

Terms of Reference (ToR) – Short-Term Expert

Title of the Action	European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU–SDGN II) Programme: Component 6a – Support to the National Peace Committee
Expert Profile	Election Security Risk Observers (ESROs)

1. Project Context

The peaceful conduct of elections remains fundamental to democratic stability in Nigeria. Previous electoral cycles have been characterised by political tensions, electoral violence, misinformation, intimidation, and other threats that undermine electoral integrity and public confidence. In response, the National Peace Committee (NPC) established the Election Security Information (ESI) Hub as a repository for election security information, a platform for electoral risk monitoring, election-related incident tracking, data analysis, and early warning.

Under the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN II) Programme, The Kukah Centre, serving as the Secretariat of the NPC, is implementing an intervention aimed at strengthening electoral risk monitoring, early warning systems, and coordinated preventive response mechanisms in advance of Nigeria's 2027 General Elections.

Over the past year, the ESI Hub has generated election security analysis through secondary-source monitoring, including media reports, observer updates, stakeholder information, and publicly available security data. While this has strengthened situational awareness, reliance on secondary information alone has limited the timeliness, contextual depth, and verification of electoral risk analysis.

To strengthen the credibility and responsiveness of the ESI Hub, the project will deploy Election Security Risk Observers (ESROs) across the 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Between October 2026 and March 2027, ESROs will provide verified field-based information on electoral risks, political developments, security incidents, and emerging threats to support evidence-based early warning, risk analysis, and preventive response.

Field-generated information will complement the ESI Hub's analytical products, strengthen hotspot monitoring, improve incident verification, and support coordinated engagement with key electoral stakeholders to promote peaceful and credible elections throughout the electoral cycle.

2. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this assignment is to support the NPC's Electoral Risk Monitoring Framework through systematic field-based monitoring, verification, and reporting of electoral developments within assigned states. The ESRO will monitor political developments and electoral tensions, identify emerging risks and conflict triggers, document and verify election-related incidents through credible stakeholder engagement, and support hotspot identification and risk mapping, generating timely, evidence-based reports that feed into the ESI Hub's early warning analysis, risk assessments, and preventive response mechanisms. Through structured reporting, ESROs will strengthen electoral risk monitoring, incident verification, and early warning systems, supporting evidence-based decision-making and peaceful, credible elections.

3. Scope of Work and Key Responsibilities

3.1 Scope of Work

Each Election Security Risk Observer will be assigned to one State and will undertake continuous electoral risk monitoring throughout the implementation period.

Methodology and Operationalisation Workshop

Before deployment, ESROs will participate in a Methodology and Operationalisation Workshop covering the Electoral Risk Monitoring Framework, the incident classification system, approved reporting templates, and digital reporting platforms. The workshop will also train observers in verification protocols, the risk-rating methodology, stakeholder engagement approaches, and early-warning and escalation procedures, alongside sessions on conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm principles, personal security and safety protocols, and ethical standards and confidentiality.

Monitoring

Monitoring will cover the full range of developments shaping the electoral environment in the assigned state. ESROs will track political developments and electoral preparations as they unfold, alongside security developments that may affect the conduct of the elections. Particular attention will be paid to incidents of electoral violence, hate speech and inflammatory rhetoric, election-related disputes, and community tensions that could escalate into conflict. Observers will maintain continuous monitoring of identified hotspots, engage regularly with stakeholders to contextualise and corroborate emerging information, and verify reported incidents to ensure that only accurate, evidence-based information feeds into the ESI Hub's early warning analysis.

3.2 Key Responsibilities

Electoral Risk Monitoring

- Monitor political developments and electoral tensions within the assigned state.
- Track emerging conflict drivers and electoral flashpoints.
- Identify and update electoral hotspot locations.
- Monitor campaign activities and political mobilisation.
- Observe election-related security developments.
- Monitor incidents of violence, intimidation, hate speech, vote buying, destruction of electoral materials, misinformation, and other electoral offences.
- Identify trends that may affect peaceful elections.
- Observe and record stakeholder conduct against Peace Accord and code of conduct commitments, including that of political parties, candidates, and security agencies.

Maintain regular engagement with:

- INEC State Offices
- Nigeria Police Force
- Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)
- Traditional leaders
- Religious leaders
- Political parties
- Civil society organisations
- Women's groups
- Youth organisations
- Community leaders
- Media practitioners

The purpose of engagement shall be to:

- Gather information
- Validate reports
- Verify incidents
- Understand local dynamics
- Strengthen contextual analysis

Data Collection and Reporting

- Submit Bi-weekly State Situation Reports.
- Submit Incident Reports within 24 hours of significant developments.

- Include an expanded monthly risk rating and forward outlook in the second bi-weekly report of each month.
- Use approved reporting templates and digital platforms.
- Include supporting evidence where appropriate.
- Ensure reports are objective, factual, timely, and evidence-based.

Verification and Quality Assurance

- Verify incidents through direct observation wherever possible.
- Corroborate information using at least two credible sources where direct observation is not possible.
- Clearly distinguish between:
 - Verified incidents
 - Credible reports
 - Unverified allegations
 - Immediately escalate high-risk incidents requiring urgent attention to the assigned Regional Lead Analyst (RLA) or, where the RLA is unreachable, directly to the ESI Hub.

