

Navigating Nigeria's Political Journey:

A Gen Z Guide to Elections in the Fourth Republic

1999-2023



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About us



Citizen was originally a category under Zikoko, a Nigerian youth publication.

Citizen's WhatsApp Community

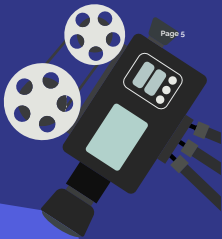


Zikoko Citizen (often called Citizen) is on a mission to help every young Nigerian—in Nigeria and abroad—understand politics, policy, and governance and equip them to take action. It is a web and social media-based organisation that provides news analysis to Nigeria's Gen Z and millennial population in places where they reside, like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Tiktok.

Citizen was originally a category under Zikoko, a Nigerian youth publication. Some of its earliest flagships from 2018–2019 include Get Your PVC, Game of Votes (a newsletter), and Politically Correct, a video interview series on YouTube. In 2020, to further drive growth in the category and help citizens stay on top of the news, we created formats such as 'Everything you need to know' and comical social posts—both snackable and SEO-compliant content—whose popularity branded Zikoko as politically conscious.

At the end of 2020, the category grew radically due to the End SARs (anti-police brutality) protests in Nigeria, which the team covered extensively. We built a tool to help protesters across the world discover protest locations and content to spur the audience to action. This was one of the most defining moments in Citizen's history. The category (and Zikoko) was credited with being honest and trustworthy. We told the news without being partisan. We informed our audience of the things they needed to know to take action. We made the news and political analysis simple enough for the audience to follow.

This became our defining principle. It's the thing we stand by, and what led to the birth of Citizen **as a standalone publication in 2022**. It informs the content we create and how we create it.



Election Coverage

Election Coverage



Between January 2 and March 22, 2023, Zikoko Citizen covered Nigeria's presidential and national assembly elections (February 25), and the governorship and state assembly elections (March 18).

Our coverage included fact-checks, updates from polling units across the country, and results updates, among other important information. We hosted our coverage on our [election tracker page](#), which was viewed over 30,000 times by our youthful audience.

Additionally, we used our WhatsApp community — the Citizens Situation Room— to monitor events nationwide and work with young election debutants to provide updates across their various polling units.

Our coverage extended beyond the result page to include analysis, explainers, and multimedia productions to guide young voters through the voting period. We gathered over **five million** views across the web and social media, indicating that, unlike the general misconception, young people—who constitute our audience—were very interested in politics if they had a platform to explain it to them.

As a post-election responsibility to this community of young people, Citizen has created an election report handbook to help first-time voters understand Nigeria's fourth republic elections and the promise that our political future holds.

Editorial Masthead



Editorial Masthead



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An illustration on a dark blue background showing a pair of dark brown hands. The right hand holds a blue and white marker, writing the word "Foreword" in large, bold, black letters on a white document. The left hand rests on the bottom left of the document. The document is slightly tilted and has a folded top-right corner. The person's white shirt cuff is visible at the bottom right.

Foreword

Foreword



When I was in primary school, a teacher told us on the assembly ground that we were mandated to hold our right palm against our left chest while reciting the national pledge.

He explained at the time that it was a sign of solidarity and respect for the country—a citizen's way of showing that the oath of allegiance was taken seriously. I thought it was silly, but in every part of Nigeria I visited as a child, all the adults replicated the instruction. So, I held my hand to my chest, and pledged to Nigeria, my country, to be faithful, loyal, and honest. I promised I would serve Nigeria with all my strength and defend our unity. Even though I didn't know what it meant, I swore to uphold our honour and glory and begged God to help me.

The pledge to Nigeria would get me into trouble in Senior Secondary School 1 (SS1). At Government College Ibadan, our assembly had two segments, separated by reciting the national anthem and pledge.

You were early if you got to the assembly ground before the anthem. If you got there after, you were late. That morning, I got there exactly when the anthem was starting. As expected, I stood still—for God and country—until the anthem recitation was done.

Other students around me ran to join the assembly to avoid being punished

for coming late. I stayed to complete the rite: hand to my chest as I recited the pledge.

A dissatisfied teacher who had seen several students running during the anthem recitation and before the pledge was done poured his frustration on me. I was beaten on the assembly ground as he explained that Nigeria was bigger than me.

To be Nigerian means to be punctual. To be respectful of my — and other people's — time. And when I fail in that duty, I should silently sit with the shame and punishment of my failure. So, in 2018, when I attended an event in Kwara state, where the deputy governor was the chairperson of the occasion, I protested in a way that was satisfactory to me.

The deputy governor had arrived late, and the event had to be redeclared open upon his arrival. The event's attendees recited the anthem a second time for his sake.

I sat on my chair, refusing to join the choir of heads in respecting a person who did not respect the time of other Nigerians. It was a subtle yet satisfactory protest.

But sometimes our objections are not always subtle or satisfactory. The anti-police brutality End SARS protests of 2020 are an example of that.

To protest, nonetheless, one must know the forms available to them: to exist within the law while challenging it, to question authority while retaining power, to hold our palms to our chest and uphold our honour and glory. And so help us, God, to speak truth to power until we no longer have to shout but dialogue.

Our gift today from Zikoko Citizen to the millions of young Nigerians protesting bad governance is this little document that tells them why they should hold their hand to their chest and when it is advisable to sit down.

In this gift, we introduce you to Nigeria's Fourth Republic and how it started in 1999. While the country was hopeful that a transition to democracy would be peaceful and tranquil, **the Bullet or the Ballot** examines the history of violence that has pervaded that promise. However, we believe there is some hope. In **Power to the People**, we show you how the gun masters are starting to leave our democracy, although guns are still around. While we are still a long way from our promised land, the history of Nigeria's electoral reforms and the promise of a digital system tells us where we might yet be.

But to get there, no person must be left behind. Hence, it was important to ask **Who can participate in Nigeria's elections**, to remind ourselves why inclusion is essential.

In the end, the future of any nation depends on its youth and that's why in **We the Youths**, we remind ourselves that we must not be deterred from doing what's right for God and country.

We will not tell you who to vote for in any election. Still, we believe you deserve to know how voting has changed since 1999 so that when you see politicians, you know who deserves to stand beside you as you hold your hand to your chest and who does not deserve to have the event restarted in their name.

We implore you to invite your friends, colleagues, family, and acquaintances to participate in this summary understanding of the fourth republic of Nigeria and collectively observe the people capable of pledging to Nigeria's future and meaning it and those who demand that we restart events for their sake.

Welcome to the Fourth Republic; this is your guide.

