

CURRENT STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

MIDTERM ASSESSMENT OF PRESIDENT
TINUBU'S ADMINISTRATION

JUNE 2025

**CURRENT STATE OF
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MIDTERM ASSESSMENT
OF PRESIDENT TINUBU'S
ADMINISTRATION**

2025 Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room

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Executive Summary

This report assesses the state of democracy in Nigeria, 26 years after the return to civilian rule in 1999. While democratic resilience has been evident, persistent challenges, ranging from electoral malpractice to cultural fragmentation, continue to undermine democratic consolidation. The report is structured around three core themes: Nigeria's democratic evolution, the influence of cultural values on governance, and a mid-term evaluation of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration.

1. Nigeria's Democratic Journey

Since the transition to the Fourth Republic in 1999, Nigeria has experienced seven general elections and its first peaceful transfer of power in 2015. Early administrations, notably under Presidents Obasanjo and Jonathan, introduced reforms and improved electoral processes, though marred by irregularities and insecurity. The President Buhari era emphasized anti-corruption and security but faced criticism over human rights and economic stagnation. By 2025, democracy in Nigeria still remains fragile, marked by institutional weaknesses, electoral distrust, and public disillusionment.

2. Culture, Values, and Democratic Practice

Nigeria's cultural diversity, spanning over 250 ethnic groups, has shaped its democratic experience. Historically, indigenous governance systems emphasised accountability and communal leadership. However, post-colonial politics have seen a shift toward elite dominance, transactional politics, and identity-based mobilisation. While federalism and traditional institutions have promoted inclusivity, ethnic and religious divisions continue to fuel electoral violence and undermine issue-based politics. Gender norms and patronage networks further restrict broad-based participation, particularly for women and marginalised groups.

3. Mid-Term Review of the President Tinubu Administration

President Tinubu assumed office in 2023 amid high expectations and political tension. His administration has launched bold reforms, including fuel subsidy removal and infrastructure investments, aimed at economic restructuring. Supporters cite efforts to strengthen institutions and maintain party cohesion. However, critics highlight centralisation of power, democratic backsliding, and detachment from citizens' realities. Economic hardship, inflation, and insecurity persist, fueling public protests and eroding trust in governance.

4. Electoral Integrity and Democratic Outlook

The 2023 elections, despite technological upgrades like BVAS, were marred by logistical failures, voter suppression, and judicial controversies. President Tinubu's symbolic reforms, such as the construction of a new INEC annex, have yet to restore electoral credibility. Concerns over judicial independence, suppression of dissent, and weakened democratic institutions remain prevalent. As President Tinubu enters the second half of his tenure, the administration faces a pivotal test: whether it can translate reform rhetoric into tangible democratic gains.

Conclusion

Nigeria's democracy stands at a crossroads while also facing a troubling decline. Once buoyed by the hope of a post-military democratic era that began in 1999, the country's political landscape has since suffered repeated setbacks from electoral malpractice and rising authoritarianism to weakened institutions and shrinking civic space. Understanding the root causes of this decline and implementing sustainable solutions is imperative if the country is to uphold the rule of law, ensure popular participation, and deliver on the promise of accountable governance. While the endurance of civil rule is commendable, systemic corruption, cultural fragmentation, and governance deficits continue to threaten democratic consolidation.

The President Tinubu administration's legacy will hinge on its ability to address economic inequality, restore electoral integrity, and foster inclusive governance. Strengthening civic engagement, institutional accountability, and national cohesion will be critical to shaping Nigeria's democratic future beyond 2027.

Introduction

This year, Nigeria marks 26 years of democratic rule, a significant milestone in the country's democratic journey since the return to civil rule in 1999. Although progress has been made, three fundamental principles that form the bedrock of democracy – cultural values, political leadership and the electoral process – are being confronted by systemic corruption, growing disillusionment and erosion of cultural values.

This report evaluates the state of governance, the quality of leadership and the foundational values that have influenced Nigeria's political trajectory. The report, focusing on these three core themes, is sectioned into four.

Section one provides a brief historical insight into Nigeria's democratic journey, exploring in brief, the evolution and contemporary issues in Nigeria's democracy between 1999 and 2025.

Section two reviews how Nigeria's diverse culture and value system continue to influence democratic practice.

Section three streamlines the analysis of the current administration, providing a mid-term reflection on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's two-year office against his 2023 election campaign promises.

In Section four, the report attempts a balanced analysis of the recent report from the Ministry of Information on the progress that President Tinubu's administration has made on its election promises (see Annex 1).

The report concludes by highlighting some practical steps to accelerating the delivery of the Election Manifesto in an efficient and effective manner that will improve the current state of governance across board – economically, politically and socially.

Brief Historical Insights on Nigeria's Democracy

Nigeria transitioned to democracy on May 29, 1999, marking the beginning of the Fourth Republic after decades of military rule¹. The return to civilian governance was seen as a pivotal moment, ushering in hopes for political stability, economic growth, and improved governance.

Early Democratic Years (1999–2007)

The first democratic government under President Olusegun Obasanjo focused on stabilising the country after years of military rule. His administration prioritized economic reforms, debt relief, and anti-corruption measures. However, democracy faced challenges, including electoral irregularities and political tensions. The 2003 elections were marred by allegations of vote rigging, setting a precedent for electoral disputes².

