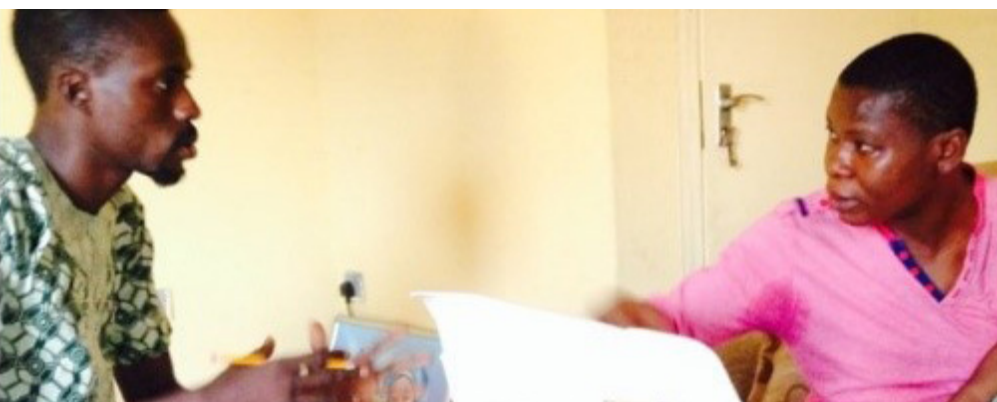




**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



# IFES PRE-ELECTION SURVEY IN NIGERIA 2014



**January 2015**

This publication was produced by IFES for the U.S. Agency for International Development concerning Cooperative Agreement Number AID-620-A-14-00002.

# **IFES Pre-Election Survey in Nigeria 2014**

*A nationwide pre-election survey exploring knowledge, opinions and expectations of the 2015 presidential and National Assembly elections in Nigeria*

January 2015

Rola Abdul-Latif and Matthew Emery





IFES Pre-Election Survey in Nigeria 2014

Copyright © 2015 International Foundation for Electoral Systems. All rights reserved.

Permission Statement: No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without the written permission of IFES.

Requests for permission should include the following information:

- A description of the material for which permission to copy is desired.
- The purpose for which the copied material will be used and the manner in which it will be used.
- Your name, title, company or organization name, telephone number, fax number, email address and mailing address.

Please send all requests for permission to:

International Foundation for Electoral Systems  
1850 K Street, NW, Fifth Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
Email: [editor@ifes.org](mailto:editor@ifes.org)  
Fax: 202-350-6701

*This report is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the sole responsibility of IFES and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.*

# Contents

- Survey Overview and Objectives .....1
- Majorities of Nigerians Intend to Vote and Mildly Confident in Integrity of Elections.....1
- Nigerians Seriously Concerned about Violence during Elections.....5
- Over Four in Five Nigerians Are Registered to Vote but Many Are Yet to Collect PVCs .....7
- Most Nigerians Know Generally about PVCs yet Many Confused about Election Day Requirements .....8
- Nigerians Still Lack Information on Key Aspects of Elections..... 10
- Uneven Exposure to INEC Voter Education yet Exposure Correlated with Higher Voter Information ..... 11
- Nigerians Rely Heavily on Radio for Information on Elections..... 12
- Over a Third of Nigerians Use Facebook Weekly, Youth Use it Much More Frequently ..... 13
- Mobile Access is Widespread and SMS Use is Prevalent ..... 14
- High Awareness of INEC and the INEC Chairman, Low Awareness of SIEC..... 14
- Nigerians Fairly Confident of INEC, yet Many Concerned about its Honesty and Independence ..... 15
- Nigerians Dissatisfied with Nigerian Democracy and Concerned about Economy and Violence ..... 16
- Men Show Timid Support for Women in Politics, Would not Elect Women in High Political Positions ..... 18
- Survey Methodology ..... 20

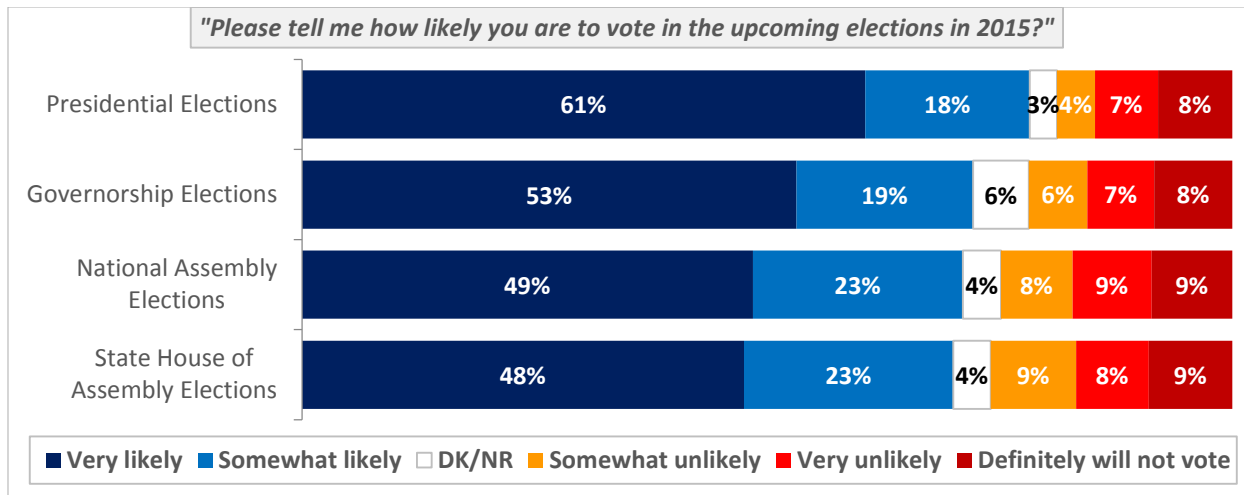
## Survey Overview and Objectives

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) conducted a pre-election public opinion survey of voting-age citizens in Nigeria (18 years or older) covering 34 out of Nigeria's 37 states (including the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja) from December 5 through December 18, 2014. The three states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe in the North East were excluded from the sampling frame due to security concerns and violence by the Boko Haram militant group at the time of the survey fieldwork. The main objectives of the survey focused on:

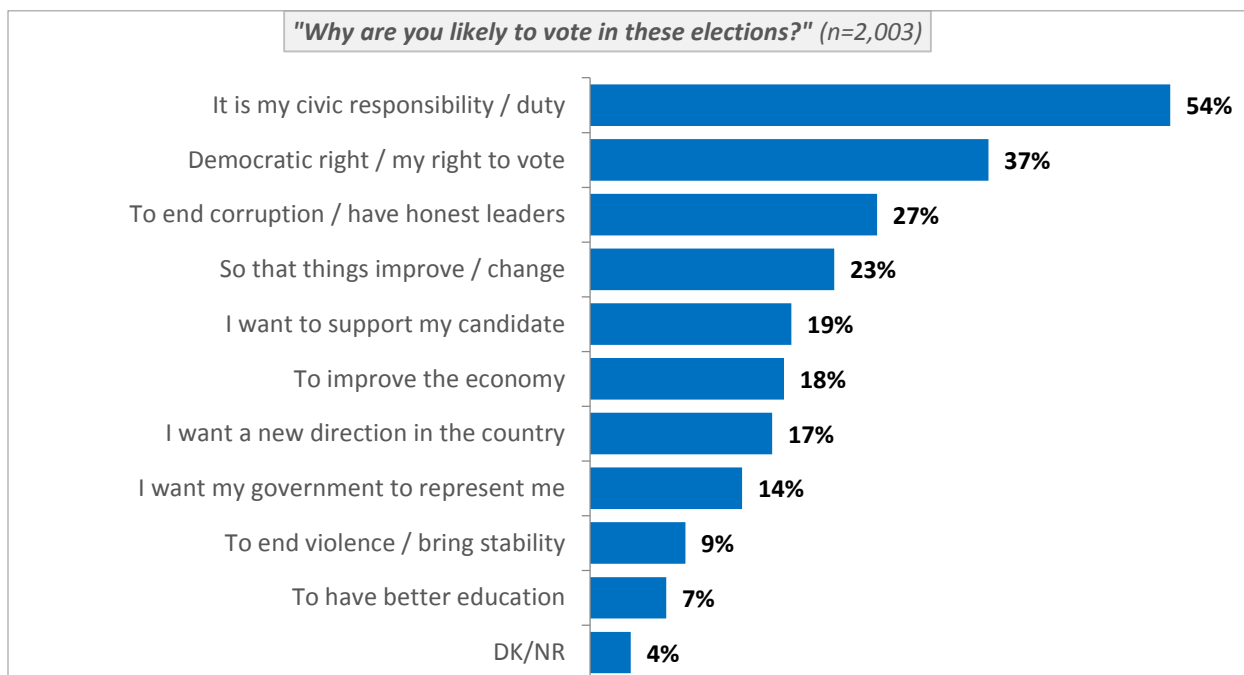
- Measuring likelihood to vote and opinions of the 2015 elections, including expectations of integrity and perceptions of election violence and vote-buying
- Evaluating voters' knowledge of and experience in the voter registration process and the distribution of Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs)
- Assessing voter knowledge of the upcoming 2015 elections, the adequacy of pre-election voter information and exposure to voter education messages
- Examining preferred information sources and patterns of radio, social media, and SMS (short message service or text message) use
- Eliciting views of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and trust in electoral processes
- Measuring satisfaction with Nigerian democracy and political efficacy
- Exploring views toward women's involvement in politics

## Majorities of Nigerians Intend to Vote and Mildly Confident in Integrity of Elections

A majority of Nigerians (63%) say they are likely to vote in all four elections to be held in 2015, which include presidential elections, governorship elections, National Assembly elections, and State House of Assembly elections. However, the share of those "very likely" to vote depicts differences according to the type of election: majorities are very likely to vote in the presidential elections (61%) and governorship elections (53%) while only pluralities are very likely to vote in the National Assembly elections (49%) and State House of Assembly elections (48%). Despite high declared intent to vote, only a plurality (45%) report feeling close to a particular political party and a 50 percent majority do not.

