

## No Referendum, No Election: Biafra Agitation and the Boycott of the 2017 Anambra State Gubernatorial Election

### Introduction

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have threatened to stop the November 18, Anambra Governorship Election. The IPOB leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu had earlier posited that unless the Nigerian State calls for a referendum to determine the status of the country, there would be no election in Anambra State. In series of press interviews and YouTube videos, Kanu insisted that the November Anambra election would not hold. It is important to point out that the agitation for the Sovereign State of Biafra never died since the end of the civil war in 1970. The agitation is not unconnected to a perceived skewed distribution of resources and opportunities in the country since the end of the civil war in 1970. The opportunity to return the Biafra issue to the political front burner was provided immediately the country returned to democracy in 1999 when the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) was launched under the leadership of Ralph Nwazurike.

The strong resurgence for the Sovereign State of Biafra received a fillip immediately after President Buhari's address at the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) on July 22, 2015. In his response to a participant on how he would bring development to the oil-rich Niger Delta region in the south that has suffered decades of environmental degradation due to oil spills and oil bunkering, he remarked that: "I hope you have a copy of the election results, Naturally, the constituencies that gave me 97 percent cannot, in all honesty, be treated in the same way on some issues with constituencies that gave me five percent" (Aljazeera 30 May, 2017). This statement was interpreted to refer to the South East where he got five percent of the presidential votes. Although President Buhari went on to say that the principles of federal character should prevail, his initial statement was taken as a political testament. Immediately after the speech, Pro-Biafra movements such as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Biafra Independent Movement (BIM), Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and People of Biafra Rebranded (IPOBR) all re-emerged with a strengthened call for self-determination and the independence of Biafra.

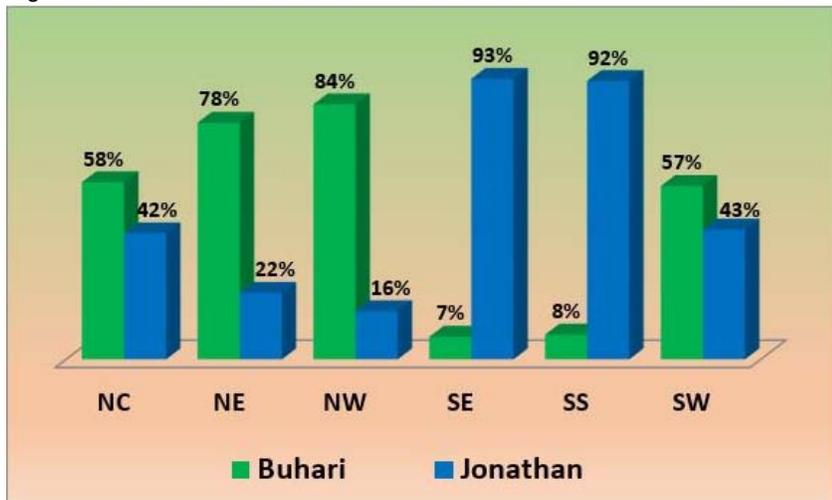
### Geo-political Breakdown of the 2015 Presidential Election Results

Geopolitical Zone	Buhari	Jonathan	Total votes per zone <sup>1</sup> For Buhari & Jonathan Only	Percentage of votes per zone	
				Buhari	Jonathan
North Central (NC)	2,411,013	1,715,818	4,126,831	58%	42%

<sup>1</sup>This is only total votes for the two candidates (Buhari and Jonathan) and not for the entire zone

North East (NE)	2,848,678	799,588	3,648,266	78%	22%
North West (NW)	7,115,199	1,339,709	8,454,908	84%	16%
South East (SE)	198,248	2,464,906	2,663,154	7%	93%
South South (SS)	418,590	4,714,725	5,133,315	8%	92%
South West (SW)	2,433,193	1,821,416	4,254,609	57%	43%
Total votes garnered by each candidate	15,424,921	12,856,162			

Fig. 1: PMB and GEJ 2015



Source: CDD 2017

In an underdeveloped, plural and multi-ethnic State such as Nigeria where there is a fledging and weak union, mutual suspicion is always rife and this is usually expressed in a form of fear of domination. This fear was not helped by President Buhari's immediate appointments, which appeared to marginalize the Igbo people as could be seen in the table and pie chart below.

