

# SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT: TOWARDS 2015 ELECTIONS

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Political Context**

The merger between the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) and other smaller parties, has provided an opportunity for opposition parties to align and challenge the dominance of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). This however will also provide the backdrop for a keenly contested election in 2015. The zoning arrangement for the presidency is also a key issue that will define the face of the 2015 elections and possible security consequences.

Across the six geopolitical zones, other factors will define the elections. These include the persisting state of insecurity from the insurgency and activities of militants and vigilante groups, the high stakes of election as a result of the availability of derivation revenues, the ethnic heterogeneity that makes elite consensus more difficult to attain, as well as the difficult environmental terrain that makes policing of elections a herculean task.

### **Preparations for the Elections**

The political temperature across the country is heating up in preparation for the 2015 elections. While some state governors are up for re-election, most others are serving out their second terms. The implication is that most of the states are open for grab by either of the major parties and will therefore make the electoral contest fiercer in 2015 both within the political parties and in the general election. With the coalescing of the major opposition parties into APC discussions, scheming and permutations are going on in all the states. Despite the increasing political activities, there is no indication that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other relevant agencies are doing much at the regional level in preparation for the 2015 elections. The voters register is yet to be updated, the relevant amendment to the electoral laws are yet to be carried out and there seem not to be election specific security plan and strategy for the region despite its history of electoral violence.

### **Gender Dimension**

Gender dimension with respect to access to political power is a recurring challenge as women political representation remains very marginal. Because of the diversities of the six zones, there is no uniformity in women's political space and public attitude to women politicians. Therefore, while some states have done relatively well in women representation, others have not. For instance, Adamawa, Yobe, Taraba have elected women into the National Assembly, Gombe and Bauchi are yet to do so. Most of the states Assemblies have no women representation. Across board, we are 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. However, the number of women candidates for elective positions have increased in the last few years, and we expect more of these candidates to emerge for the 2015 election, but there may not be any appreciable progress unless the socio-economic and political obstacles are addressed.

### **Presence and Activities of Non-State Actors**

There are several non-state actors involved in security related activities and therefore lots of vigilante groups in all the states. In North central zone, the spate of violence and the rise and dominance of armed non-state actors that are increasingly challenging state capacity have become serious threat to security. For instance, the emergence of a group- the *Ombatse* (meaning time has come), which was responsible for the massacre of over 60 security personnel in Nasarawa state are clear reflections of the fact that the Nigerian state is increasingly failing in its responsibility to protect, thereby, ceding its monopoly over the instruments of coercion to some armed non-state actors. Conflicts between pastoralists and nomads in Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau States have led to deaths and huge displacements of persons in these states, with little or nothing to show for, as it relates to the arrest and prosecution of perpetrators of these heinous crimes.

In the North West, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina have a history of youth militancy, particularly the *yan'daba*, thus electoral politics is always an opportunity to perpetrate violence on behalf of their principals. Sokoto, a hitherto quiet state has in the last 8 years been experiencing a rise of political violence due to the growing notoriety of Area Boys (a militant youth group in Sokoto). With the level of violence in the region in the last three years, the north east has one of the worst cases of small arms and light weapons. There may also be huge presence of military assault weapons in the hands of the militant groups. The zone has in the last 10 years produced militant youth groups – the Boko Haram and Ansaru being the extreme ones. Others are ECOMOG in Borno state, *Yan'Kalare* and *Sara-suka* in Gombe and Bauchi state respectively.

The activities of various violent political gangs, disguised as security outfit across the South West states also call for concern. The Odua People's Congress (OPC), especially in Lagos state, Operation Burst in Oyo state, among others, constitute serious security threats. Although many of the vigilante groups, like the Bakassi Boys in the South east, have been dismantled officially, many of them exist informally and have been implicated in cases of assassination, robbery, kidnapping and communal violence. The high level of youth unemployment also creates a ready pool of youths that politicians can mobilise to use violence to achieve political power. In the South South, militias and cults were implicated in electoral fraud and voter intimidation in the 2003 and 2007 elections. Some of the militias and cults transmogrified to the militant groups that were involved in the insurgency in the region.

### **Violent Hot Spots**

Identification of violence hotspots by states showing places to keep under close security watch for possible outbreak of violence before, during and after the elections. We categorized them using traffic light signals (green, amber and red) to indicate levels of threat; green indicating stability/lowest threat states and red indicating the highest threat level/ most volatile states. Key influencing factors here are whether the governor is up for re-election, degree of control by incumbent and relationship with the federal government, stability of internal state party politics, questions of zoning, whether the ruling party or opposition controls the state, history of violence, and lastly activities of vigilante/militants/cultists/insurgents.

- **RED:** NC – Nasarawa, Plateau, Benue; NE – Yobe, Borno, Adamawa, Bauchi; NW – Kaduna, Sokoto; SS – Rivers, Delta; (None for SE and SW)
- **AMBER:** NC – Kogi, Niger; NE – Gombe, Taraba; NW – Kano, Kastina; SE – Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo; SS – Edo, Bayelsa; SW – Lagos, Oyo, Ogun
- **GREEN:** NC – Kwara; NW – Jigawa, Zamfara, Kebbi; SE - Abia; SS – Cross River, Akwa Ibom; SW – Ondo, Ekiti, Osun; (None for NE)

### **Key Risk Factors**

- I. **Insurgency:** The NE region is currently faced with violent extremism and three of the states are under emergency rule. If the situation is not properly managed, this can be a huge threat to the 2015 election in that region. The other challenge is if the federal government tries to use the military presence in these states to rig or manipulate the electoral process, this can generate violent reaction.
- II. **Communal Violence:** A number of states in the region are faced with communal violence. The violence is often associated with politics. It is therefore important to respond quickly to communal, ethnic or religious contentions before they get further entangled in electoral politics.
- III. **Electoral manipulation:** Any attempt to rig the election in most states can generate huge violent reaction. The 2011 violence in some northern states were associated with perceived vote rigging.
- IV. **Increasing poverty, unemployment and youth exclusion** is a major risk. Many of these youth are exposed to drug, small and light weapons and are susceptible to manipulation and used as party thugs.
- V. **Activities of the militant youth groups:** There is a proliferation of militant groups and vigilantes across the country. Though there have been efforts to regulate or demobilise some of the groups in some states, there is however no guarantee that they will not bounce back during the election when politician will become desperate for their services. The process of demobilisation should therefore be comprehensive, in a way that the young people can be empowered through gainful and sustainable socio-economic activities.
- VI. **Merger of opposition parties and possible violent disagreement over leadership and candidates:** With the merger of the three major opposition parties, there is definitely going to be a huge contention over positions, leadership or candidates, some of the contentions could spiral into violence.
- VII. **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 2015 election and has continued to shape the national politics since then. Like what happen in 2011, if the ruling elite do not manage the situation properly, it could escalate into a huge national crisis.

- VIII. Already, the emerging signs have pointed to the possibility of pre-election, election-day and post-election violence. The deployment of federal might to factionalise the NGF is an example of such tendencies. With the merger of opposition parties, the contest will possibly be stiffer and the likelihood of violence higher.

#### **Mitigating factors and Recommendations**

- i. 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. Governments at all levels should pay special attention to the violence hotspots with a view to empowering and equipping the agencies for effectiveness.
- ii. Disbandment/Regulation of cults, militia and vigilante groups: The state governments and security agencies should work to disband cults and militias and regulate vigilante groups that are often hired to intimidate voters and opposing party supporters. The mobilisational capacity of political parties and elites as they engage the services of youths as political thugs and vigilantes will be a key defining element of the general elections in the run up to 2015. This must be checkmated more proactively by the INEC and the relevant security agencies.
- iii. Training for journalists on conflict sensitive reporting: The manner the media has been reporting and is likely to report political conflicts has implications for violence. A cursory examination of newspapers reveals high levels of sensationalism which if left un-moderated will contribute to violence. Media practitioners should be exposed to training on reporting of political conflicts to mitigate risk of their reports becoming triggers for violence.
- iv. Sustained engagement among key stakeholders such as INEC, security agencies, civil societies, religious and community leaders is central to re-instilling confidence in the people of the electoral process, coupled with political will on the part of governments at all levels in supporting peaceful and credible elections remains a key priority.
- v. The government needs to respond to the socio-economic vulnerability of young people.
- vi. There is need to overhaul the weak criminal justice system in the zone, with specific reference to prosecuting perpetrators of violence and checkmate the proliferation of weapons and emergence of armed-non state actors. This is the only way that the entrenched culture of impunity in the zone can be reversed.
- vii. All existing ethnic, religious and communal contentions should be properly managed to avoid escalation during election. All political parties should be persuaded to sign a peace memorandum, stating their commitment to eschew violence and work peacefully before, during and after the election; and
- viii. The main electoral umpire, the INEC, should have hopefully learnt a few things about how to and how not to conduct elections from its 2011 and subsequent elections. One can only expect INEC, despite seeming suspicion about the states of its independence, neutrality and professionalism, to prove the bookmakers wrong by doing the right thing.

## SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR NORTH CENTRAL

### **Historical Context**

The North Central zone<sup>1</sup> is one of the country's most ethnically, linguistically and religiously heterogeneous entity. The North Central zone is made up of Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Nigeria, Plateau and Abuja, which is the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Since the advent of democratic rule in 1999, the heterogeneous nature of the North Central zone in terms of religion and ethnicity has created a major challenge of diversity management as evident in the prolonged inter-communal, religious and ethnic related conflicts that plagued the zone, with grave humanitarian consequences. Deaths associated with these conflicts are unevenly distributed in terms of their frequency and intensity, with majority occurring in Nasarawa and Plateau states. Key drivers of these conflicts have been contestations over access to, and control of political and economic power, as well as disputes over indigeneship, which reflects a conceptual difference enshrined in Nigeria's constitution.

### **Preparations for Elections**

The entrenched ethnicisation of politics across the zone will be heightened by tensions amidst community agitations for the redrawing of the electoral map of the zone within the context of constituency delineation. Such agitations, which have generated serious tensions and violent confrontations in the past, and they still do, are anchored on the need to have equitable representations of minorities, as well as balance between constituencies of equal population.

### **Political Parties and Likely Candidates**

The merger between the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) and other smaller parties, has provided an opportunity for opposition parties to align and challenge the dominance of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). The PDP has been in control of the zone politically since 1999, except for Kogi State under Prince Abubakar Audu from 1999 to 2003, and Nasarawa state where the CPC gubernatorial candidate (Alhaji Tanko Almakura), who defeated his former party, the PDP in 2011.