Political Consolidation and Challenges (2007–2015)

The 2007 elections, which brought Umaru Yar'Adua to power, were widely criticized for fraud and irregularities. Yar'Adua acknowledged these flaws and initiated electoral reforms before his untimely death in 2010. His successor, Goodluck Jonathan, oversaw the 2011 elections, which were considered an improvement but still faced security threats, particularly from the Boko Haram insurgency. Jonathan's tenure saw increased political participation but also heightened ethnic and religious tensions. The 2015 elections marked a historic moment as Muhammadu Buhari defeated the incumbent, marking Nigeria's first peaceful transfer of power between political parties.

Democratic Evolution and Contemporary Issues (2015–2025)

Buhari's administration focused on anti-corruption efforts and security challenges but concerns over human rights abuses and economic struggles persisted. The 2019 elections faced logistical issues and allegations of voter suppression. By 2025, democracy in Nigeria will still remain a work in progress, with debates over governance, electoral integrity, civil liberties, and value erosion³.

- 1 Kelvin Ashindorbe and Nathaniel Danjibo (2022): Two Decades of Democracy in Nigeria: Between Consolidation and Regression (available on: <https://www.eisa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2022-journal-of-african-elections-v21n2-two-decades-democracy-nigeria-consolidation-regression-eisa.pdf>)
- 2 John Cambell (2019): The Legacy of Nigeria's 1999 Transition to Democracy (available on: <https://www.cfr.org/blog/legacy-nigerias-1999-transition-democracy>)
- 3 Jude Mutah (2024): Assessing Twenty-Five Years of Democracy in Nigeria (available on: <https://saisreview.sais.jhu.edu/assessing-twenty-five-years-of-democracy-in-nigeria/>).

Despite setbacks, Nigeria's democracy has endured for over 25 years, demonstrating resilience. However, electoral transparency, security, and economic stability remain critical for democratic consolidation under President Tinubu's administration, which commenced in 2023.

Nigeria's Culture and Value System and Its Influence on The Country's Democracy

Nigeria's democratic journey has been deeply shaped by its cultural diversity and value system. With over 250 ethnic groups and numerous religious traditions, the country's democracy has evolved, benefiting from its inclusiveness while struggling with internal divisions. While this diversity has fostered representation and resilience, it has also presented challenges that continue to shape Nigeria's democratic experience.

Historical Foundations and Gradual Erosion of National Culture and Value System

Nigeria's cultural identity and value system have historically been rooted in accountability, communal governance, and mutual respect. Pre-colonial governance structures across various ethnic nationalities exhibited democratic tendencies, with councils of elders, village assemblies, and age-grade systems ensuring checks and balances. These governance structures fostered collective responsibility and integrity, principles that aligned with democratic ideals. However, post-colonial Nigeria has seen the gradual erosion of indigenous governance frameworks. The influence of Western political systems, the violence of military rule, and the exploitation of ethnic divisions have disrupted the country's traditional value systems. Instead of experiencing a cultural revival, Nigeria has witnessed a progressive decay in civic values, reflecting a shift from service to self-interest and patriotism to apathy.

The Positive Influence of Culture on Democracy

Nigeria's cultural diversity has been instrumental in encouraging broad political participation. Ethnic and regional groups have found representation in governance, ensuring that varied voices contribute to national discourse. The country's federal structure allows states to manage their affairs in ways that reflect local traditions, reinforcing inclusivity and decentralized governance. Communal leadership has also played a stabilising role in Nigerian democracy. Traditional rulers and religious leaders often mediate political conflicts, helping to diffuse tensions before they escalate. These informal governance structures maintain a connection between democracy and indigenous values, ensuring that democratic institutions remain relevant to the people.

Additionally, Nigerians have a strong culture of participating in public discourse. Despite repressive laws, political debates, activism, and media engagement have thrived, highlighting the resilience of freedom of expression and civic involvement.

Movements such as #EndSARS have demonstrated the power of citizen-led activism, where the people demand accountability and democratic reforms.

The Challenges of Cultural Diversity in Democracy

Despite the strengths in the cultural diversity and strong traditional values, ethnic and religious divisions have significantly influenced elections, leading to tribalism rather than issue-based political discourse. Political loyalties are frequently shaped by ethnic identities rather than policy considerations, contributing to electoral violence and exclusionary politics. In many cases, leaders prioritise regional interests over national progress, which always results in a weakening of national unity.

Furthermore, Nigeria's political culture has shifted away from patriotism to protecting elite privilege, where a small group of powerful individuals continues to dominate democratic structures⁴. A new culture and value system, mainly defined by corruption and deeply embedded patronage networks, has further undermined governance, making it difficult for democracy to deliver tangible benefits to most Nigerians. The influence of money and connections in politics has limited opportunities for genuine democratic participation. Some traditional values continue to hinder inclusivity in some regions, where gender norms limit women's political participation and restrict their representation in governance and policy-making. This erosion of cultural integrity has produced a generation increasingly detached from national values of unity and collective responsibility. The phrase, **"Na my own I dey find"** (I am only looking for my interest), has become symbolic of a society driven by individual survival rather than communal aspirations. Where cultural pride was once a foundation for accountability, it has now been replaced by cynicism and detachment.

4 Victor Jatula (2019): Political Culture, Elite Privilege and Democracy in Nigeria (available on: file:///C:/Users/DBCS/Downloads/ajol-file-journals_511_articles_191459_submission_proof_191459-6037-485675-1-10-20191127.pdf).

