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THE CIVILITY NEWSLETTER

The Civility



- Editorial
- OCCEN Trains 40 Youth Activists on Democracy, Elections and Human rights in Northwest Nigeria.
- OCCEN Participates in Strategic Communications Workshop to Reinforce Democracy in West Africa
- OCCEN Nigeria Holds Sensitization Seminar on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference in Kano Ahead of 2027 General Elections
- OCCEN Nigeria Organizes One-Day Youth Mobilization Policy Dialogue on 2027 General Elections
- Political Situation Report

Editorial



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As we reflect on the period from August to October 2026, we are pleased to share highlights of our continued commitment to strengthening democratic values, promoting youth civic activism and supporting inclusive participation in democracy and governance across Northwest and Nigeria at large.

Democracy thrives when citizens are informed, institutions are accountable, and young people have the knowledge, confidence and opportunities to contribute meaningfully to decisions that shape their future. Recognizing this, our interventions during the quarter focused on building the capacity of youth activists, strengthening civil society understanding of Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI), advancing strategic communications for democratic resilience in Nigeria, and promoting youth mobilization ahead of Nigeria's 2027 General Elections. Through a series of capacity-building programs, sensitization activities and policy engagements, OCCEN brought together young leaders, civil society actors, communications practitioners and other stakeholders to examine emerging democratic challenges and identify practical approaches to addressing them.

One of the key highlights of the quarter was a three-day capacity-building program for Northwest youth activists on democracy and elections in Nigeria. The training provided an opportunity for young people to deepen their understanding of democratic governance, electoral processes, citizen participation and the critical role of youth in safeguarding democratic institutions.

In response to the growing challenges posed by information manipulation and interference in democratic societies, OCCEN convened a Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) sensitization seminar for civil society organizations in Kano State. The seminar created an important platform for civil society actors to understand the nature, methods and implications of FIMI, particularly its potential to undermine public trust, deepen social divisions and weaken democratic institutions.

Recognizing that democratic challenges transcend national boundaries, OCCEN joint a two-day West Africa Regional Strategic Communications engagement aimed at reinforcing democracy across the sub-region, organized by National Democratic Institutions (NDI) with support from National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in Abuja Nigeria, with participation from civil society organizations from Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, Mali etc.

As Nigeria prepares for the 2027 General Elections, the need to strengthen youth participation in the electoral and democratic process remains critical. In this regard, OCCEN convened a policy dialogue in Zamfara State focused on youth mobilization for the 2027 General Elections.

OCCEN Trains 40 Youth Activists on Democracy, Elections and Human rights in Northwest Nigeria

The Organization for Community Civic Engagement (OCCE), with support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), has trained 40 youth activists from across the North-West states of Nigeria on democracy, elections and civic participation.

The three-day capacity-building training, held from October 1 to 3, 2026, at Tahir Hotel, Kano, was designed to strengthen young people's understanding of democratic principles, electoral processes, human rights and their roles in promoting accountable governance.

The training brought together 40 participants drawn from different states in the North-West geopolitical zone, providing a platform for young activists to deepen their knowledge, exchange experiences and develop practical approaches to promoting democratic values in their respective communities.

Seven resource persons drawn from civil society organizations and academic institutions facilitated the sessions, sharing their expertise and practical experiences on issues affecting democratic development and citizen participation in Nigeria.

Key topics covered during the training included the concept of democracy, human rights, elections, political parties, the rule of law, civic engagement and the role of technology in democratic processes.

The sessions examined the fundamental principles of





democracy, emphasizing popular participation, accountability, transparency, equality and respect for the rights and freedoms of citizens.

Participants were also exposed to the importance of credible elections, the roles and responsibilities of political parties, and the need for strict adherence to the rule of law in strengthening democratic institutions.

Discussions on civic engagement highlighted the importance of active citizenship, particularly the role of young people in demanding accountability, influencing public policies, monitoring governance processes and contributing to decision-making at different levels.

The training further explored the growing influence of technology in democratic processes, including its potential to promote access to information, enhance citizen participation and strengthen electoral transparency.