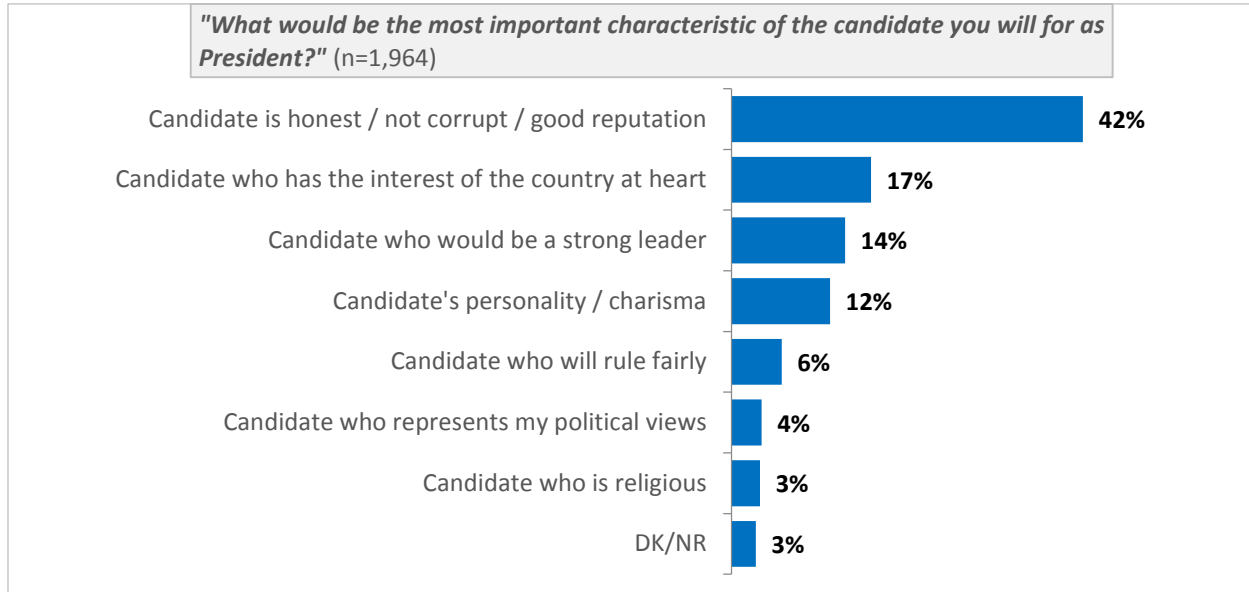


Those who are likely to vote cite their duty and right as a Nigerian as a driving factor, followed by the motivation to achieve change whether by ending corruption, improving the economy, or bringing general stability and security. Those who are not likely to vote mainly attribute this decision to a belief that their vote would not make a difference, that they are not interested in politics, that they don't trust the election process, and that all politicians are corrupt.

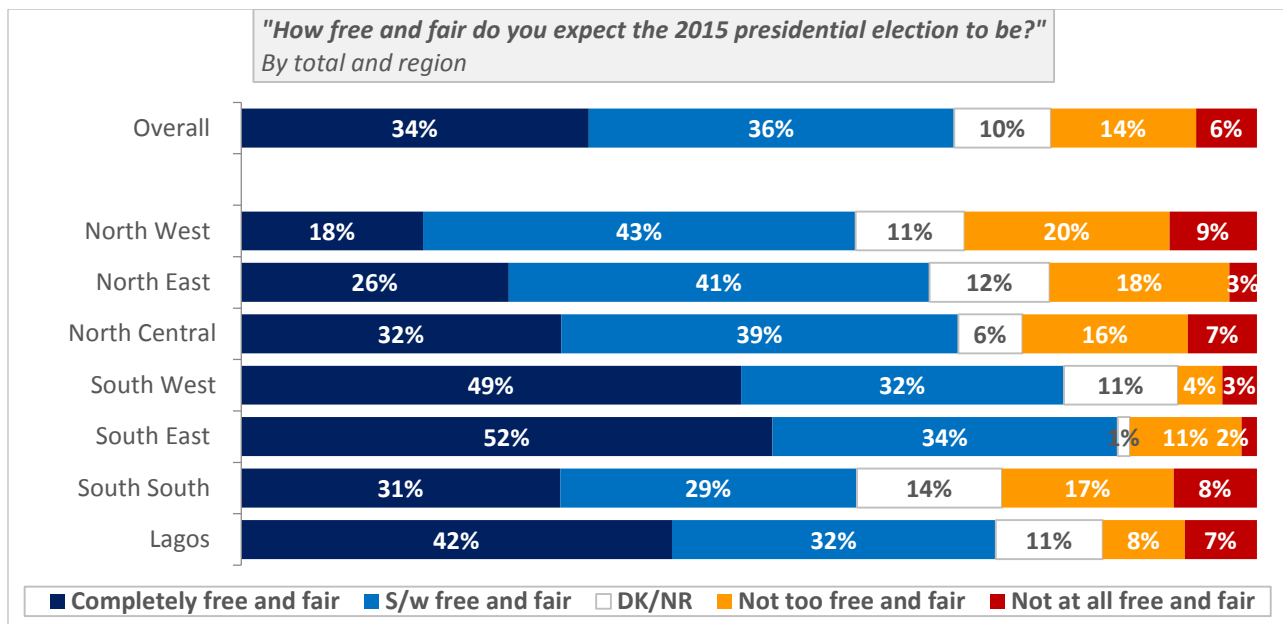


Among likely voters, 46 percent have completely made up their mind as to whom they would vote for in the National Assembly elections and 53 percent have completely made up their as to which presidential candidate they would vote for. More men (59%) indicate they have made up their minds than women (46%) regarding their choice for President.

In terms of the most important characteristic they value in their choice of a presidential candidate, a plurality of Nigerians indicate that the most important factor is that the candidate is honest and not corrupt (42%). Other important considerations for voters include that the candidate has the interest of the country at heart (16%) that the candidate would be a strong leader (14%), they have a good personality and charisma (12%), among others.

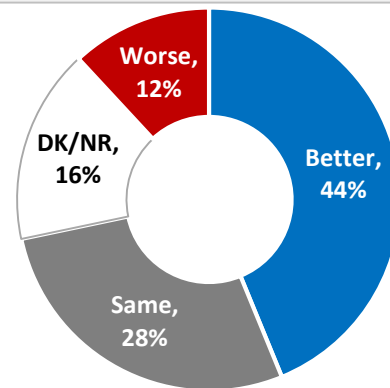


Approximately seven in 10 Nigerians say they expect the upcoming presidential and National Assembly elections to be free and fair yet only one-third expect the elections to be completely free and fair. Attitudes toward the integrity of elections vary across Nigeria, with higher number of Nigerians in the South East (87%) and South West (81%) saying the presidential elections will be free and fair compared to Nigerians in the South South (61%) and North West (60%).



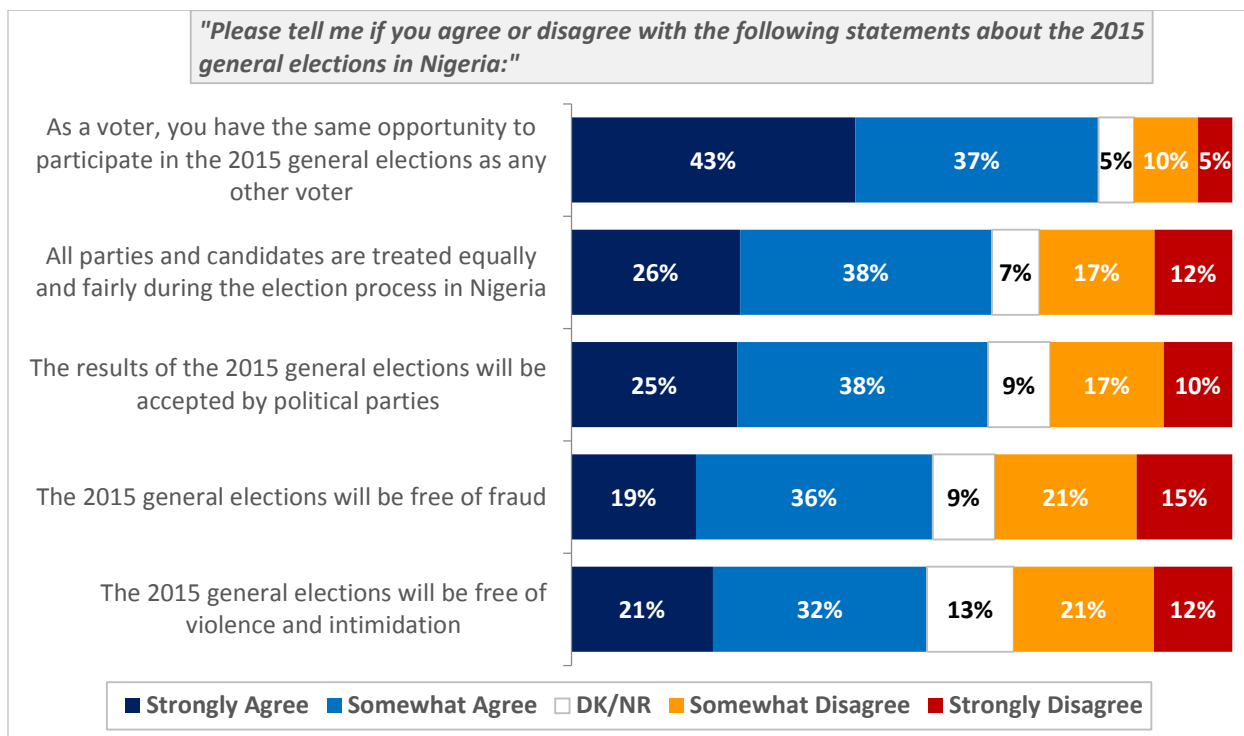
Regarding expectations of how well elections will be organized, a plurality (44%) expect the 2015 elections to be better organized than 2011 and 28 percent expect them to be the same while 12 percent expect them to be worse.

*"In your view, do you think the organization of the 2015 general elections will be better, the same or worse than the 2011 elections?"*



While the majority of Nigerians expect the elections to be free and fair at least to some extent, respondents are less likely to agree with notions describing the elections as free of fraud (55%) or free of violence and intimidation (54%) and more likely to agree with the notion that voters will have an equal opportunity to participate in elections (80%). Meanwhile, nearly three in 10 Nigerians disagree that parties and candidates are treated equally during the election process and that election results will be accepted by political parties.