Mid-Term Assessment of President Bola Tinubu's Administration

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu assumed office in May 2023 as Nigeria's 16th President and 6th democratically elected leader, amid a contentious political climate. His campaign, centred on renewed hope and economic reform, inspired optimism in some Nigerians, while others remained sceptical of his ability to deliver meaningful change. Now, two years into his administration, the reality of his governance raises pressing questions about the effectiveness of his policies.

At the midpoint of his tenure, President Tinubu's leadership has been defined by bold reforms, political manoeuvring, and mounting challenges. While he has displayed resilience in navigating Nigeria's complex political landscape, the broader implications of his decisions on governance, the economy, security, and social cohesion continue to generate debate.

Political Leadership

Politically, President Tinubu's government has exhibited a tendency toward centralization, raising concerns about democratic backsliding. Critics argue that sycophancy among political allies, excessive party loyalty, and harsh policy implementations have exposed governance weaknesses, fueling skepticism about competence. His leadership has been defined by strategic political consolidation, aimed at reinforcing his party's dominance. However, opposition figures contend that since his assumption of office in 2023, democratic space has narrowed, fostering an atmosphere of partisan control.

Governance under President Tinubu has been marked by controversies, particularly in handling dissent and opposition-controlled states. The emergency rule in Rivers State has intensified debates on executive overreach, with critics questioning its implications for federal-state relations and democratic principles. Additionally, the culture of political servility among party figures has reinforced perceptions of elite impunity, leading to growing public discontent.

On the positive side, President Tinubu's leadership has been defined by bold political maneuvering and some institutional reforms. His supporters argue that he has made efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, including reforming Nigeria's legislative framework and enhancing judicial independence. His commitment to anti-corruption measures, such as the removal of key officials accused of mismanagement, has been cited as a step toward greater accountability. Furthermore, President Tinubu has demonstrated effective party management,

preventing internal fragmentation within the ruling party. His ability to build alliances and maintain cohesion has been recognized as progress toward political stability, steering away from the instability that often plagues Nigerian party politics. Some observers believe that his policy-driven approach, centred on economic restructuring and social interventions, is geared toward achieving a broader vision for national development, though its long-term success remains to be seen.

State of the Economy

Nigeria's economic outlook remains deeply divided, with supporters lauding bold reforms while critics highlight worsening economic conditions. Over the past two years, President Tinubu's administration has pursued ambitious policies, including the removal of fuel subsidies, which freed up funds for state allocations, infrastructure development, and fiscal restructuring. Advocates argue that while these measures have imposed short-term hardship, they are necessary for long-term economic sustainability. Additionally, efforts to secure over \$50.8 billion in proposed foreign investments through economic diplomacy signal optimism for some people as well as leave some skepticism about Nigeria's future prospects.

However, challenges persist. The country continues to struggle with inflation, a weakened currency, rising debt, and widespread poverty, posing serious threats to economic stability. While the subsidy removal was meant to reposition Nigeria's economy, the absence of sufficient cushioning measures has exacerbated hardship for ordinary Nigerians. Simultaneously, insecurity, banditry, terrorism, and communal violence have disrupted economic recovery, increasing uncertainty. Inflation soared to 34% by mid-2024, significantly affecting the cost of living, with the projected 4.17% economic growth rate for 2025 proving insufficient to offset rising poverty and unemployment, which remain at an all-time high.

While some economists argue that these reforms lay the foundation for long-term stability, many Nigerians continue to struggle with economic volatility. The administration's failure to implement effective social safety nets has left vulnerable populations bearing the brunt of these economic shifts. Strengthening welfare programs, job creation initiatives, and inflation control measures will be essential to ensuring that economic policies yield meaningful improvements for the broader population.

Insecurity

Nigeria continues to face widespread security challenges, with terrorism, banditry, and communal conflicts disrupting national stability. Despite President Tinubu's efforts, including boosting military operations in the North-East, results have been mixed. While some governors in conflict-prone regions acknowledge improvements

in counter-terrorism strategies and enhanced military coordination, insecurity remains a major obstacle to economic and social development. These threats occur daily within and across Nigeria's borders, with cross-border activities, particularly in the Sahel region, further complicating stability.

Internally, under President Tinubu's government, Nigeria continues to struggle with multi-dimensional security threats, including:

Terrorism and Insurgency: The Boko Haram insurgency and its splinter faction, ISWAP (Islamic State West Africa Province), remain major threats in the North-East, particularly in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States. Despite military offensives, insurgents have regrouped in remote areas, launching attacks on villages and military outposts. Reports indicate that over 2 million people remain displaced due to insurgency-related violence.

Banditry and Kidnappings: The North-West and North-Central regions continue to experience armed banditry, with states like Zamfara, Kaduna, Niger, and Katsina frequently targeted. Bandits operate from forest hideouts, raiding communities, abducting civilians, and demanding ransom payments. Kidnappings have intensified, affecting schoolchildren, travellers, and farmers, heightening public anxiety.

Communal Clashes and Ethnic Conflicts: Ethnic tensions fuel persistent communal clashes, particularly in Plateau, Benue, and Taraba States. Disputes between herders and farmers over land have led to thousands of deaths and mass displacement. Violence in the Middle Belt region continues to escalate, driven by competition for resources and ethnic divisions. Beyond Nigeria's internal security concerns, regional instability presents additional risks. The withdrawal of Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso from ECOWAS has disrupted Nigeria's regional security strategy, as these nations formed the Alliance of Sahel States, diminishing Nigeria's influence in West Africa.