Through interactive presentations, group discussions and experience-sharing sessions, participants had the opportunity to engage with the facilitators, examine challenges confronting democratic governance and identify ways young people could contribute to positive democratic change.

The program underscored the importance of building the capacity of young people, particularly youth activists, to become informed and responsible citizens capable of promoting peaceful political participation, democratic accountability and inclusive governance.

At the end of the training, participants were expected to utilize the knowledge and skills acquired to educate and mobilize other young people for 2027 general elections, promote respect for human rights and encourage active participation in democratic and electoral processes within their communities.

The initiative reflects the importance of collaboration between civil society organisations and development partners in strengthening democratic institutions and encouraging meaningful youth participation in Nigeria's democratic development.

Suggested alternative headline: OCCE, NED Partner to Build Capacity of 40 Youth Activists on Democracy and Elections in Kano.

Editorial note: The report is written in a Nigerian newspaper style without inventing quotations or attributing statements to individuals who were not identified. Adding a quotation from the NGO's representative or a participant would make it stronger for newspaper publication.



OCCEN Participates in Strategic Communications Workshop to Reinforce Democracy in West Africa Abuja, Nigeria | October 7- 8, 2026

The Organisation for Civic and Community Engagement in Nigeria (OCCEN) participated in a two-day regional workshop on **"Strategic Communications to Reinforce Democracy in West Africa,"** held on October 7–8, 2026, at the Abuja Continental Hotel, Abuja, Nigeria.

The workshop was organised by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), with support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), and brought together stakeholders from Nigeria, Ghana, The Gambia and other parts of the West African region to deliberate on emerging challenges to democratic governance, information integrity and public trust in democratic institutions.

A central focus of the discussions was **Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI)** and its implications for democratic stability, particularly as Nigeria, Ghana and The Gambia prepare for their respective general elections in 2027.

Participants examined the growing challenges posed by disinformation, misinformation, coordinated information manipulation and other forms of digital interference capable of undermining public confidence in electoral processes, democratic institutions and peaceful political participation.

The sessions also explored the importance of strategic communication as a tool for strengthening democratic resilience, promoting credible public information, countering false and misleading narratives, and building public trust. Emphasis was placed on the need for coordinated, proactive and evidence-based communication approaches among civil society organizations, democratic institutions, media practitioners and other relevant stakeholders.

Discussions highlighted the importance of strengthening institutional capacity to identify, monitor and respond to information manipulation while upholding democratic values, freedom of expression, media independence and citizens' right to access accurate information.

OCCEN's participation provided an opportunity to engage with regional stakeholders, exchange experiences and contribute to conversations on practical approaches to addressing information-related threats to democracy. The engagement also reinforced the importance of collaboration among civil society organizations across West Africa in promoting information integrity, civic awareness and democratic accountability.

As the three countries approach their 2027 general elections, the workshop underscored the need for sustained regional cooperation, effective strategic communication frameworks and stronger partnerships to safeguard democratic processes against emerging information threats.

OCCEN recognizes that protecting democracy goes beyond the conduct of elections; it also requires informed citizens, responsible communication, resilient institutions and an information environment where facts, transparency and accountability are upheld.



The organization remains committed to promoting civic engagement, strengthening democratic values and supporting initiatives that advance credible information, inclusive participation and accountable governance in Nigeria and across the West African region.

The regional engagement brought attention to the power of strategic communication in shaping public understanding, strengthening democratic narratives and encouraging citizen participation. It provided an opportunity for stakeholders to reflect on the communication challenges confronting democratic institutions and civil society actors, while exploring approaches for developing effective, coordinated and audience-centered communication strategies.

Discussions highlighted the importance of countering misinformation, promoting democratic values, amplifying credible civic voices and building public trust through transparent and inclusive communication.

The program further reinforced the value of regional collaboration, knowledge-sharing and collective action in responding to shared democratic challenges across West Africa.

