

Nigeria

OVERVIEW

Nigeria Program Summary

Nigeria returned to civilian government in 1999 after nearly four decades of brutal and debilitating military regimes, and while the 2003 and 2007 elections ranked among the most violent and least credible, citizen and international observers found the April 2011 national elections the most credible in the nation's nascent democratic history.

To support these gains, the International Republican Institute (IRI) has continued its work with political parties as they strengthen their internal democracy and implement policy platforms, new campaign techniques and financial best practices. The Institute also supports traditionally disenfranchised groups such as women, youth and persons with disabilities to actively participate in Nigeria's political processes.

Political Party Strengthening

IRI supports Nigeria's political parties' efforts to compete in elections and represent constituent interests. The Institute offers global expertise and enables inter-party dialogue on political party finance, campaigning, internal party democracy and the role of party poll watchers. IRI also promotes responsible party behavior through the Political Party Code of Conduct.

Marginalized Groups

Youth, women and persons with disabilities have traditionally been disenfranchised at all levels of politics and civic debate in Nigeria. IRI is supporting politically active youth, women and persons with disabilities to expand their access to politics, leadership and government regardless of gender, physical ability or age.

Stakeholder Dialogues on the Electoral Process

IRI is working with civil society, government and political parties to institutionalize the use of consultative forums to address concerns stakeholder have about Nigeria's election processes. Through these discussions, political stakeholders can build consensus and mutual confidence and respect among participating groups.

Democratic Governance and Digital Tools

To generate greater opportunities for government accountability at the local level, IRI supports local civil society organizations' efforts to implement a digital platform for citizen evaluation of their local elected officials. Through this web-based scorecard, constituents will have the opportunity to assess the performance of state assembly and local government area representatives and communicate their views and expectations to them. In turn, IRI will promote more effective, representative and accountable governance by assisting state and local elected officials in their understanding of constituent needs and expectations.

Enhancing the Role of the Media

IRI recognizes that a vibrant media is a powerful tool in Nigeria's democratic development. In addition to playing a critical role in ensuring a legitimate electoral process, it can also greatly influence public perception of government officials and political parties. Through collaboration with international media experts and tech savvy Nigerians, IRI provides support to civil society and political parties to utilize new media and engage traditional media to achieve their political objectives.