The recently concluded Nigeria Governor's Forum (NGF) elections is a major test of the level of preparedness towards the 2015 elections as demonstrated by the internal wrangling, fractionalization, and the emergence of two factions led by Gov Jonah David Jang of Plateau State that enjoys federal support, and Gov. Rotimi Amaechi of Rivers State that has the support of Governors from the opposition parties. The emergence of Governor Babangida Aliyu of Niger State as the arrow-head of the opposition against President Goodluck Jonathan, the leader of the PDP is evidence of the growing discontent and dissent within the party, and a pointer to the huge challenge the PDP is set to confront.

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<sup>1</sup> There has been contestation over the creation of the North Central zone in 1996. Minorities within the Nigeria's northern region prefer to be referred to as Middle Belters. The Middle Belt states as affirmed by the minorities of the North include Adamawa, Benue, FCT-Abuja, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, Taraba, as well as southern Bauchi, Borno, Kebbi and Yobe states.

A major trend that has emerged and is been entrenched in the body polity of the North Central zone has to do with the transformation of governors into Senators after the completion of their tenures, since they cannot seek re-election. Former Governors of Benue, Kwara, Nasarawa and Plateau States are currently Senators of the Federal Republic. Increasingly, the Senate is becoming an exclusive club for former governors and their cronies.

### **Gender Dimension**

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. 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 than 10% affirmative action in any aspect of political participation and inclusion as it relates to women.

### **Presence and Activities of Non State Actors**

Less than two years to the general elections scheduled for 2015, Nigeria and the North Central zone in particular face real risks to its stability. So far, the spate of violence and the rise and dominance of armed non-state actors that are increasingly challenging state capacity have become a serious threat in the North Central zone. For instance, the emergence of a group of Eggon extraction in Nasarawa State - the *Ombatse* (meaning time has come), which was responsible for the massacre of over 60 security personnel in Nasarawa state are clear reflections of the fact that the Nigerian state is increasingly failing in its responsibility to protect, thereby, ceding its monopoly over the instruments of coercion to some armed non-state actors. Conflicts between pastoralists and nomads in Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau States have led to deaths and huge displacements of persons in these states, with little or nothing to show for, as it relates to the arrest and prosecution of perpetrators of these heinous crimes.

The trajectory to the ongoing threats across the zone is further heightened by an entrenched culture of vigilantism and impunity relating to armed ethnic militias as represented by *Ombatse*, which is an Eggon ethnic militia. There is a sense in which the militia group is poised on a collision course with security agencies and the Nasarawa State Government in particular, over what is termed a deliberate and sustained marginalization of the Christian dominated Eggon ethnic group in the state. Despite its huge population that is spread across the state, the Eggon as an ethnic group has never had the opportunity of governing the state since the advent of democratic rule in 1999<sup>2</sup>.

In fact, the *Ombatse* phenomenon has high potential of deepening divisions across ethnic, religious and political faultlines, which will heighten the risk of electoral violence in the state

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with an Eggon Youth in Lafia, 26 May, 2013.



before<sup>3</sup>, during or after the elections, with serious consequences for the zone. On this note, two scenarios that are capable of shaping the elections in Nasarawa State will include – the agitation by the Eggon ethnic group for an opportunity to govern the state in 2015; as well as the political battle between Governor Tanko Almakura of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) to maintain his hold on the governorship against the PDP during the elections.

### **Violent hot spots**

In recent times, Benue and Plateau States have been convulsed in violent conflicts that have to do with pastoralists and nomads. These conflicts have exposed the fragility of the Nigerian state as it relates to the management of diversity and internal conflicts. The increased use of force to contain internal conflicts within the zone raises serious questions about the extent to which the Rules of Engagement (RoE) are observed by the security agents with specific emphasis on the protection of the rights of citizens.

The Tiv factor in Benue politics has been a recurring issue. The Igbiras have consistently fought against marginalization by the Tivs. While the equation as it relates to the Tiv dominance cannot be easily altered, the governorship election will be an internal battle between the Tivs regardless of political party affiliation. The wounds and scars associated with the violent confrontations between supporters of PDP and ACN during the governorship elections might be reopened in the run up to the 2015 elections.

Political competition in Kogi State among the Igalas, Igbiras and Okuns will continue to generate tensions and deepen inter-ethnic divisions. Sentiments of political and economic marginalization are publicly expressed in violent manners. This has continued to intensify uncertainties in the state, which has been a hotbed of political and ethnicity induced electoral violence. This is not unconnected with the fact that despite demands by other ethnic groups led by the Igbira for a rotational arrangement on the governorship of the state, the Igalas have insisted that since it has the largest population compared to other ethnic groups, it will continue to dominate the political landscape.

Niger State has since 2011 become unpredictable in view of the fact that notwithstanding the fact that the Governor Babangida Aliyu is a member of the PDP. During the 2011 elections, PDP lost the presidential, but won at the gubernatorial level in the state. The rise and dominance of the CPC in places such as Kontagora and New Bussa, where General Muhammadu Buhari enjoys mass followership, coupled with the cold war between Governor Babangida Aliyu and President Goodluck Jonathan over a purported pact that the President will only serve a single term, and the refusal of the Governor to toe the party line during the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) elections has further created a climate of uncertainty in Niger State. Fundamentally too, the Nupe factor, as it relates to the dominance of the Nupe ethnic group in the politics of Niger

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<sup>3</sup> Two key Eggon elites that will shape politics in Nasarawa State in the run up to the 2015 elections include – Mr. Labaran Maku, current Minister for Information, as well as Senator Solomon Ewuga, current Senator representing Nasarawa North Senatorial zone at the National Assembly. They are members of the PDP and CPC respectively.

State has been the source of an ongoing political battle between the Nupes and other minority ethnic groups led by Gwari, Kadara and Koro<sup>4</sup>.

### **Key Risk Factors**

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.

The zone has also witnessed influx of persons from other zones, as well as the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs). There is a sense in which the illegal production of firearms, trafficking in such arms, armed robbery and other forms of criminality will continue to pose real risks to stability in the zone in the run up to the 2015 elections.

### **Recommendations:**

- a. Sustained engagement among key stakeholders such as INEC, security agencies, civil societies, religious and community leaders is central to re-instilling confidence in the people of the electoral process, coupled with political will on the part of governments at all levels in supporting peaceful and credible elections remains a key priority.
- b. The mobilisational capacity of political parties and elites as they engage the services of youths as political thugs and vigilantes will be a key defining element of the general elections in the run up to 2015. This must be checkmated more proactively by the INEC and the relevant security agencies.
- c. Governments at all levels should pay special attention to the violence hotspots with a view to empowering and equipping the agencies for effectiveness.
- d. There is need to overhaul the weak criminal justice system in the zone, with specific reference to prosecuting perpetrators of violence and checkmate the proliferation of weapons and emergence of armed-non state actors. This is the only way that the entrenched culture of impunity in the zone can be reversed.
- e. Security agencies should further strengthen their public safety mechanism so as to guarantee security for the people. This will help in assuaging fears over the likelihood of a repeat of the ugly incidences of 2011 – the post elections violence that resulted in the destruction of property and killing of innocent people, with youth corps members as prime targets.

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Mr. Bala Mohammed Baba in Minna, Niger State, 25 May, 2013.

## SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR THE NORTH EAST

### **Historical Context**

The northeast zone is a politically strategic region with relative calm and quietness until recently. The zone consists of 6 states with distinct socio-cultural and historical background. With over 200 ethnic groups spread across 6 states, the zone is one of the most culturally diverse regions of the country. According to the last census figures, it has a population of almost 19 million (18,971,965) and over 10 million registered voters (10,749,059). Harbouring some of the poorest development indicators – over 70% of the region live below poverty line, one of the worst maternal mortality, high level illiteracy, it is not surprising that it is currently the most insecure region in the country. It is currently going through one of the worst spell of violence since the Nigerian civil war.

The region is made up of three socio-political clusters – the Kanuri, the Hausa-Fulani Muslims and the ethnic minority Christian. The Kanuri axis covers Borno and Yobe state and has historically played distinct politics from the larger northern Nigerian politics. During the colonial period and the first republic, against the Hausa and Fulani dominated NPC and NEPU, the Kanuri elite formed the Borno Youth Movement, this movement metamorphosed into GNPP in the second republic. The axis has since 1999 been led by ANPP against the PDP dominance of the other states in the zone. The Hausa Fulani Muslims axis covers Gombe, Bauchi, Adamawa and parts of the Taraba state; the axis gravitates towards the politics of the North West and has therefore been deeply influenced by the political direction of the North West. Because the Christians are also located in these states, the politics is also influence by the historical contentions between these social groupings. Against the Hausa Fulani dominated politics of the north, the Ethnic minorities who are also predominantly Christians have more political affinity with the middle belt (north centre). The middle belt is politically conceived to cover the minority Christian areas of the northeast. Sometimes the ethnic minority groups gravitate towards southern parts of the country in building strategic alliances.

The region is currently going through a complex mix of security challenges – including armed banditry in the international border areas, different spectre of communal violence - ethnic and religious violence in Bauchi, Taraba, Gombe and Adamawa state and ferocious insurgency in almost all the six states. Although the Boko Haram insurgency is more in Borno and Yobe state, it has in the last two years, at one time or the other, affected each of the states in the region. Consequently, three states have been placed under emergency rule since the middle of May 2013.

### **Preparations for the Elections**

Like most parts of the country, the most important elections in the northeast are the Presidential and gubernatorial elections. Of the six governors of the region, only two are eligible for re-election in 2015 – Gombe and Borno state. The other four states – Taraba, Yobe, Adamawa and Bauchi are out for fierce contest and possible grab by any of the dominant parties in the region. The ANPP has since 1999 continued to dominate the Borno and Yobe states, while PDP has

dominated Taraba and Adamawa state; Bauchi and Gombe are currently led by PDP, but have in the past been led by ANPP. Although the CPC doesn't control any state in the zone, it is a major player in Bauchi, Adamawa and Gombe state. Adamawa also has an appreciable presence of ACN especially among the ethnic minority Christians in the state.

The political temperature of the zone has been heating up for the past one year. This is due to factors including the contest for the control of PDP between the two rival factions in Adamawa, the political situation in Taraba occasioned by the protracted illness of Governor Danbaba Suntai, the insurgency in Borno and Taraba and the state of emergency in the three states. Others include the communal violence in Bauchi, especially in Tafawa Balewa local government, and the violence in Wukari and Jalingo in Taraba state. These coupled with the Presidential ambition of Atiku Abubakar, Isa Yuguda and Murtala Nyako presents the region as one of the regions to watch in the run-up to the 2015 general elections.