#### APPOINTMENTS AND POSITIONS IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT UNDER BUHARI

POSITIONS	OCCUPANTS	ZONES
Aide de Camp to President	Lt. Col Abubakar Lawal	Kano State, North-West
Special Adviser, Media and Publicity	Mr. Femi Adesina	Osun State, South-West
Senior Special Assistant, Media and Publicity	Mallam Garba Shehu	Kano State, North-West
State Chief of Protocol/Special Assistant	Lawal Kazaure	Jigawa State, North-West
Accountant General of the Federation	Ahmed Idris	Kano State, North-West

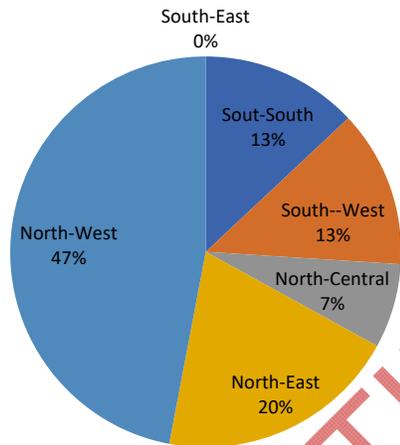
National Security Adviser	Maj. General Babagana Monguno [Rtd]	Borno State, North-East
Chief of Defence Staff	Maj. General Abayomi Olonisakin	Ekiti State, South-West
Chief of Army Staff	Major General Tukur Buratai	Borno State, North-East
Chief of Naval Staff	Rear Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwelbas	Cross Rivers, South-South
Chief of Air Staff	AVM Sadique Abubakar	Bauchi State, North-East
Chief of Defence Intelligence	AVM Monday Riku Morgan	Benue State, North Central
Director General, Department State Services (DSS)	Lawal Daura	Katsina State, North-West
Acting Chairperson, INEC	Mrs. Amina Zakari	Jigawa State, North-West
Managing Director, Nigerian Ports Authority [NPA]	Habibu Abdullahi	Kano State, North-West
Special Adviser, Niger Delta Amnesty Office	Brig. General Paul Boroh (rtd)	Bayelsa State, South-South
Acting Director General, NIMASA	Baba Haruna Jauro	Yobe State, North-East
Executive Vice Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, NCC	Umaru Dambatta	Kano State, North-West
Executive Chairman, Federal Inland Revenue Service [FIRS]	Babatunde Fowler	Lagos State, South-West
Director General, Budget Office of the Federation	Aliyu Gusau	Zamfara State, North-West
Group Managing Director, NNPC	Dr. Emmanuel Kachikwu	Delta State, South-South
Secretary to Government of the Federation	Babachir David Lawal	Adamawa State, North-East
Chief of Staff to the President	Abba Kyari	Borno State, North-East
Comptroller-General, Nigerian Customs Service	Col. Hameed Ibrahim Ali [rtd]	Kaduna State, North-West
Comptroller-General, Nigerian Immigration Service	Kure Martin Abeshi	Nasarawa State, North-Central
Senior Special Assistant on National Assembly Matters (Senate)	Senator Ita Enang	Akwabom State, South-South
Senior Special Assistant on National Assembly Matters (House of Reps)	Hon. Suleiman Kawu	Kano State, North-West
Managing Director, Department of Petroleum Resources [DPR]	Modecai Baba Ladan	Kano State, North-West
Managing Director, Asset Management Company of Nigeria [AMCON]	Ahmed Lawan Kuru	Kano State, North-West
Commissioner for Insurance	Mohammed Kari	North-West

Senior Special Assistant on Media to the Vice President	Laolu Akande	South-West
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Source: Newswatch, 2015