Muhammed Akinyemi,

**Editor in Chief,
Zikoko Citizen.**

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It's Mr Fourth Republic

It's Mr. Fourth Republic



Nigeria's story isn't long, at least in relation to the leading countries in the world with great economic output and wealth. But in that short period of its existence, Nigeria has gathered enough drama to eclipse some other African countries we may compare it with. Ethnicity, corruption, military rule, recessions: Nigeria has proven, for the most part, to be the coat of many colours of suffering. The most dramatic period in Nigerian history is, undoubtedly, during an election. And Nigeria has had a history of many troubled ones. But before we get into that, let's take a look at Nigeria's history as a Federal Republic.

How many General elections have been held since 1999?

A republic is a state where the ultimate political powers reside with the people and their elected representatives. Such a state has a president and not a monarch, or in our case, not a military dictator. While Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the country became a republic in 1963. You may ask, why not immediately after independence? Well, at the time, the British monarch remained the titular head of state. The adoption of a new constitution in 1963 ushered in a new era.

Since then, Nigeria has had four republics. These are periods when the citizens elected their rulers. The First Republic lasted from 1963 to 1966, followed by the Second Republic from 1979 to 1983, and the Third Republic from 1992 to 1993. Military regimes abruptly ended all three Republics, and the Fourth Republic, which commenced in 1999, is ongoing.

FIRST REPUBLIC:

President - Nnamdi Azikiwe (1963-1966)

Prime Minister - Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (1963-1966)

SECOND REPUBLIC:

President - Shehu Shagari (1979-1983)

Vice President - Alex Ifeanyichukwu Ekwueme (1979-1983)

THIRD REPUBLIC:

President - Ernest Shonekan (August-November 1993)

FOURTH REPUBLIC:

Presidents - Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2003), Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007-2010), Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015), Muhammadu Buhari (2015-2023), Bola Ahmed Tinubu (2023)

Vice President - Abubakar Atiku (1999-2003), Goodluck Jonathan (2007-2010), Namadi Sambo (2010-2015), Yemi Osibanjo (2015-2023), Kashim Shettima (2023)

The following is a list of military rulers who have led Nigeria during various military regimes:



Major General Aguiyi Ironsi assumed the role of Head of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria in 1966. His tenure was tragically ended by assassination during the [1966 counter-coup](#).



General Yakubu Gowon succeeded Aguiyi Ironsi and held power until 1975 when General Murtala Muhammad overthrew him in a coup.



General Murtala Muhammad's rule was cut short in 1976 by his assassination. Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters Olusegun Obasanjo, then dissolved the military government and transferred power to Shehu Shagari.



In 1983, Major-General Muhammadu Buhari staged a successful coup, establishing a new military government. Buhari was later overthrown by General Ibrahim Babangida in 1985.



General Babangida ruled for eight years, during which he conducted an election to transition to civil rule in 1993. Ernest Shonekan served as interim head of state during that period.



General Sanni Abacha swiftly seized power from Ernest Shonekan and remained in control until 1999. It was in this year that Obasanjo became president, marking the beginning of the Fourth Republic.



This report focuses on the Fourth Republic. Join us as we delve into the events of this significant period. But let's get some context.

Nigeria's third republic was a very short one. Ernest Shonekan of the Interim National Government (ING) was in charge, and it lasted for 82 days. Before then, the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida had vowed to hand over the government to a democratically elected government. As a result, elections were held, and on June 12, 1993, Chief MKO Abiola emerged as the winner of the election.

In a turn of events, on June 23, 1993, Babangida [annulled](#) the presidential election and refused to hand over power to Abiola. Instead, he handed it over to Ernest Shonekan. This move launched Nigeria into one of its worst political crises. It gave birth to many pro-democracy groups that kicked against the annulment and demanded that Abiola be declared president.

Shonekan's time was cut short when he was compelled to resign from office on November 17, 1993. Another military regime took over power and was led by General Sani Abacha. Abacha [reigned over Nigeria with terror](#). He oversaw numerous human rights violations and [looted over 5 billion pounds](#) from the country. However, what is considered by many to be his most brutal act was MKO Abiola's imprisonment. Abiola was detained in solitary confinement for four years.

Various international figures pleaded with General Sani Abacha for Abiola's release. Some were religious leaders, like Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and others were human rights activists. The most prominent organisation that protested against Abacha's military regime was NADECO.

Do you know what NADECO means? Tell them on Twitter!

1. National Democracy Coordinators
2. Nigerian Democracy Coalition
3. National Democratic Coalition
4. New Democracy Coalition

TWEET IT

NADECO emerged on May 15, 1994, from the chaos that followed June 12 and Abiola's win at the 1993 presidential elections. It was a coalition of several pro-democracy groups that protested against the military regime. The group spurred Abiola on to declare himself leader, and they backed him morally. NADECO brought international attention to the military rule, but it was clear Abacha had no intentions of ceding power if he hadn't died.

Which of these prominent figures was not a member of NADECO? Tell them on Twitter!

1. Bola Ahmed Tinubu
2. Wole Soyinka
4. Anthony Enahoro
5. Adekunle Ajasin

TWEET IT

With Abacha's death came the need to restructure Nigeria politically. The Fourth Republic had emerged from the military regime. The coalitions that challenged Abacha splintered and re-grouped into political parties in 1998.

The first party of the Fourth Republic was the PDP (People's Democratic Party). It was [formed in August 1998 by members of the G9, G18, and G34](#). The Groups of 9, 18, and 34 were Nigerians

who stood up against the Abacha regime. They came from different parts of the country and were members of NADECO. Dr Alex Ekwueme, former Vice President of Nigeria, and Sule Lamido were prominent members of the groups. PDP came from this group, and the party contested and won the 1999 presidential election with Obasanjo as its candidate.

[The Alliance for Democracy \(AD\) was an opposition](#) to PDP. The party was formed on September 9, 1998. Prominent Nigerian political figures like Bola Ige and Abraham Adesanya were among the founders.

CITIZEN | Z!

News can be boring;

we make ours entertaining.

Follow us as we follow the news. [Keep me informed](#)

As PDP and AD emerged from the struggle against military dictatorship, so did APP (All People's Party). APP suffered factional splits and merged into new parties. The APP became ANPP (All Nigerian People Party) in the 2003 elections. Not only did the name change, but also its flagbearers, with Muhammadu Buhari as its presidential candidate in 2003.

PDP's Olusegun Obasanjo became Nigeria's new democratically elected president in 1999. Since the start of the Fourth Republic, we have had seven elections: 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019, and 2023.

After an era of military dictatorship, electing Olusegun Obasanjo—a former military Head of State—as president in 1999 elicited different reactions. In fact, many Nigerians were divided on whether to call him General or President. At the time, Obasanjo had jocularly told journalists to call him 'Uncle Sege' - a nickname that he was called by his family and close circle.

Obasanjo was not the only military man to transition into an agbada-wearing politician. There were many others. [Some were elected, while others were appointed.](#) For some Nigerians, it was unclear whether Nigeria had truly transitioned into a civilian government with the influx of ex-military men in government.

