

Nigeria's Economic Outlook

Political Environment

The 2019 Presidential, Gubernatorial and Legislators elections has been concluded. The Presidential elections was held on February 23, 2019. The Incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressives Congress (APC) beat his main rival, former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), in the presidential election, securing 56% of the votes compared to Abubakar's 41%. Moreover, the governorship election was held on March 9, 2019 in 29 of Nigeria's 36 states with some previously inconclusive elections in some states such as Rivers, Kano, Plateau etc.

The polls was a closely contested affair majorly between the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). The 2019 general election was underpinned by low turnout nationwide, monetary inducement, intimidation by military and political thugs among others. In terms of states won by the two main candidates in the presidential election, the fault lines on Nigeria's electoral map looked little changed from the last presidential contest in 2015. The north and most of the west remained undisputable APC territory, whereas the PDP held strong in a constellation of vote-rich southern states and won a narrow lead in the east. Six states swung; two were claimed by the APC and four were gained for the PDP. Overall President Buhari won a majority in 19 states and his opponent was first choice in 18, compared with a ratio of 21 to 16 in the 2015 presidential poll.

Different from 2015, when the then incumbent president, Goodluck Jonathan, came up against President Buhari, who was then in opposition, both candidates in the February 2019 election were from the northern part of Nigeria, both were also Muslim and ethnic Fulani. This could have been to the advantage of Alhaji Abubakar, who in theory had an opening to claw votes away from his opponent in the north and simultaneously tap the traditional PDP heartlands in the south. And he indeed fared better in the north than Goodluck Jonathan did, but the defeat was still large in populated states such as Bauchi, Borno, Kano and Katsina.

Counting on the south for votes also ended up being a strategic slipup for the PDP, as voter turnout in that region was low. Turnout was depressed nationwide, with just 35% of registered voters casting ballots, compared with 44% in 2015. Partly this can be explained by a week-long delay to the election declared at the last minute by the Independent National Electoral

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