While there is a massive security presence in the states, they are definitely not designed for election and if not properly managed they can be a major obstacle to free, fair and credible election. It appears the Independent National Electoral Commission is not making a region specific plan to deal with these complex security issues as parts of its preparation for the 2015 elections. Like other regions, the update of voters' register is yet to be carried out and there seems not to be any engagement with major stakeholders in the zone.

### **Political Parties and Likely Candidates**

Although the region is dominated by three political parties, the merger of the three major opposition parties will possibly change the political dynamics of the region, especially in states like Bauchi, Adamawa, Gombe and Taraba. With the increasing political activities in almost all the states, a number of candidates are beginning to emerge. Atiku Abubakar, a former Vice President whose interest in the Presidency has since been made public is one of the major political gladiators of the region. Although a member of the ruling PDP, he has been very critical of the leadership of the party and the government. The Chairman of the PDP is from Adamawa state and has been locked in conflict with Governor Murtala Nyako over the control of the party machinery in the state. In Bauchi state, Governor Isa Yuguda, though has publicly denied that he is angling to be Vice President (VP) in place of the current VP Namadi Sambo, the public perception is that he is positioning himself for either the Vice Presidency or the President. In Taraba state, the protracted illness of the State Governor has further exposed the depth of religion in the politics of the state. The governor has been bedridden and out of the country for eight months. The contention between the followers of the governor and those that claim to be supporting Alhaji Garba Umar, the Acting Governor is already over heating the politics of the state. The PDP attempt to intervene has being blocked by a court action instituted by the supporters of the ailing governor.

In Gombe state, the state House of Assembly has on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 2013 adopted the seating governor, Hassan Dankwambo to run for 2015 election. This has been generating some reaction from opposition parties and members of the public. Although Bauchi state is a PDP controlled

state, it appears to be dominated by CPC. The party had failed to produce an acceptable candidate in the last election in 2011, it appears that situation is already playing out, as more and more candidates are emerging in addition to those that contested in the last election – Yusuf Tuggar and Nuhu Gidado.

### **Gender Dimension of the Elections**

Like most parts of northern Nigeria, women political representation is very marginal. Because of the diversity of the region, there is no uniformity in women's political space and public attitude to women politicians. Therefore, while some states have done relatively well in women representation, others have not. For instance, Adamawa, Yobe, Taraba have elected women into the National Assembly, Gombe and Bauchi are yet to do so. Most of the states Assemblies have no women representation. In Bauchi, the only woman in the state of House of Assembly is being politically harassed and currently under suspension for taking a different position on the relocation of Tafawa Balewa Local headquarters to Bununu. The number of women candidates for elective positions have increased in the last few years, we expect more of these candidates to emerge for the 2015 election, but there may not be any appreciable progress unless the socio-economic and political obstacles are addressed.

### **Presence and Activities of Non-state actors**

With the level of violence in the region in the last three years, the north east has one of the worst cases of small arms and light weapons, there may also be huge presence of military assault weapons in the hands of the militant groups. The zone has in the last 10 years produced militant youth groups – the Boko Haram and Ansaru being the extreme ones. Others are ECOMOG in Borno state, Yan'Kalare and Sara-suka in Gombe and Bauchi state respectively. The Gombe and Bauchi state governments have in the last two years tried to demobilise the groups. It cannot be guaranteed that they will not resurface for the 2015 election. The years of ethno-religious violence in Bauchi, Adamawa and Taraba, has also contributed in militarising youth and accumulation of small and light weapons.

### **Violent Hot Spots**

Almost all the six states in the region are hot spots but for different reasons. Borno, Yobe and Adamawa are associated with the terrorist insurgency and the state of emergency in the states, while Bauchi, Gombe and Taraba have, in addition to this, been major centres of communal violence. In Adamawa, in addition to the other stated reasons, the combustion within the PDP revolving around the interests of the quartet of contemporary Adamawa politics; Atiku Abubakar, Bamanga Tukur, Murtala Nyako and Jibril Aminu could escalate into violent conflagration.

Bauchi is a major hot spot. It is arguably a CPC state under the control of PDP. The governor is not running in 2015, the state is therefore open for grab. The state has a history of political violence; it was a major epicentre of the 2011 post-election violence. In Taraba, the combined effect of historical conflicts and contention over the governorship between different ethnic and religious groups can escalate into violence.

Specifically, the following locations should be carefully watched: Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi and Gumau in Bauchi state, Wukari, Jalingo, Takun and Ibbi in Taraba state and Gombe in Gombe state. Others are all the major cities and border towns of Yobe, Borno and Adamawa state.

### **Key Risk Factors**

In view of the socio-economic and political context of the region, and its increasing susceptibility to violence, there are a number of risk factors that should be watched. Among them include the following:

- IX. Insurgency and the politics of counter insurgency: The region is currently faced with violent extremism and three of the states are under emergency rule. Because of the massive military action, a number of this insurgence have been arrested, dispersed or killed, with huge civilian casualty and humanitarian challenges. If the situation is not properly managed, the insurgence can stage a come like they did in 2010 after the 2009 clamped down by the state. This can be a huge threat to the 2015 election. The other challenge is if the federal government tries to use the military presence in these states to rig or manipulate the electoral process, this can generate violent reaction.
- X. Communal Violence: A number of states in the region are faced with communal violence especially in Taraba, Bauchi and Adamawa state. The violence is often associated with politics. It is therefore important to respond quickly to communal, ethnic or religious contentions before they get further entangled in electoral politics.
- XI. Contention over the ailing governor of Taraba state: This is taking a religious dimension, if not properly managed it could be a huge pointer to what will happen in 2015 and beyond in the state.
- XII. Electoral manipulation: Any attempt to rig the election in Bauchi, Gombe and Adamawa can generate huge violent reaction. The 2011 violence in the states were associated with perceived vote rigging.
- XIII. Intra-party contention: Because of the limited internal democracy in most of the political parties, leadership and candidates selection has always been contentious. The APC will experience that in Bauchi and Gombe and will need to be properly managed otherwise it can escalate into violence. The PDP crisis in Adamawa and at the national level is a major risk factor that needs to be responded to.
- XIV. Increasing poverty, unemployment and youth exclusion in the zone is a major risk. Many of these youth are exposed to drug and are susceptible to manipulation and used as party thugs.
- XV. Activities of the militant youth groups: There have been efforts to demobilise the *Sarasuka* in Bauchi and *Yan'kalere* in Gombe, but there is no guarantee that they will not bounce back during the election when politician will become desperate for their services. The process of demobilisation should therefore be comprehensive, in a way that the young people can be empowered through gainful and sustainable socio-economic activities.

## **Recommendations**

- a. A rigorous security analysis should be carried out by relevant security agencies. Build strong inter agency collaboration to engage the major stakeholders.
- b. The state governments, the federal government and the civil society should begin to react to these major risk factors.
- c. The Independent Electoral commission should commence preparation for the 2015 election and ensure it engages relevant stakeholders in this process – particularly the civil society, political parties, security and the agencies.
- d. All existing ethnic, religious and communal contentions should be properly managed to avoid escalation during election.
- e. The government needs to respond to the socio-economic vulnerability of young people in this region.

## SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR THE NORTH WEST

### Historical Context

With over 35 million people (35,786,944<sup>5</sup>), seven states and almost 20 million (19,803,689<sup>6</sup>) registered voters, the northwest zone is certainly the biggest geopolitical zone and arguable the most politically influential. It is a relatively homogenous region: Apart from Kaduna state, almost all the other states are predominantly Hausa, Fulani and Muslim. Kaduna state has sizeable ethnic minority groups and Christian population. The region covers substantially the areas that constituted the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Sokoto caliphate. The region is also perceived to have dominated the national politics of the country in the last four decades – producing four Heads of state and some of the most powerful and influential politicians in the history of the country.

Although socio-culturally homogenous, the politics of the region does not often reflect this homogeneity. There are historically two dominant political tendencies in the region. One is what is loosely called the “radical progressive” politics of Kano-Kaduna axis covering Kano, Kaduna, Jigawa and Katsina State. The other is the “conservative” tendencies of the Sokoto axis covering the states that constituted the old Sokoto state – Sokoto, Zamfara and Kebbi state. These tendencies have dominated the politics of the region. The region has therefore been traditionally led by two major political parties at different times. It was NEPU and NPC in the first republic, PRP and NPN in the second republic, the two parties of the third republic (SDP and NRC) and ANPP and PDP since 1999. With the shrinking influence of both parties, CPC has in the last three years made a massive incursion into the region through the “fanatical” followership of General Muhammadu Buhari.

### Preparation for the Elections

The Presidential and Gubernatorial elections are also critical in this region. 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 terms. The implication is that most of the states are open for grab by either of the major parties and will therefore make the electoral contest fiercer both within the political parties and in the general election. 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 and ANPP.

The political temperature of the region has been heating up in preparation for the 2015 elections. With the coalescing of the major opposition parties into APC discussions, scheming and permutations are going on in all the states. In fact, rallies are being held in some locations. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of May, the Conference of All Opposition Parties in southern Kaduna organised a rally in Kagoro, Kaura local government, in an attempt to galvanize unity of opposition groups in the senatorial district. Considering the politics of southern Kaduna, this gathered caused palpable anxiety among the population. Also on 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2013, the PDP in Sokoto state

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<sup>5</sup> [Nigeriaworld.com/articles/2007/Jan/112/html](http://Nigeriaworld.com/articles/2007/Jan/112/html)

<sup>6</sup> [Nigeriavillagesquare.com/2011-final-voters-register-figures-by-state-geopoliticalzones](http://Nigeriavillagesquare.com/2011-final-voters-register-figures-by-state-geopoliticalzones)



organised a rally in solidarity with Governor Wamako in defiance to his suspension by the national secretariat of PDP.

Despite the increasing political activities in the region, there is no indication that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other relevant agencies are doing much at the regional level in preparation for the 2015 elections. The voters register is yet to be updated, the relevant amendment to the electoral laws are yet to be carried out and there seem not to be election specific security plan and strategy for the region despite its history of electoral violence.

