



13,000 VOTES *PÉRÉ* IN EACH OF OSUN'S 30 LGAs, AND OKE-FIA AWAITS YOU!

OSUN STATE 2026 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION BRIEF

A REPORT BY
ONELIFE INITIATIVE

AUGUST, 2026



OSUN IS NOT JUST A RIVER, IT'S AN IDENTITY

Ilesa. Osogbo. Ile-Ife. Ede. Iwo. These are cities and towns that readily come to mind when Osun State is mentioned. Created out of the Old Oyo State, Osun State remains a reminder of size, grit and more recently, politics occasioned by the off-cycle nature of Osun's gubernatorial election.

Nestled in Nigeria's **South-West geopolitical zone**, **Osun occupies a strategic position, sharing borders with Ekiti and Ondo states to the east, Kwara State to the north, Ogun State to the south, and Oyo State to the west.** Although it is **Nigeria's 9th smallest state by land area**, it is home to an **estimated 4.7 million people** and occupies a strategic position in Nigeria's electoral landscape. Named after the culturally significant Osun River, the state is renowned for its rich Yoruba heritage, vibrant political culture, and repeat history of closely contested elections.¹



As Osun prepares for another governorship election, this inaugural Osun Governorship Election Brief by Onelife Initiative provides a concise assessment of the political environment, key electoral dynamics, institutional preparedness, and emerging issues likely to shape the outcome of the poll. Designed especially for young people and secondarily for policymakers, the media, election observers, researchers, development partners, and the international community, the brief offers evidence-based insights into one of Nigeria's most consequential off-cycle elections.

The blinding spotlights are on Osun State as it returns to the polls, to elect a governor and deputy governor. Beyond being one of the off-cycle elections in Nigeria, it is a litmus test to the 2027 general election as it is the only major election preceding the general polls. The air in Osun is that of diverse campaign promises, coalitions, betrayals and even hopes. The Yoruba speakers in Osun understand that **"Arúgbó gbe ẹrú rẹ sọrùn, ó ní òun ní lọ sí igbó ewé; tí ó bá d'ògànjó, á mọye ewé tó kù."**

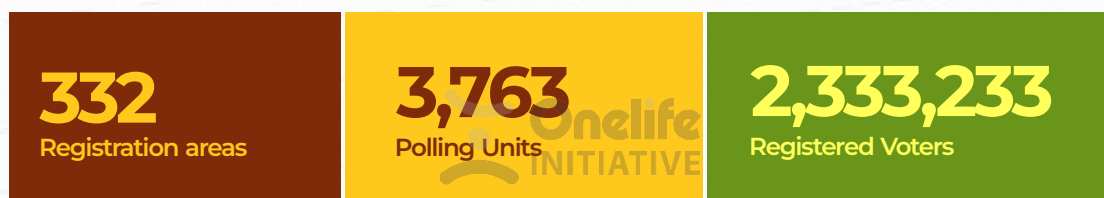
The August 15, 2026 Governorship Election in Osun State will be the 8th since the state's creation in 1991.



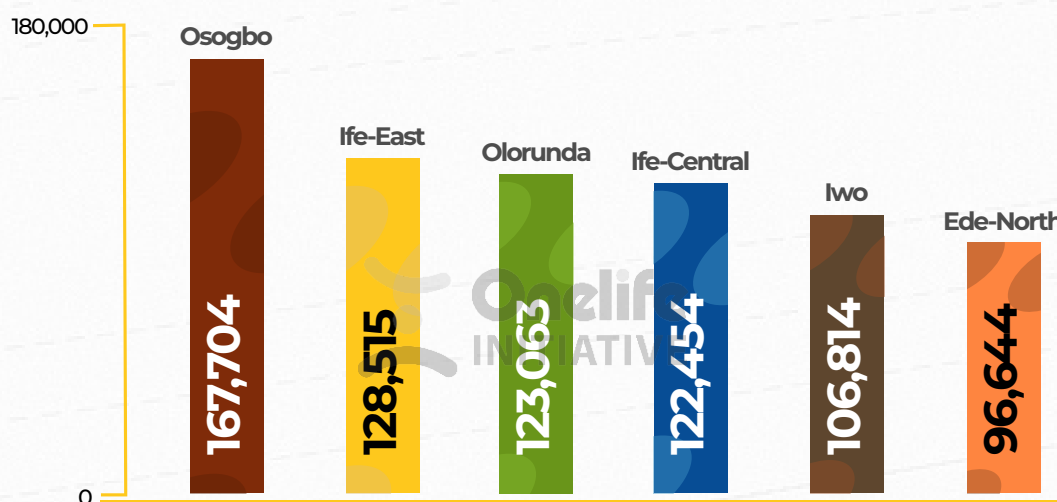
¹ Osun State Government, 'Our History' (Osun State Government)
<https://www.osunstate.gov.ng/our-history/>

This brief draws on the Independent National Electoral Commission's own public statements, its Resident Electoral Commissioner's press briefings, official candidate lists published through the Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, and reports from credible Nigerian news outlets.

The Independent National Electoral Commission disclosed that of the 332 registration areas and 3,763 polling units in the state's 30 local government areas, 2,333,233 voters in total are registered.²



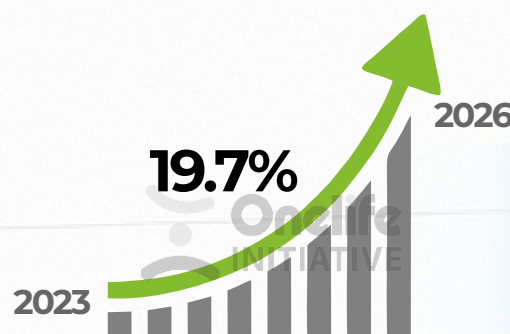
Osogbo Local Government with the highest number of registered voters, at 167,704, followed by Ife-East Local Government with 128,515 and Olorunda Local Government with 123,063. Ife-Central has 122,454 voters, Iwo has 106,814 voters, Ede-North has 96,644 voters.



Irewole and Ifelodun local governments have 96,528 and 94,870, respectively. Also, Ilesa-East and Ilesa-West follow with 89,491 and 86,699 voters with Oriade local government having 84,238 voters, and Odo-Otin and Boriipe local governments having 82,574 and 81,067 voters, respectively. The local governments with the three lowest registered voters are Ifedayo with 28,361, Boluwaduro with 29,797, and Atakumosa-West with 44,076.