Even during democratic times, the [presence of military figures](#) vying for power remained prominent.

Here is a breakdown of the ex-military officers who have contested for Presidency in Nigeria:

1999:	1 candidate - Olusegun Obasanjo.
2003:	4 candidates - Olusegun Obasanjo, M Buhari, Ike Nwachukwu, Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu.
2007:	3 candidates - Muhammadu Buhari, Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu, Mojisola Adekunle-Obasanjo (She is female).
2011:	1 candidate - Muhammadu Buhari.
2015:	1 candidate - M Buhari.
2019:	1 candidate - M Buhari.
2023:	1 candidate - Hamza Al Mustapha (AA).

Ex-military contestants are those exes who text you "hi" at 3 a.m. in the morning five years after the breakup. They rarely have good intentions. While you might have fond memories of your ex, that's hardly the case with Nigeria and her ex-military men. So why do they keep coming back?

- The textbook reason ex-military men give for craving a return to power is that those currently at the wheels of power have failed in their duties, which range from stabilising the economy to providing basic human amenities.
- The security decline since the Fourth Republic's start has also been prominent. The country has endured the Bakkasi boys, Niger Delta boys, ISWAP, Boko Haram, and Criminal Herders, to mention a few.

This gimmick was quite effective for ex-President Muhammadu Buhari, who in 2014 said:

"Today, we are in the 15th year of purposeless leadership by the PDP and all we have seen is unprecedented deterioration in the security and law and order situation, astronomical rise in the incidence, and intensity of corruption, and in the failure of governance."

The ex-military man handed power over to Bola Ahmed Tinubu on May 29, and it is debatable, to say the least, that he has righted the wrongs he pointed out. [JCIR reports](#) that Muhammadu Buhari's administration recorded the highest number of insecurity attacks at 12,120. Also, between May 2015 and June 2022, Nigeria fell into recession twice. And this is before we consider inflation. Buhari has indeed been a bad boy.

As our favourite General recedes from the looming shadow of power, it feels like he is a dying breed. In the last two elections, there has been a decrease in the number of participating ex-military men. The reason is clear, those ex-military men who had a say in previous republics either have terrible street cred—Ibrahim Babangida, for example—or have gotten too old and disconnected from the new circles of power.

By the next two election cycles—2027 and 2031—we might not have any ex-military men vying for office.



The Bullet or the Ballot

The Bullet or the Ballot



Find out in this chapter.

Voting is a risky business in Nigeria. The only patriotic exercise as dangerous as voting during an election is joining a protest.

How many people have lost their lives to electoral violence since 1999?
Tell them on Twitter!

1. 20
2. 50
3. 100
4. 1000

TWEET IT

[Leonard's family certainly attests](#) to that. He was abducted and murdered on March 18th, 2023, during the Governorship and House of Assembly elections in Rivers State. His next birthday would have been on April 23rd. He was murdered because he struggled with hoodlums who disrupted his polling unit by snatching the ballot boxes. Leonard left behind a wife and a 21-day-old baby. His story as a victim of electoral violence is not isolated.

Since 2003, at least 1,000 people have died during elections.

	1964/65	1993	1999	2003
Lives lost to election violence in Nigeria since independence	200	100	80	100
	2007	2011	2015	2019
	300	800	100	150

Chart: Kunle Adebajo/HumAngle - Source: HRW, ICG, CD, Africa Watch - Created with Datawrapper

[The Centre for Democracy and Development reported 109 election-related deaths towards the 2023 election.](#)

With the inclusion of technology, the scope of election violence has increased. While thuggery, coercion, ballot box snatching, forceful disruption, shooting, kidnapping, and assassination are popular methods of election fatalities, online hate speech can also influence on-site violence and fatalities. And when electoral violence occurs, it affects everyone, the average civilian and the notable figure alike. Politicians sometimes resort to the ultimate method of dealing with their opposition. Some popular political assassinations in the Fourth Republic:

<p>2004:</p> <p>Chief Aminasoari Dikibo, former National Vice Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). He was assassinated on February 6, 2004.</p>	<p>2006:</p> <p>Anthony Olufunsho Williams was found bound, strangled, and stabbed at his home in Ikoyi</p>
<p>2009</p> <p>Bayo Ohu, a journalist, who was killed on September 20, 2009, in Lagos State while covering the governorship elections in the state.</p>	<p>2011</p> <p>Dipo Dina, a former member of the House of Representatives, killed on January 25, 2010, in Ogun State during the buildup to the 2011 general elections.</p>
<p>2014:</p> <p>Ayo Daramola, former Ekiti State House of Assembly member, killed on September 14, 2014, during the gubernatorial elections in the state.</p>	<p>2015:</p> <p>Christopher Adube, the former caretaker chairman of the local government, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni, Rivers.</p>
<p>2015</p> <p>Bello Gidan-Hamma, former Commissioner for Local Government in Sokoto State. Killed on December 12, 2015, during the rerun elections in the state.</p>	<p>2019</p> <p>Olatoye Temitope, Oyo State federal lawmaker, was shot in the eye at a polling unit and died at the hospital.</p>
<p>2023</p> <p>Oyibo Chukwu, Labour Party senatorial candidate, was killed in an attack on his convoy in Enugu State.</p>	

From Martin Luther King Jr.'s hit song "[I Have a Dream](#)" to Donald Trump's diss track "[MAGA](#)" rhetoric, politicians have used words for [the extremes of good and evil](#). Nigerian politicians aren't any different.

In several cases, there aren't direct connections between the inciting speeches or incidents and the election violence, but it is doubtless that these speeches were a factor.

In November 2014, the Governor of Katsina State at the time, Sheu Shema, while [speaking to a crowd in a video](#), urged his supporters in Hausa to kill their political opponents, whom [he called cockroaches](#).

Following speeches from Dame Patience Jonathan in 2015, [it became impossible for APC to campaign](#) in her hometown, Okirika, Rivers State.

In 2023, Tinubu's spokesman, Bayo Onanuga, tweeted on March 19th, a day after the governorship election: "Let 2023 be the last of Igbo interference in Lagos politics. Let there be no repeat in 2027. Lagos is like Anambra, Imo, any Nigerian State. It is not No Man's Land; not Federal Capital Territory. It is a Yoruba Land. Mind your business."

This was amidst Lagos's verbal and physical anti-Igbo attacks during the 2023 elections.

On February 25, a [video surfaced](#) on Twitter. In it, Musiliu Akinsanya, aka MC. Oluomo, the head of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Lagos Branch, is seen threatening Igbos to stay at home if they do not vote "for us"—us being the Lagos APC.

The erratic nature of election violence in Nigeria makes this a difficult question to answer. The documented numbers tell a fluctuating story, and this doesn't factor in the numerous undocumented cases.

