

NOVEMBER 2020



WHAT CAN **NIGERIA** EXPECT FROM
PRESIDENT BIDEN?



Disclaimer

The data contained in this report is only up-to-date as at Saturday, 7 November 2020. Some of it is subject to change during the natural course of events. SB Morgen cannot accept liability in respect of any errors or omissions that may follow such events that may invalidate data contained herein.

Our researchers employed desk research to collate the available data.

Our publicly released reports are formatted for easy and quick reading, and may not necessarily contain all the data that SB Morgen gathered during a given survey. Complete datasets can be made available on request.

-  sbmintel.com
-  info@sbmintel.com
-  [@sbmintelligence](https://twitter.com/sbmintelligence)
-  facebook.com/sbmintel



JOE BIDEN ✓
290 electoral college votes
 74,857,880 votes

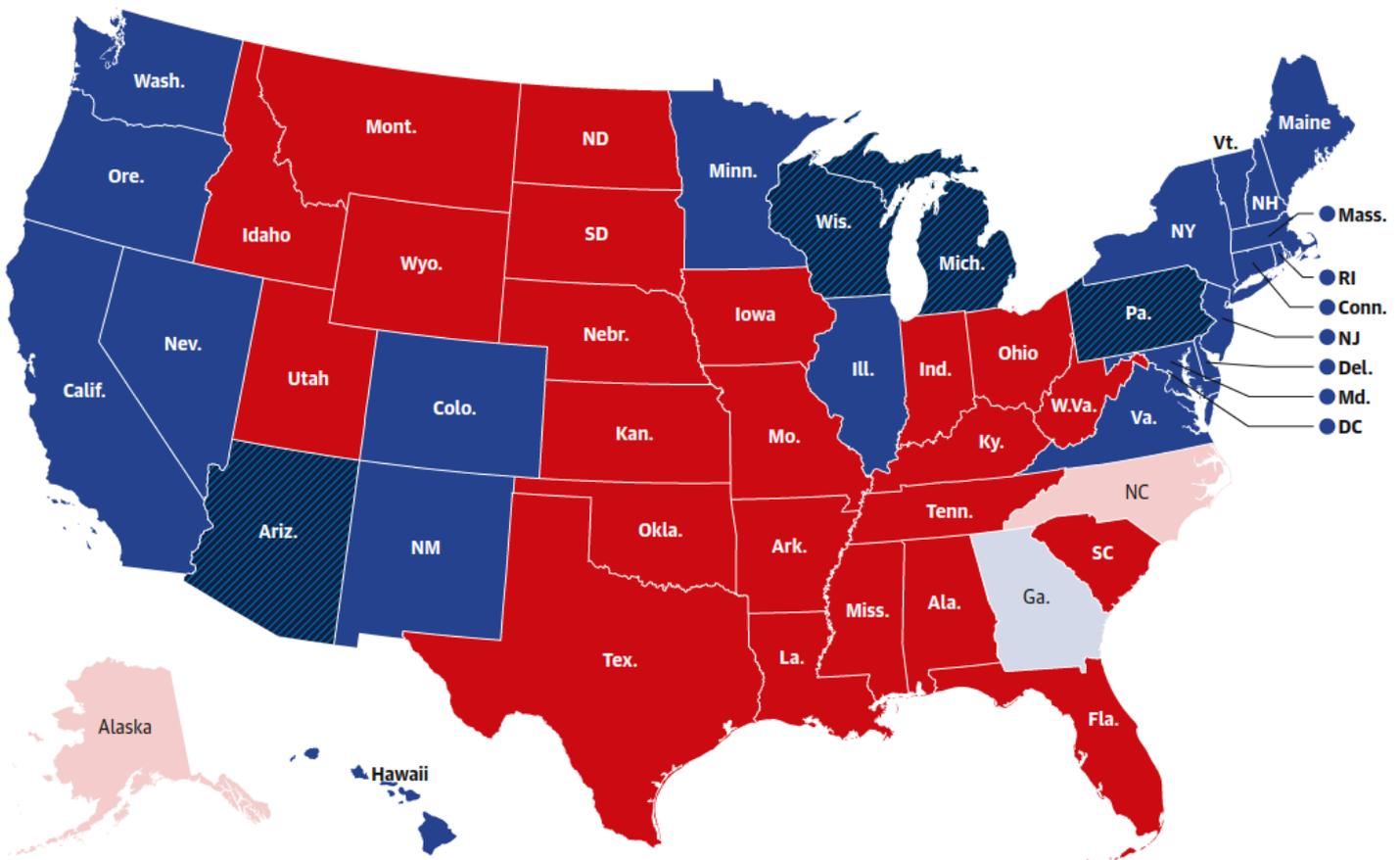
270 to win

DONALD TRUMP
 electoral college votes **214**
 70,598,535 votes



Introduction

In the last four days, the world has watched a historic and suspense-filled US election, one that has raised concerns around the legitimacy of America's democracy, with growing fears of post-election violence and tribunals. Nevertheless, as it stands, Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. has been elected the 46th President of the United States of America.



