

# THE NIGERIAN ELECTORAL PROCESS IN PERSPECTIVE

## Elections Under Colonial Rule

Before independence in 1960, Nigeria, which existed as an amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates since 1914, had already witnessed three different elections:

**1923:** In September, the first election took place in Lagos and Calabar following the introduction of the Sir Hugh **Clifford Constitution in 1922.**

The **Nigerian National Democratic Party** led by Herbert Macaulay won the three seats for the Lagos Legislative Council while the **Calabar Improvement League**, won the only seat for Calabar. Although voting was by direct election, it (the election) was based on limited franchise.

Those who could vote or be voted for were only British citizens residing in the cities and British Protected Persons with a minimum gross income of 100 Pounds a year. Many Nigerians were thus disenfranchised.

**1946:** An indirect system of election which filled seats in Regional and Central Legislatures, following the introduction of **Sir Arthur Richards (Lord Milverton) Constitution** a year earlier.

The Legislative Council had 45 members for the entire Country – 28 members were Nigerians of whom four were elected and the remaining 24 were nominated.

Three political units emerged: the Northern, Western and Southern Regions.

By the Indirect Electoral System, adult males in each village chose a representative for the district level, who in turn chose a Provincial representative. The Provincial Electoral College elected by secret ballot the specific number of representatives to the Regional Assembly.

**1951/54:** General Election by Electoral College, following the Sir John **McPherson Constitution**, guaranteed greater regional autonomy. So, a Council of Ministers had 18 members – 12 Nigerian and six officials reflecting equal representation by each region as nominated by the Regional Legislature.

The Houses of Assembly in each region was complemented with a House of Chiefs in the North and West. But the House of Representatives had 139 Nigerians out of the total of 142 members.

By the 1954 General Elections, the **Sir Oliver Lyttleton Constitution** had replaced the Electoral Collegiate System with Direct Elections as a means of electing 184 Members of the House of Representatives.

### **Elections During The First Republic**

Nigeria's political independence was ushered in by the 12 December 1959 general elections into local councils, Regional and Federal Legislatures. Before the elections, and based on the Federal Department of Statistics' projection of Nigeria's population to be 31,559,026, the political parties all agreed that there should be approximately one seat in the new House of Representatives to every 100,000 persons in Nigeria.

Elections were therefore held in 312 single member constituencies nationwide; but with the vacant seats allocated regionally thus:

Northern Nigeria:	174
Western Nigeria:	62
Eastern Nigeria:	73
Lagos Federal Territory:	3

Voting was by secret ballot and all registered adults in Western and Eastern Nigeria were eligible to vote. In Northern Nigeria only registered adult males were, however, eligible to vote.

Besides, to qualify, the election regulations indicated that a candidate must:

- Be a British subject or protected person over 21 years of age
- Be male (in the North)
- He or his father must have been born in Nigeria, or might have resided in the country for a continuous period of up to three years
- Must be of sound mind
- Not have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment exceeding six months
- Not hold public office or act in any public office.

The elections were supervised (conducted) by an Electoral Commission headed by a Chief Commissioner, Mr. R.E Wraith, who was a senior lecturer in Public

Administration at the University College, Ibadan. Another British, Mr. J. J. Warren was appointed Executive Secretary.

Four Nigerians - Alhaji Muhammed Bello (North), Mr. Anthony Aniagolu (East), Prof. Oritsejolomi Thomas (West) and Mr. M. A. Shosilva (Lagos). – were to join the expatriates later as commissioners. The Southern Cameroon’s representative was Mr. K. A. de Bohn

Twenty six political parties were registered to contest the elections. Yet, a tri-regional party system had begun to emerge by common consent among the parties albeit reflecting the dominant ethnic group in each region.