In a bid to protect voters, elections have witnessed guns in a different form: The military is increasingly involved in Nigerian elections, specifically as a conductor of law and order. In 2019, the Acting Director of Defence In-

formation (DDI), [Colonel Onyema Nwachukwu pointed out](#) that Section 271 of the 1999 Constitution empowers the military "to assist the police in maintenance of law and order."

In 2012, the INEC chairman, Attahiru Jega, said, "In many ways, election in Nigeria is akin to war." When the Nigerian election is considered in this light, it is no surprise why there is a constant need for military presence.

[All pre, during, and post-election phases have recorded violence since 1999](#). Police stations, INEC offices, and government buildings were burned during the 2007 elections. In 2011, the INEC office in Suleija was bombed, killing several poll workers. These constant outbursts of violence, sometimes machinated, sometimes spontaneous, have justified the military's continued involvement in Nigerian elections. For example, 73,000 security personnel, comprising the army, police, and Civil Defence operatives, were deployed for the Osun gubernatorial election in 2014.

With such unnatural proximity between civilians and high-end law enforcement, there are bound to be clashes and [inevitable innocent casualties](#).

When will Nigerians participate in democratic processes without losing an arm and a limb?

Power to the People



Power to the People



Historically, democracy became acceptable in many societies because it was a system that entrusted the people with the affairs of their state. It gave power to the people. But as societies evolved and elected officials' willingness to hold on to power for longer than democracy stipulates, the involvement of the people dwindled.

In recent years, countries like Norway, New Zealand, and Finland have distinguished themselves by staying true to core democratic principles. Apart from conducting free and fair elections, they honour and respect the civil liberties of their citizens. The government is held accountable, and citizens are fully involved in politics. In these cases, we have also seen women lead their democracies successfully.

In Nigeria's case, our democracy has suffered many blows. The era of military regimes truncated any progress we could have made in establishing a solid foundation for democracy.

This is our longest democratic spell. Yet nothing appears to have changed. The transition from military men to civilians has not solved bad governance, and power isn't really with the people, despite having professionals from different backgrounds take charge of the affairs of the country.

Year	Registered Voters	National Turnout
1999	57,938,945	52.30%
2003	60,823,622	69.10%
2007	61,567,036	57.50%
2011	73,528,040	53.70%
2015	67,442,005	43.70%
2019	80,004,084	34.75%
2023	93,469,008	25.70%

Source: YVote Naija

For example, Nigerian legislators come from diverse professional backgrounds. The professions of legislators in the 4th National Assembly included lawyers, doctors, engineers, journalists, businesspeople, entrepreneurs, and educators, among others.

According to a [study](#) by Ali Ahmad, a Nigerian researcher and former legislator at the Kwara state House of Assembly, 40%–50% of NASS legislators since 1999 have been lawyers, while 20%–30% have been businessmen and women. Nonetheless, we have had some ex-military men in the mix. For example, the longest-serving senate president, David Mark (2007 - 2015), is a retired brigadier general. They never go away, do they?

Regardless of their backgrounds, many elected officials have failed to deliver on their promises to Nigerians. This has resulted in a [decline in public trust in government](#) and underwhelming participation in the electoral process.

To ensure accountability and transparency from public officials, the people rely on the Press to serve as watchdogs and keep the populace informed on the officials' activities. During the military regimes, press freedom was trampled upon. For example, many of Nigeria's largest newspapers came under government scrutiny during the Babangida regime. By the end of 1987, newspapers like Newswatch, Punch, the Guardian, and Lagos News had experienced closure periods.

Despite media suppression, they played a crucial role in shaping public opinion, especially in the buildup to the June 12, 1993, elections. The media entrenched the narrative of the urgency and necessity of the return to a democratic system, and this influenced voter turnout during the election.

The influence of the media has continued to grow, and in the last decade, it has become more pivotal with the advent of social media. Traditional media, like newspapers, radio, television, etc., have also evolved by integrating new media into their distribution channels.

The most disruptive part of the emergence of the new media is how it has increased the participation of Nigerians in politics. It has also served to drive social movements and protests against bad governance and failed institutions. The End SARS anti-police brutality protest of 2020 is a prime example. The movement was activated and coordinated via social media.

Through these media platforms, many Nigerians have become more informed about the political situation in their country. But how much has the media helped improve voting patterns?

Many factors, such as electoral malpractice, violence, the quality of candidates, etc., influence people's decisions to vote or not to vote. According to a [2022 Afrobarometer poll](#), 76% of Nigerians distrust the electoral body - INEC. This also contributes to voter turnout.

But the media plays a crucial role in educating voters, encouraging more people to vote during elections. While we cannot be definitive about whether Nigerians vote more or less because of the news, some evidence suggests that the news can influence voting patterns. A [study](#) by the Pew Research Center found that people who are more likely to get their news from social media are also more likely to say that they are undecided about who to vote for in an election. This suggests that the news can be a source of information for voters but also a source of confusion and uncertainty.

In the buildup to the 2023 elections, civil society organisations, social media influencers, media organisations, and several other stakeholders ran different campaigns to encourage people to get their PVCs. Organisations like Zikoko Citizen, Multichoice, BudgIT, Yiaga Africa, YVote Naija, etc., organised different movements to help people register and collect their PVCs.

This greatly impacted the number of people who registered to vote. According to Dataphyte, [there was an 11.26% increase in voters in the 2023](#) general elections compared to the 2019 general election.

In the leadup to the elections, Daria Media, with Zikoko Citizen as a partner, organised a town hall series called [The Candidates](#) that brought together [leading presidential candidates](#). The platform allowed young Nigerians to grill and interact with these candidates to understand their plans for the country. Zikoko Citizen also held a series of political interviews via its [Navigating Nigeria flagship](#), where it interacted with spokespersons of leading political parties, INEC officials, and civil society organisations like Yiaga Africa to educate young Nigerians on all they need to know before casting their ballot, including information on states at risk of electoral manipulation.

Zikoko Citizen also monitored the presidential election from its base in Lagos. Our [election tracker](#) was up and running,

providing real-time updates on happenings across the country. This was made possible by partnering with [Stears](#), which provided reliable electoral data.

We also had our WhatsApp community of young Nigerians sending in videos and photos of events around their polling units from across the country. **Zikoko Citizen worked with FactCheck Elections to verify claims, images and videos that were in circulation for the duration of the elections.** We were on the ground in Surulere to monitor election proceedings, and we witnessed vigilant citizens interested in the electoral process joining in the counting of votes. Unfortunately, due to INEC's inexplicable incompetence, results weren't uploaded in real-time despite voters' insistence. This delay, coupled with reports of voter intimidation and violence, would ultimately cast doubt on the credibility of the announced results.

