ICEA WATCH

Tracking Electoral Violence and Related Incidents in Nigeria | 18 February - 15 August 2026

Nigeria notoriety for electoral atrocities, in particular, violent attacks, predates its independence. Its uncanny penchant for violence has not been limited to election days, but is emergent across the entire gamut of the electoral process from party congresses and primaries, through campaigns election days and post elections. The physical manifestation of violence almost invariably begins with hate speech and disinformation to rile up voters' sentiments. The failure to effectively document, investigate and demand accountability each electoral cycle, further entrenches what has become Nigeria's culture of political impunity and has instigated other forms of violence and resulted in a democracy that is fundamentally fragile.

For the past two electoral cycles, ICEA has tracked and documented election related violence, and sought accountability for these atrocities. Given Nigeria's electoral trajectory, it continues to be imperative that ICEA spotlights, documents and seeks accountability for these incidents.

At the flag off of Nigeria's 2027, ICEA resumed its situation room for electoral violence. This report highlights incidents recorded between **February and August 2026.** A summary of the atrocities documented during the period include at least eight killing-related incidents, four reports of inflammatory political rhetoric, four attacks on political actors, four incidents affecting INEC facilities or personnel, and five incidents of voter intimidation.

The atrocities recorded in the 3 days lead up to the Osun state governorship election, which held on **15 August 2026** demonstrates how several of these risks can converge in the final stages of an electoral contest, Furthermore, if its trends provide a forecast for the upcoming general elections, then Nigeria may be facing one of its most atrocious elections, and is therefore in need of early interventions to mitigate widespread violence across the country.

Below are snapshots of incidents recorded across the country within the last six months.

1. A Violent Take Off.

Political competition can become increasingly confrontational in the immediate period preceding voting, making the final days of an electoral process an important period for early warning and preventive intervention. A strong indicator of violence during Nigeria's elections has been party primaries and congresses. The contention for who leads a party's ticket for a political post is often treated as a zero-sum game and this electoral cycle has not been any different.

ICEA's records reveal a pattern of violent intimidation and attacks occurring during internal party processes. On 18 February 2026, an APC ward congress in Idanre, Ondo State, turned violent, killing two people; the state party chairman's brother, Raphael Adetimehin, was shot and macheted after being mistaken for the chairman himself, and remained in a coma. On 22 May 2026, an ADC primary

at the Wummy Hotel in Ekori, Yakurr LGA, Cross River State, was disrupted by armed men. And on 17 May 2026, an APC House of Representatives primary in Kasuwan Ali community, Mangu LGA, Plateau State, turned deadly when Sani Abdullahi was shot dead, reportedly by a stray round from soldiers dispersing protesting youths, rather than a direct thug attack, a distinction worth preserving since it points to security-force conduct rather than partisan violence as the immediate cause.

2. Voter Intimidation is taking multiple forms

Voter intimidation is often a precursor to physical violence in Nigeria's elections, and continues to be one of the major demotivating factors for voter turnout. Party supporters, particularly supporters of incumbents, often issue threats of physical harm, arson, disenfranchisement from government services and public goods to coerce their votes.

ICEA recorded the emergence of this trend during local elections and towards the buildup of the upcoming general elections. On 21 February 2026, during the FCT area council polls, the ADC accused Federal Capital Territory Minister Nyesom Wike of voter intimidation. The party's National Publicity Secretary, Bolaji Abdullahi, argued that Wike, a non-registered voter in the FCT, had no constitutional role moving between polling units under the guise of monitoring, and that his presence created an atmosphere of fear and undue influence. The same day, the APGA chairmanship candidate for AMAC, Dr Eze Onyebuchi Chukwu, alleged "massive vote-buying" and threats against voters in the Orozo area, alongside missing original result sheets at a Durumi polling unit. A further report on 22 February 2026 documented the PDP's own National Working Committee alleging that armed security personnel had been used to cart away result sheets and intimidate voters at several polling units, notably because it was the winning party itself raising the alarm.

The Osun election provides a clear illustration of this broader pattern in its final days. On 13 August, a woman filmed under the nickname "Arugba" warned Osogbo-area voters that anyone who didn't vote APC would lose the finger used to cast their ballot. In Ikire, APC chieftain Funmi Hasstrup was recorded telling supporters, "If you vote for anyone that is not Ambo, you will not go home." Senator Francis Fadahunsi was separately reported to police over remarks in which he was heard telling supporters that encountering Accord Party members "is killing."

This demonstrates that electoral coercion does not always involve physical attacks. Intimidation and interference can create fear and uncertainty that discourage citizens from participating freely in the electoral process.