PREMIUM TIMES

## Appointments per Geo-Political Zone



This was further exacerbated by the detention of Kanu, the leader of IPOB for close to two years despite several court rulings granting him bail. Kanu was facing trials bordering on treasonable felony including the operation of a pirate radio, Radio Biafra. The little known Kanu emerged from obscurity to an ex prisoner with a virtual demi god status as the Supreme Leader of the Igbo nation. One of his immediate acts on his release was to call for a sit at home action to celebrate 50 the year-anniversary of the commencement of the Biafran civil war. The May 30<sup>th</sup> sit at home order was a huge success and buoyed by this and his new popularity and credibility amongst the Igbo youth in particular, Nnamdi Kanu and his IPOB compatriots called for the boycott of the Anambra gubernatorial election as a potent weapon of civil disobedience to activate their demand for a referendum on secession. They equally contended that boycott would convince the Federal Government that if there is no referendum before 2019, there will be no election in the Southeast in 2019.

However, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu is nowhere to be found today. Following Operation Python Dance II, a military exercise described by government as an operation to check criminality in the region, his home was cordoned off following clashes between IPOB members and soldiers with both sides accusing each other of starting the confrontation. Since September 14, 2017, when the military raided Kanu residence, he is yet to be seen in public with claims<sup>2</sup> and counter claims<sup>3</sup> about his whereabouts. The Federal Government has since proscribed IPOB under the Terrorism Prevention Act (TPA 2013) as a terrorist group. The South East Governors Forum also followed

<sup>2</sup>Kanu' lawyers and family are claiming that he was kidnapped and taken away by the military.

<sup>3</sup> The military through its spokesperson James Eneche claimed he did not arrest or abduct Kanu while former governor Orji Uzor Kalu claimed Kanu have escaped to London through Malaysia

the example by declaring the group to be illegal. Their position is that the November 18, 2017 governorship election in Anambra must hold.

However, while there were hopes that with the python dance 11, the Nnamdi Kanu's group may halt all calls for the boycott of the November 18 2017 governorship election. IPOB have reiterated its call for boycott of the elections. The Centre for Democracy and Development conducted field studies in the state between August and October 2017 in the preparation of this report. Our findings reveal....

### No Referendum, No Elections

Mazi Kanu's call for a boycott of the November 18 election was not accepted by all sections of the Igbo political elite. Indeed, it was largely rejected by the political elites who fear that a boycott will trigger serious political crisis, which could possibly include the militarization of the state, (which eventually happened), and open up the possibility of a declaration of a state of emergency and the envisaged human cost that may follow. In other words, they saw IPOB enforcement of their threat as a gateway to serious political crisis in the zone. It was in this context that many South Eastern groups, political parties and other pro-Biafra groups denounced it as follows:

Nnamdi Kanu "Anambra governorship poll may not hold unless a referendum is held for Biafra restoration before then".

All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), "The call to boycott the election is irresponsible and devoid of intellectual focus".

Professor Pita Ejiofor (OTU Suwakwa Igbo), "Boycotting an election is an evil wind that blows no one any good.... Drop calls for election boycott so as not to decimate the Igbo population again".

The Anambra State Association of Town Unions (ASATU), "The call for boycott of the governorship election is a shot to one's own foot, a call for a goal in one's own net and accordingly, a call to be seen as counterproductive and a dance to the gallery... it would not be in the best interest of the Igbos".

Ralph Uwazurike Biafra Independence Movement (BIM), "the development of Anambra state would be hampered if the boycott order is obeyed. It is anti-Igbo. Kanu is only trying to grab cheap relevance and popularity with Biafra agitation".

Chief Edwin Clark (Niger-Delta Leader and PANDEF Leader), "The IPOB leader should be locked away for declaring that an election would not take place in Anambra state in November".

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Mr Garba Umar (Anambra state Commissioner of Police), "IPOB cannot disrupt the governorship poll scheduled for November 18. IPOB have no power to stop the poll, the police would do its best to ensure the exercise is peaceful".

South East/ South South Network, "The refusal to participate in an election is to surrender in the game of struggle for leadership position, for which participants would have no one to blame but themselves.... The threat to boycott the election is childish and defeatist, which would only result in further marginalization of the people of the South East".