### **Political Parties and Likely Candidates**

There are three major political parties in the region, the PDP, ANPP and CPC. Although the CPC is not currently controlling any state, it is generally considered one of the major parties, because of its mass appeal across most states in the zone. The zone is likely to produce some interesting presidential candidates including General Muhammadu Buhari, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, Alhaji Sani Yeriman Bakura for APC and Sule Lamido, Rabiu Kwankwaso and possibly Aminu Tambuwal for PDP. At the state level, it has been chains of possible candidates across the political parties. Because of the current merger of opposition parties, interested individuals are yet to openly declare their candidature except in few cases. In Kano for instance, Sheik Ibrahim Khalil has declared for Governorship under the yet to be registered APC, while the Deputy Governor, Abdullahi Ganduje is considered to be a likely contender. In Sokoto state, Speaker House of Representative, Aminu Tambuwal, 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.

### **Gender Dimension of the election**

Like most parts of Nigeria, the North West zone is deeply patriarchal; it has one of the least political representations of women in the country. Although the region has produced up to five different women as National Assembly members, almost all of them are from Kaduna and Kano state. Of all the seven State Houses of Assembly, only Kaduna has a female member.

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. 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.

### **Presence and Activities of Non state actors**

Some parts of the North West geopolitical zone have a history of political and ethno-religious violence. Although violence is not generally endemic in the region, the Kaduna and Kano axis of the region had experienced some of the worst violence in the history of the country. The zone has also been affected by recent Boko Haram insurgency especially in Kaduna, Kano, Katsina and Sokoto. The region is therefore likely to have a high concentration of small arms and light weapons.

There are several non-state actors involved in security related activities. There are lots of vigilante groups in all the states. With the increasing group-based armed robbery, 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 8 years been experiencing rising spectre of political violence due to the growing notoriety of Area Boys (a militant youth group in Sokoto).

### **Violent Hot spots**

The North West zone is arguable the worst affected by the 2011 post-election violence. Except for a few areas, largely, the areas affected have a history of political violence. With the increasing political tension in the zone, 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. Possible violence period may be before the polls, during the election and after. The threat level is however higher in Kaduna state – Kaduna city, Zaria and Southern Kaduna and Kano city.

### **Key Risk Factors**

Because the region is generally violence prone, it takes a small trigger for violence to erupt, especially in Kaduna state. This may be part of the historical animosities between groups; others could be generated by political contentions or disagreements. Some of the risk factors may include.

- I. PDP crisis: The increasing conflict within the ruling party is a major risk factor. The recent suspension of Governor Wamako of Sokoto state, not only generating ripples in Sokoto state, it is deeply vibrating in the entire region particularly with the rumour that some prominent politicians and governors from the region could also be suspended. If these internal conflicts are not properly managed they could escalate into violent political conflict.
- II. Merger of opposition parties and possible violent disagreement over leadership and candidates: 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 the merger of the three major opposition parties, there is definitely going to be a huge contention over positions, leadership or candidates, some of the contentions could spiral into violence.

- III. Electoral manipulation: Vote ragging or perceived rigging will be the major trigger of violence in the region especially in the presidential election. It was perceived vote rigging that led to the 2011 post-election violence. The region, especially Kano has a history of mandate protection; manipulation of election result could result into violence.
- IV. 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 2015 election and has continued to shape the national politics since then. Like what happen 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, Kaduna and Kano state are states to watch in this regard.
- V. Possible activities of insurgency groups like Boko Haram and Ansaru – especially in Kano, Kaduna and Katsina. They could plan to disrupt the elections through violent intimidation.
- VI. Ethno-religious and communal conflicts especially in Kaduna state: 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 played out in every election, sometimes spiralling to violence.

### **Recommendations**

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. The following are thus recommended:

- a. 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.
- b. The government and political parties should also encourage issues-based politics and avoid religion and ethnic identity based mobilisation.
- c. INEC should ensure free, fair and credible election.
- d. 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.

## SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR THE SOUTH EAST

### **Historical Context**

The South East geo-political zone was created in 1996 and is made up of five states- Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. These states include ethno-linguistic groups in Nigeria which still self-identify as 'Igbo'. The five states were formerly housed in the East Central State, which was created after the dissolution of the Eastern Region in 1967.

Since the end of the civil war in 1970, the South East has claimed it is marginalized. The discourse of marginality has stemmed from the status of the Igbo as one of the three major ethnic groups that emerged in colonial Nigeria. The highpoint of the said marginality is the fact that unlike other major ethnic groups, the Igbo have not produced a Nigerian president. Since 1999, the Igbo of the South East have been canvassing for the presidency. The inability of the Igbo to realize this objective under the platform of the PDP contributed to the emergence of PPA and APGA 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. The PDP currently controls 3 states – Enugu, Ebonyi and Abia, while the 2 remaining states – Imo and Anambra, are controlled by APGA. While the PDP seeks to regain control of the region, the APGA which is likely to merge with the APC is mobilizing to capture more states. The main mobilization in the South East will be on the governorship and other legislative elections since there seems to be a tacit support among the dominant Igbo political elite for the re-election of President Goodluck Jonathan in 2015.

The South East has had a long history of electoral violence which was driven by the individualistic and communalistic political culture of the Igbo people. Violence had been driven largely by supporters of dominant parties such as the National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) in the First Republic and the Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP) in the Second Republic to force non-supportive communities to support the presumed Igbo candidate. The situation became worse in the Second Republic when some prominent Igbo elites joined the dominant National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and worked against the NPP in the 1983 elections. There were reported clashes between supporters of the different parties as rival groups formed armed groups with sundry appellations to prosecute their competing political projects.

In the Fourth Republic, vigilante groups most notably, the Bakassi Boys, formed to fight crime were instrumentalized for political purposes and became involved in voter intimidation and violence against opposition political figures. Although many of these groups have been dismantled officially, many of them exist informally and have been implicated in cases of assassination, robbery, kidnapping and communal violence. The high level of youth unemployment creates a ready pool of youths that politicians can mobilise to use violence to achieve political power.

### **State by State projections**

*Anambra: Clash of the titans*

In Anambra, the 2014 gubernatorial election promises to be a clash of the titans given the political heavy weights and money bags that are involved. It promises to be a keenly contested election as the state has plenty of what other states in the South East lack for effective electoral competition. These are individuals with the required financial resources to contest elections and existing opposition parties. It is the only state in the federation where 3 political parties hold important positions. The All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) has produced the governor since 2006; the ACN has a senator and the PDP has two serving senators. Anambra also has the distinction of having produced the highest number of governments in the current democratic dispensation. Since 1999, five individuals have served as governors.

The stakes for winning the governorship election are high enough to make it a do or die affair. The stakes have been heightened by the discovery of oil well in the state and the imminent entrance of the state to the league of oil producing states. Another factor which raises concerns for the forthcoming election is the large number of extremely wealthy individuals who have declared their candidacy for the position. The spending power of these individuals will likely undermine the prospects for free and fair elections and set the stage for violent protests and protracted legal battles. The other factor that increases the probably for political violence is the fact a number of the contestants are coming to the elections with bitter experiences of losses. Dr. Chris Ngige, a serving senator and former governor is anxious to complete his mandate which was truncated by the court judgment that awarded victory to Peter Obi, the incumbent governor. Dr. Andy Uba, another serving senator and former governor is also desperate to complete his tenure following the termination of his rule after he had spent only 17 days on the saddle. Other candidates such as Hon. Uche Ekwunife, Prince Nicholas Ukachukwu and Senator Emmanuel Anosike have either lost elections or had their electoral victory nullified by the courts.

Another factor that is expected to make Anambra boil is the fate of Anambra North Senatorial District which has not produced a governor in the state since its creation. The elites of the area have been campaigning for the right to produce the next governor. However, though the current governor appears sympathetic to their case, concession to the district will be difficult to attain because zoning arrangements did not appear to have counted in previous elections. It has been a battle of survival of the fittest and Anambra South and Anambra Central who have more wealthy individuals interested in the position have always emerged victorious. Moreover, governors of the state have emerged from different political parties and factions of parties and thereby undermined orderly transition of power. The prospects of a candidate from Anambra North emerging is slim as candidates from the area do not match the resources and structure of their counterparts from Anambra central and Anambra South.

Finally, the factor of godfatherism is expected to provoke resentment that may turn violent given the recent history of the state where godfather Chris Ubah held the whole state ransom in the inglorious Ubah-Ngige saga. This is largely to be the case with the new entrants to the race. Dr. Ifeanyi Ubah is believed to be supported by Chief Arthur Eze, one of Anambra's richest businessmen. Princess Stella Oduah, current minister of Aviation is perceived as the president's

candidate. Many people believe Jonathan shortchanged the state when he gave the state's ministerial slot to Princess Oduah who married a non-Anambra man. There is likely to be more resistance if she emerges the PDP candidate.

***Enugu: politics of zoning raises risk of violence***

In Enugu State, the battle to replace Sullivan Chime, the high performing but sickly governor, is gearing up with several candidates indicating their interests both covertly and overtly. Two factors are likely to set the stage for violence in the 2015 elections. The first is the insistence of Enugu North senatorial District (Nsukka zone) that it is their turn to produce the next governor. This insistence is based on the fact that Dr. Chimaraoke Nnamani from Enugu East governed from 1999 to 2007 while the current governor who has been in power since 2007 is from Enugu West. Ugly signs of the likely violent reactions that may result from any election that produces a non-Nsukka governor was demonstrated when Nsukka youths went on rampage and removed campaign posters of Senator Ike Ekweremadu, the Deputy Senate President. The grievance of Nsukka people is aggravated by the fact that their demand for the creation of Adada State has not elicited any positive response. The zone currently has almost half of the state's population but remains marginal.

The second factor is the likely resurgence of the three dimensional struggle for power between incumbent governor Chime, former Governor and former senator Chimaraoke Nnamani, and former governor Okwesilieze Nwodo and former national Chairman of the PDP. It is believed that the three political factions will be competing to ensure that their preferred candidates emerge victorious. Nnamani and Nwodo will be working hard to terminate the dynasty of Chime. Top contenders that have so far emerged are Ekweremadu, Senator Ayogu Eze and Hon. Eugene Odo, speaker of the state House of Assembly. Both Eze and Odo are from Nsukka zone but Odo, who stood solidly behind Chime and resisted all pressures to impeach him during his long sick leave, is expected to get the governor's support. Many believe the governor's stated preference for a candidate from Nsukka is a tacit endorsement of the candidacy of Odo.

***Ebonyi: controversy over power sharing arrangements deepens***

In Ebonyi, the youngest state in the South East, power shift based on zoning policy is also the main bone of contention. The political elites of Ebonyi South Senatorial District (Afikpo zone) are insisting that it is their turn to produce the next governor of the state. This is based on the fact that the first civilian governor of the state (Dr. Samuel Egwu, 1999-2007) is from Ebonyi North Senatorial District while the incumbent (Chief Martin Elechi, 2007 till date) is from Ebonyi Central. The Central and North districts make up the Abakaliki zone. The people of Afikpo claim it is only fair that they should be allowed to produce the next governor, a point which Elechi has made and promised to uphold. 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 district to the Central district 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 senatorial District 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 Nkwo clan, 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, Secretary to the Federal Government (both held by Pius Anyim Pius), Minister of Health, Minister of Education. 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.