In 2019, the World Bank published a [Country Opinion Survey](#) that showed that only 5 out of 10 Nigerians trusted the government to do the right thing.

A. General Issues Facing Nigeria

1. When you think about the future in Nigeria, are you ... ?	Percentage of Respondents (N=497)
Very pessimistic	12.9%
Somewhat pessimistic	19.3%
Somewhat optimistic	34.6%
Very optimistic	28.6%
Not sure	4.6% 2.

Do you think that economic opportunity for citizens in Nigeria is ... ?	Percentage of Respondents (N=494)
Increasing	29.6%
Decreasing	49.2%
Staying about the same	21.3%

According to the [2021 Edelman Trust Barometer survey](#), citizens' trust in Nigeria's government is at a 24% low, showing deep distrust in the government.

The news plays a vital role in informing citizens about the government. It provides information about the government's activities, policies, and decisions. This information is essential for citizens to make informed decisions about their government and to participate in the democratic process.

Therefore, news shapes people's perceptions of their government and their role in it.

Nigeria means different things to different people. Some believe that with the human and material resources at Nigeria's disposal, the country has a bright future if it can address issues such as corruption, terrorism, unemployment, etc. On the other hand, there are Nigerians who are less optimistic.



FactCheck Elections is an independent, non-partisan, and nonprofit fact-checking platform that uses data, research, and technological tools to verify claims and debunk fake news around electoral activities in Nigeria.

Deploying expertise cum sound ethical principles, the team is proud of over 200 publications focused on Nigeria's 2022 gubernatorial and 2023 general elections.

FactCheck Elections' works have been amplified by a number of global media corporations including Aljazeera, CNN and TechCabal, and the organization has widened its audience base via strategic partnerships with leading media brands like Zikoko Citizens.

TO DONATE OR SUPPORT

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Multimedia, New Media and the Age of Fake News

Multimedia, New Media and the Age of Fake News



Before the internet penetrated Nigeria and social media became popular, it was common to find people at newspaper stands in the morning trying to catch up with the news. Many debates emerged from these newsstands. Citizens spent hours analysing candidates, reviewing and criticising their manifestos, and forming opinions on who they think will save Nigeria from its mess.

If you are not at the newspaper stands, you are watching the network news on NTA at night or tuning in to the news broadcast by Radio Nigeria. Nigerians relied on these traditional media to stay informed until the internet changed everything.

Are Nigerian voters more informed today than they were in the past? Undoubtedly, social media has changed many things. The world has become a global village, and news travels at the speed of light. We no longer find people at newspaper stands. The news is now delivered to their smartphones.

As social media grew in popularity and scope, voters now rely on it as their primary news source. This has increasingly changed voters' perceptions, as they now have access to more information about candidates, political parties, manifestos, and the various dramas that ensue due to party politics. This shapes their perception of who to vote for during elections.

The most obvious advantage that new media has over traditional media is reach. While tens of thousands of people can gather at newspaper stands, millions more can access the news in real-time through social

According to this Reuters Institute [study](#), Nigeria is among the top countries where there is an increase in digital news consumption. What the new media has done differently is that it allows more people to engage in political conversations, increasing their interest in voting media.



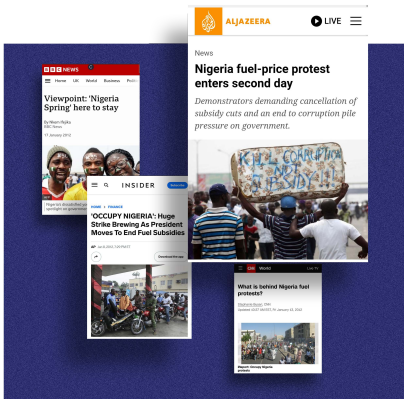
But this has also opened an opportunity for thought leaders and influencers to bend political interests in favour of some candidates. On traditional media, they're merely pundits. But on social media, where they have more power and reach more people, they are called political influencers.

A political influencer is anyone who can shape public opinion on politics and governance. They can be journalists, politicians, business leaders, or ordinary citizens. What sets them apart is their ability to reach a large audience and convince others to take action.

They may do this through a position of power or authority or by using a plat-

form to speak out on politically charged issues. Whatever their methods, political influencers set the tone, narratives, and propaganda on issues they choose.

On Monday, January 2, 2012, a socio-political protest occurred in different cities across Nigeria. It was in response to the announcement of the removal of the petrol subsidy by the Federal Government of President Goodluck Jonathan a day before, - Sunday, January 1, 2012. The protest was called Occupy Nigeria.



The Occupy Nigeria protest gave birth to many political influencers on social media who used platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to plan and organise the protest. The government eventually succumbed to pressure and reduced fuel prices, but that campaign is remembered as one of the major turning points in Nigeria's history and one that laid the foundation for the role of influencers in the Nigerian political space.

For example, in 2015, influencers used their platforms to mobilise young people to vote, participate in election campaigns, and support candidates who aligned with their interests. These influencers also served as citizen journalists, providing real-time updates and monitoring election activities. They used platforms like Twitter to report incidents of electoral malpractice, share live video feeds from polling stations, and inform the public about any irregularities they witnessed. One notable example is the #NigeriaDecides hashtag on Twitter during the elections, where social media influencers and citizens shared updates and documented their experiences.

According to the Centre for Democracy and Development, the number of active social media users in Nigeria [has risen from 27 million in 2019 to 36 million in 2023](#). The rise in social media usage in Nigeria came with the influx of political influencers who continue to raise awareness about politics, government policies, news, etc.

As the media changes, so does propaganda and how it's executed.

The impact of propaganda is the same whether it is transmitted via new media or traditional media. Nonetheless, propaganda is more pervasive in new media because of the larger audience.

There are also more sophisticated techniques to spread propaganda, such as social engineering, deep fakes, astroturfing, etc. This has also created a misinformation pandemic.

Misinformation damages elections as it can lead to voter apathy and suppression. With an overwhelming amount of misinformation, voters are more likely to vote for unqualified candidates.

Fake news, especially when spread by social media influencers, triggers reactions that threaten the legitimacy of the electoral process. This [BBC report](#) is a collection of some of the false claims and fake videos that went viral during the 2023 presidential election.

As young Nigerians work to reclaim their country, they must also participate in sanitising it from fake news.

Fake news can be fought using Open Source Intelligence (OSINT). OSINT is the process of collecting information from publicly available sources, such as the internet, social media, and news articles. OSINT can be used to fight fake news by identifying the source of the information, tracking the spread of the information, and debunking the information.

Fighting fake news is a collective responsibility. Many young people have taken up the responsibility of fighting fake news by calling out perpetrators, especially on social media. **Zikoko Citizen runs a flagship called [Walt First](#), that helps to combat misinformation.** Youth-based platforms such as [Fact-Check Elections](#) use OSINT to fight fake news and are using their resources to debunk fake news.