### **IPOB and the Preparation for Boycott of the Gubernatorial Election**

The call for the boycott of the election has led to the articulation of a lot of hate speech and door-to-door mobilization in the zone. IPOB has been using four strategies to ensure that the gubernatorial election scheduled for November 18, 2017 does not hold in the state.

The first a hate campaign. By hate campaign, we refer to any speech, gesture, conduct, writing or display, which could incite people to violence or prejudicial action. IPOB have employed a lot of hate campaign in dissuading people from participating in the November 18<sup>th</sup> election, not only through media engagements but the daily court sittings Kanu was hosting in his parents' house in Umuahia. For example, in a YouTube Video monitored, he attributed the Ozubulu killings to the government. In his words: "They have killed our people in Onitsha, they have been to the church, to massacre our people in Ozubulu, and as I was coming in now, I got information. When we ask you not to vote, people don't understand. Those you are voting for cannot protect you.... Any traditional ruler that asks you to come out to vote is only concerned about the stipend he receives from the state government" As Kanu continue to spew his hate speech, his statements elicited responses composed of significant ethnic slurs, mudslinging and bigotry by groups and individuals across the country worsening the situation appearing to confirm Kanu's position of generalised hatred for the Igbos. The escalation of hate speech heightened the already charged political environment negatively, leaving the people more divided.

The second strategy adopted by IPOB is the door-to-door mobilization of people seeking to convince them to boycott the November 18, 2017 governorship election. This new strategy tagged "evangelism" by the groups taking place simultaneously in all the 21 local government areas of the State. IPOB members argued that its door-to-door campaign would put the final nail to the November 18 governorship election (CDD August 2017). The strategy seeks to reach out to every street, compound, community and family in Anambra State to join the movement to enforce the boycott. The plan of the group is to instil the fear of violence in everyone and cause voter apathy during the election. Recently, the police in the state arrested two members of the group in a

printing press in Onitsha with printed fliers to instil fear and persuade people not to come out and vote. Some of the fliers read, "Call for referendum is not call for war," "No election in Anambra State," "Biafrans declare sit-at-home," and "Anyone who insists on participating in the Anambra election will be doing so at his or her own risk."<sup>4</sup> The fear is that to enforce the boycott, IPOB might try to physically restrain people from voting by obstructing the movement of voters on election day, and stopping them from exercising their franchise. Such action could have dangerous consequences leading to chaos and further militarization of the zone.

A third strategy, which emerged following the proscription of the group, is the use of Short Messaging Service (SMS). SMS is now being used as means of spreading the quest to continue the struggle for Biafra and the Anambra election boycott. They are able to continue spreading their hate messages in the new context of their prescription and Biafrans in the diaspora have also been active.

The final strategy is the activation of the rumour mill. There is active rumour mongering aimed at deterring people from participating in the election and forcing a low voter turnout. The potency of rumour mongering can best be illustrated by recent happenings where rumour was spread via SMS and social media that the army have invaded primary and secondary schools and are forcefully injecting pupils with monkey pox in an attempt to depopulate the South East. The rumour spread through the five southeastern states also into some South South states and led to the closure of schools as parents scammed to get their children out of schools. Some of the people interviewed also linked the attempt to a particular political party all in relation to the forthcoming elections (CDD October 2017). The connection to the elections becomes more evident as the monkey pox panic started from Anambra state where the army planned a medical outreach in Ozubulu, Ekwusigo Local Government Area as part of its corporate social responsibility. The army and government has at the time of concluding this report is still trying to dispel the rumours. However, the IPOB have gone ahead to buttress their importance and galvanizing power in the South East, issued a press release asking pupils return to school and dispelling the rumour of the monkey pox.

### **Government Strategy and the Anambra Governorship Election**

In response to the campaign to make the Anambra election fail, both the State and Federal governments are adopting different strategies to ensure that the governorship election holds as scheduled. The first is local/community mobilization by the state and

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<sup>4</sup> IPOB leaflets: Police arrest Onitsha publishers <https://www.nigerianewsgrio.com/site/stories/179344-ipob-leaflets-police-arrest-onitsha-publishers.html>

political parties and the second is the recent proscription of IPOB and its activities by the South East Governors Forum and the third which, is essentially Federal government strategy, is the deployment of heavy military personnel in the South East called Operation Python Dance 11.

