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10.99 Million Votes in One Weekend:

An Honest Look at the Numbers behind the APC's 2026 Presidential Primary

On Saturday, May 23, 2026, the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) held its presidential primary election across all 8,809 wards in Nigeria. By Sunday morning, the result was official: President Bola Ahmed Tinubu had been declared the party's sole presidential candidate for the 2027 general election.

The headline number is striking: 10,999,162 votes.

That is a remarkable figure by any measure. It is also a figure that deserves scrutiny — not because of who it favours or disfavours, but because in a democracy, the numbers that decide our future should be able to withstand basic questions.

This explainer walks through the publicly available data and lets the math speak for itself. No verdicts. Just receipts.

1. What Was Announced

According to APC Primary Election Committee Chairman, former Senate President Pius Anyim, the official results were as follows:

- Total APC registered members across Nigeria: 12,643,306
- Members accredited to vote: 11,069,756 (87.5% of registered)
- Total votes cast: 11,015,665 (99.5% of accredited members showed up)
- President Bola Tinubu: 10,999,162 votes
- Mr Stanley Osifo (sole challenger): 16,503 votes

Source: APC Presidential Primary Committee announcement, May 24, 2026 (Premium Times, Channels TV, Punch).

2. Nigerians Do Not Vote Like This

Before assessing whether these numbers are plausible, we need to understand how Nigerians have actually behaved at the ballot box over the past 15 years.

Voter turnout in Nigerian general elections has been falling consistently since 2011:

Election Year	**Registered Voters**	**Votes Cast**	**Turnout %**	**Trend**
2011	73.5 million	~39.5 million	**53.7%**	Baseline
2015	67.4 million	~29.4 million	**43.7%**	↓ Falling
2019	82.3 million	28.6 million	**34.75%**	↓ Falling
2023	93.5 million	25.3 million	**26.72%**	**Lowest ever**
APC Primary 2026	12.6 million (APC members)	11.0 million	**99.5%**	**Inexplicable**

The 2023 general election recorded the lowest turnout since Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999. Roughly one in four registered voters showed up. The reasons are well-documented: insecurity, logistics failures, late arrival of materials, voter suppression claims, and a general loss of faith in the process.

Against that backdrop, the APC primary is claimed to have achieved a 99.5% turnout rate among its accredited members — nearly four times the national turnout from the actual presidential election held three years earlier.

This was achieved on a single Saturday, across 8,809 wards, while insecurity, banditry, and kidnappings continue to disrupt parts of the country.

3. Tinubu's 2023 Mandate, In Context

To understand how significant the 10.99 million figure is, we need to compare it to the votes that actually made Bola Tinubu the President of Nigeria in 2023.

In the 2023 presidential election, Tinubu received 8,794,726 votes nationwide. This made him President — but with the lowest winning percentage of any Nigerian President since 1999.

Here is the side-by-side comparison:

Metric	**2023 Presidential Election (All Nigerians)**	**2026 APC Primary (APC Members Only)**
Tinubu's votes	**8,794,726**	**10,999,162**
Pool of eligible voters	93.5 million Nigerians	12.6 million APC members
Voter turnout	26.72%	**99.5%**
Tinubu as % of those who voted	36.61%	**99.85%**
Tinubu as % of all eligible voters	10.08%	**86.99%**

Read that table carefully. In a party primary that was, by definition, restricted to APC members only, Tinubu reportedly received 2.2 million MORE votes than he received from the entire Nigerian electorate in 2023.

A political party's membership should always be a subset of the country it operates in. The 2026 primary numbers suggest the subset is now larger than the original sample.

4. The 12 Million Members Question

The APC has announced that it has 12,643,306 registered members nationwide. To put that in perspective:

- Nigeria's total registered voters in 2023: 93,469,008
- APC's claimed membership: 12,643,306
- That means APC is claiming roughly 1 in every 7 registered Nigerian voters is a card-carrying APC member.

There is currently no publicly available, independently audited APC membership register that confirms this number. The figure was announced from the podium and adopted by acclamation. It has not been independently verified by INEC or any third-party body.

For comparison, in the actual 2023 presidential election, Tinubu (the APC candidate) received 8.79 million votes — and that figure already includes party loyalists, sympathisers, undecided swing voters, and those reached through campaign mobilisation.

The party is now claiming more registered members than total Nigerians who voted for it nationwide.

5. The State-by-State Receipts

This is where the numbers become difficult to reconcile. Let us look at how the APC primary results compare to Tinubu's actual 2023 election results, broken down by state.