OCCEN Nigeria Holds Sensitization Seminar on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference in Kano Ahead of 2027 General Elections

KANO, Nigeria – The Organization for Community Civic Engagement Network (OCCEN) Nigeria, with support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), has organized a sensitization seminar on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) for civil society organizations in Kano State ahead of the 2027 Nigeria General Elections.



The seminar, held on 16 September at Tahir Guest Palace Hotel, Kano, brought together 60 participants drawn from civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders to discuss the growing challenges of foreign information manipulation and interference and their implications for Nigeria's democratic processes.

The engagement aimed to raise awareness about the nature, methods and potential consequences of FIMI, particularly in the context of the forthcoming 2027 general elections. It also provided an opportunity for participants to discuss the role of civil society in identifying, understanding and responding to misleading information, coordinated information manipulation and other forms of interference in the information environment.

Participants were sensitized on the importance of information integrity, responsible information sharing, critical media consumption and strengthening public awareness against information manipulation.



The seminar further highlighted the important role civil society organizations can play in promoting informed civic participation, protecting democratic values and supporting a credible electoral environment through public education, advocacy and constructive engagement.



Through this initiative, OCCEN Nigeria seeks to strengthen the capacity of civil society actors to recognize and respond to information manipulation while contributing to a more informed and resilient society as Nigeria approaches the 2027 general elections.

The programme forms part of OCCEN Nigeria's broader commitment to promoting democratic accountability, civic engagement and information integrity, with support from the National Endowment for Democracy.

OCCEN Nigeria Organizes One-Day Youth Mobilization Policy Dialogue on 2027 General Elections in Zamfara State

GUSAU, ZAMFARA STATE – 31 October 2026

OCCEN Nigeria, with support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), has organized a one-day Youth Mobilization Policy Dialogue on the 2027 General Elections at the ICONIC Study Center, Gusau, Zamfara State. The event brought together 50 participants, comprising young people and other stakeholders, to discuss youth participation, democratic governance, and strategies for promoting credible, peaceful, inclusive, and transparent elections in Nigeria.

The dialogue provided an important platform for young people to engage in constructive discussions on the role of youth in strengthening Nigeria's democratic process ahead of the 2027 general elections. Participants examined the importance of active youth participation in electoral processes, responsible political engagement, voter education, and the need for young people to take greater ownership of democratic governance.

Discussions also focused on the challenges limiting meaningful youth participation in elections, including political exclusion, voter apathy, misinformation and disinformation, electoral violence, and limited access to decision-making platforms. Participants emphasized the need to address these challenges through sustained civic education, inclusive political engagement, peaceful advocacy, and collaboration among relevant stakeholders.

The dialogue further highlighted the importance of mobilizing young people to participate actively in the electoral process, not only as voters but also as advocates for accountability, transparency, peaceful coexistence, and democratic reforms. Participants were encouraged to promote issue-based political engagement, respect democratic principles, and reject all forms of electoral violence and manipulation.

A key outcome of the engagement was the recognition of the need for stronger youth-led initiatives and





sustained collaboration between civil society organizations, electoral stakeholders, community leaders, and young people to improve democratic participation ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The participation of 50 individuals demonstrated the importance of creating inclusive spaces where young people can contribute their perspectives, share experiences, and collectively identify practical approaches to strengthening democratic institutions.

OCCEN Nigeria reaffirmed the importance of continuous youth mobilization, civic awareness, and policy engagement in building a more participatory democratic society. Through the support of the National Endowment for Democracy, the organization continues to provide opportunities for constructive dialogue and civic engagement that encourage young people to contribute meaningfully to Nigeria's democratic development.

The event concluded with a renewed call for sustained youth engagement, peaceful participation, and collective commitment to credible and inclusive elections in 2027.

Discussions centered on strategies for encouraging voter education, civic awareness, peaceful political participation and constructive engagement between young people and relevant democratic institutions.

The engagement also highlighted the importance of addressing barriers to youth involvement and creating inclusive spaces where young people can contribute to electoral processes beyond voting, including advocacy, community mobilization, public accountability and democratic leadership.

