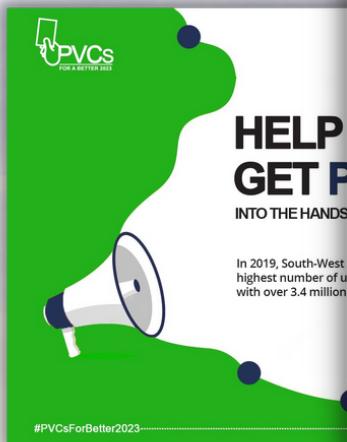


# THE ADVOCACY BULLETIN

*The Nigerian Physicians Advocacy Group*



## UPDATE ON 2023: NPAG & THE NVDC's PVCs FOR A BETTER 2023

*Susan Edionwe MD, FACS*

The Nigerian Physicians Advocacy Group (NPAG) has been strong at work towards supporting voting in Nigeria for 2023 and beyond. Earlier this year, in our June 2022 Special Edition, we reported that we officially are in collaboration with the National Voters Drive Coalition (NVDC). As a collective, we have finished PHASE ONE of our push towards increasing voter turnout in 2023. We saw the most success with voter registration in Abia, Nigeria, and were instrumental in the first-time registration of over 70,000 people in addition to performing 51,203 health screenings.

PHASE TWO has been decided and we are gearing up to continue our impact. Phase two is the "PVCs For A Better 2023" campaign. This is a novel project that seeks to strengthen our relationship with INEC as well as allow for an NGO to be instrumental in getting PVCs into the community. As it stands, the process for obtaining one's PVC after registration involves physically

### IN THIS ISSUE

**UPDATE ON 2023: NPAG & THE NVDC'S PVC FOR A BETTER 2023**

**VIOLENCE AT NIGERIA ELECTIONS**

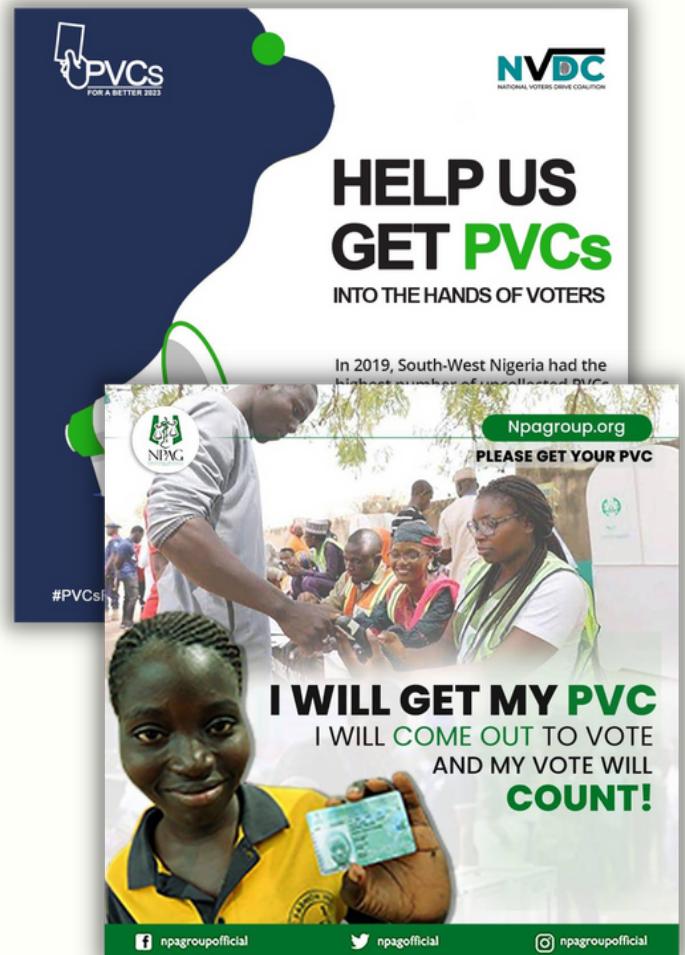
**THE LOBBY(IST): ELECTORAL LAW ELECTION FINANCING AS IT PERTAINS TO THE NIGERIA DIASPORA**

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

going to a designated location to pick up the permanent voter card. We are working with INEC to bring PVCs into the communities to make it easier for collection. In PHASE TWO, we are going to coordinate with INEC to set up PVC distribution events in various community centers and churches, etc. in key LGAs in Nigeria. We will be coordinating logistics, transport, and volunteers in various LGAs including Lagos and Abia to make sure we get as many PVCs distributed!

Furthermore, we have launched an educational campaign to run simultaneously with the PVC project. We are looking to address the misinformation or lack thereof regarding what the updated voting process entails and also to educate voters on the full process to vote successfully in 2023.

**How can you help?** We are launching our ONE MILLION PVC CHALLENGE! Already, we know over 1.2 million PVCs are uncollected in Lagos alone and hundreds of thousands of PVCs remain uncollected in other LGAs. You can support us



getting as many PVCs disseminated by sponsoring our PVC efforts. We fully expect to conduct this exercise beginning September 2022 until January 2023.

**HELP US GET TO ONE MILLION PVCs DISTRIBUTED TODAY! Scan the QR Code to support today!**

**\$5 dollars** - gets ONE (1) PVC into the hand of a voter

**\$15 dollars** - gets FOUR (4) PVCs distributed

**\$20 dollars** - gets SIX (6) PVCs distributed

**\$50 dollars** - gets FIFTEEN (15) PVCs distributed

**\$100 dollars** - gets FORTY (40) PVCs distributed

Stay tuned for more updates on our PHASE TWO efforts!

