problem from a different direction. Leadership disputes are often characterised as internal party affairs, but the recognised party authority controls notices to INEC, screening structures, primary committees, appeal panels, nomination forms, portal credentials and candidate certification. In the ADC, the Federal High Court on 2 July dismissed Leke Abejide's challenge to the David Mark-led national leadership as an internal matter and for want of standing, while separate litigation concerning the power of that leadership to dissolve or replace state structures continued on appeal. The Court of Appeal on 13 July upheld an order restraining recognition of congresses organised through committees appointed by the Mark-led leadership. The two strands are not necessarily contradictory: recognition of national leadership does not automatically validate every downstream exercise of authority over state organs.⁹⁵

The PDP leadership crisis has similarly shown how a dispute over party offices can migrate into candidate law. The Supreme Court's 30 April decision nullifying the Ibadan convention removed one asserted basis of authority, while other factional and appellate proceedings continued to

⁹² Access Party: Dr Audu Bulama-Bukarti & Anor v INEC, Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/2096/2025; Daily Trust, "Court orders INEC to reinstate Access Party", 10 June 2026; Legit.ng, "Court orders INEC to reinstate another party's registration", 10 June 2026.

⁹³ NDC: Takori Mohammed Sanni & Ors v INEC, Suit No. FHC/LKJ/CS/49/2025; TheCable, "Court sets aside judgment recognising NDC as political party", 26 June 2026; Channels Television, "Court sets aside judgment recognising NDC, restores parties to pre-judgment status", 26 June 2026; Premium Times, "Court overturns judgment recognising NDC as political party", 26 June 2026.

⁹⁴ Incorporated Trustees of the National Forum of Former Legislators v INEC & Ors, FHC/ABJ/CS/2637/2025; Constitution, s. 225A; Court of Appeal, CA/ABJ/CV/569/2026, 22 May 2026; Channels TV, 15 June 2026; ThisDay, 17 June 2026.

⁹⁵ ADC leadership-recognition proceedings, reported as Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/1819/2025; Supreme Court decision of 30 April 2026; Norman Obinna/state-executive litigation, Federal High Court, Abuja, judgment of 29 April 2026; Vanguard, "ADC leadership crisis: Judge declines to hand off case", 16 June 2026.

affect claims over who could speak for the party before INEC. The legally relevant issue is whether the organ issuing notices, conducting or reviewing primaries, certifying results and instructing the nomination portal had lawful authority at the relevant time.⁹⁶

3. Nomination disputes after Zenith Labour Party: registers, methods and consensus

At the time of the primaries, sections 77(5)–(7) of the Electoral Act made the membership register previously submitted to INEC a decisive statutory instrument for participation. Section 77(5) limited voting and being voted for to persons whose names appeared in that register; section 77(6) prohibited reliance on another register; section 77(7) attached consequences to non-compliance. This created particular exposure for late defectors, aspirants introduced shortly before primaries and replacement candidates. The issue was not theoretical: the primary period produced numerous politically significant defections close to nomination dates.

In *Zenith Labour Party v INEC*, CA/ABJ/CV/750/2026, the Court of Appeal on 16 July 2026 declared sections 77(5), 77(6), 77(7) and 84(2) unconstitutional as inconsistent with the constitutional autonomy of political parties under sections 221 and 222. The Court’s reasoning was constitutional rather than merely procedural. It treated the impugned provisions as statutory restrictions on powers which the Constitution assigns to political parties in determining their membership and sponsoring candidates. Sections 221 and 222 were read as protecting that sphere of party autonomy, while the Constitution itself already prescribes the qualifications and disqualifications applicable to elective office. On that reasoning, ordinary legislation could not impose additional conditions which would prevent an otherwise qualified person from participating in a party nomination process or prevent a party from sponsoring that person. The judgment therefore removed the INEC-filed membership register as an exclusive statutory gateway to nomination and invalidated the statutory restriction of nomination methods to direct primaries or consensus. It did not, however, convert party autonomy into exemption from the remaining constitutional, statutory or party-rule requirements governing membership and nomination.

The 16 July judgment is also relevant to nominations conducted before that date. It does not apply only to post-16 July nominations: where a challenge remained pending on 16 July, the court must assess it in light of the legal position established in *Zenith Labour Party*, and the invalidated provisions can no longer operate as grounds of exclusion. The judgment does not, however, reopen cases already finally determined before 16 July, nor does it automatically validate earlier nominations, which remain subject to the surviving legal requirements.

Section 77(4) was not struck down. Parties therefore remain obliged to make their membership registers available to INEC not later than 21 days before the relevant primary, congress or convention, but the Act can no longer presently be read as imposing a 21-day minimum period of personal membership or as automatically excluding an aspirant solely because his or her name was absent from the version of the register previously submitted to INEC.

The effect is important but should not be overstated. The *Zenith Labour Party* ruling did not eliminate the legal requirement that a candidate actually belong to the sponsoring political party, nor did it displace party constitutions, membership rules, screening rules or constitutional qualification requirements. It shifted the inquiry. Instead of treating the INEC-filed register as a conclusive statutory gate, courts are more likely to examine actual membership, the party’s own rules, the authority of the nominating organ and the legality of the process through which the candidate emerged.. INEC subsequently appealed the Court of Appeal judgment to the Supreme

⁹⁶ PDP leadership proceedings include FHC/ABJ/CS/1159/2026, filed 4 June 2026 by the Wabara-led BoT/PDP actors against INEC; Court of Appeal, Appeal No. CA/IB/86/2026, judgment of 3 June 2026; Supreme Court, Appeal No. SC/CV/164/2026, judgment of 30 April 2026 concerning the PDP Ibadan convention.

Court. On 16 September 2026, a seven-member panel of the Supreme Court heard the appeal, SC/CR/495/2026, and reserved judgment, with the date for delivery to be communicated to the parties. The appeal concerns the validity of sections 77(5)–(7) and 84(2) of the Electoral Act 2026. Pending the Supreme Court’s determination, the Court of Appeal judgment remains the operative judicial decision unless otherwise stayed or set aside *Zenith Labour Party*.⁹⁷

The judgment also invalidated section 84(2), which had confined statutory nomination methods to direct primaries or consensus. This creates a hierarchy issue because INEC’s 2026 Political Party Regulations were drafted on the basis of that statutory restriction and have not yet been formally revised to reflect the Court of Appeal judgment. The result is not a regulatory vacuum. Parties remain bound by the Constitution, surviving provisions of the Act, their own constitutions and guidelines, and INEC’s monitoring and notice framework. What can no longer safely be asserted is that a nomination is invalid merely because it was not one of the two methods formerly listed in section 84(2).

Section 87 remains important where a party in fact chooses consensus. The Court of Appeal did not strike it down. Accordingly, a nomination presented as consensus must still be assessed against the statutory safeguards applicable to that method, notably written and voluntary consent of all cleared aspirants and formal ratification of the consensus candidate. The significance is practical in cases described as “affirmations”, where the label alone does not establish whether the process satisfied section 87 or whether competing aspirants were lawfully screened out before the consensus stage.⁹⁸

Current litigation illustrates the shift. In the PRP presidential dispute, Donald Duke’s nomination is challenged by an aspirant who alleges, among other matters, that Duke was not a registered member when PRP submitted its register to INEC. Judgment is fixed for 2 November. Again, *Zenith Labour Party* changes the legal weight of the register argument without disposing of the wider questions of actual membership, screening, the conduct of the primary, standing and limitation.

Six federal candidacies illustrate this shift: an unsuccessful nomination bid or screening outcome in one party was followed by movement to another and inclusion on INEC’s final lists. These cases do not form a single category of illegality. After *Zenith Labour Party*, joining a party after submission of its register under section 77(4) does not by itself invalidate a nomination; INEC’s publication does not establish its lawfulness either. The questions remain whether the candidate held valid membership under the sponsoring party’s rules, whether the competent organ lawfully nominated or certified the candidate, which nomination procedure was used and, where another candidate had already been submitted to INEC, whether sections 31 and 33 on withdrawal and replacement were satisfied. The table compares the six cases; sources are in V.5.

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⁹⁸ Electoral Act 2026, ss. 29(5), 77, 82, 84 and 87–88. Reported disputes include FHC/UY/CS/104/2026 concerning APC Akwa Ibom aspirants; FHC/GS/CS/6/2026 concerning APC Zamfara North; and reported ADC Lagos and ADC authority-to-conduct-primary disputes.

Six cross-party candidacies after Zenith Labour Party

Candidate / final candidacy	Sequence	Principal legal significance after Zenith Labour Party	Key issue / evidence required
Ovie Omo-Agege NDC - Delta Central Senate	Contested the APC Delta Central primary on 18 May; APC declared Ede Dafinone winner. He subsequently left APC for NDC and obtained a waiver. Competing NDC claims then arose between Omo-Agege and Onome Dema. INEC's final list records Omo-Agege as the NDC candidate.	Zenith Labour Party substantially weakens any objection based solely on his absence from the earlier NDC register. It does not determine whether his NDC membership and nomination were valid.	Valid NDC membership; authority to grant the waiver; which NDC nomination process was legally operative; INEC monitoring report; primary return; formal certification and candidate-submission trail.
Saliu Mustapha PDP - Kwara Central Senate	Contested and lost the APC governorship primary, resigned from APC in August and, on 21 August, obtained the PDP Kwara Central ticket through a reported substitution. His name is on INEC's final candidate list.	Combines the post-Zenith membership issue with the separate statutory replacement regime. Late PDP entry is not automatically fatal, but Zenith Labour Party does not dispense with sections 31 and 33.	Actual PDP membership; identity and valid withdrawal of the previous nominee; fresh nomination exercise; notice to INEC; timely submission, particularly given the proximity to INEC's 22 August operational deadline.
Samaila Dahuwa Kaila PRP - Bauchi North Senate	APC officials announced Ibrahim Mohammed Baba as winner of the Bauchi North primary; Kaila disputes that a valid APC primary occurred. He subsequently moved to PRP and appears as its candidate.	Illustrates that Zenith Labour Party removes the automatic register-based objection to late entry into PRP without resolving whether a valid PRP nomination subsequently occurred.	Actual PRP membership; compliance with PRP rules; competent nominating authority; nomination method used. His challenge to the APC process should remain distinct from the legality of the later PRP nomination.
Olubiyi Fadeyi PDP - Osun Central Senate	Failed to secure the APC Osun Central nomination, later returned to PDP and appeared on INEC's final list as the PDP candidate. Ibraheem Adekunle claims that he had already emerged through the PDP primary and been submitted to INEC before Fadeyi's return.	Potentially the strongest replacement case among the six. Zenith Labour Party affects the membership-register argument, but cannot cure an unlawful displacement of a candidate already submitted to INEC.	Actual PDP membership and chronology; whether Adekunle had already been submitted; valid withdrawal, if any; fresh nomination; compliance with sections 31 and 33; verification of the reported waiver chronology.
Rabilu Bala (Kashuri) PRP - Jama'are/Itas-Gadabu House	After an unsuccessful APC re-election bid, he left APC and subsequently joined PRP. INEC's final House list records Rabilu Bala as the PRP candidate for Jama'are/Itas-Gadabu.	A relatively clear example of the post-Zenith membership question: failure in one party followed by nomination in another is not itself prohibited.	Actual PRP membership; compliance with PRP nomination rules; authority and procedure through which he became the nominee. No replacement issue should be assumed without evidence that PRP had already submitted another candidate.
Garba Musa Maidoki ADC - Kebbi South Senate	Was screened out of the APC senatorial contest and therefore did not become an APC nominee. He subsequently moved to ADC and appears as its Kebbi South candidate.	Clarifies the limits of section 35. Because Maidoki was an APC aspirant who was screened out, there is no apparent multiple nomination by two parties. His case instead concerns post-Zenith membership and lawful ADC nomination.	Actual ADC membership; compliance with ADC nomination rules and competent authority. Separately, as a serving legislator who defected, section 68(1)(g) may affect his current mandate, but that issue is distinct from the validity of his 2027 ADC nomination.

Analytical pattern across the six cases

Membership / nomination after Zenith Labour Party Kaila; Rabilu Bala	Membership + disputed second-party nomination Omo-Agege	Membership + statutory replacement Mustapha; Fadeyi	Screening exclusion + section 35 distinction Maidoki
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The Delta Central sequence makes the changed legal position particularly concrete. Ovie Omo-Agege first contested the APC primary for Delta Central on 18 May, in which the party declared incumbent Senator Ede Dafinone the winner. Omo-Agege subsequently resigned from the APC, joined the NDC and received a party waiver to contest the same seat. The ensuing NDC process itself produced competing claims involving Omo-Agege and Onome Bernice Dema, while INEC's final list now records Omo-Agege as the NDC candidate. *Zenith Labour Party* substantially weakens any argument that his late entry into the NDC was, by itself, fatal because he could not have appeared on the membership register previously submitted to INEC. It does not resolve whether he had acquired valid membership under the NDC's rules, whether the waiver was issued by a competent authority, which NDC nomination process was legally operative, or whether the candidate ultimately certified and submitted emerged through that process. Those questions require the party records, INEC monitoring documentation, primary return and candidate-submission trail.

In Gombe, several unsuccessful PDP aspirants challenged Isa Ali Pantami's emergence as governorship candidate, raising questions concerning membership, screening and the validity of the 26 May process. The Federal High Court reserved judgment in July. To the extent those claims relied on Pantami's absence from an earlier INEC-filed register, *Zenith Labour Party* weakens that limb of the challenge; questions of actual membership, party rules, screening and the legality of any consensus process remain live.

4. Candidate replacement and substitution after the primaries

Post-primary replacement has become one of the clearest litigation clusters of the 2027 cycle. The legal threshold is simple but frequently blurred in political reporting. If a person has not yet been submitted to INEC under section 29, a party may still be resolving its internal nomination process, subject to the Act and its own rules. Once a candidate has been submitted, however, sections 31 and 33 sharply constrain the party's ability to change that name. Substitution is permitted only following death or valid withdrawal; withdrawal requires a personally signed written notice and sworn affidavit; the party must conduct another primary within 14 days; and INEC's Political Party Regulations require at least five days' notice of the replacement primary. The process must also comply with the operative INEC timetable.

The distinction became critical after the APC's post-primary review process. On 1 July the party issued a revised National Assembly list replacing numerous persons who had earlier been announced as primary winners across several states. The resulting litigation now tests whether party appeal or review organs can displace outcomes of INEC-monitored primaries and, where names had already been submitted, whether the statutory conditions for replacement were satisfied.

Gabriel Suswam's Benue North-East case is particularly instructive. Suswam maintains that he won the APC direct primary conducted on 18 May, while the party later recognised Emmanuel Udende. INEC reportedly informed the Federal High Court that its monitoring record showed Suswam as the winner, and judgment has been reserved for 12 October. The applicable legal consequences depend on whether Suswam had already been submitted to INEC. If Suswam had already been submitted to INEC and the party later replaced him, sections 31 and 33 are directly engaged. If APC had not yet submitted Suswam and instead treated Udende as the candidate after an internal appeal process, the dispute is not necessarily a statutory substitution; it becomes a question whether the party could lawfully overturn or revise the outcome of the monitored primary under the Act, APC's constitution and its appeal guidelines.

A broader action concerning the APC nomination process in Benue State by Sesugh Kaaba and other affected aspirants challenges the APC's post-primary replacement exercise and seeks recognition of candidates said to have won monitored primaries. Similar litigation has emerged in Abia, Ondo, Lagos, Imo and Kebbi. In *Abdulghani Arobo v APC & INEC*, the Federal High Court held in August that Arobo was the lawful APC candidate for Owo/Ose and ordered his recognition, after which APC and INEC appealed and INEC continued to recognise Timehin Adelegbe pending appellate determination. That sequence illustrates why: inclusion on INEC's final list, while carrying formal administrative weight, is not legally conclusive; a candidate list is not legally curative: the list records INEC's current administrative position, but the status as a candidate may remain subject to a binding judicial outcome.

Other cases expose the mechanics of replacement directly. In Kebbi, Abubakar Sadiq Sa'adu Fakai challenged an attempted repeat primary and replacement after asserting that his name had already been submitted; the Federal High Court ordered the parties to maintain the status quo pending determination. In Lagos Mainland, Pratt Tunde alleges that NDC removed his name from the INEC portal and substituted another candidate despite his claimed primary victory. In Imo North, Isaac Nwachukwu relies on an alleged consensus ratification and challenges his later replacement. In another Kebbi case, Abubakar Labbo Gwandu alleges successive replacements after his claimed primary victory. These proceedings turn less on broad assertions of unfairness than on documentary chronology: who emerged, what INEC monitored, whether a candidate had already been submitted, whether there was death or valid withdrawal, and whether the replacement primary and portal submission complied with the law.

Saliu Mustapha's case illustrates the interaction between post-*Zenith Labour Party* switching and candidate replacement. After unsuccessfully contesting the APC governorship primary in May, Mustapha left the APC in August and, on 21 August, secured the PDP nomination for Kwara Central Senate through a reported substitution. His name now appears on INEC's final candidate list. Because the move occurred after *Zenith Labour Party*, late entry into the PDP is not in itself an automatic ground of exclusion under the invalidated register provisions. The outstanding questions are instead whether he had valid PDP membership, whether the previous nominee validly withdrew, whether the required fresh nomination exercise and notice to INEC took place, and whether the replacement was submitted within the applicable timeframe. The fact that the reported substitution occurred on 21 August, immediately before INEC's 22 August operational deadline for Presidential and National Assembly withdrawals and replacements, makes the documentary chronology particularly important.

A similar but potentially more complex sequence arose in Osun Central. Olubiyi Fadeyi returned to the PDP after failing to secure the APC senatorial nomination and subsequently appeared on INEC's final list as the PDP candidate. Ibraheem Adekunle, however, has publicly claimed that he had already emerged through the PDP primary and been submitted to INEC before Fadeyi's return. If borne out by the party and INEC records, the case would engage not only the post-*Zenith* question of Fadeyi's actual PDP membership, but also whether the earlier nominee validly withdrew and whether the requirements for a fresh nomination and replacement under sections 31 and 33 were satisfied. The chronology therefore requires verification against the membership, withdrawal, primary and candidate-submission records.