In 2023, there were 1,954,800 registered voters.³ For the 2026 elections, there is a **19.7 percent increase**.

During the 2025/2026 Continuous Voter Registration exercise, 395,995 voters were registered in Osun State, 26,202 voters were transferred to Osun State and 7,125 voters were transferred out of Osun State.



² Shina Abubakar, 'Osun 2026: 2.33 million voters registered for governorship poll – INEC' Vanguard (9 July 2026) <Vanguard article> <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2026/07/osun-2026-2-33-million-voters-registered-for-governorship-poll-inec/>

³ Bola Bamigbola, 'Osun: INEC unveils 2.34m voter register, receives 95% non-sensitive materials' The Punch (10 July 2026) <https://punchng.com/osun-inec-unveils-2-34m-voter-register-receives-95-non-sensitive-lmaterials/>

WHO IS IN THE RING FOR THE 2026 ELECTIONS AND WHO HAS GLOVES ON?

PARTY	CANDIDATE	SEX	AGE	HIGHEST ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION	RUNNING MATE
	ADELEKE ADEMOLA JACKSON NURUDEEN	M	65	B.Sc	ADENUSI KOLA ADEGBOYEGA
	OLANREWAJU FARINLOYE	M	40	GCSE	FADAHUNSI OLANIYI
	ESAN OLAJIDE	M	39	B.Sc	BELLO MUIDEEN YEKEEN
	SALAAM NAJEEM FOLASAYO	M	60	Ph.D	AGIRI YEMISI TEMITOPE
	ADEAGBO OPAWOYE YEMISI	F	84	B.Ed	ATANDA ENIOLA BAPTUNDE
	OYEBAMIJI BOLA	M	60	HND	ADERETI BENJAMIN KAYODE
	ADEYEMI-DORO ADESINA OLUSANYA	M	39	B.Sc	DURO-ONI DURO IRIMENG
	ADEBAYO SIMON ADEWALE	M	41	MBA	JIMOH NAHEEM SHINA
	ADESUYI BANJI CLEMENT	M	69	B.Sc	ODESOLA OLUSEYE TITUS
	ADELEKE ADESOJI MASILO	M	65	Advanced Diploma	ARESA KEHINDE ADENIKE
	ADELEKE ADEWALE TAOFECK	M	52	FSLC	ADEYARA OLUWABUSAYO ADESHOLA
	SALIU RAZAQ OYELAMI	M	49	B.Sc	ADEWALE ALABI SOLOMON
	FRANCIS OLUGBENGA AJALA	M	-	-	FASEKE BABAJIMI OLADIPO
	OGUNSAKIN OLALEKAN ENOCH	M	37	B.Sc	OYETOLA TAYE
	ADESUYI JOHN OLUFEMI	M	50	PGD	ABDULSALAM ABUBAKAR OLAMIDE

Ages range from **37 to 84 years**. Adegabo Opaowo Yemisi of ACTION DEMOCRATIC PARTY (ADP) is the only female governorship candidate on the ballot.

Two candidates on the ballot paper for this year's election in Osun are PhD holders and there is another First School Leaving Certificate holder who believes he is a better fit for the leadership of the Abere, Bola Ige State Government secretariat.

Also, no candidate was listed with a disability. It's amazing to note that two of Osun's heavyweight parties are notably missing from the ballot. The **Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)** on whose platform Governor Adeleke won in 2022 did not present a candidate. Osun PDP chairman, Sunday Bisi, affirmed that the party is fully backing Adeleke's re-election under Accord.⁴ **Labour Party (LP)** is also not represented.

⁴ Timothy Agboh, 'Osun 2026: PDP shuns own candidate, adopts Accord Party's Adeleke' The Guardian (15 December 2025) <<https://guardian.ng/politics/osun-2026-pdp-shuns-own-candidate-adopts-accord-partys-adeleke/>>

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE CANDIDATES. THEY ARE ALL DANCING TO SOME TUNES



Born on 13 May 1960
Third Attempt
Incumbent Governor

ACCORD: Senator Ademola Jackson Nurudeen Adeleke

Senator Ademola Nurudeen Adeleke is the governorship candidate of the Accord Party for the 15 August 2026 Osun State governorship election. But first things first, he is Nigeria's most famous political dancer. Called Imole in informal circles, he has the advantage of having Davido as his nephew; hence, his campaigns are similar to concerts. If you ever visit Osun during this period, swing by any of his campaign grounds to witness this first-hand.

He is the **incumbent Governor of Osun State**, having assumed office on 27 November 2022 after defeating then-incumbent Governor Gboyega Oyetola in the 2022 governorship election.⁵

Born on 13 May 1960 in Enugu State, Adeleke is a native of Ede in Osun State and a member of the prominent Adeleke family. He is the younger brother of the late former Osun State Governor, Senator Isiaka Adeleke, and businessman Dr Adedeji Adeleke, and is the uncle of Afrobeats artiste, Davido. He attended schools in Lagos and Osun State before pursuing higher education in the United States, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice from Atlanta Metropolitan State College.

Before venturing into politics, Adeleke built a career in business and administration. He served as Executive Director of Guinness Nigeria Plc between 1992 and 1999, worked with Quicksilver Courier Company in Atlanta, became Vice President of Origin International LLC, and later served as Group Executive Director of Pacific Holdings Limited from 2001 to 2016.

Adeleke entered active politics in 2017 following the death of his elder brother, winning the Osun West Senatorial by-election and representing the district in the Senate from 2017 to 2019. He began his political career in the All Progressives Congress before defecting to the Peoples Democratic Party in 2017, under which he contested the 2018 governorship election and later won the 2022 governorship poll. After leaving the PDP in December 2025, he joined the Accord Party and emerged as its governorship candidate for the 2026 election.

His campaign focuses on **consolidating his administration's achievements in infrastructure, education, healthcare, social welfare, and economic development**, while promising continuity in governance and improved service delivery across Osun State.