Northern Peoples Congress (NPC)	Northern Nigeria
Action Group (AG)	Western Nigeria
National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC)	Eastern Nigeria

**Other political parties included:**

- Democratic Party of Nigeria and Cameroon (DPNC)
- Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU)
- United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC)
- Borno Youth Movement (BYM)
- United National Independence Party (UNIP)

The Political leaders who led the campaigns on behalf of the three-dominant regional and ethnic-based political parties were:

Sir Ahmadu Bello - NPC  
Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe - NCNC  
Chief Obafemi Awolowo - AG

They campaigned vigorously across the length and breadth of Nigeria. The parties traded charges of hooliganism at each other. Issues hardly formed the messages of the campaigns. Instead, abusive language, ethno-religious (tribal) slurs and violence featured prominently. Chief Awolowo added the helicopter offensive to the drama and excitement of the elections; penetrating the remote villages where other major political leaders had never been. The symbols of the dominant political parties helped the campaigners to sell their party programmes.

<b>Parties</b>	<b>Symbol/Logo</b>
<b>NPC</b>	<b>The Hoe</b>
<b>AG</b>	<b>The Palm Tree</b>
<b>NCNC</b>	<b>The Cock</b>

At the close of nominations, a total of 953 candidates stood elections in the 312 constituencies. A breakdown showed:

<b>Region</b>	<b>Nominees</b>	<b>Seats</b>
<b>North</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>East</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>West</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Lagos</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

Beyond the symbols and messages, ethnicity and religion were to play dominant roles in the results of the 1959 General Elections:

NPC - 142  
 NCNC - 89  
 AG - 72  
 Others - 9

A little over seven million Nigerians (7,185,555) turned out to vote at the General Elections that ushered in a new government at Independence in 1960. The NPC and NCNC had to go into a coalition to form the Federal Government on 20 December 1959 in a ratio of 10 NPC ministers to 7 NCNC cabinet members. The AG led by Awolowo formed the opposition in the parliamentary (Westminster) system of government. The house had its inaugural session on 12 January 1960

A compilation of an electoral roll through house-to-house enumeration of voters was undertaken a few months to the general elections.

At the compilation of the voters register, eligible voters employed the secret ballot system to cast votes (using ballot papers and ballot boxes) for election into the 312

Federal House of Representatives. Results of the election reflected ethno-religious sentiments of the dominant political party in a region:

<b>Region</b>	<b>Voters</b>	<b>%Poll</b>
Northern Region	3,258,520	89.4
Eastern region	1,929,754	75.3
Western Region	1,887,209	71.2
Lagos	110,072	76.2

In the regional elections, which followed early in 1960, the dominant political party and by extension, the largest ethnic group in each region, reflected in the voting pattern. The winning party readily swallowed up the smaller minority parties within its region. So that NPC was dominant in the North despite the existence of NEPU, UMBC and BYM in the region. AG was dominant in the West despite the existence of NDC (Niger Delta Congress) and other smaller parties. NCNC was the leading party in the East overshadowing the DPNC and UNIP.

Leadership and influence still resided largely in the leading political figures. **Ahmadu Bello** (NCP), **Nnamdi Azikiwe** (NCNC) and **Obafemi Awolowo** (AG) held sway in the regions but had to cede some power to their deputies when it was expedient to do so. Thus, **Dr Michael Okpara** took charge as president of the NCNC; even as he had assumed the Premiership of the Eastern Region in Enugu after Azikiwe became the Governor-General of the Federation.

**Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola** took over as Premier of the Western Region in Ibadan when Awolowo became Leader of the opposition in the Federal House of Representatives. Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, remained in Kaduna as Premier of the Northern Region; while Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was the Prime Minister of the Federation in Lagos, the capital of Nigeria.

## The 1964 General Elections

From a multiparty structure which marked the 1959 pre-independent elections, Nigeria was to witness the emergence of a two-party system in the 1964 General Elections: The Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) and the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA)

In their quest to appropriate power at the Centre and dominate the Federal Government, the NPC, NCNC and AG sought alliances with the minority parties.