Terrorism and transnational crimes perpetrated by terrorist groups such as Boko Haram, ISWAP, and Al-Qaeda affiliates exploit Nigeria's porous borders for arms trafficking, human smuggling, and illicit trade. The Sahel region has become a battleground, with violence spilling into Nigeria's northern borders. Cross-border cattle grazing has also posed security risks. The ECOWAS' Transhumance Protocol, which permits cross-border cattle grazing, has inadvertently enabled terrorist networks posing as herdsmen to infiltrate several communities and instigate violence and ethnic tensions.

While President Tinubu's administration has made efforts to strengthen security, challenges persist both internally and regionally. Addressing banditry, insurgency, and communal conflicts requires policy reform, enhanced intelligence gathering, military coordination, and community engagement, areas where significant progress remains elusive.

Social Cohesion

Nigeria's social fabric has been tested by economic hardship, political divisions, and ethnic tensions, shaping the public's perception of President Tinubu's administration. While his government has introduced initiatives aimed at fostering national unity, concerns remain about civil liberties, press freedom, and inclusivity. Supporters of President Tinubu's administration claim that this regime has prioritised national unity with the launching of programmes such as the Presidential Community Engagement Strategy, which ensures grassroots participation in governance and direct dialogue between government officials and citizens, allowing communities to voice concerns and propose solutions. Additionally, the Citizens' Assembly has provided a structured platform for engagement, helping to reduce social tensions and bridge the gap between leadership and the people.

Additionally, there are significant pointers to the government's efforts to strengthen youth involvement in governance. The National Youth Confab, set to launch in 2025, aims to enhance youth participation in policy-making, reinforcing the administration's commitment to nation-building. Furthermore, President Tinubu's government has invested in infrastructure projects, including Renewed Hope Cities, which seek to address housing deficits and improve urban development. These initiatives contribute to long-term social stability, fostering a sense of national progress.

On the flip side, despite these efforts, economic hardship and political divisions have fuelled public protests, with citizens expressing frustration over governance and living conditions. Movements like #EndSARS and other civic engagements reflect growing dissatisfaction with leadership, particularly regarding security, inflation, and unemployment. Critics argue that President Tinubu's administration has not sufficiently addressed ethnic and regional disparities, with some policies perceived as favouring certain groups over others.

Concerns about civil liberties and press freedom have also emerged, with reports of restrictions on dissent and media censorship. While the government promotes inclusive governance, critics warn that political opposition and activists face increased scrutiny, raising questions about democratic integrity. Additionally, the impact of subsidy removal has disproportionately affected low-income communities, exacerbating social inequality.

Mid-Term Assessment of President Bola Tinubu's 2023 Election Manifesto

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope 2023 manifesto outlined ambitious goals across security, economy, governance, infrastructure, education, healthcare, and social programs. Two years into his tenure, the Ministry of Information's mid-term review provides insights into progress made. This section examines the Ministry's report by analysing the progress made in key areas, identifying current gaps and the implications for the remaining years of President Tinubu's Administration (**see Annex 1 for a detailed assessment across all the twenty-one areas covered in the manifesto**).

Progress Recorded

President Tinubu's manifesto prioritised national security, pledging to strengthen military capacity, reform policing, and enhance border security. The Ministry of Information reports 13,543 terrorists eliminated, 17,469 arrested, and 9,821 hostages rescued, alongside investments in modern weapons, drones, and naval vessels. While insecurity persists, these efforts align with his manifesto's security objectives.

On economic reforms, President Tinubu promised diversification, industrial growth, and fiscal stability. The review highlights GDP growth of 3.84%, \$ 50 B+ in foreign investment commitments, and FX reserves rising from \$3.99B to \$ 23.11 B. His administration has also cleared \$10B in FX debts, signalling improved investor confidence. These achievements reflect his manifesto's focus on economic revitalization, though inflation and unemployment remain high.

Infrastructure development has been a key pillar of President Tinubu's agenda, with commitments to road expansion, water access, and rural development. The review notes 440+ road projects, including major highways and urban renewal initiatives, alongside housing schemes like Renewed Hope Cities. While implementation delays persist, these projects align with his manifesto's nationwide infrastructure push.

In governance and anti-corruption, President Tinubu pledged institutional reforms and transparency measures. The Oronsaye Report's implementation has led to federal agency restructuring, and digital tracking systems have improved oversight. While corruption remains a challenge, these steps reflect his manifesto's commitment to accountability.

Education and healthcare reforms have seen significant investment, with a ₦35B student loan fund, TETFUND-backed research projects, and revitalized primary

healthcare centers. The manifesto's promise to expand access to quality education and healthcare is being pursued, though teacher shortages and medical brain drain remain concerns.

Gaps and Challenges

Despite progress, critical gaps remain. Security improvements have not fully addressed banditry, kidnappings, and communal conflicts, which continue to disrupt economic activities and social stability. Border security remains weak, particularly following Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso's withdrawal from ECOWAS, reducing Nigeria's regional influence.

Economic hardship caused by fuel subsidy removal has raised the cost of living, deepening poverty and inequality. While investments and fiscal reforms have improved macro indicators, many Nigerians struggle to see tangible benefits. Inflation remains stubbornly high, and job creation has not matched workforce demand, contradicting the manifesto's promise of widespread employment opportunities.