A. States Where Tinubu Lost Badly in 2023, But APC 'Members' Suddenly Appeared in 2026

In each of the states below, Tinubu received very few votes in the 2023 general election. Yet in the 2026 APC primary, the party reportedly produced massive turnouts of registered members:

State	**Tinubu in 2023 Election (every voter in the state)**	**Tinubu in 2026 APC Primary (only APC members)**	**Multiple**	**Note**
Enugu	4,772	**383,382**	**80x**	PDP/LP zone

Abia	8,914	**161,005**	**18x**	LP stronghold
Imo	66,406	**582,960**	**8.8x**	Mixed loyalty
Anambra	5,111	**43,034**	**8.4x**	APGA/LP stronghold
Bayelsa	42,572	**227,192**	**5.3x**	APC/PDP zone
Ebonyi	42,402	**207,579**	**4.9x**	Mixed
Delta	90,183	**407,646**	**4.5x**	APC/PDP zone
Adamawa	182,881	**644,149**	**3.5x**	Atiku's home

In Enugu — a Labour Party stronghold where Tinubu received fewer than 5,000 votes from ALL voters in 2023 — the APC now claims 383,382 of its own members voted in a single primary. That is an 80-fold increase in three years, in a state where the party historically has minimal grassroots presence.

B. States Where Tinubu Won Decisively in 2023, But Turnout DROPPED in 2026

If APC genuinely has more members today than in 2023, we should expect its strongholds to produce significantly higher numbers in this primary than Tinubu received in the actual presidential election.

The opposite happened:

State	Tinubu in 2023 Election (every voter in the state)	Tinubu in 2026 APC Primary (only APC members)	Change	Note
Ekiti	201,486	**85,340**	↓ **58%**	APC stronghold
FCT (Abuja)	90,902	**36,103**	↓ **60%**	Federal capital
Jigawa	421,390	**206,520**	↓ **51%**	APC stronghold
Ogun	341,554	**322,485**	↓ **6%**	APC stronghold

In Ekiti, Tinubu received 201,486 votes from all voters in 2023. In the 2026 APC primary, only 85,340 party members reportedly voted. That is a 58% decrease in his home zone — even though APC has supposedly grown stronger.

This pattern is the opposite of how political loyalty math works. In a normal political environment, a party's stronghold produces consistent or growing numbers. The 2026 primary shows APC strongholds shrinking and former opposition territories suddenly overflowing.

6. The Osifo Anomaly

Tinubu's only challenger, Mr Stanley Osifo, received 16,503 total votes nationwide. But more striking is the geographical distribution:

21 States Where Stanley Osifo Got ZERO Votes	**Not a single vote. Not even by accident.**
FCT, Delta, Kogi, Ebonyi, Kwara, Borno, Kebbi, Enugu, Kaduna, Ondo, Yobe	Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Ekiti, Ogun, Sokoto, Taraba, Cross River, Gombe, Oyo, Osun

In 21 of Nigeria's 37 federating units (36 states plus FCT), the challenger received zero votes. Not one. Not a single registered APC member among the hundreds of thousands who reportedly voted — including disgruntled aspirants, family members, or anyone with a personal grievance — cast a vote for the only other name on the ballot.

This pattern is statistically unusual even in environments with strong incumbency.

7. The Pattern, Summarised

When we put all the data together, three patterns emerge:

Pattern 1: APC's primary turnout (99.5%) is nearly four times Nigeria's actual general election turnout (26.72%). The same population that struggles to vote in real elections allegedly turned out almost unanimously for an internal party exercise with one real candidate.

Pattern 2: In opposition strongholds where APC has historically had little presence, hundreds of thousands of 'party members' suddenly emerged. Enugu went from 4,772 Tinubu votes (entire 2023 election) to 383,382 APC primary votes.

Pattern 3: In APC's actual strongholds, the primary produced **FEWER** votes than Tinubu received in 2023. Ekiti dropped 58%, FCT dropped 60%, Jigawa dropped 51%.

These three patterns, taken together, are the opposite of what we would expect if 12.6 million registered party members organically turned out to vote for their incumbent president.

8. Why This Matters For The Everyday Nigerian

This is not a Tinubu issue, nor an APC issue alone. It is a Nigerian democracy issue.

The 2027 general election is approximately 8 months away. The same machinery, the same officials, and the same processes that produced these primary numbers will be involved in shaping the political landscape ahead of that election.

When any political party — regardless of which one — gets comfortable producing numbers that do not square with publicly verifiable behaviour, two things happen:

- Other parties watching take notes and adjust their own behaviour accordingly.
- Citizens grow more cynical, vote less, and democratic legitimacy weakens further.

Democracies rarely collapse in one dramatic moment. They erode through small, accepted irregularities — through numbers nobody questions, through Saturdays we collectively shrug at, through the quiet normalisation of the implausible.

The numbers from this weekend are official. The questions about them are also legitimate. In a healthy democracy, both can exist at the same time.

9. What You Can Do

- Collect your PVC (Permanent Voter Card) if you do not have one yet — and verify your registration is active.
- Track election data yourself through INEC's IReV portal and independent civic tech platforms.
- Question numbers that do not match lived reality. Ask the people around you — neighbours, family, colleagues — whether the announced figures match what they saw in their communities.
- Engage with civic platforms. Civic Bridge Africa exists to help amplify citizen voices in moments exactly like this.
- Show up. Especially when nobody expects you to.

Sources & References

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