*"Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statements about the 2015 general elections in Nigeria:"*

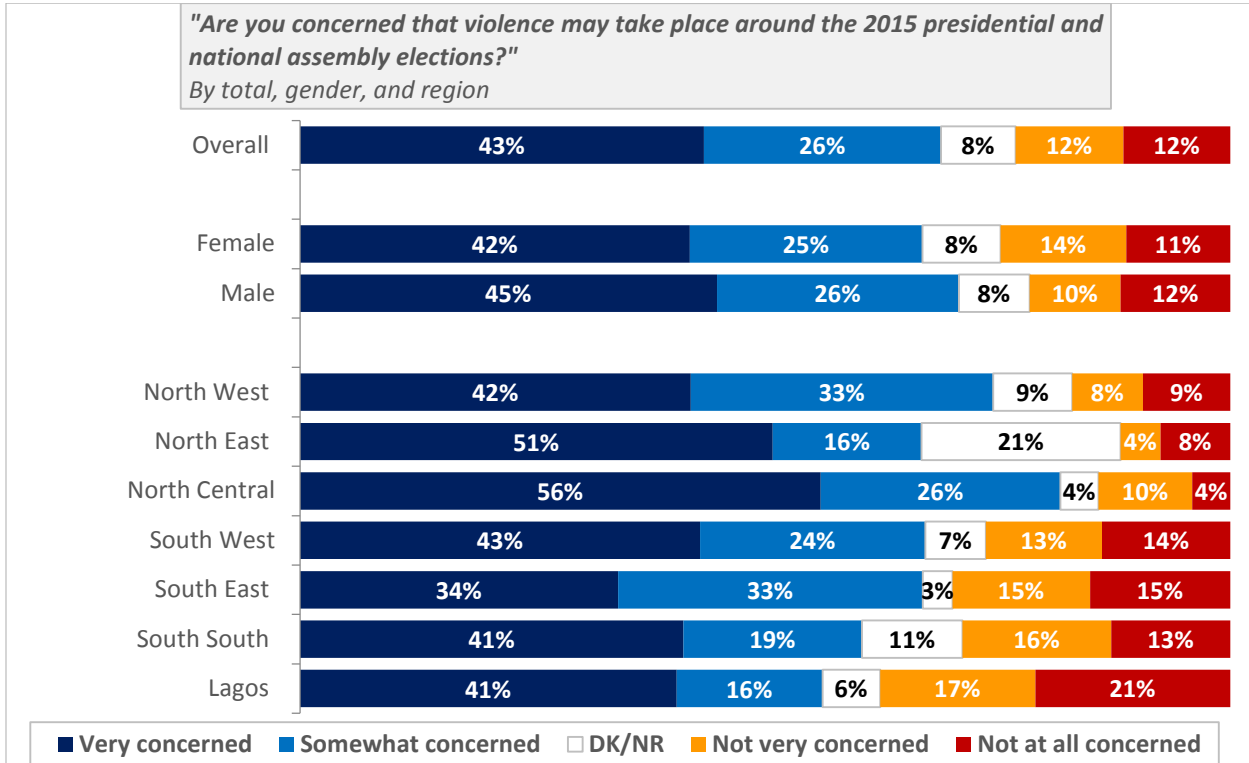


When assessing elements that are absolutely necessary for good elections, Nigerians prioritize “election materials being adequate and arriving on time to polling units” (75%), “absence of violence at polling units” (74%), “competent and well-trained polling officials” (72%), and “presence of security personnel at polling units” (70%).



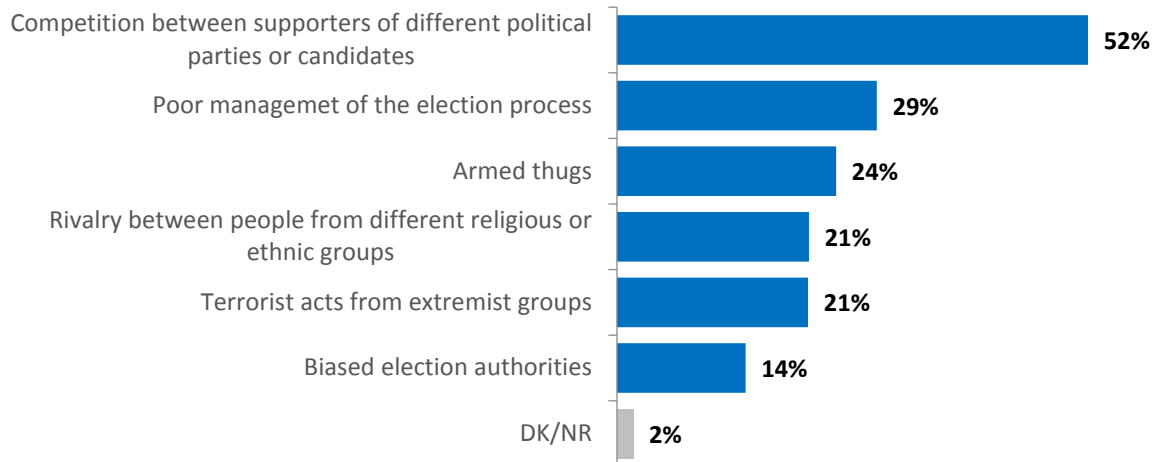
## Nigerians Seriously Concerned about Violence during Elections

Violence by political actors and security issues top the list of worries expressed by survey respondents when asked to specify their main concerns about the upcoming 2015 elections. Furthermore, over two-thirds of Nigerians (69%) say they are worried that violence may take place around the 2015 presidential and National Assembly elections. Notably, majorities across all regions of Nigeria are concerned about electoral violence, however, concerns of violence are highest in the North Central (82%) and North West (75%) regions than in other regions, compared with lower rates of expressed concern in the South South (61%) and Lagos (56%).



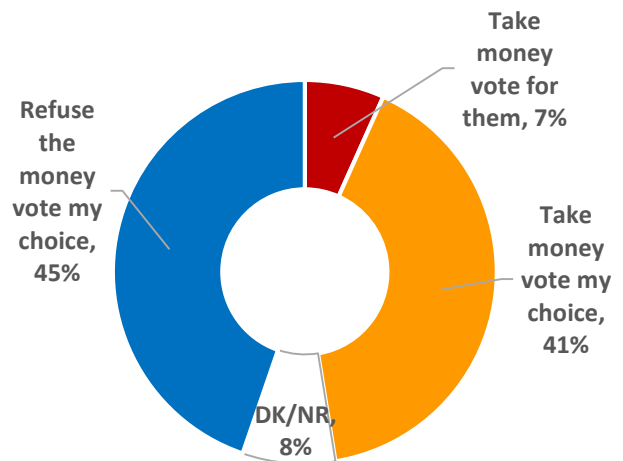
According to a majority of respondents (52%), competition between supporters of different political parties or candidates is the leading factor accounting for electoral violence in Nigeria. The poor management of the election process (29%), armed thugs (24%), rivalries between people from different religious or ethnic groups (21%), terrorist acts from extremist groups (21%), and biased electoral authorities (14%) are cited as factors as well, yet seem only secondary to the competition between party and candidate supporters. On a related note, a sizable share of Nigerians (39%) strongly (16%) or somewhat (23%) agree that violence is sometimes necessary in support of a just cause.

*"Please tell me which of these do you think primarily accounts for election violence in Nigeria?"*



On the issue of vote buying, a plurality of Nigerians show a propensity to accept money for their vote, with a plurality of 48 percent saying that if offered money for their vote, they would take the money, and 45 percent saying they would not sell their vote under any circumstances. Of those who would accept the money, 7 percent said they would vote for the candidate offering the money, while 41% would take the money and still vote for the candidate of their choice. Most Nigerians (62%) are in fact confident their voting choice will be kept secret during the elections yet a sizable 23 percent are concerned about the secrecy of the vote, with much higher rates of concern in the North West and North East regions (33%).

*"What would you do if a candidate or party official offered you money for your vote in the 2015 elections?"*

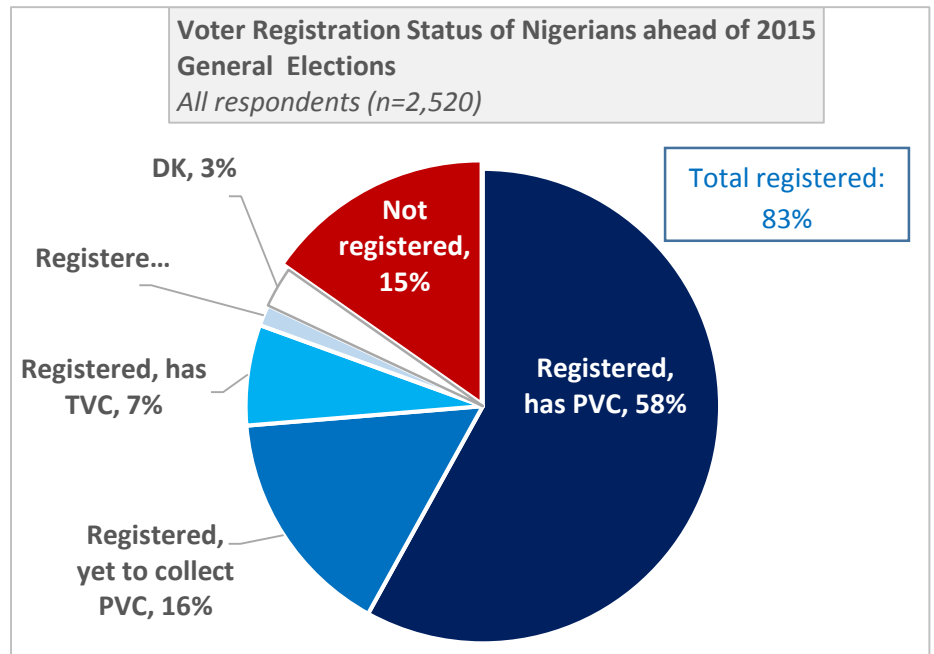


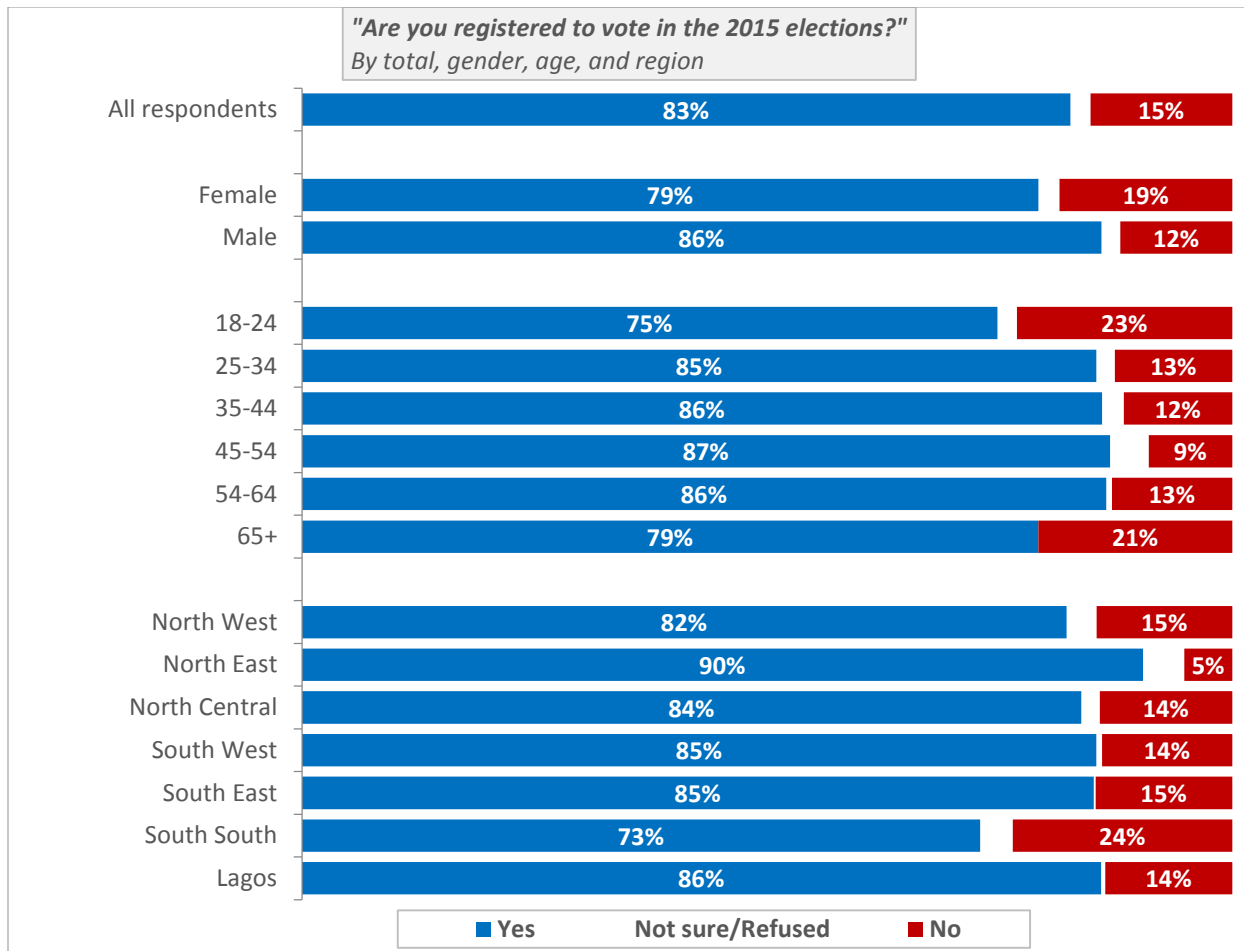
## Over Four in Five Nigerians Are Registered to Vote but Many Are Yet to Collect PVCs