5. Candidate qualification, standing, defection and evidentiary thresholds

The 2026 Act also increased the strategic importance of candidate qualification litigation by pushing qualification disputes further into the pre-election phase. False-information claims concerning constitutional requirements are channelled through section 29, while qualification is no longer available as a standalone post-election petition ground in the manner previously familiar

under the 2022 framework. Allegations concerning affidavits, educational certificates, forged or inconsistent documents and constitutional eligibility therefore require earlier detection and litigation.⁹⁹

This front-loading makes two threshold questions decisive: who is entitled to bring the case, and when the 14-day period for doing so begins. Constitution section 285(14) and the statutory nomination remedies centre pre-election litigation primarily on the aggrieved aspirant and, in defined circumstances, on a political party challenging INEC action affecting its candidates. Rival parties and ordinary voters generally cannot transform another party's internal nomination defect into their own cause of action. Youth Party confirms the importance of this threshold: even a challenge raising significant questions about INEC's timetable failed because the claimant did not show concrete injury.¹⁰⁰

The 14-day filing period under section 285(9) is equally unforgiving. The relevant clock runs from the act, decision or event complained of. Publication of a final candidate list may itself create a cause of action where the complaint is that INEC has published the wrong person or omitted the lawful nominee, but it does not automatically revive a challenge to an earlier primary, screening decision or substitution whose own limitation period has expired. This distinction is likely to become increasingly important as final candidate lists are published and litigants seek to characterise later publication as a fresh event.

The amended Federal High Court Practice Directions reinforce that discipline by opening registries on weekends and public holidays, requiring early joinder of necessary parties and limiting procedural delay. They also respond directly to the evidential difficulty of fraud and forgery allegations by allowing written depositions and cross-examination within the originating-summons framework. The practical implication is that pre-election cases will increasingly be decided on the quality and completeness of documentary trails: notices, party rules, screening records, accreditation lists, INEC monitoring reports, primary returns, appeal decisions, withdrawal affidavits and portal records.

A separate but related issue arises where serving federal legislators defect and then secure nominations in their new parties. Constitution section 68(1)(g) provides that a Senator or House member who becomes a member of another political party before the end of the legislative term shall vacate the seat unless the change results from a qualifying division in the former party or a merger. *Abegunde v Ondo State House of Assembly* makes the exception demanding: a merely local or state-level dispute is insufficient; the division must affect the broader party structure. Yet this current-seat question is legally distinct from the validity of the politician's 2026 nomination in the new party. A serving legislator may therefore face two different legal questions: whether the present mandate is retained under section 68, and whether the new-party nomination for 2027 was lawfully obtained. The distinction is particularly important for defectors from parties experiencing genuine national leadership crises, where the constitutional division exception may be arguable rather than merely rhetorical.

Section 35 creates a separate prohibition on multiple nomination: where a candidate knowingly allows himself to be nominated by more than one political party or in more than one constituency, the nomination is void. This requires actual nomination, rather than merely participation in an

⁹⁹ Electoral Act 2026, ss. 29(5)-(7), 88 and 138; Constitution, ss. 66, 107, 137 and 182; PLAC, *Candidate Qualification in the Electoral Act 2026: From Post-Election Petitions to Pre-Election Scrutiny*, April 2026.

¹⁰⁰ *INEC v Youth Party*, Appeal No. CA/ABJ/CV/695, Court of Appeal, Abuja, judgment of 16 July 2026, setting aside *Youth Party v INEC*, Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/517/2026, Federal High Court, Abuja, judgment of 20 May 2026. *SDP v INEC*, Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/720/2026, Federal High Court, Abuja, judgment of 26 May 2026; appeal heard on 1 July 2026, with no publicly reported determination identified as of the date of writing.

earlier nomination process. Garba Musa Maidoki, for example, was screened out of the APC contest for Kebbi South before moving to the ADC and subsequently appearing on INEC's final list as the ADC candidate. On the available facts, section 35 therefore does not appear to apply. His case instead raises the distinct post-*Zenith Labour Party* question of whether his subsequent ADC nomination complied with the surviving requirements on actual party membership, party rules and the nomination process.

6. A prolonged dispute environment

The 2026 Practice Directions attempt to reduce avoidable delay within a system that combines compressed procedural timelines with potentially prolonged final resolution. Nor does the publication of a "final" candidate list create legal finality. INEC may be required to amend a list to comply with a court judgment, and pending appeals may leave the Commission maintaining one candidate administratively while another claims legal entitlement. The Owo/Ose litigation already demonstrates the problem: a trial court ordered recognition of one candidate, appeals followed, and INEC continued to treat another as its operative candidate pending appellate determination. The uncertainty therefore concerns not the official status of INEC's published list, but whether a particular candidate appearing on it will remain the legally entitled candidate once pending litigation is finally resolved. Similar risks arise wherever party appeal committees, replacement primaries or portal changes are litigated after the main primary process has closed.

The legal architecture itself has also shifted during the cycle. The Electoral Act initially sought to discipline candidate selection through a closed membership-register regime and a statutory restriction of nomination methods to direct primaries or consensus. *Zenith Labour Party v INEC* materially altered both elements by invalidating sections 77(5)–(7) and 84(2). Parties remain bound by constitutional qualification rules, section 77(4), which still requires the membership register to be made available to INEC at least 21 days before the relevant primary, section 82 requirements to notify INEC at least 21 days before a nomination meeting and to permit INEC observation of the process, section 87 safeguards where consensus is used, and the withdrawal and substitution requirements in sections 31 and 33, as well as by their constitutions and guidelines. What has changed is the centre of legal inquiry: away from mechanically applying the pre-filed register or a closed statutory list of nomination methods, towards proof of actual membership, lawful party authority, valid internal procedure, reliable documentary records and compliance with the surviving statutory framework.

Post-primary litigation is therefore not separate from candidate selection; it has become its continuation through legal and administrative means. Party organs decide, review and sometimes reverse nomination outcomes; INEC monitors, receives and publishes names; courts determine whether the statutory and constitutional conditions were met. The resulting system can correct unlawful nominations, but often only after political expectations and campaign structures have already formed around a disputed candidate. In an environment of low institutional trust, this sequencing carries consequences beyond individual cases. The credibility of electoral justice will depend not only on legally sound judgments, but on consistency across courts, respect for appellate hierarchy, transparent documentary records, timely enforcement and a clear distinction between legitimate judicial correction and the perception that litigation itself has become a means of influencing the candidate field.

7. Electoral milestones and operational implications

The next state-level administrative dates are 19 September for withdrawal and replacement, 26 September for the remaining nomination forms, and 10 October for final publication. The separate statutory procedure for notifying INEC of an omitted candidate would run to 26 September for the

federal lists published on 12 September, and to 24 October if the state lists are published on 10 October. These administrative and notification dates do not replace the case-specific constitutional filing periods.¹⁰¹

As discussed above, publication of the final lists does not prevent ongoing or legally admissible new proceedings and appeals. Where both appellate tiers are available, the ordinary pre-election allocations can extend to 328 days from initial filing: 180 days at trial, followed by 14 days to appeal and 60 days for determination at each of two appellate levels. Actual proceedings may finish earlier; the calculation shows why disputes filed in the nomination period can still affect preparations and, in some cases, the election or its aftermath.¹⁰²

INEC therefore needs to track the relief sought in each case against the stages of ballot approval, printing, distribution and public information. A change of nominee within the same party may require updated candidate information without reprinting a party-symbol ballot. Inclusion or exclusion of a party can have a much larger production impact.¹⁰³ Osun's August election demonstrated the operational exposure: INEC reported printing millions of ballot papers and result sheets within 36 hours to implement the SDP inclusion judgment.¹⁰⁴ The final ballot design, actual orders and implementation dates determine the effect in each contest.

A public register of case numbers, last orders, next hearings, appeal filings, granted stays and resulting changes to nomination records would reduce uncertainty for parties, candidates and voters. It would also enable INEC to distinguish cases requiring immediate administrative action from those whose effect depends on a future judgment, and to explain promptly why an entry has changed or remains unchanged.

¹⁰¹ Festus Okoye, INEC revised timetable reproduced in THISDAY, 2 June 2026; Electoral Act 2026, ss. 31, 32 and 42. Statutory dates are calendar calculations from the scheduled polling dates; the omission dates depend on actual final-list publication. [thisdaylive.com] [placng.org]

¹⁰² Supreme Court Act, s. 27(2)(a) and (4); Court of Appeal Act, s. 24; Constitution, s. 285(9)–(14), including s. 285(13A). Ordinary final-civil appeal periods are three calendar months. The special pre-election period is 14 days, followed by 60 days for determination of an appeal. Any filing deadlines calculated from the reported decisions are conditional calculations from reported decisions, subject to the applicable classification, court-day rules and any permitted extension or constitutional exclusion. [supreme.supremecourt.gov.ng] [placng.org] [placng.org]

¹⁰³ Electoral Act 2026, s. 42. The distinction between changing the nominee and changing the printed ballot is an operational inference; the final 2027 ballot design and printing status were not verified. [placng.org]

¹⁰⁴ Channels Television, interview with INEC Commissioner Kunle Ajayi, 14 August 2026. The report identifies the underlying judgment as 22 July; it also records late receipt/verification of the order. [channelstv.com]

VIII. Inclusion and Participation: Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

Main Findings

1. The main inclusion deficit lay in party-controlled access to viable candidacy. Costs, screening, consensus bargaining, withdrawals, substitutions, intimidation, weak fundraising access and control over winnable tickets allowed exclusion to occur before the formal candidate list stage.

2. Final candidate lists therefore provide an incomplete measure of inclusion. To identify where attrition occurs, monitoring should cover the full nomination pipeline, from Expression of Interest and form purchase through screening, clearance, consensus negotiations, appeals, withdrawal, substitution and upload, with data disaggregated by sex, age and disability.

Women entered the 2026 primary cycle from an exceptionally weak baseline. In 2023, women won only 68 of 1,491 seats across the five principal election levels, a meagre 4.6 per cent of all elected positions¹⁰⁵. This remained far below global and Sub-Saharan African Legislative averages, and by May 2026 Nigeria ranked 175th of 181 countries for women's representation in lower or single chambers.

1. Women's participation: weak legal protection and structural barriers

Nigeria's international commitments require active measures to promote women's equal participation in public life¹⁰⁶. Yet they have not produced enforceable candidate-nomination quotas. The National Gender Policy's 35 per cent benchmark gained renewed legal weight through the 2022 Federal High Court judgment on public appointments, but not as binding party-primary quotas¹⁰⁷. The Constitution, Electoral Act and INEC Regulations prohibit discriminatory qualification rules, including on the basis of sex, but do not require parties to nominate women in winnable contests¹⁰⁸.

Some parties have gender-inclusion provisions, but these mostly concern internal offices, women's wings or mobilisation structures rather than elective tickets. Fee reductions may ease entry, but do not shift the male-dominated centres of authority where candidacies are negotiated. Patronage, monetisation, campaign and litigation costs, weak fundraising access, intimidation and gendered abuse continue to make nomination contests structurally unequal. The suspension of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, after a disciplinary process that began shortly after she publicly alleged sexual harassment against the Senate President, became a wider gender-accountability controversy and underlined the institutional vulnerability of women even after election¹⁰⁹.

The primaries showed that exclusion was already materialising at candidate-selection stage. A coalition of women's organisations warned in Abuja that early outcomes revealed a gap between

¹⁰⁵ None of the presidential or 28 governorship offices, 3 of 109 Senate seats, 17 of 360 House of Representatives seats, and 48 of 993 State House of Assembly seats.

¹⁰⁶ Nigeria is party to both the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ratified in 1985, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, ratified in 2004.

¹⁰⁷ Incorporated Trustees of Nigerian Women Trust Fund & Ors v Federal Government & AGF, FHC Abuja, Okorowo J., 6 April 2022; appeal reported in July 2022, with no publicly identified stay of execution.

¹⁰⁸ Electoral Act 2026, ss 85 and 87; INEC Regulations and Guidelines for Political Parties 2026, cl 23(3).

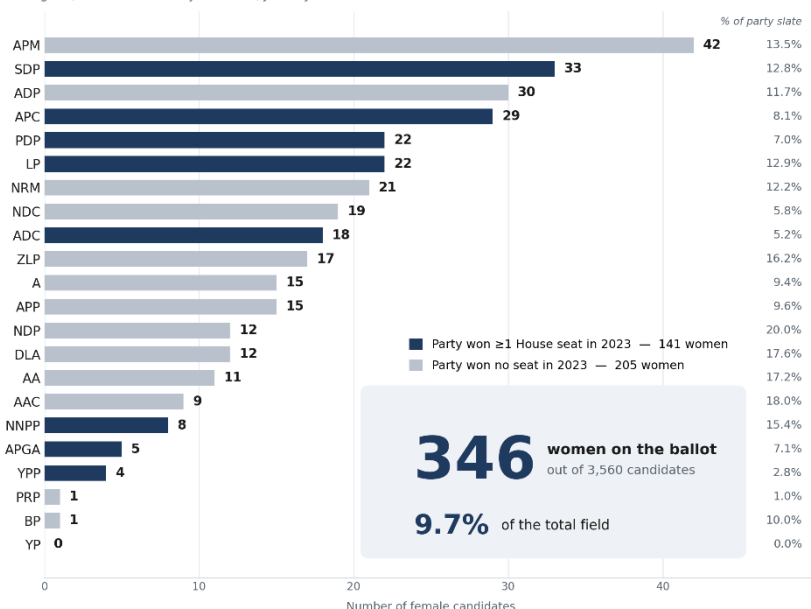
¹⁰⁹ Her six-month suspension from the Senate, following a disciplinary process initiated shortly after she publicly alleged sexual harassment against the Senate President, became a major gender-accountability controversy, irrespective of the Senate's position that the suspension concerned misconduct during plenary rather than the allegation itself.

political commitments to inclusion and the number of women securing tickets¹¹⁰. It cited disqualification of serving female lawmakers, defeats of prominent women incumbents and allegations that women aspirants were marginalised through screening, internal party pressure and demands to step down for male consensus candidates¹¹¹. The problem was cumulative: women remained formally eligible, while party-controlled screening, consensus, withdrawals, substitutions and patronage bargaining often narrowed the route to nomination.

The final House of Representatives candidate list published on 12 September 2026 contains 3,560 candidates for 360 federal constituencies. Of these, 346 (9.7 per cent) are women, which represents a slight increase from 2023 when the figure was 9.22%.¹¹² However, only 51 women candidates (less than 15% of all women candidates) are running for the APC or the PDP, the two parties that together took 73% of House seats in 2023. Women are absent from almost half of the map with none of them standing in 44.4% of the constituencies (160 out of 360). Only 9 of the 16 women incumbents will compete, when incumbency in the Nigerian House is the main predictor of re-election.

Female House of Representatives candidates by party

Nigeria, National Assembly elections, January 2027



The parties best placed to win are the least likely to nominate women which reflects the economics of nomination. Where a party ticket is worth something, it is contested, priced and allocated through networks in which women are poorly placed; where the ticket is worth little, the nomination is cheap and the party is glad of a body to put on the ballot. Female candidature in Nigeria is thus systematically displaced towards the low-value end of the party system.

Regarding geographical representation, the North-East and North-West sit below 4 per cent — that is, below even the current national rate of female representation, let alone candidature. The North-West is the largest single bloc of candidates in the country (863, reflecting its constituency count and crowded fields) and returns the lowest female share of any zone. Finally, four of the nine returning candidates have changed party and six of them are now running on an APC ticket. Out of the seven seats vacated by women, only one has a woman position to take it.¹¹³ On these figures the 11th Assembly is unlikely to seat more women than the 10th, and may well seat fewer.

¹¹⁰ Women's groups press conference, 'Broken Promises, Missing Women', Abuja, 18 May 2026; Daily Sun, 18 May 2026; Guardian Nigeria, 19 May 2026.

¹¹¹ It cited the disqualification of serving female lawmakers, including Rivers West Senator Ipalibo Banigo, and the defeat of prominent female incumbents, including Miriam Onuoha, Chairperson of the House Committee on TETFUND, during the APC primaries.

¹¹² INEC, [2027 presidential final list](#); [2027 Senate final list](#); and [2027 House of Representatives final list](#), accessed 15 September 2026. Totals are calculated from the candidate entries. Publication date: Channels Television, [12 September 2026](#).

¹¹³ Ogun's Ikenne/Shagamu/Remo North constituency.

This prospect was in plain sight during the primaries period and explained the renewed attention to the special seats for women Bill perceived in June 2026 when it appeared in the final print of the thirty-seven priority Sixth Alteration bills ahead of a plenary vote on 11 June 2026. The House sat and voted. The State Police Bill was passed. The Special Seats Bill was listed but not called, reportedly owing to the volume of other listed bills and unresolved disputes on the floor, and was deferred to the resumption of 7 July 2026, which produced no vote either. On 3–4 August 2026 the House convened a National Dialogue on the Electoral College Model for the Bill, an advocacy event held during recess rather than a legislative proceeding. The National Assembly adjourned on 23 July 2026 and had not resumed plenary as at the date of writing, resumption having been postponed from 15 to 29 September 2026. No vote has therefore been taken since 11 June 2026.

The comparison with the bills from which it was separated is instructive. The State Police Bill was passed by the Senate on 24 June 2026 in the form of an executive bill transmitted by the President, and by the House on 23 July 2026, the House having rescinded its own earlier text and adopted the executive version; it awaits transmission to the thirty-six State Houses of Assembly. A proposal touching the federal distribution of coercive power, defeated under three previous administrations, was thus carried through both chambers within six weeks, while a proposal enjoying the declared support of the President, the Senate President and the Speaker was not put to a vote at all. Inclusion among the prioritised bills has not operated as a guarantee of floor consideration. The corrective mechanism proposed in response to party gatekeeping has itself failed to secure legislative time.

