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Sixth Security Threat Assessment: Towards 2015 Elections October 2014

Background/political context

Under a time table released by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Nigeria will undertake Presidential and National Assembly elections on 14 February 2015.¹ Two weeks later, voting will occur to elect State Governors and State Houses of Assembly. It has also published new data on voters' registration and distribution of polling units across the federation².

Electioneering process is already gearing up ahead of the elections evident by several activities of key actors. Adequate preparation and planning is essential to the effective management of elections. According to INEC timetable for the elections, campaigns are slated to commence on 16 November 2014. INEC has approved the distribution of Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) in thirteen states in the third phase of the exercise to begin on Friday, 7th November and end on Sunday, 9th November 2014. Also, the Commission has approved Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise in the third phase to begin on Thursday, 13th November and end on Monday, 17th November 2014. The states involved are: Adamawa, Borno, Edo, Imo, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Lagos, Nasarawa, Niger, Ogun, Plateau and Rivers.

In response to this calendar political parties have in turn announced calendars for the emergence of their candidates for various elective offices. Politicians under various parties have declared their intention to vie for different political positions. Expectedly in APC, General Muhammadu Buhari, Governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso and Atiku Abubakar have formally declared their intension to contest for the Presidency, while and Sam Nda-Isaiah is expected to declare

¹ <http://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/General-Elections.pdf>

² *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)*, "No Sectional, Parochial Agenda in Distribution of Polling Units – Jega" *Leadership Newspaper*, September 10, 2014, available at <http://leadership.ng/news/politics/383588/sectional-parochial-agenda-distribution-polling-units-jega>

this month or early November 2014. It appears all the Presidential Candidates of APC will be coming from the north of the country, especially the North West. There are already internal contentions on how to determine the candidate of the party. While some want primary elections, others prefer a non-election consensus process. Also in the PDP, President Goodluck Jonathan is expected to pick up his nomination form before Thursday 30th October 2014. Politicians vying for senatorial, federal house of representative, gubernatorial and state house of assembly positions have also commenced collection of interest form from their various party offices ahead of the 2015 general elections. The rumours of ceasefire, the abducted Chibok girls and killings of citizens by the insurgents; obviously the political atmosphere are heated with activities that will make or mar the elections.

The security context for the 2015 elections will, however, be different from any previous elections in Nigeria. Preparations are taking place with continued state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe States all in the north-eastern part of Nigeria since May 2013. The National Human Rights Commission in its decision in the *Global Rights & 3 Ors v Federal Republic of Nigeria & 3 Others* which was delivered sometime in March 2014 stated that the situation in these states is a non-international armed conflict.

Since 2011, incidents of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have escalated. So far, IED incidents have been reported in at least 21 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).³ In the last one month, the tension and communal clashes between Tiv and Fulani, Jukun and Tiv, Kutepe and Jukun in Wukari and Ibi Local Government Area of Taraba State is yet to abate.

As we get closer to the 2015 general elections particularly official flag off of political campaigns, intra and inter party wrangling have become more pronounced. For example, in Adamawa State, intra party squabbles between Ahmadu Fintiri and Bala Ngilari arising from the suspension of the October 11 governorship by-election; and subsequent challenge by the APC could

³ Map available at <http://www.jaguda.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/map.jpg>

degenerate and create a scenario that could foster insecurity in the State. All Progressives Congress (APC) in Zaria and Sabongari local government areas of Kaduna State prevented Malam Nasir El- Rufa'i from holding a meeting with the party executives over a yet to be identified matter.

The recent violence that marred the just concluded Delta State local government council Poll is a signal of the likely violence that may characterize the process leading to 2015 elections if measures are not set in place to forestall future occurrence given the political history of the State. Lagos continues to be on the watch list, there was a reported case of killing in Isale Eko over election related control fracas. At the official Foundation Laying Ceremony of the Azura-Edo Power Plant, PDP party thugs were allegedly accused of attacking senior officials of Edo State government and APC in the state. This security threat assessment is the outcome of a field work that was undertaken across the thirty six states of the federation and the Federal Capital Abuja. The objectives of this STA are threefold to:

- (i) Identify and analysis emerging trends that can either make or mar INEC's preparedness towards the 2015 elections with specific reference to a credible and violence free election;
- (ii) Identify security hotspots, players and drivers of violence and;
- (iii) Provide specific recommendations to INEC, other institutions and actors towards violence free elections.

Preparations for the Elections (Overview of Nigeria's electoral demography)

INEC has continued with the distribution of the Permanent Voters Cards (PVC) across the country following the schedule for distribution which was earlier made public by the Commission. The third phase would commence from the 7 - 9 November 2014, the Continuous Voter Registration would take place from 13 - 17 November⁴

⁴ See more at: <http://www.mydailynewswatchng.com/2015-inec-to-start-phase-iii-pvc-distribution-in-13-states/#sthash.sL8TXHPL.dpuf>

Gender Dimension

It has become obvious that women participate in the electoral process more as mobilisers and supporters but not contesting for key positions. However as we get closer to the general elections, there indications of interest by women to contest for some elective positions in some states. For example, Ms. , Kofoworola Bucknor - Akelere, former deputy of Lagos State has indicated interest to vie for the governorship election in Lagos state.

In the South East, Senator Chris Anyanwu, representing Imo East senatorial district has indicated interest for the governorship position in Imo state.

Presence and Activities of Non-State Actors

Activities of non-state actors continue to evolve across the country, moreso as the elections approaches. Violent non state actors are present across the country for example Jama'atu Ahils Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad also known as Boko Haram in the Northern part of the country particularly in the North East; the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in the South South and Ombatse in the Nassarawa State, North Central Nigeria. Nonviolent non state actors have also continued to evolve to work closely with the State at different levels to ensure continued safety and security of their communities. Memberships of these groups (both Non Violent and Violent) are largely drawn from the youth population in the communities.

In Gombe State, there is the recent reemergence of '*yan kalare*' a group set up by former Governor of Gombe State, Danjuma Goje and used as political thugs during his tenure are alleged to be responsible for rising scale of pockets of violence in the State. The group is also said to be responsible for the recent pelting of Governor Ibrahim Dankwambo in the State.

Kaduna, Kano and Zamfara have continued to attract the activities of non-state security activities including vigilante groups. There is huge concentration of small arms and light weapons in the areas. A little trigger could easily ignite violence, sometimes with unexpected result. Kaduna has continued to experience increasing cases of violence especially in southern Kaduna. As the electoral politics heightens, some of the ethno-religious contentions in the

state will continue to boil. The zone has also been affected by Boko Haram insurgency, especially in Kaduna, Kano, Katsina and Sokoto. Zamfara and Katsina have also been experiencing increasing cases of cattle rustling and rural banditry resulting in wanton destruction of lives and property.

With the increasing cases of cattle rustling, especially in Zamfara, Kaduna and Sokoto states, several community vigilante groups have been established. The Zamfara State government has recruited 4,540 security guards ostensibly in response to the security challenges in the state. The State Governor, Abdulaziz Yari, disclosed that the personnel would be deployed to the state's 227 districts "so that every citizen in the state will feel secured". The outfits are said to comprise Nigerian Legion, Association of Retired Police Officers of Nigeria, Vigilante Group, Man 'O' War and the Peace Corps. Others are the Boys Scout, the Red Crescent, Local Hunters Association and the Association of Retired SSS operatives in the state. Kano state government had earlier recruited 395 security personnel, apart from the 402 female recently recruited. Increasingly state governments are beginning to recruit their own security personnel, this is not simply a result of escalating insecurity in the zone, it is also reaction to the increasing partisan control of the federal security institutions like the military, Police and DSS by the PDP controlled federal government.

In Kano, Kaduna, Katsina 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. Militant youths called Area boys are major players in electoral politics and security in Sokoto state.

The Odua People's Congress is the most pronounced group with wide spread in the region. Since 1999 the groups has basically functioned as private security outfits within the region. Ogun State a state supported vigilante / neighbourhood watch group. There are allegations of the group being involved in extrajudicial killings and operating illegal detention facilities. In Osun State, the opposition PDP had alleged that the 'State Boys' are the armed

thugs of Governor Rauf Aregbesola and by extension, APC in the state. This allegation has been strongly denied by APC in the state; APC has in turn accused Senator Iyiola Omisore of being the godfather of a street gang known as IBK Boys. These boys were accused of being responsible for the killing of one Tolu Adeosun in Ilesa on Friday July 25, 2014.⁵

In Ekiti State, the activities of violent non state actors working as political thugs have become an issue of concern. The assault of a High Court Judge on the 25th September when the High Court was invaded by political thugs resulted in the Judge being beaten up⁶. It was also alleged that one of the thugs that participated in the attack on the High Court Judge was a former chairman of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) in the State, Mr. Omolafe Aderiye, who was also killed days later by unknown gunmen.

In the South-South, the increasing case of cult groups, ex-militants continue to be a cause for concern. In Bayelsa State, there are several community groups emerging mainly to endorse Governor Siriaki Dickson for a second tenure in 2016. This development is being interpreted as coming too early. An area of concern is the manner in which the governor seems to be tying his re-election bid in 2016 to the re-election ambition of President Goodluck Jonathan in the 2015 general elections.

In Rivers state, kidnapping of prominent public and political figures has continued for example the kidnap of immediate past president of the Nigeria Bar Association, Mr Okey Wali on October 11, by unknown gunmen. He was later released after about 15 days with his abductors. One of the ex-militants in the State who is presently responsible for the security of oil pipelines in the Niger Delta, and also an active participant in determining who becomes a member of Community Development Committees in Okrika. The activities

⁵ <http://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2014/07/26/osun-election-omisore-supporters-kill-apc-member/>

⁶ - See more at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/09/judiciary-attacked-thugs-beat-ekiti-judge-tear-suit/#sthash.0udGUHUr.dpuf>

of groups like *Deywell, Deygham and Grassroot Democratic Initiative* continue to create fear in the people.

Migration and Internal Displacement

According to United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) a total of 15.5 million people have been reported to be displaced in Nigeria due to conflict or natural disaster. Of the figure, 646,993 were displaced as a result of insecurity. The “Global Overview 2014: people internally displaced by conflict and violence,” by the Internal Displaced Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the number of internally displaced persons in Nigeria is approximately a third of the IDPs in Africa and 10 per cent of IDPs in the world. Although there are variances in figures released by International Development Partners, one thing remains crucial Nigeria is dealing with more IDPs as the country prepares for the 2015 elections compared to previous times. Some issues of concern about the IDPs as the general elections draw closer are related to possible disenfranchisement (particularly those that are not documented), humanitarian crises, possible attacks on IDP camps or IDP themselves.

Porosity of the Nigerian border continues to be a challenge. There are influx of illegal migrants from neighbouring countries like Benin, Togo, Ghana, Cameroon, Niger and Chad. There are allegations that illegal migrants serve as possible recruitment base for insurgents and criminals.

Recent Developments within the State Houses of Assembly

Activities in the State House of Assembly are reflecting some of the tensions in the political climate as we get closer to the 2015 general elections. The tension in Edo State House of Assembly is yet to abate. Within the period under review there was an attack on one for the law makers in the State which followed a reprisal attack resulting in the vandalisation of at least 30 cars in the legislative quarters.

In Ekiti, six APC lawmakers defected to PDP on the October 16, 2014 during the swearing in ceremony of the new governor, Mr. Ayodele Fayose. Thereby

bringing the number of PDP lawmakers in the State to 13 out of the 26 lawmakers in the State. The Speaker of the Ekiti House of Assembly, Dr. Adewale Omirin, had declared one month recess in a bid to foil alleged plan of the PDP lawmakers to impeach him. This recess however has been suspended. In Ogun State, the frosty relationship between Governor Ibikunle Amosun and his political godfather, Chief Segun Osoba is said to be affecting APC in the State. After the 2011 elections, there were 18 APC lawmakers, 5 PPN and 3 PDP. As at the time of writing this report, our research showed that some of the APC state lawmakers have decamped to the opposition PDP in the state. The State House of Assembly now made up of predominantly APC and PDP, PPN still in the minority. Among those who decamped from APC to PDP are Hon. Remmy Hassan and Hon. Adija Adeleye Oladapo. On October 1, Mrs Madam Racheal Hassan, 65 year old mother of Honourable Remmy Hassan was reportedly kidnapped by unidentified gunmen⁷ and has since been released.

In Ondo State, with the October 2nd defection of Governor Abdulrahman Olusegun Mimiko from Labour Party to PDP alongside with all the Labour Party members in the state assembly, the legislative chamber is now predominantly made of PDP members, 2 members namely Hon. Gbenga Edema and Hon Fola Olasheinde - Vincent have decamped to APC.

In Oyo State, there has been defection of 2 APC Senators to Accord Party and PDP respectively. Similar trends might follow in the State House of Assembly. It will be recalled that Senator Femi Lanlehin recently defected to Accord Party to realise his gubernatorial ambition while Senator Ayo Adeseun had decamped to PDP. There is obviously more activities at the State Houses of Assembly in the South West. This could bring forth certain issues of concern as the 2015 elections draw closer.

Violent Hot Spots

We categorized the states according to the perceived level of threat using traffic light signals (green, amber and red). Red indicates presence of insurgency,

⁷ <http://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2014/10/02/ogun-lawmakers-mother-abducted/>

intensity of politics with presence of different gladiators, violence that can lead to loss of lives and properties, Amber indicates presence of tension that have not escalated to earlier category under Red and Green is anything not Red or Amber. Most States fit into various categories depending on the level at which the analysis is done, that is either national or regional level. However for the purpose of this STA, analysis done at the regional level so as to ensure that all possible threats and hotspots are identified and mapped accordingly.

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

Regional Analysis.

In the North East, the continued intrusion, abductions and killings by the insurgents has cast doubts on the conduct of elections in the region in 2015. Though a ceasefire was recently announced between government forces and Boko Haram, the spate of the attacks has continued unabated. Despite optimism by the Nigerian government that its negotiation with Boko Haram militants will bring about the end of hostilities, intelligence reports in the possession of the military show that the Islamist militant group is plotting deadly attacks across northern Nigeria⁸. It has the following hotspots where violence is most likely to interfere with the conduct of elections in 2015.

Borno State: the following LGAs are very volatile due to insurgency. They are Bama, Gwoza, Askira/Uba, Damboa, Chibok, Konduga, Kaga, Marte, Ngala,

⁸ <http://saharareporters.com/2014/10/23/ceasefire-boko-haram-military-reports-reveal-plot-militant-sect-stage-deadly-attacks>

Kukawa, Abadam, Mafa, Dikwa and Monguno. Maiduguri metropolitan may also become volatile during elections due to the activities of the Civilian Joint Task Force. Adamawa: Madagali, Michika, Mubi North, Mubi South LGAs; Yobe: Gulani, Potiskum, Damaturu, and Gujba LGAs; Gombe: Gombe LGA (Jeka da fari quarters); Bauchi: Bauchi metropolitan, Azare, Tafawa Balewa.

In North West, while the heightening political situation in the region is a major security issue, the security situation is still principally dominated by cases of cattle rustling, banditry, assassinations, political skirmishes, insurgency and rape. There are cases of skirmishes between pastoral communities and rural sedentary farmers in some parts of southern Kaduna. This is happening amidst politically induced ethno-religious tension in the state. In Kaduna, Kano, Katsina and Sokoto inter party and intra-party tension and contentions are deepening, cases of defection and counter defections between the two major political parties are going on.

Kano, Kaduna, Zamfara and Katsina should be carefully watched. It appears southern Kaduna, Kaduna city and Kano city will be major flashpoints. The nature of violence may not necessarily be partisan; it could take different dimension including ethnic or religion, banditry and targeted assassination. Southern Kaduna has been experiencing ranging spate of banditry and violence with strong possibility of escalating reprisals attacks in other parts of the state.

As long as the insurgency continues in the northeast states, it is expected that there will be occasional attack on Kano. The intensity and may differ, but it is difficult to rule out the possibility of such actions. As electioneering increases, criminal elements may also disguise as Boko Haram to perpetrate mayhem. Although there is relative calm in Jigawa, the eastern parts of state, particularly areas bordering Yobe state are still very vulnerable to Boko Haram attack. In the South-South, Bayelsa State, hotspots for violence include Ogbia, Brass-Nembe, Southern Ijaw, and Ekeremor. Also, on the 12th of October 2014, unknown gunmen assassinated the Executive Secretary of Bayelsa State Independent Electoral Commission (BYSIEC), Mr Simon Akpen, in Yenagoa.

The presidential election in the state is expected to be peaceful as the majority of Bayelsa people look forward to the re-election of incumbent President.

Although Cross River State as a whole has remained peaceful however, there is a need to monitor closely the Central Senatorial District for possible outbreak of violence as tension between Senator Ndoma Egba and serving Federal House of Representative member John Owan Enor continue to mount.⁹ Whereas Egba believes, he has the support of the powers that be in Abuja to run for a fourth term for the Senatorial seat, Enor and his supporters argue that on grounds of equity Egba should withdraw from the race. They substantiate this argument by adding that no one from their community has occupied the office in the history of the senatorial district.

In Delta state, kidnapping, killing and piracy remain common in the state. Some of the areas to watch for possible violence include Bomadi —Brutu— and Ughelli South.

Edo South Senatorial District remains a place to watch for possible outbreak of violence. The role of security agencies in threat posed by supporters of the two major political parties are of concern in view of political conflict that is heating the state. Residential quarters for legislators in the state should be watched for possible outbreak of more violence. At the official Foundation Laying Ceremony of the Azura-Edo Power Plant, PDP youths who throng the Airport, carrying placards with various inscriptions including placards of some PDP aspirants, harassed some senior officials of the Edo State Government including Secretary to the State Government, Prof Julius Ihonvbere, Chief of Staff to the Governor, Hon Patrick Obahiagbon, Edo State Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Hon Anselm Ojezua and some commissioners.

In the South West region, Oyo, Ogun, Osun and Ekiti States are to be watched ahead of 2015 elections. In Oyo, the potential for conflict is high because of

⁹ Interview, Anonymous, Calabar, October 13, 2014

the present strength of three political parties: APC, Accord and PDP. Oyo traditionally has history of electoral violence and with the determination of the opposition parties to wrestle power from incumbent Governor Abiola Ajimobi an epic battle of intrigues and political tension is unraveling. Towns and cities to closely monitor for violence in Oyo State include Ibadan, Ogbomoso, Oyo and Saki.

In Ogun, the cold war between godson Governor Ibikunle Amosun and godfather, Aremo Segun Osoba is unfolding by the day. APC currently has two parallel executives. As confirmed by a respondent, there is groundswell of opposition to the second term ambition of Governor Ibikunle Amosun as there is now realignment of forces to dislodge the governor. It is a public knowledge that PDP, Labour Party and the Osoba faction of APC are seeking to be registered by INEC as a political party called Action Group of Nigeria. Arrow heads from this group are said to be responsible for the Amosun Must Go Project. The PDP in the State is also embroiled in supremacy battle between the former President Olusegun Obasanjo and Chief Buruji Kashamu who is a major financier of the party in the state and even the South West region. The Yewa people in Ogun West are also unhappy for not having produced governor of the state since its creation in 1976. Some of the towns to watch out for violence are Abeokuta, Ijebu-Igbo, Sagamu, Ilaro and other part of Yewa-land.

In Osun, the recent Akure Appeal Court ruling on the eligibility of the Resident Electoral Commission, Ambassador Rufus Akeju to be appointed as REC in the stater is generating a heated debate. While PDP interpreted the ruling to mean that the Osun REC was ineligible to conduct the 2011 elections in the state and having conducted them, all the elections were nullity, APC has a different interpretation. There was also the unceremonious removal of the chairman of the Osun State Election Petition Tribunal Justice I. M. Bako by the President of the Court of Appeal, Justice Zainab Bulkachuwa barely two weeks after the panel started sitting; he was replaced with Justice Suleiman Ambrusa. Should PDP win at the tribunal, APC supporters may take laws into their hands as the victory may be perceived to have been induced by the PDP. Towns to watch for violence include Ile-Ife, Ilesa, Ede and Iwo.

The scenario in Ekiti is frightening. News report has it that on Monday, September 22 Justice Olusegun Ogunyemi, who is handling a case filed by Ekiti-11 on the eligibility of the Governor Ayo Fayose to contest the last June gubernatorial election narrowly, escaped being lynched by irate mob that attacked his court on that fateful day. On Thursday, September 25, a sitting judge, Justice John Adeyeye, was beaten up and his suit torn by political thugs. The record book of the Chief Judge, Justice Ayodeji Daramola, was also torn into pieces by the thugs who also disrupted proceedings at the state Election Petitions Tribunal. The tension in the court forced the State's Chief Judge to order the immediate closure of all the state high courts. (The courts were reopened on the order of the National Judicial Council on October 15.) Aftermath of the ensuing tension, former Ekiti State Chairman of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, Omolafe Aderiye, was murdered on the night of September 25. Reprisal attack by his supporters led to arson in which several houses and vehicles were burnt. This made Governor Kayode Fayemi to impose a dusk to dawn curfew on the state. The curfew was only lifted on October 15 when the former governor, Kayode Fayemi, made his last official broadcast as the governor of Ekiti State.

In Lagos state, the major challenge is the unhealthy rivalry between APC and PDP. Already, several deaths have been recorded in the "State of Aquatic Splendour" and "Centre of Excellence". For instance, it was alleged Alhaji Azeez Asake was killed on Lagos Island by suspected PDP thugs after the party's mega rally at the Tafawa Balewa Square, Lagos.¹⁰ Also, rival street gangs have been engaging in war of attrition in Fadeyi and Mushin area of Lagos State in which many lives have been reported lost. According to report in *The Punch* of October 15, the clash between rival cults in the Fadeyi and Mushin areas of Lagos entered day four as another youth, Tunde, was shot dead on Railway Line on October 14. It was a cult fight between two factions- Toba boys and Toheeb's gang. Both gangs were also said to be foot soldiers of the APC and PDP.

¹⁰ <http://www.punchng.com/politics/why-jonathan-appointed-obanikoro-minister-apc/>

A lottery agent, Sheriff Alasia, was shot dead during a brutal cult clash at the Fadeyi end of Ikorodu Road.¹¹ Another key challenge is the APC and PDP party nomination process. If not well handled, the exercise can pose a major threat to the security of the cosmopolitan state.

The current threat in Ondo State is shielded in the battle over control of PDP party structure in the state. Following the Governor's defection from Labour Party to PDP, the governor had gone ahead to collapse Labour Party structure in the state into PDP following refusal of PDP members in the state to allow him as the leader of the party in the state.

Mr. Nicholas Oluwatobi Akinbiola, the immediate past chairman of Irele Local Government Area of Ondo State, was recently abducted by unknown gunmen, demanding N20 million for his release¹²

In the South East, Enugu precisely, the Senatorial ambition of Governor Chime is heating up the polity. With the contentious adoption of Hon. Ugwuanyi as the flag bearer by the PDP, there are allegations that another group within the PDP plans to use the Presidency to scuttle Chime's plans as he did not support President Jonathan's ascendance during Yar'Adua's illness saga. Cross the various states in the region, the contention between proponents of zoning and those opposed to it are some other security issues to worry about.

Synthesis of Key Risk Factors

- a) Continued exclusion of minority groups from political participation should be addressed going forward.
- b) Political assassination, kidnapping, armed robbery and bombings are on the increase as 2015 approaches.
- c) Unguarded statements by politicians can heat up the polity and they should be advised otherwise

¹¹ <http://www.punchng.com/metro-plus/gangsters-behead-youth-shoot-another-dead-in-lagos/>

¹² <http://saharareporters.com/2014/10/23/gunmen-snatch-former-ondo-council-boss-demand-n20m-ransom>

- d) Increasing activities of armed groups. Since the beginning of the year rural banditry and cattle rustling have continued unabated thereby making life miserable for poor rural communities in Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara States. Violent attacks have continued to kill and displace people in the States. There is the risk of ethnisation - some killings can easily be manipulatively attributed to some historical conflicts and therefore justify reprisal from the other side. Second the engagement of vigilante groups to combat this banditry could be a preparatory process of recruiting election and ethnic militia.
- e) Non completion of constitutional and electoral act amendment by the National Assembly barely four months to the next general elections is also a danger signal as the electoral commission's already laid down strategic plan for the polls may be grossly affected;
- f) Imposition of candidates works against the interest of internal democracy of parties. It should be discouraged. INEC should strengthen platforms for stakeholder dialogue on key security issues ahead of the 2015;
- g) Partisanship of security institutions: there are strong cases of partisan control of security institutions in the country. The Federal government has been very partisan in its use of the Police, Military and the DSS. This could be a major threat to security. Politicians have continued to use the example of Ekiti and Osun election to illustrate what could happen during the 2015 elections. Opposition parties are already reacting to that some state governments have instituted their own security outfits which could serve as counterforce to the federal security agencies.

Recommendations

1. The INEC led Inter Party Consultative Committee (IPAC) should ensure all politicians and political parties adhere to a Code of Conduct against violence, taking a cue from a proposal by former President, Olusegun Obasanjo;

2. The neutrality of INEC as an impartial organisation can never be over emphasized. In addition to training on election good practices, bad elements within the organisation must be immediately replaced for credible elections.
3. While INEC awaits the outcome of the amendment of the Electoral Act the Interagency Consultative Committee on Election Security should start meeting periodically Security agencies need to foster interagency collaboration through information and skills sharing and jettison interagency rivalry;
4. As a matter of urgency, INEC should identify ways of ensuring that IDP's vote irrespective of where they find themselves;
5. Community based groups should talk to politicians in their communities on the need to eschew political violence. Well-meaning religious leaders have an important role to play through political education;
6. Those seeking political positions should see the broader interest of society as more crucial for peace and security than any personal interest;
7. As for the Police and INEC, strengthening existing platforms for non-violent consultation or dialogue with stakeholders remains crucial;
8. INEC must prepare adequately for free, fair and credible elections;
9. INEC should fully implement relevant laws to ensure internal party democracy;
10. Political parties and politicians should consider broader societal interest in their pursuit of power;
11. The police must continue to strengthen its capacity to threats posed by activities of ex-militants;

12. Government should put in place effective measures to ensure proper and effective resettlement of displaced persons as a basis for safeguarding their rights to political participation in the forthcoming election;
13. INEC should partner with the National Human Right Commission (NHRC) to ascertain the extent to which violence and displacement will impact on the right of people to vote during the elections;
14. There is need for the deployment of more troops into the region to quell the tide of insurgency as all attempts at negotiations appear to have failed. This is more so considering the apparent defensive position Boko Haram has assumed recently vis a vis the military;
15. More synergy between the various security agencies both in terms of stemming the tide of insurgency and towards peaceful conduct of elections is required;
16. The need to consider IDPs in the forthcoming elections is necessary. In the interim, the records of those living in camps can be useful indices for INEC registration while those living with families outside camps can be quickly revalidated. Close surveillance of areas with IDPs is equally necessary to overcome any breach to security;
17. A peaceful settlement of communal violence by setting up peace and reconciliation committees at local level is important;
18. There should be regular meeting between the stakeholders in the election process including political parties, security agencies and youth groups at different levels in the states.
19. Political Parties and Internal Democracy: The absence of internal democracy among the contending parties in the forthcoming elections lends credence to the fear that the 2015 general elections may yet prove to be worst in terms of violence in the history of Nigerian politics.

20. Improved Preparation by INEC: The INEC needs to ensure that voter registration is completed on time. To ensure increased participation during the forthcoming elections, INEC should engage in continuous voters' registration until a few weeks to the elections.
21. Public Enlightenment on Electoral Process: Such enlightenment should educate the public on the difference between constitutional provisions of universal franchise and internal power sharing arrangements of parties.
22. Support for Robust Security Initiatives: The state governments and security agencies should work to improve security at all the nooks and crannies of the States to forestall intimidation of voters and opposing party supporters. There is need for tailored election security management capacity building to be carried out for security agencies in the States ahead of the elections.
23. Elite Crisis Mitigating Interventions: It is necessary for some eminent persons with leverage to intervene to mediate in these conflicts as intra-party mediation mechanisms have been weakened by impunity.
24. Training of Journalists on Conflict Sensitive Reporting: The manner the media has been reporting and is likely to report political conflicts has implications for violence. A cursory examination of newspapers reveals high levels of sensationalism which if left unchecked could contribute to violence. Media practitioners should be exposed to training on reporting of political conflicts to mitigate risk of their reports becoming triggers for violence.