



Security Threat Assessment: Towards 2015 Elections

Key Risk Factors:

- Inability of electorates to obtain their Permanent Voters Card and register during PVC/CVR exercises.
- The issue of zoning and religious balancing is a major risk factor if not well handled.
- Political assassination, kidnapping, armed robbery and bombings may escalate as we approach 2015.
- The nexus between drugs, arms and crimes that needs to be effectively contained.

Key Mitigating Factors:

- INEC should ensure the proper capturing of voter details and ensure it uses the card reader for voter verification during the 2015 polls.
- INEC, National Orientation Agency, media and Civil Society Organisations need to embark on voter education.
- INEC should shelve the creation of the proposed 30,027 additional PUs till after the next general elections.

Political Context

Preparation for the February 2015 General Elections is amidst increasing concern of high levels of insecurity and violence in the election days and the days immediately after. The concerns are that the current security situation such as continued insurgents attacks in the North East, attempts by insurgents to infiltrate the South South, incursion by Cattle Herdsmen openly armed with AK47 rifles in the South East, political killings and proliferation of Small Arms & Light Weapons (SALWs), would fuel an outbreak of violence.

The Government recently scaled-up its on-going intervention of providing heavy military presence across Nigeria to curb insecurity. Military personnel and over 30,000 and 73,000 security agents were deployed to the Ekiti State and Osun State Governorship Elections respectively. The elections were conducted in June and August 2014 and were incident-free. The Independent National Election Commission (INEC) has been lauded by some Stakeholders for this feat and also for suspending two Electoral Officers over administrative lapses during the Osun State Elections. Some see these events as a foreshadowing of free and fair, violence-free General Elections in February 2015.

Preparations for the Elections

On May 16, Independent National Election Commission (INEC) inaugurated the National Inter-Agency Advisory Committee on Voter Education and Publicity (NICVEP). The Commission is expected to issue Notice of Election on 1 October, 2014. INEC distributed Permanent Voters Card (PVCs) and continued with Continuous Voters Registration (CVR) across the country. INEC also procured 150,000 Card Readers to fast track the accreditation process of voters during the February 2015 General Elections.

INEC has also established citizens' contact centres as well as online voter verification platform. It plans to use electronic transmission of results during the next general elections and is in the process of implementing a redelineation (delimitation) of electoral constituencies aimed at creating an additional 30,027 Polling Units (PUs) ahead of the 2015 elections (21,615 PUs allocated to the North; 8,412 PUs to the South).

The Nigerian Police, through the former Force Public Relations Officer had reported that the Police had commenced training of its officers and men on election policing ahead of the 2015 polls.

Gender Dimension

A combination of cultural practices, religion and a long history of political exclusion has continued to keep women out of active political participation. Women with ambition for prominent political positions have had to endure the usual electioneering process as well as the patrilineal nature ideology prevalent in parts of Nigeria.

Women are not currently featuring prominently in most of the permutations, neither are they strategically involved in any of the political parties.

Although women usually are more of victims than perpetrators of electoral violence, recent suicide bombings by women in Kano and Lagos States by a person (gender undetermined) dressed in hijab has placed a different perspective on this opinion. In July alone, five synchronized teenage female suicide bombers killed scores of people in different locations, in Kano State.

Presence and Activities of Non-State Actors

Understanding the recruitment, operations, financing and accountability processes of non-state actors is crucial even as the election date draws closer.

In the North West, some non-state outfits are supported and funded by some states and local governments. In some cases parallel or complementary security outfits are established by state governments. For instance, aside the Hisbah in Kano, the government recruited and trained 395 security guards to curb the menace of insecurity and unemployment. Militant youths called Area boys are major players in electoral politics and security in Sokoto state. In Kano, Kaduna, Katsina states with the history of youth militancy, particularly the yan'daba, electoral politics is always an opportunity to perpetrate violence on behalf of their principals. The cases of raids and mass killings by bandits in southern Kaduna are also attracting non state security response from the communities.

In the North East, the continued encroachment and establishment of a caliphate by insurgents has cast doubts on the conduct of elections in the region in 2015. In the North Central region, the rise and dominance of militia and vigilante groups operating outside the control of states is an on-going issue. The remoteness of the land makes it poorly policed which in turn increases the proliferation of SALWs.

In the South South, the ex-militants, cult groups and other dangerous groups supporting the PDP is creating security concerns. It is feared that the existence of these groups may lead to the creation of counter armed groups for opposition parties vying for other government level positions.

In the South West, the most pronounced non-state actors are the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) working mainly as private security guards. In Ogun and Osun states, state funded Vigilante Security outfits complement the service of the police and other security agencies. They however carry weapons and unlicensed arms, operate illegal detention centres and are said to be involved in extra-judicial killings.

Migration and Internal Displacement

There is a foreshadowing of security threats from Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) across the nation. This notion began in June 2014 when 486 suspected Boko Haram members on their way to Port Harcourt were arrested in Aba by the Army.

In September 2014, rural bandits and cattle rustlers allegedly stormed Zamfara State villages in Gusau LGA killing over 35 people displacing hundreds of people. Many villagers fled after a coordinated attack on their respective communities and camped at Damba Model Primary School. Hundreds of refugees including children besieged classroom blocks where they spent days in suspense, receiving emergency assistance from the state and local authorities. Others took refuge in Yandoto, Mada, Marke, Kwatarkwashi, Faskari, Gusau, the capital city and the neighbouring Katsina state.