The consequences for implementation are substantial. Alteration requires two-thirds of the membership of each chamber on identical text, ratification by at least twenty-four State Houses of Assembly, and presidential assent. Application to the 2027 elections appears to be foreclosed. Beyond that, State Houses of Assembly are unlikely to give meaningful consideration to a transmitted bill between approximately December 2026 and the seating of new assemblies in mid-2027, and the 10th National Assembly's term expires in June 2027. The bill further reserves accreditation, quorum, voting procedure, collation, declaration, tie-breaking, vacancies, substitution, campaign finance, election petitions and party nomination to a subsequent Act, so ratification alone would not render the seats operative. On the most plausible sequence, the earliest realistic application is the 2031 general elections. One qualification cuts the other way. Because the seats would be filled by electoral colleges rather than on the general-election ballot, they are not tied to the electoral cycle: were both the alteration and its enabling Act completed during the 11th Assembly, the seats could in principle be filled mid-term rather than awaiting 2031. No published version of the text contains a transitional provision to that effect, so this is better read as a gap in the drafting than as a route anyone has planned.

2. Youth and persons with disabilities

Youth and persons with disabilities faced a weaker evidentiary record but similar structural limits. Youth inclusion remains based mainly on party-level fee reductions, not quotas or reserved nominations, and current evidence does not show a reversal of youth under-representation. For persons with disabilities, the INEC Regulations prohibit exclusion of aspirants based on physical disability, and some parties reduced fees for PWD aspirants. TAF Africa nevertheless found that formal accommodations had not sufficiently translated into influence in party leadership, decision-making or candidate selection.

The disability field on the candidate nomination form was expected to improve inclusion data at some cost to privacy. The 12 September publication of the final House of Representatives candidate list shows the cost without the improvement. The PWD field is populated for all 3,560

records but admits four values — None (3,553), Albinism (3), Visually impaired (3), Others (1).¹¹⁴ Seven candidates, 0.20 per cent of the field, declared a disability, against a National Population Commission estimate of at least 19 million Nigerians with disabilities.¹¹⁵ The instrument is narrower than the statute it serves: section 155 of the Electoral Act 2026 defines disability to include long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment, yet across 3,560 records the field never once registers a mobility, hearing, speech, intellectual or psychosocial condition. It records which candidates volunteered a visible condition, not disability.

The exposure is real, and the field's weak legal footing explains it. Parties submit candidate lists in forms prescribed by the Commission (sections 29(1) and 73(1)); neither the Act nor the 2026 Regulations specifies what those forms must contain. Publication nonetheless follows under section 29(3), and the purpose of that publicity is confined by sections 29(5) and (6) to challenges touching constitutional eligibility — a category that excludes disability, which appears nowhere in sections 65 and 66 of the Constitution. Health status is meanwhile sensitive personal data under section 30 of the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023. Seven named individuals are thus publicly identified by health status, by constituency, to no statutory end.

On the voter side, the same information does work. No one is obliged to declare a disability in order to register — it is not among the qualifications in section 12 — but where a voter does declare one, the register records it by type (section 9(1)(b)) and the declaration unlocks something concrete: assistance in the voting compartment under section 54, Braille ballot guides and other assistive devices, priority queues and accessible polling units under the 2026 Regulations. Disclosure there serves the person who makes it. On the candidate side it serves no one: sections 84 and 85 ask nothing of parties nominating candidates with disabilities, and the declaration leads nowhere but into the published list.

¹¹⁴ INEC, 2027 House of Representatives final list, published 12 September 2026, disability field; the figures describe recorded disclosures in the 3,560 House entries. See also the candidate-list source in V.5. [INEC House list](#)

¹¹⁵ Vanguard, "NPC puts Nigeria's disabled population at 19million", 6 October 2018; ThisDay, "INEC: 19 Million Nigerians Living with Disabilities are Registered Voters", 20 October 2022. Nigeria has not counted disability in a census since 2006, when it returned 3.25 million, and the 2023 census was postponed indefinitely.

IX. Recommendations and proposals for targeted activities

The recommendations distinguish action before the 2027 elections from reforms requiring sustained work during 2027–2031. Immediate priorities are to explain disputed nominations, improve public information and protect participation. Longer-term work concerns party governance, nomination costs and accountability in candidate selection. Preparations for those reforms can begin before polling.

1. Until the 2027 elections

A. General / thematic recommendations

1. Resolve disputes affecting participation before polling

The courts should give priority to cases that could change which parties or candidates may contest, particularly disputes over who can nominate on a party's behalf. Cases should be heard fairly and early enough for INEC to implement judgments and adjust preparations.¹¹⁶ INEC should explain which decisions require changes to the published lists and which cases remain pending.

2. Explain nomination decisions and subsequent changes

Parties should explain how disputed candidates were selected and why any declared result or submitted name was changed. INEC should make the relevant findings from its monitoring and handling of nominations available, so affected aspirants can examine the reasons and evidence. Any later amendment to a published list should be dated and explained, with sensitive personal information protected. These explanations should also cover nominations obtained after a change of party.

3. Use dialogue to clarify concerns and reduce tensions

INEC, IPAC and programme partners should maintain dialogue with parties, affected aspirants and civic organisations on outstanding nomination concerns and campaign conditions. The aim should be to obtain explanations, clarify procedures and agree practical steps to reduce tensions. Consultations should focus on matters the participants can address, with legal disputes continuing through the courts where necessary.

4. Make candidate and policy information accessible

INEC should make candidate information easy to find and search by party, office and constituency, and explain subsequent changes. **Clear public communication should also cover election procedures and technology, including testing, faults found, corrective action and contingency arrangements.**

Support parties to present their policy commitments in accessible, comparable form. A Nigerian Vote Compass or similar voter-information tool could help the public compare documented positions, provided its sources and methodology are public, parties are treated equally and the information can be maintained. Voters should be able to examine the positions and make their own choices.

¹¹⁶ See Chapter VII for pending proceedings and possible appeals affecting party participation and candidate identity.

5. Support participation by women, youth and persons with disabilities

Immediate support should address the obstacles facing candidates already nominated, including access to information, media and safe, accessible campaign venues. Women candidates should have access across parties to non-partisan legal and procedural assistance, communications training and support in responding to threats or violence.

INEC and civil society organisations should publish candidate data by sex and age and examine where women and other under-represented aspirants were excluded during nomination, protecting sensitive personal information. Work on special seats and other inclusion measures should continue alongside practical assistance for the 2027 elections, without making that assistance dependent on legislative change.¹¹⁷

6. Prepare for candidate changes and protect peaceful participation

INEC should prepare for lawful changes to candidate lists, including their possible effects on election materials and public information. Parties and security agencies should address risks arising from unresolved nomination disputes and protect candidates, election workers, observers and journalists. Peace Accord commitments should be reflected in issue-based campaigning and action against intimidation, violence and inducement, with allegations investigated promptly and responses made public.

7. Explain how INEC's alternative dispute resolution can be used

INEC should explain which disputes its alternative dispute-resolution mechanism can address and how parties and aspirants can use it. Mediation could help with information gaps, procedural misunderstandings and emerging tensions. Guidance should make clear that mediation does not suspend court deadlines or override nomination requirements.

8. Support timely, consistent and transparent electoral justice

Support judicial exchanges on the Electoral Act 2026 and subsequent rulings. Early identification of related proceedings and better sharing of judgments could reduce conflicting orders, while preserving judges' independence in individual cases. A public litigation tracker would help parties and voters follow significant cases; INEC also needs reliable internal records to implement court decisions promptly.

9. Match programme support to available time and resources

EU-SDGN partners should agree a manageable set of immediate activities, with clear responsibilities and adequate resources. Priority should go to nomination transparency, public communication, inclusion and dispute prevention. Existing expertise and coordination arrangements should be used, with follow-up extending into the post-election review.

B. Recommendations to institutions / stakeholders

1. To the National Assembly

Use oversight to examine the handling of nominations, election preparedness and barriers to participation. Hear the concerns of parties, aspirants and observers, and identify legislative issues for the next cycle. Continue consideration of inclusion reforms and the legislation needed to implement them.

¹¹⁷ See Chapter VIII on special seats and the constitutional and implementing steps required. No commencement date is assumed here.

2. To INEC

Make candidate lists and subsequent changes accessible, explain disputed entries and release relevant monitoring findings. Provide clear information on the Commission's role and complaints procedures. Work with disability organisations to improve access to polling units and electoral information, and with security agencies to protect election personnel.

3. To Political Parties

Explain selection and appeal decisions to affected aspirants and address grievances with members in the constituencies concerned. Any remaining nomination or replacement exercise should follow the applicable law and party rules, with genuine voluntary consent where consensus is used. Provide inclusive campaign access and carry Peace Accord commitments into the conduct of officials and supporters.

4. To the Judiciary

Determine leadership and nomination cases as early as practicable and make judgments readily available to those responsible for implementing them. Identify related cases to reduce conflicting orders. Apply filing rules consistently, address unjustified procedural delay and protect access to redress. Remedies should respect legal rights while taking account of the electoral calendar.

5. To Civil Society, Media, and Development Partners

Monitor disputed nominations, campaign conditions and official responses to reported misconduct. Provide impartial candidate and policy information, and non-partisan assistance for women, young people and persons with disabilities across parties. Maintain scrutiny of political finance, hate speech, disinformation and restrictions on observation or reporting.

2. The post-2027 electoral cycle, 2027–2031

A. General / thematic recommendations

1. Strengthen members' participation in party decisions

Support parties across the political spectrum to maintain reliable membership records, publish their constitutions and rules, and communicate regularly with members. Members should be able to check their records, challenge errors and understand how candidates are selected. Clear arrangements for admitting newcomers should protect participation by existing members as well as new entrants.

2. Make candidate selection and appeals transparent

Parties should publish screening decisions, primary results and appeal outcomes, explaining any change to the candidate selected. Internal appeals need independence and clear procedures. Decisions by national party bodies should also be open to scrutiny by affected aspirants and members.

Review nomination and litigation timetables together, drawing on the experience of parties, observers and the courts. Publish revised rules and guidance well before the next primaries so parties and aspirants can plan. The timetable should allow complaints to be heard and decisions implemented before critical election preparations.

3. Reduce nomination costs and strengthen financial accountability

Review Expression of Interest and nomination charges, explain what they finance and establish affordable, published fee schedules. Party-finance disclosure should cover income from forms and spending during internal contests. The law should expressly prohibit and sanction bribery and inducement throughout party primaries, addressing gaps in coverage or enforcement.¹¹⁸

4. Increase access to nominations for under-represented groups

Parties and legislators should develop enforceable inclusion measures and nomination targets for women, young people and persons with disabilities. Work on women's special seats should include the legislation needed to implement them. Women's and disability organisations should help assess whether reforms improve access to candidacies, decision-making and resources, using protected data from each stage of selection.

5. Improve digital membership and nomination records

Improve electronic membership and nomination records so that authorised decisions and later changes can be checked. Any internal electronic-voting pilot should be independently assessed for security, verification and protection against coercion, with alternatives for members unable to use it. Digitalisation requires continuing technical capacity, data protection and maintenance between elections.

6. Sustain reform work throughout the electoral cycle

Use the post-election review to agree a practical reform programme, drawing on nomination records, observer findings and participants' experience. The programme should connect legal changes with improvements in party procedures, INEC monitoring and dispute resolution. Institutions and development partners should agree responsibilities, provide sustained funding and review progress well before the next primaries.

B. Recommendations to institutions / stakeholders

1. To the National Assembly

Review the Electoral Act and related legislation in light of court decisions and documented problems in the nomination process. Priorities include membership records, nomination costs, primary-related bribery, inclusion and the timing of legal remedies. Electoral-offences and political-finance reforms should identify the institutions and resources needed for enforcement.

2. To INEC

Publish guidance early, strengthen the training of primary monitors and make their findings available for scrutiny. Develop consistent records of nomination decisions and subsequent changes, with safeguards for privacy and accessibility. Work with parties to test procedures before the next nomination period.

3. To Political Parties

Publish selection rules and results, reduce nomination fees and establish independent internal appeals. Adopt clear arrangements for admitting defectors and allocating nomination authority, so that incoming and existing members understand their rights. Inclusion commitments should extend to candidates, resources and the bodies making selection decisions; consensus should reflect voluntary agreement.

¹¹⁸ Kukah Centre observers' report, §6.0(d); [Electoral Act 2026](#), ss. 125 and 131 (PLAC edition). The proposed review concerns explicit coverage of party primaries and effective enforcement; it does not assume that existing prohibitions have no application.

4. To the Judiciary

Review the handling of nomination disputes after the elections, including access to evidence, related proceedings and implementation of decisions. Use the findings to improve procedures, share relevant judgments and strengthen preparation for the next cycle.

5. To Civil Society, Media, and Development Partners

Maintain observation of party governance and nominations between elections, with particular attention to costs, inclusion and access to records. Publish findings with clear methods and an opportunity for parties to respond. Continue civic education and support for inclusion reforms, retaining local expertise and following up on implementation.

The assessment points to weak confidence among electoral stakeholders, limited structured dialogue and a transparency deficit around an exclusionary primary process. The recommendations follow directly from the report's central finding: the 2026 framework created new formal safeguards, but the decisive risks moved to transparency, documentation, monitoring, litigation and party gatekeeping. The proposed activities therefore focus on what can still be improved before 2027 and what for the next primaries: public information, structured dialogue, legal certainty, inclusion data, dispute prevention and traceability of nomination outcomes.

We differentiate the recommendations; the first set focuses on the actual issues to be addressed while the second set is directed towards the various stakeholders of the electoral process.

Annex 1 – Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full term
AA	Action Alliance
ADC	African Democratic Congress
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AGF	Attorney-General of the Federation
AMAC	Abuja Municipal Area Council
APC	All Progressives Congress
APGA	All Progressives Grand Alliance
APM	Allied Peoples Movement
APP	Action Peoples Party
BoT	Board of Trustees
CA	Court of Appeal
CS	Civil Suit
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEM	Election Expert Mission
EFCC	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
EFM	Election Follow-up Mission
EOI / Eol	Expression of Interest
EOM	Election Observation Mission
EU	European Union
EU-SDGN II	European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria, Phase II
FAQ(s)	Frequently Asked Question(s)
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FHC	Federal High Court
Form EC 16B	INEC form used for recording political-party primary results and related monitoring information
G5	Group of Five PDP governors
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IPAC	Inter-Party Advisory Council
IReV	INEC Result Viewing Portal
LP	Labour Party
MHR	Member of the House of Representatives
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NASS	National Assembly
NDC	Nigeria Democratic Congress
NDP	National Democratic Party
NF	Nomination Fee
NIN	National Identification Number
NNPP	New Nigeria Peoples Party
NOM	Nomination Fee
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
PLAC	Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre
PVC	Permanent Voter Card
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
QR	Quick Response
SC	Supreme Court
SDGN	Support to Democratic Governance
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SHA	State House of Assembly
SIEC	State Independent Electoral Commission
TAF Africa	TAF Africa (disability-inclusion civil-society organisation; formerly The Albino Foundation)
TETFund	Tertiary Education Trust Fund
ZLP	Zenith Labour Party

Annex 2 – List of Interlocutors

S/N	Day/Date	Location	Pol. Party/ Organisation	Post/Position
1.	Friday -15/5/26	Abuja – Wuse Ward (Govt. Sec. Schl, Maitama)	APC Primaries (Abuja North)	House of Representatives
		Abuja -Gudu	Barr. Festus Okoye	Fmr INEC Comm.
2.	Saturday -16/5/26	Abuja – Wuse Ward (Govt. Sec. Schl, Maitama)	APC Primaries	Senate
3.	Sunday - 17/5/26	Abuja PDP FCT Office	PDP Primaries (Abuja North)	House of Representatives
4.	Monday - 18/5/26	Abuja	DAI	Interaction
5.	Tuesday – 19/5/26	Abuja	PLAC/YIAGA/TKC	Interaction
6.	Wednesday- 20/5/26	Ibadan	INEC State Office	Interaction with REC/EPM
7.	Thursday - 21/5/26	Ibadan (Ward 10)	APC Primaries	APC Governorship
			ADC Primaries	ADC Senate
8.	Friday 22/5/26	Ibadan – PDP State Office	APM-PDP (1)	Governorship
9.	--	Ibadan (University)	PDP (2)	Factional State Chairman/Interaction
			Prof. Olawale Albert	Political Analyst/Interaction
10.	Saturday 23/5/26	Ibadan	INEC Ibadan North LGA Office	Interaction with EO/Preliminary Results
11.	Sunday 24/5/26	Ibadan (Brava Hotel)	ADC	Oyo State Secretary/Interaction
12.	Monday 25/5/26	Lagos	INEC State Office	Interaction with EPM
13.	--	Lagos	APM	Elective Congress in session (Not observed)
			ADC (State Office)	Presidential Primaries
14.	Tuesday -26/5/26	Lagos	APC	State Secretary directed team to State Chairman who categorically declined interaction on the basis that primaries were over.
			PDP	State Chairman neglected to call back for appointment despite initial promises.