The US, under President Donald Trump, seemed to have neglected its role as the global policeman, focusing on promoting its interest under Mr Trump's "America First" slogan. This has led to the US pulling out of several international treaties and organisations. First, the Iran Nuclear Deal, then the Paris Climate Change Agreement, the UN Human Rights Council and the latest being the World Health Organisation. The US is also in a trade war with China and has also placed travel restrictions on a few countries including Nigeria. It has also opposed the candidature of Akinwumi Adesina for the African Development Bank and Ngozi Okonjo Iweala for the World Trade Organisation.

In this report, we look at what a Biden presidency could look like for Nigeria and the continent in terms of trade, immigration, regional security, and diplomatic relations with Abuja.



JOE BIDEN ✓
290 electoral college votes
74,857,880 votes

270 to win

DONALD TRUMP
electoral college votes **214**
70,598,535 votes



Trade

It is tempting to think that the Biden presidency will simply extrapolate from the Obama Administration. What is more likely is that Mr Biden will continue Mr Trump's policy of "Making America Great Again" in one key respect: trade.

As part of his campaign promises, Joe Biden unequivocally favours a reshoring of American jobs that gives power back to the American worker. He says: If we make smart investments in manufacturing and technology, give our workers and companies the tools they need to compete, use taxpayer dollars to buy American and spark American innovation, stand up to the Chinese government's abuses, insist on fair trade, and extend opportunity to all Americans, many of the products that are being made abroad could be made here today. And, if we do these things with an unwavering commitment to bolstering American industrial strength, which we will power using clean energy that we also harvest here at home, we will also lead in making the cutting-edge products and services of tomorrow. Biden will do more than bring back the jobs lost due to COVID-19 and Trump's incompetence, he will create millions of new manufacturing and innovation jobs throughout all of America.

If he follows through with the concrete steps outlined to Buy American, Make It In America, Innovate in America, Invest In All of America, Stand Up For America, and Supply America, it will turn the clock back on decades of US offshoring and bring perhaps a final end to globalisation as we know it.

This posture will play very well with both sides of America's political divide, especially the Republican Party, whose cooperation he will need to govern. It is also likely to return vitality to America's North-East, known for its industrial activity, but which has been in decline since the 1980s.

This has implications for America's purchase of Nigerian oil, which has also been in decline due to a growing focus on domestic energy production in the US. In August 2020, the US announced that it had slashed its imports of Nigerian crude oil to 9.37 million barrels in the first five months of this year, 11.67 million barrels lower than what it bought in the same period of 2019.

The highest monthly volume of Nigerian crude purchased by the North American country so far this year was 2.12 million barrels, compared to 11.78 million barrels in 2019.

Its purchases plunged by 63.03 per cent in the first quarter of 2020 to 5.53 million barrels, compared to the last quarter of 2019 when it bought 15.07 million barrels from Nigeria.

It is a state of affairs that is unlikely to change.



JOE BIDEN ✓
290 electoral college votes
74,857,880 votes

270 to win

DONALD TRUMP
electoral college votes **214**
70,598,535 votes



Immigration

Donald Trump's populist America First nationalism necessarily came with distrust, if not outright demonisation, of immigrants. This distrust played very well with Mr Trump's base and was central to his appeal. Mr Trump first made national headlines with the birther conspiracy, making the false claim that his predecessor, Barack Obama was not born in the United States. In his declaration for the presidency, he called Mexicans who come into the US rapists.

As such, his executive order banning immigrants from eight countries – six of which are majority Muslim – just days after assuming office, was very much in line with his campaign posture.

The eight countries were Chad, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela, and Yemen. In January this year, Nigeria, Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Sudan and Tanzania were added to the list. This addition caught Nigeria's authorities by surprise. The reason given by the Trump administration was security concerns around sharing personal data — including immigrants' criminal histories, stolen passport information and suspected links to terrorism — with the United States and Interpol member countries.

As of this moment, Nigeria remains on the list. Joe Biden, as part of his campaign promises on immigration, has pledged¹ to rescind that ban. Such a move will please many in the Nigerian diaspora resident in America, whose family ties have come under pressure because of the ban.

Three Nigerian-Americans, all Democrats, have won elective office in the 2020 election cycle, growing the ranks of Nigerian-Americans with political influence. Already one of the successful non-white groups in the country, this political influence will only grow with time.

The Nigerian diaspora is also highly engaged in events in Nigeria. Their remittances have played a crucial part in sustaining families for decades, and they are now organising themselves politically as well.

A diaspora that is more engaged with Nigerian affairs is more likely to, encouraged by a resurgent Democratic party, get more involved in Nigeria's politics, and force through reforms in the way things are done in this country.