The **NNA** was an amalgam of hitherto disparate political tendencies that included:

1. NPC (Northern People Congress)
2. NNDP (Nigerian National Democratic Party, led by Western Region Premier Samuel Ladoke Akintola, who had indeed earlier formed the United Peoples Party (UPP) in protest against perceived injustices in the AG. The NNDP had its symbol as the hand)
3. MDF (Midwest Democratic Front, which was an offshoot of the Midwest Peoples Congress and elements of the AG and UPP in the new Midwest Region)
4. Dynamic Party which was led by the famed mathematician Dr. Chike Obi
5. Republican Party led by Dr J. O. J. Okezie
6. Niger Delta Congress
7. Lagos State United Front

The **UPGA**, on the other hand, was a coalition of some six political parties, namely:

1. NCNC (now known as National Convention of Nigerian Citizens and led by Dr Michael Okpara, Premier of the Eastern Region)
2. AG (now led by Alhaji Dauda Adegbenro since Awolowo and his Lieutenants were serving various jail term)
3. NEPU (Northern Elements Progressive Union, led by Malam Aminu Kano)
4. UMBC (United Middle Belt Congress led by Joseph Tarka)
5. NPF (Northern Progressive Front)

The tone was thus set for an election that appeared programmed to plunge the nation into crises, the seeds of which had been sown by events in the young nation which had barely a year earlier, become a Sovereign Republic.

The crises generating issues were:

- i. The jail terms handed down on Chief Obafemi Awolowo and his leading AG members on charges of sedition and treasonable felony in November 1962
- ii. The 1963 census which put Nigeria's Population at some 55.6 million, but which remained controversial because the Northern Region was half the country's population; a development hotly contested by the NCNC and the AG. Thus, the two grand political alliances that emerged pitched the North against the South in the 1964 General Election. Chief Eyo E. Esua, chairman of Federal Electoral Commission came up with election guidelines to ensure free, and fair and non-violent elections by the 22 million registered voters of Nigeria's 55.6 million. Ballot boxes were designed to bear the symbols of each party in the elections scheduled for 30 December 1964 into the 312 seat House of Representatives.
- iii. The basis of representation, regionally, had however slightly altered:

North	167 seats	From 174
East	70 seats	From 73
West	47 seats	From 47
Midwest	14 seats	From 15
Lagos	3 seats	From 2

The elections were largely boycotted in the East, Midwest, Lagos and parts of the Western Region. In the North, (61) of the NNA candidates were returned unopposed. NNDP candidates in the West, where S. L. Akintola was the Premier, were equally returned unopposed for the NNA. UPGA denounced the outcome, calling the election a "farce"

The NNA insisted that the elections were valid wherever they took place and that by-elections should only be held in the Eastern Region constituencies where the boycott was total.

Stagnated as the elections were, President Nnamdi Azikiwe called on Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa to form a new government of "broadly based national" character. Even so elections were held some three months later in the Eastern Region on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1965, in which UPGA won 52 of the 54 seats.

The performance of the parties in the 312-member parliament was now:

NNA - 198 seats  
 UPGA - 108 seats  
 Independents - 5 seats  
 Vacant - 1 seat

Yet, the political atmosphere remained charged. Intimidation and brutalisation of political opponents oftentimes resulting in deaths including the vandalism of their property were rampant. Manipulation of the political process for partisan appropriation of the perquisites of office and suffocation of ethnic minorities fuelling ethnic animosities and suspicion, provided a conducive climate for the military coup d'état of 15 January 1966 which claimed the lives of some leading actors in Nigerian politics.

The 1963 constitution was suspended and political activities were banned.



## **The 1979 General Elections**

After 13 years in government, the military lifted the ban on political activities on 21 September 1978.

Before then, the Federal Military Government of General Murtala Mohammed had set the stage for political activities by instituting on 4 October 1975 a 50-member Constitution Drafting Committee, headed by Lagos-based lawyer, Chief Rotimi Williams.