As of mid-December, 2014, and with approximately eight weeks remaining to the conduct of the Nigeria 2015 general elections, 83 percent of Nigerians report having registered to vote compared with 15 percent who say they have not registered. Slightly more men (86%) report being registered than women (79%) and younger Nigerians (aged 18 through 24) are less likely to be registered than respondents in other age groups (only 75 percent report being registered compared to a nationwide average of 83 percent). Older respondents (aged 65 or older) are also less likely to be registered (79%) than respondents aged 25 through 64 (86%). In terms of regional differences, the lowest registration levels are in the South South region – 10 percentage points short of the national average.

Seventy percent of survey respondents who are registered had already collected their PVC as of mid-December, compared with 18 percent who had not, 9 percent who have a Temporary Voter Card (TVC), 1 percent who had a PVC but lost it, and 1 percent who have a PVC that needs to be transferred to their current state. When looking at all voting-age Nigerians, the proportion of those who are registered and had PVCs as of mid-

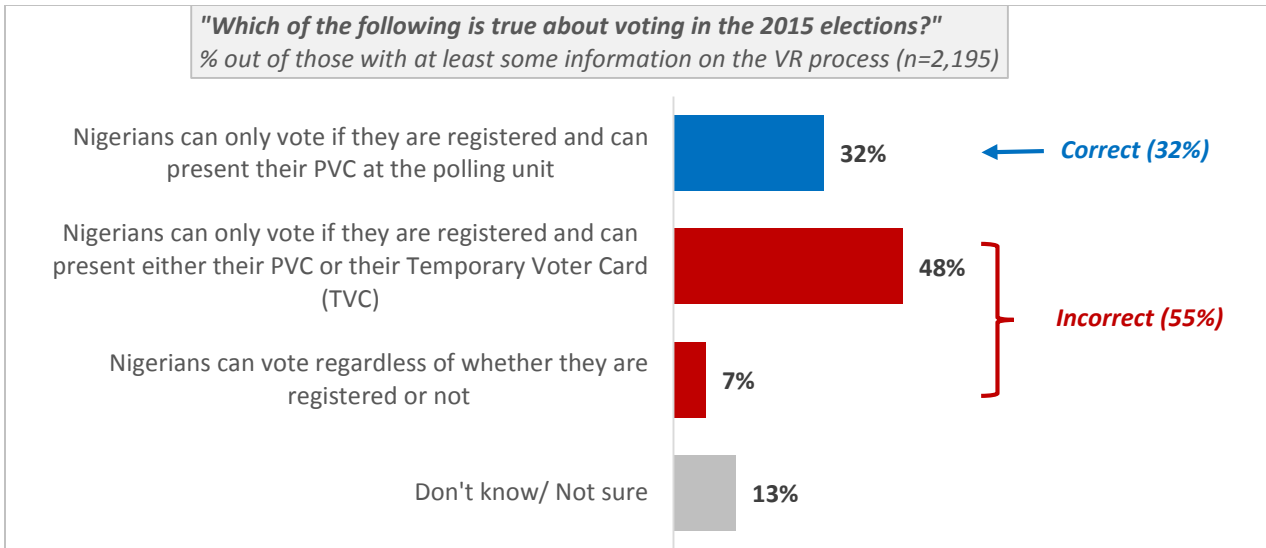
December stood at 58 percent. More men (72%) had collected their PVCs than women (68%) and significantly more Nigerians in the South had collected their PVCs than those in the North, with the exception of Lagos.



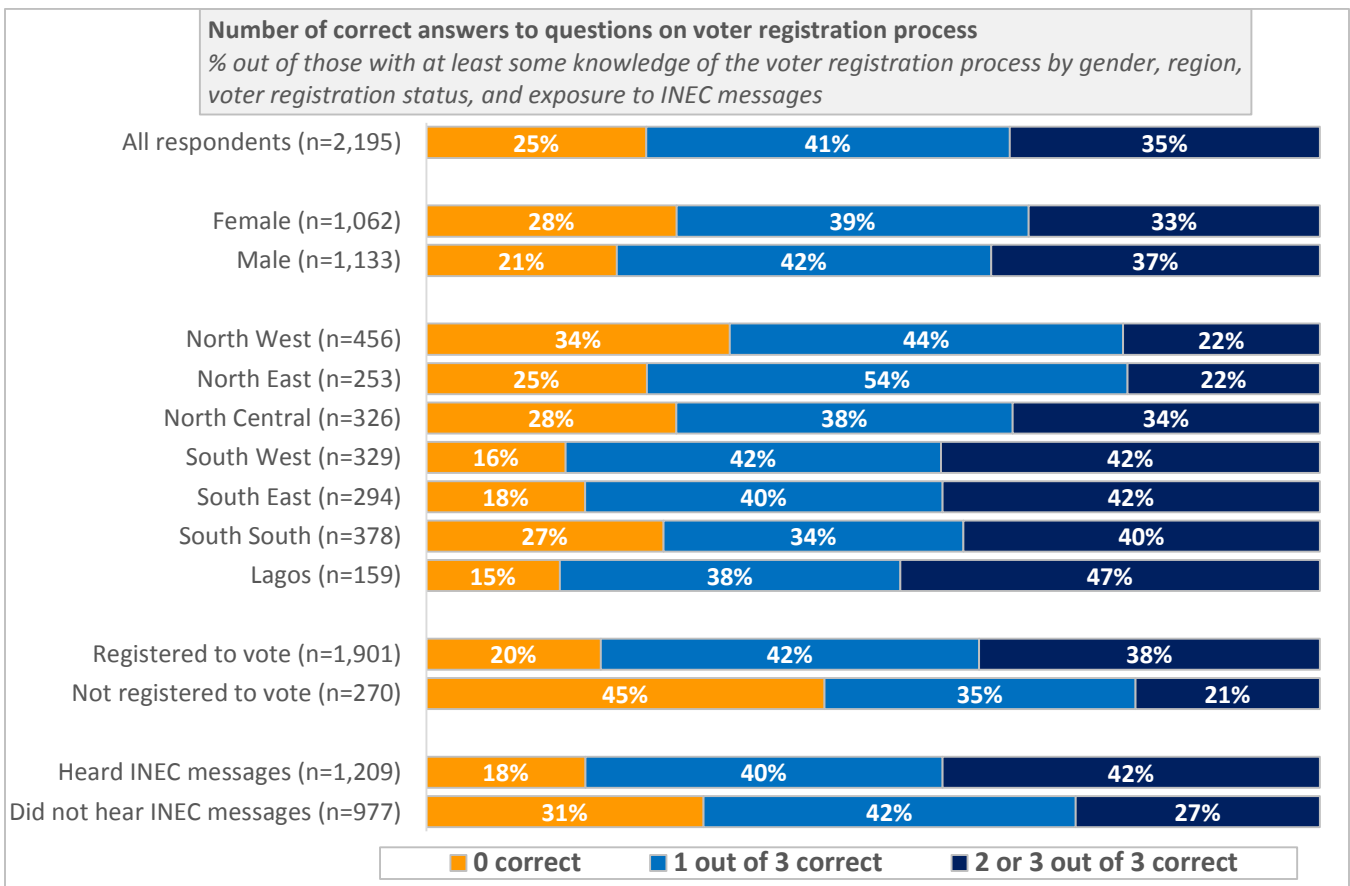


## Most Nigerians Know Generally about PVCs yet Many Confused about Election Day Requirements

Majorities of Nigerians indicate they have at least a fair amount of information about the voter registration process (59%) and even more (66%) about PVCs, yet when tested about their factual knowledge of different voter registration aspects through three knowledge questions, the majority of Nigerians, while understanding processes related to collecting PVCs, exhibited confusion regarding requirements for being able to vote on Election Day. Indeed, 55 percent provided incorrect answers: 48 percent wrongly believed that voters can present either a PVC or a TVC to be able to vote on Election Day, and another 7 percent wrongly believed they can vote regardless of whether they are registered or not. Only 32 percent correctly indicated that Nigerians can only vote if they are registered and can present their PVC at the polling unit.

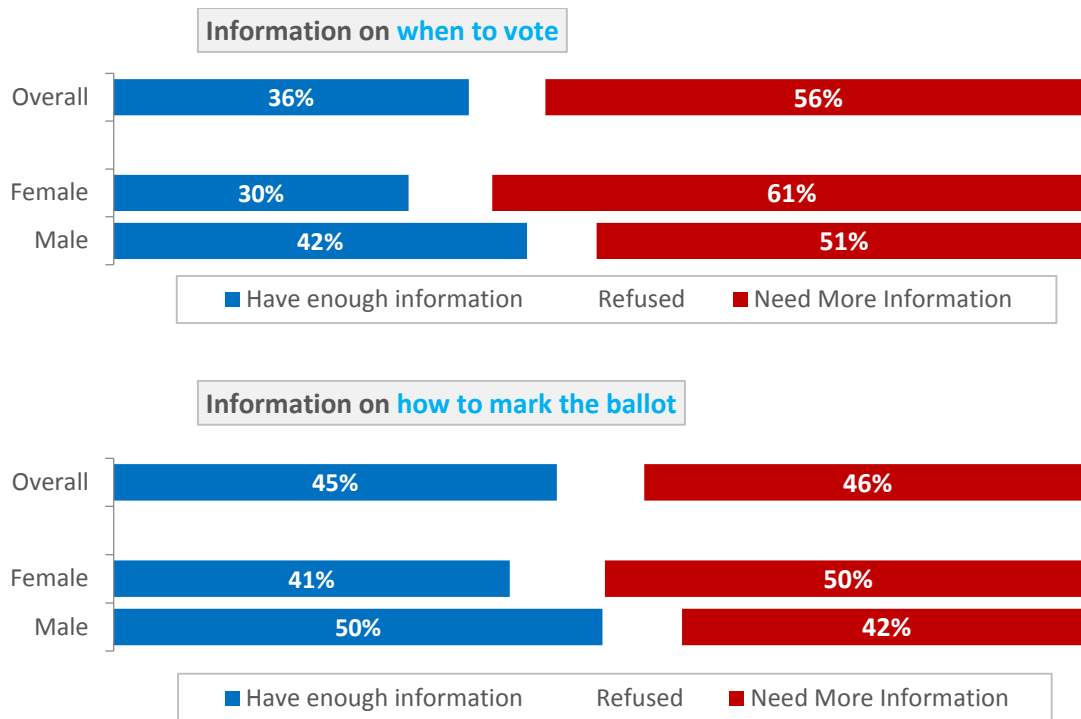


When aggregating responses to questions on the voter registration process and comparing scores, we find that registered voters are nearly twice as likely to answer two out of three questions correctly compared to non-registered respondents (38% vs. 21%) and voters exposed to INEC voter education messages much more likely to answer correctly than those not exposed (42% vs. 27%). Respondents in the South are also much more likely to answer correctly than respondents in the North.