The dialogue served as a platform for strengthening stakeholder collaboration and generating practical perspectives on how to harness the potential of young people as positive contributors to Nigeria's democratic future.



Political Situation Report

Kano, Katsina, Jigawa, Kaduna and Zamfara States

Reporting Period: 1 August 2026 – 31 October 2026

1. SUMMARY

September and August 2026 were the months in which the 2027 contest moved from party primaries into the formal campaign. INEC's revised timetable opened presidential and National Assembly campaigns on 19 August and governorship and State Assembly campaigns on 9 September. The final list of presidential and National Assembly candidates followed on 12 September, with 18 presidential candidates, and the final governorship list on 10 October. Presidential and National Assembly elections are fixed for 16 January 2027 and governorship and State Assembly elections for 6 February 2027.

Three patterns stand out. First, the incumbent governors of Kano, Katsina, Jigawa, Kaduna and Zamfara are all APC candidates, and defections to the APC recurred through the period. Second, the opposition is fragmented and increasingly in the courts, most visibly over the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) governorship ticket in Kano and the African Democratic Congress (ADC) ticket in Katsina. Third, the information environment became a political risk in its own right. On 2 September, INEC's Chairman warned that generative AI was making manipulated video, audio and images harder to detect ahead of the elections.

OCCEN's work in the period addressed this third pattern and the wider question of young people's participation. It held a one-day sensitisation on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) in Kano on 16 September, a three-day capacity building training for 40 young people from five states from 1 to 3 October, and a policy dialogue on preparing young voters for 2027 in Gusau, Zamfara State, on 31 October.

2. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Nationally, the contest centers on President Bola Tinubu's re-election bid on the APC platform and the NDC ticket of Peter Obi and former Kano Governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso. The Obi–Kwankwaso Movement unveiled a 59-member presidential campaign council on 17 September, with John Ughulu as Director-General. The north-west is a central battleground, since Kwankwaso's network is the NDC's main northern asset while the APC defends on the incumbency of governors in every state covered here.

Women remain under-represented. A national analysis of INEC's final lists found 471 women among 4,881 candidates, about 9.6 per cent. Kano's police command and DSS have warned against fake news and hate speech, and media-literacy groups such as ALKALANCI have trained religious leaders on verification.

3. KANO STATE

3.1 Political situation

The period was dominated by the contest between Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf's APC and Kwankwaso's NDC. In the first week of September, Governor Yusuf met members of the NDC camp, including figures loyal to former Deputy Governor Nasiru Yusuf Gawuna. He then received Senator Rufai Sani Hanga, who had left the NDC and the Kwankwasiyya movement, and welcomed what was described as more than 136,000 new members from other parties. The flow was not one-way: by late September Gawuna had accepted the NDC's Kano Central senatorial ticket, with former Deputy Governor Aminu Abdussalam Gwarzo as the party's governorship candidate. On 20 September, Kwankwaso told BBC Hausa that he remained open to reconciliation with Governor Yusuf.

In October the contest moved into the courts. INEC published its final governorship list on 10 October, and Gwarzo's name was missing from the updated Kano list. Court documents show that three NDC members filed an ex parte motion on 17 October alleging that Kwankwaso imposed Gwarzo as candidate. On 27 October, Justice Amobeda of the Federal High Court in Kano barred INEC from publishing any NDC governorship candidate's name until the motion on notice is heard, and adjourned the case to 16 November.

3.2 Misinformation and disinformation

Foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) has been growing in northern Nigeria as the elections draw near. Analysts have documented coordinated foreign information

campaigns aimed at Hausa-speaking audiences, with the 2027 elections a focal point, and on 2 September INEC's Chairman warned that generative AI was making manipulated video, audio and images harder to detect. Kano, with its large, highly connected Hausa-speaking electorate, is especially exposed. An intense two-camp contest, a pending court case over a candidate's eligibility and cheap AI tools add to that exposure by giving manipulated content ready material to exploit. State officials acknowledged that competing political narratives were likely to generate strong emotions and misinformation, and security agencies warned that those spreading hate speech or fake news would face the law.