But social media remains an essential political tool, both for candidates and for voters. Candidates use social media to reach a large audience with their message, to build support for their campaign, and to mobilise voters to turn out to the polls. Voters use social media to learn about the candidates and the issues, to discuss the election with their friends and family, and to make informed decisions about who to vote for. As a result, it is an integral part of our electoral process.

Social media has allowed stakeholders such as CSOs, government bodies such as INEC, etc. to educate voters and keep them informed about essential information about elections. It has also made it easy for citizens to scruti-

nise the electoral process, communicate their concerns, and ensure action from responsible bodies.

During the 2023 elections, social media served both positive and negative purposes. On the positive side, it gave citizens a voice, which was used to amplify concerns and issues about the process. More people learned about candidates and their antecedents, which was pivotal to their decisions at the polls.

However, social media also served as a means of spreading fake news and false narratives. Some of these narratives sparked ethnic and religious friction that affected the public's perception of the process and the candidates.

Sets of feedback from Citizen community members saying how they felt after the election

John

It has taught me that our leaders are selected and not elected

Posi

This elections almost made me doubt our power as a people. TBH, when Tinubu was elected, I was so sad... I felt defeated but then I realized that we fought a war that was very unlikely for us to lose and we "lost" by a small margin. I'm still struggling tho but it'll be well soon... Have to keep telling myself that

Lonimi

The only sane thing that would happen is quasi-military rule

Aisha

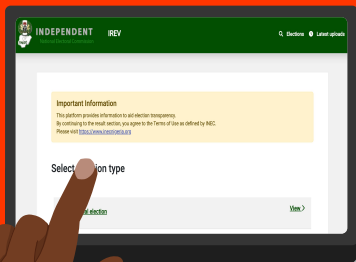
Taught me how random people always fail to realize they're mere propaganda pawns on politicians' chessboards. BAT & Obi will end up as allies in the same political party tomorrow & will talk good about each other—can that be said about small people like you that have blocked & insulted your personal destiny helpers over "values" you're busy pretending to have?? 😂 (Yes, I saw you bribe someone yesterday, so miss me with the "my values BS" 😂)

Chidi

Our foundation for governance is terrible and it trickles to every sector of the country.

We have a very long way to go.

IReV, BVAs: The Digital reform of Nigeria's electoral system



IReV, BVAs: The Digital reform of Nigeria's electoral system



Conducting free, fair, and credible elections depends on the quality of the laws that guide the process. Nigeria's democratic journey since 1999 has been marred by various electoral misconducts, but in the last three election cycles, efforts to use technology to improve our elections have been at the forefront. From card readers to the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) to prevent identity fraud, there have been different attempts to fix the issues. But how

well has this played out? The 2003 and 2007 elections in Nigeria were marked by massive electoral fraud and violence. International observers said the 2003 elections fell short of international standards, while they described the 2007 elections as a charade. One interesting thing to note about the 2007 elections is that the official results of that presidential election are [still not available today](#).

The declared winner of the 2007 presidential election, Late Umaru Musa Yar'adua, gave credence to this claim when he publicly admitted that the

[election that brought him in as president had shortcomings](#), noting that he would [commit to electoral reforms](#) to fix the problem. He established a 22-person electoral reform committee under the leadership of retired Justice

M o h a m m e d Uwais, staying true to his word. In 2010, the National Assembly enacted the Electoral Act. This was a first step in ensuring that elections are more credible in Nigeria.

As INEC chair-

man ahead of the 2015 elections, Professor Attahiru Jega introduced two technology-driven solutions. Firstly, the Permanent Voters Card (PVC): The PVC contained voters' biometric information in an embedded microchip, and it replaced the Temporary Voter's Card that was used in the 2011 general elections. In addition, the electronic card reader was introduced with a fingerprint scanner to verify voters with PVC and ensure they were registered in their designated polling unit. The card was also designed to display pictures of voters, which allowed poll agents to verify voters visually.

From card readers to the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) to prevent identity fraud, there have been different attempts to fix the issues. But how well has this played out?

Despite INEC assuring Nigerians of the effectiveness of the card readers, the device failed to deliver in many polling units across the country. Contributing to the failure of the card reader was INEC's failure to properly sensitise citi-

zens on the use of the device, especially people living in rural areas. For example, some electorates believed that the card reader was a voting device, thereby causing friction between them and election officials.

Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS)

The Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) was designed to replace the card reader. While the BVAS could verify PVC and fingerprints like the card reader, it also verifies voters using facial recognition. Apart from that, BVAS was also used to transmit results from polling units electronically. The purpose of the BVAS was to prevent ballot box snatching, result manipulation, etc.

INEC Result Viewing Portal (IREV)

In November 2022, INEC chairman Mahmood Yakubu said, "The commission will upload polling unit level results and citizens will have access to those results in real-time as we upload your polling units." The platform he was referring to is the IREV, where Nigerians are supposed to access the results of the polls in real time. In the build-up to the 2023 general elections, many Nigerians began to have faith in the electoral process because of tech-enabled systems like the BVAS and IREV. When the BVAS and IREV were deployed in the off-cycle elections in Ekiti and Osun States, many Nigerians were impressed by their efficiency.

Nigerians are committed to the digitization of the electoral process because it enhances transparency and allows for free, fair, and credible elections if properly implemented.

Notably, Civic Hive, a non-partisan platform, also contributed to changing the game in 2023. With election visualisation and real-time access to results even before INEC announced them at the state level through their [website](#). While there were reports of different fake news peddlers working for the government, Civic Hive and other platforms like Stears Election were debunking them and monitoring real-time election results.

Over the next election cycles, it is the duty of the citizenry, especially young Nigerians, to ensure that the electronic reform of the electoral process is enhanced until it becomes almost impossible to rig elections.



Civichive

We support changemakers.

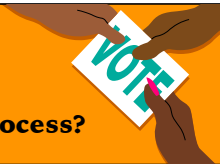
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**Who can participate
in Nigeria's electoral
process?**

Who can participate in Nigeria's electoral process?



To vote in Nigeria, you must be Nigerian, at least 18 years old and within the boundaries of the law.

To run for political office, you must have school-certificate-level education, be a party member, and be at least 25 years old. The unofficial answer, at least if you are running for office, is, in addition to those above, to be rich, have strong connections with powerful people, and blame the party in power for all the problems in the country. If anyone asks you how you intend to fix it, quote some numbers, verified or otherwise, and go with the flow.

But this broad definition does not cover those in the minority, especially women and people with disabilities. [The 2022 Electoral Act](#) and the Not-too-young-to-run Act made provisions for including youth, women, and PWD in the electoral process. But the overall involvement (or absence) of these people in government indicates that the words on paper are not yet in practise.