Governance and public accountability remain mixed. While digital tracking tools have improved transparency, corruption continues to be deep-rooted. The absence of comprehensive women empowerment programs contradicts the manifesto's pledge to enforce 35% affirmative action.

Educational investments have been strong, but frequent strikes and funding gaps hinder academic continuity. Healthcare has improved in coverage and funding, but health worker shortages and limited specialized care facilities persist.

In social cohesion, President Tinubu's administration has launched grassroots engagement programs, including the Presidential Community Engagement Strategy and Citizens' Assembly, fostering government-citizen dialogue. However, civil liberties concerns, including restrictions on dissent and press freedom, have drawn criticism.

Federalism remains under review, with regional economic collaborations and governance decentralisation making progress. However, implementation gaps, particularly around local government autonomy, indicate lingering bureaucratic bottlenecks.

Implications of President Tinubu's Leadership for The Future of Nigeria Democracy and Elections

Despite holding six general elections since 1999, Nigeria's electoral system remains fundamentally compromised. The 2023 general elections, though technologically enhanced by the introduction of the BVAS system, were marred by logistical failures, electoral manipulation, voter suppression, judicial compromise, and a significant erosion of public confidence in the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

At the heart of this dysfunction lies a disempowered electorate who are either alienated from the process or resigned to the inevitability of poor governance. For many Nigerians, elections are no longer perceived as instruments of change but as ritualistic exercises that legitimise predetermined outcomes. The entrenched culture of **"anyhowness"** – a pervasive tolerance for mediocrity and impunity - continues to shape political conduct.

The President Tinubu administration has made symbolic overtures toward institutional reform, notably the commissioning of a new INEC annex headquarters, intended to enhance the Commission's operational capacity and autonomy. However, these infrastructural efforts have yet to yield tangible improvements in electoral credibility. Critics contend that under President Tinubu, democratic norms have further deteriorated, with increasing concerns over judicial independence, suppression of dissent, and the consolidation of power within the ruling party.

Furthermore, the administration has been criticised for its perceived detachment from the lived realities of Nigerians. Accusations of remote governance, opaque appointments, and disregard for due process have deepened public disillusionment. While the rhetoric of reform persists, the absence of transparent, inclusive, and accountable governance continues to erode democratic resilience.

This democratic fatigue is not merely institutional—it is deeply cultural. Thriving democracies are often anchored in shared values of patriotism, civic responsibility, and national honour. In Nigeria, the absence of a cohesive national ethos has enabled the rise of transactional politics and identity-based mobilisation, weakening the foundations of democratic accountability.

President Tinubu's mid-term record presents a paradox. While his administration has initiated key reforms and maintained political stability, widespread economic hardship and governance concerns have fuelled public dissatisfaction. His ability to project authority, attract investment, and sustain institutional continuity reflects political acumen, but unresolved challenges in security, economic relief, and national cohesion continue to cast a long shadow.

As he enters the second half of his tenure, President Tinubu stands at a critical juncture. The question remains: will his policies deliver lasting democratic consolidation and socio-economic stability, or will mounting public frustration define his legacy? Strengthening poverty alleviation, expanding job creation, and restoring faith in democratic institutions will be essential to shaping a credible and enduring impact beyond 2027.

Next Steps

Implementing the following strategic steps will help to reposition President Tinubu's policies direction towards delivering enduring benefits of democracy that will consolidate political and socio-economic stability, and lessen the mounting public frustration that is currently defining his legacy.

Electoral Reform

Comprehensive electoral reform is critical. INEC must be strengthened and its independence protected. This includes:

- Fully implementing electronic transmission of results,
- Enforcing campaign finance regulations,
- Protecting electoral officials and voters from violence and coercion,
- Ensuring legal sanctions for electoral offenders through special tribunals or fast-track courts.

Strengthening Democratic Institutions

To advance the consolidation of Nigeria's democracy, the President Tinubu administration must strengthen institutional independence, improve bureaucratic efficiency, and rebuild public trust in the electoral process. This includes ensuring that the judiciary and legislature operate with full financial and administrative autonomy, effectively insulating them from executive interference and enabling them to function as genuine checks on power. The complete, balanced implementation of the Oronsaye Report is equally critical, not simply to streamline government, but to protect and reinforce accountability mechanisms. Alongside these efforts, the digitization and modernization of electoral infrastructure through biometric voter accreditation and secure result transmission, remain vital to restoring electoral credibility and citizen confidence. These reforms, pursued in tandem, can form the bedrock of a more transparent, independent, and resilient democratic framework.

Deepening Political Accountability and Inclusion

In the remaining period, the President Tinubu administration must prioritize deeper political accountability and broader inclusion. Institutionalizing internal party democracy is vital to curbing sycophancy and weakening elite dominance. This will help in fostering a culture where party members can contest and contribute without fear or favoritism. Equally important is the enforcement of affirmative action policies, particularly the 35% representation quota for women and meaningful youth inclusion in policymaking and appointments, both of which are essential for reflective and equitable governance. Additionally, strengthening anti-corruption frameworks through the reform of the Code of Conduct Bureau, coupled with greater transparency in public procurement and spending, will bolster public trust and promote ethical leadership. These measures are not only consistent with democratic ideals but critical to ensuring legitimacy, responsiveness, and long-term stability. A culture of accountability must be nurtured and Political leaders must demonstrate democratic values through:

- Transparent governance and regular public engagement,
- Merit-based appointments across government institutions,
- Democratic Culture and Leadership Accountability

Expanding Civic Space and Media Freedom

A vibrant civil society and independent media are essential pillars of democracy. The government should:

- Repeal or amend repressive laws that criminalise dissent,
- Ensure the protection of journalists and activists,
- Promote dialogue with civil society organisations on governance issues.

