



Partner Liaison Security  
Operations [PLSO] Nigeria

# 2020 Elections: Critical Event Planning

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## Introduction

The Nigerian constitution stipulates that certain elective offices have 4-year tenures, consequently, general elections are held every 4 years. Nigeria returned to democratic Rule on 29 May 1999 and subsequent general elections were conducted in 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019. The next general election is scheduled for 2023. The actual date on which the elections take place are guided by the Electoral Act, which stipulates that they must be held no more than 150 days before the expiration of the incumbent’s tenure, and no less than 30 days before the said expiration. The body, constitutionally empowered to conduct the elections and set the exact dates, is the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). They conduct federal elections: presidential, senatorial and the House of Representatives. The INEC also conducts gubernatorial elections and elections into the state houses of assembly.

The period before each election, the campaign period, the election day, and the day the election results are announced have historically been periods of heightened security risks throughout Nigeria. This deterioration in security is perceived to be true for all levels of election.

Each state has an Independent State Electoral Commission (ISEC). The ISEC is constitutionally tasked with Local Government Area (LGA) Chairmanship elections and Ward Councillorship elections. These elections are also tenured. The tenures are for 3 years. These elections are under the purview of the state government. Historically, instead of risking opposition party politicians winning elective offices in the LGAs, the governors often appoint Sole Administrators to superintend over the LGA and espouse various reasons for not conducting the elections. A state governor may decide to allow the ISEC to conduct LGA elections in his state at any time, subject to the laws of the state and as legislated by the State Assembly, it is usually not on any predictable basis other than the fiat of the governor. Thus, all the ISEC conducted elections may be considered as “Off cycle Elections”.

## Off Cycle Elections

INEC conducts scheduled nation-wide general elections every 4 years to ensure a unified transition process. However, due to litigation, some elective office holders may lose their positions after having been on seat for a certain period. When this happens, the INEC sets a new date for fresh elections into the vacated office. In compliance with the constitution the newly elected office holder still enjoys a 4-year tenure. Consequently, the election into that office is no longer in sync with the scheduled nation-wide general elections and subsequently runs its own 4-year schedule.

Since the first general elections, in 1999, 6 states have experienced this situation and their elections do not hold per the general election schedule. The affected states are; Anambra, Bayelsa, Edo, Ekiti, Kogi, Ondo and Osun. Their respective inauguration dates and end-of-tenure are presented below:

State	Inauguration Date	End of Tenure	Next Election Date Range
Anambra	17Mar18	17Mar22	17Oct21 – 17Feb22
Bayelsa	14Feb16	14Feb20	14Sep23 – 14Jan23
Edo	12Nov16	12Nov20	12Jun20 – 12Oct20
Ekiti	16Oct18	16Oct22	16May22 – 16Sep22
Kogi	27Jan16	27Jan20	27Aug23 – 27Dec23
Ondo	24Feb17	24Feb21	24Sep20 – 24Jan21
Osun	27Nov18	27Nov22	27Jun22 – 27Oct22

The tenure of current Edo State Governor will end on November 12, 2020, while that of his Ondo State counterpart will end on February 24, 2021.

## Elections Scheduled for 2020

The actual date of any election is set by INEC within the constitutionally stipulated date range, with respect to the end-of-tenure date. It would therefore be unrealistic to try to predict a date for the elections, other than to be cognizant of the 120-day (3 months) period during which any date may be selected. However, all elections have traditionally held on Saturdays. Also, for convenience and economy of effort, INEC strives to conduct on the same date any elections whose date ranges overlap. As an example, the Bayelsa and Kogi elections of 2019 were held on the same date.

Since 5 December 2019, for the Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial rerun election the INEC has fixed the dates for Saturday, 25 January 2020 in Akwa Ibom State. More importantly, on the same day, INEC will conduct court-ordered rerun and supplementary rerun elections in 27 other Federal and States Constituencies across 12 States of the Federation.

In 2020, based on the constitutional provision for the date ranges during which the elections must be held, 2 states are expected to have elections. They are:

- Edo state 12Jun20 – 12Oct20
- Ondo State 24Sep20 – 24Jan21.

Based on these dates and INECs penchant for setting elections on the same date, the elections for the 2 states may therefore be conducted in the overlapping range which is: **between 24Sep20 and 12Oct20**. Within that range, there are 3 Saturdays as follows:

- Saturday 24Sep20
- Saturday 03Oct20
- Saturday 10Oct 20

These above dates are therefore the most likely dates for elections in 2020.

As mentioned above, any LGA election dates may be announced at any time during the course of the year by any state governor. These elections are no less significant in terms of security as they often also lead to localized incidents of violence.

## Risk Management Top Tips

Some ideas for risk planning for elections include:

- Review and update security document systems and ensure they are fit for purpose in order to support risk and emergency management requirements.
- Establish a 'Critical Event Risk Management Plan'.
- Conduct a table top exercises of the Local Incident Management Team to discuss possible risks, and associated planning needs and response solutions. Potentially include your headquarters Security Department.
- Review non-critical tasks and visits, and potentially work around high-risk periods.

- Stock up on fuels, water, food and other critical supplies.
- Provide briefings and training to staff on personal security awareness, as well as the responses to emergency situations.
- Test your Phone Tree or Crisis Communications Plan.
- Monitor the security situation before, during and after the election.
- Establish communications – and share information with – your security peers.
- Delay or adjust non critical tasks and activities, including international visits.

## PLSO Support

The PLSO team can support implementing partners by:

- Providing security risk management document templates, including specifically a Critical Event Risk Management Plan.
- Sending SMS and Whatsapp alerts, as well as ISER Threat Alerts.
- Provide access to online training on how to develop security risk management document systems.
- Provide Local Incident Management Team exercising solutions.
- Provide training to Chiefs of Party and Security Focal Points on risk and emergency management topics.
- Host Critical Event Risk Management workshops to bring implementors and security professionals together in order to share ideas and experiences, pool resources, and plan against periods of elevated risks.
- Train staff on personal safety and security during periods of elevated risk. Ideally this should be done at least 4 weeks ahead of a risk point.

Please contact the PLSO team for support: [sioplsonigeria@rsmconsulting.us](mailto:sioplsonigeria@rsmconsulting.us)

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