⁵ Kazeem Kasali, 'Profile: Ademola Adeleke, Osun State Governor and Accord Party Governorship Candidate For Osun 2026' TVC News (3 August 2026) <https://www.tvcnews.tv/profile-ademola-adeleke-osun-state-governor-and-accord-party-governorship-candidate-for-osun-2026>



Born on 8 August 1965
Only PhD Holder
Former Speaker (OSHA)



ADC: Dr Najeem Folasayo Salaam (Iwaloye)

Dr. Najeem Folasayo Salaam, popularly known as **Iwaloye**, is the governorship candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) for the 15 August 2026 Osun State governorship election. A former Speaker of the Osun State House of Assembly, political scientist and public administrator, he is positioning himself as an alternative to the state's two dominant political parties.⁶

Born on 8 August 1965 in Ejigbo, Osun State, Salaam lost his father at the age of two and his mother at 10, after which he was raised by his maternal aunt. He attended Ansar-U-Deen Primary School and Baptist High School, both in Ejigbo, before proceeding to Obafemi Awolowo University, where he earned advanced degrees culminating in a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Political Science. He also co-authored *Rudiments of Government and Politics*, a textbook used by students of government and political science.

Salaam was elected Speaker of the 5th Osun State House of Assembly in 2011 and was re-elected in 2015, serving until 2018 as one of the state's longest-serving legislative leaders. He later chaired the Caretaker Committee of the Conference of Speakers of State Legislatures of Nigeria and served as Executive Director, Marketing and Business Development at Nigerian Communications Satellite Limited (NIGCOMSAT).

His campaign is built around a **10-point development agenda focusing on education, youth employment and empowerment, security, infrastructure renewal, economic growth, healthcare, agriculture, social welfare, good governance and institutional reforms**. He says the programme is aimed at delivering inclusive development and improving public service delivery across Osun State.



Sole Female Candidate
Oldest Candidate

ADP: Comrade Adeagbo-Opawoye Yemisi

Comrade Adeagbo-Opawoye Yemisi is the governorship candidate of the Action Democratic Party (ADP) for the 15 August 2026 Osun State governorship election. A retired teacher, veteran educator and community mentor, she is the **sole female candidate** in the 2026 Osun governorship race, positioning herself as a candidate offering an alternative based on ideas, integrity and public service.

At 84 years old, Adeagbo-Opawoye brings decades of experience in education and community development to the political arena. She holds a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree and spent much of her professional life as a teacher, where she was involved in educating and mentoring young people. Her transition from education into frontline partisan politics has

⁶ TVC News, '12 Facts About Dr Najeem Folasayo Salaam, ADC Osun 2026 Governorship Candidate' TVC News <https://www.tvcnews.tv/12-facts-about-dr-najeem-folasayo-salaam-adc-osun-2026-governorship-candidate/>



placed her among the candidates seeking to provide a different approach to governance in Osun State.

Adeagbo-Opawoye is contesting under the platform of the Action Democratic Party (ADP), which is also sometimes referred to as the African Democratic Party. Her candidacy received particular attention following her emergence as the only woman among the final list of candidates cleared by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the August 2026 election.

Her campaign philosophy emphasizes the importance of ideas, integrity and genuine public service over the influence of political machinery and elite structures. Drawing from her background as an educator and community mentor, she presents her candidacy as an effort to bring a service-oriented perspective to governance and to demonstrate that political leadership can be built around competence, character and a commitment to the people.



HND/MBA

Former Commissioner
for Finance

APC: Asiwaju Munirudeen Bola Oyebamiji (AMBO)

Munirudeen Bola Oyebamiji, popularly known as **AMBO**, is the governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress for the 15 August 2026 Osun State governorship election.⁷ Please read that again, it's AMBO, not RAMBO! The marine politician is making a case to steer the ship of Osun State. He knows the numbers. He knows the gaps. He is familiar with the books, whether Excel, Quickbooks or Sage.

A native of Ikire in Irewole Local Government Area, Oyebamiji has a professional background in banking and finance. He holds National Diploma and Higher National Diploma qualifications in Banking and Finance from The Polytechnic, Ibadan, as well as a Master's degree in Public Administration and an MBA. He is also a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria.

Before entering public service, Oyebamiji held management positions in commercial banks. His public sector experience includes serving as Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the Osun State Investment Company Limited (OSICOL), Commissioner for Finance under the administrations of former Governors Rauf Aregbesola and Gboyega Oyetola, Special Adviser in the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy, and Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the National Inland Waterways Authority before resigning in 2025 to contest the governorship election.

His campaign emphasises **economic management, fiscal discipline, job creation, business development, and governance reforms**, drawing on his experience in banking and public administration.



⁷ Kazeem Kasali, '12 Things To Know About Bola Oyebamiji, APC Candidate In the Osun Gov. Election' TVC News (4 August 2026) <https://www.tvcnews.tv/12-things-to-know-about-bola-oyebamiji-apc-candidate-in-the-osun-gov-election/>



Born on 21 June 1986

Private Sector
Experience

APGA: Prince Adesina Olusanya Adeyemi-Doro

Prince Adesina Olusanya Adeyemi-Doro is the governorship candidate of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) for the 15 August 2026 Osun State governorship election. A psychologist, entrepreneur and member of the Onigbo Ruling House of Otan-Ayegbaju, he is presenting himself as a new-generation leader with a background in healthcare, business development and human capital management.⁸

Born on 21 June 1986 in Lagos, Adeyemi-Doro hails from the Onigbo Ruling House of Otan-Ayegbaju in Osun State. He is the grandson of Pa (Prince) Peter Ogundoro Adeyemi, an early educated civil servant, and the son of the late Professor (Prince) Henry Olusanya Adeyemi-Doro, a surgeon and philanthropist. He holds a Master's degree in Industrial and Labour Relations from the University of Lagos and has obtained several professional certifications.

His professional career spans healthcare management, insurance, business development and human capital administration. He has held roles at Hygeia HMO, Redcare HMO and Africa InsurTech Lab, where he worked on healthcare administration, policy development, enterprise growth and cross-sector partnerships. His experience also includes initiatives focused on youth empowerment, small and medium-sized enterprises, and economic development.

His campaign is centred on the theme of building a **"Stronger Osun" through investments in quality education, accessible healthcare, agricultural development and inclusive economic growth**. He says his administration would prioritise people-centred governance, job creation, sustainable development and shared prosperity across Osun State.

⁸ '12 Facts About Dr Najeem Folasayo Salaam, ADC Osun 2026 Governorship Candidate' TVC News
<https://www.tvcnews.tv/12-facts-about-dr-najeem-folasayo-salaam-adc-osun-2026-governorship-candidate>

BOLA IGE HOUSE: WHO'S NEXT?