Coordination

- Participate in periodic coordination meetings.
- Participate in periodic review sessions.
- Respond promptly to requests for clarification.
- Work closely with the assigned Regional Lead Analyst, who provides first-line supervision and quality assurance of all reports.
- Support data verification exercises undertaken by the ESI Hub.
- Contribute material and case examples to ESI Hub knowledge and communication products, including the periodic podcast, on request.

4. Deliverables

Each Election Security Risk Observer shall submit:

- Bi-weekly State Situation Reports (fortnightly, i.e. every two weeks; 12 reports), incorporating hotspot status changes, the stakeholder engagement log, verified incident summaries, a state risk rating, and observations on stakeholder conduct against Peace Accord and code of conduct commitments; the second report of each month shall carry an expanded monthly risk rating and forward outlook.
- Incident Reports submitted within 24 hours of a significant incident (event-driven).
- End-of-Assignment State Electoral Risk Assessment (1), submitted using a structured template with a defined page limit.

Reporting Calendar

Each bi-weekly cycle shall run to a staggered schedule:

- ESROs shall submit State Situation Reports by close of business on Day 1 of the cycle;
- Regional Lead Analysts shall complete quality assurance and consolidation by Day 3;
- The ESI Hub shall publish the bi-weekly election security snapshot on Day 5.

On the monthly cycle, Regional Lead Analysts shall submit Monthly Regional Electoral Risk Assessments by Day 5 of the following month, and the ESI Hub shall issue the monthly election security report by Day 10. End-of-Assignment State Electoral Risk Assessments shall be submitted two weeks ahead of the Regional Lead Analysts' end-of-assignment deadline, to allow time for regional consolidation.

Knowledge Product Volume and Use by the ESI Hub

Based on the six-month assignment period, each ESRO is expected to produce approximately 13 scheduled knowledge products or reporting inputs: about 12 Bi-weekly State Situation Reports and 1 End-of-Assignment State Electoral Risk Assessment. Across 37 ESROs, this represents approximately 481 scheduled submissions, in addition to event-driven Incident Reports.

These submissions are operational inputs into the ESI Hub rather than separate public-facing products. The ESI Hub will use them to populate and update the central incident database and dashboard, verify and triangulate incidents, update hotspot and risk maps, track emerging political and security trends, and support early warning and escalation. ESRO bi-weekly reports will also provide the state-level evidence base for RLA consolidation and for ESI Hub products including bi-weekly electoral risk bulletins, monthly risk assessments, trend analyses, early warning alerts, election security briefs, and other national analytical products.

- All reports shall comply with approved data governance, confidentiality, and quality assurance protocols.

Deliverables shall be subject to review and approval by the assigned Regional Lead Analyst and the Research Manager of the ESI Hub; sustained failure to meet quality or timeliness standards may result in termination of the assignment.

5. Reporting Requirements

The ESRO will report to the:

- Assigned Regional Lead Analyst (first-line supervision)
- **Research Manager** of the ESI Hub
- Work in close collaboration with the ESI Hub and other ESROs on the project.
- Coordinate with programme partners and relevant stakeholders.

6. Required Expertise

Minimum Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in political science, Peace and Conflict Studies, Law, International Relations, Sociology, Security Studies, Journalism, Development Studies, Governance, or related discipline.
- Minimum of 2 years' experience in election observation, governance, conflict monitoring, peacebuilding, research, journalism, civil society programming, or related fields.
- Strong understanding of Nigeria's electoral environment.
- Knowledge of electoral conflict dynamics.
- Experience using digital reporting platforms.
- Strong writing and analytical skills.

Competencies

- Knowledge of the assigned state's political and security environment.
- Excellent analytical skills.
- Strong report-writing ability.
- Ability to verify information objectively.
- High ethical standards.

- Excellent interpersonal skills.
- Strong stakeholder engagement skills.
- Ability to work independently.
- Ability to meet reporting deadlines.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office and mobile data collection applications.

Ethical Considerations

- Maintain strict political neutrality.
- Avoid conflicts of interest.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Protect sensitive information.
- Comply with the project's Code of Conduct.
- Observe Do No Harm principles.
- Respect diversity and human rights.
- Refrain from accepting gifts or inducements.
- Avoid public commentary on project findings without authorisation.
- Violation of these standards may result in immediate termination of the assignment.

Ownership of Outputs

All reports, datasets, analyses, and other materials produced under this assignment shall remain the intellectual property of The Kukah Centre and the National Peace Committee. Such materials may be revised, reproduced, or disseminated as part of the programme's electoral risk monitoring and knowledge management activities.

7. Location of Work

The duty station shall be the ESRO's assigned State. Travel within the State shall be undertaken as required, security conditions permitting.

8. Duration of Assignment

The assignment shall run from October 2026 to March 2027, covering the pre-election, election, and immediate post-election periods of the 2027 General Elections. The engagement shall be continuous over this period. The indicative level of effort, remuneration, payment modality, and arrangements for logistics, communications, insurance, and duty of care shall be as specified in the expert's contract.