On 15 November 1976, the Head of State General Olusegun Obasanjo (who assumed leadership on the assassination of general Murtala Muhammed) inaugurated a new 24-member **Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO)** headed by Mr. Richard Avic, a retired Civil servant.

This would be followed up with the inauguration of a Constituent Assembly on 11 September 1977, headed by Justice Udo Udoma, a judge of the Supreme Court of Nigeria. Charged with scrutinising, re-examining and amending articles, where necessary, in the Draft Constitution, the Constituent Assembly also had the implicit task of giving legitimacy to the decisions of the Constitution Drafting Committee, who were all appointed.

The 230-member Assembly had only 40 of its ex-officio members appointed by the Federal Military Government. Most members of the Constituent Assembly were elected indirectly through a Collegiate System based largely on Local Government units –95 on the basis of five members per state and a further 95 on the basis of population distribution.

The Constituent Assembly, which began its clause-by-clause examination of the Draft Constitution in December 1976 wound up in June 1978.

Head of State, Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, on 21 September 1978 signed Decree No. 25 which promulgated the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria into law. It would come into effect on 1 October 1979 when a new civilian administration would be sworn in.

The 1979 Constitution marked a major paradigm shift in Nigeria's political experience. It evolved a presidential system of government modeled after the United States of America, and effectively abandoning the Parliamentary (Westminster) system inherited from the British at independence in 1960.

The 1979 Constitution also:

- Enshrined the doctrine of separation of powers in the checks and balances in a presidential system of government.
- Improved and strengthened the provision of Human Rights
- Introduced a new idea of incorporating fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy in the constitution
- Elevated to the constitutional level an entire code of conduct for public officers.

The constitution also stipulated conditions for the formation of political parties, principal among which was that a party must have "national spread" i.e. it must not be limited to an ethnic group or its activities defined by purely ethnic considerations. Five political parties emerged to contest the 1979 General Elections:

<b>Party</b>	<b>Chairman</b>
National Party of Nigeria (NPN)	Adisa Akinloye
Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN)	Obafemi Awolowo
Peoples Redemption Party (PRP)	Aminu Kano
Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP)	Waziri Ibrahim
Nigerian Peoples party (NPP)	Adeniran Ogunsanya

(Another party, the Nigerian Advance Party (NAP) led by Lagos Lawyer Dr Tunji Braithwaite would be registered later to contest the 1983 elections)

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Slogan</b>	<b>Presidential Candidate</b>
House and Maize	One Nation One destiny	Shehu Shagari
Light Bulb	Up Nigeria	Obafemi Awolowo
Key	<i>Nasara</i> (victory)	Aminu Kano
Cockerel and Palm Tree	<i>Adalchi</i> (fairness)	Waziri Ibrahim
A family	Power	Nnamdi Azikiwe

Symbols and slogans apart, it soon became obvious that the new parties were a reincarnation of the tri-regional parties of the First Republic. The same actors, manifesting tendencies that threw up deep-rooted ethnic sentiments, were back on the political turf in a fierce struggle for the control of the reigns of power in a Federal Republic; even though a 19-state structure had emerged in Nigeria.

The elections were conducted for positions in the Local Councils, State Assemblies, Governorship, the Federal House of Representatives, the Senate and the Presidency. Another remarkable constitutional departure from the First Republic was the existence of a Senate into which elections would be conducted. Besides, the Governor was the

Chief Executive of the State, assisted by a Deputy; and the President as the Chief Executive of the nation, also had an assistant in a Vice President.

Results of the elections in the states confirmed the ethnic colouration of the parties:

The NPN was dominant largely in the North; the UPN controlled the Yoruba South West while the NPP was the leading party in the Igbo states of Anambra and Imo. The PRP held onto its traditional NEPU stronghold of Kano and Kaduna while the GNPP made a statement in Borno and Gongola States in the North East more or less indicating Kanuri independence of Hausa –Fulani domination.