As the D-day draws near, attention is focused on Bola Ige House, the seat of executive power in the state. Since its creation in 1991, Osun has been governed by a mix of military administrators and democratically elected governors, reflecting Nigeria's transition from military rule to constitutional democracy.⁹

Military Administration (1991–1999)

Leo Segun Ajiborisha (1991–1992)

Brigadier Leo Segun Ajiborisha became the first Military Administrator of Osun State following its creation on 27 August 1991 by the military government of General Ibrahim Babangida. He laid the administrative foundations of the new state.



Isiaka Adetunji Adeleke (1992–1993)

Following the transition to the Third Republic, Isiaka Adeleke became Osun State's first democratically elected governor on the platform of the Social Democratic Party (SDP). His tenure was cut short by the military coup led by General Sani Abacha in November 1993.



Anthony Udofia (1993–1994)

Following the dissolution of democratic institutions, Colonel Anthony Udofia was appointed Military Administrator by General Sani Abacha to oversee the state's affairs.



Anthony Obi (1994–1996)

Colonel Anthony Obi succeeded Udofia and continued military administration during Abacha's regime.



Theophilus Bamigboye (1996–1998)

Colonel Theophilus Bamigboye became the final Military Administrator of Osun State serving through the final years of military rule until Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 under General Abdulsalami Abubakar.



Democratic Era (Fourth Republic)

Bisi Akande (1999–2003)

Chief Bisi Akande of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) became the first civilian governor of Osun State under the Fourth Republic. His administration prioritised public sector reforms, fiscal discipline, and education.



Olagunsoye Oyinlola (2003–2010)

Elected on the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola focused on infrastructure development and agricultural initiatives. His tenure ended following a court ruling that declared the 2007 governorship election invalid.



Rauf Aregbesola (2010–2018)

Following the judgment of the Court of Appeal, Rauf Aregbesola of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) assumed office in November 2010. ACN later merged into the All Progressives Congress (APC). His administration was marked by education reforms, road construction, and social intervention programmes.



Gboyega Oyetola (2018–2022)

Elected on the APC platform, Gboyega Oyetola emphasised continuity in governance, infrastructure expansion, fiscal prudence, and investment promotion during his four-year tenure.



Ademola Adeleke (2022–2026)

Senator Ademola Adeleke was elected governor under the PDP in the 16 July 2022 governorship election, defeating incumbent Governor Gboyega Oyetola. Sworn into office on 27 November 2022, Adeleke secured 403,371 votes against Oyetola's 375,027, winning a majority of the state's Local Government Areas. He defected to Accord in 2025. His administration has focused on infrastructure renewal, public sector reforms, and social welfare initiatives.



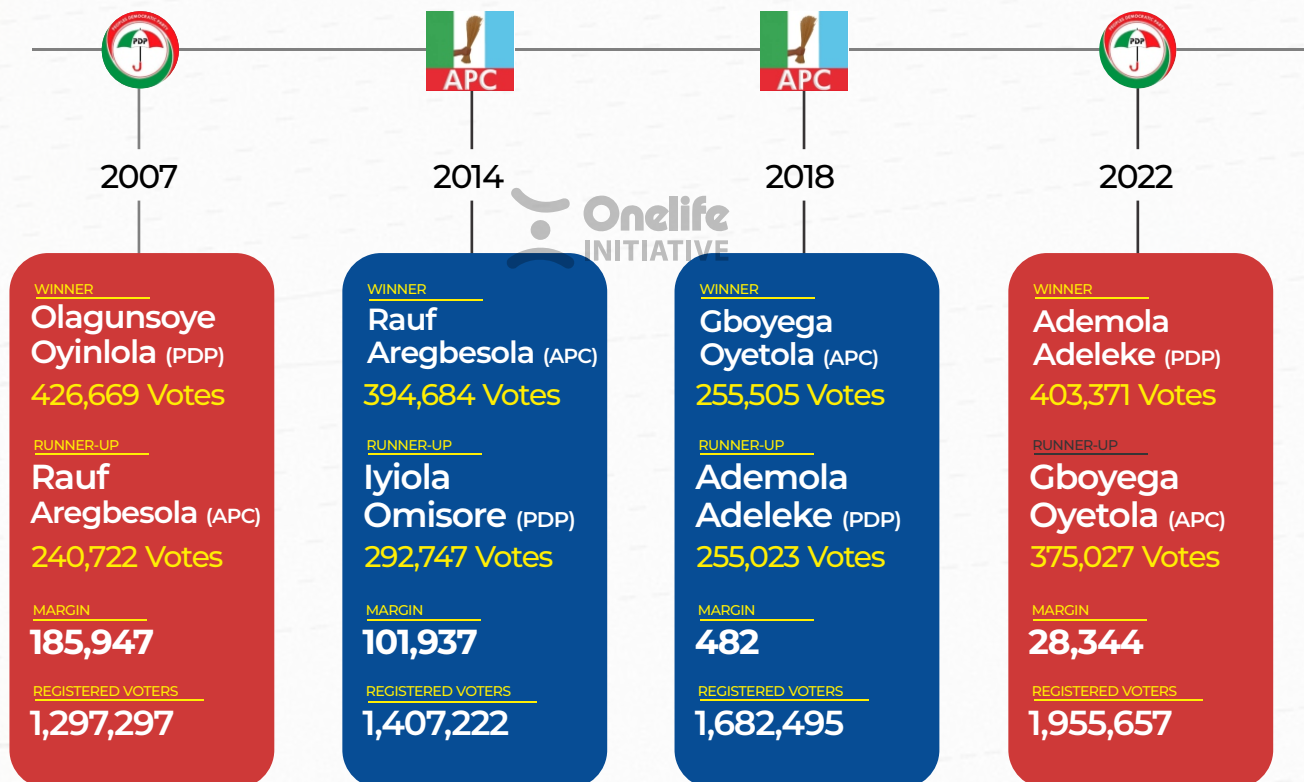
???(2026–2030)

There are three major contenders. One of them will likely win the election. How this election is perceived as free and fair will be a litmus test for the 2027 general elections.