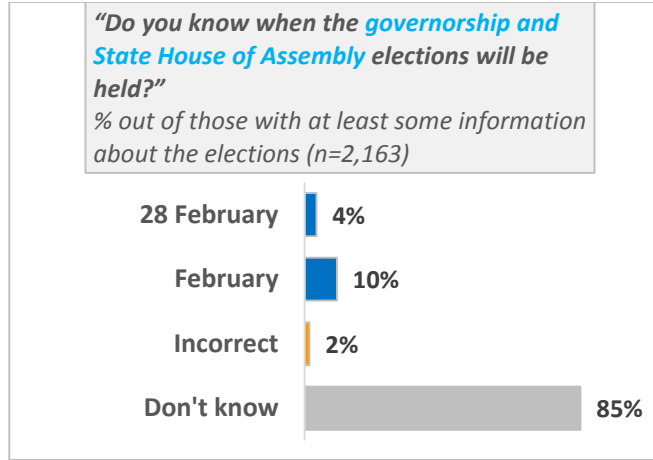
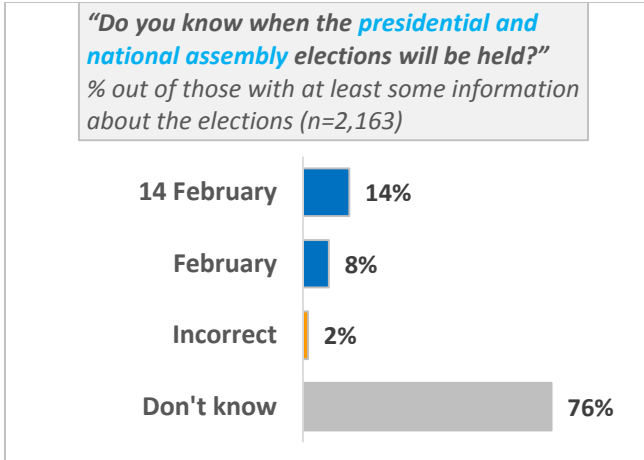


## Nigerians Still Lack Information on Key Aspects of Elections

Pluralities, if not majorities, of Nigerians still need more information on several key aspects of the electoral process, including perhaps most critically information on “when to vote” (56 percent need more information; 36 percent have enough information) and on “how to mark their ballot” (46%; 45%). It is noteworthy that for all aspects of the election, significantly more women than men say they need more information, suggesting that while both men and women need more electoral information, the information gap is larger for women. More generally, only a slim majority of Nigerians (53%) report having a great deal or a fair amount of information about the elections leaving a sizable 46 percent saying they have very little or no information at all.

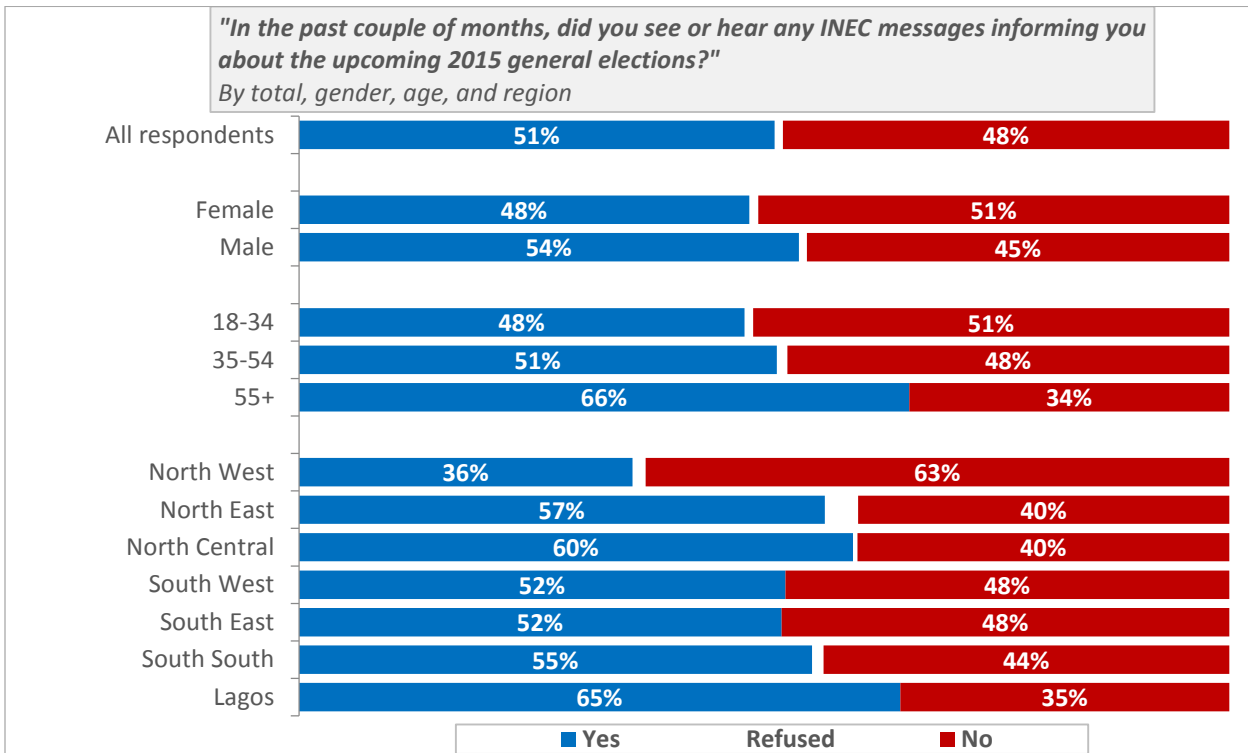


The deficit in voter information is apparent when examining voters’ knowledge of the type and date of elections: while the overwhelming majority are aware there would be presidential and national assembly elections, only 14 percent know that presidential and National Assembly elections will be held on February 14, and 8 percent mention February but not the correct day, leaving over three quarters (78%) who don’t know the date of elections or give incorrect dates. Even fewer Nigerians (4%) know the date of the governorship and State House of Assembly elections to be held on February 28, and 10 percent mentioned February but not the correct day, leaving a full 87 percent who don’t know the date at all.

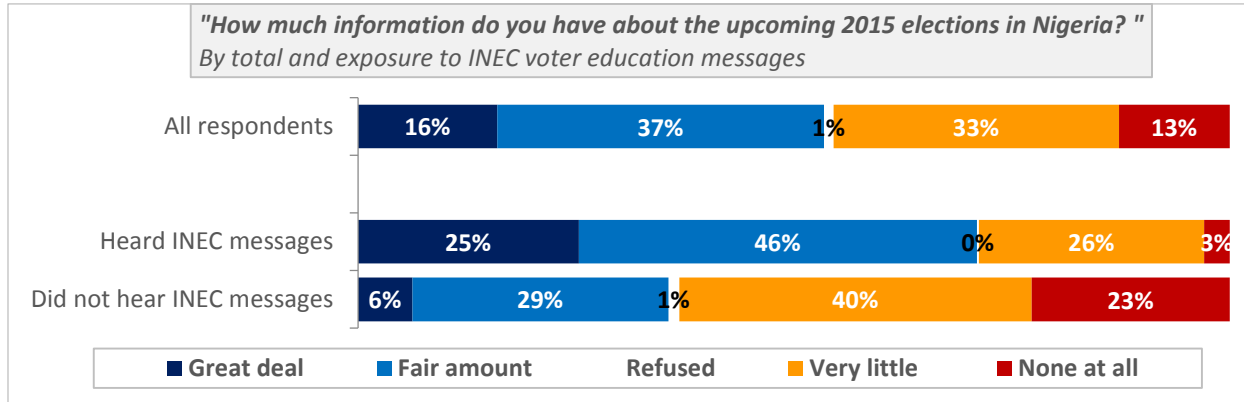


### Uneven Exposure to INEC Voter Education yet Exposure Correlated with Higher Voter Information

As of mid-December 2014, INEC had started disseminating voter education messages through various channels. Survey results suggest only a slim majority (51%) of Nigerians were exposed to INEC messages compared with 48 percent who were not. Slightly more men (54%) than women (48%) have heard or seen INEC messages, and interestingly, more Nigerians 55 or older (66%) reported seeing or hearing INEC messages compared with a lower share among Nigerians 35 to 54 years of age (51%) or Nigerians 34 or younger (48%). Residents of Lagos (65%) and North Central (60%) regions are the most likely to be exposed to INEC voter education messages while North West residents are the least likely to be exposed (only 36%).



Exposure to INEC voter education messages is correlated with high self-reported information on elections and more accurate knowledge of voter registration procedures. Indeed, a full 71 percent of Nigerians who had seen or heard INEC messages report having a great deal or a fair amount of information about the elections compared to about only half this proportion (36%) among Nigerians not exposed to INEC messages.



## Nigerians Rely Heavily on Radio for Information on Elections

Radio tops the list of information sources to learn about elections for Nigerians with a large majority (77%) indicating talk show or news programs on radio as their preferred sources to learn about election-related issues and procedures. This is closely followed by talk show or news programs on TV at 65 percent. Word of mouth (35%), information in newspapers and magazines (28%), town hall meetings/workshops/discussion groups (18%) are also mentioned by many Nigerians among their preferred information sources on elections. Billboards and Facebook are each mentioned by 10 percent of respondents.

Comparing the top five information sources on elections by region reveals important differences: for all regions, except Lagos, radio precedes TV as the leading information source on elections. Only in the North West and North East regions do religious meetings make it to the top five information sources on elections while newspapers and magazines do not make it. Facebook makes it to the top five list only in the South West and Lagos. Billboards make it to the top five only in the South South region.