Promoting Issue-Based Politics and Civic Engagement

A shift toward issue-driven politics requires deliberate public education and civic literacy programs that empower citizens to assess candidates based on policies, not identity. Elevating the quality of political discourse through media regulation and balanced reporting can further discourage divisive narratives. Creating local engagement platforms like town halls, participatory budgeting forums, and community councils, will help bridge the gap between government and citizens. Upholding freedom of expression through press independence and minimal state interference ensures a vibrant democratic space where diverse voices are heard and respected.

Fostering National Unity and Social Cohesion

National unity in Nigeria hinges on cultivating a governance model that respects diversity while fostering a shared sense of purpose. Inclusive federalism, where subnational governments have greater authority over policing, taxation, and resource management, can bridge the disconnect between central policies and local realities. Giving states more responsibility allows communities to see themselves reflected in decision-making, deepening ownership of national outcomes. Addressing longstanding ethnic and regional imbalances in federal appointments and resource distribution is equally crucial to building trust and countering perceptions of marginalization. Equitable representation fosters belonging and quells grievances that often drive division. Further, investing in peace building initiatives especially in conflict-affected areas like the Middle Belt and North-East, can heal fractured communities and lay the groundwork for reconciliation. Initiatives that blend security with dialogue, justice, and economic inclusion will help restore damaged social fabrics. Together, these steps offer a pathway to cohesion anchored in fairness, mutual respect, and national solidarity.

Consolidating Economic Reforms for Democratic Gains

Economic transformation holds little meaning without direct impact on citizens' well-being. While macroeconomic reforms such as subsidy removal and exchange rate unification have laid the groundwork for fiscal stability, translating these gains into tangible social relief remains essential. Expanding welfare initiatives, including conditional cash transfers and access to affordable basic services, will help cushion vulnerable populations and foster greater inclusion. Equally, creating dignified jobs through targeted incentives for youth-led enterprises and labor-intensive public works can bridge the gap between economic policy and social progress. To reinforce public trust, transparent reporting on how revenue from subsidy savings and foreign investments is utilized must become standard practice. Embedding these reforms within a framework of equity and accountability will not only enhance economic resilience but also deepen democratic legitimacy.

Leveraging Cultural Institutions for Democratic Education

Harnessing Nigeria's rich cultural and traditional structures can help embed democratic values more deeply within society. Integrating concepts like accountability, tolerance, and civic duty into national education curricula ensures that young Nigerians grow up with a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Beyond formal education, partnering with traditional and religious leaders offers a powerful channel for promoting democratic norms at the grassroots level. These figures command deep respect within communities and can serve as trusted advocates for inclusive governance, participatory citizenship, and peaceful coexistence. Building on indigenous systems of collective leadership and social accountability will help foster a democratic culture rooted in local realities.

Conclusion

After 26 years of uninterrupted civilian rule, Nigeria's democracy remains at a pivotal juncture, marked by key reforms, deep-rooted challenges, and competing visions for the future. From the early post-military governments to President Tinubu's administration, efforts have been made to stabilize governance and reform electoral systems, yet these strides continue to be tested by insecurity, elite dominance, and institutional fragility.

President Tinubu's mid-term record reflects a leadership defined by bold economic reforms, political centralization, and mixed results in governance delivery. His administration has introduced strategic initiatives to modernize institutions, boost transparency, and pursue long-term fiscal sustainability through subsidy removal and infrastructure expansion. However, these measures have also triggered economic hardship, public protests, and growing discontent over perceived exclusion and democratic backsliding.

Cultural diversity and federal structures have offered pathways for inclusive governance, but identity politics, regional inequality, and restricted civic space continue to hinder meaningful participation, particularly for women and marginalized groups.

As Nigeria looks beyond 2025, the durability of its democracy will depend on bridging the gap between reform and inclusion. Deepening institutional accountability, rebuilding public trust, and fostering civic engagement must move from rhetoric to action. The legacy of President Tinubu's government will rest not only on policy ambition but on its ability to deliver equity, stability, and a democracy that works for all Nigerians.

Annex 1: An Assessment of the Ministry of Information’s Mid-Term Review of President Tinubu’s 2023 Election Manifesto

S/N	Sector/ Issue	Current Problems (2023)	Proposed Solutions	Mid-Term Review By The Ministry of Information	Comments/Remarks
1	National Security	Terrorism, banditry, police underfunded, porous borders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish ABATTS (Anti-terrorism battalions) for rapid response • Increase investment in modern weapons, surveillance drones, and encrypted communication • Improve welfare for armed forces • Reform the police into a more professional, community-based force • Expand border patrol capacity 	13,543 terrorists eliminated, 17,469 arrested, 9,821 hostages rescued. Over 25 aircraft, 4+ naval vessels procured. Mining Marshals launched; stronger military logistics and morale.	While the numbers indicate progress, insecurity remains a major concern, particularly in rural areas. Banditry and kidnappings persist, and border security challenges continue to threaten national stability. Sustained efforts are needed to consolidate these gains.
2	Economy	Over-reliance on oil, youth unemployment, weak local industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive industrial growth by promoting local manufacturing and processing • Diversify exports beyond oil using AfCFTA opportunities • Introduce tax reforms, digitized revenue collection • Implement job-creating policies in sectors like agriculture, tech, and logistics 	GDP grew 3.84% in Q4 2024, \$50B+ FDI commitments, FX reserves grew from \$3.99B to \$23.11B, \$10B FX debts cleared. Positive investor sentiment.	Economic indicators show improvement, but inflation and unemployment remain high. The impact of subsidy removal has strained household incomes, and the benefits of foreign investments are yet to be fully realized.