First, there is the community mobilization programme initiated by the government of Anambra State including the political parties operating in the State to mobilize the people to come out and vote. They are sending out their foot soldiers to various communities and wards to encourage people to come out and vote. To get to the grassroots, the State Government and political parties are sending emissaries to the 326 wards in the state to mobilise they people.

The second strategy adopted by government is the recent proscription of IPOB and its activities by the South East Governors Forum. This came after reviewing the prevailing security situation in the zone and its attendant consequences, especially the militarization of the entire South East due to the activities of IPOB and the subsequent clash with the military in Abia State. The South East Governors' Forum has reiterated is earlier position that the November 18, 2017 gubernatorial election in Anambra State must hold contrary to the order by the now proscribed IPOB (Isiguzo, 2017:8). The decision to proscribe the activities of the organization was taken to avoid a looming danger that may be fatal on its trail.

The third strategy by the Government is the militarization of the South East and the deployment of troops by the Federal Government to the stronghold of IPOB in Abia State (Aba and Umuahia) especially to the Afaraukwu country home of the leader of the IPOB, Nnamdi Kanu. This operation python dance 11 validate our focus group discussion with the Inter Party Advisory Council (IPAC) members (September 2017) that the activities and the call to boycott the Anambra governorship election by IPOB would lead to the militarization of the election and the state. They cited the recently concluded primaries of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which witnessed an unprecedented deployment of policemen and other proximate security outfits in the state. They also held that in the event of breakdown of law and order in the state, the Federal Government might proclaim emergency rule with its associated anti-democratic tendencies (CDD Fieldwork, 2017: 5).

The militarisation of the state does have grave consequences for the elections itself. It may instil fear in the prospective election officials thereby making the mobilization of election officials difficult. It may also increase voter apathy. For instance, 20 squadrons of the Nigerian Police Force have already been deployed to the state. This could be increased as the campaigns continue and the election draws nearer (CDD Fieldwork, 2017:7). All these factors are generating mixed feelings among the citizens on whether to come out in their numbers and vote in the forthcoming governorship election or heed

to IPOB's directive to seat at home on Election Day. A review of the voter turnout since 2007 reveals a progressive decline in voter turnout;

In 2013, a total of 1,770,127 were registered, but only 465,891 voted, representing 24%. By INEC's election result, 1.6 million registered voters exist in Anambra state for the 2010 governorship election. Only 302,000 voted a miserly 17 percent voter turnout. In 2007, the state has 1,844,819 as registered voters but had 68% voter turnout for the governorship election. Thus, there is a progressive low voter turnout since 2007. So all the above factors may further drive down the turnout in the elections. However, we must point out that IPOB had at no time called for the boycott or disrupted the Continuous Voters Registration (CVR) exercise that took place.

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The CVR was conducted in several phases with the second phase that started on the 10<sup>th</sup> and ended on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 2017, which was at the ward level across Anambra State showed no disruption. The first phase in April, according to INEC recorded 79,720 people while the second phase from August 10 to 15, 2017, recorded 115,000 people bringing the number to 2,042,548 from July 24-28 July, 2017 as grand total for the state excluding the August ward level registration (CDD Fieldwork Report, 2017:3). This is encouraging that people may turn out to vote as well as the campaign by the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) asking all eligible voters in the five South-East states to participate in the voter's registration exercise in readiness for a possible referendum for the emergence of the Republic of Biafra. It also requested members who are registered voters in Anambra State to come out in their numbers and vote a candidate of their choice. Boycotting the election will truncate democratic governance in the state, the group argued (CDD Fieldwork Report, 2017:3).

MASSOB position is that for a proposed statehood of Biafra to be ordered and declared by United Nations, the voting population of Biafrans through the registration and possession of the voters' card must be captured in the national demography of the existing political territory (Nigeria) from which the voting population of coming statehood (Biafra) is seeking a separation (ThisDay, 2017). The MASSOB position is in contrast to the position of IPOB leader, Kanu, who has asked Southeast electorate to boycott any further election in the zone beginning with the Anambra state governorship poll on November 18 until a referendum is ordered.