Top five information sources to learn about elections <i>By total &amp; region</i>	Total	North West	North East	North Central	South West	South East	South South	Lagos
<b>Radio</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
<b>TV</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
<b>Word of mouth</b>	3	3	3	4	3	4	4	4
<b>Newspapers and magazines</b>	4			3	4	3	3	3
<b>Town hall meetings/ workshops</b>	5	4		5		5		

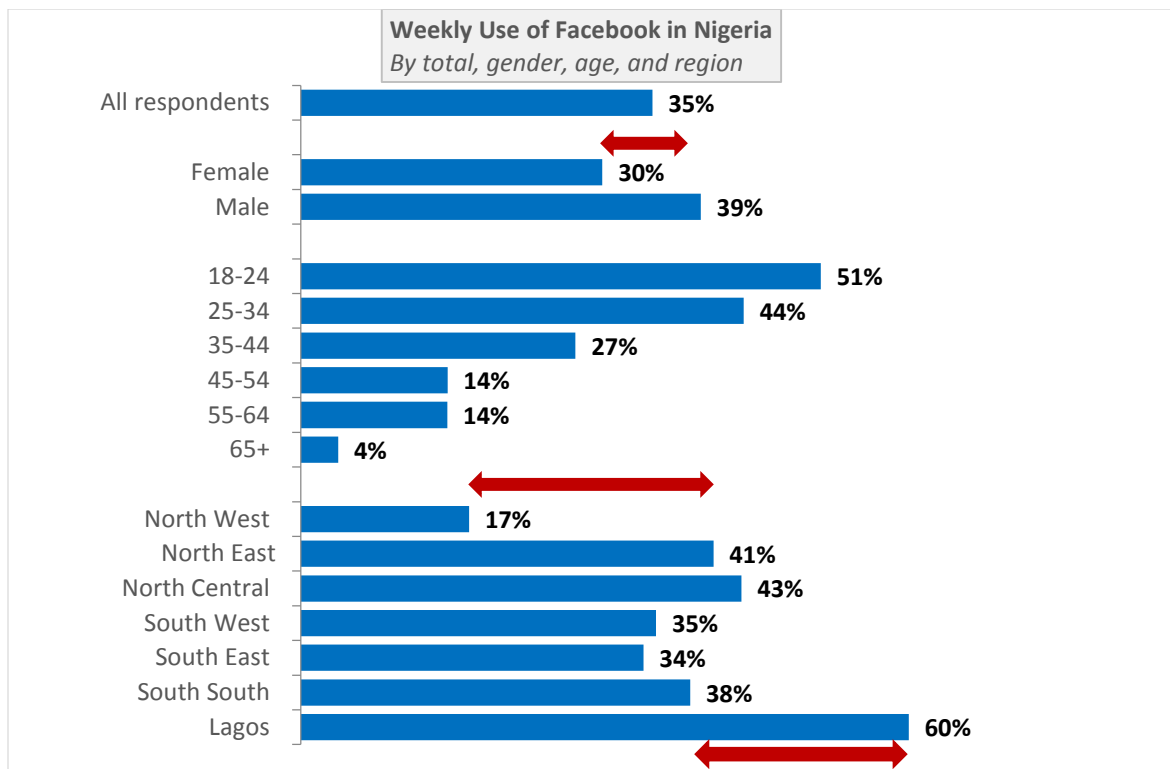


Religious meetings		5	4					
Billboards							5	
Facebook					5			5

It must be noted, that while the frequency of listening to the radio is very high with over 81 percent listening on a weekly basis, either every day (44%) or once or a few times a week (37%), radio reach is higher for older Nigerians and peaks for Nigerians 55 or older with 93 percent tuning in once or a few times a week – including 63 percent who tune in daily, compared to a weekly reach of 83 percent for Nigerians 35-54 and 78 percent for younger Nigerians (18-34). The frequency of radio listening is much higher in the South West region (88% weekly) and is higher than average in North Central and South East regions (85% and 84% respectively).

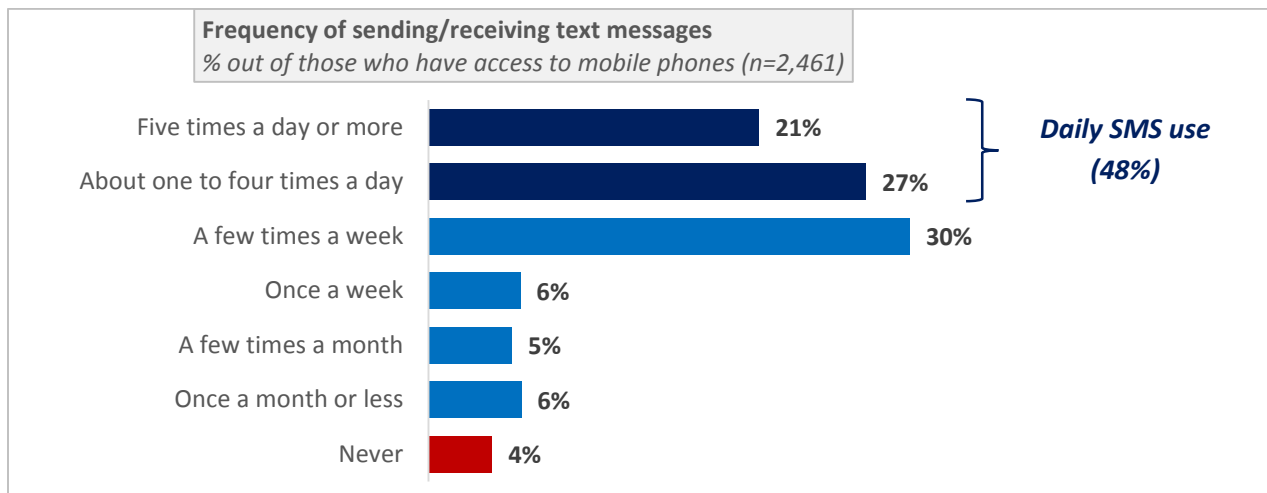
### Over a Third of Nigerians Use Facebook Weekly, Youth Use it Much More Frequently

Facebook use is quite common with 19 percent of adult Nigerians using it on a daily basis and another 16 percent using it once or a few times a week, leading to over a third of Nigerians (35%) using it on a weekly basis. Not surprisingly, Facebook use is more prevalent among youth with just over half (51%) of Nigerians 18-24 using it on a weekly basis. Facebook use also depicts sharp differences by region with significantly higher weekly usage rates in Lagos (60%) and higher than average rates in North Central (43%) and North East (41%) regions, compared with much lower rates in the North West region (17%). In comparison to Facebook, Twitter use is subdued with only 9 percent using it on a weekly basis.



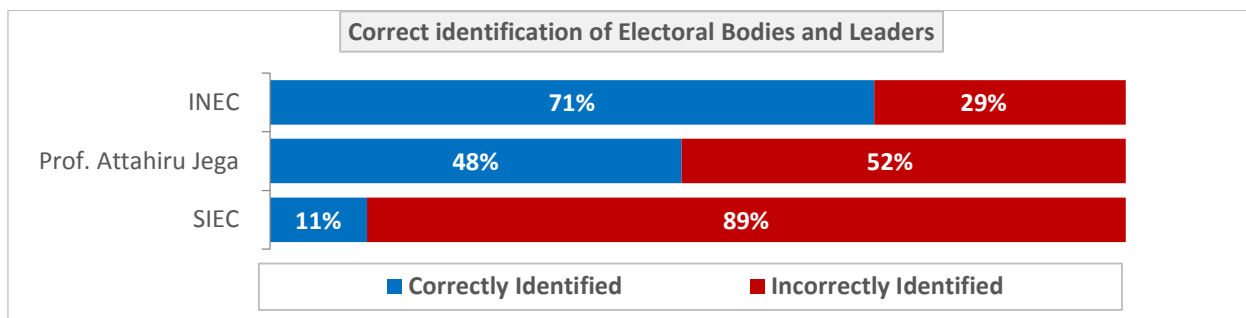
## Mobile Access is Widespread and SMS Use is Prevalent

Mobile phone access in Nigeria is widespread with over 92 percent personally owning a mobile phone and nearly half of Nigerians (48%) sending or receiving text messages on a daily basis. Only 4 percent of Nigerians do not use SMS at all. When comparing daily SMS users by demographics, we observe a narrow gender gap in SMS use with fewer women (44%) using SMS daily than men (52%) and a more widespread usage among Nigerians 18-34 (52%) and 35-54 (48%) than Nigerians 55 or older (31%).



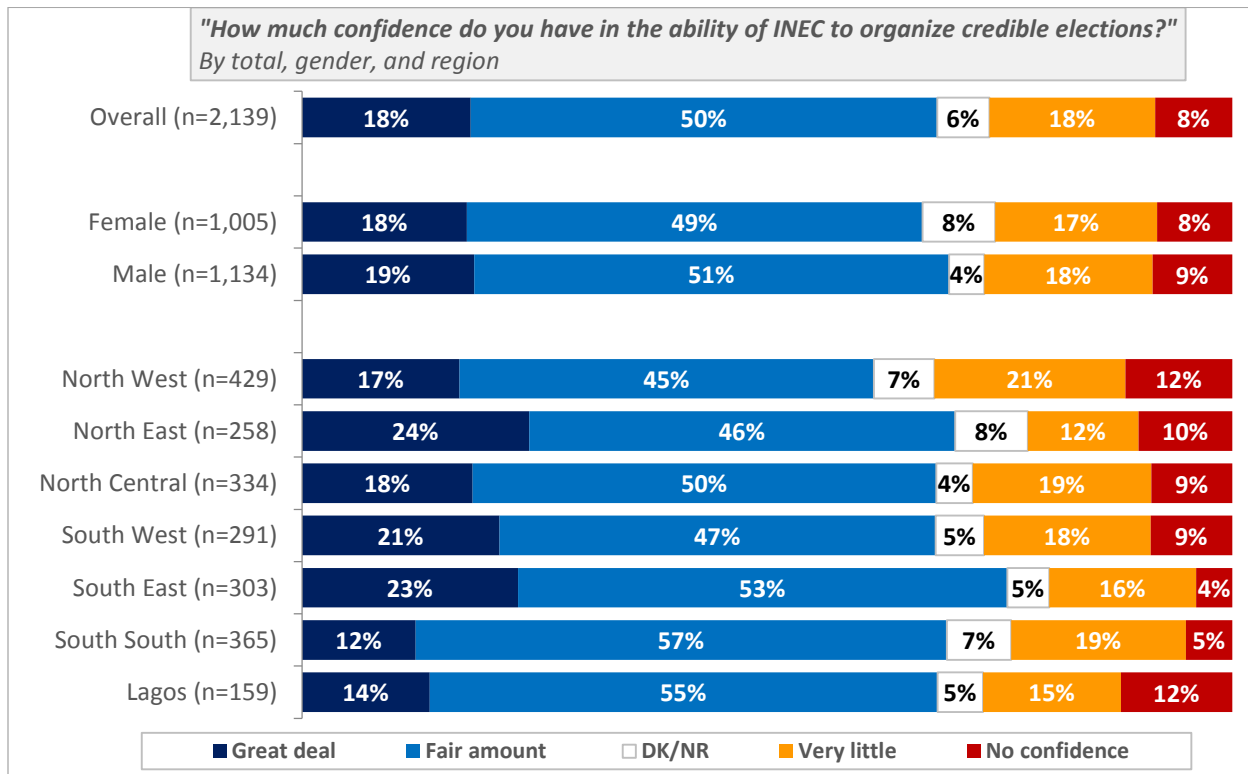
## High Awareness of INEC and the INEC Chairman, Low Awareness of SIEC