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3	Infrastructure	Poor roads, low electricity access, water scarcity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a national road network connecting major cities and economic zones • Ensure that no Nigerian lives more than 5 minutes from potable water through boreholes and small treatment plants • Invest in rural and agricultural infrastructure like dams and access roads • Partner with private sector for sustainable infrastructure projects 	440+ road projects ongoing, e.g., Lagos-Calabar, Sokoto-Badagry, Abuja-Kaduna; Alao Dam reconstruction approved; RHIDF launched to fund legacy projects.	Infrastructure development is progressing, but implementation delays and funding constraints remain challenges. Many rural areas still lack access to potable water and reliable electricity.
4	Governance & Corruption	Ghost workers, inefficiency, revenue leakages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use biometric verification and digitization to remove ghost workers • Set spending caps for public offices and increase transparency • Digitally track government transactions and introduce open procurement systems • Reform public institutions for better accountability 	Oronsaye Report implementation approved; federal agency restructuring underway. Improved digital tracking systems (e.g., Delivery Tracker App).	The restructuring of federal agencies is a positive step, but corruption remains a persistent issue. Transparency measures need stronger enforcement to ensure accountability.
5	Youth Employment	Youth joblessness, skills mismatch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on labor-intensive sectors like agriculture, ICT, and the creative industry • Establish job matching platforms • Reform NYSC to include entrepreneurship training and a business incubation option • Fund youth-led startups and provide skill acquisition centers 	3MTT program launched (3 million youth for tech training); Youth Investment Fund (NYIF) restructured; new Nigerian Youth Academy launched; 280K jobs in creative sector.	While youth-focused programs have been introduced, job creation remains insufficient to meet demand. Many graduates still struggle with unemployment, and skill acquisition programs need better alignment with industry needs.

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6	Monetary Policy	Exchange rate volatility, inflation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonize exchange rates to stop arbitrage and speculation • Shift from over-reliance on demand-suppression (raising interest rates) • Strengthen fiscal and monetary policy coordination • Limit foreign borrowing to essential projects only 	CBN unified FX market, cleared \$7B FX backlog, repaid \$3.4B IMF loan. FX reserves increased, inflation showing signs of moderation.	While FX reserves have improved, inflation remains a challenge. The unification of the exchange rate has reduced distortions, but the cost of living remains high for many Nigerians.
7	Industrial Development	Weak industrial zones, underuse of regional strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up regional industrial hubs that tap local raw materials (e.g., leather in Kano, cocoa in Ondo) • Provide tax credits to companies hiring young people • Ensure consistent power and water supply in industrial parks 	\$5.5B in private pharma/ industry investments; LNG plants launched; 75,000+ new jobs in solid minerals; Executive Orders to attract oil/gas FDI.	Industrial investments are promising, but infrastructure gaps and inconsistent power supply continue to hinder full industrialization. More incentives for local manufacturers are needed.
8	Housing & Mortgage	Lack of affordable housing, low mortgage access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merge federal housing agencies for efficiency • Create social housing schemes through PPPs • Reform the Land Use Act to simplify land titling • Expand mortgage financing options for low- and middle-income Nigerians 	Renewed Hope Cities launched, 3,112 units in Abuja; mortgage frameworks underway; land registration reform initiated.	Housing initiatives are commendable, but affordability remains a concern. Mortgage access needs to be expanded to benefit lower-income earners.

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9	Agriculture	Low food production, underutilized land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in irrigation and dry-season farming Launch Farm Nigeria Project to train and support farmers Revive commodity marketing boards to stabilize prices Provide low-interest loans and create cooperatives for smallholder farmers 	State of Emergency on Food, 42,000MT grains distributed, 2.15M fertilizer bags from CBN; Livestock Ministry established; rice & grain reserves replenished.	Food security measures are improving, but inflation continues to affect affordability. More investment in mechanized farming and rural infrastructure is needed.
10	Power Sector	Frequent black-outs, poor distribution, billing disputes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accelerate the metering of all electricity consumers Expand access to off-grid and renewable energy, especially solar in rural areas Increase domestic use of Nigeria's natural gas for power generation Enforce contracts and improve private sector participation 	Electricity Act signed (states can now generate/distribute power); new solar, gas, and LNG projects; record 6,003 MW peak power generated.	Power generation has improved, but distribution challenges persist. Rural electrification efforts need to be scaled up.
11	Oil & Gas	Oil theft, gas flaring, subsidy burden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use advanced technology (drones, sensors) to monitor pipelines Remove petrol subsidies and reinvest savings in transport and health Promote gas as Nigeria's transition fuel Attract private investment to revive existing refineries 	Subsidy removed; \$8B in oil/gas investments unlocked; Port Harcourt refinery resumed, Presidential CNG scheme launched; \$500M clean energy funding.	The removal of subsidies has freed up funds, but fuel prices remain high. Investments in gas and refinery projects are promising, but oil theft and pipeline vandalism persist.