**one million pvc challenge**  
SUPPORT! SHARE & POST!

# VIOLENCE AT NIGERIA ELECTIONS

**Biodun Ogungbo, MBBS, FRCSEd, FRCS(SN), MSc**

I think it is a given that there would be violence in the run-up to the 2023 elections in Nigeria. I am not being a pessimist but of course, truth is bitter. Violence has been a constant in Nigeria's electoral history and democratic journey since independence in 1960. The country experiences an escalation of violence in the period before, during, and after elections.

The violence is perpetuated by the political class and the Nigerian Government itself. The Government is a major stakeholder and a biased protagonist (by this I mean a central character, not the hero) and often does not apply wisdom in the prevention and elimination of violence from our body politics. In fact, the government has often perpetuated acts of violence through its agencies to frustrate and disenfranchise its political opponents. There are too many examples. As far, as I can tell, we have never had a free and fair election - elections where the votes truly count or are counted freely.

The country's electoral body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has much to do ahead of the polls scheduled for February and March 2023. Unfortunately, the Commission depends on the government for its own protection and the protection of voters. However, there is currently no visible plan in place and no evidence that INEC offices and staff are effectively and properly protected all over the country.



INEC itself has reported violent acts against its staff members, offices, storage units, and the wanton destruction of electoral machinery and materials. It recently reported that it lost no fewer than 9,836 smart card readers in over 42 attacks on its offices and staff in three years. Also, more than 1,149 persons, including INEC employees and security officers were killed in the three elections held in 2011, 2015, and 2019. Ballot papers, cubicles, and other materials were similarly destroyed.

Following the violent assaults on its assets and staff, the electoral body has expressed fears over the 2023 elections, ***stating that there would be no results at polling units where violent incidents were orchestrated.***

The Commission should state this clearly and in no uncertain terms. Violence anywhere should lead to the cancellation of the results from that area such that it does not benefit the perpetrators. The Commission should strategize and find a legal solution that incapacitates the government itself as well as the political actors fermenting evil. As stated above, the political elite is the major culprit using state and non-state actors to deliver violence across geo-political zones.

A lack of political will, will ultimately scupper any real plans to shackle the violence. Legal clout that punishes the politicians inciting violence may be a better solution.

\*The thoughts & opinions in this article are the authors & do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the this organization.

# The LOBBY(IST)

## Electoral Law Election Financing as it Pertains to the Nigeria Diaspora\*

*Goodness Esu*

Since the news broke out that Diaspora funding can lead to the disqualification of a candidate, there have been contentions among patriotic Nigerians in the diaspora. The executives of NPAG hosted a lecture to address some of these matters. The guest speakers were Professor Paul Ananaba LLB, LLM, Ph.D. Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Attorney Sunny Ogunji, and Sarah Adekunle- James.

Attorney Sunny Ogunji elucidated that the law of no funding from the diaspora *applies to a political party, not a political candidate*. But, he asserted that the political party is not separate from the candidate. He encouraged those in the diaspora who wanted to support a political candidate to desist from doing so directly from the diaspora and instead transfer funds to an account in Nigeria to be used to support the political group they wished to back.

Prof. Paul Ananaba explained that the law does not allow political parties to have funds or assets outside Nigeria, with a fine of 5 million as the punishment. He also reiterated that the law does not allow funding of political parties but is not against funding a candidate and argued that the candidate is separate from the political party. Donations to a candidate should not exceed fifty million Naira by the law.

Barr. Sarah Adekunle- James maintained that the political party is not separate from the candidate. She suggested that to prevent conflicts and legal issues while funding, diaspora funding should be done via NGOs since donating to an NGO that funds political parties is not illegal and can prevent legal issues.

A few Questions were asked during the lecture.

**Q: Can diaspora accounts in Nigerian banks be used to fund elections?**

Attorney Ogunji: Yes, because the remittance is from a Nigerian bank and is not recognized as diaspora funding.

**Q: According to the relevant laws, what is the maximum amount a candidate can raise from the diaspora?**

Barr. Paul Ananaba: You cannot donate more than 50 million naira to a candidate, irrespective of whether it is from Nigeria or the diaspora.



**Q: Who interprets the law in Nigeria, and are the courts independent? Are laws governing elections interpreted differently from other laws? How will this affect this discussion?**

Attorney Ogunji: The judiciary interprets the law in Nigeria. The laws governing the election are not interpreted differently.

Prof. Paul Ananaba: The Judiciary authority rests with the court, the courts are independent. Election laws are interpreted differently. Diasporas should be guided well on the right way to fund so as not to make things worse.

**Q: Can an individual or group of people sponsor campaigns independently?**

Prof. Paul Ananaba: You cannot do that, as someone in the diaspora you cannot support a political campaign. You can however support a candidate just as a candidate.

*\*The thoughts & opinions in this article are that of the speakers & does not constitute legal advise. We advise proper legal counsel is sought by anyone seeking to make any political donations.*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We can ALL agree that the time for action is now!!! The enthusiasm needs to continue through election day and beyond!!! People must come out to vote!!! The diaspora should find a way to get involved! Support NPAG today!

Iyore James MD/MALD, FACS