



# Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP)

*.....Uniting people of different faiths for peace through dialogue*



**Anambra State November 2025 Off-Cycle  
Gubernatorial Election Report as Observed  
By  
The Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation For Peace (cofp)**



## INTRODUCTION

- i. The Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP), a non-governmental organization dedicated to driving social change by promoting good governance, and enhancing culture of peace among adherents of different faiths and cultures, through their accreditation by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) deployed a short-term election observation mission to monitor the off-cycle gubernatorial election in Anambra State. This report provides an analysis of the electoral process and its outcomes, with a focus on the conduct of the elections, as well as challenges encountered during the process. Through this, we hope to contribute to the promotion of free, fair, and transparent elections in Nigeria.
- ii. The 2025 Anambra election is particularly significant as the state operates a unique off-cycle electoral calendar, following a 2007 Supreme Court ruling that aligned gubernatorial tenure with the date of a winner's inauguration. The election, which held on Saturday, November 8th, drew considerable public interest as the first major off-cycle election conducted under the new INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, amid ongoing national calls for deeper electoral reforms and enhanced use of technology in result transmission.
- iii. COFP observers monitored the election across multiple polling units in Amawbia I, II, and III Wards of Awka South LGA, engaging key electoral stakeholders including INEC officials, security personnel, political party agents, and voters.

## PRE-ELECTION FINDINGS

- i. The pre-election environment was tense, with APC and APGA supporters engaging in verbal attacks and propaganda, especially on social media. Issue-based campaigns were largely overshadowed by personal attacks.
- ii. Observers reported open monetary inducement of voters during campaigns, including allegations of financial promises made by key political actors. This undermined confidence in the fairness of the process.
- iii. The mandatory 50 million fee imposed by the Anambra State Signage and Advertisement Agency for billboards and posters was a significant obstacle for many opposition candidates, limiting their visibility and reach.

- iv. INEC prepared adequately, training staff, deploying materials, and updating registers. However, the voter registers still contained names of deceased or relocated individuals, affecting turnout accuracy.

## ELECTION DAY OBSERVATIONS

- i. Sixteen political parties participated in the election: fourteen male candidates and two female candidates.
- ii. INEC officials arrived early, and accreditation/voting began at 8:00 a.m. in all observed units.
- iii. All necessary materials, including ballot papers, result sheets and BVAS devices arrived complete and on time at all observed polling units, with no shortages recorded.
- iv. Security personnel from multiple agencies were deployed across polling units. Although they were unarmed, they maintained order. The large number of deployed personnel created a sense of fear among some voters. However, no harassment or intimidation was recorded.
- v. Sorting, counting, and announcement of results were done openly. Party agents signed result sheets, and most units uploaded results to IReV promptly.
- vi. BVAS devices functioned effectively across many polling units, with only three voters encountering capture issues. The overall performance contributed positively to voter confidence.
- vii. Vote buying was widespread, with individuals receiving 50,000 to 10,000 and groups receiving 3,000 to 100,000. These practices took place openly, often without intervention from security agents.



- viii. Voter turnout was notably low, with only 598,229 out of the 2,788,864 registered voters accredited, and a total of 584,054 valid votes cast. Only about 21% of voters participated. Many voters left immediately after voting, indicating declining trust in the system.

## ELECTION RESULTS

INEC declared Charles Chukwuma Soludo of APGA the winner with 422,664 votes, followed by Nicholas Ukachukwu of APC with 99,445 votes, Paul Chukwuka of YPP with 37,753 votes, and George Moghalu of LP with 10,576 votes, while all other candidates received significantly fewer votes; overall, Soludo won by a wide margin, securing over 72% of the valid votes cast.



## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The 2025 Anambra State gubernatorial election was generally peaceful, well-organized, and professionally managed by INEC. Polling officials arrived early, election materials were available, and BVAS operated efficiently. Sorting, counting, and result announcements were open and transparent, giving the process a strong procedural foundation.

However, beyond this orderly execution, deeper concerns remain. Voter turnout was very low, reflecting a worrying level of public distrust and disengagement. Vote buying was widespread and conducted openly, sometimes in the presence of security personnel, which undermines fairness and



weakens public confidence. The pre-election environment was also dominated by personal attacks and propaganda rather than issue-based campaigns, while policies like the N50 million signage fee created an uneven playing field for opposition candidates.

Overall, while the process can be described as free and peaceful, it falls short of being fully fair. Strengthening public trust, curbing vote buying, and ensuring equal opportunities for all political actors remain essential steps for improving future elections.

Based on the observations from the pre-election period, election day activities, and the post-election environment, the following recommendations are made by COFP for consideration by the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), to help strengthen future electoral processes:

- i. **Strengthen Enforcement of Electoral Laws on Vote Buying**  
Security agencies must be trained, equipped, and empowered to respond swiftly to electoral offences, particularly vote buying. Election day security personnel should receive clear instructions on how to identify, document, and prevent inducement activities as was experienced in this electoral process. There should also be consequences for officials who fail to act when electoral laws are openly violated.
- ii. **Intensify Voter Education and Civic Engagement**  
There is an urgent need to rebuild trust between citizens and the electoral system. INEC, the National Orientation Agency (NOA), religious institutions, youth groups, and civil society organizations should intensify voter education campaigns that explain not just how to vote, but why voting matters. These programs must target young people, women, and marginalized communities, using relatable language, storytelling, and community dialogue formats.
- iii. **Ensure a Level Playing Field for All Political Parties**  
Policies such as the 50 million signage fee should be reviewed to avoid placing undue burden on smaller parties. INEC and state agencies must ensure that campaign regulations promote fairness, inclusiveness, and equal opportunity for all political actors.
- iv. **Improve Accuracy of the Voter Register**  
INEC should intensify efforts to clean up the voter register by removing the names of deceased voters and individuals who have relocated. A more accurate register will improve turnout analysis, strengthen planning, and boost public confidence.

- v. Continue Strengthening Technology Use (BVAS and IReV)  
BVAS was a major strength of this election. INEC should continue to invest in upgrades, training, backup devices, and troubleshooting support. IReV uploads should remain mandatory for transparency and accountability.
- vi. Encourage Community-Led Election Monitoring  
Communities should be encouraged to take greater ownership of the electoral process. Traditional leaders, local associations, and youth groups can help discourage vote buying, promote peaceful participation, and hold political actors accountable.
- vii. Provision for PLWD  
Adequate provision should be made for people living with disabilities to enable them participate effectively in exercising their fundamental rights in the future elections.

These recommendations are important for addressing the challenges identified in the reviewed data and for strengthening the democratic process in Nigeria. We hope they will be considered for implementation, as the Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace remains committed to supporting peaceful, credible and inclusive democratic processes in the country.





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