The high number of politicians mobilizing to capture the governorship also increases the stakes for the election. This is particularly so because many of the aspirants are politicians who are seeking to get back to power after having lost out in 2003 and 2007. The fact that the politicians are mobilizing communal sentiments is also worrisome given the recent incidents of violent communal conflicts in the state.

#### ***Abia: Reduced risk of violence***

In Abia, the issue of zoning has also so far dominated discussions on the 2015 election. The Ngwa people of the old Aba Division have so far expressed their determination to mobilize support for power-shift to the area. The advocacy is based on the so-called 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. The issue of zoning does not appear to have elicited the controversy it has attracted in other states partly because of no group and candidate from Bende Division has started mobilization for the governorship. Moreover, Chief Theodore Orji, the state governor has on a number of occasions expressed support for the Aba Division to produce his successor.

The main controversy that has arisen so far is the debate on what constitutes Aba Division. This debate was stirred by the mobilizations of some elites from Ukwa and Ngwa who make up old Aba Division to clamour for the governorship to be zoned to Abia South Senatorial District. This group justifies its claim on the fact that Abia North Senatorial District produced Governor

Orji Uzor Kalu (1999-2007) while Abia Central produced the incumbent who has been in power since 2007. The advocacy has generated resentment from Ngwa people in three LGAs (Isiala Ngwa North, Isiala Ngwa South and Osioma Ngwa) in Abia Central Senatorial District. They 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 Central District 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 senatorial district privilege 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. There are also fears that most politicians interested in the governorship have not indicated their interest because they would not like to incur the wrath of the governor popularly called 'Ochendo'. Ochendo had warned politicians in the state that it was premature to start campaigning for the 2015 elections. So far prominent politicians rumoured to be interested in the race include Senator Enyinna Abaribe, former deputy governor of the state; Senator Adolphus Wabara, former senate president; Senator Nkechi Nwaogu, currently representing Abia Central; Hon. Uzor Azubuike, representing Aba North/South in the Federal House of Representatives; and Mr. Friday Nwosu an Abuja based legal practitioner who ran a social movement (called 'Money cannot buy') that mobilized the public against the re-election of Orji Uzor as governor in 2003. If the picture remains the same and only candidates from the Aba area present themselves for election, the risks of violence will be reduced. The absence of a credible opposition party in the state with the required structure to mobilize for elections also reduces the likelihood for intense political competition that may result in violence. Most observers believe that Ochendo is the kingmaker and will ultimately take the decision on his successor. The governor has consolidated his hold on power and effectively liquidated the Reality organization, which brought him to power after he fell out with Orji Uzor Kanu. Other parties in the state like the Progressive Peoples Alliance (PPA), APGA and APP will need massive infusion of funds and decampments from the PDP to make any impact. The cozy relationship between Ochendo and President Jonathan also makes it very unlikely that Abuja will impose any candidate on the Abia PDP.

### ***Imo State: High stakes raises threat to election security***

The reported violence in the recent House of Assembly elections in Imo State is seen by many as an ominous sign of what would happen in 2015. This is because of the three cornered mobilizations by competing groups to capture the governorship. The mobilizations are considered a continuation of the fractious politics, which led to the emergence of Owelle Rochas Okorochoa as governor in 2011. Okorochoa who decamped from the PDP to join APGA defeated Ikedi Ohakim, the PDP governor at the time. The upset was deemed to have destabilized the power sharing arrangement and political calculations of groups in the state.

Imo is made up of three senatorial districts- Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe. Orlu District produced the governor between 1999 and 2007 when Achike Udenwa was governor. It was the turn of



Okigwe when Ohakim was in power. Ohakim completed a single tenure when he was defeated by Okorochoa who is also from Orlu District. The situation has left both Owerri and Okigwe aggrieved of having been shortchanged. Consequently, while Owerri District is asking for the chance to produce 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 politicians that are interested in the position. The list of governorship candidate includes tens of politicians who are either currently occupying legislative and executive posts at state and federal levels and those who lost out in the last elections. The crowd of aspirants and their mobilization of ethno-regional sentiments are likely to exacerbate political conflicts and set the stage for violence. Moreover, PDP and APGA have formidable structures in the state. The PDP is investing heavily to recapture the state while APGA wants to retain the state and bolster its influence in the newly formed APC.

The risks of violence will be reduced if Okorochoa gets a national post in the new APC and decides not to run for a second term as he promised during his campaign for election. This means that he will support Prince Eze Madumere, the deputy governor who is from Owerri zone. Madumere will then be expected to get some support from Owerri zone that have not produced a governor since the short-lived tenure of Evans Enwerem in 1991. The risk of violence will also be reduced if the Federal Government goes ahead to prosecute persons accused of perpetrating violence in the recent elections in Oguta, Imo State. This is so because the incidents in the volatile constituency stems from the fact that previous occurrences of violence were not investigated and perpetrators of violence were not held accountable.

### **Recommendations**

Threats to electoral violence stem largely from the high stakes of election as a result of the high level of influence of money in politics in the South East and the militarization of society as a result of emergence of vigilantes and militias in response to rising crime waves. The grievance of alienation of the Igbo from the presidency and certain politico-linguistic groups in different states from the governorship is an underlying source of violence. Against this background, the key recommendations to secure elections include the following:

- a. Early preparations for elections to prevent electoral fraud. Given the high-stakes involved in winning the election, the outcomes of election is a likely trigger of violence. INEC needs to commence early preparation to ensure that materials reach the coastal communities on time and there is enough security to allow citizens vote freely.
- b. 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.

- c. Disbandment of cult and militia groups. The state governments and security agencies should work to disband cults and militias that are often hired to intimidate voters and opposing party supporters.
- d. Resolution of inter-elite conflicts. 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.
- e. Training for journalists on conflict sensitive reporting. The manner the media has been reporting and is likely to report political conflicts has implications for violence. A cursory examination of newspapers reveals high levels of sensationalism which if left un-moderated will contribute to violence. Media practitioners should be exposed to training on reporting of political conflicts to mitigate risk of their reports becoming triggers for violence.

## SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR SOUTH SOUTH

### **Historical Context**

The South South region is made up of diverse ethno-linguistic groups notably the Ijaw, Ibibio, Urhobo, Itsekiri, Ikwerre, Ogoni, Anioma, Edo, Ishan, Anang, Ejagham. Some studies estimate that there are 40 of such ethno-linguistic groups in the region. Forming the core area of the Niger Delta region, the South South geopolitical zone is made up of six states (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers). These states were created from the Western region and Eastern region of Nigeria following agitations by ethnic groups in the areas for states. The agitations were based on grievance over distribution of political positions and access to socio-economic opportunities shared by the different ethnic groups in the regions perceived to be dominated by Igbo and Yoruba who in the context of the three region structure of the Nigerian federation emerged as the dominant politically salient ethnic groups in Southern Nigeria.

The political marginality of the southern minorities (as they historically came to be known) changed in the aftermath of the Nigeria civil war as they became autonomous from the dominant groups following successive creation of states. However, the creation of states created new major ethnic groups and new minor ethnic groups given the diverse groups that formed the new political entities. The southern minorities also became important as their role in the Nigeria civil war afforded them the opportunity to become part of the coalition of the military leadership in the early 1970s. The region's marginality was also mitigated by the fact that it became the major source of government's oil dependent revenues since 1970.

However, the political gains of southern minorities were eroded from the late 1970s when successive military coups and return to civil rule consolidated power in the hands of political elites from Nigeria's three major ethnic groups. The oil glut and economic crisis that set in in the early 1980s also led to significant cuts in the proportion of revenues that accrued to oil producing states of the region. From 50 per cent in the pre-civil war period, the proportion of revenue allocated on the basis of derivation principle plummeted to 1.5 per cent. This set the stage for resurgence of agitations in the 1990s among the southern minorities over political exploitation and oil related -environmental degradation.

Repressive state responses to agitations led to the militarization of the region leading to the insurgency in which militant groups attacked security institutions and oil installations between 2005 and 2009 when the Federal Government proclaimed amnesty for the militants. The agitations of the 1990s and recent insurgency, which crippled oil production and undermined national stability, have led the region to get some concessions in the Nigerian federation. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria fixed the percentage of revenue to be distributed on the basis of the derivation principle at a minimum of 13 per cent- an increment from 3 per cent. The need to pacify the aggrieved region is deemed to be a key factor that influenced the zoning of the vice presidential ticket of the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) to the South South region and the selection of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, an Ijaw from

Bayelsa State as vice president. Dr. Jonathan eventually ascended to the Nigerian presidency following the unfortunate death of Preseident Umaru Musa Yar Adua in 2010.

Jonathan's decision to contest the 2011 presidential election sparked criticisms among some Northern politicians. They claimed the presidency had been zoned to the North for eight years since Obasanjo (a southerner) was in power for eight years under a controversial power sharing arrangement adopted by the PDP leadership. The controversy surrounding Jonathan's candidacy set the stage for the 2011 post-election violence in a number of towns in Northern Nigeria. The political temperature of Nigeria has been rising since 2012 when different groups, mostly from South South Nigeria started agitating for a second tenure for Jonathan. As Nigeria prepares for the 2015 election, the candidacy of Jonathan remains the main polarising issue. Although the president is yet to confirm or deny his candidacy, his supporters and opponents are already threatening violence. This has raised fears that Jonathan's candidacy in the 2015 election is likely to be main source of political violence.

### **History of Political violence**

Incidents of political violence in the South South have historically been linked to the region's political marginality. In the Eastern Region, minority communities that refused to vote for the dominant National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) were victims of voter intimidation during elections. This is because critical minority elements from such ethnic groups as the Efik, Ibibio and Ijaw aligned with opposition parties. The parties formed by minority elites who were disenchanted with the NCNC from 1953 formed the United Nigeria Independence Party (UNIP) and the Niger Delta Congress (NDC) which respectively entered into electoral alliances with the Action Group (AG) and the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC).

The same scenario was repeated in the Western region where the ruling Action Group in its desperation to control the region intimidated voters in minority areas that had aligned with opposition parties. Critical minority elements from the Urhobo and Edo ethnic groups formed the Warri Peoples Party (WPP) and Benin Peoples Party (BPP)- both of which aligned with the NCNC. Strongholds of minority groups such as Warri and Calabar were election hotspots in the 1950 and early 1960s.