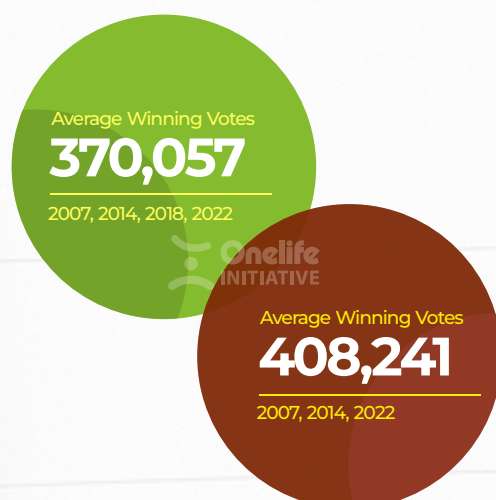


⁹ Osun State Government, 'Our History' (Osun State Government) <https://www.osunstate.gov.ng/our-history/>

THE WINNING PATTERN OF OSUN GOVERNORSHIP ELECTIONS



Historical voting patterns in Osun State suggest that the 2026 governorship election is likely to remain highly competitive. The 2018 governorship election, which comprised the main poll conducted on 22 September and the rerun held on 27 September, produced an exceptionally close and contested outcome. Although Senator Ademola Adeleke was initially declared winner by the Election Petition Tribunal in March 2019, the Supreme Court subsequently affirmed Gboyega Oyetola as the duly elected governor on 5 July 2019. Given its unique circumstances and prolonged judicial resolution, the 2018 election represents a statistical outlier when compared with the other governorship contests conducted during the Fourth Republic.

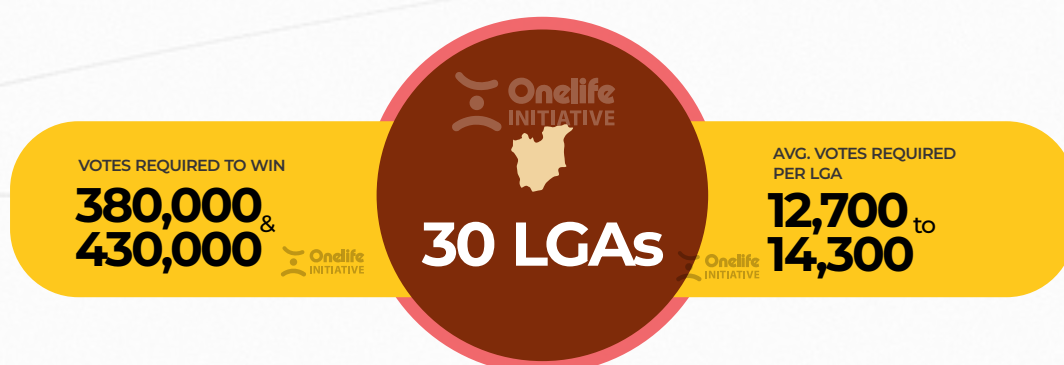


Across the four governorship elections held between 2007 and 2022, the average winning vote stands at approximately **370,057 votes**. However, excluding the anomalous 2018 contest, the average winning total for the three elections that produced clear outcomes (2007, 2014 and 2022) increases to approximately **408,241 votes**, providing a more representative benchmark of the level of electoral support historically required to secure victory in Osun State.

Looking ahead to 2026, several factors suggest that the winning threshold could increase modestly. First, the state's voter register has expanded by approximately **19.7 percent** since the last governorship election, enlarging the pool of eligible voters. Second, **15 political parties** have fielded candidates for the election, creating a broader electoral field than initially anticipated. While this could result in some degree of vote dispersion, historical voting patterns in Osun State suggest that governorship elections are predominantly shaped by the leading political parties, with smaller parties often exerting only marginal influence on the overall outcome. Consequently, although the larger number of contestants may slightly dilute votes in some localities, the winning threshold is still expected to be determined primarily by the ability of the major contenders to consolidate support, maximise voter turnout in their strongholds, and remain competitive in key battleground Local Government Areas.



It is trite law that the winning candidate must secure the majority of the vote and at least 25% of the vote in two thirds of the LGAs. Based on these historical trends and prevailing electoral dynamics, this brief projects that the eventual winner of the 2026 Osun State governorship election is likely to require **between 380,000 and 430,000 votes** to secure victory. This is equivalent to an average of approximately **12,700 to 14,300 votes per Local Government Area** across the state's 30 LGAs, although actual vote distribution will vary considerably depending on demographic composition, party strongholds, and turnout patterns.



Notwithstanding this projection, voter turnout remains the principal variable that could influence the final outcome. Osun State has consistently recorded turnout below 50 percent in recent governorship elections, even in closely contested races. Unless there is a significant increase in voter mobilisation and participation, the winning vote total is expected to remain within the projected range, making effective grassroots organisation, voter turnout operations, and strategic mobilisation in key battleground LGAs decisive factors in determining the outcome of the 2026 election.

ZONING AND VOTING BLOCS: ANY EFFECT?



The Osun State 2026 governorship election is likely to be shaped less by statewide sentiment alone than by the mobilisation of key geographic and demographic voting blocs. Historically, governorship elections in the state have been decided by a combination of candidate appeal, party organisation, regional identity, incumbency, and the ability to consolidate support in high-turnout local government areas.¹⁰

Since the state's creation in 1991, the governorship has rotated across Osun's three senatorial districts without a formal zoning arrangement. Governors have emerged from Osun West (Isiaka Adeleke and Ademola Adeleke), Osun Central (Olagunsoye Oyinlola and Gboyega Oyetola), and Osun East (Rauf Aregbesola). While this reflects a broad regional spread, political discourse ahead of the 2026 election has increasingly focused on whether specific federal constituencies or sub-ethnic groups that have yet to produce a governor may seek greater political representation.

Ile-Ife: A Potential Decisive Bloc



Among the constituencies attracting the greatest attention is Ile-Ife Federal Constituency, comprising Ife East, Ife Central, Ife North, and Ife South Local Government Areas. With one of the state's largest concentrations of registered voters, Ile-Ife has historically played a pivotal role in determining election outcomes by providing substantial vote margins to successful candidates across party lines.

It is important to note that the constituency contributed significantly to the victories of Isiaka Adeleke in 1992, Bisi Akande in 1999, and Olagunsoye Oyinlola in both 2003 and 2007. It also served as the principal electoral base of former deputy governor and governorship candidate Iyiola Omisore during his campaigns in 2014 and 2018.

A recurring argument within sections of the political class is that, despite its electoral significance and historical status as the cradle of Yoruba civilisation, Ile-Ife has never produced a governor since Osun State was created. Some observers suggest that nominating a candidate from the constituency could strengthen voter mobilisation within Osun East while appealing to broader sentiments of political inclusion. Whether this translates into electoral advantage, however, will depend on candidate popularity, party cohesion, campaign dynamics, and voting behaviour beyond the constituency itself.