This is where Civic society groups come in.

Civic groups in Nigeria have been responsible for political advancements like the Not-Too-Young-To-Run bill, #PoliceReforms, #OpenNASS, #Safe-

Schools campaigns, and many more. Civic groups play a prominent role in safeguarding our democracy, calling for transparency and accountability, and amplifying the voices and concerns of citizens for inclusive governance.

While some reforms have yielded results, the inclusion rate can be faster. For example, the police reforms, while they have occurred in principle, have had little effect on the structural defects of the police force.

The #NotTooYoungToRun is equally slow to fruition. In 2021, Seun Fakorode made history by becoming the youngest commissioner in Nigerian history at 27. [Rukayyat Shittu, 26, is a member-elect](#) to represent the Owode/Oniru constituency in the Kwara State House of Assembly. While some examples can be pointed to concerning these reforms, there aren't enough to represent a proper change of the status quo.

15%

The Republic asserts that while women comprise half of the Nigerian population, they have never held more than 15 per cent of elective office.

This should come as no surprise when we consider the volume of [GBV that occurs in Nigerian domestic settings](#).

All forms of intimidation against women are employed in Nigerian politics. In 2022, the [LP Women Leader in Kaduna, Mrs Victoria Chintex, was murdered](#) in a violent act that CHRICED (Resource for Human Rights and Civic Education) has described as gender-based.

Women are often targeted during elections and suffer physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. Men with spouses competing for political positions may feel emasculated and curtail their spouses' ambitions. [The National Democratic Institute indicates](#) that the short and long-term effect of violence against women in politics is that it discourages women from actively participating in political processes on an equal footing with men.

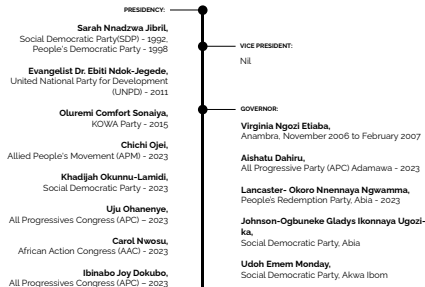
It is not so different for people with dis-

abilities (PWD).

A 2018 World Bank report holds that [1 in 6 Nigerians have a disability](#). PWDs have the right to vote and be voted for, the secrecy of the ballot, and protection during emergencies while voting, among others. But these rights are lip-serviced. For example, there are no emergency protective measures at most, if not all, voting grounds in Nigeria. There are no [Braille ballot papers](#) as well. And disabled people who have no fingers cannot vote.

There is a need for a radical sociological change in Nigeria's mindset towards women and PWD. The conviction to follow through on favourable policies must be encouraged, and this will be possible only if members of those communities, women and PWD, are included in office.

Women who have run for the office of President/VP, Governor/Deputy, and Fed/state legislature since 1999;



Patience Key,
People's Redemption Party – 2023

Olivia Diana Teriela,
People's Democratic Party (PDP) - 2023

Angela Johnson,
All Progressives Grand Alliance - 2023

DEPUTY:

Alhaja Sinatu Aderoju Ojikutu,
Lagos - 1992-1993

Mrs Cecilia Ekpenyong,
Cross River - 1993

Kofoworola Bucknor-Akerele,
Lagos - 1999 and 2003

Virginia Ngozi Etiaba,
Anambra, November 2003

Omoba Sarah Adebisi Sosan,
Lagos, All Progressives Congress (APC)
2007 to 2011

Valerie Maurice Ebe,
Akwa Ibom, People's Democratic Party
(PDP) 2012 - 2015

Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire,
Lagos, All Progressives Congress (APC) -
2011 - 2015

Oluranti Adebule, Lagos,
All Progressives Congress (APC) - 2015 -
2019

Dr Hadiza Balarabe Sabuwa,
Kaduna, All Progressives Congress (APC) -
2019

Engr Noimot Salako Oyedele,
Ogun, All Progressives Congress (APC) -
2019

Mrs Josephine Piyo,
Plateau, People's Democratic Party (PDP)
- 2023

Dr Akon Eyakenyi,
Akwa Ibom, People's Democratic Party
(PDP) - 2023

Dr Ngozi Nma Odu, Rivers,
People's Democratic Party (PDP) - 2023

Mrs Patricia Obila, Ebonyi,
All Progressives Congress (APC) - 2023

Dr. Roseline Ada Change,
Action Democratic Party, Benue

Aishatu Mahmud,
National Rescue Movement, Kano

Abdulahi-Iya Khadijah,
All Progressives Grand Alliance, Niger

FED LEGISLATURE:

Chief Margaret Ekpo,
Cross River, In office 1961-1965

Patricia Etteh,
Ayedaade/Isokan/Irewole Fed. constitu-
ency, Osun State, 3 June 1999 - 6 June
2011, Speaker of the House of Represent-
atives of Nigeria, 6 June 2007 - 30 Octo-
ber 2007.

The 8th National Assembly of 2015 and 2019 consisted of only 7 females out of the 109 Senate seats available and 22 females out of the 360 House of Representatives seats available, and in the 9th National Assembly, there were only 7 females out of the 109 Senators and 11 females out of the 360 House of Representative Members (PLAC 2019), which indi-

How many have won/occupied offices?

GOVERNOR:

Virginia Ngozi Etiaba,
Anambra, November 2006
to February 2007

DEPUTY:

Alhaja Sinatu Aderoju Ojikutu,
Lagos - 1992-1993

Mrs Cecilia Ekpenyong,
Cross River - 1993

Kofoworola Bucknor-Akerele,
Lagos - 1999 and 2003

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Omoba Sarah Adebisi Sosan,
Lagos, All Progressives Congress (APC) 2007
to 2011

Valerie Maurice Ebe,
Akwa Ibom, People's Democratic Party (PDP)
2012 - 2015

Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire,
Lagos, All Progressives Congress (APC) -
2011 - 2015

Oluranti Adebule,
Lagos, All Progressives Congress (APC) -
2015 - 2019

Dr Hadiza Balarabe Sabuwa,
Kaduna, All Progressives Congress (APC) -
2019

Engr Noimot Salako Oyedele,
Ogun, All Progressives Congress (APC) -
2019

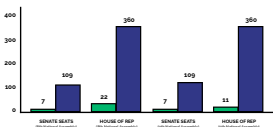
Mrs Josephine Piyo,
Plateau, People's Democratic Party (PDP) -
2023

Dr Akon Eyakenyi,
Akwa Ibom, People's Democratic Party (PDP)
- 2023

Dr Ngozi Nma Odu,
Rivers, People's Democratic Party (PDP) -
2023

Mrs Patricia Obila,
Ebonyi, All Progressives Congress (APC) -
2023

How many have won/occupied offices?