A break down of states controlled by the parties is given below:

<b>Party</b>	<b>States Controlled</b>
<b>NPN</b>	Bauchi, Benue, Cross-River, Kwara, Niger, Rivers and Sokoto
<b>UPN</b>	Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo and Bendel
<b>NPP</b>	Anambra, Imo and Plateau
<b>GNPP</b>	Borno and Gongola
<b>PRP</b>	Kano and Kaduna

The pattern of voting was finally reflected in the Presidential Elections. Of the 47,433,757 registered voters, 16,846,633 Nigerians voted in the 11 August, 1979 Presidential Elections:

<b>Party</b>	<b>Votes Polled</b>
<b>NPN</b>	5,688,857
<b>UPN</b>	4,916,651
<b>NPP</b>	2,822,523
<b>GNPP</b>	1,686,489
<b>PRP</b>	1,732,113

Alhaji Shehu Usman Aliyu Shagari, of the NPN was the eventual winner of the Presidential Elections on 26 September 1979 after the Supreme Court had interpreted the provisions of the constitution on what constitutes two-thirds of 19 states, critical requirement to ascertain overall winner. The court's interpretation followed a legal challenge instituted by Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the UPN, challenging the FEDECO declaration on 16 August 1979 of Shagari as President-elect and claiming that Shagari

could not have won the elections because he did not muster the 25 per cent of votes cast in 13 states of the Federation.

Justice Fatai Williams swore in Shagari as the first Executive President of Nigeria on 1st October 1979. The reins of government were handed over to Shagari by Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, out-going head of State.

### **The 1983 elections**

The Nigeria Advance Party (NAP) of Dr Tunji Braithwaite joined the existing five political parties to contest the elections.

The NPN consolidated its hold on the polity, breaking into the traditional strongholds of the UPN and NPP. The gubernatorial election results provided the first indication that the NPN had transformed itself into a "Super-Power," as its new slogan indicated, albeit the other parties alleged the process was massively rigged.

<b>Party</b>	<b>States Controlled</b>
<b>NPN</b>	Anambra, Bauchi, Bendel, Benue, Borno, Cross-River, Gongola, Kaduna, Niger, Oyo, Rivers, Sokoto
<b>UPN</b>	Lagos, Ogun, Kwara, Ondo
<b>NPP</b>	Imo and Plateau
<b>GNPP</b>	Nil
<b>PRP</b>	Kano
<b>NAP</b>	Nil

In the Presidential Elections, Shehu Shagari of the NPN again emerged winner defeating Awolowo (UPN), Nnamdi Azikiwe (NPP), Aminu Kano (PRP), Waziri Ibrahim (GNPP) and Tunji Braithwaite (NAP)

Three months into the new Government, on 31 December 1983, another military *coup d'état* again aborted Nigeria's journey in democratic governance.

### **The 1989 to 1993 Elections**

Five years after the Military usurped power, on 3 May 1989, another constitution was decreed into existence. Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, who in a coup d'état had overthrown

the Gen. Muhammad Buhari Government in August 1985, created two political parties and foisted them on the political class.

He called the politicians “**equal founders and equal joiners**” of the two political parties, which were “**a little to left**” and a “**little to the right**” of the centre.

<b>Party</b>	<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Colour</b>
Social Democratic Party (SDP)	A Horse	Green
National Republican Convention (NRC)	The Eagle	White

The influence of the Federal Military Government was obvious in the design, membership, structures and infrastructure of the two ‘grassroots’ parties: Government provided the funds, influenced the appointment of their leaderships, provided buildings and logistics for the parties.

The constitution would not come into effect during the life of the regime, because handover date (to a civilian president) was frequently shifted from 1990 to 1992 and then to January 1993 and finally August 1993, in what appeared like an endless transition programme.