3.3 OCCEN activities

FIMI sensitisation, 16 September. With support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), OCCEN held a one-day policy dialogue on building resilience against FIMI at the Underground Hall, Tahir Guest Palace, Kano. OCCEN's Executive Director, Abdulrazaq Alkali, presented on countering FIMI to protect democratic institutions, public trust and informed citizens. He explained that FIMI requires both a foreign dimension and an intent to manipulate, listed common tactics (false narratives, manipulation of context, impersonation and coordinated amplification), and set out a five-pillar framework of Prevent, Detect, Verify, Respond and Recover. He urged citizens to follow the rule of Stop, Check, Think, Share, and stressed that the answer to FIMI is a resilient democracy rather than censorship. A five-member panel covering the media, social media, civil society and data perspectives called for closer cooperation between civil society and regulators, sustained outreach to online influencers who share unverified content, and stronger digital literacy. An open session addressed how to distinguish legitimate advocacy from foreign propaganda.

Three-day capacity building training, 1–3 October. OCCEN's annual youth training under the NED project, held at Tahir Underground Hall, Kano, brought together 40 young people from Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara and Jigawa. Sessions covered the concept of democracy and the development of political parties in Nigeria (Prof. Habu Muhammad, Bayero University Kano), election and technology innovation, including how misinformation and disinformation travel and how to check facts before sharing (Hamza Ibrahim, Disinformation Analyst, CITAD), human rights and the rule of law (Sani Ammani Esq.), youth political participation, civic engagement and youth networking for democracy. The workshop closed on 3 October with a presentation on the Democracy Drivers Network (DDN), which formally launched the new cohort into the DDN platform.

Together, the two activities responded to the Kano problem directly: the FIMI dialogue built shared understanding among stakeholders, and the training gave young people practical habits for verifying information before sharing it.

4. KATSINA STATE

4.1 Political situation

Katsina's politics was one of APC consolidation alongside early signs of internal strain. Governor Dikko Radda, affirmed as the APC consensus candidate in May, launched the state structure of the PBAT Door-to-Door Movement 2027 in early September, declaring that every elected person in Katsina belongs to the APC. In early October he lost at least five political appointees within days, among them the Deputy Commander (Operations) of the Hisbah Board, Muhammad Shitu Maslaha (letter dated 6 October), and Fadila Sani Dalhatu, Senior Special Assistant on Project Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation (letter dated 5 October). The resignations prompted speculation about an intra-APC contest for influence. On 14 October Radda was named chairman of the party's Tinubu/Radda 2027 campaign council, with Minister of Housing and Urban Development Ahmed Dangiwa as Director-General. The council was inaugurated on 17 October, when the governor appealed for reconciliation within the party.

INEC's final governorship list names Radda as the APC candidate and Garba Yakubu Lado as the PDP candidate. In the ADC, former Senator Ahmad Kaita appears as candidate, but a rival aspirant, Salisu Uli, has challenged the nomination at the Federal High Court in Abuja, alleging that no valid primary was held.

4.2 Women's political participation

Katsina has just one female candidate for the House of Representatives on INEC's final lists. The APC's selection of a woman for a Reps ticket in May was celebrated by women's groups as a breakthrough, but drew reported objections from some clerics. Women aspirants had earlier asked the governor for reserved seats, noting that women have been largely excluded from elective office in the state since 1999.

4.3 OCCEN activities

Young people from Katsina took part in the 1–3 October training, where they were taken through democracy, political parties, human rights, the rule of law, youth political participation and the identification of misinformation and disinformation, and were inducted into the DDN. OCCEN's women's political and voting sensitisation in Katsina is scheduled for 14 November 2026.

5. JIGAWA STATE

5.1 Political situation

Jigawa was the least turbulent of the five states. Governor Umar Namadi is the APC candidate on INEC's final list of 10 October, with Aminu Usman as running mate, and faces candidates from several parties, including Sabo Mohammed Nakudu of the ADC and Mustapha Sule Lamido of the PDP, who constituted his campaign council on 14 September. The APC continued to receive defectors and has described the opposition in the state as collapsed. On 23 October Governor Namadi was reported to be leading the party's state campaign council. Unlike Kano, Jigawa saw no high-profile legal dispute over candidacy, and observers describe the NDC as largely absent from the state's political arena.