¹⁰ Akinsanmi Akinyemi, 'Osun 2026: Beyond Zoning Lies Victory' Punch (22 September 2025) <https://punchng.com/osun-2026-beyond-zoning-lies-victory/>

Ede: The Incumbent's Electoral Stronghold



Ede North and Ede South Local Government Areas remain one of the most reliable electoral bases for the incumbent governor, having secured an overwhelming majority of votes from his home constituency, in the 2022 governorship election, providing a substantial foundation for his statewide victory.

For opposition parties, reducing the incumbent's margin in Ede or compensating for it through stronger performances elsewhere may be critical to mounting a competitive challenge.

Osogbo: A Competitive Urban Centre



As the state capital and administrative hub, Osogbo represents one of the largest voting centres in Osun. However, unlike Ede or parts of Ile-Ife, the city has increasingly emerged as a competitive electoral battleground rather than a dependable stronghold for either major party.

Its electorate, which includes a significant concentration of civil servants, professionals, and urban voters, has historically produced relatively narrow victory margins. Consequently, while Osogbo contributes substantially to the statewide vote total, it is unlikely to determine the election independently unless accompanied by decisive shifts in other key constituencies.

Beyond Regional Identity

Although discussions around zoning, sub-ethnic representation, and historical patterns continue to shape political narratives, these factors alone are unlikely to determine the outcome of the Osun 2026 election. Electoral success will also depend on incumbency performance, party unity, candidate credibility, grassroots mobilisation, voter turnout, and the effectiveness of campaign organisation across the state's 30 Local Government Areas.

Ultimately, the 2026 governorship election is expected to hinge on whether the incumbent can retain his established support base while expanding into competitive constituencies, or whether the oppositions can assemble a broader coalition by consolidating support in traditional strongholds, improving their performance in swing areas such as Osogbo, and maximising turnout in high-population blocs, particularly Ile-Ife. The interaction of these electoral blocs, rather than any single regional factor, is likely to determine who next occupies Bola Ige House.

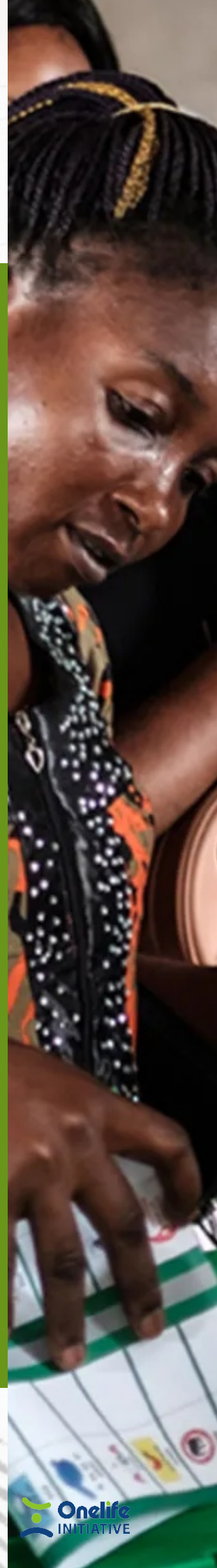
POLITICAL TWISTS AND TURNS

The All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) governorship candidate in Osun State, Adesina Adeyemi-Doro, has withdrawn from the 15 August 2026 governorship election and endorsed the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate, Bola Oyebamiji.

Adeyemi-Doro announced the decision in Osogbo on Saturday 8th August 2026 following consultations with the APGA state leadership and other senior party officials. He said his decision followed an assessment of the candidates and was based on what he described as a shared progressive orientation between his political platform and Oyebamiji's campaign. Although Adeyemi-Doro has withdrawn his support from his own candidacy, his withdrawal does not necessarily remove his name or APGA from the ballot. The official window for candidate withdrawal has closed and ballot papers have already been printed by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The practical electoral significance of the move will therefore depend on the extent to which his supporters and political network transfer their support to Oyebamiji on election day.

Similarly, on 9th August 2026, a faction of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Osun State, led by former Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola and aligned with the Saminu Turaki-led faction of the party, has endorsed the All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship candidate, Bola Oyebamiji (AMBO), ahead of Saturday's governorship election.

The group mobilised members and supporters from across the state's local government areas to publicly declare its support for Oyebamiji. Oyinlola said the faction remained affiliated with the PDP but had chosen to back the APC candidate in what he described as the broader interest of Osun State. The endorsement represents a notable intra-party development ahead of the poll, potentially strengthening Oyebamiji's support base while highlighting divisions within the opposition PDP.

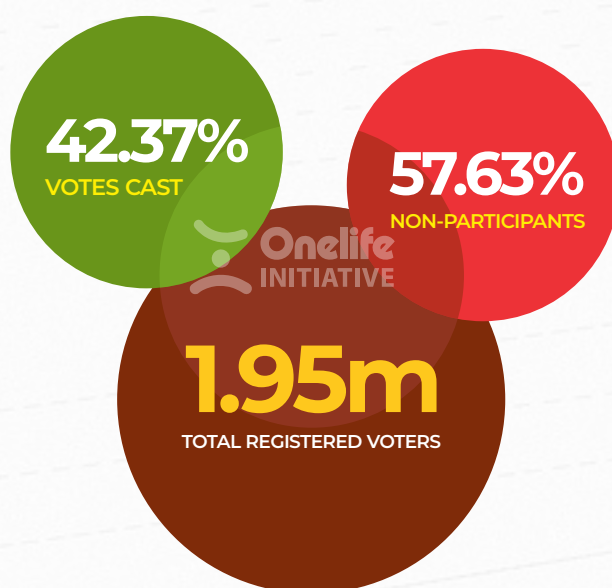


¹¹ Abubakar Abdulrasheed, 'APGA candidate withdraws from Osun election, backs APC's Oyebamiji' Premium Times (8 August 2026) <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/901589-apga-candidate-withdraws-from-osun-election-backs-apcs-oyebamiji.html>

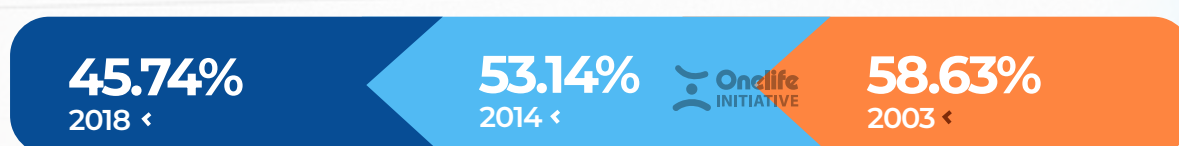
VOTER APATHY



Voter turnout remains a significant concern in Osun State and reflects a broader challenge confronting electoral participation in Nigeria. Official results released by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) indicate that **804,450 voters** cast ballots in the 2022 Osun State gubernatorial election out of approximately **1.95 million registered voters**. This translates to a voter turnout of **about 42.37%**, meaning that nearly **57.63%** of registered voters did not participate in the electoral process.¹²