In the South South, there are suspected refugees from Mali, North East and South East Nigeria. The prevalent belief in the region is that these refugees are imminent threats to the security of 2015 General Elections.

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In the South West illegal aliens from West African countries such as Benin Republic, Togo and Ghana have been reported to move en-masse into Nigeria illegally through the three states (Lagos, Ogun and Oyo) that border with Benin Republic. Some of these immigrants are involved in trans-border crimes such as smuggling of small arms which often are bought by politicians to arm their thugs. Also, citizens fleeing from Boko Haram insurgents in the North East often flee to the South West state of Lagos though the state itself recently witnessed one foiled and one successful attack by the same insurgents.

The impact of this migration will be immediate humanitarian crises, escalation of Sexual and Gender based Violence (SGBV), disenfranchisement of IDPs, near impossibility to conduct elections in affected states and inadequacy in existing infrastructure of IDP receiving states.

Recent Developments within the State Houses of Assembly

Adamawa State House of Assembly succeeded in impeaching Governor Nyako while the Borno State House of Assembly removed its majority leader. In the North Central region, there have been failed attempts by the Nasarawa State PDP dominated House of Assembly to impeach Governor Tanko Almakura, deepening inter-party rivalry between PDP and APC.

The Imo State House of Assembly which was predominantly and originally PDP moved almost en masse with Governor Rochas Okorocha when he became governor under APGA. Though there is disenchantment with the current governor's achievements, Governor Okorocha wishes to retain the state. In Edo state, there is discord in the House of Assembly resulting from the perceived plot by PDP lawmakers to impeach the Governor, the Deputy Governor and the Speaker of the House of Assembly.

In the South West, the Lagos State Speaker is being persecuted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for an alleged N600 million financial crimes. In Ondo State, there have been rumors that Governor Olusegun Mimiko intends decamp to PDP. If this happens, most members of the State House of Assembly may follow suit.

Presence and impact of the activities of the military, police and other security agencies

The insurgency in the North East persists in spite of the state of emergency and heavy military deployment to the region. The presence of the military in the South East states restored some sense of public safety among the populace particularly due to the significant reduction in incidences of kidnapping. This sense of public safety has nurtured a culture of healthy civil-military relation, and if maintained, will ensure the preservation of security before, during and after the 2015 elections.

Due to the interest of the President Goodluck Jonathan to capture the South West in order to bolster his purported second term ambition, the president made two key appointments - Minister of State for Defence and the Minister of Police Affairs. These two appointments are strategic and its usefulness is perceived to have played out during the Ekiti and Osun elections.

The perceived partisanship of security agencies by openly embarking on show of force, deployment of masked personnel, indiscriminate shooting in the air, arrest of opposition party chieftains are grounds for citizens losing confidence in the security agencies.

Violent Hot Spots

We categorized the states according to the perceived level of threat using traffic light signals (green, amber and red); green indicating stability/lowest threat states and red indicating the highest threat level/ most volatile states. The measures used for the categorization include history of violence, degree of control by incumbent and relationship with the federal government, stability of internal state party politics, existence of

terrorist/militant activity, state of emergency or communal/religious conflict, bid for second term by incumbent governor, zoning arrangement, jostle for federal and state legislative positions etc. Most states fit into various categories based on comparison within their region and not on the scale of risks nationally.

- **RED:** NC – Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa; NE – Borno, Yobe, Adamawa and Taraba; NW – Kaduna, Kano, Zamfara; SS – Rivers; Akwa Ibom; Edo; SE – Enugu and Imo; SW – Lagos
- **AMBER:** NE – Bauchi and Gombe; NW – Jigawa, Katsina, Sokoto; SE – Abia, Anambra, and Ebonyi; SW: Ondo, Oyo, Ogun; NC: Kogi, Niger
- **GREEN:** NC – Kwara; NW – Kebbi, SS – Cross River and Bayelsa; SW: Osun and Ekiti

Synthesis of Key Risk Factors

- a. Inability of electorates to obtain their Permanent Voters Card and register during PVC/CVR exercises.
- b. The issue of zoning and religious balancing is a major risk factor if not well handled.
- c. Political assassination, kidnapping, armed robbery and bombings may escalate as we approach 2015. The nexus between drugs, arms and crimes that has not been effectively contained.
- d. The creation of additional 30,027 Polling Units with a distribution formula of the North having more than half of the new PU allocations. Southern political leaders are openly canvassing for the resignation or removal of INEC chairman on this basis.
- e. The recent order by President Goodluck Jonathan that INEC should print sensitive electoral materials at the Nigeria Printing and Minting Company, a subsidiary of the Central Bank of Nigeria.

Mitigating Factors and Recommendations

- a. INEC should ensure the proper capturing of voter details; ensure it uses the card reader for voter verification during the 2015 polls and commence early preparation to ensure electoral materials reach the rural and coastal communities timely.
- b. INEC should activate and institutionalise its Inter-agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), ensuring that the committee plans for the three phases of the elections - Pre-Election, Election Day and Post-Election Day.
- c. INEC, National Orientation Agency, media and Civil Society Organisations need to embark on massive and sustained voter education, peace education and general civic education aimed at ensuring that there is violence free election in Adamawa and during the February 2015 General Elections.
- d. INEC should shelve the creation of the proposed 30,027 additional PUs till after the next general elections. This will calm frayed nerves and make the commission to focus on preparations for 2015 polls.
- e. The Government and security agencies should provide adequate policing to dislodge terrorist camps, dismantle cult groups and forestall intimidation of the electorate.

Map of Threats Assessment by States