S/N	Day/Date	Location	Pol. Party/ Organisation	Post/Position
15.	Friday – 29/5/26	Abuja	NDC	“Obidient” Movement Interaction
16.	Saturday - 30/5/26	Abuja (Apo Qtrs)	NDC (Aspirants)	House of Representatives (Emeka Ike & Ors)
		Abuja (Idu)	NDC Special Convention	Presidential
				Interaction with NDC National Org. Secretary
17.	Monday - 1/6/26	Abuja	Prof. Ibrahim Jibrin	Political Analysis
		Abuja -APC HQ	APC	National Publicity Secretary interaction
		Abuja	TAF Africa	Interaction
18.	Tuesday - 2/6/26	Abuja - TKC	Abia and Enugu Teams	Interaction/Note sharing
		Abuja - INEC HQ	EPM and Legal Depts	Unaware of Observation Team accreditation/deployment
		Abuja - IPAC HQ	IPAC Executive	Interaction with National Chairman, DG and Woman Leader
19.	Wednesday - 3/6/26	Abuja – DAI	Prof. O. Ibeanu	Electoral Analysis
		Abuja/Virtual	Nnamdi Obasi	Int. Crisis Group
20.	Thursday - 4/6/26	Abuja – PDP (2)	NWC	Interaction
21.	Friday - 5/6/26	Abuja – DAI	WFD Consultants	Interaction
		Abuja – NDC	Senate Aspirant Aisha Yesufu	Interaction
		Abuja – WiP	Ebere Ifendu	Interaction
		Abuja – PLAC	CSO/Interlocutor	Interaction
22.	Tuesday - 16/6/26	Abuja–EU–Ekiti Virtual Yiaga	Samson Itodo	Interaction
23.	Wednesday- 17/6/26	Abuja–EU–Lagos Virtual ElectHer	Ibijoke Fakorede	Interaction
24.	Tuesday – 23/6/26	Abuja–EU–Virtual	ADC Aspirant Rotimi Amaechi	Presidential Aspirant/Interaction

Annex 3 – Disentangled Comparative Table: Electoral Act 2022, October 2025 Proposition and Electoral Act 2026

Analytical note. The October 2025 column refers to the Electoral Bill 2025 proposition as presented in PLAC materials and Bill text, not to the final Electoral Act 2026. The table distinguishes true innovations from provisions retained or renumbered from the Electoral Act 2022, and gives the relevant Electoral Act 2022 and Electoral Act 2026 clauses in the respective cells.

Reform issue	Electoral Act 2022	October 2025 proposition	Electoral Act 2026	Critical implication for 2027
CALENDAR AND SEQUENCING PROVISIONS				
INEC election funding	EA2022 s. 3(3): election funds due to INEC for any general election to be released not later than one year before the next general election.	Electoral Bill 2025 / PLAC Oct. 2025: retained and tightened the one-year rule with mandatory wording.	EA2026 s. 3(3): deadline reduced to not later than six months before the next general election.	Clear narrowing/regression. The legal funding deadline may arrive after costly pre-election activities have begun, including primaries and early litigation.
Notice of election	EA2022 s. 28(1): INEC to publish notice of election not later than 360 days before polling day.	Electoral Bill 2025 / PLAC Oct. 2025: retained the 360-day notice period.	EA2026 s. 28(1): notice period reduced to 300 days before polling day.	Shortens the formal notice window and confirms that the final Act narrowed both the 2022 Act and the October 2025 Bill position. The reduction was presented as giving INEC flexibility around the 2027 calendar, including Ramadan-related scheduling.
Submission of candidate lists	EA2022 s. 29(1): parties to submit candidate lists and affidavits not later than 180 days before a general election.	Electoral Bill 2025 / PLAC Oct. 2025: retained the 180-day submission deadline.	EA2026 s. 29(1): candidate-list submission reduced to not later than 120 days before a general election.	Gives parties more late flexibility but reduces time for INEC review, public scrutiny, legal challenges, substitutions and ballot preparation.
Publication of candidate particulars	EA2022 s. 29(3): INEC to publish candidate particulars within seven days of receipt.	Electoral Bill 2025 / PLAC Oct. 2025: proposed extending INEC's publication period to 21 days after receipt.	EA2026 s. 29(3): retained the 21-day publication period.	Administrative relief for INEC, but public access to candidate particulars becomes slower within an already compressed calendar.
Publication of final nominated candidates	EA2022 s. 32(1): INEC to publish the full names and addresses of candidates standing nominated at least 150 days before polling day.	Electoral Bill 2025 / PLAC Oct. 2025: retained the 150-day publication point.	EA2026 s. 32(1): final candidate-list publication reduced to at least 60 days before polling day.	Major compression. Voters, observers, parties and litigants receive final certainty much later.

Reform issue	Electoral Act 2022	October 2025 proposition	Electoral Act 2026	Critical implication for 2027
Campaign commencement and nomination sequencing	EA2022 s. 94(1): campaigns commence 150 days before polling day. Read with ss. 29(1) and 32(1), nominations closed at 180 days and the final list appeared at 150 days, creating broadly coherent sequencing.	Electoral Bill 2025 / PLAC Oct. 2025: retained campaign commencement at 150 days, with nominations at 180 days and final list at 150 days.	EA2026 s. 98(1): campaign commencement remains 150 days; read with ss. 29(1) and 32(1), nominations now close at 120 days and final list appears at 60 days.	Creates the PLAC-identified campaign-nomination gap: campaigns may begin before nomination processes are legally concluded.
Party membership-register submission deadline	EA2022 ss. 77(2)-(3): parties maintain registers in hard and soft copy and submit them to INEC at least 30 days before primaries, congresses or conventions.	Electoral Bill 2025 / PLAC Oct. 2025: proposed a digital register with richer data, while retaining submission at least 30 days before primaries, congresses or conventions.	EA2026 ss. 77(2) and 77(4): required a digital register but reduced submission to at least 21 days before primaries, congresses or conventions.	Stronger legal consequences for registers, but a shorter submission window; this increases exclusion and litigation risk, especially for weaker parties.
INSTITUTIONAL, PARTY-PROCESS AND INTEGRITY REFORMS				
INEC audit and REC accountability	EA2022 s. 5: INEC accounts to be audited “as soon as possible” after each financial year. EA2022 s. 6(2)(a): RECs were already “answerable to the Commission.”	Electoral Bill 2025 / PLAC Oct. 2025: proposed a hard six-month audit deadline and restated/clarified REC accountability. The REC-accountability point was not new in substance.	EA2026 s. 5: accounts to be audited not later than six months after the end of each financial year. EA2026 s. 6(2)(b): retains the REC-accountability wording, only reordered.	Corrected reading: the real statutory innovation is the hard six-month audit deadline. REC accountability to INEC was already in EA2022 and was retained, not newly created. The Act still does not redesign REC appointment/removal powers.
Party membership registers as eligibility instruments	EA2022 ss. 77(2)-(3): registers existed and had to be submitted, but there was no explicit exclusivity rule for intra-party voting or candidacy and no express bar for late/non-submission.	Electoral Bill 2025 / PLAC Oct. 2025: made the submitted digital register the basis for who may vote or be voted for in primaries, congresses and conventions; failure to submit would bar fielding a candidate.	EA2026 ss. 77(2), 77(4)-(7): only members in the submitted digital register may vote or be voted for; no other register may be used; failure to submit bars fielding a candidate.	Potentially transformative for internal democracy, but only if registers are auditable, accessible to aspirants and not manipulated by party gatekeepers.
Mode of party primaries	EA2022 ss. 84(1)-(2), 84(4)-(11): direct, indirect and consensus primaries were all permitted, with detailed procedures for each method.	Electoral Bill 2025 / PLAC Oct. 2025: retained indirect primaries but sought to standardise delegate composition and representation.	EA2026 ss. 84(1)-(2), 86 and 87: indirect primaries abolished; nomination is by direct primaries or consensus only. Consensus requires written consent of all cleared aspirants; otherwise the party must revert to direct primaries.	Aims to reduce delegate-market capture. However, direct primaries depend on credible membership registers, while consensus can still conceal elite coercion.

Reform issue	Electoral Act 2022	October 2025 proposition	Electoral Act 2026	Critical implication for 2027
Candidate withdrawal, false information and candidate exclusion	EA2022 s. 31: withdrawal by written notice. EA2022 ss. 29(5)-(8): false-information remedy. EA2022 ss. 84(13)-(15): non-compliant primary candidate “shall not be included”; aspirants could already seek Federal High Court redress; courts could not stop primaries/elections pending suit. EA2022 s. 134(1)(a): qualification remained a post-election petition ground.	Electoral Bill 2025 / PLAC Oct. 2025: added sworn affidavit to withdrawal; sought to front-load candidate-qualification disputes; and clarified that exclusion for invalid primaries depends on a court finding.	EA2026 s. 31: withdrawal requires signed notice plus sworn affidavit. EA2026 ss. 29(5)-(7) and 138: false-information/qualification issues are pushed further into the pre-election phase and qualification is removed as a stand-alone petition ground. EA2026 ss. 88(2)-(4): substantially carries over EA2022 ss. 84(13)-(15), with s. 88(3) expressly tying exclusion to a court finding.	Corrected reading: court redress and exclusion of candidates for non-compliant primaries were not created in 2026. The main tweaks are the affidavit requirement, earlier qualification/false-information litigation, and the explicit court-finding trigger for exclusion. This increases pressure for early litigation and timely documentation.
Result transmission / IReV	EA2022 ss. 60(5), 62(2)-(3) and 64(4): technology/results transfer and an electronic results register were recognised, but legal ambiguity remained after the 2023 experience over transmission, IReV and collation priority. Also: s. 65(1) proviso already let INEC review a declaration within 7 days on broad grounds (“not voluntary or contrary to law/regulations/guidelines”).	Electoral Bill 2025 / PLAC Oct. 2025: proposed mandatory electronic transmission of polling-unit results, including accreditation data, to the next level of collation.	EA2026 s. 60(3): requires electronic transmission of polling-unit results to IReV after Form EC8A is signed/stamped and countersigned where available; Form EC8A remains the primary source for collation/declaration if transmission fails. EA2026 ss. 60(5) and 62 support transmission/collation verification. s. 65: now a standalone section, narrowed to (a) duress or (b) breach of s. 62(4)-(8) collation procedures, triggered by an officials' report.	Strengthens statutory recognition of IReV but preserves a paper fallback that could renew transparency disputes where transmission fails. The review trigger is now explicitly anchored to the same collation-verification provisions (s. 62(4)-(8)) governing IReV/transmission disputes, tightening the legal ground but also formalising a clear, named power for INEC to unilaterally alter a declared result post-hoc — a mechanism likely to draw scrutiny in any close or disputed 2027 collation.
Voter identification and prisoner voting	EA2022 s. 10(2): registration identity could be proved through birth certificate, national passport, identity card, driver’s licence or other proof. No express inmate/prisoner-voting framework; no QR-code voter ID.	Electoral Bill 2025 / PLAC Oct. 2025: proposed stricter registration ID options; explicit registration/voting arrangements for eligible inmates; and electronically generated/downloadable voter ID with QR code.	EA2026 s. 10(2): registration ID options limited to Nigerian birth certificate, Nigerian passport or NIN. The explicit inmate/prisoner-voting framework and QR-code voter ID did not survive in the same form.	Shows narrowing of inclusion and digital-convenience reforms between the October Bill and the final Act.

Reform issue	Electoral Act 2022	October 2025 proposition	Electoral Act 2026	Critical implication for 2027
Campaign finance ceilings and donor limits	EA2022 s. 88(2)-(8): lower ceilings: president ₦5bn, governor ₦1bn, Senate ₦100m, House of Representatives ₦70m, State Assembly ₦30m; individual/entity candidate donation limit ₦50m. EA2022 ss. 89-90 regulated party returns/disclosure.	Electoral Bill 2025 / PLAC Oct. 2025: proposed higher ceilings: president ₦10bn, governor ₦3bn, Senate ₦500m, House of Representatives ₦250m, State Assembly ₦100m, and donor limit ₦500m.	EA2026 s. 92(2)-(8): retained the higher ceilings and ₦500m candidate-donation limit. EA2026 ss. 93-94 retained/updated party election-expense returns and disclosure obligations.	Adjusts for inflation but also normalises high-cost politics. Dedicated campaign accounts, real-time disclosure and strong independent enforcement were not included.
Electoral offences and enforcement architecture	EA2022 ss. 114-129 created electoral offences, with prosecution by INEC/legal practitioners under s. 145. No Electoral Offences Commission was created.	Electoral Bill 2025 / PLAC Oct. 2025: proposed tougher sanctions, including mandatory prison terms for result falsification/obstruction and a new internal-party inducement offence.	EA2026 ss. 118-133 retained and strengthened offences/penalties in part; prosecutions remain under EA2026 s. 148. No Electoral Offences Commission was created in the Act.	Deterrence improved on paper, but institutional enforcement still depends on existing police/prosecution capacity. The proposed Electoral Offences Commission remained outside the ordinary Act and on the constitutional track.
Party conventions and INEC monitoring	EA2022 ss. 82-83: parties gave INEC at least 21 days' notice of conventions/congresses; INEC could attend and observe; failure to notify invalidated the event; INEC kept records and could seek information.	Electoral Bill 2025 / PLAC Oct. 2025: proposed more detailed notices including date, time, venue, agenda, delegate composition and committee membership.	EA2026 ss. 82(1)-(6) and 83(1)-(6): retains at least 21 days' notice and requires date, time, venue and names of committee members; INEC shall attend and observe; failure to notify invalidates relevant party events; internal-party court intervention is restricted.	Somewhat stronger monitoring architecture, but the Act still leaves party autonomy and INEC's corrective powers in tension.
Independent candidacy and other constitutional-track reforms	No EA2022 provision for independent candidacy; candidature remained mediated through party sponsorship under the constitutional framework.	Not suitable for ordinary-law reform alone; independent candidacy and several structural reforms required constitutional alteration.	No EA2026 provision. Independent candidacy, SIEC reform, women's special seats and the Electoral Offences Commission were left to the constitutional-alteration track.	Unlikely to affect 2027 unless constitutional amendments commence and are given effect through enabling legislation, INEC rules and administrative arrangements before nomination and ballot-access deadlines.

Source notes: EA 2022: Electoral Act 2022, especially ss. 3, 5, 6, 10, 28, 29, 31, 32, 60, 62, 64, 77, 82-84, 88-90, 94, 114-129, 134 and 145. October 2025: Electoral Bill 2025 and PLAC Electoral Bill 2025 Factsheet, Issue 1, October 2025. EA 2026: Electoral Act 2026, especially ss. 3, 5, 6, 10, 28, 29, 31, 32, 60, 62, 77, 82-88, 92-94, 98, 118-133, 138 and 148. Also used: PLAC, The 2027 Electoral Calendar: Legal Timelines, Administrative Choices and Implications, March 2026; and PLAC, Candidate Nomination by Political Parties under the Electoral Act 2026: Key Changes and Implications, March 2026.

Annex 4 – EU EOM 2023 Recommendations — Post-October 2025 Implementation Update

Purpose. This matrix updates the October 2025 EU Election Follow-up Mission (EFM) assessment by showing what happened after the EFM: what was implemented through the Electoral Act 2026 and INEC regulations, what moved into the first-batch Sixth Alteration package, what remained pending, and what was omitted. It also maps publicly identified Citizens Memorandum proposals and indicates where they overlap with EU EOM 2023 recommendations.

Source and limitation note. The EU recommendation wording is condensed from the EU EOM 2023 Final Report and the EFM 2025 implementation matrix. The Citizens Memorandum column is based on public summaries and the EFM 2025 description of the Memorandum; the full original Memorandum text was not available. Public summaries indicate that the Memorandum contained 37 recommendations across 15 strategic objectives and 16 priority areas, including 21 constitutional and 16 Electoral Act proposals.

Status guide. “EFM status” refers to October 2025. “Post-Oct. 2025 development” records what changed by June 2026. “Route/status” identifies whether the issue was addressed through the Electoral Act 2026, INEC regulations, the Sixth Alteration package, administrative action, or not advanced.

A. EU EOM 2023 recommendations: October 2025 status and post-October 2025 update

No.	EU EOM 2023 recommendation (condensed)	Priority / EFM status Oct. 2025	Citizens Memorandum convergence	Post-Oct. 2025 development (what changed by June 2026)	Route/status after Oct. 2025	Updated June 2026 assessment
1	Eliminate errors, ambiguities and conflicting interpretations in electoral law and regulations through an inclusive revision process.	Yes / Ongoing	Yes — CSO Memorandum called for removal of ambiguities and reform of the Constitution, Electoral Act and INEC Regulations.	Electoral Act 2026 enacted; INEC Political Party Regulations issued. New ambiguities nevertheless emerged around party registers, consensus, replacement primaries, INEC timetable powers and enforcement of primary breaches.	Electoral Act 2026 + INEC Regulations; implemented only in part.	Partially implemented: reform occurred, but legal clarity remains incomplete.
2	Publish and disseminate election-related laws, regulations and guidelines; make consolidated legal materials easily accessible to the public.	No / Fully implemented	Partial overlap — CSO reform agenda emphasised legal clarity and public accessibility.	The 2026 Political Party Regulations were not publicly available at the start of primaries; party constitutions and primary guidelines were not accessible in practice.	Administrative / INEC transparency action; not fully delivered in the primary process.	Reassessed as partially implemented / deficient for primaries.
3	Establish a merit-based and publicly accountable selection mechanism for INEC Commissioners and RECs based on clear criteria and verified non-partisanship.	Yes / No implemented	Yes — CSO proposals sought stronger INEC independence and appointment reform.	No enacted federal INEC appointment reform. Earlier constitutional-review discussions included proposals, but the June 2026 first batch of 37 Sixth Alteration Bills did not include federal INEC appointment reform.	No enacted reform; not in first prioritised constitutional package.	Not implemented; remains a central confidence gap.