The 8th National Assembly of 2015 and 2019 consisted of only 7 females out of the 109 Senate seats available and 22 females out of the 360 House of Representatives seats available.

In the 9th National Assembly, there were only 7 females out of the 109 Senators and 11 females out of the 360 House of Representative Members (PLAC 2019), which indicates a decline in female participation.

The transition to the 4th Republic on May 29, 1999, ushered in democracy and with it a new constitution, under which the current National Gender Policy was promulgated.

This policy recommends that women be represented by at least 35 per cent in both elected and appointed public service positions. One of these key offices is the National Assembly.

But that has been abysmally far-fetched as a breakdown of women's representation in the federal legislative system. According to a report by the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies, the situation in Nigeria is indeed deplorable when compared with other countries.

The report revealed that in 1999, there were only three women in the Senate and 13 women in the House of Representatives

In 2003, the number of women in the

Senate increased to four, while in the House of Representatives, it rose to 21. 2007 recorded the peak of women's representation, with nine in the Senate and 27 in the House.

By 2011, it had dropped to seven in the Senate and 25 in the House. In 2015, it remained at seven in the Senate but dropped to 22 in the House. In 2019, the figure remained steady at seven in the Senate but dropped drastically to 10 in the House.

This year, [92 women contested for the Senate](#) in the February elections, but only three won. And of the 286 who contested for seats in the House of Representatives, only 15 have been declared winners.

For PWDs, representation is still a wishful thought.

Nigeria's continued exclusion of women, PWDs, and other minorities makes governance at every level devoid of equal representation. Policies are therefore not representative of interests, a situation that turns simple challenges into recurring problems.

Before the next general election, it is the responsibility of those who are privileged to ensure that those who are excluded are carried along in governance. We must choose our best bets across every class and representation.



The banner features a grid of 24 small photographs showing diverse groups of people, including women in professional and public settings. A central green box contains the text: **IMPROVING THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC LIFE**. The top right corner displays the **ElectHER** logo with the tagline **DECIDE. RUN. WIN.**

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We the Youths



We the Youths



The Nigerian youth, or "[yoot](#)," as they are condescendingly referred to in some corners, is a divisive figure in the country. To a few, they are a bag of untapped resources, but to most, the yoot are an irritant demanding power they know nothing about. Think of the youth as a kid in a parlour with his parents trying to take charge of the TV remote. It doesn't matter how old you are, Mummy and Daddy will still shout, "Ahan!"

But who does the Constitution see as a youth in Nigeria?

According to the 2019 National Youth Policy, Youth in Nigeria includes citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria [between 18 and 29 years old](#). Despite facing challenges, Nigerian youth have persistently strived to attain positions of power. Here, we highlight a few individuals from the youth demographic who have served in Nigeria's National Assembly.

Youths who have served in Nigeria's National Assembly

**This is not an exhaustive list:*

Owolabi Ibrahim Ajani

House of Assembly (2019)

AGE:

(at the time of election)

32

Kabir Tukura Ibrahim

House of Representatives (2019)

AGE:

(at the time of election)

35



Hafiz Kawu Ibrahim

House of Representatives (2019)

AGE:
*(at the time
of election)***35****Mukhtar Shehu Ladan**

House of Assembly (2019)

AGE:
*(at the time
of election)***33****Mansur Manu Soro**

House of Representatives (2019)

AGE:
*(at the time
of election)***32****Sha'aban Ibrahim Sharada**

House of Representatives (2019)

AGE:
*(at the time
of election)***35****Abdullahi Usman**

House of Representatives (2019)

AGE:
*(at the time
of election)***34****Gabriel Saleh Zock**

House of Representatives (2019)

AGE:
*(at the time
of election)***34****Rukayat Shittu**a member-elect to represent the
Owode/Oniru constituency in the
Kwara State House of Assembly.

AGE:

26

Youth are the creative, physical, and dynamic force in any society. The youth galvanise the engine of change and steer the country into new, advanced horizons.

Despite deterrents, the young Nigerian has still reached for the remote possibility of change. In October 2020, the youths thronged out to [protest police brutality with the #ENDSARS](#) protests.

There are no new, notable police reforms, but it was the first time the youths of this generation challenged the status quo and brought that energy into the 2023 elections. [76% of the new voters](#) in 2023 were young people, and 40% [were students](#). The results of the elections remain contestable, but there are no doubts that the so-called 'yoots' now recognise their voting power.

Beyond voting during elections, young people must remember that they can take charge of the affairs of this country. But this will only happen if they recognise and seize control of the gap about to be created by the leaving class of 99' politicians and ex-military men. It will not be the first time such a thing happens in this country.

Many of those who changed the direction of this country were young when they did it. Anthony Enahoro was 30 when he moved the motion for inde-

pendence in 1953. Kaduna Nzeogwu and Yakubu Gowon were 29 and 30, respectively, when they tried to change the country's direction. Ojukwu was 34 when he became the leader of the Eastern region.

The truth is that it was a different time, and the dynamics of Nigerian politics have gotten a little more complex. However, the ingredients to change the country's course for the better—to lead and renovate a state's destiny—are present. These demands will remain the same throughout time. The Nigerian youth must continue to prove that they are up to the task. The burning question that should remain on our minds is if a 30-year-old Enahoro could affect the fate of this country, why can't the 30-year-old of today rise to the occasion?

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Conclusion



Conclusion



Nigeria's potential has never been in doubt and young Nigerians continue to demonstrate this in different spheres. From tech to entertainment to sports, you see people driven by passion, sheer willpower, and zeal to exceed expectations. They break barriers and set new standards. But when it comes to politics, the case appears to be different.

Our democratic journey in the Fourth Republic is the longest we have had in Nigeria's history but it has been tainted by bad governance, political assassinations, electoral malpractice, human rights violations, and more. At the receiving end are the young people, who, in spite of the system's failures, find a way to thrive. Is that how it should be?

For so long, the old guard has defined the destiny of Nigeria while the young ones remain spectators. The time for "I am not interested in politics or governance" is over. The future of Nigeria relies on your decision as a young person, which is either to remain a spectator or get involved.

To get involved, you must educate yourself. Understanding where we are coming from will inform how you respond to today's realities. With this

report, we've given you a foundation you can begin to act on. Beyond this report, Zikoko Citizen, with support from our partners, will constantly equip you with resources to get you ready for your role in Nigeria's future.

As the 2023 elections have shown, young people have the power to disrupt the status quo. However, you must be willing to sustain your engagement, demand change, and actively participate. You must also stay informed. Read Citizen, advocate for causes you believe in, follow conversations on politics and governance, engage civic society actors, and continue to participate in the electoral process.

Remember, the change you desire will not magically happen; you must be the catalyst for its realisation. Your actions have the potential to shape the future of Nigeria.



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