A sizable majority of Nigerians (70%) can accurately identify INEC as the body responsible for conducting general elections, compared to 29 percent who do not. Awareness of INEC is higher in the North East (88%) and North Central (85%) regions than in other regions, with the lowest awareness level reported in the South West (54%). Significantly more men can spontaneously identify INEC (80%) than women (63%). Additionally, 48 percent of Nigerians can correctly name Professor Attahiru Muhammadu Jega as the Chairman of INEC. In contrast, awareness of the State Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC) is very low with only 11 percent correctly identifying it as the body responsible for conducting local elections in their state with many Nigerians wrongly assuming that INEC also conducts local elections. Of Nigerians aware of INEC, 19 percent are aware of the INEC website [www.inecnigeria.org](http://www.inecnigeria.org), and of those aware, 30 percent have visited the website. Nigerians rely mostly on radio (78%) and TV (61%) to learn about INEC, followed by word of mouth (38%), and newspapers (29%).

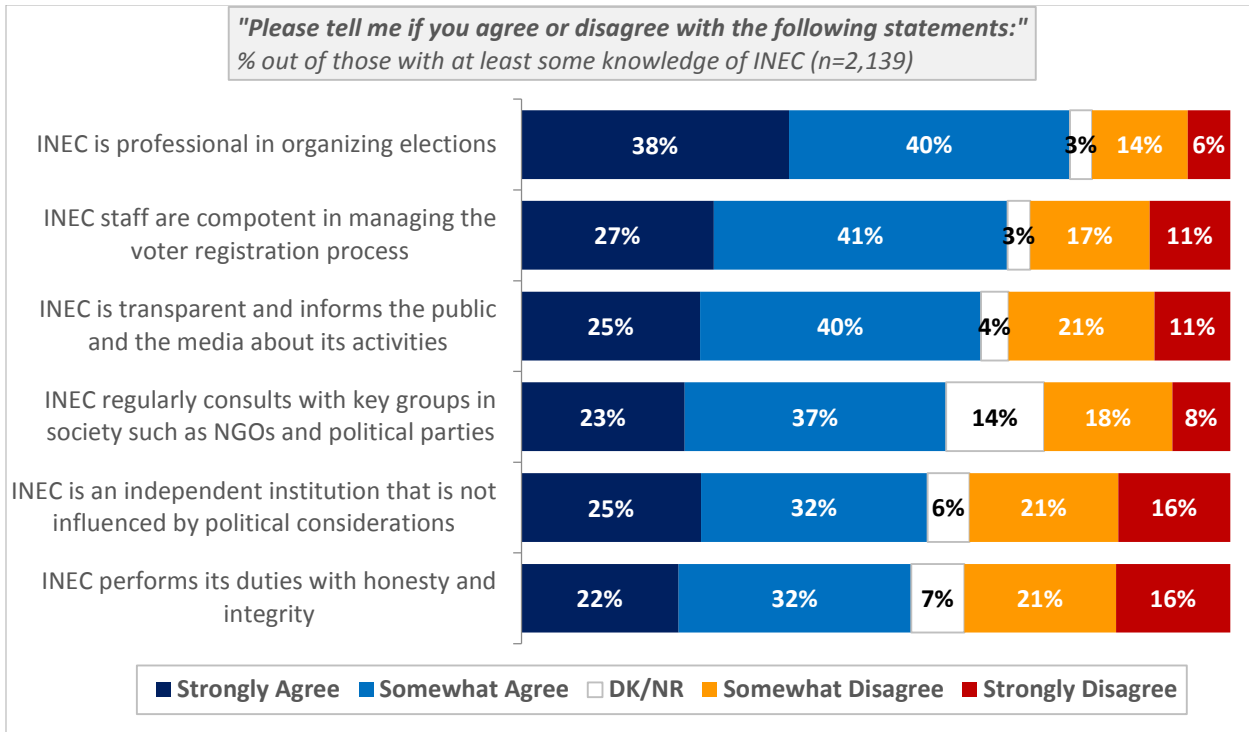


## Nigerians Fairly Confident of INEC, yet Many Concerned about its Honesty and Independence

Over two-thirds of Nigerians (68%) are generally confident of INEC’s ability to organize credible elections in Nigeria, with 18 percent expressing a great deal of confidence, 50 percent expressing a fair amount of confidence versus 18 percent expressing very little confidence, and 8 percent expressing no confidence at all. Confidence in INEC is largely consistent across the country, with slightly higher numbers of voters in the South East (76%) and North East (70%) having either a great deal or fair amount of confidence in INEC, compared to a low of 62 percent in the North West.

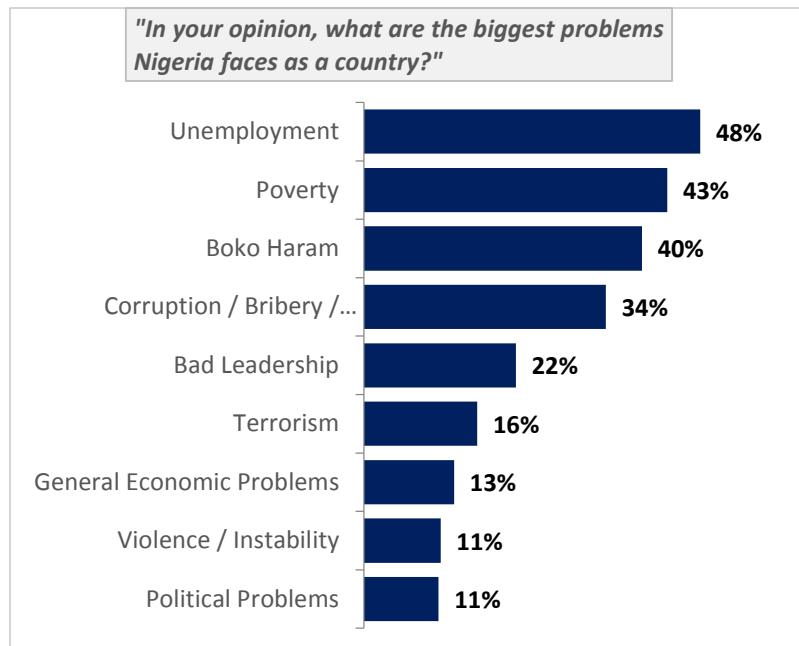


Overall, a majority of Nigerians have positive attitudes toward INEC and its work. Nigerians seem to generally view INEC as a professional organization and majorities agree with all positive statements about INEC, however, statements describing INEC’s independence and integrity garner fewer “agrees” than those based on its technical and organizational capacities. Indeed, over three-quarters (77%) strongly or somewhat agree INEC is professional in organizing elections, 69 percent agree INEC staff are competent in managing the voter registration process, and 65 percent agree INEC is transparent and informs the public about its activities. The area that the fewest Nigerians (54%) agree with is that INEC performs its duties with honesty and integrity while 39 percent disagree. Also, while 57 percent agree INEC is an independent institution not influenced by political considerations, 37 percent disagree with this statement.