Although the election was widely regarded as competitive and largely peaceful, the relatively low turnout underscores persistent voter apathy despite improvements in electoral technology and administration. When compared with previous gubernatorial elections in the state, the decline in voter participation becomes more pronounced. Voter turnout stood at approximately **45.74% in 2018**, **53.14% in 2014**, and **58.63% in 2003**, indicating a gradual but consistent downward trend in electoral participation over the past two decades, and raises important questions about the health of democratic engagement in the state. The forthcoming election with **2.33 million registered voters** presents an important opportunity to assess whether recent electoral reforms, particularly those introduced under the Electoral Act 2026, can reverse this trend.



¹² International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA Nigeria), Report of the Osun State Governorship 2022 Election (2022) <https://fida.org.ng/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Osun-Election-Report-1.pdf>

IMPACT OF POLITICAL PARTY AGENTS AT POLLING UNITS



The presence and conduct of political party agents remain a critical component of electoral transparency and accountability at the polling unit level. Findings from the 2022 election observation indicated a robust presence of party agents across polling units, reflecting the keen interest of political parties in monitoring the voting and result management processes.¹³

Observation data showed that **48%** of the polling units monitored had **more than three (3) political party agents** present, while **44%** had **three (3) party agents** in attendance. The remaining **8%** of polling units **had two (2) party agents** present during the electoral process. The widespread deployment of party agents across polling units contributed to enhanced oversight of election-day activities and increased stakeholder confidence in the integrity of the process.

For the forthcoming Osun State gubernatorial election, the continued presence of accredited party agents, coupled with strict adherence to the provisions of the Electoral Act and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Guidelines, will remain essential to promoting transparency, minimizing disputes, and strengthening public confidence in the electoral process. Political parties and strengthening public confidence in the electoral process. Political parties should therefore continue to ensure that **only properly trained, accredited and well-behaved agents** are deployed, while emphasizing compliance with electoral regulations and constructive engagement throughout the election period.

BVAS AND TECHNICAL GLITCHES?

Ahead of the Osun State governorship election, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) conducted a mock voter accreditation exercise on 1st August 2026 across 12 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the state's three senatorial districts to assess operational readiness and test the functionality of its Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS). The exercise was disrupted shortly after a delayed commencement when BVAS devices at several designated polling

3,763

DESIGNATED

1,328

BACKUP



¹³ Ibid

units reportedly failed to authenticate voters' fingerprints, facial recognition data, and Permanent Voter Card (PVC) details. The malfunction brought the accreditation process to a halt in the affected locations, raising concerns about the reliability of the technology ahead of election day.

The incident is significant because technical failures during a controlled pre-election test may undermine public confidence in the integrity and credibility of the electoral process. While INEC stated that all **3,763 BVAS devices** designated for the election had been

successfully configured and that an additional **1,328 backup machines** had been deployed as contingency measures, the glitches are expected to intensify scrutiny of the Commission's operational preparedness.

Political parties, domestic and international election observers, and other stakeholders are likely to closely monitor INEC's response to these technical challenges and the effectiveness of any corrective measures implemented before polling day, as the Commission seeks to reassure voters of the robustness and reliability of its electoral technology.



RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

Informal engagements with three residents of Osun State—one from Osogbo Local Government Area, one from Egbedore Local Government Area and another from Ilesa East Local Government Area—provided limited but useful insights into voter perceptions ahead of the 15 August 2026 governorship election.

LAJI, OSOGBO RESIDENT

Laji, a youth resident in Osogbo, expressed that most of the people within his immediate social and community circle appear to support a singular candidate. Laji also identified market women and civil servants as potentially influential voting blocs, suggesting that their political preferences could have a significant bearing on the outcome.

Laji further expressed concern about what he described as repeated defacement and damage to campaign billboards of some candidates. He interpreted this as a possible

attempt to undermine visibility and influence among voters. He also referred to what he perceives as instances of political interference. He, however, regretted his inability to vote, as he has his PVC registered in another state.

SODIQ, LAW STUDENT, EGBEDORE LGA

Sodiq, a law student resident in Egbedore Local Government Area, similarly expressed strong support for one of the contestants. He described himself as a committed supporter of the candidate and confirmed that he intends to use his PVC to show this on Saturday, 15th August.

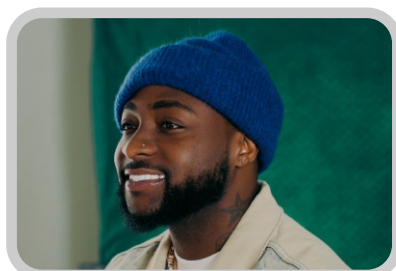
BISOLA, TRADER, ILESA EAST LGA

Bisola, a clothing-material trader and resident of Ilesa East Local Government Area, has lived in Osun State since 2025. She confirmed that she holds a Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) and

intends to participate in the August 15 governorship election.

Bisola expressed support for her preferred candidate based on his past. Security, however, remains a significant concern for her. She reported recurring clashes involving cult groups, resulting in deaths, as well as persistent incidents of kidnapping. She identified improved security as an area requiring greater attention for any candidate who wins. She identified Osogbo, Ilesa and Ile-

ife as areas she considers particularly important to the outcome of the election, reflecting her perception that voting patterns in the state's major urban centres could significantly influence the final result.



DAVIDO'S APPEAL FOR PEACEFUL PARTICIPATION

Nigerian afrobeats artist and superstar, David Adeleke, popularly known as Davido, who is a nephew of the incumbent Governor Ademola Adeleke, publicly appealed to residents of Osun State to participate peacefully in the governorship election.¹⁴

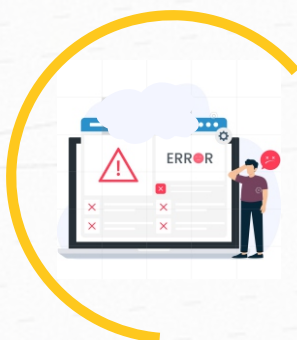
Davido, who spoke at a youth campaign mobilisation event in Osogbo, urged voters to reject violence, intimidation, provocation, and destruction. He encouraged eligible voters to exercise their right to vote freely and emphasised that every voter's choice should be respected.