The Second Republic did not witness some of the incidences of political violence that were associated with the competition for power between elites from major ethnic groups and minorities in the First Republic. This is principally because creation of states had eliminated the influence of elites from the major ethnic groups in these areas. Political competition was between elites from the minority groups and parties supported by elites from emergent dominant groups like the Ijaw, Edo and Ibibio won the 1979 elections. The fact that the elites could win the elections by harnessing votes from their immediate ethnic constituents reduced the incentives to mobilise votes in non-supportive constituencies. The implication of this is the curtailment of confrontation between supporters of rival parties, which are key riggers of electoral violence.

The South South has experienced more incidence of political violence in the Fourth Republic. This is principally due to two interlinked factors. First is the increased stakes for controlling political power. The payment of derivation revenues to the oil producing states since 1999 increased the stakes for winning elections and securing control of the oil rich states. The windfalls accruing to the states since 1999 explains the high levels of electoral fraud and politically motivated killings in the region during the 2003 elections. At the roots of the violence were heavy investments by opposition elements to capture the state from incumbents. It is hardly surprising that incidents of violence were proportional to state income with more violence recorded in Rivers, Delta and Bayelsa states.

The second factor that has contributed to increased incidence of political violence in the region is the proliferation of militias and cults and their recruitment by competing political interest groups. These militias and cults were implicated in electoral fraud and voter intimidation in the 2003 and 2007 elections. Some of the militias and cults transmogrified to the militant groups that were involved in the insurgency in the region. The involvement of cults and militias also explained why violence took the form of assassination of prominent power brokers as rival political factions sort to liquidate one another. Incidence of violence seemed to have been correlated with the strength of opposition political factions. Consequently, more political assassinations were reported in Delta and Rivers state where incumbents faced formidable opposition from within their parties or from rivals from dominant ethno-linguistic groups.

### **Political Parties and Likely Candidates**

The PDP is the dominant party in the South South zone. The party took control of the region in the 1999 elections when it captured the governorship elections for all six states. The total control was eroded in November 2008 when the Appeal Court sacked the PDP governor of Edo State and ordered the swearing of Adams Oshiomhole of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN). The ACN consolidated its control of the state by winning most of the legislative seats in the 2011 election and the governorship election in 2012. The ACN remains weak in other states in the region and has not made any strong showing. The weakness of the ACN and other parties in the region stem largely from the fact that the parties present candidates that are quondam members of the PDP that were aggrieved with the outcomes of controversial party primaries. The decampers perform poorly because they are unable to mobilize for votes due to the lack of existing structures of opposition parties in the states. The only opposition party that has performed relatively well in the South South is the Democratic Peoples' Party (DPP), which gave the PDP a run for its money in the 2011 elections. The DPP candidate lost a fiercely contested governorship election but won a senatorial seat and some seats in the state and federal legislature.

It is not yet clear whether the All Peoples Congress (APC) the newly formed opposition coalition alliance will be able to provide a formidable challenge to the PDP in the region. This is because apart from the ACN governor of Edo State no significant political actor has declared for the party. Two other factors likely to affect the fortunes of the party in the region are the association of the party with Gen. Muhammadu Buhari who is perceived as being anti-South

and the widely held belief that the APC is simply a scheme by conspirators who are determined to snatch power from Jonathan, who hails from the region. The fortunes of the party will likely depend on whether or not the PDP will remain house divided against itself in 2015.

### **State by State Projections**

#### ***Rivers State: Fears of fire and brimstone***

Nowhere else in the region and indeed the entire country is there so much fear about the potential for political violence than in Rivers State-which houses Port Harcourt, the nation's oil capital. This is because of the cold war brewing between President Jonathan and Rt. Hon. Rotimi Amaechi, Governor of Rivers State. The root of the conflict is the allegation by supporters of Jonathan that Amaechi is not only opposed to Jonathan's candidacy in the 2015 presidential elections but is actively working with opposition party and key northern politicians to unseat Jonathan. There have been reports of Amaechi running as running mate to a northern presidential candidate against Jonathan in 2015.

The Jonathan camp has been accused of strategizing to cut the wings of Amaechi for daring the lion in its den. The president's allies are believed to have orchestrated the take-over of control of the PDP machinery in Rivers from Amaechi. This followed the verdict of a controversial Abuja High court judgement that declared the Felix Obuah faction of the PDP winner of the 2013 state party congress election. Obuah is an ally of Chief Nyesom Wike, Minister of State for Education. He ran against Chief Ake, the incumbent PDP chairman, who is an ally of Amaechi. Wike, who served as Amaechi's chief of staff between 2007 and 2011, is working with Jonathan to undermine Amaechi's influence. It is against this background that the Rivers State House of Assembly is believed to have wielded the hammer to suspend the executive council of Obio Akpor LGA. The chairman and councillors of the LGA are allies of Wike, who also served as chairman of the LGA in the early 2000s.

The action prompted the decision of the PDP to suspend Amaechi for ignoring an order to recall the suspended council executive. The PDP, allegedly acting in consort with the president, also opposed the re-election of Amaechi as Chairman of the Nigerian Governors' Forum (NGF). The party is suspected to have established the PDP Governors' Forum and influenced the selection of Governor Godswill Akpabio of Akwa Ibom State as chairman of the Forum in order to undermine Amaechi's influence. This is after the president allegedly failed to remove Amaechi in early elections of the NGF. The president and the PDP leadership also recognised Jonah Jang as new chairman of the NGF after controversial election when Jang reportedly polled 16 votes as against Amaechi's 19 votes.

Another troubling dimension of the conflict in Rivers State which has implications for the 2015 election is the perception that the conflict has been contrived to enable Dame Patience Jonathan, the First Lady to impose her own candidates in the 2015 election. The wife of the president who hails from Okrika in Rivers State is believed to be interested in installing an Ijaw from Okrika as governor of the state. Specifically, second term Senator George Thompson Sekibo, who represents Rivers East senatorial district is seen as the preferred candidate of the First Lady.

Amaechi is reportedly opposed to the First Lady's choice because it violates existing power sharing arrangement in the state where Rivers South East senatorial district is expected to produce the next governor. Amaechi is from Rivers East, while Dr. Peter Odili, his predecessor and former godfather is from Rivers West. Amaechi is suspected of grooming his allies from Rivers South East notably Senator Magnus Abe, Deputy Governor Tele Ikuru and Hon. Dakuku Peterside of the Federal House of Representatives. The odds favour Abe who served as Secretary to the State Government under Amaechi's first term because he is an Ogoni, the largest ethnic group in the senatorial district. It is also believed that Wike moved to Jonathan's camp to secure support for his ambition to succeed Amaechi, after failing to get Amaechi's support. Amaechi reportedly discouraged Wike from pursuing the ambition because it would undermine the PDP zoning formula. Wike is Amaechi's Ikwerre ethnic kinsman from Rivers East senatorial district.

The conflicting interests of heavy weight politicians in the Rivers State governorship is a likely threat to security in the 2015 election. The security situation is expected to worsen if Amaechi is selected as vice presidential candidate of an opposition party to contest against Jonathan. Fears of potential violence are aggravated by the perception that state institutions have been compromised in the conflicts. There are widespread allegations that the police, the judiciary and aviation agency have been compromised. Amaechi has repeatedly called for the transfer of the Rivers State Commissioner of Police for alleged brazen support for the president. The governor has indefinitely postponed meetings of the State Security Council over allegations that the commissioner of police, a statutory member of the council, discloses information shared in the meeting with the governor's detractors.

The alleged partisanship of the police commissioner has raised fears that rival political factions who believe the police have been compromised will mobilise cults and militias to secure their interests. The prospects of mobilization of militias and cults into the contestation for power are enhanced by the fact that some of the militant groups have already identified with some of the key actors. For instance, Ateke Tom of the Niger Delta Volunteer Service and Icelanders Confraternity and Mujahid Asari Dokubo of the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force have threatened to resume militant activities if Jonathan is not re-elected in 2015. Ateke Tom, who is an Ijaw from Dame Patience Jonathan's Okrika community, has gone further to organize protest marches against Amaechi in Port Harcourt for working against Niger Delta and Ijaw interests. This has raised fears of the resurgence of the historical conflicts between the Okrika and Ikwerre around the 2015 election.

The high stakes involved in control of Rivers State government and the PDP structure in the state, the conflicting ambitions of heavy weight politicians, the perception of partisanship by the police and the judiciary, and the mobilization of militias into the political conflicts raise the risks of political violence in the state in the run-up to the election. The situation will likely change if on-going initiatives to promote reconciliation between Jonathan and Amaechi succeed. However, the feasibility of reconciliation initiatives is not promising because of the interests of cheerleaders and rival supporters who intend to benefit from the crisis. Moreover, some of the

politicians who have switched camps will want to fight to finish. Consequently, it is most likely that the relations between Jonathan and Amaechi the main dramatis personae will not improve in the lead up to the election.

***Delta State: Risk of violence is high***

The risk of political violence is also high in Delta State though lesser than the grim situation in Rivers State. The context for the risks is the mobilizations by politicians and ethno-linguistic groups toward the governorship election. Two factors are currently overheating the Delta polity and raising fears of potential violence in the 2015 elections. The first factor is the competition among elites of the competing ethno-linguistic groups to produce the next governor of the state. The conflicting interests endanger the standing zoning arrangements of the PDP which has been in power in 1999. Under this zoning arrangement, Chief James Ibori from Delta Central Senatorial District was governor between 1999 and 2007; while Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan from Delta South Senatorial District will be completing his second term by 2015. In the spirit of the rule, Delta North Senatorial District is expected to produce the next governor.