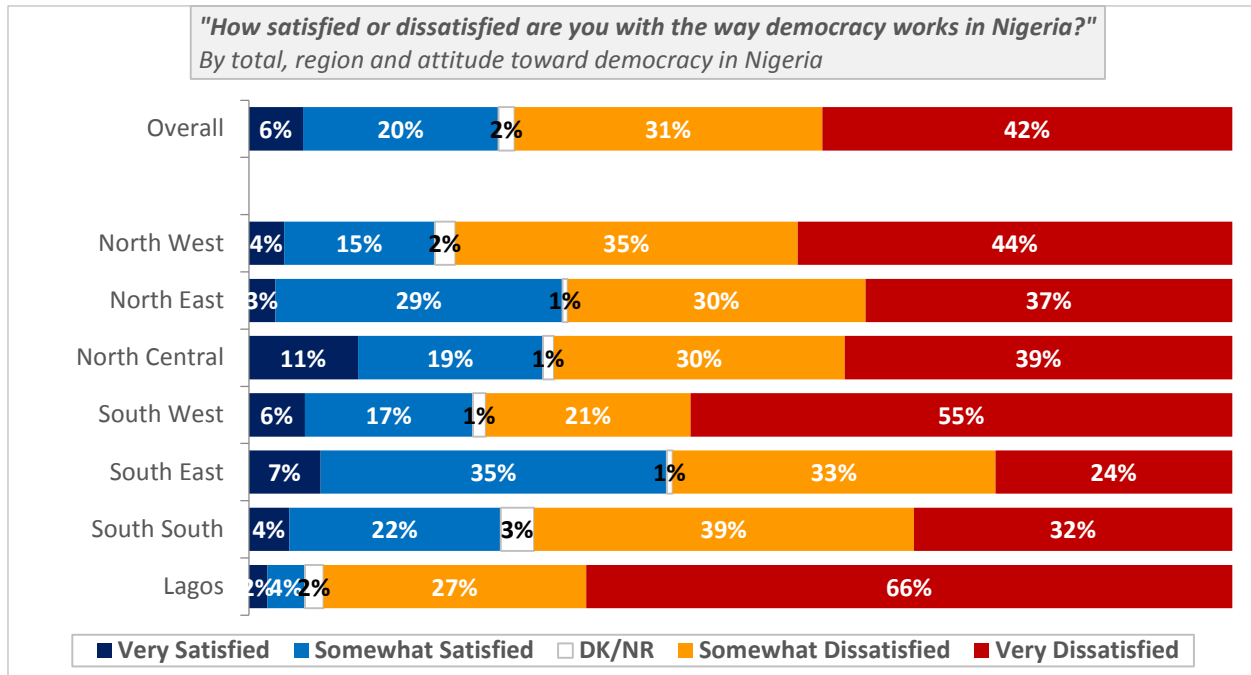


## Nigerians Dissatisfied with Nigerian Democracy and Concerned about Economy and Violence

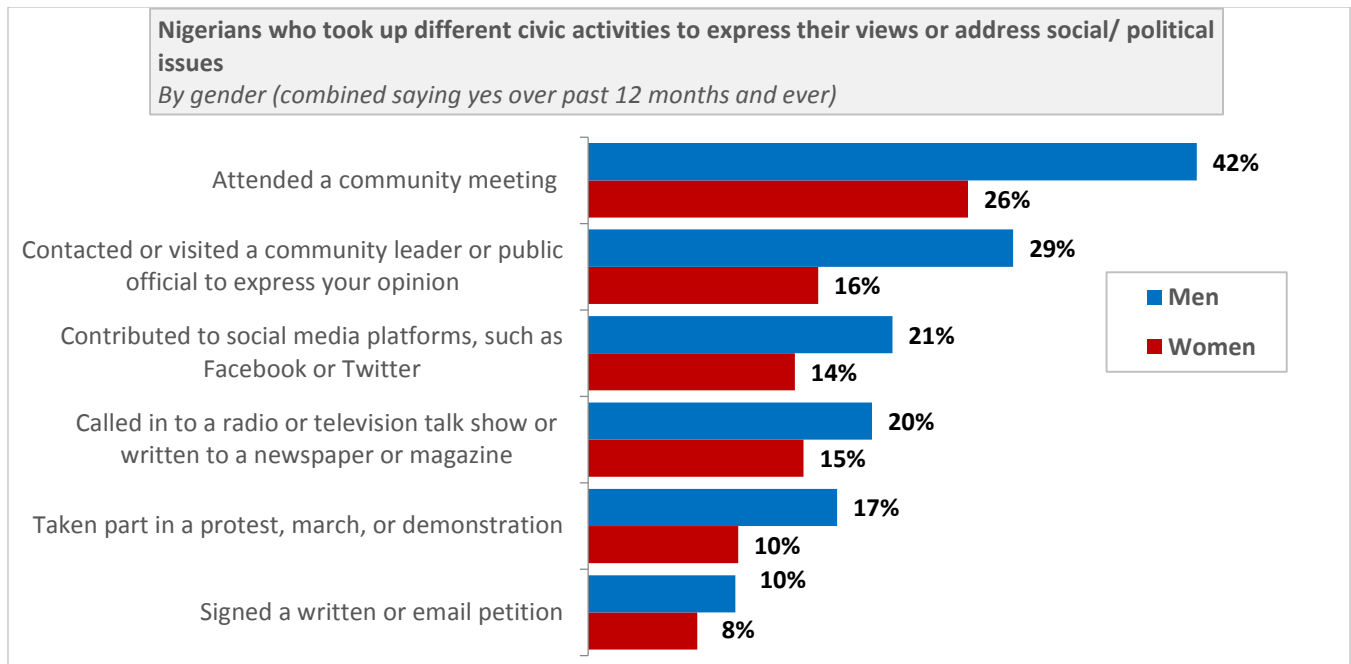
Nigeria is faced with many problems according to survey respondents; ranging from economic and governance issues to violence and security concerns. Economic and employment issues are at the heart of many Nigerians’ concerns, with 48 percent saying unemployment is one of the biggest problems Nigeria faces, 43 percent saying poverty, 34 percent saying corruption and mismanagement of public funds, and 13 percent saying general economic problems. Terrorism and violence also rank high in the minds of Nigerians, with 40 percent listing Boko Haram as one of the biggest problems facing Nigeria, 16 percent saying terrorism, and 11 percent saying violence and instability. Political concerns are also critical, with 22 percent saying bad leadership and 11 percent saying political problems are among the biggest problems facing Nigeria.



Satisfaction with Nigerian democracy is very low: only 26 percent are satisfied with how democracy works while 73 percent are dissatisfied. Satisfaction with democracy is higher in the South East (42%) compared to all other regions, while satisfaction is the lowest in the North West (19%) and Lagos (6%).

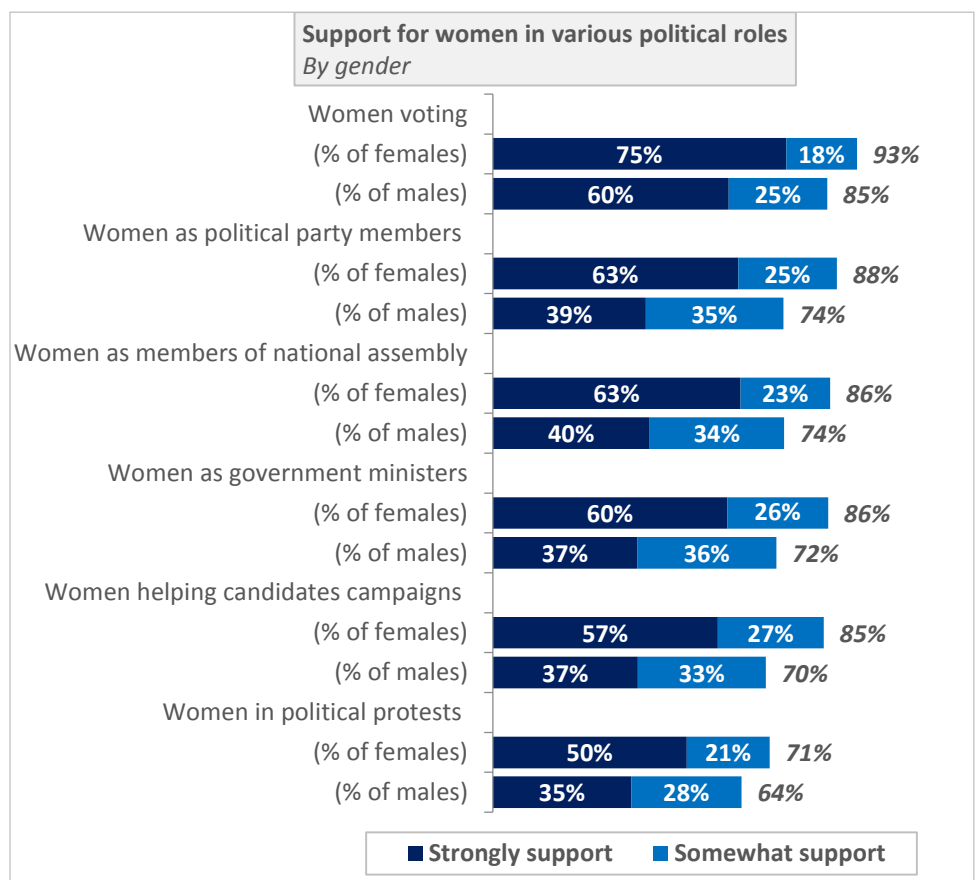


Overall, very few Nigerians take part in different types of civic activities to express their views. The most common type of civic activity is attending community meetings to express an opinion on a political or social issue, which 34 percent of Nigerians have done, 19 percent of whom did it within the past 12 months. In aggregate, 52 percent admit never taking part in any of six areas of civic engagement listed in the survey. In all areas of civic engagement, Nigerian men show higher rates of participation than women.



## Men Show Timid Support for Women in Politics, Would not Elect Women in High Political Positions

In response to whether they support or oppose women in various political roles, such as women voting, women serving as political party members, women serving as National Assembly members or government Ministers, survey results show that, while at the surface, the majority of both female and male respondents support women in all political roles, female respondents consistently show higher support for women’s involvement than males and a significantly higher share “strongly support” rather than just “somewhat support.” Indeed, only a minority of male respondents “strongly support”

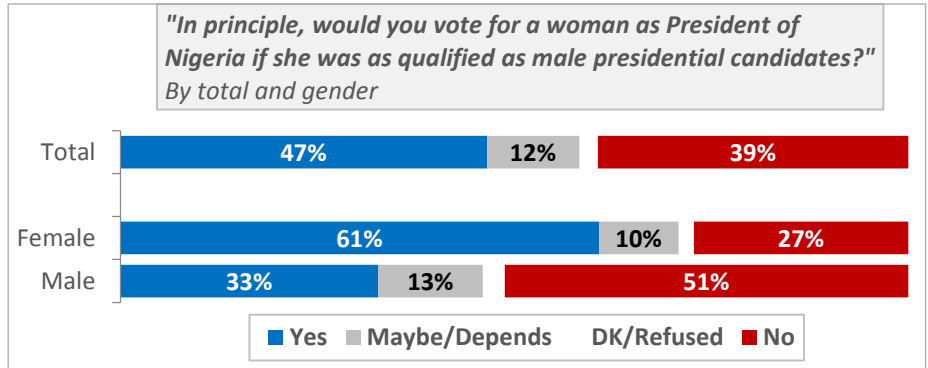


women in any political roles with the exception of “women voting” compared to a majority of female respondents consistently “strongly supporting” women in all political roles listed.

Men and women are sharply divided on questions of women’s representation in high political positions, such as women as National Assembly Representatives or as President of Nigeria. Indeed, 52 percent of Nigerian women prefer a woman to represent them at the National Assembly and a similar majority of men prefer a man to represent them. Only 20 percent

of women and 27 percent of men say it would not make a difference to them. Likewise, a majority of men (51%) state they would not vote for a woman as President even if she was as qualified as male candidates versus a 61 percent majority of women who would vote for a woman as President. Still, it is

noteworthy that there is resistance to the idea of a woman President in Nigeria even among women: indeed over a quarter (27%) of female respondents say they would not vote for a woman President even if she was as qualified as male presidential candidates.



## Survey Methodology

- The **sample size** of the survey is 2,520 respondents, randomly selected and interviewed face-to-face in their homes. The sample was stratified proportionately across the 33 states and the federal capital territory of Abuja, where the survey was able to be administered. Due to security concerns and violence by the Boko Haram militant group, the survey was unable to be administered in the three states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Results and data breakdowns for the North East region should not be considered to represent the entire North East region due to the exclusion of three states. The North East region, as presented in this report, is representative of the states of Bauchi, Gombe and Taraba only and does not necessarily reflect the views of Nigerians residing in the states excluded from the sampling frame. A weight factor was introduced to bring the realized sample in line with the population parameters to adjust for minor discrepancies in observed age and regional proportions.
- **Sample sizes for key demographic segments:**
  - **Gender:** Male = 1,260; Female = 1,260
  - **Age groups:** 18-24 = 661; 25-34 = 1,096; 35-44 = 450; 45-54 = 191; 55-64 = 72; 65 or older = 36; refused = 14
  - **Education groups:** Illiterate = 157; Primary = 160; Secondary = 1,304; University = 735; Post-University = 164
  - **Regional groups:** North West = 568; North East = 296; North Central = 368; South West = 360; South East = 328; South South = 416; Lagos = 184
- Unless otherwise noted, the **margin of error** for the entire sample is  $\pm 1.95$  percent with a 95 percent confidence interval.
- **Fieldwork dates:** December 5-18, 2014.
- **Survey firm:** IFES contracted Practical Sampling International (PSI), a Lagos-based research organization, to implement the survey. Oversight was provided by the IFES Center for Applied Research and Learning.
- **Charts:** There may be slight variation between numbers presented in the analysis and the data figures or tables due to rounding. This occurred in only a few cases and the difference was never greater than 1 percent.





Global Expertise. Local Solutions.  
Sustainable Democracy.

IFES | 1850 K Street, NW | Fifth Floor | Washington, D.C. 20006 | [www.IFES.org](http://www.IFES.org)