3. Political actors are increasingly exposed to violence

The tracker recorded four attacks on political actors. On 24 February 2026, gunmen opened fire on the Benin City residence of ADC national leader John Odigie-Oyegun during a leadership meeting attended by Peter Obi and Olumide Akpata. Vehicle windows were shattered, and the party secretariat was struck; ADC officials called it an assassination attempt. In another incident, on 1 March 2026, a similar disruption hit the Iruekpen residence of the party's National Legal Officer,

Oserheimen Osunbor, during another leaders' meeting. On 21 May 2026, Senator Ireti Kingibe and fellow ADC officials were assaulted and briefly held inside a locked office at the party's Gudu secretariat in Abuja during a disruption of primary material distribution. Kingibe was thrown against a wall and treated for a head injury. And on election day itself, 15 August, the residence of the Speaker of the Osun State House of Assembly, Adewale Egbedun, was surrounded before dawn by armed personnel arriving in more than ten black Hilux vehicles; the Adeleke campaign alleged the residence was sealed off with occupants prevented from leaving, and that repeated calls to the Commissioner of Police went unanswered.

Attacks against politicians, candidates and party structures can restrict peaceful political competition and create an environment where political participation carries increasing risks.

4. Electoral institutions and personnel are also vulnerable

ICEA recorded one incident involving the abduction of an INEC official, alongside heightened threats to INEC facilities and concerns involving security personnel themselves. On 22 May 2026, armed men invaded the Wummy Hotel in Ekori, Yakurr LGA, Cross River State, during an ADC primary, abducting the INEC returning officer and carting away ballot boxes; she was rescued in a security operation shortly after. Earlier, on 2 April 2026, a report documented heightened security around an INEC facility in Maitama, Abuja, over threats of protest tied to the ADC crisis.

In another incident, on election day in Osun, INEC ad-hoc staff and voters fled a polling unit in Ejigbo amid unrest, and a Divisional Police Officer in Boluwaduro LGA was accused by residents of leading APC-linked thugs in an attempt to cart away election materials from Otan-Ayegbaju; the community resisted, and the materials stayed. Separately, a police officer discharged tear gas at a Registration Area Centre in Modakeke, Ife East LGA, sending INEC ad-hoc staff and residents running; the Osun Police Command called it accidental, arrested the officer, and disputed the viral claim that materials were carted away The claim that election materials were carted away remains contested, as the police's account does not fully align with the footage circulating online.

These incidents are particularly significant because electoral institutions and their personnel are essential to the administration of credible elections. Threats against them can disrupt electoral processes and undermine public confidence.

5. Inflammatory political rhetoric is part of the emerging risk environment

The tracker recorded four incidents involving inflammatory political rhetoric, particularly in July, with statements directed at named political figures. On 6 July 2026, former Borno governor Ali Modu Sheriff accused Peter Obi of pursuing the division of Nigeria, invoking the memory of the Civil War. The following day, 7 July 2026, Minister of Works Dave Umahi dismissed Obi's political support as "AI politics" and said Obi could not "face" him or President Tinubu; Sheriff separately said Obi would "leave any party that can't make him presidential candidate." In early August, at a press briefing in Osogbo, APC Campaign Council Director-General Wole Oke accused Governor Adeleke of protecting political thugs and facilitating the release of suspects from correctional custody, a charge made in

direct response to Adeleke's appeal to President Tinubu at an Osogbo campaign rally over alleged killings of his supporters.
While political rhetoric does not automatically translate into physical violence, its recurrence alongside other forms of intimidation and violence highlights the importance of monitoring both rhetoric and physical incidents as part of an early-warning system.

6. Killings remain the most severe form of electoral violence
The tracker recorded at least eight killing-related incidents during the period under review, including the two killed during the Ondo APC congress described in Section 1. On 5 July 2026, Islamiyya teacher Ustaz Ridwan Dauda, 42, was stabbed to death in Karofin-Madaki, Bauchi, in a dispute reportedly over a campaign poster pasted on his family's property. The next day, 6 July, 19-year-old Timileyin Oni was shot dead in Ijebu-Jesa, Osun; police attributed this to a suspected cult clash rather than a political motive, though it continues to be counted among the state's politically linked fatalities, ICEA treats this attribution as contested rather than settled.

Osun's toll deepened through the campaign's final weeks. On 15 July, Lateef Adelodun and Waheed Adigun were killed together in the Egbatedo area of Osogbo in an attack on APC members, with six others injured. On the night of 12 August , three days before the vote Dele Ayegbo (also reported as Ayegbo Oluwadele), nephew of APC campaign Director-General Wole Oke, was shot dead near his home in the Idofin quarters of Esa-Oke, Obokun LGA; fellow APC supporter Taiwo Oluwadele was critically wounded in the same attack, which the APC blamed on Accord-aligned hoodlums (this is the same incident reported separately by Channels TV as "one killed, another injured" in Obokun LGA noting this to avoid double-counting it as two deaths). On 14 August, in Omi Eran Atijo community, an Accord Party member was reportedly chased down and killed, this time with the APC named as the alleged perpetrator.

These incidents demonstrate the most severe consequences of political violence and reinforce the need to identify warning signs before political disputes escalate into physical attacks and loss of life.

The pattern points to an escalation of political violence
Across the incidents tracked, a broader pattern is emerging:
Hate speech and inflammatory rhetoric → intimidation and threats → disruption of political processes → attacks on political actors and electoral institutions → abductions and killings.
The incidents do not necessarily follow this sequence in every case, but the range of incidents demonstrates that political violence is taking place across multiple stages of the electoral cycle.