No.	EU EOM 2023 recommendation (condensed)	Priority / EFM status Oct. 2025	Citizens Memorandum convergence	Post-Oct. 2025 development (what changed by June 2026)	Route/status after Oct. 2025	Updated June 2026 assessment
4	Enhance capacity of election supervisors, collation officers and ad hoc polling staff through revised procedures and training.	No / Partially implemented	Indirect overlap through broader election-administration efficiency concerns.	VETS and staff-recruitment/training improvements continued with EU-SDGN and INEC support, but their impact can only be assessed during 2027 polls.	Administrative / INEC capacity-building.	Partially implemented; too early to fully assess.
5	Mandate public scrutiny of election technology through disclosure of test/audit results, protocols, procurement, methodology and functionality details.	No / Not implemented	Yes — CSO proposals included mandatory testing/mock exercises and technology transparency.	Electoral Act 2026 recognised electronic transmission/IReV but did not create a mandatory public audit or disclosure framework for BVAS/IReV.	Electoral Act 2026 advanced transmission only; public audit omitted.	Not implemented.
6	Establish a transparent and easily verifiable results-processing system with real-time polling-unit and collation-level uploads.	Yes / Ongoing	Yes — compulsory electronic transmission of results was a core CSO demand.	Electoral Act 2026 gave statutory recognition to electronic transmission to IReV, but paper results remain primary where transmission fails, and no full collation-level real-time database was introduced.	Electoral Act 2026; partial statutory implementation.	Partially implemented; important advance but not full EU transparency model.
7	Allow citizens who will attain 18 before election day to register during the preceding registration period.	No / Not implemented	No direct public counterpart identified; overlaps indirectly with voter-access concerns.	No enacted reform identified after October 2025.	No legislative or administrative implementation identified.	Not implemented.
8	Conduct an external independent audit of the voter register, including in-person checks, sample analysis and biometric-data assessment.	No / Not implemented	Yes — CSO proposals included voter-register audit and clean-up.	No independent external audit mandated after October 2025; INEC continues internal clean-up approaches.	No enacted reform; administrative issue remains.	Not implemented.
9	Curb excessive party nomination fees as unreasonable restrictions on the right to stand.	No / Not implemented	Indirect overlap through political-party reform and inclusion concerns; no clear identical CSO proposal in public summaries.	Electoral Act 2026 did not cap nomination fees. INEC Regulations refer to limits where applicable, but no effective ceiling was created.	No effective statutory implementation.	Not implemented.
10	Enforce INEC campaign regulations through robust monitoring and sanctions to curtail abuse of incumbency and obstruction.	No / Not implemented	Indirect overlap through electoral-offences and accountability proposals.	No robust INEC campaign-sanctions mechanism established. Electoral Offences Commission moved into Sixth Alteration package but is not enacted.	Sixth Alteration pending for offences; no campaign-enforcement mechanism.	Not implemented.
11	Introduce dedicated campaign bank accounts and stronger disclosure rules for parties, candidates and third parties, with sanctions.	No / Not implemented	Weak/indirect overlap through campaign-finance accountability; no clear public CSO one-to-one proposal identified.	Electoral Act 2026 did not introduce dedicated campaign accounts or stronger third-party disclosure.	Omitted from Electoral Act 2026.	Not implemented.

No.	EU EOM 2023 recommendation (condensed)	Priority / EFM status Oct. 2025	Citizens Memorandum convergence	Post-Oct. 2025 development (what changed by June 2026)	Route/status after Oct. 2025	Updated June 2026 assessment
12	Develop an operational framework for prompt investigation and prosecution of attacks against media practitioners.	Yes / Ongoing	Indirect overlap with civic-space and media-protection concerns, but not a prominent public Citizens Memorandum item.	Some coordination and advocacy continued; no comprehensive operational protection framework fully in place after October 2025.	Administrative / inter-agency action; no completed framework.	Ongoing / incomplete.
13	Ensure independence of the National Broadcasting Commission in law and practice, including open selection and accountability requirements.	No / Ongoing	No direct public counterpart identified.	NBC reform process remained pending; no enacted independence reform.	Ordinary legislation pending / no enacted reform.	Ongoing but not implemented in law.
14	Transform NTA and FRCN into genuine public-service broadcasters with editorial independence and financial autonomy.	No / Not implemented	No direct public counterpart identified.	No concrete legal reform enacted after October 2025.	No implementation identified.	Not implemented.
15	Amend overly restrictive provisions limiting expression, including vague cyberstalking and classified-matters provisions.	No / Partially implemented	No direct public counterpart identified.	Cybercrimes amendment preceded the EFM; no further action on Official Secrets Act identified after October 2025.	Partly implemented before Oct. 2025; no further completion.	Partially implemented.
16	Combat disinformation through inclusive legislative/regulatory measures while protecting freedom of expression.	No / Ongoing	Indirect overlap through civic/media reform and voter-information concerns.	NITDA Code implementation, INEC media engagement and fact-checking initiatives continued; no comprehensive enacted framework after October 2025.	Administrative/regulatory initiatives ongoing.	Ongoing; safeguards and inclusiveness remain important.
17	Adopt urgent affirmative action and special measures to increase women candidates and elected women.	Yes / Ongoing	Yes — CSO proposals included special seats for women and 35% women in party governing bodies.	Women's special seats included in the first batch of 37 Sixth Alteration Bills; not enacted by the primaries and not yet operational for 2027.	Sixth Alteration package; pending.	Ongoing / pending; not implemented for the 2026 primaries.
18	Ensure genuine voting opportunity for persons with disabilities and vulnerable voters, including accessibility, secrecy and assistive devices.	No / Ongoing	Yes/partial — CSO proposals addressed PWD inclusion and accessible results; some summaries also mention marginalised groups.	Assistive-device improvements continued; INEC Political Party Regulations added PWD status to party registers, but comprehensive polling-station accessibility and PWD reserved seats did not materialise.	Administrative / regulatory partial; constitutional PWD seats not in first package.	Ongoing / partial.
19	Issue a clear operational framework for IDP voting, including voter data, polling locations, security, education and evaluations.	No / Ongoing	No direct public counterpart identified.	No major post-October 2025 reform identified; existing IDP framework remains weak in implementation.	Administrative implementation gap.	Ongoing but weak.

No.	EU EOM 2023 recommendation (condensed)	Priority / EFM status Oct. 2025	Citizens Memorandum convergence	Post-Oct. 2025 development (what changed by June 2026)	Route/status after Oct. 2025	Updated June 2026 assessment
20	Guarantee observer access to all stages and key information, with timely accreditation and sanctions for obstruction.	No / Too early to determine	No direct public counterpart identified in public Citizens Memorandum summaries.	No clear Electoral Act 2026 strengthening identified; observer access still depends heavily on implementation and INEC practice.	Omitted from Electoral Act 2026; implementation to be assessed during 2027.	Too early / no major legal implementation.
21	Complete pre-election disputes before election day by adapting timelines, resources and decision publication.	No / Ongoing	Yes — CSOs proposed completion of pre-election matters before polls, 90-day petition timelines and Court of Appeal finality.	Electoral Act 2026 shifted some qualification issues into pre-election litigation and narrowed petition grounds; constitutional timeline reductions and adjudication reforms moved into Sixth Alteration package but are not enacted.	Electoral Act 2026 partial + Sixth Alteration pending.	Partially implemented / pending; litigation may still overrun the calendar.
22	Address impunity for electoral offences through effective inter-agency coordination, investigation, sanctioning and public reporting.	Yes / Too early to determine	Yes, but through a different model — CSOs proposed an Electoral Offences Commission.	Electoral Offences Commission included in first batch of 37 Sixth Alteration Bills; no operational commission created; inter-agency effectiveness cannot yet be assessed.	Sixth Alteration pending; administrative coordination unresolved.	Not implemented; an alternative institutional model is pending, but no operational commission or demonstrably strengthened inter-agency enforcement framework exists
23	Ensure immediate public access to key electoral information, including result forms, cancellation decisions, supplementary polls and polling-unit changes.	No / Ongoing	Yes/partial — CSOs supported compulsory electronic transmission and accessible results.	Electoral Act 2026 recognises electronic transmission to IReV, but full collation-level publication, cancellation decisions and sanction-backed disclosure remain unresolved.	Electoral Act 2026 partial implementation.	Partially implemented / ongoing.

B. Additional Citizens Memorandum proposals not fully captured by a specific EU EOM recommendation

Note. These items are listed separately because they were identified in public summaries of the Citizens Memorandum but do not map neatly onto a single EU EOM 2023 recommendation, or are broader domestic/Uwais-lineage proposals.

Citizens Memorandum / CSO proposal	EU convergence	Post-Oct. 2025 development	Route / status after Oct. 2025	Updated assessment
Strengthen State Independent Electoral Commissions and reduce governor influence over local elections.	Indirectly overlaps with credible electoral administration; not a direct EU 2023 recommendation.	SIEC reform included in the first batch of 37 Sixth Alteration Bills.	Sixth Alteration pending.	Pending; not implemented.
Create a separate Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission.	Indirectly overlaps with party regulation, Uwais agenda and EU concerns on party oversight.	Not included in Electoral Act 2026 and not visible in first prioritised Sixth Alteration package.	No post-Oct. advance identified.	Not implemented.

Citizens Memorandum / CSO proposal	EU convergence	Post-Oct. 2025 development	Route / status after Oct. 2025	Updated assessment
Introduce independent candidacy.	Indirectly overlaps with access to candidature and political participation.	Included in first batch of 37 Sixth Alteration Bills.	Sixth Alteration pending; unlikely to affect 2027 without rapid implementing rules.	Pending; not implemented.
Introduce diaspora / out-of-country voting.	Indirect overlap with voter inclusion.	Not included in Electoral Act 2026 or first prioritised constitutional package.	No enacted reform.	Not implemented.
Introduce early voting for election-duty personnel, observers, journalists and security personnel.	Indirect overlap with right to vote / inclusion.	Included in 2025 reform debate but omitted from Electoral Act 2026.	Dropped/omitted from enacted Act.	Not implemented.
Permit voting by eligible inmates.	Indirect overlap with right to vote and inclusion.	Included in 2025 reform debate but omitted from Electoral Act 2026.	Dropped/omitted from enacted Act.	Not implemented.
Allow alternatives to compulsory PVC use for voter accreditation.	Related to voter access; not a specific EU recommendation.	Discussed in 2025 reform process; not included in Electoral Act 2026. The Electoral Act 2026 allows a voter to print a downloadable copy of a lost or damaged voter card, but it does not introduce broader alternative identity documents for accreditation. The reform therefore eases card replacement without ending PVC-centred accreditation.	Omitted from enacted Act.	Not implemented.
Hold presidential, governorship, National Assembly and State Assembly elections on one day.	Operational efficiency proposal; not a direct EU recommendation.	Discussed in 2025 reform process; not included in Electoral Act 2026.	Omitted from enacted Act.	Not implemented.
Release election funding to INEC one year before general elections.	Indirectly overlaps with effective election administration.	The Electoral Act 2026 reduced the existing statutory funding deadline from one year before the general election under the 2022 Act to six months.	Electoral Act 2026; regression from the previous statutory position.	Not implemented as proposed.
Require 35% women representation in party governing bodies.	Overlaps with EU priority recommendation on women's representation.	No binding provision enacted in Electoral Act 2026; not prominent in first constitutional package as a party-governance rule.	No enacted reform.	Not implemented.

Citizens Memorandum / CSO proposal	EU convergence	Post-Oct. 2025 development	Route / status after Oct. 2025	Updated assessment
Create special seats for women.	Strong overlap with EU priority recommendation on affirmative action.	Included in the first batch of 37 prioritised bills through an indirect electoral-college model; the amendment and implementing legislation remain pending.	Sixth Alteration pending. Prioritised constitutional amendment; capable of separate fast-track consideration, but passage, state ratification, assent and implementing legislation remain outstanding.	Not enacted or operational, but still feasible; any application to 2027 would depend on rapid completion of the constitutional and implementing processes.
Create special seats for persons with disabilities / marginalised groups.	Partial overlap with EU PWD participation recommendation.	Earlier proposals existed, but separate PWD special seats not visible in the first prioritised Sixth Alteration package.	Not advanced in first package.	Not implemented.
Conduct constituency delimitation / boundary reforms.	Indirectly relevant to equal suffrage; not a central EU 2023 recommendation.	No major post-Oct. 2025 implementation identified.	No enacted reform.	Not implemented.
Strengthen sanctions for failure to submit membership registers and nomination documents.	Overlaps with party-regulation and nomination integrity concerns.	Electoral Act 2026 made failure to submit membership register a bar to fielding a candidate; INEC Regulations added documentation duties, but enforcement chain remains incomplete.	Electoral Act 2026 partial implementation.	Partially implemented.
Mandatory testing/mock exercises for election technologies.	Overlaps strongly with EU technology-scrutiny recommendation.	Not incorporated into Electoral Act 2026 as a mandatory public audit/testing framework.	Omitted from enacted Act.	Not implemented.
Complete election petitions before swearing-in.	Overlaps with EU electoral-justice recommendation.	Not implemented in Electoral Act 2026; adjudication reforms moved to Sixth Constitutional Alteration package.	Sixth Alteration pending; statutory partial only.	Pending

Key source references

EU Election Observation Mission Nigeria 2023, Final Report, Table of Recommendations.

EU Election Follow-up Mission Nigeria 2025, Final Report, Executive Summary and Implementation Status Matrix.

Electoral Act 2026 and INEC Regulations and Guidelines for Political Parties 2026.

First-batch Sixth Alteration / 37 prioritised Constitution Alteration Bills, June 2026 public materials.

Public summaries of the Citizens Memorandum by EU-SDGN, Nigerian Tribune, Vanguard and related CSO reporting.

Annex 5 – Table of official nomination fees for aspirants/candidates, 2026

EOI= Expression of Interest Fee; NOM = Nomination Fee

MHR = Member of House of Representatives

S/N	Party	Fee	President in Million Naira	Senate	MHR	Governor
1	APC	EOI	N30million	N3m	N1m	N10m
		NOM	N70million	N17m	N9m	N40m
2	ADC	EOI				
		NOM	N90	N10m	N5m	N30m ¹¹⁹
3	NDC	EOI	N20m	N3m	N2m	N10m
		NOM	N40m	N5m	N4m	N20m
4	PDP (1) Abdulrahman Mohammed faction	EOI	N1m	N1m	N1m	N1m
		NOM	N50m	N5	N3m	N20 ¹²⁰
	PDP (2) Kabir Tanimu Turaki faction	EOI	N10m	N3m	N2m	N5m
		NOM	N90m	N7m	N5m	N35m ¹²¹
5	APM	EOI				
		NOM	N35m	N8m	N5m	N25m ¹²²
6	LP	EOI	N10m	N2.5m	N1.5m	N5m
		NOM	N40m	N7.5m	N3.5m	N20m ¹²³
7	SDP	EOI				
		NOM	N75m	N15m	N7.5m	N40m ¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ ADC did not provide breakdown of its Eoi and NF: <https://adc.org.ng/news-single/adc-releases-updated-primary-election-schedule-and-revised-nomination-fees>

¹²⁰ <https://www.channelstv.com/2026/04/22/mohammed-led-pdp-fixes-%E2%82%A651m-presidential-form-fee-for-2027-elections/>

¹²¹ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/876986-makinde-backed-pdp-releases-election-timetable-fixes-cost-of-presidential-nomination-expression-of-interest-forms.html>

¹²² There is no breakdown into Eoi and NF: https://www.instagram.com/p/DYK_gMnAs4C/

¹²³ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/876799-labour-party-releases-2027-primaries-timetable-fixes-nomination-fees.html>

¹²⁴ No breakdown into Eoi and NF: <https://www.facebook.com/100067189809679/posts/sdp-releases-timetable-nomination-fees-for-2027-elections-the-social-democratic-/1264595205790128/>

Annex 6 – Party Defections Ahead of the 2027 Elections

LEGAL VERIFICATION NOTE — framework applied to the revised column (12 September 2026)

Zenith Labour Party v INEC (CA/ABJ/CV/750/2026, Court of Appeal, 16 July 2026): ss.77(5), 77(6), 77(7) and 84(2) of the Electoral Act 2026 were declared unconstitutional. Section 77(4) (party obligation to make its membership register available to INEC at least 21 days before primaries/congresses/conventions) was not struck down. Accordingly, this register no longer treats absence from the earlier INEC-filed membership register, or a public party switch within 21 days of a primary, as an automatic personal statutory disqualification. Party constitutions/guidelines and actual membership remain relevant.

Serving legislators: Constitution s.68(1)(g) (and s.109(1)(g) for State Assemblies) creates a separate current-seat issue when a legislator defects mid-term. Under Abegunde v Ondo State House of Assembly (SC/643/2014, 17 April 2015), the “division” exception requires a division affecting the party nationally; a merely local dispute is insufficient. This seat-vacancy question is legally separate from the validity of a 2027 nomination. Governors are not subject to the same automatic legislative vacancy rule.

Withdrawal/replacement after submission: Electoral Act ss.31 and 33 apply once a candidate has been submitted under s.29. A submitted candidate may be changed only on death or valid personal withdrawal; withdrawal requires the candidate’s signed written notice and sworn affidavit, and the party must hold a fresh primary within 14 days. INEC Political Party Regulations 2026 cl.22(4) requires at least five days’ notice of a replacement primary. The INEC timetable set 22 Aug. 2026 as the P/NASS withdrawal/replacement deadline and 19 Sept. 2026 for Governorship/State Assembly.

Pre-election litigation: Constitution s.285(9) imposes a 14-day filing period from the event/decision/action complained of. Electoral Act s.88(2) gives an aspirant a Federal High Court route where the Act or party guidelines were not complied with. Standing, accrual date and limitation must therefore be checked in every litigation row. The Federal High Court (Pre-Election) Practice Directions 2026, as amended in July 2026, govern procedure.

NDC systemic background: the Federal High Court, Lokoja, set aside the earlier order compelling NDC registration on 26 June 2026; NDC appealed and INEC continued to provide portal access/process nominations. The revised column treats this as a systemic background risk, not as automatic candidate-specific invalidity in the absence of a further binding order.

Authorities checked: Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended); Electoral Act 2026; INEC Regulations and Guidelines for Political Parties 2026; INEC Revised Timetable for the 2027 General Election; Federal High Court Pre-Election Practice Directions 2026 (and July amendment); Zenith Labour Party v INEC; Abegunde v Ondo State House of Assembly; and current reported pre-election litigation through 12 September 2026.