JOE BIDEN ✓
290 electoral college votes
74,857,880 votes

270 to win

DONALD TRUMP
electoral college votes **214**
70,598,535 votes



Regional Security

American involvement in the Sahel is mostly associated with its support for France-led Operation Barkhane, a counter-insurgency operation in Sahelian countries of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali Mauritania and Niger. The US maintains a military base in Niger, with a lean strength of 1000 men. The Trump administration maintained this light presence with a very tiny budget of \$60 million, an indication that it considers the region least amongst its foreign priorities, and is happy to play a support role for the French. However, the US Africa Command has tried to step up cooperation with Nigeria in recent times, with the latest being its warning in September that Al Qaeda was making a play for North-Western and Southern Nigeria. At the onset of the current government, the Obama administration mulled over the sale and provision² of surveillance drones or other larger scale assistance to Nigeria because of the latter military's reputation for brutality and incompetence and because Boko Haram still ranks as a lower priority compared to the threat posed by Islamic State jihadists in the Middle East.

A lot of things have happened in four years. The influx of foreign terror elements in the region and in Northern Nigeria have put defence relations between the US and Nigeria on the spotlight. The recent hostage rescue³ conducted on (northern) Nigerian soil by the US Navy's Seal Team Six with very minimal collaboration⁴ with the Nigerian government speaks to many things, chief of which is its impatience with the Nigerian government and its negative perception in dealing with terrorism. A Biden administration would not differ so much with the departing Trump white house, but one thing we expect would be a return on the emphasis on the respect of human rights in the fight against Boko Haram and other armed Islamist militias in the region. Biden has committed to ending America's forever wars, but it is not a new promise to American voters. Obama and Trump promised the same thing during their campaign. With the Islamic State reduced to a hit and run group, A president Biden would continue its support for counter terror operations in the Sahel, but as usual, acting through France and other proxies with boots on the ground.

2 - U.S. to Boost Military Aid to Nigeria for Boko Haram Fight | Foreign Policy | <https://bit.ly/36cQYrz>

3 - SEAL Team 6 rescues U.S. citizen Philip Walton in Nigeria | CBS News | <https://cbsn.ws/3n3lj2w>

4 - US Thanks Nigeria for Support after SEAL Team 6 Rescues American Hostage in Sokoto | Arise TV | <https://bit.ly/2JNjJnd>



JOE BIDEN ✓
290 electoral college votes
74,857,880 votes

270 to win

DONALD TRUMP
electoral college votes **214**
70,598,535 votes



Diplomatic relations with Abuja

Africa has been on the short end of the stick with US policies under the Trump administration, with Trump infamously referring to countries in the continent as “shit hole countries”. For Nigeria, during President Buhari’s April 2018 visit to the White House, reports alleged that the US president referred to Nigeria’s president Buhari as “lifeless”.

This untoward approach toward diplomatic relations with Nigeria became more evident as Nigeria’s foreign Minister, Geoffrey Onyeama, claimed in February 2020 that he was “somewhat blindsided” by the Trump administration’s ban on immigration from Nigeria, as he only learned about the ban a few minutes before his with the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, to discuss possible expansion of US-Nigeria cooperation. A Biden-led government is likely to be more receptive not only to immigration from Nigeria, but would also respect the diplomatic history both nations share.

In addition, the US has become a major opposition to the ascendancy of former Nigerian minister of finance, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, as Director General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). A similar play to this was the US role in the delay to reelect Dr Akinwumi Adesina as President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), following corruption allegations he was cleared of by a panel of inquiry. The US insisted on an independent investigation, which ultimately arrived at the same conclusion as the first. SBM projects that with a more balanced and traditional diplomatic approach from the Biden-led government, Nigerians seeking international offices are likely to face less opposition.

Furthermore, SBM expects that a Biden led government is likely to put more pressure on the Nigerian government with respect to the issues of human rights violation. Following the influence of Nigerian’s in diaspora in their support for the #EndSARS protests, which drew the attention of President-Elect, Joseph Biden, as well as Hillary Clinton, who both released statements supporting the protesters. Mr Biden had spoken out during the #EndSARS protests urging the Nigerian government to “cease the violent crackdown on protesters in Nigeria, which has already resulted in several deaths.” He added that “The United States must stand with Nigerians who are peacefully demonstrating for police reform and seeking an end to corruption in their democracy”. He further encouraged the Nigerian government to “engage in a good-faith dialogue with civil society,” Biden continued, “to address these long-standing grievances and work together for a more just and inclusive Nigeria”.



About SBM

SBM Intel is an Africa focused geopolitical research and strategic communications consulting firm focused on addressing the critical need for political, social, economic and market data, and big data analytics. We employ various methods of data collection. Our Data Collection Methodology team advises on data collection methods for all ONS social and business surveys. With clients both within the business and the wider government community, we aim to provide expert advice on data collection procedures and carry out research leading to improvements in survey quality.

Since 2013, we have provided data analytics and strategic communication solutions to clients across various sectors in Nigeria, Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Kenya, South Africa, the UK, France and the United States.