It is noteworthy though that a civilian government had been installed at the local governments, State Houses of Assembly and the National Assembly. Civilian Governors had also taken charge as Chief Executives in the 30 States of the Federation. The states and their Governors were beholden to General Babangida who styled himself President.

The Presidential Elections of 12 June 1993 pitched the SDP’s Moshood Abiola a businessman, against NRC’s Bashir Tofa another businessman. It was an election that promised to erase the ghosts of ethnicity and religious intolerance, which had for so long haunted the political space.

The results of the elections were inconclusive as the Babangida regime annulled the results, in which Abiola was adjudged the winner, promising another Presidential election before October 1993. Instead, by 27 August 1993 an Interim National Government (ING) headed by Ernest Shonekan, was put in place. Gen. Sani Abacha, however, sacked the ING in November of the same year and abrogated the 1989 Constitution (which never really came into effect), banned the political parties and declared political activities illegal.

## **The 1999 Elections**

Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar became Head of State on the death of General Sani Abacha in June 1998. Building on the recommendations of a work-in-progress constitution evolved by the Abacha regime, a transition programme was announced to terminate with a handover to an elected civilian president on 29 May 1999.

Three political parties – Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Peoples Party (APP) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) - were registered by the **Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)** to participate in the elections into legislative and executive positions.

Most of the political actors were drawn from the pool of politicians that had participated in elections since the first Republic or who had been in government as military personnel.

The results of the 1999 Governorship elections indicated that the **PDP** had more national spread by winning in 21 states across the country. **APP** followed with nine states; while **AD**, which held sway in the Yoruba Southwest had six states.

The Presidential Elections were to pitch the PDP against an AD-APP alliance, whose joint candidate Chief Olu Falae lost to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, a former Military Head of State from 1976 to 1979. Now a civilian, Obasanjo would, draw on politicians from the AD and APP to join his PDP members, form a broad-based government of National Unity.

## **Count down to the Fourth Republic**

The nation has begun preparations to usher in a Fourth Republic at the end of general elections billed for April 2003. It is widely held that the elections are crucial to the survival of the Nigerian state.

This is more so given the fact that the nation is yet to experience a successful civilian-to-civilian transition, in addition to the fear that elections conducted and supervised by civilian governments have often been fraught with fraud and irregularities.

Others even wallow in the 'belief' that election years that end with the figure three in the nation's political history have ended in turbulence. The general elections in 1963, the argument goes, 1983 and 1993 had variously ruptured the political normalcy in the nation.

While 1963 was largely characterised by electoral malpractice, violence, declaration of

a state of emergency in the Western Region, which may have set the stage for eventual military take over and a harrowing 30 month-long Civil war, the '83 elections were no less different. Perceived electoral injustices and brazen manipulation of election results again, perhaps created the enabling environment for another military take-over.

Then in 1993, the Presidential Elections were officially declared inconclusive even when it was obvious to the majority of Nigerians that a winner had emerged in Chief Moshood Abiola.

The challenge of a successful, free, fair and credible conduct of the 2003 Elections rests squarely with INEC. The registration of additional political parties to 30, after a series of litigations, set the tone for the 2003 process as the political space has been widened to accommodate pluralism of ideas and opinions as well as divergent ideological persuasions by disparate political personalities.

INEC's sense of purpose was also heightened by its release of the timetable of the General Elections (See Time Table)

Other notable highlights of INEC's preparations include:

- The delineation of 120,000 polling stations nationwide
- 8,800 collation centres nationwide
- 60 million registered voters (so far)
- 500,000 polling officials to be engaged
- 3 sets of elections over a five-week period
- Ballot papers reflecting the logo, symbols and colours of 30 political parties
- 5-week long elections that will produce 780 State Houses of Assembly members in 36 states of the Federation; 361 members of the Federal House of Representatives 109 Senators, 36 State Governors and one President

Going by the sheer magnitude of the elections, how prepared is the INEC?

Chairman of INEC, Sir Abel Ibude Guobadia, says: "We are as ready as we can be, as of this time".