Davido also appealed to political actors and their supporters to allow the electoral process to proceed peacefully and to respect the will of the electorate, regardless of the outcome. He stressed that no political ambition is worth the loss of lives or destruction of property and called for Osun State to remain peaceful throughout the election period.

¹⁴ David Bolarinwa, 'Davido Urges Peace Ahead of Osun Poll, Backs Adeleke's Re-election Bid' TVC News (5 August 2026) <https://www.tvcnews.tv/davido-urges-peace-ahead-of-osun-poll-backs-adelekes-re-election-bid>

RECOMMENDATIONS

The credibility of the 2026 Osun State Governorship Election will depend on the collective commitment of electoral stakeholders to a peaceful, transparent, and inclusive process.



The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should prioritise resolving all technical issues identified during the mock accreditation exercise before election day. Additional testing of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), adequate deployment of backup devices, timely distribution of election materials, and transparent communication with political parties, observers, and the public will be critical to strengthening confidence in the electoral process. INEC should also ensure the prompt publication of polling unit and Local Government Area-level data on voter registration, accreditation, and election results through established transparency mechanisms, enabling independent verification and reducing post-election disputes.



Given the addition of nearly 384,000 new voters since the 2023 register, particularly in high-growth Local Government Areas such as Osogbo, Ife East, and Olorunda, voter education efforts should be intensified. Particular attention should be paid to first-time voters and to explaining ballot choices in light of the absence of some parties from the 2026 ballot despite the informal support of some of their structures for another political platform. Clear voter information will help minimise confusion, reduce invalid ballots, and improve the credibility of the electoral process.



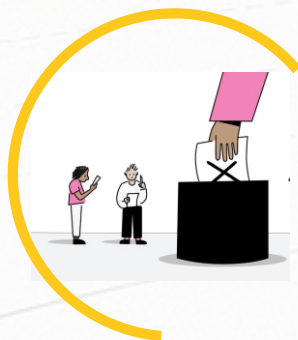
Political parties and candidates should continue to conduct peaceful, issue-based campaigns focused on governance, economic development, public service delivery, education, healthcare, and infrastructure. They should refrain from inflammatory rhetoric, misinformation, hate speech, or identity-based mobilisation that could heighten tensions. Parties should also train their polling agents adequately, respect the independence of electoral institutions, and commit to resolving any electoral grievances through lawful constitutional and judicial processes.



Security agencies have a critical responsibility to maintain a safe environment for voters, election officials, political parties, observers, and journalists. While enhanced deployment in identified flashpoint Local Government Areas may be necessary to deter electoral violence, security operations should remain visibly professional, impartial, and proportionate. Maintaining neutrality throughout the electoral process will be essential to preserving public trust and preventing perceptions of political interference.



Voters also have an important role in safeguarding the integrity of the election. They should participate peacefully, reject vote-buying and other forms of electoral malpractice, verify their polling information ahead of election day, and report incidents of intimidation or violence through appropriate channels. Acceptance of officially declared results, alongside the use of established legal mechanisms to challenge disputed outcomes, will contribute to political stability and democratic consolidation.



Domestic and international election observers should maintain broad geographic coverage across both urban and rural constituencies, with particular attention to historically competitive and high-risk Local Government Areas. Observation efforts should extend beyond polling day to include campaign activities, voter education, media access, electoral technology, and the collation process. Given the technical challenges recorded during the mock accreditation exercise, particular attention should be paid to the functionality of BVAS and the timely upload of polling unit results to the INEC Result Viewing (IReV) portal. Observer reports should remain timely, evidence-based, and clearly distinguish between procedural shortcomings and issues that materially affect the integrity of the election.

Plan to Contest in 2030?

Mobilise, Do Not Agonise!

Under Nigeria's current constitutional framework, the minimum age for contesting the State House of Assembly and House of Representatives is 25 years, while the minimum age for the Senate is 30 years. **The minimum age for contesting the office of Governor or President is 35 years.**¹⁵ These age thresholds provide young Nigerians with several possible entry points into elective politics and make it possible to begin building political experience long before seeking the highest offices.

A more sustainable pathway may begin with community leadership, ward-level participation and local government engagement before progressing to the State House of Assembly or governorship. The years before an election provides for you an opportunity to build a record of community service, identify problems in your wards and Local Government Areas, develop practical policy ideas and cultivate relationships across communities. It is also the period in which you can learn how political parties operate, understand electoral laws and procedures, develop competent campaign teams and establish a reputation based on service rather than political promises.

13,000 votes per LGA sounds large when viewed from the state level, but becomes more manageable when broken down into wards, communities and polling units. The objective is not to “find” 390,000 votes at the end of the campaign; it is to build 1,300 committed hearts per ward through 30



functioning LGA-level political structures capable of earning approximately 13,000 votes each through sustained community engagement, credible candidates, voter education and a clear programme of government. It's about being quiet but strategic. It's about being intentional. It is a marathon and not a sprint. It's about mobilising and not agonising. If you are under 35, and you are interested in contesting elections, you can reach out to benefit from our pro bono consultations

The 2029/2030 election cycle should consequently be viewed not simply as another electoral event, but as a preparation window for a new generation of political leaders. The future candidate should start with service, build credibility, understand the law, develop a constituency and then seek office. The future candidate is you!

¹⁵ PLAC, 'President Buhari Signs Constitutional Bill Seeking To Reduce Age Qualification Into Elective Offices Into Law' (31 May 2018) <https://placng.org/l/president-buhari-signs-constitutional-bill-seeking-to-reduce-age-qualification-into-elective-offices-into-law/>

About **Onelife Initiative**

Onelife Initiative is a youth-serving, non-partisan, non-governmental organisation actively providing and connecting young people with information, services and resources needed to thrive and build a resilient society. We prioritise policy advocacy and promote gender and social inclusion across our thematic areas.

Our vision is a world of valued, informed and resourced young people driving sustainable change. Through our thematic area of Governance and Civic Engagement, we deploy civic education and actions, and support young people to actively contribute to local governance and policy reforms that promise electoral participation, peaceful co-existence and quality leadership.

Our other thematic areas of operation include Inclusive Education, Agribusiness and Enterprise Development, and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

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