5.2 OCCEN activities

Young people from Jigawa took part in the 1–3 October training and were inducted into the DDN. The training's sessions on political parties, youth participation and fact-checking addressed the low-information, low-competition conditions that a dominant ruling party can create. OCCEN will also hold a town hall meeting in Jigawa.

6. KADUNA STATE

6.1 Political situation

The continued detention and trial of former Governor Nasir El-Rufai remained the defining political story. He has been in ICPC custody since 18 February 2026. On 9 October the Court of Appeal in Kaduna dismissed his challenge to the refusal of bail. He missed a hearing on 12 October, citing a request to see his personal physician, after which the trial judge ordered the ICPC to produce him, and he appeared at the Kaduna State High Court on 13 October. On 17 October, former senator Suleiman Hunkuyi publicly urged Governor Uba Sani, at an event in Zaria where former allies of El-Rufai were received into the APC, to keep El-Rufai in detention until after the 2027 election. On 28 October Governor Sani said on Trust TV that he had done things for his predecessor privately and would not speak ill of him.

INEC's final list shows 16 governorship contestants. Governor Sani contests for the APC with Adams Jerry as running mate, while Isa Ashiru, his 2023 challenger, flies the ADC flag with Kantiok Ishaku. Only one of the 16 is a woman, Jamila Mohammed of the Young Progressives Party, and among 317 candidates for the State House of Assembly only 27 are women.

6.2 OCCEN activities

Young people from Kaduna took part in the 1–3 October training and were inducted into the DDN. Its sessions on human rights, the rule of law and peaceful participation, and on checking information before sharing, are directly relevant to a state in which the El-Rufai case is closely tied to the contest. OCCEN will also hold a town hall meeting in Kaduna.

7. ZAMFARA STATE

7.1 Political situation

Zamfara's politics was consolidated around Governor Dauda Lawal, declared the APC consensus candidate in May after a statewide affirmation exercise in which he was credited with 301,893 votes, and who appears on INEC's final list. On 20 October, Governor Lawal and 14 other governorship candidates signed a peace accord at a Peace Accord and Election Security Summit organised by the Zamfara State Police Command in Gusau, committing to peaceful conduct before, during and after the elections. Women's representation is low: Zamfara, like Katsina, has just one female candidate for the House of Representatives.

7.2 OCCEN activities

Young people from Zamfara took part in the 1–3 October training and were inducted into the DDN.

Policy dialogue, Gusau, 31 October. OCCEN held a policy dialogue in Gusau on preparing young voters for Nigeria's 2027 General Elections. Its aim was not to tell young people whom to vote for but to help every eligible young person participate freely, safely, knowledgeably and peacefully. The key message was that young people must move from being political bystanders to central drivers of governance by demanding policy-driven leadership, rejecting electoral manipulation and using their demographic weight to secure accountable governance ahead of 2027. The dialogue took place eleven days after the state's governorship candidates signed the peace accord, reinforcing its call for peaceful, issue-based participation.



Abdulrazaq Alkali
Executive Director, OCCEN Nigeria

One thing I can guarantee in this work is that you will never find me being partisan. However, I will always stand firmly for the cause of demanding accountability from those entrusted with power. My loyalty is not to any political party or individual; it is to the principles of transparency, accountability, justice, and good governance. Whoever is in power must be held accountable to the people.

I encourage all Nigerians not to give up on our democracy, despite the challenges and disappointments we may have experienced. Democracy belongs to the people, and its future depends on our collective participation. Let us not surrender our voices or our hopes.

Go out on election days, exercise your constitutional right, and vote according to your conscience. Vote for the future you believe in, the values you stand for, and the Nigeria you want to see.

Never give up on democracy. Your vote is your voice, and your voice matters!

#NigeriaDecides2027

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