Speaking in the wake of the release of the 2003 General Elections timetable, he hinged his confidence on the **computerisation** of the Voter Registration exercise.

Guobadia notes that since every election process is preceded by a credible Voter Register, "INEC decided to computerise the process...we were able to assemble a computerised system, went to the field in September (2002) and collected voter

details including names, age, sex, address and thumb prints of the voters”.

A marked departure from previous voter registration exercises since the 1950's in Nigeria, the INEC initiative holds the promise of giving the 2003 elections a patina of credibility. This is because the computerisation specifically seeks to eliminate incidents of multiple registration; a loophole often exploited by unscrupulous aspirants to political offices to stuff ballot boxes with votes bearing fictitious names of voters.

INEC, which began the scanning and processing of voter details in October 2002, hopes to display a comprehensive and genuine voter register before the end of February 2003.

The commission said it sent out 70 million voters cards during the registration exercise, but only 67 million were returned, thereby creating room for the supplementary exercise held by mid-January 2003 to address complaints that in the last September exercise, some politicians may have disenfranchised some Nigerians because of alleged hoarding of registration materials.

Of the 30 political parties expected to field candidates in the General Elections, only the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has conducted shadow elections (primaries) for candidates into the State Assemblies, the National Assembly, and the Gubernatorial and Presidential Elections. Others, however, had contented themselves with selecting Presidential candidates and party officials only based on provisions of their various constitutions.

Nonetheless, only 17 out of the 30 parties registered for the elections are fielding Presidential candidates as shown in the table below.

<b>POLITICAL PARTY</b>	<b>PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE</b>	<b>RUNNING MATE</b>
Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	Atiku Abubakar
All Nigeria peoples Party (ANPP)	Muhammadu Buhari	Chuba Okadigbo
National Conscience Party (NCP)	Chief Gani Fawehimi	Jerome Tala Topye
All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA)	Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu	Alhaji Sani Bayero
National Democratic Party (NDP)	Gen.Ike Nwachukwu (rtd)	Alhaji Aliyu Habu-Fari
United Nigeria Peoples Party (UNPP)	Sen.Jim Nwobodo	Alhaji Mohammed Goni
Progressive Action Congress (PAC)	Ms.Sarah Jubril	Chief Mohammed Shittu Adeyinka Ali-Balogun
Peoples Mandate Party (PMP)	Chief Arthur Nwankwo	Otubo Raymond
African Alliance Party (AAP)	Alhaji Yahaya Ndu	Hajiya Asma'u A. Mohammed



National Action Council (NAC)	Dr. Olapade Agoro	
Peoples Redemption Party (PRP)	Alhaji Balarabe Musa	Ngozi Okafor
Democratic Alternative (DA)	Dr. Abayomi Ferreira	Edoibge Ihi Emmanuel
Justice Party (JP)	Pastor Chris Okotie	Hajiya Mairo B. Habib
National Advance Party (NAP)	Dr.Tunji Braithwaite	Suleiman Galadanchi
Movement for Democracy and Justice (MDJ)	Alhaji M.D.Yusuf	Emantor Patrick Wales
Liberal Democratic Party of Nigeria (LDPN)	Chief Pere Ajunwa	
Green Party of Nigeria (GPN)	Chief Olisa Agbakoba	

13 other parties did not field any candidates by the statutory period of Feb.11. These parties include:

- Alliance for Democracy (AD)
- Nigerian Peoples Congress (NPC)
- Community Party of Nigeria (CPN)
- All Peoples Liberation Party (APLP)
- Better Nigeria Progressive Party (BNPP)
- Masses Movement of Nigeria (MMN)
- National Reformation party (NRP)
- Party for Social Democracy (PSD)
- Peoples Salvation Party (PSP)
- United Democratic Party (UDP)
- New Democrats (ND)
- National Mass Movement of Nigeria (NMMN)
- New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP)