Election Security Threat Assessment
Towards 2015 Elections

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Election Security Threat Assessment: Towards 2015 Elections

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Executive Summary

Political Context
With the release of the timetable for the 2015 general elections by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the stage is now set for a year of pulsating politicking. Like the last quarter, the country has continued to witness defection and counter defection from the two major parties, PDP and APC. This has changed the internal dynamics of the two parties and could have serious implications for the character of elections across the country. The altercation between the parties about which of them is behind the Boko Haram insurgency also raises tensions and could impact on the elections if not checked. Two main factors - ethnicity and religion- are likely to continue defining party politics in the run up to elections in the coming months. The potency of these two factors may however become neutralized in some areas by money politics which appears to have an overriding effect on the choice of candidates by both the electorate and political elite.

The security situation has been dominated by the cases of cattle rustling, banditry, assassinations, ritual killings, political skirmishes and rape. Two different cases of violence in March 2014 killed over 200 people Katsina and Kaduna state alone. The violent confrontations between farmers and herdsmen, as well as overnight attacks against defenseless communities in some North central states by suspected Fulani marauders, pose serious threats to national security. This situation is seen by many communities as a reflection of the failure of the Nigerian state to protect its citizen, in the face of its displacement by non-state actors in terms of the control of the instruments of coercion. The inability of the security agencies to arrest or prosecute persons and groups responsible for the spate of violence and insecurity has accounted for an entrenched culture of impunity.

Preparations for the Elections
Political parties and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) are at different levels of preparedness for the 2015 elections. Historically, Presidential and Gubernatorial elections attract more popular attention, but in the last few months indications are that Senatorial election will also become a major issue, particularly because most Governors whose tenure are ending are likely to run for senatorial seat. The political environment is therefore being defined by contentions over presidential election, gubernatorial candidates and senatorial candidates across the major political parties.

Series of political activities such as membership registration, ward congresses and rallies are being carried out by political parties in some states to galvanise action and strengthen
membership base. Although there were no major incidences, some minor skirmishes were experienced at different locations. With gubernatorial elections coming up in Ekiti and Osun States in June and August 2014 respectively, INEC has taken steps to update the voters register by conducting Continuous Voters Registration (CVR) and distributing Permanent Voters Cards (PVC) in those states. It has also opened a Voters Verification Platform for those who have registered to vote in the two states’ and promises to replicate these steps across the country in coming months.

Gender Dimension

A combination of cultural practices, religion and long history of political exclusion has continued to keep women out of active political participation. Although women candidates have increased in the last 10 years, the number of those who get nominated and eventually elected are still low across the country. There are however indications that more women will be contesting in the next elections; though the level of impact they can make is subject to the support they can get from the two major parties. Only a few women are currently holding leadership positions even in the political parties. As the run towards the 2015 election continues, more of female candidates are expected to emerge at all levels.

Presence and Activities of Non-State Actors

The emergence and activities of non-state actors as it relates to challenging state control over the control of the instrument of coercion is evident in the spate of violence witnessed in the North Central zone for example. This is obvious with the Ombatse phenomenon in Nasarawa State, as well as cattle theft, banditry and other forms of criminality, which include armed robbery and overnight attacks.

There are several other non-state actors involved in security activities across the country. For instance, with the increasing cases of cattle rustling, especially in Zamfara, Kaduna and Sokoto states, several community vigilante groups have been established. Sokoto, a hitherto quiet state has in the last eight years been experiencing rising spectre of political violence due to the growing notoriety of Area Boys (a militant youth group in Sokoto).

More generally, the youth bulge in all the states continues to remain ready-made reservoir of vibrant energy for recruitment by non-state actors and politicians in turn. Another threat to security in the North East zone may likely come from the Civilian JTF (CJTF) in Borno currently hailed for their gallant counter terrorism efforts in the state. The CJTF are currently heavily armed with machetes, knives, daggers etc. to fight insurgency but it is reasonable to assume also that some of the heavy weapons acquired from encounters with Boko Haram may remain
in their circulation which could be readily used for intimidation during the forthcoming elections.

Migration and Internal Displacement
Due to Nigeria’s porous borders, some persons from neighbouring countries such as Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana, Chad, Niger and Cameroon have been known to enter Nigerian territory illegally. These immigrants are sometimes involved in trans-border crimes such as smuggling of food items, vehicles and even small arms. These smuggled arms and ammunitions are sometimes bought by politicians to arm their thugs.

The North East continues to suffer massive population movement at a scale never witnessed before principally arising from Boko Haram insurgency. The three states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe that are presently under emergency rule have recorded millions of internally displaced persons. This excludes those that have qualified as refugees across Nigeria’s international borders. Scores of settlements have even been attacked several times such that their populations have now been decimated leading to grave humanitarian crisis for the people living in these communities. The fear expressed by INEC about the possibility of holding elections in the three states under emergency rule should therefore not be taken lightly. Whatever political interpretations INEC’s fear might take, many people in the states are already traumatized to the extent that their willingness to participate even if elections would hold remains to be seen. This is more so given the perception in many communities about neglect by government in their times of need when these communities were ravaged by the insurgents.

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 comparism within their region and not on the scale of risks nationally.

- **RED**: NC – Nasarawa, Plateau, Benue; NE – Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Taraba; NW – Kaduna, Zamfara; SS – Rivers; SE – Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo; SW – Ekiti and Osun
• **AMBER**: NC – Kogi, Niger; NE – Bauchi, Gombe; NW – Kastina, Sokoto and Kano; SE – Abia and Anambra; SS – Delta and Akwa Ibom; (None for SW though Ekiti and Osun are oscillating between Red and Amber)

• **GREEN**: NC – Kwara and FCT; NW – Jigawa, Kebbi; SS – Edo, Cross River and Bayelsa; SW – Lagos, Ondo, Ogun and Oyo; (None for NE and SE)

Regional Analysis

**North Central**: Persisting communal /religious clashes and more recent violent confrontations between farmers and herdsmen, as well as overnight attacks against defenseless communities in Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau make them high risk states. The Ombatse phenomenon in Nasarawa State makes it very volatile. Communal and religious also make Kogi and Niger risk states but not to the degree in Benue and Plateau. The political crisis in Kwara is mostly contained within the Sarakis, though deep it does not portend any immediate security challenge.

**North East**: Persisting insurgency activities and state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe put them in the red. The number of internally displaced persons, presence arms and political contestation within these states are also worrisome. Political contestation around the governorship in Taraba puts it in this category also. Political alignments and realignments within the PDP and APC make Gombe and Bauchi states to keenly observe.

**North West**: The defections across the two major parties have produced huge internal contradictions, it will take a little trigger for the bubble to burst. In Kano, there an increasing tension between Shekarau group and the old PDP in the state. In Sokoto, the tension between the group loyal to the Governor Wamako and those of PDP, particularly Senator Ahmed Maccido and former Governor Bafarawa can easily escalate. Zamfara and Katsina have also been experiencing increasing cases of cattle rustling resulting in wanton destruction of lives and property. These internal contradictions coupled with historical grievances between the opposing forces now in the same party could degenerate into violence. The threat level now are therefore highest in Zamfara and Kaduna, high in Kano, Kastina and Sokoto and lowest in Jigawa and Kebbi.

**South East**: Enugu and Ebonyi are both PDP states but contestation over zoning to senatorial district and fights as to who succeeds the exiting governors makes them very high risk states within their context. Defecting of the Imo governor to APC and efforts by candidates from other senatorial districts and parties to unseat him puts Imo in the red too. Growing contestation over
zoning arrangements for the governorship position in Abia State makes it a state to watch. Though there is no gubernatorial election in Anambra in 2015, contestation by serving senators and new-comers will make the election one to also watch.

**South South:** The ongoing crisis in Rivers State keeps it in the red. Inter and intra party tension and succession contestation amongst zoning arrangements make Delta and Akwa Ibom states. Edo is not up for gubernatorial election and the senatorial elections may not throw up significant security threats. There are intra party tensions in Bayelsa and Cross River but these are not likely to spill over.

**South West:** Osun and Ekiti States are oscillate between amber and red because of their forthcoming gubernatorial elections. Lagos, Ondo, Ogun, and Oyo are green now due to low level political activities but this will likely change to amber a couple of months from now when APC congress and conventions may have been held and INEC distributes PVC and conducts CVR. The closer we are to the candidate nomination process and campaigns the more unpredictable the political scenario becomes and likelihood of election related violence.

**Synthesis of Key Risk Factors**

1. The proliferation of arms and increasing activities of armed groups is a major risk factor. In less than three weeks over 300 people have been killed and thousands of people displaced. There are two dimensions of risks in this regard – first some of killings can easily be manipulatively attributed to some historical conflicts and therefore justify reprisals. Second some of these armed groups are potential army for electoral violence.

2. Inter and intra party conflicts: the defection and counter defection between the two major parties have generated a huge political tension. As political activities picks up within the year, we may begin to experience some violent engagements within and between the political parties.

3. Contention over candidates including zoning of presidential or gubernatorial candidates. Like what happened in 2011, if the ruling elite don’t manage the situation properly, it could escalate into a huge national crisis. Similar situation are also emerging at the state level – senatorial districts for governorship and senatorial positions.

4. Cattle rustling and conflicts between farmers and herdsmen: In the last few months over 300 people have been killed in different incidences spread across these state. It has become more like an organised crime, involving sophisticated weapon.
5. Perceptions that there is no level playing ground for people due to the hijack of the electoral process by ‘god fathers’;

6. The presence of militia groups provokes apprehension as they could be used by powerful politicians;

7. Massive displacement of people on a scale never witnessed before has led to a humanitarian crisis in the North East region and most of these people might be disenfranchised in 2015.

**Mitigating Factors and Recommendations**

1. Election related stakeholders – including security agencies, INEC, political parties and civil society groups must commence preparation for the 2015 election and mainstream conflict management in their plans. A quarterly security situation review can be very helpful for INEC, law enforcement agencies and CSOs.

2. Reversing the entrenched culture of impunity through the prosecution of perpetrators of violence by the police and the judiciary;

3. Public safety mechanisms across the country should be strengthened so as to assuage fears over the likelihood of violence before, during and after the elections;

4. More options for dialogue and disarmament of insurgents failing which dislodgement of their camps in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States should continue to be vigorously pursued;

5. Rapid response to the humanitarian crisis in the northeast is urgently required;

6. Efforts should be made to reduce the level of small arms in the country. The report of Presidential Committee on Small arms and the Presidential committee on Post Elections violence made useful recommendations on how to deal with these issues;

7. Urgent attempt should be made to understand the political economy and dynamics of cattle rustling in the zone. The situation is not simply about military action, it is also about having a better understanding of the situation so that a better response mechanism can be developed.
Map of Threats Assessment by States
SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR NORTH CENTRAL

Introduction
The North Central zone has witnessed various forms of violent conflicts such as communal, identity, political as well as farmers versus herdsmen. All these had serious implications for political stability and the conduct of elections across the states that make up the zone.

One major challenge the zone confronts today has to do with the management of diversity in view of its heterogeneous nature, which to a large extent, explains why conflicts have become frequent and intense. While deaths and displacements arising from these conflicts are unevenly distributed in terms of their consequences, the key drivers of these conflicts have been struggles over access to, and control of resources as reflected in outcry over marginalisations, access to land and other sources of livelihoods, and disputes over indigeneship.

Political and Social Context:
In terms of the political configurations in the North Central zone, the struggle for political power is between the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) and the opposition All Progressive Congress (APC). With the exception of Nasarawa and Kwara states, the other states – Benue, Kogi, Niger, Plateau and the FCT are all governed by the PDP. Even in Nasarawa State where the Governor is from the APC, the decampment of his deputy to the PDP, coupled with the dominance of the PDP in the House of Assembly raises the stakes of power struggle in the state, in the run up to the 2015 general elections. Also, the outcome of the local government elections also revealed such, in view of the fact that both the PDP and the APC ran neck-to-neck with respect to the election of Chairmen and Councilors.

In Benue state, the Tivs as an ethnic group remain a dominant factor in the politics of the state, with its control of over 80% of the votes. Since the inception of the state in 1976, the Idomas and Igedes have been crying of political and economic marginalization. While the Idomas have often been settled with the position of Deputy Governor, the Governorship ticket is always an internal struggle amongst the Tivs. Among the Tivs there are concerns that in the spirit of togetherness the Idomas should be allowed to rule the state. This argument is still a matter for discussion and negotiation among the political elites of the state.

There have been several attempts by the Igbiras and Okuns to work together in a bid to challenge the dominance and control of the Igalas in the politics of Kogi state. Such political competition continues to pose serious challenges to the management of diversity in the state.
Such demands by smaller ethnic groups led by the Igibiras for a rotational arrangement on the governorship of the state will continue to dominate politics and governance in the state. The demise of the godfather of Kwara politics, Dr. Olusola Saraki created a huge vacuum in the politics of Kwara State. So far, the power struggle between the Senator Bukola Saraki led APC and the Senator Gbemisola Saraki led PDP has created deep political divisions in the state. Under such condition, the political atmosphere is heavily charged in a way that the real risks to political stability in the state are so rife.

There is a huge perception across the region that serving and former governors see clinching a Senatorial seat as their ultimate goal. So far, four former governors from the zone are in the Senate–Joshua Dariye of Plateau State; Bukola Saraki of Kwara State; George Akume of Benue State and Abdulahi Adamu of Nasarawa State. Other serving governors that are perceived to be nursing Senatorial ambition at the end of their tenure include Jonah Jang of Plateau State; Gabriel Suswam of Benue State and Mu’azu Babangida Aliyu of Niger State. It seems then, that, the Senate has become a retirement home for former governors.

**Population Dynamics, Migration and Insecurity**

Less than a year to the conduct of elections in the country, the zone is still faced with real risks to stability. The region has faced various forms of violent conflicts that have led to deaths, forced displacements of persons and destruction of property with huge humanitarian consequences. For instance, the violent confrontations between farmers and herdsmen, as well as overnight attacks against defenseless communities in Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau states by suspected Fulani marauders, which pose serious threats to national security. This situation is seen by many communities as a reflection of the failure of the Nigerian state to protect its citizen, in the face of its displacement by non-state actors in terms of the control of the instruments of coercion. The inability of the security agencies to arrest or prosecute persons and groups responsible for the spate of violence and insecurity in the region, has accounted for an entrenched culture of impunity.

The region is also faced with a huge demographic challenge as a result of other drivers of insecurity, which include desertification arising from climate change that has led to population dispersal; the Boko Haram insurgency has led to the displacement and involuntary dispersal of people from the North East region to the North Central zone; as well as the Almajiri phenomenon respectively.

The emergence and activities of non-state actors as it relates to challenging state control over the control of the instrument of coercion is evident in the spate of violence witnessed in the zone.
This is obvious with the Ombatse phenomenon in Nasarawa State, as well as cattle theft, banditry and other forms of criminality, which include armed robbery and overnight attacks.

**Violent Hot Spots in the North Central Zone**

![Map of violent hot spots in the North Central Zone](image)

**Situating Gender in the Politics of the North Central Zone:**

Gender dimension with respect to access to political power in the region has been a recurring challenge. There is a sense in which disadvantaged groups can better be represented only if they are present in elected assemblies (British Council, 2012). So far, the zone is yet to achieve gender parity in political representation, which makes the realization of the target of 35% affirmative action as set in the National Gender Policy (NGP) far from been attained, as evident in the fact that none of the states within the zone has achieved more that 10% affirmative action in any aspect of political participation and inclusion as it relates to women.

So far, while there are very few women holding both elective and appointive positions across the zone, it is only in Plateau State that a woman was elected to serve as the Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly. This is the only state that has achieved about 28% affirmative action that emphasizes raising the bargaining power of women through access to political and economic power.

**Risks Factors**

I. Cattle theft, overnight attacks against communities and banditry;

II. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons and its use by non-state actors;

III. Conflicts between farmers and herdsmen, which has led to huge deaths and displacements;
IV. Perceptions that the there is no level playing ground for people due to the hijack of the electoral process by godfathers; and

V. Intra and inter party conflicts that heightens tensions as a result of alignments and realignments between and among the political class;

**Suggested Measures for Mitigation**

I. Effective rapid response to emergence by security agencies and the relevant institutions charged with the responsibility of emergency preparedness and response such as the Emergency Management Agencies at the national, state and local levels;

II. Sustained engagement among key stakeholders such as INEC, security agencies, civil societies, religious and community leaders towards credible elections;

III. Governments at all levels should pay special attention to the violence hotspots highlighted in this security brief, with a view to empowering and equipping the agencies for effectiveness.

IV. Reversing the entrenched culture of impunity through the prosecution of perpetrators of violence by the police and the judiciary; and

V. Public safety mechanisms across the country should be strengthened so as to assuage fears over the likelihood of violence before, during and after the elections.

**Conclusion**

The need to address other internal security threats in the North Central zone offers opportunities for the design of strategies that are linked to durable solution. This include lack of respect for the rule of law, economic challenges such as poverty and unemployment, poor management of natural and human resources, corruption, robbery, drug abuse and trafficking, deep ethnic, religious and communal hatred and weak security and justice system. Although, these challenges are not unique to the North Central zone, framing responses requires an understanding of these prevailing realities.
SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR THE NORTH EAST

Political Context
Since Nigeria’s return to democracy in 1999 the northeast geopolitical zone has been largely controlled by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). But this has slightly changed recently with the defection of Adamawa State governor to the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the latter part of 2013. This appears to balance political party affiliation at the state level between the PDP and APC, each in control of three states. Precisely Bauchi, Gombe and Taraba are controlled by PDP while Adamawa, Borno and Yobe are governed by APC. This picture appears to be replicated at the local government level in terms of elected local council officials such that the ruling party in each state almost entirely wins not only the chairmanship but also including the councillorship seats. Local government elections held recently in Gombe and Yobe State attest to this fact. While PDP effectively controlled local government polls in Gombe, the APC won all the chairmanship and councillorship seats in Yobe such that even the federal might of PDP was unable to stop the ‘winner takes all’ syndrome of party affiliation at the state level in Nigeria.

Two main factors - ethnicity and religion are likely to continue defining party politics in the run up to elections in the coming months. The potency of these two factors may however become neutralized in some areas by money politics which appears to have an overriding effect on the choice of candidates by both the electorate and electoral officers in Nigeria’s politics. The use of money through both overt and covert means may in particular play significant role in the voting process of the northeast especially against the backdrop of the region’s dire poverty situation. The high poverty level in itself may have become exacerbated by the current Boko Haram insurgency especially in the three frontline states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe potentially creating problems of food security. In many communities within these states, farming was abandoned during the last cropping season and whatever little that remained of the previous year’s harvest became lost to the insurgency (at least 40 villages were destroyed by insurgents between January and March 2014). The importance of this is that it throws the people of the affected areas into desperation and more vulnerable to being bought over by local politicians during elections if and when it holds.

Preparations for 2015 Elections
Political parties and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) are at different levels of preparedness for the 2015 elections. While Nigeria’s Electoral Act stipulates that candidates must not canvass for votes until it is three months to the time of elections, it does appear that the two main political parties in the northeast i.e. PDP and APC are both in violation of the Act going by candidates’ pronouncements over the media and the ubiquitous
display of posters and bill boards across the states. This tends to suggest the level of overzealousness on the part of both the candidates and their platforms i.e. the political parties. While there is some achievement on the part of INEC that 60 million permanent voters’ cards are ready i.e. about two-thirds of the total required the kite flown by it a couple of months ago that elections may not hold in the northeast in 2015 should not be taken for granted.

There are also political maneuverings in the governorship race across the states with interesting developments. In Adamawa State the resignation of the erstwhile PDP chairman Dr Bamanga Tukur may confer certain advantages to Governor Nyako’s son who is seen by many as not only APC’s most preferred candidate but also the de facto governor in the state. In Yobe State Governor Gaidam is likely to face stiff challenge from the former Minister of State for Finance, Dr Yerima Ngama (PDP) who will put up a big fight for the governorship. In Borno State the battle line between the incumbent governor Shettima and his anointer Ali Sheriff has become most apparent. The governor’s assumption as the leader of APC in the state was questioned by supporters of Sheriff who prefer him and many observers believe that the February 14th bomb blast that claimed over 30 lives in Maiduguri was actually a fight for political supremacy as both groups claimed the blast was staged to discredit the other. In Gombe State, the former Governor Danjuma Goje has finally defected to the APC, a move that shows the latter’s desperation for a change of government in the state. In the neighbouring Bauchi, the PDP National Chairman Adamu Muazu and Governor Yuguda have finally reconciled their differences and it is possible that both will throw their weight on the candidature of the FCT Minister Bala Mohammed as the next governor. Bala Mohammed is currently perceived to have strong backing from the Presidency in Abuja.

**Gender in Politics**

As in other parts of the country women’s representation in politics remains poor in the northeast, far from attaining the avowed 35% affirmative action. There has not been any appreciable cabinet reshuffle by the state governments in the last six months in the region that may have altered the participation of women holding political appointments and so their participation continues to remain poor. Neither has there been major election held except for the local government election in Yobe in which no woman even contested. Women’s participation may be expected to decline even further going by the increasing rate of insurgency. Though no female politician has been deliberately targeted by the insurgents as in the case of their male counterparts, the wave of fear created so far and the trauma unleashed is enough to deter their participation. This effect is even likely to transcend to the level of women’s decision making such that their participation in voting process may even decline further.
Migration and Internal Displacement
The northeast continues to suffer massive population movement at a scale never witnessed before principally arising from Boko Haram insurgency. The three states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe that are presently under emergency rule have recorded about three million internally displaced persons with more than 1.7 million living in Borno State alone. This excludes those that have qualified as refugees across Nigeria’s international borders. For instance, there are at present about 40,000 Nigerian refugees in Niger Republic and about 28,000 in Cameroun mostly people from border communities. Scores of settlements have even been attacked several times such that their populations have now been decimated leading to grave humanitarian crisis for the people living in these communities. These include Izge, Bama, Konduga, Mainok, Benisheikh (Borno), Mubi, Madagali, Michika (Adamawa) and Gujba, Buni Yadi and Damaturu (Yobe). The right to vote for these communities may likely be denied should the security situation remain unchanged.

Non State Actors
The large presence of non state actors in the northeast continues to be a big challenge in the northeast. Boko Haram being the main culprit in the zone has continued to unleash its terror attacks on the people with no end in sight. While the military and the communities have tried to fight its menace, there continues to remain daunting challenges. The fear expressed by INEC about the impossibility of holding elections in the three states under emergency rule should therefore not be taken lightly. Whatever political interpretations INEC’s fear might take many people in the states are already traumatized to the extent that their willingness to participate even if elections would hold remains to be seen. This is more so given the perception in many communities about neglect by government in their times of greatest need i.e. when these communities were ravaged by the insurgents.

More generally, youth bulge in all the states continues to remain ready-made reservoir of vibrant energy for recruitment by non state actors and politicians in turn. This was recently clearly demonstrated in Gombe State’s youth training camp for the ‘yan kalare where a riot by the youths against the PDP led state government responsible for their training was allegedly thought to have been incited by the opposition APC. In southern Taraba, there still remain elements of communal tension in the Wukari – Ibbi axis judging from the arrest made by police of firearms and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) among the local populations. But perhaps the greatest threat to security in the zone may likely come from the Civilian JTF (CJTF) in Borno currently hailed for their gallant counter terrorism efforts in the state. The CJTF are currently heavily armed with machetes, knives, daggers etc. to fight insurgency but it is reasonable to assume also that some of the heavy weapons acquired from encounter with Boko Haram may
remain in their circulation which could be readily used for intimidation during the forthcoming elections. Abduction especially of political opponents is also of great concern in the northeast. Instances like the abduction of a member of Bauchi State House of Assembly remind us of non state actors in possession of small arms and light weapons. Whether such abductions are responses to economic pressure by youths or politically induced is often difficult to unbundle but certainly call for great concern as Nigeria marches towards 2015 elections.

**Violent Hotspots**

Based on the current threats to security in the northeast the region has been divided into three based on traffic lights signals. These are green, amber and red to signify the severity of the threat with red posing the greatest threat and green the minimal. Thus, the northeast may be classified as follows:

RED: Borno, Adamawa, Yobe and Taraba

AMBER: Bauchi and Gombe

GREEN: Nil

**Synopsis of Risk Factors**

I. Insurgency: Three states in the region have suffered violent religious extremism from Boko Haram.

II. Political assassination: there are clear signals of politically motivated kidnap in some states of the North-East.

III. Youth vigilantes: the presence of these vigilantes has been met with apprehension as there are clear signs that they could be used by powerful politicians

IV. Massive displacement of people on a scale never witnessed before has led to a humanitarian crisis in the region.

**Suggested Measures for Mitigation**

The following measures are suggested to help reduce the risk factors identified above:

I. More options for dialogue and disarmament of insurgents failing which dislodgement of terrorist camps in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States should continue to be vigorously pursued.

II. Rapid response to the humanitarian crisis in the northeast is urgently required

III. Quick resolution of communal tension in southern Taraba State and more policing of both urban and rural areas

IV. Immediate distribution of permanent voters card and update of voters’ register

V. Strict enforcement of the electoral guidelines by INEC and quick resolution of intra party squabbles
SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR THE NORTH WEST

Introduction
Ordinarily, northwest Nigeria has historically been a hotbed of northern Nigeria politics. The zone has in the last two months been devastated by series of violence. The security situation has been dominated by the cases of cattle rustling, banditry, assassinations, ritual killings, political skirmishes and rape. Two different cases of violence in March 2014 killed over 200 people Katsina and Kaduna state alone. With this escalation in insecurity, as we move closer to 2015 elections the situation in the region will be more about drawing a line between insurgency, criminality and politics.

Like the last quarter, the region has continued to witness defection and counter defection from the two major parties. While two PDP governors defected to APC, two former governors of APC extraction defected to PDP. These will definitely impact on electoral politics in the zone.

Preparation for the Election
Through series of subtle political campaigns, the political activities in the zone are gradually heightening. Historically, Presidential and Gubernatorial elections attracts more popular attention, but in the last few months indications are that Senatorial election will also become a major issue, particularly that most Governors whose tenure are ending are likely to run for senatorial seat. The political environment is therefore being defined by contentions over presidential election, gubernatorial candidates and senatorial candidates across the major political parties. Only two of the seven state governors are eligible for re-election in 2015 – Muktar Ramalan Yero of Kaduna state and Abdul’Aziz Abubakar Yari of Zamfara state. The other five are completing their second and final term. For now it appears the contest is between PDP and APC, almost all the states are open for grab by either of the parties, although each of the parties are struggling to retain their turf. Only two of the states in the region (Kaduna and Katsina) have since 1999 been led by only PDP. Kano, Jigawa, Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara have alternated between PDP, ANPP and now APC.

The defection of two former governors of APC to PDP was the major political development in the last three months. This has changed the internal dynamics of the two parties and could have implication for the character of elections in the region. Series of political activities are been carried out in each of the states to galvanise action and strengthen membership base. The PDP has in the last three months held different rallies, in Kaduna, Katsina and Sokoto. APC has also embarked on elaborate membership registration and ward congresses. Although there were no
major incidences, some minor skirmishes were experienced at different locations in Kaduna, Kano and Katsina.
Increasingly governance is being set at bay, politics seems to have pervades everywhere in the zone. This is likely to remain so until the 2015 elections. Although the electoral commission has released the timetable for the 2015 elections, there are still limited INEC activities in the zone.

**Political Parties and Likely Candidates**

The emergence of APC and the defection of two PDP governors are still creating ripples in the zone. The tension between and within the two contending parties is very high. How these contentions or combustion are managed has implication for the security in the region and even the conduct of elections. Although none have openly declared his candidacy for the Presidential election, the zone is likely to produce an interesting array of candidates including General Mohammadu Buhari, Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso and Aminu Tambuwal for APC. It is likely that Sule Lamido will try to challenge Goodluck Jonathan’s candidature in PDP.

At the state level, it has been chains of possible candidates across the political parties. Most of these candidates are yet to commence open campaigns. Nevertheless, interesting underground campaigns are going on. In Kano for instance, the major contenders for governorship include Sheik Ibrahim Khalil, Sagir Takai, Senator Kabir Ibrahim Gaya, Bello Sani Gwarzo, Nasiru Yusuf Gawuna, Ibrahim Kankarofi, Honourable Barau Jibrin and Suleiman Kawu Sumaila. Others may include Deputy Governor, Abdullahi Ganduje. Some of the likely candidates in PDP include Umar Ghali Na’Abba, Ambassador Aminu Wali, and Mohammed Abacha among others.

In Kebbi State, about 19 aspirants have started jostling for the governorship position. The contest is likely to be between candidates from Kebbi Central (Gwandu Emirate) and Kebbi South Senatorial District (Zuru Area). Among the key contenders from Gwandu Emirate are retired Gen Sarkin Yaki Bello, Abubakar Shetima Malam, Mansur Shehu Mansa, Sen Atiku Bagudu and Kabiru Tanimu.

Others include Bashir Sarkin Yakin Koko, Saidu Sambawa, Sen Farouk Bunya, Bello Turakin Gwandu, Prof Tijjani Bande and former deputy governor, Suleiman Argungu who may likely emerge from the All Progressives Congress (APC). Major contenders from Kebbi South include Senator Muhammadu Magoro, Hon. Abdullahi Dan’alkali, Hon. Bala Na’Allah, Deputy Speaker Mohammed Bena, retired Major General Mohammad Danhannane Isah and Benjamin Dikki and the incumbent deputy governor Ibrahim K. Aliyu.
In Sokoto state, although the Speaker of the House of Representative, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal’s name has continued to feature prominently for Presidential election, he may also be on line for governorship under APC, others may include, Umar Bature, the Deputy Governor of the state, Muktar Shagari. Senator Abubakar Gada and former Ministers of Sport, Alhaji Yusuf Suleiman are likely contenders for governorship of the state under PDP.

In Jigawa state, there are still no major political activities are taking place; most politicians have continued to keep their ambition close to their chest. Ambassador Abdulhamid Ahmed Malam-Madori, the current Nigerian Ambassador to Turkey is believed to be a major contender for the governorship. Others in PDP are Engineer Baba Suntali, Bashir Dalhatu, Hon Adamu Ahmed Sarawa, the Speaker of the Jigawa State House of Assembly. Hon Farouk Adamu Aliyu, Alhaji Abubakar Badaru and Barrister Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia are the likely contestant for the APC ticket in the state.

Gender Dimension of the election
There are indications that more women will be contesting in the next elections; however the level of impact they can make is subject to support they can get from the two major parties. Only a few women are holding leadership positions even in the political parties. Although the zone will definitely produce a number of female candidates for the 2015 elections, no woman is currently featuring prominently in most of the permutations, neither are women strategically involved in any of the political parties, but as the run towards the second quarter of the year, more of these candidates will emerge.

A combination of cultural practices, religion and long history of political exclusion has continued to keep women out of active political participation. Until 1979, northern Nigeria generally operated a universal male suffrage: Women secured their voting right only in 1979. Although women candidates have increased in the last 10 years, most of them never get nominated and even when they did, they never got to win the election.

Presence and Activities of Non state actors
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 resulting in wanton destruction of lives and property. The zone has is already experiencing increasing cases of assassination. The assassination of Sheikh Mohammed Auwal Albani, a very popular Islamic Scholar in Zaria on the 1st of February 2014, was a major security threat in Kaduna. This singular incidence was capable of unsettling the state.
There are several non-state actors involved in security activities. With the increasing cases of cattle rustling, especially in Zamfara, Kaduna and Sokoto states, several community vigilante groups have been established. 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. Sokoto, a hitherto quiet state has in the last eight years been experiencing rising spectre of political violence due to the growing notoriety of Area Boys (a militant youth group in Sokoto).

The state governments have also been either directly funding some of these vigilante outfits or have purposely established them. For instance, aside the *Hisbah* in Kano, the government recently recruited and trained 395 security guards to “curb the menace of insecurity and unemployment. Zamfara state government had contemplated arming community vigilante groups to respond to the increasing cases of armed robbery and cattle rustling in the state.

**Violent hotspots**

The rising political tension in Kano, Kaduna and Katsina states are undoubtedly some of the states to watch, particularly, Kano city, Kaduna, Zaria, southern Kaduna, Katsina and Daura. Others may include Sokoto town and other state capitals like Gusau and Birnin Kebbi. The nature of violence may not necessarily be interparty. With the character of defections across the two major parties have produced huge internal contradictions, it will take a little trigger for the bubble to burst. In Kano, there an increasing tension between Shekarau group and the old PDP in the state. In Sokoto, the tension between the group loyal to the Governor Wamako and those of PDP, particularly Senator Ahmed Maccido and former Governor Bafarawa can easily escalate. These internal contradictions coupled with historical grievances between the opposing forces now in the same party could degenerate into violence. Some of the possible violence period may be during party congresses, registration of membership and selection of party flag bearers. The threat level will therefore be high in Kano, Kaduna and Sokoto.

**RED:** Zamfara and Kaduna  
**AMBER:** Sokoto, Kano and Kastina  
**GREEN:** Jigawa and Kebbi

**Violence and Displacement**

The zone has in the last few months experience massive violence by “unknown gun men”. Over 100 people were killed on the 12th of March when gun welding cattle rustlers invaded villages in Faskari and Sabuwa local governments in Katsina state. Some of the villages attacked include Kurar Mota, Marabar Kindo, Marabar Maigora, Maigora, Sabon Layin Galadima and Unguwar
Doka. Communities in Kaduna state along Birnin Gwari and parts of Zamfara state have been living with similar incidences on regular bases. In Kaura Local governments in Kaduna state, over another 100 of people were killed in Unguwar Sankwai, Unguwar Gata and Chenshyi villages. Several gun men invaded the villages killing and setting houses ablaze resulting in the displacement of thousands of people.

Just while this report was been concluded another incidence occurred in Zamfara state where over 112 people were killed and thousands of others displaced. The attacked took place on Saturday 5th of April at Yargaladima village in Dansadau district of Maru Local government area. The village was invaded by suspected bandits. This attacked followed a week earlier attack on Burni-Tsaba and Manitsaba communities in Zurmi local government.

**Key Risk Factors**

Because the region is prone to violence, it takes a small trigger for violence to erupt, especially in Kaduna and Kano state. Some of the causes may be historical others are largely generated by prevailing political situation. Some of the risk factors may include:

I. Increasing activities of armed groups is a major risk factor. In less than three weeks over 300 people have been killed and thousands of people displaced. There are two dimensions of risks in this regard – first some of killings can easily be manipulatively attributed to some historical conflicts and therefore justify reprisal from the other side, especially in Kaduna state. The killings of villagers in southern Kaduna and the recent military action in the area is already generating tension. Ethnicising the violence has a very huge risk. Second some of these armed groups are potential army for electoral violence.

II. Inter and intra party conflicts; the defection and counter defection between the two major parties have generated a huge political tension. As political activities picks up within the year, we may begin to experience some violent engagements within and between the political parties.

III. Considering the history of mutual distrust, political contentions and almost annihilative posturing of contending forces now in the same party, it appears the APC may not be big and elastic enough to accommodate these varied groups. In the run-up to the 2011 elections, the failure of CPC to resolve most of the contentions over its candidates led to different levels of conflicts that almost destroyed the party. With this new development
in APC there is definitely going to be a huge contention over control of the party, leadership and candidates, some of the contentions could spiral into violence.

IV. Electoral manipulation – vote ragging or perceived rigging will be the major trigger of violence in the region especially the Presidential election. It was perceived vote rigging that triggered the 2011 post-election violence. The region, especially Kano has a history of mandate protection; manipulation of election result could result into violence.

V. Contention over candidates including zoning of presidential or gubernatorial candidates. There are emerging contentions over where the President of the country should come from. This is a continuation of the controversy that preceded the 2011 election and has continued to shape the national politics since then. Like what happened in 2011, if the ruling elite don’t manage the situation properly, it could escalate into a huge national crisis. Similar situation are also emerging at the state level – senatorial districts within states are demanding for a fair share or taste of the governorship in Kaduna, Kebbi and Kano state are states to watch in this regard. In Kebbi state for instance the tension between the southern and northern Senatorial district over the governorship seat is almost palpable. Similar situation can be observed in Kano, Sokoto and Kaduna.

VI. Although, apart from the assassination of Sheikh Albani in Zaria, there has not been any major Boko Haram related incidence of terror attack in the last three month, the region remain very vulnerable to such attacks. Activities of insurgency groups like Boko Haram and Ansaru – especially in Kano, Kaduna and Katsina. There has been intermittent attack by these groups in parts of Jigawa, Kano and Kaduna state in the last few months.

VII. The North West is a major hotbed of communal violence especially in southern Kaduna. The historical contentions between the Hausa-Fulani and Muslim communities of northern Kaduna and the ethnic minorities and Christian communities of the south of the state have often play out in every election, sometimes spiralling to violence. In March 2014 gunmen raided three communities in Kaura local government and reportedly killed over 100 people displacing thousands of others. This and the resultant military activities in the area are already generating tension.

VIII. Cattle rustling and implication for election: Zamfara, Katsina and Kaduna have been experiencing a raising spectre of violent cattle rustling. In the last few months over 300
people have been killed in different incidences spread across these state. It has become more like an organised crime, involving sophisticated weapon and logistics supports. Communities leaders, including senior traditional ruler\(^1\) have alleged that Helicopters are used to provide logistics support to these groups in the forests of these state.

IX. Political assassination: Although there are no reported cases of assassination, the killing of Alhaji Yusif Garba, a commissioner with Zamfara state local government commission in Gusau and the killing of Alhaji Mansir Mansa is a big warning. As 2015 draws closer differentiating between insurgency, criminality and politics could became more difficult as cases like this could be disguised as Boko Haram.

Recommendation
To mitigate possible violence will require a nuanced understanding of the politics of the region and respond to some of the key concerns of the people:

I. Efforts should be made to reduce the level of small arms in the zone. It may be important to revisit the report of Presidential Committee on Small arms and the Presidential committee on Post Elections violence. These committees have made useful recommendations on how to deal with these issues.

II. Election related stakeholders – including security agencies, INEC, political parties and civil society groups must commence preparation for the 2015 election and mainstream conflict management in their plans. A quarterly security situation review can be very helpful for INEC, law enforcement agencies and CSOs.

III. The government and political parties should also encourage issues-based politics and avoid religion and ethnic identity based mobilisation. Inter party dialogue should be encouraged.

IV. Urgent attempt should be made to understand the political economy and dynamics of cattle rustling in the zone. The situation is not simply about military action, it is also about having a better understanding of the situation so that a better response mechanism can be developed. As it is nobody has done a serious study of the situation. If care is not taken the situation could degenerate akin what to the situation in Kenya,

\(^1\) Emir of Birnin Gwari, Alhaji Jibrin Maigwari, and the House of Representative debate on this issue Indicates that Nigeria is dealing with huge national security challenge.
Uganda and Malawi. This will have a serious implication for food security in the country.

V. The electoral commission should ensure free, fair and credible election. This can be achieved only if INEC commences early preparation for the elections. Some of these preparatory issues should include update of electoral laws, delimitation of constituencies and update of voters’ register.

VI. The electoral commission and relevant agencies should engage different stakeholders including youth groups, political parties, security agencies, religious leaders, traditional rulers and women on the need for violence free election.

VII. The federal government need to invest in training of security agencies on election related security issues.

VIII. The federal and state governments should intensify effort in addressing the Boko Haram insurgences to avoid disruption of election activities.
SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR THE SOUTH EAST

Introduction
The South-East geo-political zone was created in 1996 by the military government of General Sani Abacha and is made up of five states - Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. These states are generally and linguistically 'Igbo'. As one of the three major ethnic groups dominant in the Nigerian political arrangement, the region has continually cried about being marginalized mainly as a result of her inability to produce a President of Igbo extraction since independence, and the inequality in the number of states in the country.

The inability of the Igbo to realize this objective under the platform of the PDP contributed to the emergence of APGA, and for a fleeting moment, the PPA, whose founders sought to use to actualize Igbo presidency. The result is that the PDP has over time lost its total control of the region, currently controlling 3 states – Enugu, Ebonyi and Abia, while the other 2 – Imo and Anambra, are controlled by APC and APGA respectively. While the PDP seeks to regain control of the region, the APGA has already successfully retained Anambra while APC is currently in the leadership of Imo State and making effort to retain it in 2015.

However, given that the Igbo generally have tacitly supported the re-election of President Goodluck Jonathan in 2015, the main mobilization in the South-East will be on the governorship and other legislative elections.

While the South-East cannot be compared with other regions in terms of electoral violence, since 1999, the presence of teeming unemployed youths, various cult groups in higher institution of learning in the zone and existence of militant group known as the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), a group canvassing for the re-declaration of Biafran republic, suggest the availability of negative forces that could be used for political assassination, thuggery, voter intimidation, kidnapping and disruption of elections, among other forms of violence.

STATE BY STATE ANALYSIS AND PROJECTIONS

ABIA: Expected High Stakes and Risks of Violence
Ordinarily, Abia should not have any problems of electoral violence given that there is an existing zoning formula. It is generally believed that it is the turn of the Ukwu-Ngwa zone to produce the next governor of the State. Thus, the people of old Aba Division have determined to mobilize support for power-shift to the area. The advocacy is based on a supposed Abia
Charter of Equity signed by the founding fathers of the state for power sharing being the main constituent units of the proposed state - Aba Division and Bende Division. The people of Aba Division claim it is only fair that they should be allowed to produce the governor in 2015 since all indigenous governors from 1991 when the state was created come from Bende Division. Moreover, incumbent Governor Theodore Orji, has on a number of occasions expressed support for the Aba Division to produce his successor.

While there is an ongoing debate as to which area constitutes Aba Division, a group from the Ukwa/Ngwa stock who make up old Aba Division have continued to clamour for the governorship to be zoned to Abia South Senatorial District, anchoring its claim on the fact that Abia North produced Governor Orji Uzor Kalu (1999-2007) while Abia Central produced the incumbent (2007-date). This has generated resentment from Ngwa people in three LGAs (Isiala Ngwa North, Isiala Ngwa South and Osisioma Ngwa) in Abia Central who see the clamour for power sharing on the grounds of Senatorial district as a ploy to exclude them from the race. While Ngwa people in the Abia Central claim the basis of power sharing in the historic Abia Charter of Equity was the Old Aba Division, of which they are part, the people of Abia South claim it is Senatorial district which has been the main basis for power sharing in the current democratic dispensation.

There are fears that this disagreement may be exploited by ambitious politicians and interest groups to deny the Ngwa people another chance to produce the governor, although Governor Orji seems capable of deflecting any such as he has a cosy relationship with the Presidency. The rumoured interests of some prominent politicians from the Ukwa-Ngwa stock – former deputy governor Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe; former senate president Adolphus Wabara; Senator Nkechi Nwaogu, currently representing Abia Central; Hon. Uzor Azubuike, representing Aba North/South in the Federal House of Representatives – do not seem to be concrete as they are said to be pretenders. The major contender for Abia governorship presently is said to be Mr. Friday N. Nwosu an Abuja based legal practitioner from Obi-Ngwa, who is said to be favoured by both Governor T.A. Orji and the President. As all the above are from the Ukwa-Ngwa area, the risks of violence within the ruling PDP will be reduced. However, with the rumoured entrance of the immediate past Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Azubuike Iheirika into the race will be a game-changer as he is from the same zone as the incumbent governor. If the rumours of presidential endorsement are anything to go by, then there is a serious likelihood of a serious crisis in the state as election draws near. The youth of Ukwa-Ngwa area seem to have calmed down since the Army took over the region but there is likelihood of resurgence of kidnapping and allied criminal activities if they fail to get governorship in the area.
Moreover, as the Governor is gearing up to represent Abia South in the Senate in 2015, and not being ready to hand over to the incumbent Senator Nkechi Nwaogu, who wishes to replace him in Government House, there is bound to be some fireworks, which may not necessarily translate to significant threat to election security in the state.

Designation: **Amber**

**ANAMBRA: Expected Serious Politicking in Legislative Elections**

Anambra State does not have to worry about the gubernatorial elections in 2015 as Chief Willie Obiano of APGA has just been sworn in for a four-year term on March 17, 2014. Given that APGA as a political party has adopted President Jonathan as their candidate for the 2015 general elections, the National Assembly election promises to be a clash of the titans given the political heavyweights and money bags that are involved. It promises to be a keenly contested election.

The stakes in the National Assembly elections are high as none of the serving senators, especially Andy Uba (PDP) and Chris Ngige (APC), is ready to step down having lost the governorship to APGA. Margery Okadigbo (PDP) is more or less a new-comer in the game and would want to continue in order to entrench herself in the polity. This may prove a serious task for her and the PDP as there are a lot of actors ready to shove her aside at the slightest miscalculation on her part. On the other hand, APGA as a party, having supported the President and adopted him as their flag-bearer for 2015, will try to leverage on the rapport to make a bold claim by having a serious go at the legislative elections.

The presence of large pool of unemployed youths, MASSOB members, and cultists offer a large pool of young men that could be manipulated to disrupt parliamentary elections. Notwithstanding the elections are not expected to be volatile as in other states in the region.

Designation: **Amber**

**EBONYI: Power Shift Calculations Raise Risks of Violence**

The general assumption is that power should shift to Ebonyi South Senatorial zone (Afikpo zone) that has the likes of Senator Anyim Pius Anyim, Professor Onyebuchi Chukwu, former Deputy Governor Chigozie Ogbo and current Deputy Governor, Dave Umahi, who are all interested to contest for the governorship position. Meanwhile, the incumbent governor, Martin Elechi, is said to be packaging former Deputy Governor, Chigozie Ogbo. The insistence of the South to produce the next governor of the state is based on the fact that the first civilian
governor of the state (Dr. Samuel Egwu, 1999-2007) is from Ebonyi North while the incumbent (Chief Martin Elechi, 2007-date) is from Ebonyi Central. The Central and North districts make up the Abakaliki zone, and the North has the largest voting strength in the state. The people of Afikpo zone claim it is only fair that they should be allowed to produce the next governor. The determination of the people of Afikpo zone to produce the governor stems from an agreement that was reached during the agitations for state creation. The founding fathers of the state reportedly agreed that the zone that got the state capital will cede the right to produce the first governor of the state to the other zone. The people of Afikpo zone have been aggrieved that the Abakaliki zone, which has the state capital, has also kept the governorship position since the inception of the state.

The fact that the PDP has governed the state since 1999 and during this period power shifted from the North to the Central has raised the expectations of the South that it is their turn to fill the slot in 2015. There are fears that refusal to accede to their demands may trigger violent reactions during the elections. The fears are heightened by mobilizations by elites from the North to reclaim the governorship. The political elites from the Izzi clan, which is the most populous clan in the state, claim they have never had the chance to produce the governor of the state. They argue that Dr. Egwu was from Ikwo, a minority clan in the Northern Senatorial district and could not have been said to have filled their quota.

Moreover, the political elite of the Abakaliki zone claim that the marginalization of Afikpo zone is not true. They argue that during the period that Abakaliki zone has produced the governor, Afikpo has held most of the federal positions allotted to the state. These include the post of Senate President and Secretary to the Federal Government (both held by Anyim Pius Anyim), Minister of Health (Professor Onyebuchi Chukwu) and Minister of Education (Dr. Sam Egwu). This explains the palpable apprehension in Afikpo zone. They also claim that Afikpo zone has presented governorship candidates in all elections, a fact which invalidates any agreement that may have existed.

Apart from the governorship, another likely source of high risk of violence will be the Senatorial elections as it has the capacity to resurrect the violent communal conflicts in the state are still being managed gingerly. There is uneasy calm in the Central Senatorial District where the Governor comes from. The Ezza-Ezillo communal conflict is still not satisfactorily settled as far as both parties are concerned. The Ezza people think that Governor Martin Elechi has not handled the matter well and this may affect his chances in the ensuing fight for the Ebonyi Central Senatorial slot currently being occupied by Igwe Nwagu. Already, a group has adopted him for the post and another has quickly countered that, claiming that the current Senator
should be allowed to go for another term as the Governor would be completing his second term in office.

Designation: Red

**ENUGU: Politics of Zoning and the Risk of Violence**

Enugu State is already boiling but the cauldron is being managed by a deft politicking of the taciturn, high-performing but sickly governor Sullivan Chime. The battle to replace him has reached fever pitch as many candidates are being touted as contenders. The major issue at stake is that the Governor has insisted on handing over to a credible person from Enugu North Senatorial District (Nsukka zone) which claims that it is their turn to produce the next governor. The fact that Dr. Chimaroke Nnamani from Enugu East (1999-2007) was replaced by Governor Sullivan Chime from Enugu West (2007-date) seems to give a fillip to their agitation. Having got tacit support from the Governor, Enugu North has started showing ominous signs of likely violent reactions that may result from any election that produces a non-Nsukka governor. The youths have demonstrated against the perceived nonchalance of the Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu, who is known to have an eye for the Enugu State governorship, to make a serious move to actualize their demand for the creation of Adada State. Being a very important and election-winning population for any candidate, the likelihood of them conceding to any other zone is out of the question and will definitely breed violence if it happens.

With the return recently of the former governor Chimaroke Nnamani back to the PDP, much to the discomfort of the incumbent, there is bound to be a resurgence of animosities between the two and also the powerful Nwodo family of Ukehe, Nsukka zone. Given that Nnamani would gladly align with Nwodo to terminate the dynasty of Chime which would likely continue if he succeeds in installing an Nsukka person as governor, the fight will be furious. While Senator Ayogu Eze and Hon. Eugene Odo, Speaker Enugu State House of Assembly, have been identified as major contenders, Ekweremadu has also been making serious inroads into the zone with his position in the National Assembly. It is also public knowledge that Senator Ayogu Eze and the Governor are not friends; hence the Speaker of the House is likely to be the Governor’s candidate given his unalloyed support for the ailing governor. It is therefore expected that the Nwodo-Nnamani group would want to bring up Senator Ayogu Eze or any other candidate just to be sure that it is not Chime that would carry the day. There are also a lot of other actors from other parties that are likely to give the governorship a shot from other parties. The stakes are very high and the risk of violence is very high. The invasion of the Government House, in Enugu in March 2014 allegedly be members of the MASSOB serves as a
Designation: Red

**IMO: Very High Stakes Raise Threat to Election Security**

The emergence of Owelle Rochas Anayo Okorocha as Governor of Imo State under APGA altered the power sharing arrangement and political calculations of groups in the state. The litigations that lingered till February 2014 showed that the fractious implications of the 2011 election are yet to be settled. This raises the stakes for threats in the forthcoming elections in 2015.

Imo State is made up of three Senatorial districts - Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe. In 1999, Orlu produced Governor Achike Udenwa (1999-2007); Okigwe’s turn with Ikedi Ohakim (2007-2011) was truncated by the emergence of Rochas Okorocha (APGA) from Orlu. The situation has left both Owerri and Okigwe aggrieved of having been shortchanged. Consequently, while Owerri District is asking for the chance to produce the governor for the first time under the current dispensation, Okigwe District is asking for the opportunity to complete the ‘natural’ two terms of eight years.

Another likely source of violence is the increasing stake for the position as a result of the caliber of politicians that are interested in the position. The current Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Emeka Ihedioha, has not hidden his interest in the position and will likely give the governor a run for his money under PDP if given the ticket. Other titans in the race are Senators Ifeanyi Araraume and Chris Anyanwu, as well as Chief Humphrey Anumudu of PDP. The others are Chief Martin Agbaso and Colonel Emmanuel Iheanacho of APGA. Both PDP and APGA have formidable structures in the state and are investing heavily to recapture the state, while Okorocha’s APC wants to retain the state and show that it is a force to be reckoned with. It is going to be highly contentious given the fact that there are many unresolved issues in the 2011 general elections and a lot of people feel it was a grave mistake allowing Rochas access to the Government House.

Designation: Red

**Recommendations**

Threats to electoral violence stem largely from the high stakes of politics as a result of the excessive centralisation of power and resources to political offices, such as the office of the
President and Governor in Nigeria. The occupation of such offices has become the major source of wealth accumulation in Nigeria. As a result, electoral contests over such positions have become vicious. In the South-East, money politics has become the norm so much so that it is only those who have access to ‘government money’ that dictate how the state is run. This has created a new set of youths that only respect money and wealth, and partly accounts for the high rate of crime in the zone. The tradition support that President Goodluck Jonathan had received in the past suggests that people of the zone will most likely support him overwhelmingly, should her decide to run in the absence of any presidential candidate from the Igbo extraction. This has the potential of reducing violence in the zone during the 2015 general elections. However, the risk of violence will increase over the conduct of, and contest for gubernatorial positions in places like Enugu, Imo and Ebonyi State. Parliamentary elections is bound to also witness outbreak of electoral violence in the zone. Against this background, the key recommendations to secure elections include the following:

a. *Activation of Early Warning and Situation Monitoring Mechanism (EWSMoM)*: There is the need for the activation of a robust early warning and situation monitoring mechanism involving representatives of political parties, civil society organisations, security agencies, community leaders and youth groups to provide situation reports (sitrep) on developments on all the nooks and crannies of each state to provide a level playing field of all political actors in order to forestall intimidation of voters and opposing party supporters.

b. INEC’s preparedness for elections to prevent electoral fraud. Given the high-stakes involved in winning elections, the outcomes of election is a likely trigger of violence. INEC needs to improve on its planning culture within its headquarters in Abuja and State Offices by developing and training its officers and adhoc staff on best practices in the conduct of elections. It needs to hone the skills and expertise of its staff on election preparation and conduct through mock or simulation exercises.

c. *Political Sensitisation*: There is need for public enlightenment about the electoral process. Such enlightenment should educate the public on the difference between constitutional provisions of universal franchise and internal power sharing arrangements of parties. The risk of violence by aggrieved communities who feel cheated as result of outcomes that do not respect zoning arrangements of parties will be mitigated if citizens are informed that constitutional provisions override party arrangements.
d. **Security Awareness and Threat Reporting Programmes:** The media and civil society need to scale up programmes that promote habit of security consciousness on the people so that they can easily detect and report suspicious developments (such as massive movement of youths or the presence of strange people) in the communities well before, during and after elections to appropriate security agencies to forestall the outbreak of political or electoral violence.

e. **Promotion of Inter-Elite Dialogue.** A key driver of violence is the zero sum politics that have been linked to unsettled disagreement between political elites. Many of these conflicts are already brewing across the region. 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.

f. **Capacity Building for Journalists:** Accurate and balanced reporting of electoral issues contribute to peaceful and secure election while sensation reporting in most cases is a recipe for electoral violence. To this end, there is the need for targeted and robust training of media practitioners on reporting of political conflicts to mitigate risk of their reports becoming triggers for violence. They need to be trained on how to adopt cutting-edge tools such as new media technologies to better enhance their reporting and coverage of electoral matters, before, during and after elections in the zone.
SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR SOUTH-SOUTH

Political Context

The South-South geopolitical region constitutes the entire area covering Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers states. The region, like the North-Central, is often referred to as a miniature Nigeria because it is peopled by a myriad of ethno-religious and cultural groups. Dominant among them are Andoni, Anioma, Annang, Bekwarra, Bini, Efik, Ekpeye, Engenne, Etche, Etsako, Ibeno, Ibibio, Ijaw, Ikwerre, Ijaw, Isoko, Itsekiri, Kalabari, Nembe, Obolo, Ogba, Ogoni, Okrika, Oron, Owan and Urhobo. Although, often referenced as southern minority, the South-South is, in a mono-cultural sense of Nigeria’s oil economy, the goose that lays the golden eggs for the country. It accounts for 91.5% of gross oil production in Nigeria. While the people are largely farmers, fishers, hunters and traders, oil production activities affected these traditional occupations in many communities to the extent that has precipitated different layers of conflicts. The emergent youth insurgency resulting in destruction of oil platforms and installations had almost crippled the Nigerian economy before the late President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua proclaimed an amnesty that was predicated on the surrender of arms, renunciation of militancy unconditionally in exchange for arrest and prosecution.

Politically, the South-South has often been presented as a marginalised region, until it produced Goodluck Ebele Jonathan as Acting President of Nigeria on the death of late President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua in 2010 and later as a substantive President in the 2011 general elections. The events and bickering leading to the 2011 elections over whether President Jonathan should contest the election or allow the North to present a candidate in place of late President’s Yar’Adua’s uncompleted tenure was feisty as much as it was fraught with post-election violence that eventually characterised many states in the North. In less than one year to the 2015 general elections, the same issues are not only up for debate, but are further compounded by threats of potential violence in several parts of the country, including the South-South region which should expectedly approximate peace by virtue of its being the constituency of President Jonathan.

Preparation for the Elections and the Risk of Violence

Beyond public perception of the possibility of President Jonathan’s intention to contest, the 2015 elections is important in the South-South because all governors of the states in the region are up to be succeeded after concluding maximum term of eight years, except for Governor Adams Oshiomhole of Edo State whose tenure lasts till November 2016. The mood everywhere in the South-South recognises the fact that politicking is already in full swing – both within and across parties – in contravention of the electoral law and the regular warning by the Independent...
National Electoral Commission (INEC) that embargo on electionerring campaigns is yet to be lifted. While this increased citizens’ interest in competitive elections is necessary for the transformation of Nigeria’s democracy, observing all that in breach of established rule portends a threat to the 2015 electoral process as much as it also leaves much to be desired in terms of possible risk factors for the credibility of the process.

Explanations for the observed interest and desperation above are layered. The first is the emergence of the All Progressive Congress (APC) from the merger of Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), Congress of Progressive Change (CPC) and a faction of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) which has raised the stakes against the dominance of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

The second is increased competition for political powers, deriving from the general understanding that access to state power in Nigeria automatically translates to access to state resources. To this extent, the main sources of accumulation in all the states in the South-South region are located in politically mediated oil rents whose distribution and market entry points are solely determined by a political elite that is perpetually engaged in the politics of sharing petro-dollars. This, in the context of the 13% revenue derivation formula, is no doubt huge.

Lastly, there is the perennial practice of imposition of candidates across parties in disregard of the will of the people. This is forcing aspirants to political office to seek early visibility. In view of this, it is obvious nobody is leaving anything to chance, while the risk for violence remains in varying degrees and styles at both intra- and inter-party levels.

Development across States
A panoramic analysis of developments in the South-South states reveals varying degrees of the risk of violence along parties, candidates, level of preparedness, gender and youth dimensions.

Akwa Ibom State
Akwa Ibom State rose progressively from being one of the least recipient of oil revenue derivation to about the highest under Governor Godswill Akpabio’s administration. This rise in the revenue profile of the state, the zero-sum and first-pass-the-post character of Nigerian politics, and the recognition of its history of violence which resulted in the loss of many lives and property in 2011 are indicative of a possibility of replay of the same scenario at both inter- and intra-party levels in the state in 2015 elections. At inter-party level is the continuing confrontation between the PDP and opposition parties, formerly led by the ACN, but now consolidated in the APC. At the intra-party level, two key issues are up for play. The first is the
The question of who succeeds Governor Godswill Akpabio after completing his maximum second term. Although Governor Akpabio is yet to openly anoint anybody to succeed him, he is widely perceived to favour a former banker, but now Secretary to the State Government (SSG) from Eket axis of the state, Udom Emmanuel, to the dislike of many people who are opposed to imposition of candidates. His ongoing Town Hall Meetings in the 10 federal constituencies to ‘sound out’ people’s view on the succession is largely interpreted as an intelligible attempt to hide under equity, fair play and justice to impose the SSG on the state. To the extent to which there is now a sharp divide between those for and those against Governor Akpabio’s succession plan, is a looming violence that should be nipped in the bud and doused.

The Oron/Mbo/Okobo/Urue offong oruke/Udung uko Federal Constituency is currently the most volatile ahead of the 2015 elections. At the Town Hall Meeting (THM) held in Oron on 31 March, 2014, protesting youths carrying placards that read “no imposition”, “Oron 2015 or nothing” disrupted the event and pelted the SSG with stones, contending that zoning being canvass by the Governor Akpabio is on the basis of an ethnic tripod (Annang, Ibibio and Oron) rather than Senatorial Districts – (Eket, Ikot Ekpene and Uyo).

The second key issue is the challenge ahead of Governor Akpabio’s plan to contest the Senate seat being currently occupied by a two-term Senator Alloysius Etok. Governor Akpabio was instrumental to the emergence of Senator Etok in 2007 and 2011 elections as a political settlement for the marginalisation of Ikono/Ini Federal Constituency from the Nigeria Senate since independence. The reality of wrestling power from the latter who is not only still interested in the seat, but has vowed to resist intimidation and fight it out with the former is already tearing apart old political allies. This was evident at the Ikono/Ini Federal Constituency Town Hall Meeting where (even without physical exchange of blows) tempers and sentiments were obviously demonstrated.

Besides Ikono/Ini, Governor Akpabio will also have to contend with Abak Five comprising Abak, Etim Ekpo, Ika, Oruk Anam and Ukanafun local government areas who have alleged it is their turn to fill the senate seat under contention. Any decision by the Abak five to demand their pound of flesh in retaliation for the admitted fraud in the PDP primary election that produced Senator Etok is capable of posing security threats ahead of the 2015 elections.

To the above extent, Akwa Ibom posts Amber with Ikono/Ini and Oron/Mbo/Okobo/Urue offong oruke/Udung uko federal constituencies as possible flashpoints for security threats.
Bayelsa State
Bayelsa is a relatively small state with only eight local government areas. As much as it is not in a position to deliver high votes, Bayelsa is as important as other big states because of its block votes in presidential elections and the fact that it is President Goodluck’s home state. However, Bayelsa has been known for violence since the days of military dictatorship. It is also a major hub for political violence, sea piracy, oil theft and militancy, even in a post-amnesty era. The governorship election that brought current Governor Seriake Dickson to power was a major climax of the political violence that characterised the state. Indeed the movement of the former Governor Timipre Sylva and his followers into the APC could set the stage for continued violence in the state. The attempt in 2013 to prevent the then new Peoples Democratic Party (nPDP) from opening a secretariat in Yenagoa and the seeming overzealousness to stop the APC by flagging a portion of its premises for demolition under the guise of road expansion are visible signs of security threats. While APC may not pose a major threat to PDP in the 2015 elections in Bayelsa State, an attempt to harass the party out of the state may become a recipe for violence.

Besides the inter-party scenario painted above, the only election-related security threat ahead of the 2015 will be intra-party struggle for candidacy. The intensity of such crisis are largely premised on the understanding that whoever secures the PDP ticket is automatically favoured to win the election. Thus, for Bayelsa State the PDP primaries are the real elections to watch, especially as most of the conflicts will be at the level of pre-election. The flashpoints for security threats are Southern Ijaw local government which has a history of militancy/violence and Yenagoa which is the base for political elites’ consensus and disagreement.

Notwithstanding the above, Bayelsa State passes for a Green.

Cross River State
Cross River State has a general history of relatively peaceful elections, especially when compared to many other states in the South-South geopolitical zone. The state is dominated by the PDP. Although the opposition, led by the defunct ACN – but now APC after the famous merger of parties – has posed a challenge, but that is yet to spring any big surprise. With the emergence of APC, the stakes could be higher than before. To this extent, the security issues in Cross River State would have to be watched from inter-party perspective, although the PDP still has an upper hand.

Other potential security threats are largely issues of internal democracy at the level of the two leading parties in the state. The struggle for the Chairmanship of APC at the state congresses
billed to hold on April across the country is a potential conflict driver in Cross River State. The threat PDP has to contend with as it relates to internal democracy is how it manages the looming succession crisis after Governor Liyel Imoke. This is particularly important in the context of the alleged claim that a ‘gentleman agreement’ between Governor Imoke, former Governor Donald Duke and one Mr. Geishom Bassey (currently Chairman of Cross River State Water Board) to pass the governorship baton among themselves is up for breached to satisfy the spirit of equity, fair play and justice. Governor Imoke hails from Cross River Central Senatorial District, while former Governor Duke and Bassey are from Cross River South Senatorial District. The perceived move by Governor Imoke to pass on the baton to a yet unknown person from the North Senatorial District may be currying the displeasure of Bassey and his associates, even as much as it may satisfy equity, fair play and justice.

Irrespective of the PDP/APC divide in Cross River State, Yakurr, Calabar South and Obubra local government areas are potential flashpoints for security threats. While Yakurr is so perceived because of its long history election violence associated with ethnicity and opposition politics, Calabar South Local Government Area is currently beset with the perceived discomfort associated with the alleged ‘over-stay’ of Hon. Essien Ayi in the House of Representatives. Other sections of his constituency are fast itching to taste power too, even as the incumbent is not planning to give way; thus raising the likelihood for potential threat to security. Obubra Local Government is also known to harbour some youths who are susceptible to put their lives on the line for political thuggery, if mobilised for violent activities.

Notwithstanding the above, Cross River State gets a Green in terms of security threat to the 2015 elections.

**Delta State**

The first thing any political analyst must appreciate about contemporary politics in Delta State is the factor of former Governor James Ibori now serving jail term in the UK for money laundering. Irrespective of the negative image his conviction has attracted, Governor Ibori is credited to have made quite a lot of developmental stride as Chief Executive of Delta State than the present Governor Emmanuel Uduaghan who is due to complete his maximum eight years term in 2015. The Ibori factor in Delta politics is perceived to be so strong and real that he is believed in some quarters as capable of pointing the direction for Delta politics from prison. Not even Great Ogboru, his major challenger and leader of the Democratic People Party (DPP) in the state has been able to pull the rug under Ibori’s feet and his party, the PDP. Rather, from its 12 seats in the Delta House of Assembly, two seats in the House of Representatives and one senatorial seat, the fortune of DPP is fast dwindling due to internal crisis. Except something
unexpected happens, not many people can boast of DPP’s ability to match its earlier feat in the next election.

Security threats to the 2015 elections in Delta State are both inter- and intra-party as much as they have potentials to run through pre, during and post-elections periods. At the inter-party level, the fight is tripartite with PDP, APC and DPP as the main players. A cursory analysis of the preliminary issues points to claims of senatorial district and ethnicity as the dominant narratives among the different political players. On senatorial front, the Delta State is divided into South, Central and West. Former Governor James Ibori and Felix Ibru before him are Urhobo from Delta Central. The Incumbent Governor Uduaghan is of Itsekiri from Delta South, which also has Isoko, Itsekiri and Urhobo ethnic groups. Delta North peopled by Anioma (Delta Igbo) have never been governor and as such are seriously determined to succeed Governor Uduaghan. Even though no known Governor Uduaghan’s Itsekiri or Isoko ethnic groups have indicated interest in contesting the 2015 elections, the former Minister of Niger Delta Affairs, Elder Godsday Orubebe, of Ijaw extraction is already in the forefront of contenders for the governorship seat in Asaba. The common argument offered is that power rotation in the state is by ethnic configuration and not by senatorial district. The Urhobo are also warming up for the contest to the displeasure of others who saw earlier Ibru and Ibori administrations as compensating for both senatorial district and ethnicity arrangements.

In all the permutations above, ethnic and sectional sentiments are being massively mobilised using umbrella socio-cultural organisations of the people. Prominent among these are Urhobo Press Union (UPU), Anioma Congress (AC) and G3 representing Ijaw, Isoko and Itsekiri in Delta Central, North and South respectively. The involvement of these supposed pan socio-cultural organisations in the screening of their sons and daughters for the governorship race for possible recommendation to their groups as flag bearers of major political parties points to their growing influence as centres for power and authority. Whatever becomes the outcome of the ongoing processes recounted above, the potential for conflicts remains as high in the pan socio-cultural associations as much as it is real at intra and inter-party levels. To the above extent, the flashpoints for conflicts in the 2015 elections in Delta State would be cross-cutting, depending on where the campaign train goes.

Delta gets Amber.

Edo State
Edo is the only state in South-South geopolitical region that is not embroiled in crisis of succession politics because the tenure of Governor Adams Oshiomhole lasts till November 2016.
However, the state has pockets of knotty issues at both intra and inter-party levels which could pose security threats. These threats are in the ruling APC as much as they are in the PDP. At the level of the APC, it is obvious that the dust over the imposition of candidates in the 2013 local government elections in which Governor Oshiomhole allegedly desecrated the ‘One man, One Vote’ mantra for which he was morally elevated by the people has not yet settled. A lot of people, reportedly, still have an axe to grind with the governor, especially against the backdrop of the impunity with which he was perceived to have gone about that.

Also, there is the recent APC membership registration exercise in which only persons loyal to Governor Oshiomhole were largely favoured. Both developments above are perceived to have been orchestrated ahead of the 2015 election primaries where only persons loyal to the governor can become flag bearers of APC. This has not only set the tune for a possibility of mass defection to the opposition (PDP), it has also become the source of worries in the context of those who are likely to seek their pound of flesh through balance of ‘terror’. Thus, between those that will choose to fight from within and outside of APC, there are security threats.

Possible hotspots for violence are Esan North in Edo Central Senatorial District which is the home of Chief Tony Anenih, otherwise known as “Mr. Fix It”, based on long drawn disagreement between Governor Oshiomhole and Chief Anenih. Also, depending on how the rumoured defection being currently perceived between incumbent Senator Uzamere in Edo South and Senator (Mrs.) Daisy Danjuma, and their followers play out, hotspots for security threats may be Oredo, Ikpoba Okha and Egor local government areas, being the most populated and reputed with political activities by virtue of being located in the state capital.

Notwithstanding the above, Edo State passes for Green.

**Rivers State**

Rivers State poses the biggest security threat to the 2015 elections among the states in the South-South geopolitical zones. The most easily identifiable driver of conflict in the state is the crisis between Governor Rotimi Amaechi and Nigeria’s first family which culminated in the removal of the party structure from the former; the failed attempt to impeach him and accompanying consequences; and his eventual defection from the PDP to the APC. While Mr. President has maintained sealed lips on Governor Amaechi, the latter and Mr. President’s wife (Patience Jonathan) have publicly made statements to the effect that all is not well. As expected in all political situations, both sides in the conflicts have disciples within and outside of government. Of these, the Nigerian public was more concerned when an expectedly neutral institution of
government such as the Nigeria Police presented itself as a tool in the service of the powers that be; culminating in the replacement of the State Commissioner of Police, Joseph Mbu.

Deriving from the crisis above is the issue of succession to Governor Amaechi, which according to history of election in Rivers State is tied to riverine and upland system of power sharing. Besides these two positions is the dimension of the Ogoni people who strongly believe that it is their turn to produce the next governor of the state. The people have argued that they have never been Governor, Deputy Governor, Chief Judge or Speaker since the creation of Rivers State, even though they are the second largest ethnic group in Rivers State. They have consolidated their argument around the idea that the June 12 Election and the Ogoni Question were the two key issues prior to return to civil rule in 1999, adding that while the Yoruba were pacified with Obasanjo Presidency, nothing has been done to address their plight. The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) report that was commissioned by the Federal Government has also been left in the limbo. To this end they seek to be governor, relying on the political demands in the Ogoni Bill of Rights. Thus, besides the battle lines defined by Governor Amaechi and Nigeria’s first family, contestations for and against ethnic, riverine or upland arrangement for power sharing will be a major security threat.

To this extent, Rivers passes for Red, with every place in the state a likely hotspot/battlefield.

**Recommendations**

1. All aspirants to elective positions and their supporters must accept to play by the rules of the game and commit to peaceful exercises at both the levels of the primaries and the election proper;

2. Political parties must commit to respect internal democracy by ensuring that only those duly nominated by popular votes are fielded for elective positions;

3. Candidates for elections and their parties should reach popular agreement on some form of consociational power sharing arrangement as against the present winner-takes-all practice of first-past-through-the-past system of elections;

4. Pan socio-cultural organisations should be insulated from partisan politics; except where they are positively exploited for promotion of peaceful co-existence, rather than for purposes of division and self-destruction;

5. Security services must be prepared enough to match early warning with early response.
SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR THE SOUTH WEST

Introduction
With the release of the timetable for Ekiti and Osun gubernatorial elections as well as the 2015 General Elections on January 24, 2014 by the Independent National Electoral Commission, the stage is now set for a year of pulsating politicking. As different actors and stakeholders such as the political parties and contestants, judiciary, legislature, the civil society, the media, the security agencies and the election management body, INEC itself, cue into the timelines set for the upcoming polls there are bound to be issues that need to be addressed in order to pave way for free, fair, violence-free and credible elections.

This security threat assessment will focus on happenings in the political climate of the six south west states of Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Ekiti. Much emphasis will be on Ekiti and Osun states going by the fact that gubernatorial elections are slated for the two states this year ahead of the 2015 General Elections. Gubernatorial election for Ekiti State is scheduled for Saturday, June 21, 2014 while that of Osun State is scheduled for Saturday, August 9, 2014. As observed by Sam Unom and Jide Ojo “State-level contests are invariably the fiercest, since control at the state level confers an invaluable advantage in all other contests. Further, the state governorship remains for most politicians the most coveted prize and governors are also the players to watch in even non-gubernatorial contests.”

Level of preparations by key role players and likely impact on peaceful conduct of elections
The Independent National Electoral Commission as the umpire in the electoral process has commenced preparation for the forthcoming gubernatorial polls in Ekiti and Osun State as well as the 2015 General Elections by releasing the timetable for the elections in January 2014. INEC has also gone ahead to display voters register and distribute Permanent Voters Cards (PVC) for the electorates in Ekiti and Osun States as well as conducted Continuous Voters Registration exercise from March 12 – 17 for those who just have become 18 years old since the last registration, as well as those whose details have not been sufficiently captured in the electronic register. INEC has also opened a Voters Verification Platform for those who have registered to vote in the two states.

Aside INEC, other actors and stakeholders have also commenced preparation for the gubernatorial and the general elections. The decampment and cross carpeting being witnessed across the political parties particularly between the Peoples’ Democratic Party and All

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Progressives Congress are prelude to the polls. The altercation between the PDP and APC about which of them is behind the menace of Boko Haram insurgency is also part of the game plan of the parties. Political parties and contestants, media, civil society organizations are also monitoring events in Ekiti and Osun States closely. It was from these stakeholders that we first heard of the challenges INEC is facing in the distribution of the PVC as well as the conduct of the CVR.

For instance, the Director of Publicity for All Progressives Congress in Ekiti State Mr. Segun Dipe while addressing a press conference on March 13 alleged that the CVR exercise was shoddy, tardy and a deliberate attempt at disenfranchising the enthusiastic people of Ekiti State from participating in the June 21 governorship election. The media reported physical violence in Osun State during the CVR. The public was informed of attacks in Ife and Ilesa as thugs allegedly unleashed violence on some people. Also, some of those who turned out for the registration exercise could not be attended to because some of the direct data capture machines used for the registration were faulty. Coalition of Civil Society Organisations who monitored the PVC distribution and the CVR exercise in Ekiti and Osun state also corroborated some of these reported incidences while INEC chairman himself admitted that there were glitches during the exercises. At its first quarterly meeting with the leaders of political parties the INEC boss said “Although doing these were not without some challenges, overall, the two exercises were a remarkable improvement over previous efforts”

Apart from INEC activities in Ekiti and Osun State, the aftermath of party primaries organized by political parties contesting the gubernatorial elections is also disturbing. Ahead of the conduct of its party primary on Saturday, March 22, the PDP in Ekiti State charged aspirants N1 million for Expression of Interest Form and N10 million for Nomination Form. This is structural violence against brilliant, intelligent but poor party members who may wish to contest. Even, the conduct of the exercise was not without some violence as some of the aspirants cleared to contest the primary went to court to stop the election from holding and when they could not succeed, they protested at the venue of the primary and were allegedly tear-gassed by the police.

**Political parties and candidates to pay attention to in the elections**
The political parties and candidates to beam searchlight on in the South West are majorly the All Progressives Congress who are in control of five out of the six states making up the region, the Peoples Democratic Party, Labour Party, and Accord Party. These parties are holding
executive and or legislative positions within the zone. It needs be stated that two out of the six governors in the region are on their second and final term. These are Gov. Babatunde Raji Fashola of Lagos State and Gov. Olusegun AbdulRahman Mimiko of Ondo State. Even at that, only Lagos governor will end his second term on May 29, 2015 as Ondo governor commenced his second term in February 2013 and will be serving out his second term in February 2017.

In the forthcoming gubernatorial election in Ekiti State, the candidates to note are the incumbent governor, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, the Labour Party candidate who emerged on March 25, Barrister Opeyemi Bamidele, and ex-Governor Ayodele Fayose who was elected at the PDP party primary held on March 22. In Osun State, the incumbent governor, Ogbeni Rauf Adesoji Aregbesola of the All Progressives Congress, ex-Governor Adebisi Akande, the interim National Chairman of APC and whoever emerges as the PDP candidate among ex-Governor Isiaka Adeleke, former Congressman Oluwole Oke, ex-deputy governor and former senator Iyiola Omisore and ex-Minister Olasunkanmi Akinlabi needs to be monitored. In Oyo State, incumbent governor, Senator Abiola Isiaka Ajimobi of APC, former governor, Senator Rashidi Adewolu Ladoja of Accord Party and ex-Governor Christopher Adebayo Alao- Akala are the major political heavyweights in Oyo State. In Ogun, Senator Ibikunle Amosun of APC, ex-Governor Gbenga Daniel of Labour Party, Sina Kawonise a gubernatorial aspirant under Labour Party and ex-Speaker Sabur Oladimeji Bankole of PDP are among notable Ogun State politicians to put under scrutiny. In Ondo, though the incumbent governor, Dr. Olusegun Mimiko will not be contesting in 2015, he would want to influence the victory of Labour Party in the state during the general poll. Other notable politicians in Ondo State to watch are Senator Ajayi Borroface of APC and Bar. Rotimi Akeredolu who contested with Mimiko in the October 20, 2012 governorship election in the ‘Sunshine state’ as well as PDP candidate in the last governorship election, Bar. Olusola Oke. In Lagos, kingmaker and APC National Leader, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Senator Musiliu Obanikoro who was recently appointed as Minister of State for Defence are among those who will determine the way the pendulum will swing in the ‘Centre of Excellence’ as Lagos is called.

Gender and youth dimension to elections within the region

Gender dimension to the election in the South West is considerable. Lagos, Osun and Ekiti State have female deputy governors, the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, Mrs. Mulikat Adeola is a PDP member from Oyo State, Oyo State also has a female Speaker of the State House of Assembly while Hon. Abike Dabiri Erewa is a third term member of House of Reps representing Ikorodu Federal Constituency of Lagos State. She’s at present being tipped for governorship seat of Lagos State. Women are generally at the margins of election related violence and are more of victims than villains or perpetrators. As for the youths, though the
form the bulk of the electorates, on the flip side, they are also mobilized as purveyor of conflict. In the South West, various on and off campus cult groups, members of the road transport unions, street urchins (popularly known as Area Boys) and vigilante groups operating in the region provide political thugs used by party leaders and contestants to perpetrate election related violence. Many of these thugs masquerade as members of the youth wing of political parties while some who are apolitical are just recruited to perform specific illegal functions during the electioneering process.

Possible impact of presence of migrants/IDPs, if any, on the elections
The acts of terrorism in the North East Nigeria have made a lot of people to flee to safe haven like the South West particularly Lagos where some alleged members of Boko Haram had been previously arrested. Due to Nigeria’s porous borders, some illegal aliens from West Africa such as Benin Republic, Togo, and Ghana have been known to enter Nigeria territory illegally. These immigrants are sometimes involved in trans-border crimes such as smuggling of food items, vehicles and even small arms. These smuggled arms and ammunitions are sometimes bought by politicians to arm their thugs. Lagos, Ogun and Oyo State share border with Benin Republic. Within the country, the act of bussing supporters from one state to another to shore up their support base during elections can cause violence. This was experienced during the October 20, 2012 gubernatorial election in Ondo State when Action Congress of Nigeria routinely bus in party supporters from neighboring ACN states to give impression of mass support for Rotimi Akeredolu, its candidate in the contest. Likewise, a day to the November 16, 2013 gubernatorial election in Anambra, 180 persons (said to be members of APC from Osun State) were arrested in Imo State with fake INEC Observer Accreditation badges with which they intend to observe the gubernatorial election. They are currently being prosecuted in court.

Activities and presence of State and non-state actors
There are a number of non-state security outfits operating in the South West. The most pronounced among them is the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) members who work as private security guards in many communities in the region. A state like Ogun also has a Vigilante Security outfit funded by the state government to complement the Police and other federal security agencies. Members of the vigilante outfit most times carry weapons that are unlicensed and operate illegal detention facilities as well as being involved in extra judicial killings. They are also part of the supply chain for politicians in need of thugs for electoral violence.

Violent Hotspots
States to watch closely for violence are Ekiti and Osun State. This because of the looming gubernatorial elections in the states. PDP want to upstage the incumbents from APC and the
APC wants to maintain these two states as its stronghold ahead of 2015 General Elections. In Ekiti likely hotspots include Ado, Oye, Ido-Osi, Ikere and Ifaki. In Osun State, Osogbo, Ile-Ife, Esa-Oke, Ejigbo and Ilesa are likely hotspots. Likely period of violence are during the PVC distribution and CVR exercises, party primaries, campaigns, Election Day and post election Day. Given the isolated nature of the election, the threat is likely to be middle level (amber) as security agencies have been mobilized to provide adequate security cover ahead of the poll.

For now the states to watch for violence (hotspots) are Osun and Ekiti who for now oscillate between amber and red. The rationale for this is the forthcoming gubernatorial polls in these two states. Lagos, Ondo, Ogun, and Oyo are green now due to low level political activities but this will likely change to amber a couple of months from now when APC congress and conventions may have been held and INEC distributes PVC and conducts CVR. The closer we are to the candidate nomination process and campaigns the more unpredictable the political scenario becomes and likelihood of election related violence

Synopsis of key risk factors

a. Lack of credible voters register for the Ekiti and Osun State gubernatorial elections may pose a threat to the conduct of credible polls in those states. APC has threatened to resist the disenfranchisement of its members as many of them were alleged to be unable to register during the just concluded CVR exercise due to the malfunction of some of the DDC machines;

b. Inability of electorates to obtain their Permanent Voters Card is also a tinder box that could cause violence during the forthcoming gubernatorial elections in Ekiti and Osun States. Only about 50 per cent of the eligible voters are said to have been able to collect their PVC during the distribution exercise in the two states. INEC has announced that only those who have PVC will be allowed to vote as it intends to use Card Readers to authenticate the identity of the voters.

c. Upshot of party primaries in Osun and Ekiti state can also cause threat in those states. On Tuesday, March 25, some unknown persons were said to have torched the PDP party secretariat in Ado Ekiti. This act of arson was alleged to be a fall out of the crisis rocking the party arising from the emergence of ex-governor Ayo Fayose as the candidate of the party in the June 21 gubernatorial election.

d. Fall-out of APC congress and convention in the South West also portend a danger to peace in the region. APC is set to hold its party congress on April 5, 12 and 23 in Ward, Local
Government and State respectively and national convention on May 24 in order to elect its party executives since the party is currently being run by interim executive. Granted that ACN is the dominant party in the South West among the three that formed the merger (others are Congress for Progressives Change and All Nigeria Peoples Party), the way the winners and losers in the forthcoming election of party executives react to the poll will determine if there will be peace or chaos.

e. The overall conduct of the gubernatorial elections in Ekiti and Osun states by INEC in June and August will determine how 2015 will play out. These two elections are test cases for INEC.

f. Primordial ethno-religious sentiments also need to be handled with care in the south west particularly in Lagos and Osun State. In Osun State, the incumbent governor has been alleged to harbor plan to Islamise the state especially with his recent merger of schools and faceoff between Christian and Muslim students over the use of Hijab (veil) in schools. Academic institutions established by Christian missionaries are said to be intolerant of Muslim students using hijab to school. This caused fracas in Baptist High School, Ejigbo recently. In Lagos, members of the Christian Association of Nigeria were reported to be angling for a Christian candidate to succeed the outgoing governor of the state Babatunde Raji Fashola. CAN executive reportedly said there have been more Muslim governing the state than Christians and if a Christian candidate is not fielded by the party in 2015 for governorship position, they would mobilise their members not to vote for APC. In Oyo State the people of Oke-Ogun in Oyo North want power to shift to them while in Ogun the Yewa people of Ogun West who had never been governor of the state are mounting pressure for power to shift to them.

g. Political assassination, kidnapping and armed robbery may escalate as we approach 2015. The South West had previously recorded a number of politically motivated assassinations such as that of former Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige and Arc. Layi Balogun in Oyo State, Engineer Funsho Williams in Lagos, Otuba Dipo Dina an A CN gubernatorial candidate in Ogun State in 2003 and Dr Ayodeji Daramola and Kehinde Fasuba in Ekiti State. During the March 2014 CVR an Octogenarian and PDP chieftain in Ile-Ife, Osun State, Pa Taiwo Ogundele was reported to have been assassinated by suspected political thugs.

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4 http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/03/apc-hold-national-convention-may/
5 The Punch, March 26, 2014, p. 19.
h. The ongoing national conference can pose a threat to the conduct of the 2015 elections as some opinion moulders have started calling for the postponement of the next general elections in order to make way for adequate deliberation at the conference as well as the implementation of its outcomes. This can lead to constitutional crisis and suspicion of the real motive of government in holding the conference on the eve of a general election.

Recommendations

1. INEC must be properly funded and should ensure proper distribution of PVCs to all the old and new registrants ahead of the June 21 and August 9, 2014 polls in Ekiti and Osun State respectively. The Commission should also ensure the proper capturing of those who could not be registered during the recently held CVR. The Commission must also get its election day logistics right and regulate the political environment in such a way that political parties and contestants are made to follow the rules of political engagements.

2. APC as a party must activate its internal conflict resolution mechanisms so that whatever may be the fall out of its forthcoming April/May party congress and convention does not cause threat to peace and stability of the South West as a region and the country as whole.

3. Actors and Stakeholders must work positively with INEC to ensure credible elections in the forthcoming gubernatorial elections in Ekiti and Osun States.

4. CLEEN Foundation needs to assist to train security agencies that will be deployed for the forthcoming gubernatorial elections and the 2015 elections so that they can be very professional when on duty during the polls.

5. The federal government and its allies need to properly fund security agents that will be deployed on election duties so that they will not be beholden to politicians for their comfort and survival while on official election duty.

6. INEC needs to activate and institutionalize its inter-agency consultative committee on election security (ICCES) and ensure that the committee plan for the three phases of the elections viz. pre-election, Election Day and post Election Day.

7. 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 education in Ekiti, Osun and during the February 2015 General Elections.
8. Political parties must adhere strictly to their code of conduct and engage in issue based politics. They should eschew hate speeches and inflammatory statements during their campaigns.

9. The police and other security agencies in the south west need to dismantle all the cult groups and monitor closely the activities of the members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers and the Oodua People’s Congress.

10. The judiciary should ensure that pre and post elections petitions brought before it are treated on merit rather than on technicalities and justice is not done but is seen by all to be done. If people cannot get justice in the courts they will resort to self help.

11. The federal government should ensure that the on-going national conference winds up in good time and that its outcome does not negatively affect the 2015 polls.

12. National Assembly should fasttrack the amendment of the constitution and the Electoral Act so that INEC and other actors and stakeholders will know for certain the legal framework for the 2015 elections.