1. Party changes before the primaries | 34 politicians

Before 23 April 2026

Politician	Party trajectory	2027 ticket outcome	Party change timing before / during / after	Nomination timing and method	Potential legal issue / verification required (revised 12 Sep. 2026)	Sources (clickable links)
01 Atiku Abubakar Former vice-president	PDP → ADC	Yes — ADC presidential nominee.	Before — formally registered with ADC on 24 November 2025.	During — won the ADC presidential primary in May; running mate selected subsequently.	No defection-timing issue identified. He joined ADC well before the primary. No statutory minimum personal membership period should be inferred from the former s.77 register rules; nomination validity turns on actual party membership, the party rules and a valid authorised nomination process.	Channels • joining, 24 Nov 2025 AP News Channels TV
05 Sheriff Oborevwori Delta governor	PDP → APC	Yes — Delta governorship.	Before — April 2025.	During — APC governorship primary/affirmation in May.	No defection-timing issue identified for the 2027 nomination. A governor’s change of party does not trigger the legislative seat-vacancy rules in Constitution ss.68/109. Verify only ordinary party-membership and nomination compliance.	Guardian • APC primaries, 22 May ThisDay • 2025 chronology
06 Umo Eno Akwa Ibom governor	PDP → APC	Yes — Akwa Ibom governorship.	Before — June 2025.	During — won the APC governorship primary in May.	No defection-timing issue identified for the 2027 nomination. A governor’s change of party does not trigger the legislative seat-vacancy rules in Constitution ss.68/109. Verify only ordinary party-membership and nomination compliance.	Guardian • APC primaries, 22 May ThisDay • 2025 chronology

Politician	Party trajectory	2027 ticket outcome	Party change timing before / during / after	Nomination timing and method	Potential legal issue / verification required (revised 12 Sep. 2026)	Sources (clickable links)
07 Peter Mbah Enugu governor	PDP → APC	Yes — Enugu governorship.	Before — October 2025.	During — affirmed as sole APC governorship aspirant in May.	No defection-timing issue identified for the 2027 nomination. A governor's change of party does not trigger the legislative seat-vacancy rules in Constitution ss.68/109. Verify the party-authorised nomination/affirmation under the APC rules.	Guardian • APC primaries, 22 May ThisDay • 2025 chronology
08 Agbu Kefas Taraba governor	PDP → APC	Yes — Taraba governorship.	Before — move completed before the April–May window; public reception/registration had separate dates.	During — won APC governorship primary in May.	No defection-timing issue identified for the 2027 nomination. A governor's change of party does not trigger the legislative seat-vacancy rules in Constitution ss.68/109. The differing public reception/registration dates should not be treated as a legal breach without the underlying membership record.	Guardian • APC primaries, 22 May APC • pre-primary defections
09 Caleb Mutfwang Plateau governor	PDP → APC	Yes — Plateau governorship.	Before — turn-of-year 2025–26 move, preceding the primary window.	During — won APC governorship primary in May.	No defection-timing issue identified for the 2027 nomination. A governor's change of party does not trigger the legislative seat-vacancy rules in Constitution ss.68/109. Verify only ordinary party-membership and nomination compliance.	Guardian • APC primaries, 22 May APC • pre-primary defections
10 Dauda Lawal Zamfara governor	PDP → APC	Yes — Zamfara governorship.	Before — APC defection announced on 9 March 2026.	During — APC governorship primary in May.	No defection-timing issue identified for the 2027 nomination. A governor's change of party does not trigger the legislative seat-vacancy rules in Constitution ss.68/109. Verify only ordinary party-membership and nomination compliance.	Guardian • APC primaries, 22 May Channels • move, 9 March
11 Siminalayi Fubara Rivers governor	PDP → APC	No APC governorship ticket — withdrew. No alternative personal 2027 ticket verified.	Before — December 2025.	No nomination — withdrew before the 21 May APC governorship primary; Chinda emerged.	He withdrew as an aspirant before the APC primary; that is distinct from statutory withdrawal of a candidate already submitted to INEC under s.31. No APC candidate was submitted in his name on the evidence recorded here, so ss.31/33 substitution rules are not presently engaged.	APC • pre-primary defections Arise • withdrawal / result
12 Ahmadu Fintiri Adamawa governor	PDP → APC	Yes — Senate, Adamawa North.	Before — publicly joined APC on 27 February 2026.	During — won APC Senate primary in May; later candidate-list reporting corroborated the outcome.	No 2027 nomination-timing issue identified. The move to APC preceded the Senate primary by a substantial period. Verify ordinary party-membership and nomination records; there is no separate constitutional vacancy issue because he is a governor, not a serving legislator.	Legit • joining, 27 Feb Daily Post • primary, 19 May
14 Douye Diri Bayelsa governor	PDP → APC	No personal 2027 ticket verified. Bayelsa governorship is off-cycle.	Before — late 2025.	No personal 2027 nomination established; Bayelsa governorship is off-cycle.	No personal 2027 nomination is established. Bayelsa governorship is off-cycle. His party defection does not itself create a 2027 candidate-nomination issue.	APC • pre-primary defections Premium Times

Politician	Party trajectory	2027 ticket outcome	Party change timing before / during / after	Nomination timing and method	Potential legal issue / verification required (revised 12 Sep. 2026)	Sources (clickable links)
16 Ifeanyi Okowa Former Delta governor; PDP's 2023 vice-presidential candidate	PDP → APC	Yes — Senate, Delta North; defeated Nwoko.	Before — April 2025.	During — won competitive APC Senate primary against Nwoko.	No defection-timing issue identified. He joined APC well before the Delta North primary. No post-submission change of candidate is indicated on the present record.	Channels • April 2025 move ICIR
17 Ned Nwoko Senator, Delta North	PDP → APC	No APC ticket — lost Delta North primary to Okowa.	Before — 2025.	No APC nomination — lost the Delta North Senate primary to Okowa.	No APC 2027 ticket: he lost the primary. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving Senator, his mid-term defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g). Retention of the seat depends on the constitutional division/merger exception; Abegunde requires a division affecting the party nationally, not merely a local dispute.	ICIR
18 Gabriel Suswam Former Benue governor	PDP → APC	Initially yes — Benue North-East; replaced by Udende in revised July APC list.	Before — joined/registered with APC on 4 February 2026.	During, then revised afterwards — initially won APC primary; omitted from the revised July list in favour of Udende.	High-risk nomination dispute; judgment reserved for 12 Oct. 2026 in the Suswam/Udende case. If Suswam had already been submitted to INEC under s.29, any later replacement had to satisfy ss.31/33: death or valid personal withdrawal (signed notice plus sworn affidavit), a fresh primary within 14 days, at least five days' notice to INEC under Reg. 22(4), and compliance with the INEC timetable. If no prior submission occurred, the issue is instead whether APC could lawfully overturn the INEC-monitored primary through its appeal/NWC process under the Act and APC rules.	Punch • registration, 4 Feb ICIR • revised July list Premium Times
19 Adamu Aliero Senator; former Kebbi governor	PDP → APC	Yes — Senate, Kebbi Central.	Before — PDP-to-APC move announced on 13 May 2025.	During — won APC Senate nomination, reported on 18 May 2026.	2027 nomination: no timing-specific issue identified. Separate current-seat issue under Constitution s.68(1)(g): a serving Senator who changes party before the end of the term risks vacancy unless the national-division/merger exception is established (Abegunde). This is separate from validity of the 2027 APC nomination.	Premium Times • May 2025 move Channels • primary, 18 May
20 Yahaya Abdullahi Senator, Kebbi North	PDP → APC	Yes — Senate, Kebbi North.	Before — PDP-to-APC move announced on 13 May 2025.	During — won APC Senate nomination, reported on 18 May 2026.	2027 nomination: no timing-specific issue identified on the present record. Separate current-seat issue under Constitution s.68(1)(g): vacancy may arise from mid-term defection unless the national-division/merger exception is established. This does not itself determine the validity of a 2027 nomination.	Premium Times • May 2025 move Channels • primary, 18 May

Politician	Party trajectory	2027 ticket outcome	Party change timing before / during / after	Nomination timing and method	Potential legal issue / verification required (revised 12 Sep. 2026)	Sources (clickable links)
21 Konbowei Benson Senator, Bayelsa Central	PDP → APC	Yes — Senate, Bayelsa Central.	Before — October 2025.	During — won APC Senate primary in May.	2027 nomination: no timing-specific issue identified on the present record. Separate current-seat issue under Constitution s.68(1)(g): vacancy may arise from mid-term defection unless the national-division/merger exception is established. This does not itself determine the validity of a 2027 nomination.	TheCable • APC outcomes / chronology
22 Benson Agadaga Senator, Bayelsa East	PDP → APC	No APC ticket — screened out. No reversal/alternative ticket verified.	Before — moved to APC before the primary window.	No APC nomination — excluded at screening; no successful reversal verified.	Primary/screening dispute rather than a simple late-entry issue. Verify the legal basis of the screening/appeal decision, compliance with the party constitution/guidelines and any pre-election suit filed within the constitutional 14-day limit. Separate current-seat consequences may arise under Constitution s.68(1)(g).	Premium Times • screening
23 Ipalibo Harry Banigo Senator, Rivers West	PDP → APC	No APC ticket — screened out. Successful appeal not verified.	Before — PDP-to-APC move reported by March 2026.	No APC nomination — excluded at screening; appeal announced.	Screening/appeal issue; no successful reversal or alternative nomination is established. Verify any pre-election challenge, standing and the 14-day filing limit. As a serving Senator, her party switch also raises a separate Constitution s.68(1)(g) current-seat question.	Premium Times • screening Channels • March chronology
25 Aminu Waziri Tambuwal Senator; former Sokoto governor	PDP → ADC	Withdrew from Sokoto South Senate race. No alternative ticket verified.	Before — ADC defection announced in the Senate on 12 March 2026.		No nomination-specific defect established on the present record. As a serving Senator, any mid-term party change separately engages Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception in Abegunde. That issue is distinct from the validity of any 2027 ticket.	Channels • March chronology Premium Times
27 Peter Ndalikali Jiya Senator, Niger South	PDP → APC	No APC ticket — lost Niger South Senate primary.	Before — March 2026.	No APC nomination — lost Senate primary.	No successful late nomination is established. As a serving Senator, the defection separately raises a Constitution s.68(1)(g) current-seat issue, subject to the national-division/merger exception; it does not automatically create a 2027 nomination defect.	TheCable • APC outcomes / chronology
30 David Mark Former Senate president; ADC leader	PDP → ADC	No personal electoral ticket verified; ADC party leadership role.	Before — ADC leadership/coalition move in 2025.	No personal public-office nomination verified; ADC leadership role is distinct.	No personal 2027 public-office nomination is established. His leadership/organising role does not itself raise a candidate-defection issue. Any ADC nomination dispute should be analysed through the specific primary/party-authority litigation rather than his prior party affiliation.	AP News

Politician	Party trajectory	2027 ticket outcome	Party change timing before / during / after	Nomination timing and method	Potential legal issue / verification required (revised 12 Sep. 2026)	Sources (clickable links)
31 Seriake Dickson Senator; former Bayelsa governor	PDP → NDC	Personal 2027 ticket unverified.	Before — NDC membership publicly announced on 5 March 2026.	Individual 2027 nomination not established.	No defection-timing issue identified on the present record. As a serving Senator, a mid-term party change would separately engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception. For NDC candidacies, also note the unresolved NDC registration appeal described in the legal framework note.	NAN / PM News • joined 5 March
32 Rotimi Amaechi Former Rivers governor; former minister	APC → ADC	Yes — ADC vice-presidential running mate to Atiku.	Before — APC-to-ADC move in 2025.	After presidential primary — selected as Atiku's running mate in June, after losing the ADC presidential contest.	Running-mate selection is constitutionally distinct from an ordinary primary. Constitution s.142 requires the presidential candidate to nominate a vice-president from the same political party. No separate vice-presidential primary or 21-day personal membership waiting period should be assumed.	Channels TV
33 Abubakar Malami Former attorney-general	APC → ADC	Yes — Kebbi governorship.	Before — APC-to-ADC move in 2025.	During — governorship ticket announced on 24 May. Exact primary mechanics not independently established.	No late-entry issue apparent on the evidence recorded. Verify the actual ADC governorship nomination process and compliance with party rules; do not infer a statutory 21-day personal membership requirement from s.77 after Zenith Labour Party v INEC.	TheCable • ticket, 24 May The Nigeria Standard
41 Nasir el-Rufai Former Kaduna governor	APC → SDP → ADC	No personal ticket verified; ruled out ADC presidential bid.	Before — APC-to-SDP-to-ADC trajectory in 2025.	No personal 2027 nomination established.	No personal 2027 nomination is established. Multiple party moves alone do not create a nomination defect; any later ticket would require proof of actual membership and a valid party-authorised nomination process.	The Whistler
42 Rauf Aregbesola Former Osun governor; ADC organiser	APC → ADC	No personal electoral ticket verified; ADC party role.	Before — ADC leadership/coalition role established in 2025.	No personal public-office nomination established.	No personal electoral ticket is established. A party leadership/organising role is not a nomination. No candidate-substitution issue arises on the present record.	AP News The Guardian (homepage only)
44 Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour LP's 2023 Lagos governorship candidate	LP → ADC	Yes — Lagos governorship.	Before — LP-to-ADC move in September 2025.	During — competitive ADC governorship primary reported on 25 May.	No timing-specific defect identified on the present chronology. Verify the ADC primary and party rules. After Zenith Labour Party v INEC, the earlier statutory rule tying eligibility to the INEC-filed membership register cannot be treated as an automatic bar.	Punch • ADC move, Sept 2025 BusinessDay • primary, 25 May
45 Ireti Kingibe FCT senator	LP → ADC	Yes — Senate, FCT.	Before — ADC parliamentary defection announced on 12 March 2026.	During — ADC FCT Senate primary/nomination reported in May.	2027 nomination: verify the ADC Senate primary and party-authority records; no automatic 21-day personal membership bar follows after Zenith Labour Party v INEC. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving Senator, the defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception.	Channels • March chronology The Whistler

Politician	Party trajectory	2027 ticket outcome	Party change timing before / during / after	Nomination timing and method	Potential legal issue / verification required (revised 12 Sep. 2026)	Sources (clickable links)
48 Neda Imasuen Senator, Edo South	LP → APC	No APC ticket — lost Edo South Senate primary.	Before — moved from LP to APC in 2025.	No APC nomination — lost Edo South Senate primary.	No APC 2027 ticket: he lost the primary. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving Senator, the defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception. This does not create a nomination issue where no APC ticket was secured.	TheCable • APC outcomes / chronology
49 Ngozi Lawrence Okolie House member, Aniocha/Oshimili	LP → APC	No APC ticket — lost House primary to Elumelu.	Before — APC defection reported on 23 May 2025.	No APC nomination — lost House primary to Elumelu on 16 May 2026.	No APC 2027 ticket: the incumbent lost the primary. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving House member, the defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception in Abegunde.	Radio Nigeria • primary, 16 May The Nation • move, 23 May 2025
55 Abba Kabir Yusuf Kano governor	NNPP → APC	Yes — Kano governorship.	Before — NNPP-to-APC move in January 2026.	During — adopted/affirmed as APC consensus governorship candidate in May.	No defection-timing issue identified for the 2027 nomination. A governor's change of party does not trigger Constitution s.68/109 legislative vacancy rules. Verify the legal basis and party documentation for the reported APC consensus nomination.	Guardian • APC primaries, 22 May Punch • APC consensus Channels • joining, January
57 Abdulrahman Kawu Sumaila Senator, Kano South	NNPP → APC	Yes — Senate, Kano South.	Before — NNPP-to-APC move in 2025.	During — won APC Kano South Senate nomination in May.	2027 nomination: no timing-specific issue identified on the present chronology. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving Senator, his mid-term defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception.	TheCable • APC outcomes / chronology
59 Ahmed Aliyu Wadada Senator, Nasarawa West	SDP → APC	Yes — Nasarawa governorship.	Before — parliamentary APC defection announced on 22 April, immediately before the main window. Earlier membership claims contested.	During — APC consensus governorship nomination in May.	Two distinct issues. (1) 2027 nomination: verify effective APC membership and the consensus/nomination documentation; no automatic 21-day personal membership bar follows after Zenith Labour Party v INEC. (2) Current Senate seat: the defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception. SDP's threatened litigation should be tracked separately.	TheCable • APC outcomes / chronology NALTF • announcement, 22 April Punch • SDP legal threat
60 Pam Mwadkon Dachungyang Senator, Plateau North	ADP → APC	No APC ticket — lost Plateau North Senate primary.	Before — ADP-to-APC move in January 2026.	No APC nomination — lost Plateau North Senate primary.	No successful APC ticket is established. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving Senator, the defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception. This is separate from the failed 2027 nomination.	TheCable • APC outcomes / chronology