## Conclusion

As the November 18<sup>th</sup> Anambra Governorship election draws nearer, it is important for all stakeholders to put hands on deck towards the consolidation of democracy. While Nnamdi Kanu has been declared missing, with nobody aware of his whereabouts, IPOB continues to maintain that no elections shall hold in Anambra state. This hard line stature by a group already proscribed by the State as a terrorist organisation raises concerns. First, we must not assume that the proscription of the group has rendered

it toothless in the scheme of things. The proscription does not stop organizations from functioning and it is an illusion to assume that it will stop the IPOB agitation. The group may attempt to enforce its boycott of the election at all cost and this may lead to an outcome that threatens democracy not just in Anambra State but also in the South East and indeed the country as a whole. The destruction of lives and property cannot be entirely ruled out at this stage as the group may not only resort to confronting the security forces but may also attempt disrupting the elections. We cannot completely rule out the possibility of IPOB trying to disrupt the polls as they have been accused of harassing political party stalwarts and candidates, including a confrontation with incumbent Governor Willie Obiano during a church service on July 30, 2017 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church Ekwuluobia. During the clash, the IPOB members were chanting - no election in Anambra on November 18. We should also not forget that IPOB at some point during this year enjoyed support from other separatist and ethnic movements such as some Niger Delta militant groups - Concerned Militant Leaders (CML), Niger Delta People Democratic Front (NDPDF) and Rainbow Marabas Squad (RMS).

However, with the determination of the state to conduct the election, it is likely to be conducted as planned as arrangements for massive deployment of security forces have already been concluded. It is important that the security forces do not use excessive force in case of any skirmishes arising during the election. It would be recalled that Amnesty International have drawn attention in their reports that the Nigeria military has a history of the unlawful killing of protesting members of IPOB engaged in demonstrations. The Operation Python Dance 11 has elicited so much pain and emotional anguish within the Igbo community that the State must ensure that the situation does not worsen. The Nigerian State must accept that the attachment to Biafra among a part of the Igbo community is real and deep-rooted and force cannot drive away such sentiments. Not all members of the community however believe that secession is the best option so the way the security forces operate will have consequences for which side increases its support.

It is also important to note that if IPOB engages in violence and disrupts the election and their activities lead to a declaration of a state of emergency on Anambra state, it is IPOB that will lose its social capital. In that case, it is possible that the entire South East may revolt against IPOB and cause an implosion that will invert the Biafra struggle against itself. There are already a number of disgruntled citizens in Anambra State who believe that IPOB has singled their State as a guinea pig that will make them the only Igbo state without an elected governor in the South East. Such an outcome, desired by IPOB would trigger a constitutional crisis as the term of the governor would have elapsed and a sole administrator will have to be appointed by the Federal Government. Putting it succinctly, Mefor (2017) opined that many Igbo people, especially Anambra people will not be happy that other South East States are governed by elected governors while only Anambra State is ruled by a retired army

general possibly from outside Igboland, which is most likely outcome if the election fails.

A successful election boycott by the IPOB poses extreme danger to the Federal Government and national politics. It will boost the confidence of secessionists and equally trigger the drive for other ethnic groups or sections of the country to toe the same line. On the other hand, a failure of the boycott will also place the Biafran struggle on the line, should Anambra people come out en-mass in November to vote. It is therefore imperative that the Nigerian government desists from using force and militarizing the state to avoid low voter turn out and also to avoid violence or a faceoff with the IPOB secessionist movement. It is also recommended that voter education is commenced in earnest in the state, political parties, civil society and INEC must start a campaign of encouraging people to vote, allay fears and promote violent free election.

The Stakes are very high for Nigeria. If the experiment of boycotting and disrupting the governorship election by IPOB in the Anambra gubernatorial election succeeds, it would be very difficult to organise the 2019 general elections in the South East. To make the election possible, voter education becomes extremely important on the part of the political parties and INEC. However, there is an indication that the election will hold as scheduled by INEC. Table 1 below, which is our first scenario before the Python Dance 11 in the South East explains this hope.