This arrangement is being threatened by the ambition of members of the ruling party from other districts to contest the election. Notable among this is Elder Godsdai Orubebe, current Minister of Niger Delta Affairs, an Ijaw from Delta South Senatorial District. Orubebe's ambition is a source of concern given fears that he may have the backing of the president given his closeness to Jonathan. He is also believed to be very well resourced- a perception driven by allegations that he has misappropriated funds meant for development projects in the region. Fears over Orubebe's candidacy also stems from his closeness to key ex-militants in the coastal sections of the state. In fact, Orubebe is regarded as having been nominated by ex-militant leaders led by Government Tompolo of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). He is also believed to be championing the cause of the Ijaw who do not feel Uduaghan, an Itsekiri from the Delta senatorial district served their turn. Ijaws like the Isoko in Delta State prefer a zoning arrangement based on ethnic groups rather than senatorial districts. Anxiety over Orubebe's candidacy heightened when Chief Edwin Clark, elder statesman and Ijaw leader, who is also close to the president and has championed the advocacy for Jonathan to 2015, declared that Orubebe was corrupt and unfit to govern Delta State. The Delta State Elders Forum has also supported the position of Clark who is one of their leaders on Orubebe's candidacy. The group has asked the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to investigate allegations of corruption against Orubebe. The crisis is deepening as rival factions of the state chapter of PDP have suspended Orubebe on the one hand and Clark on the other from the party. The confrontation between Clark and Orubebe may degenerate further especially in the coastal Ijaw communities where both of them hail from. Although personality clashes have been identified as the source of friction between the two allies of President Jonathan, there are indications that other factors are at play. It is speculated that Clark is opposing Orubebe and openly upholding the power sharing arrangement in Delta State to dispel allegations of Ijaw domination of the presidency, which may endanger the possibility of the president repeating the 2011 feat of landslide victory in the South South zone.



The second factor likely to contribute to violence in the lead up to the elections is the determination of the anti-Ibori elements in the state to terminate what they consider is the Ibori dynasty in the state. The concept of Ibori dynasty stems from the fact that most of those currently serving in the Uduaghan administration (Ibori's cousin) were part of the Ibori administration. There are fears that the group is grooming a successor for Uduaghan among its political family. The fierce contests over the Delta governorship which resulted in re-run elections were mostly driven by anti-Ibori elements. These groups are mobilizing to stop continuation of so-called Ibori dynastic rule in the state.

The race for the governorship promises to be intense because most of the candidates from Delta North Senatorial District, which are likely to have Uduaghan's support are members of the Ibori political family. Notable among this are Chief Festus Okubor, Chief of Staff to Governor Uduaghan; Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, senator representing Delta North; and Hon. Victor Ochei, speaker of Delta State House of Assembly. These candidates have to slot it outside among themselves as well as against other formidable candidates outside the family. Among those already being mentioned are Chief Sam Obi former speaker and former acting governor of the state; Dr. Sylvester Monye, Special Adviser to the President on Project Monitoring and Evaluation; and Chief Godwin Obielum, a retired police officer who contested against Uduaghan in 2007 allegedly with the support of Dr. Peter Odili, former governor of Rivers State.

Non-PDP candidates outside Delta North who had reportedly started mobilizations are Chief Great Ogboru of the DPP and Pius Ewherido, DPP senator representing Delta Central District who died recently after a brief illness. Some of the allies of the late senator have already alleged he was poisoned by persons opposed to his ambition.

#### ***Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Bayelsa and Edo States: Lower risks of political violence***

The situation in other states of the South South does not look very threatening. There will be no governorship election in Bayelsa and Edo in 2015 where gubernatorial elections held in 2012. The governors of both states have consolidated their hold on power and are likely to easily influence the outcomes of legislative elections scheduled to hold in the states. This is especially the case with Governor Seriake Dickson of Bayelsa who has the full support of the president and First Lady and has been at the forefront of campaigning for Jonathan's re-election in 2015. Anti-Jonathan forces in the state have to a large extent been tamed with former Governor Timipre Sylva engrossed in legal battles with the EFCC. Moreover, there is no credible opposition party in the state.

The contest in Edo State will likely be fiercer since the PDP is a well-resourced opposition party. A lot will depend on how Adams Oshiomhole is able to retain his popularity rating. During the 2011 elections, most of the candidates he supported won the state and national legislative elections. He repeated this feat in the recently concluded Local Government Council elections. However, his image was tainted by allegations of candidate imposition. Given the re-emergence of Chief Tony Anenih as chairman of the Board of Trustees of the PDP, the PDP is likely to

invest more resources to recover Edo State. This will be necessary to ensure that the opposition APC does not secure any significant vote from the South South. The determination of both APC and PDP to capture Edo in 2015 will likely raise the stakes in the election and create conditions for violence.

There are no significant threats in Cross River State. Mr. Liyel Imoke, the state governor will not be standing re-election and is in the good books of the PDP and the president as far as the 2015 Jonathan presidency agenda is concerned. There is no viable opposition party in the state. The ACN, which came alive during the 2012 elections, went into hibernation thereafter. The competition for power is likely to be within the party. The only foreseeable threat to election security is the position of election of a candidate from the Cross River North Senatorial District. This relatively underdeveloped section of the state has not produced a governor since 1999. Donald Duke (1999-2007) and Imoke who has been in power since 2007 is from the Central District. The expectation is that the next governor will be selected from the North District for fairness and equity.

However, there have been concerns that the North may be denied the opportunity to produce governor as a result of the so-called pact of 'the three wise men'. Since 1999, Cross Riverians have known that Duke, Imoke and Chief Gershom Bassey prepared a strategic plan that will allow them to control power in the state for 24 years by handing power to one another. Duke ruled for 8 years and handed over power to Imoke who will have 8 years by 2015. According to this calculation, Bassey, who like Duke is from the South Senatorial District will take over from Imoke to complete the 24 years. Fears that this agenda would be sustained heightened when Imoke retained Bassey as chairman of the Board of the Cross Rivers State Water Corporation and Chair of the State's Strategic Planning Committee. There were fears that elections in Cross River the North senatorial may engender violence if the PDP presents a candidate outside the North.

Nonetheless, tensions have reduced since Imoke assured that the North will be allowed to produce the next governor under the PDP. Imoke's position is seen as a gesture to the North which restrained politicians from the District from contesting against Imoke's re-election. However, the process of selecting the PDP candidate may be challenging as several prominent politicians from the area have already indicated interest in the governorship. Interested candidates include Mr. John Odey, former Minister of Environment and PDP national executive committee (NEC) member; Senator Ben Ayade; Mr. Fidelis Ugbo executive secretary of the National Planning Commission and Chief Joe Abang, former commissioner for Environment.

There are also no major threats of political violence in Akwa Ibom State as the 2015 elections approach. It is expected that Chief Godswill Akpabio, who has consolidated control in the state through his commendable achievements in infrastructural development, will easily install his successor. Akpabio's political clout has been enhanced by his closeness to the president which contributed to his emergence as chairman of the PDP Governors Forum. Like in other states, the likely source of political violence is linked to the demand of the political elites of Akwa Ibom

South Senatorial District (Eket Zone) to be allowed to produce the next governor. The Eket Zone, which accounts for most of the state's oil production, has not produced a governor since the current democratic dispensation. Chief Victor Attah (1999-2007) is from Akwa Ibom North Central (Uyo Zone) while incumbent Akpabio is from the Akwa Ibom North East (Ikot Ekpene Zone).

There is anxiety in Eket Zone partly because of Akpabio's equivocation over the issue of zoning. Akpabio has been quoted as saying he is not against zoning and that he is not a product of zoning. The governor is also widely believed to be planning to install Mr. Umanah Okon Umanah, the Secretary to the State Government (SSG) as his successor. Umanah, an Ibibio from Uyo District is believed to have been instrumental to Akpabio's electoral victory in 2007 and 2011 when leading Ibibio politicians, including Victor Attah, were working against Akpabio. The Ibibio are the numerically dominant group in Akwa Ibom. The plot to impeach Deputy Governor Nsima Ekere in 2012 was intended to make way for Umanah. Ekere resigned as deputy governor to avoid being impeached after he declared his intention to run for the governorship. He is the second deputy governor from the Eket zone to serve under the Akpabio administration.

The position of Akpabio on the ceding of power to the Eket zone is likely to determine the character of politicking in the state. It is widely believed that some Ibibio politicians like Attah and Senators Akpanudoedeghe and Bob Ekarika who feel humiliated by Akpabio are mobilizing to support a candidate from the Eket zone to terminate Akpabio's plan to install his successor. Such opposition is likely to face two major problems. First is the absence of opposition party structure in the state. Senator Akpanudoedeghe who contested against Akpabio in 2011 under the ticket of the ACN has not done much to sustain the party after the elections. Second is the disunity in the Eket zone which will be easily exploited. Unlike the other zones which are fairly ethnically homogenous Ibibio in Uyo and Anang in Ikot Ekpene, Eket zone is heterogeneous. It is made up of the Oro, Eket, Obolo and Ibibio (Ikot Abasi) peoples. The different groups are already mobilising to capture the position of governor and there are no indications that they will present a common candidate.

### **Recommendations**

The South South region has had a long history of political violence. Threats to electoral violence stem largely from the high stakes of election as a result of the availability of derivation revenues; the ethnic heterogeneity that makes elite consensus more difficult to attain; as well as the difficult environmental terrain that makes policing of elections a herculean task. Against this background, the key recommendations to secure elections include the following:

1. 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.

2. Adequate security equipment and personnel should be deployed to coastal communities before and during election elections. The bane of elections in the South South has been the virtual absence and limited presence of security during elections. This has created conducive environment for voter intimidation and violence often reported in the communities.
3. Disbandment of cult and militia groups. The state governments and security agencies should work to disband cults and militias that are often hired to intimidate voters and opposing party supporters. The presence of these groups in states like Rivers is already overheating the polity.
4. Resolution of elite conflicts. 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.

## SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR THE SOUTH WEST

### Historical Context

What is today known as the South West geopolitical zone of Nigeria was an offshoot of the defunct Western Region, a sub-national level of the federation of Nigeria in the first republic (1960-66), with capital in Ibadan, the current capital of Oyo state. The south west today has six states, namely Lagos (Ikeja), Oyo (Ibadan), Ogun (Abeokuta), Osun (Osogbo) Ondo (Akure) and Ekiti (Ado Ekiti). Generally, the south west is populated by the Yoruba people, who are bound together by a common progenitor called Oduduwa, a common language, and a rich spirituality.

One of the most glaring democratic deficits in Nigeria today is the decline and decay of opposition politics. The purported expansion of the democratic space particularly through the registration of more political parties has, contrary to expectations, failed to entrench a viable opposition politics necessary for democratic deepening. This tendency peaked with the near-total eclipse of the Alliance for Democracy (AD), the party of Western Nigeria, by the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the ruling party at the center, in the 2003 general elections. The South West has since battled hard to reclaim its centrality to opposition politics in Nigeria.

In the annals of Nigeria's party politics and electoral history, the main opposition has come mostly from the Southwest. Beginning from the colonial era through the post-independence period, any dominant party in the Southwest has been traditionally known for providing official opposition at the national level. Until it suffered a near-total defeat in the 2003 elections, and perhaps under a very brief spell during the First Republic precisely between 1963 and 1966, when Akintola's Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) cooperated with federal government of Bafawa Balewa's dominated Northern People's Congress (NPC), the region had continuously remained in opposition at the national level, and jealously guarded against any form of "intrusion" into its domain.