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12	Transport Infrastructure	Poor roads, underdeveloped ports, inefficient rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete ongoing expressway and bridge projects • Expand rail networks to major economic corridors • Reform ports for faster clearance and export efficiency • Launch a national airline to promote tourism and trade 	Commercial rail ops on Port Harcourt–Aba, expansion of coastal highway & airport infrastructure; N1.5T in HDMI road concessions.	Rail expansion and road projects are progressing, but delays and funding constraints remain. Port reforms need stronger enforcement to improve efficiency.
13	Poor roads, underdeveloped ports, inefficient rail	Outdated curriculum, dilapidated schools, strikes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in STEM and vocational education • Upgrade facilities in public schools and universities • Introduce a student loan program to increase access • Use tech-based learning (e.g., tablets, e-learning platforms) 	N35B Nigerian Education Loan Fund launched, 300,000 student loan recipients, TET-FUND funded 185 research projects, investment in federal schools.	Education funding has increased, but infrastructure gaps and teacher shortages persist. Strikes remain a challenge, affecting academic stability.
14	Health-care	Limited access, poor facilities, brain drain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure primary healthcare is available in every ward • Upgrade public hospitals with better equipment and personnel • Expand the National Health Insurance Scheme to cover the poor • Improve conditions to retain medical professionals 	N80B revitalized 8,000+ PHCs, 2,500 health workers hired, 60,000 retrained, cancer centers approved, VAT exemptions on pharma inputs.	Healthcare access has improved, but brain drain continues to affect medical personnel retention. More investment in specialized healthcare is needed.

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15	Digital Economy/ ICT	Low broadband access, job scarcity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train 1 million youths in digital skills (coding, AI, design) • Expand broadband coverage to 90% by 2027 • Promote local content in tech procurement • Support blockchain and digital ID systems 	Nigeria declared AfCFTA Digital Trade Champion; 3MTT underway; Citizens' Delivery Tracker App launched; MIL Institute for media literacy announced.	Digital initiatives are promising, but broadband expansion is slow. More investment in tech startups and local content development is needed.
16	Creative Industry & Sports	Lack of funding, piracy, talent underdeveloped	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Media City SEZ to house studios and production facilities • Offer tax breaks and IP protection for creators • Fund grassroots sports programs in schools • Modernize stadiums and support athlete training grants 	Creative Economy Development Fund launched; 280,000 jobs created; media & entertainment hubs in progress; funding for sports infrastructure under review.	The creative sector is growing, but piracy remains a challenge. Sports funding needs clearer implementation strategies.
17	Youth Empowerment	Exclusion from policymaking, loan inaccessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a mentorship and startup support program • Allocate 15% of cabinet and board positions to youths • Simplify youth access to government loans and grants • Engage youth in civic education and nation-building 	Presidential loan schemes worth ₦200B launched for MSMEs and manufacturers; 20% youth appointment target being implemented; NYIF & advisory councils active.	Youth inclusion has improved, but access to loans remains bureaucratic. More mentorship programs are needed to support young entrepreneurs.

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18	Women Empowerment	Low representation, economic exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce 35% affirmative action in appointments • Provide low-interest loans to women entrepreneurs • Launch scholarships for women in STEM and leadership • Expand domestic violence protection services 	No Review Provided on Women Empowerment.	The absence of a mid-term review suggests limited progress. More concrete actions are needed to improve women's representation and economic inclusion.
19	Social Programs	High poverty, weak safety nets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale up the National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) • Digitize MSME Academy for skills training • Introduce unconditional cash transfers for elderly poor • Expand school feeding and cash-for-work programs 	N200B Loan and Grant Scheme launched; Consumer Credit Scheme in motion; Mobilizer App and Delivery Tracker App launched to monitor reach.	Social programs have expanded, but poverty remains widespread. More targeted interventions are needed to support vulnerable populations.
20	Judicial Reform	Slow trials, corruption, low tech use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure full judicial independence (budget and appointments) • Digitize court systems for faster hearings • Introduce timelines for judgment delivery • Set performance targets for judges and review outdated laws 	Signed Bill harmonizing judicial retirement; Defence Industries Act signed; Judiciary digitization not fully reported; limited transparency on broader reforms.	Judicial reforms are progressing, but digitization efforts need acceleration. Transparency in legal proceedings remains a concern.

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21	Federalism/Governance	Over centralized power, weak local autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devolve powers in policing, prisons, and taxation to states • Review revenue allocation formula to empower state • Encourage regional economic collaboration (e.g., shared rail, power projects) 	Local Government Autonomy affirmed by Supreme Court; 5 Regional Development Commissions established; Oronsaye MDA rationalization underway.	Federalism reforms are promising, but implementation challenges persist. More clarity on revenue allocation and state autonomy is needed.

ABOUT

PLAC hosts the secretariat of the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room and is a member of its steering committee. The Situation Room provides a co-ordinating platform for civil society engagement on governance issues. It is also a platform for information sharing among civil society groups working on elections and topical national issues. It intervenes in the electoral process by promoting collaboration, proactive advocacy and rapid response to crisis in the electoral process. The Situation Room provides a forum of advance planning, scenario building, evidence based analysis, constructive engagement with various stakeholders in the electoral process and observation of elections.

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