List of LGAs in Anambra State where the boycott is likely/not likely to be high based on variables of enlightenment, cosmopolitanism, education, population of IPOB members, heavy taxation, higher presence of government security agents, etc.

S/N	LGA	LGs that are likely or not likely to witness boycott	Number of Registered Voters	Reason for likely or not likely boycott election	Remark
1.	Aguata	Not likely	101, 974	Has small number of IPOB members	Supports holding of election
2.	Ayamelum	Not likely	55, 936	Has small number of IPOB members	In support of election and Obiano
3.	Anambra East	Not likely	61, 178	Has small number of	Hosts heavy

				IPOB members	security operatives
4.	Anambra West	Not likely	43, 172	Has small number of IPOB members	Hosts heavy security operatives
5.	Anaocha	Not likely	76, 812	Has small number of IPOB members	Supports holding of election
6.	Awka North	Not likely	44, 159	Has small number of IPOB members	Hosts heavy security operatives
7.	Awka South	Not likely	118, 312	Has small number of IPOB members	Hosts heavy security operatives
8.	Dunukofia	Not likely	45, 289	Has small number of IPOB members	Hosts heavy security operatives
9.	Ekwusigo	Not likely	62, 318	Has small number of IPOB members	Supports holding of election
10.	Idemili North	Likely	173, 832	Has high Number of IPOB members	Supports election boycott
11.	Idemili South	Likely	85, 731	Has high Number of die-hard IPOB members	Supports election boycott
12.	Ihiala	Not likely	113, 783	Has small number of IPOB members	Supports holding election
13.	Njikoka	Not likely	70, 415	Has small number of IPOB members	Supports holding election

14.	Nnewi North	Not likely	112, 121	Has small number of IPOB members	Supports holding election
15.	Nnewi South	Not likely	57, 069	Has small number of IPOB members	Supports holding election
16.	Ogbaru	Likely	139, 057	Has high Number of die-hard IPOB members, illiteracy, heavy taxation	Supports boycott of election
17.	Onitsha North	Likely	117, 332	Has high Number of die-hard IPOB members, illiteracy, heavy taxation	Supports boycott of election
18.	Onitsha South	Likely	123, 466	Has high Number of die-hard IPOB members, illiteracy, heavy taxation	Supports boycott of election
19.	Orumba North	Not likely	61, 321	Has small number of IPOB members	Supports holding election
20.	Orumba South	Not likely	46, 100	Has small number of IPOB members	Supports holding election
21.	Oyi	Likely	75, 159	Has high Number of die-hard	Supports boycott of election

				IPOB members	
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Anambra State consists of twenty-one (21) local government areas as shown above however, it is likely that six LGAs may witness low voter turnout as a result of the IPOB call for election boycott. These LGAs are the strongholds of IPOB and are likely to mobilize members and sympathizers to boycott the governorship election. They also have a high number of registered voters. What this means is that the election would hold in many LGAs but it may witness poor voter turnout in the strongholds of IPOB in areas such as Ogbaru, Onitsha North and South, Oyi, and Idemili North and South. Moreover, the support for the November 18 governorship election comes with the assurance from 179 communities under the aegis of the Anambra State Association of Town Unions (ASATU), have reaffirmed their support and endorsement of Governor Willie Obiano for a second term in office. The unions said that their support for Obiano is based on their appraisal of his scorecard in the first term, stressing that the governor had achieved a lot and deserved to be re-elected for continuity and consolidation in the areas of infrastructural development, security, and agricultural development among others (Onwuchekwa and Agbodo, 2017:1). It should be noted that these unions could mobilize vigilante groups in their various communities to checkmate the activities of the IPOB during the governorship election since Anambra State has one of the strongest density of vigilante groups in the South East.

Nonetheless, following Operation Python Dance 11 and the discontent it generated, the likelihood of having high voter turnout is low. Finally, the State, civil society and communities must be vigilant that last minute conflict triggers via SMS or social media are not allowed to disrupt the election.

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