2. Defections during the primaries | 21 politicians

23 April–30 May 2026 inclusive

Politician	Party trajectory	2027 ticket outcome	Defection timing before / during / after	Nomination timing and method	Potential legal issue / verification required (revised 12 Sep. 2026)	Sources (clickable links)
02 Seyi Makinde Oyo governor	PDP → APM	Yes — APM presidential nominee.	During — APM presidential bid publicly announced on 14 May. Effective membership date not established.	During — presidential primary/affirmation on 30 May; delegate voice-vote endorsement reported.	The earlier “less than 21 days” concern should not be treated as an automatic statutory bar. Zenith Labour Party v INEC (CA/ABJ/CV/750/2026, 16 July) voided ss.77(5)-(7). Verify actual APM membership, the APM constitution/guidelines and the legal basis of the reported nomination/affirmation. As a governor, no s.68 legislative-vacancy rule applies.	Arise • declaration, 14 May TVC • nomination, 30 May
04 Gbenga Olawepo-Hashim Former presidential candidate	PDP → Accord	Disputed — claimed Accord presidential nomination; party leadership disowned it. Court outcome unverified.	During (public bid) — Accord says his expression-of-interest letter arrived on 26 May. Effective joining date unverified.	Disputed — claimed a 30 May presidential primary; national leadership says it cancelled that exercise and rejected his bid.	Pending pre-election dispute: the Federal High Court reserved judgment on 15 July 2026 in his suit seeking recognition as Accord’s presidential candidate. Core issues are whether an authorised primary occurred, whether the party validly cancelled/rejected it, and whether his name should have been submitted to INEC. No final judgment was located as of 12 Sept.	Accord • rejection, 3 June Channels • lawsuit, 9 July
13 Bala Mohammed Bauchi governor	PDP → APM	Yes — Senate, Bauchi South.	During — joined APM on 2 May, after leaving PDP.	Nomination announced during — Senate ticket unveiled on 29 May. Exact primary date and procedure not independently established.	Do not calculate a personal s.77 “21-day membership interval”: ss.77(5)-(7) were voided in Zenith Labour Party v INEC. The legally material facts are the actual APM joining/membership record, the date and authority for the Senate nomination, and compliance with APM rules. No post-submission substitution is established.	TheCable • joined 2 May TVC • ticket, 29 May
26 Samaila Dahuwa Kaila Senator, Bauchi North	PDP → APC → PRP	Lost APC Senate ticket; PRP nomination unverified.	During — joined PRP in late May after APC Senate defeat; had moved from PDP to APC in 2025.	PRP nomination unverified — APC primary defeat is established.	No PRP ticket is established. Any later nomination would require proof of actual PRP membership and a valid party-authorised selection process; if replacing an already submitted candidate, ss.31/33 would apply. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving Senator, the defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g).	Premium Times • PRP move, May

Politician	Party trajectory	2027 ticket outcome	Defection timing before / during / after	Nomination timing and method	Potential legal issue / verification required (revised 12 Sep. 2026)	Sources (clickable links)
34 Isa Ali Pantami Former communications minister	APC → PDP	Yes — PDP Gombe governorship.	During — PDP move publicly reported on 26 May, after withdrawing from the APC governorship race.	During — affirmed as PDP governorship candidate on 26 May. No later substitution established.	Pending pre-election litigation: Federal High Court proceedings challenge the validity of Pantami's 26 May PDP Gombe nomination; judgments were reserved in July and no delivery date is publicly reported as of 12 Sept. 2026. Zenith Labour Party v INEC weakens any challenge based solely on absence from the earlier INEC-filed membership register. If the nomination was by consensus, validity also depends on s.87 compliance, including written voluntary consent of all cleared aspirants and formal ratification. Actual PDP membership, party rules, standing and the 14-day filing limit remain relevant.	Punch • joining / affirmation
35 Aishatu Dahiru Ahmed “Binani” Former senator; APC's 2023 Adamawa governorship candidate	APC → ADC → NDC	NDC Adamawa governorship ambition established; ticket unverified.	During — ADC-to-NDC move announced on 2 May; earlier APC-to-ADC move preceded it.	Nomination unverified — transfer of party structure and governorship ambition reported.	No NDC ticket is established. Control/transfer of party structures and a declared ambition are not a nomination. If a nomination later emerges, verify actual party-authorised selection and the NDC registration background; do not infer an automatic s.77 register bar after Zenith Labour Party v INEC.	ThisDay • NDC move, 2 May
36 Shehu Buba Umar Senator, Bauchi South	APC → PRP	Yes — PRP Bauchi governorship.	During — PRP move publicly reported on 24 May, after exiting the APC governorship race.	During — affirmed at PRP governorship congress on 25 May. Not shown to be a post-window substitution.	The earlier s.77 timing concern should be downgraded after Zenith Labour Party v INEC. A Bauchi High Court suit (BA/181/2026) challenging the PRP governorship primary/exclusion was dismissed on 4 June 2026 with costs; that disposed of that particular action, not every possible nomination issue. As a serving Senator, his defection separately engages Constitution s.68(1)(g).	Arise • PRP move, 24 May Punch • affirmation, 25 May PRP • screening list, 23 May
37 Mohammed Bello el-Rufai House member, Kaduna North	APC → ADC	Yes — House, Kaduna North.	During — APC-to-ADC move announced on 7 May.	During — won ADC House primary unopposed on 30 May.	No automatic 21-day personal membership bar applies after Zenith Labour Party v INEC. Verify actual ADC membership and compliance with ADC rules for the unopposed primary. As a serving House member, his defection separately may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception.	TheCable • joining, 7 May TheCable • primary, 30 May

Politician	Party trajectory	2027 ticket outcome	Defection timing before / during / after	Nomination timing and method	Potential legal issue / verification required (revised 12 Sep. 2026)	Sources (clickable links)
39 Ovie Omo-Agege Former deputy Senate president	APC → NDC	Reported NDC Delta Central candidate in August; earlier rival primary claims not definitively resolved.	During — resigned APC on 27 May and announced NDC membership on 28 May, after losing the APC Senate contest.	Disputed — rival NDC primary claims in May; subsequently reported as candidate in August. Definitive resolution unverified.	High-risk nomination dispute. The central issue is not simply late membership: rival NDC Delta Central primary returns were reported. Obtain the INEC monitoring report, NDC return/EC16B and the party decision identifying the lawful winner. If another candidate was first submitted and Omo-Agege was later inserted, ss.31/33 become central. A party waiver is not itself proof of a valid nomination.	NAN / PM News • move, 28 May Guardian • later candidacy
40 Victor Ochei Former Delta Assembly speaker	APC → NDC	Ticket unverified; waiver to contest reported.	During (reported) — late-May NDC move/waiver; exact membership date unverified.	Ticket unverified — waiver to participate reported.	A party waiver is not a ticket. No nomination is established. If a ticket is later claimed, verify actual NDC membership and the authorised selection process under the party rules; after Zenith Labour Party v INEC, absence from the earlier INEC-filed register is not by itself an automatic statutory bar.	Vanguard
43 Peter Obi Former Anambra governor; LP's 2023 presidential candidate	LP → ADC → NDC	Yes — NDC presidential nominee.	During — joined NDC on 3 May; ADC was the intermediate party.	During — NDC presidential nomination on 30 May; Kwankwaso announced as running mate.	No automatic s.77 “short interval” breach follows from the 27-day chronology: Zenith Labour Party v INEC voided ss.77(5)-(7). Verify actual NDC membership and the party-authorised presidential nomination. The separate NDC registration appeal is a systemic background risk and should not, without a further binding order, be treated as candidate-specific invalidity.	Arise • NDC joining, 3 May Daily Post • joint ticket, 30 May
46 Victor Umeh Senator, Anambra Central	LP → ADC → NDC	Yes — Senate, Anambra Central.	During — ADC-to-NDC move announced in the Senate on 5 May.	During — won NDC Senate primary on 29 May; registered-member Option A4 voting reported.	2027 nomination: no automatic s.77 register bar after Zenith Labour Party v INEC; verify actual NDC membership and the valid party-authorised primary. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving Senator, the defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception. NDC registration litigation remains a separate systemic issue.	NALTF • Senate moves, 5 May Punch • primary, 29 May
47 Tony Nwoye Senator, Anambra North	LP → ADC → NDC	Yes — Senate, Anambra North.	During — ADC-to-NDC parliamentary announcement on 6 May.	During — won NDC Senate primary on 29 May; registered-member Option A4 voting reported.	2027 nomination: no automatic s.77 register bar after Zenith Labour Party v INEC; verify actual NDC membership and the valid party-authorised primary. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving Senator, the defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception. NDC registration litigation remains separate.	Punch • primary, 29 May NALTF • NDC move, 6 May
50 Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed LP's 2023 vice-presidential candidate	LP → PRP	No personal 2027 ticket verified. Distinct from House member Yusuf Datti.	During (announcement) — LP exit/PRP move announced on 28 April; registration date unverified.	No personal 2027 nomination established.	No personal 2027 ticket is established. Defection alone creates no entitlement to a ticket and no substitution issue. Any later nomination would require proof of actual party membership and a valid authorised nomination process.	Punch • announced PRP move

Politician	Party trajectory	2027 ticket outcome	Defection timing before / during / after	Nomination timing and method	Potential legal issue / verification required (revised 12 Sep. 2026)	Sources (clickable links)
51 Afam Ogene House member; former LP caucus leader	LP → ADC → NDC	Individual House nomination unverified.	During — latest ADC-to-NDC parliamentary move announced on 5 May.	Individual House nomination unverified.	No individual NDC House nomination is established. Do not infer a ticket from the collective defection announcement. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving House member, the defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception. If a 2027 ticket is later shown, verify the primary/substitution record.	Punch • House moves, 5 May BusinessDay
52 Lilian Orogbu House member, Anambra	LP → ADC → NDC	Individual House nomination unverified.	During — latest ADC-to-NDC parliamentary move announced on 5 May.	Individual House nomination unverified.	No individual NDC House nomination is established. Do not infer a ticket from the collective defection announcement. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving House member, the defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception. If a 2027 ticket is later shown, verify the primary/substitution record.	Punch • House moves, 5 May BusinessDay
53 Peter Aniekwe House member, Anambra	LP → ADC → NDC	Individual House nomination unverified.	During — latest ADC-to-NDC parliamentary move announced on 5 May.	Individual House nomination unverified.	No individual NDC House nomination is established. Do not infer a ticket from the collective defection announcement. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving House member, the defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception. If a 2027 ticket is later shown, verify the primary/substitution record.	Punch • House moves, 5 May BusinessDay
54 Rabiū Musa Kwankwaso Former Kano governor; NNPP's 2023 presidential candidate	NNPP → ADC → NDC	Yes — NDC vice-presidential running mate to Obi.	During — joined NDC with Obi on 3 May, after the intermediate ADC move.	Running-mate selection — announced by Obi on 30 May, rather than a separate vice-presidential primary.	Vice-presidential selection is constitutionally distinct from an ordinary primary. Constitution s.142 requires the presidential candidate to nominate a running mate from the same political party; do not import a separate ordinary-primary or 21-day membership timetable without a specific legal basis. NDC registration litigation remains a separate systemic issue.	Arise • NDC joining, 3 May Daily Post • joint ticket, 30 May
58 Enyinnaya Abaribe Senator, Abia South	APGA → ADC → LP	Yes — LP Senate, Abia South.	During — ADC-to-LP parliamentary announcement on 5 May; earlier APGA-to-ADC move preceded the window.	During — LP Senate primary/nomination reported on 30 May.	2027 nomination: no automatic s.77 register bar after Zenith Labour Party v INEC; verify actual LP membership and the party-authorised primary. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving Senator, the defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception. That issue does not automatically invalidate the 2027 LP nomination.	NALTF • Senate moves, 5 May Ikenga • LP primary, 30 May

Politician	Party trajectory	2027 ticket outcome	Defection timing before / during / after	Nomination timing and method	Potential legal issue / verification required (revised 12 Sep. 2026)	Sources (clickable links)
61 Leke Abejide House member, Yagba	ADC → APC	Yes — APC House, Yagba.	During — left ADC in early May; APC parliamentary move announced on 5 May.	During — won APC House primary on 16 May.	The 11-day chronology is not, by itself, a statutory disqualification after Zenith Labour Party v INEC voided ss.77(5)-(7). Verify actual APC membership and the authorised House primary. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving House member, the defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception.	Channels • move, 5 May TheCable • resignation, 1 May Punch • primary, 16 May
62 Peter Ifeanyi Uzokwe House member, Nnewi-area constituency	YPP → ADC → NDC	Individual House nomination unverified. Also reported as Peter or Ifeanyi Uzokwe.	During — latest ADC-to-NDC parliamentary move announced on 5 May.	Individual House nomination unverified.	No individual NDC ticket is established. The parliamentary defection announcement does not prove nomination. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving House member, the defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception. Any later ticket requires the primary/substitution record.	Punch • House moves, 5 May BusinessDay

3. Defections after the primaries | 3 politicians

After 30 May 2026

Politician	Party trajectory	2027 ticket outcome	Defection timing before / during / after	Nomination timing and method	Potential legal issue / verification required (revised 12 Sep. 2026)	Sources (clickable links)
24 Garba Musa Maidoki Senator, Kebbi South	PDP → APC → ADC	APC bid failed; ADC ticket unverified.	After (notification) — ADC move announced in June; APC exit preceded its May primary. Actual ADC joining date unverified.	ADC nomination unverified — APC screening exclusion preceded the latest move.	No ADC nomination is established, and the June Senate notification does not prove the effective membership date. If a later ADC ticket is claimed, verify the party-authorised primary or lawful substitution. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving Senator, his party changes may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g), subject to the national-division/merger exception.	Premium Times • May 2025 move TheCable • APC outcomes / chronology Premium Times • ADC notification
38 Saliu Mustapha Senator, Kwara Central	APC → PDP	Yes — PDP Senate, Kwara Central, through reported substitution.	After — APC-to-PDP move in August, after his unsuccessful APC governorship bid and the main primary window.	Afterwards — PDP Senate ticket obtained through substitution, reported on 21 August. A fresh replacement primary was not independently verified.	High-risk substitution. Channels reported a PDP Kwara Central ticket “by substitution” on 21 Aug., one day before INEC’s 22 Aug. P/NASS replacement deadline. Verify the original PDP nominee; a personal written withdrawal plus sworn affidavit under s.31; a fresh primary within 14 days under s.33; at least five days’ INEC notice for the replacement primary under INEC Reg. 22(4); and timely ICNP filing. Separate current-seat issue under Constitution s.68(1)(g).	Channels • substitution, 21 Aug
56 Rufai Hanga Senator, Kano Central	NNPP → NDC → APC	APC ticket unverified; latest move reported in September.	After (latest move) — APC defection reported in September. Earlier NNPP-to-NDC move was announced on 5 May.	APC nomination unverified.	No APC ticket is established. A September move occurred after INEC’s 22 Aug. P/NASS withdrawal/replacement deadline; therefore any claim that he acquired an APC Senate ticket by replacement would require a specific judicial/statutory basis in addition to ss.31/33 compliance. Separate current-seat issue: as a serving Senator, the defection may engage Constitution s.68(1)(g).	NALTF • Senate moves, 5 May Premium Times on X

4. Defection timing not established | 3 politicians

Kept separate; not assigned to a dated group

Politician	Party trajectory	2027 ticket outcome	Defection timing before / during / after	Nomination timing and method	Potential legal issue / verification required (revised 12 Sep. 2026)	Sources (clickable links)
03 Donald Duke Former Cross River governor	PDP → ADC → PRP	Yes — PRP presidential nominee; nomination challenged in court.	Uncertain — publicly cleared by PRP on 23 May, during the window. Actual PRP joining date disputed.	During — PRP presidential primary on 25 May; result declared on 26 May.	Pending litigation; judgment reportedly fixed for 2 Nov. 2026. The suit includes alleged absence from the PRP register submitted on 4 May, but Zenith Labour Party v INEC subsequently voided ss.77(5)-(7), so that fact should not be treated as an automatic statutory disqualification. Remaining issues include actual PRP membership, screening/primary validity, party rules, standing/jurisdiction and the 14-day pre-election filing limit.	PRP • screening list, 23 May NAN / Gazette • lawsuit, 28 July
28 Ndudi Elumelu Former House minority leader	PDP → APC	Yes — House, Aniocha/Oshimili; defeated Okolie.	Unverified — APC membership established by its 16 May primary; exact PDP exit date not established.	During — won APC House primary on 16 May, defeating Okolie.	The missing public joining date no longer supports a mechanical s.77 “21-day interval” objection after Zenith Labour Party v INEC. Verify actual APC membership and the authorised 16 May primary under APC rules. No current-seat s.68 issue arises because he is a former, not serving, House member.	Radio Nigeria • primary, 16 May
29 Kingsley Ogundu Chinda Former House minority leader	PDP → APC	Yes — Rivers governorship nomination reported; timing controversy noted.	Uncertain — minority-leader letter dated 23 April; House announcement on 2 June. Actual APC joining date unverified.	During — won APC governorship primary on 21 May, before the parliamentary announcement.	The 2 June House announcement does not prove a post-primary defection; verify the actual PDP resignation/APC enrolment and the authority for the 21 May APC governorship primary. After Zenith Labour Party v INEC, there is no automatic 21-day personal register bar. Separate current-seat issue: Chinda remains a serving House member, so Constitution s.68(1)(g) may be engaged, subject to the national-division/merger exception.	Arise • primary, 21 May Arise • letter / announcement

5. Separate 2026 election | 1 politician

Retained from the register; excluded from 2027 ticket outcomes

Politician	Party trajectory	2027 ticket outcome	Defection timing before / during / after	Nomination timing and method	Potential legal issue / verification required (revised 12 Sep. 2026)	Sources (clickable links)
15 Ademola Adeleke Osun governor	PDP → Accord	2026, not 2027 — Accord ticket for the Osun governorship election.	Outside this comparison — joined Accord in December 2025 for the 2026 Osun election.	2026 cycle — Accord governorship primary in December 2025.	This is a separate 2026 election cycle. The Accord primary occurred in Dec. 2025, before enactment of the Electoral Act 2026; do not apply the 2026 Act retrospectively to that completed nomination event. Assess the primary under the law and rules then in force, while later electoral steps may be governed by subsequently applicable law.	ICIR

6. Summary of the grouped register

Defection timing	Total politicians	2027 ticket reported	Unsuccessful / withdrawn / replaced	Nomination disputed	2027 ticket unverified	2026 ticket only
Defections before primaries	34	19	10	0	5	0
Defections during primaries	21	11	0	2	8	0
Defections after primaries	3	1	0	0	2	0
Timing not established	3	3	0	0	0	0
Separate 2026 election	1	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL REGISTER	62	34	10	2	15	1

Basis. Counts are derived from the existing 62-person register, with an evidence cut-off of 12 September 2026; they are not national totals. Each politician is counted once, by the latest destination party. All original case IDs are retained.

Timing. Before: before 23 April 2026. During: 23 April–30 May 2026 inclusive. After: after 30 May 2026. Existing timing classifications are retained, including qualified public declarations, bids and parliamentary notifications; they do not always establish the effective membership date. Three unclassified cases and one separate 2026 case are retained outside these dated groups.

Ticket outcomes. The outcome concerns the latest destination party. “Ticket reported” includes vice-presidential running mates and reported nominations under legal challenge; it does not certify legal validity or a final INEC listing. Unsuccessful, withdrawn or subsequently replaced nominations are counted separately. “Nomination disputed” covers unresolved authority/rival-candidate outcomes. “Unverified” is not a finding that no ticket was received.

Reference links retained from the source register: [Primary timetable](#) | [Electoral Act 2026](#) | [Constitution](#)

Annex 7 – 2027 Candidates List Analysis

Nigeria 2027 | Selected nomination tables

Source cut-off: 12 September 2026 · Selected data from the supplied working audit

Table 1. Party coverage

The federal candidate lists contain 18 presidential tickets, 1,303 Senate nominees and 3,560 House nominees across 22 parties. APC is recorded with a presidential ticket and candidates for all 109 Senate and 360 House seats. ADC has one Senate gap and 14 House gaps; NDC has ten and 30 respectively. PDP has eight Senate gaps and 44 House gaps.

Party	Presidential ticket	Senate nominees	House nominees	Senate gaps	House gaps	Complete federal slate	Sources
APC	1	109	360	0	0	Yes	S01 ; S02 ; S03
ADC	1	108	346	1	14	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
APM	1	104	312	5	48	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
PDP	1	101	316	8	44	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
NDC	1	99	330	10	30	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
SDP	1	95	257	14	103	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
ADP	1	92	256	17	104	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
APP	1	69	156	40	204	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
LP	1	68	170	41	190	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
Accord	0	67	159	42	201	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
NRM	1	65	172	44	188	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
YPP	1	60	143	49	217	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
ZLP	1	51	105	58	255	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
AA	1	39	64	70	296	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
APGA	0	33	70	76	290	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
NDP	1	32	60	77	300	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
PRP	1	27	100	82	260	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
DLA	1	27	68	82	292	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
AAC	1	25	50	84	310	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
NNPP	0	21	52	88	308	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
BP	1	7	10	102	350	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
YP	0	4	4	105	356	No	S01 ; S02 ; S03
TOTAL	18	1303	3560				

Source: supplied working audit, Party coverage. Linked underlying references: [S01 — INEC presidential list](#); [S02 — INEC Senate list](#); [S03 — INEC House list](#). Party-name reference: [INEC — Accord](#).

Table 2. Opposition gaps: ADC and NDC

ADC and NDC together have 55 missing legislative nominations: 15 for ADC (one Senate district and 14 House constituencies) and 40 for NDC (ten Senate districts and 30 House constituencies). The North West accounts for 28 of these gaps. Neither party has a recorded gap in the South East, while NDC also has complete legislative coverage in the South South. The entries below cover ADC and NDC only; they are not a register of missing nominations for every opposition party.

Party	Race	State	Missing nomination/constituency	PDF page(s)	Source
ADC	House	Bayelsa	Ogbia	47	S03
ADC	House	Bayelsa	Sagbama/Ekeremor	47–48	S03
ADC	House	Edo	Etsako East/Etsako West/ Etsako Central	89–90	S03
ADC	House	Kaduna	Zangon Kataf/ Jaba	142–143	S03
ADC	House	Kano	Bebeji/Kiru	145–146	S03
ADC	House	Kano	Dambatta/Makoda	148–149	S03
ADC	House	Kano	Doguwa/Tudun Wada	150–151	S03
ADC	House	Kano	Rano/Bunkure/Kibiya	146	S03
ADC	House	Kano	Shanono/Bagwai	145	S03
ADC	House	Kano	Tarauni	153–154	S03
ADC	House	Lagos	Amuwo-Odofin	198	S03
ADC	House	Lagos	Shomolu	200–201	S03
ADC	House	Niger	Lavun/Mokwa/Edati	213	S03
ADC	House	Zamfara	Bungudu/Maru	297–298	S03
ADC	Senate	Delta	Delta South	36	S02
NDC	House	Bauchi	DARAZO/GANJUWA	39–40	S03
NDC	House	Bauchi	Gamawa	42	S03
NDC	House	Bauchi	Ningi/Warji	39	S03
NDC	House	Borno	Damboa/Gwoza/ Chibok	62–63	S03
NDC	House	Ekiti	Emure/Gbonyin/Ekiti East	94	S03
NDC	House	Ekiti	Ijero/Ekiti West/Efon	95	S03
NDC	House	Jigawa	Jahun/Miga	130–131	S03
NDC	House	Jigawa	Mallam Madori/ Kaugama	131	S03

Party	Race	State	Missing nomination/constituency	PDF page(s)	Source
NDC	House	Kaduna	Birnin Gwari/Giwa	139–140	S03
NDC	House	Katsina	Batagarawa/ Charanchi/Rimi	161–162	S03
NDC	House	Katsina	Dutsin-ma/Kurfi	164	S03
NDC	House	Katsina	Faskari/Kankara/ Sabuwa	164–165	S03
NDC	House	Katsina	Ingawa/Kankia/ Kusada	165–166	S03
NDC	House	Katsina	Jibia/Kaita	166	S03
NDC	House	Katsina	Malumfashi/Kafur	167	S03
NDC	House	Katsina	Mashi/Dutsi	167–168	S03
NDC	House	Katsina	Zango/Baure	168–169	S03
NDC	House	Kebbi	Aleiro/Gwandu/Jega	173	S03
NDC	House	Kebbi	Argungu/Augie	170–171	S03
NDC	House	Kebbi	Bagudo/Suru	171	S03
NDC	House	Kebbi	Bunza/Birnin Kebbi/ Kalgo	172	S03
NDC	House	Kebbi	Koko-Besse/Maiyama	173–174	S03
NDC	House	Kogi	Yagba East/Yagba West/ Mopamuro	183	S03
NDC	House	Lagos	Lagos Island I	195	S03
NDC	House	Osun	Ayedire/Iwo/Ola-Oluwa	237	S03
NDC	House	Osun	Ife Central/Ife North/Ife South/Ife East	236–237	S03
NDC	House	Oyo	Saki East/Saki West/ Atisbo	244–245	S03
NDC	House	Sokoto	Kebbe/Tambuwal	281–282	S03
NDC	House	Taraba	Takum/Donga/Ussa	283–284	S03
NDC	House	Yobe	Bursari/Geidam/ Yunusari	290	S03
NDC	Senate	Bauchi	Bauchi Central	18	S02
NDC	Senate	Bauchi	Bauchi North	18-19	S02
NDC	Senate	Bauchi	Bauchi South	17-18	S02
NDC	Senate	Benue	Benue North East	24-25	S02
NDC	Senate	Ekiti	Ekiti South	44	S02

Party	Race	State	Missing nomination/constituency	PDF page(s)	Source
NDC	Senate	Jigawa	Jigawa North East	59	S02
NDC	Senate	Kaduna	Kaduna South	63	S02
NDC	Senate	Katsina	Katsina Central	69-70	S02
NDC	Senate	Yobe	Yobe East	121-122	S02
NDC	Senate	Yobe	Yobe North	122	S02

Source: supplied working audit, Opposition gaps. Linked underlying references: [S02 — INEC Senate list](#); [S03 — INEC House list](#).

Table 2a. Opposition candidate gaps by geopolitical zone: ADC and NDC

Half of NDC's 40 gaps are in the North West, with a further 11 in the North East. ADC's gaps are concentrated in the North West (eight) and South South (four). Neither party has a recorded gap in the South East.

Geopolitical zone	ADC			NDC			Combined total
	Senate	House	Total	Senate	House	Total	
North Central	0	1	1	1	1	2	3
North East	0	0	0	5	6	11	11
North West	0	8	8	3	17	20	28
South East	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South South	1	3	4	0	0	0	4
South West	0	2	2	1	6	7	9
Total	1	14	15	10	30	40	55

Counting basis: missing nominations for ADC and NDC only, as recorded on 12 September 2026. If both parties lack a candidate in the same constituency, the combined total counts two gaps. Zero indicates no recorded gap.

Source: zonal aggregation of Table 2 and the supplied working audit, Opposition gaps. Linked underlying references: [S02 — INEC Senate list](#); [S03 — INEC House list](#).

Table 3. Incumbent senators: parties and geopolitical zones

The identified Senate return nominations total 79: 57 for APC, eight for PDP, seven for ADC, three for NDC, and one each for Accord, APGA, LP and PRP. Of the 74 nominees holding mandates from the 2023 election, 45 retain the same party label and 29 stand for a different party; these include 13 PDP-to-APC and six PDP-to-ADC transitions. Five later by-election entrants are counted separately. The zonal totals range from 11 in the North Central to 16 in the North West.

Mandate party and basis	2027 party	North Central	North East	North West	South East	South South	South West	Total
PDP (2023)	Accord	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
LP (2023)	ADC	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
PDP (2023)	ADC	0	2	3	1	0	0	6
Total for ADC		1	2	3	1	0	0	7
APC (2023)	APC	6	6	8	4	5	10	39
LP (2023)	APC	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
NNPP (2023)	APC	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
PDP (2023)	APC	0	2	4	1	5	1	13
APC (later mandate)	APC	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
Total for APC		6	8	13	8	11	11	57
APGA (later mandate)	APGA	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
APGA (2023)	LP	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
LP (2023)	NDC	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
PDP (2023)	NDC	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for NDC		0	0	0	2	1	0	3
APC (2023)	PDP	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
PDP (2023)	PDP	3	2	0	0	0	1	6
PDP (later mandate)	PDP	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for PDP		4	2	0	0	1	1	8
PDP (2023)	PRP	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
All identified Senate return nominations		11	13	16	13	13	13	79

Counting basis: one identified same-district nomination per senator in the working roster. The 30 entries without a same-district match are excluded; they are not collectively classified as primary defeats. “2023” refers to the electoral mandate ultimately established, including court or rerun resolutions. “Later mandate” denotes a new by-election mandate after 2023. Matching party labels can conceal an intervening defection.

Source: supplied working audit, Senate_incumbents. Linked underlying references: [S02 — INEC Senate list](#); [S05 — NALTF Senate directory](#); [S07 — INEC 2023 senators-elect \(Channels\)](#); [S08 — NALTF, 24 June 2026 plenary](#).

Table 4. Incumbent House members: parties and geopolitical zones

The identified candidacies comprise 258 House return nominations and five bids for Senate seats. Among the House return nominees, 189 stand for APC, 14 for NDC, 12 for ADC and ten for APM, with 33 spread across eight other parties. Of the 250 nominees holding 2023 mandates, 119 retain the same party label and 131 stand for a different party. The 48 PDP-to-APC transitions include 20 in the South South and 12 in the North West. Eight later by-election entrants are listed separately, as are the five House members seeking Senate seats.

Mandate party and basis	2027 party	North Central	North East	North West	South East	South South	South West	Total
A. Return nominations to the House of Representatives								
LP (2023)	Accord	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
PDP (2023)	Accord	0	1	0	0	0	6	7
Total for Accord		1	1	0	0	0	6	8
APC (2023)	ADC	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
PDP (2023)	ADC	0	2	7	0	0	0	9
Total for ADC		0	3	9	0	0	0	12
ADC (2023)	APC	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
APC (2023)	APC	22	17	27	7	8	29	110
APGA (2023)	APC	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
LP (2023)	APC	1	0	0	5	0	0	6
NNPP (2023)	APC	0	0	14	0	0	0	14
PDP (2023)	APC	1	9	12	2	20	4	48
YPP (2023)	APC	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
APC (later mandate)	APC	0	0	3	0	1	2	6
PDP (later mandate)	APC	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total for APC		26	27	56	15	30	35	189
APGA (2023)	APGA	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
PDP (2023)	APM	0	5	0	0	0	4	9
PDP (later mandate)	APM	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total for APM		0	5	0	0	0	5	10
LP (2023)	APP	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
PDP (2023)	APP	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Total for APP		0	0	0	3	1	0	4
APC (2023)	LP	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
APGA (2023)	LP	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
LP (2023)	LP	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
Total for LP		1	1	0	5	0	0	7

Mandate party and basis	2027 party	North Central	North East	North West	South East	South South	South West	Total
LP (2023)	NDC	0	0	0	4	2	3	9
NNPP (2023)	NDC	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
YPP (2023)	NDC	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for NDC		0	0	4	5	2	3	14
APC (2023)	PDP	1	1	1	0	1	0	4
LP (2023)	PDP	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
PDP (2023)	PDP	0	1	1	0	1	0	3
Total for PDP		1	2	2	0	3	0	8
APC (2023)	PRP	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
PDP (2023)	PRP	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total for PRP		0	2	0	0	0	0	2
APC (2023)	SDP	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
PDP (2023)	YPP	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
All identified House return nominations		30	41	71	31	36	49	258
B. House incumbents nominated for the Senate — excluded from House return totals								
APC (2023)	APC	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
PDP (2023)	APM	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
PDP (2023)	NDC	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
SDP (2023)	SDP	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
All identified House-to-Senate nominations		2	0	0	0	1	2	5
All identified incumbent House-member candidacies		32	41	71	31	37	51	263

Counting basis: 263 members from the working House roster have an identified federal nomination; 97 have no confirmed federal match and are excluded. An unmatched entry does not establish primary defeat. Original roster and identity-verification caveats remain applicable. “2023” is the party of the mandate ultimately established for that election; “later mandate” is a subsequent new by-election mandate. Party comparisons show the two endpoints, not every intervening move.

Source: supplied working audit, House_incumbents. Linked underlying references: [S02 — INEC Senate list](#); [S03 — INEC House list](#); [S04 — NALTF House directory](#); [S06 — INEC 2023 members-elect sheets \(TheCable\)](#).

Table 5. Primary-case sample: outcomes after reported unsuccessful APC bids

Twenty-nine incumbents—eight senators and 21 House members—were initially reported as unsuccessful in APC primaries. Six subsequently appeared on the final candidate lists for APC, five for another party, and 18 had no same-chamber final-list match. The sample therefore covers both eventual nominations by the original party and cross-party nominations following a reported primary setback. It is a selected sample, not a national total of unsuccessful incumbents; the absence of a same-chamber match does not establish whether a member obtained a nomination for another office.

Chamber	Sitting member	State	Party at failed primary	Earlier reported outcome	Final-listed party	Final constituency	PDF page	Outcome after the primary	Sources
House	Etteh Okpolupm Ikpong	Akwa Ibom	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S15
House	Irom Etaba Michael	Cross River	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S27 ; S15
House	Mutu Nicholas Ebomo	Delta	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S15
House	Julius Omozuanvbo Ihonvbere	Edo	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S15
House	Gagdi Yusuf Adamu	Plateau	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid	APC	Kanke/Pankshin/ Kanam	257	Listed for APC after initial failure	S15
House	Offiong Godwin Odey Ekpo	Cross River	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S27 ; S15
House	Inyang Emil Lemke	Cross River	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S27 ; S15
House	Akiba Bassey Ekpenyong	Cross River	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid	PDP	Calabar Municipal/ Odukpani	70	Listed for another party	S27 ; S15
House	Okolie Ngozi Lawrence	Delta	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S15
House	Omoleye Abiodun Francis	Ekiti	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S15
House	Ojuawo Rufus Adeniyi	Ekiti	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S15
House	Kolawole Davidson Akinlayo	Ekiti	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S15
House	Akinlade Abiodun Isiaq	Ogun	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S15
House	Isiaka Ayokunle Ibrahim	Ogun	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S15
House	Akinosi Olatunji Akanni	Ogun	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S15

Chamber	Sitting member	State	Party at failed primary	Earlier reported outcome	Final-listed party	Final constituency	PDF page	Outcome after the primary	Sources
House	Ogunbanwo Adeleke Olufemi	Ogun	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S15
House	Adelegbe Oluwatimehin Emmanuel	Ondo	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid	APC	Owo/Ose	231	Listed for APC after initial failure	S15
House	Adefiranye Ayodele Festus	Ondo	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid	APC	Ileoluji/Okeigbo/Odigbo	228	Listed for APC after initial failure	S15
House	Ojogo Donald Kimikamboh	Ondo	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid	APC	Eseodo/Ilaje	230	Listed for APC after initial failure	S15
House	Adesida Abiodun Cornelius Aderin	Ondo	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S15
House	Rabilu Bala	Bauchi	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid	PRP	Jama'are/Itas-Gadai	43	Listed for another party	S11
Senate	Ned Nwoko	Delta	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S26
Senate	Neda Imasuen	Edo	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S25
Senate	Olubiyi Fadeyi	Osun	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid	PDP	Osun Central	99	Listed for another party	S30 ; S14
Senate	Samaila Dahuwa Kaila	Bauchi	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid	PRP	Bauchi North	19	Listed for another party	S11
Senate	Peter Ndalikali Jiya	Niger	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid	PDP	Niger South	90	Listed for another party	S16
Senate	Pam Mwakdon Dachungyang	Plateau	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid				No same-chamber final-list match	S16
Senate	Emmanuel Udende	Benue	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid	APC	Benue North East	24	Listed for APC after initial failure	S17 ; S16
Senate	Titus Zam	Benue	APC	Reported unsuccessful primary bid	APC	Benue North West	25	Listed for APC after initial failure	S17 ; S16

Counting basis: the initial primary reports are compared with the 12 September 2026 final lists for the same chamber. Blank nomination cells mean that no same-chamber match was recorded, not a verified absence from all races. The earlier reported outcomes are retained as reported; subsequent listing for APC is not, by itself, evidence of how the nomination changed.

Source: supplied working audit, Primary case sample. Linked final lists: [S02 — INEC Senate list](#); [S03 — INEC House list](#). Primary and subsequent nomination reports: [S11](#); [S14](#); [S15](#); [S16](#); [S17](#); [S25](#); [S26](#); [S27](#); [S30](#). Source references within the table are also clickable. The working audit's factual and verification qualifications remain applicable.

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