This trend continues in the second republic (1979-83), when the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) controlled politics of the region and provided opposition at the federal level, a situation that was reenacted in 1999, when the AD captured the region. The trend, however, suffered a temporary setback in 2003, when the Southwest appeared to be a shadow of its former self. Its stronghold on the politics of its domain particularly the masses was seriously denuded by the outcome of the 2003 elections.

In the general elections of 2003, the party in/of the Southwest - Alliance for Democracy (AD) - was mercilessly routed and eclipsed by the party at the centre, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). The PDP recorded a landslide victory in five of the six states in the Southwest, which had hitherto been under the firm grip of the AD, since the return of the country to the path of democracy on 29 May, 1999. The hope of reviving opposition politics through the 2007 elections also faltered, with the PDP recording more resounding landslides in the elections at all levels. Like in 2003, the party of the south west (Action Congress) also suffered serious defeat in, until some of the results were overturned through protracted judicial process. Thus, the gradual

consolidated drift towards a one party dominant state, or albeit a one party state *de facto*, with very devastating impact on opposition politics, was arrested. As at today, the south west has regained its opposition stronghold on the region, with the party of the region, the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), firmly in control of five of the six states of the region.

### **Preparation for the Election**

The 2015 elections are crucial in Nigeria's political development, particularly in terms of electoral governance. The emerging signs across the country are, however, not heartwarming. Among other events with great security threats, the Boko Haram insurgency, Asari Dokubo and Kingsley Kuku's threats about the possible breakup of the country if Goodluck Jonathan is not reelected president in 2015, the Governor's Forum/Northern Governors Forum/PDP Governor's Forum Debacle, President Jonathan/Rotimi Amaechi imbroglio, intra-party squabbles and rising poverty and youth unemployment in the midst of excruciating official grafts, all manifestations of deficit of governance, remain major sources of security conundrum before, during and after the elections. These and related events only signify one thing: the ascendancy of the centrifugal, at the expense of the centripetal forces of the country. The 2015 general elections, therefore, promise to be hotly contested than others before it under the fourth republic.

Though a national phenomenon, the 2015 election security threats are, however, differentiated by geopolitical peculiarities. While the South West may not have witnessed serious physical security breaches, in comparative terms with the North and the South East, its political configuration as the hub of opposition politics in the country, makes it worthy of special consideration. The open threats of the party in power at the centre, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), to regain the South West at all costs, in places such as Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun and Ekiti, make it the more pertinent to pay timely and adequate attention to security threats of the elections.

### **Political Parties and Likely Candidates**

Of the six serving governors in the South West, only two, Raji Fasola and Olufemi Mimiko of Lagos and Ondo states respectively, are two termers among them. The import is that they are out of the race for reelection but may want to play important role in determining the choice of their successor. The first termers, namely Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti, Raufu Aregbesola of Ogun, Abiola Ajimobi of Oyo and Ibikunle Amosun of Ogun states, are candidates to watch out for in their parties and the politics in the region. The position of Ahmed Bola Tinubu, overall political leader of the region remains key in determining who gets nominated to run for office and how the politics of the region shapes out in 2015.

However, the contest for the governorship race in these states will not be restricted to the incumbent's party. Several other parties may field candidates, but as usual, the main contenders to watch out for, in addition to those of the incumbent's party, are candidates of the PDP and Labour Party (LP).

### **Presence and Activities of Non-State Actors**

Though largely stable politically, the south west has a history of electoral violence, most notably the 1983 post-election violence -the Adekunle Ajasin/Omoboriowo saga- which a public commentator described as the 'house of war'. Similar things happened in Oyo state during the same period between the supporters of the UPN and the NPN, reenacted in 2003 and 2007 in some states, most notably Osun. The activities of various violent political gangs, disguised as security outfit across the states, call for concern. The Odua People's Congress (OPC), especially in Lagos state, Operation Burst in Oyo state, among others, constitute serious security threats.

The question of security contract allegedly awarded to the Fredrick Fasheun faction of the OPC, and his widely reported desire to reinvent 'Awoism' under a different political platform in the south west, also deserves attention. Allegations of exclusion/marginalization of the south west by the federal government have already put the PDP in bad light in the region. Any attempt to wrestle power in an undemocratic fashion may be counterproductive.

### **Violet Hot Spots**

While the foregoing security threats apply to the entire south west, the probability of degenerating into violence is much more pronounced in some states/areas than others. Lagos State is a potential flash point for obvious reasons. One, it has a huge number of registered voters, which makes it attractive to all parties in federal elections. Two, Lagos is strategically located as the industrial and commercial nerve centre of the country. Three, its opportunities for internally generated revenue are huge. Fourth, it is the only state in the south west that the PDP has not been able to capture at all since 1999. They have never hidden their desperation to do so. Moreover, Lagos has a huge presence of security outfit: the federal vs the state, formal vs informal, etc, with varying electoral interests. It is also home to Senator Ahmed Tinubu, one of the Chief promoters of opposition merger into APC.

Ogun State was under the control of the PDP for an uninterrupted period of eight years until 2011 when the CAN reclaimed its control. The PDP has always proclaimed its resolve to stage a comeback in 2015. It is also the country home of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, who appeared to have finally fallen out with President Goodluck Jonathan. This makes the state to assume more security concerns, as the incumbent may want to deploy state power to neutralize whatever threats Obasanjo may pose to his purported reelection bid. The incumbent Governor Amosun is a first term and may wish to seek reelection in 2015. Such elections are usually tension-soaked as they tend to heighten intra-party squabbles (talk of no vacancy in the government house usually offensive and provocative). Notable politicians in the state, including former Governor Gbanga Daniel, former Speaker Dimeji Bankole and Iyabo Obasanjo, among others, who all lost in their respective bids in 2011, may want to stage a powerful comeback in some other ways to show that they are still relevant in the scheme of things. The question of internal zoning arrangement in the state also crucial. Major cities such as Abeokuta, Ijebu, Sagamu, Sango Ota should be kept under close monitor.

Oyo State is also a potential flash point in the 2015 elections. First, the incumbent is also a first term, who may seek reelection. Second, the state has two former Governors, Raheed Ladoja and Alao Akala, both first termers, who appear still interested in staging a comeback. There is a widely reported rapprochement between the two in making this happen. Three, the state has a history of political/electoral violence, as witnessed in 1983 and under the fourth republic under the defunct empire of the late Lamidi Adedibu and Tokyo, a factional leader of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW). The Olomi area of Ibadan, where the NURTW office headed by the late Tokyo is located, remains a major flash point. The existence of state security outfits, particularly Operation Burst, poses its own security concern, as it is allegedly used as the militant wing of the ruling party, the ACN. Overall, the state capital, Ogbomoso and Oke Ogun axis of the state requires adequate attention.

Osun state also requires adequate attention. Its major cities, most notably Osogbo, Ile Ife and Ilesha, have a history of violence. The Iyiola Omisore factor, a former two terms Senator with a gubernatorial ambition in the next election, makes Ile Ife an important area to watch. The incumbent Governor Aregbesola is a first termer seeking reelection. Moreover, the PDP lost power to the incumbent in a most acrimonious and contentious judicial process and they are desperate to reclaim power. The alleged religious fundamentalism of the Governor may make desperate politicians foment religious problem clandestinely.

In Ekiti State, the incumbent Governor also came to power after a protracted, albeit controversial judicial process. The controversy has, however, been finally laid to rest with the recent pronouncement of the Supreme Court nullifying the final hope of overturning the mandate by the PDP. The subsequent announcement by Governor Fayemi to query his predecessor can heighten security tensions. The fact that Fayemi is seeking reelection can only accentuate the problem. Worse still, the state also has a history of election violence, as demonstrated in the 2007 election and subsequent rerun. The state capital, Ikole, Ifaki and Oye Ekiti are usually volatile and should be watched carefully.

Ondo state has a history of electoral violence, most notably as witnessed in 1983. The 2012 gubernatorial election in the state was keenly contested and characterized by allegations of misuse of power of incumbency, electoral corruption and violence, which were never proved beyond reasonable doubts on technical grounds. As the only state in the state currently under the control of another party – LP, the ACN (APC) has never hidden its desperation to capture the state. The recent rapprochement of Governor Mimiko with the PDP and his infamous role in the ignominious Nigerian Governor's Forum election has raised suspicion that federal might may be deployed, as allegedly done in the 2012 election, to frustrate opposition parties. Mimiko will be vacating power as a second term governor and will be keen in retaining considerable influence over the politics of the state. So places like Ondo, Owo, Ori Omi axis and Ikare and Akungba Akoko, may retain their usually volatile nature and should be closely monitored.



## **Key Risk Factors**

- I. Already, the emerging signs have pointed to the possibility of pre-election, election-day and post-election violence. The deployments of federal might to factionalise the NGF, the war against Rotimi Amaechi are examples of such tendencies. Such early warning signs allow for proactive responses by elections administrators, including INEC, security agencies, civil society (election observers) in dealing with such security threats;
- II. These signs also suggest, implicitly, that the oft-repeated assurances of the federal government that it would not interfere in the elections, can no longer be taking on its face value. It is a challenge to major political actors, most notably opposition parties, civil society and the mass media to intensify their mobilization, sensitization and education of the populace on the electoral processes, particularly the need and how to vote and protect the vote without undue recourse to violence;
- III. The seeming determination of the PDP to penetrate the southwest at all cost poses security challenges. This has elicited the fear of interference from the above through the use of federal might (security agents, INEC and money) in favour of the PDP, which has been battling hard to stage a comeback since 2007;
- IV. The ongoing merger of leading opposition parties into the All Progressive Congress (APC) has the chance of streamlining party politics into two traditions, namely the progressives and the conservatives. If this happens, electoral contest may become more intense and the south west will remain the focal point of contending parties. Attention should be paid to this.
- V. The resolve of the incumbent Governors in Ogun, Oyo, Osun and Ekiti to seek reelection and the possibility of abuse of power of incumbency also has security ramifications;

## **Recommendations**

As this security threats assessment reveals, the potentials for violence during the 2015 in the south west are glaring. In order to mitigate these threats, the following recommendations are considered imperative:

- a. Activities of notable political thugs/gangs such as the OPC and Area Boys, as well as those of state security outfits like Operation Burst in Oyo state should be adequately regulated;
- b. All adhoc election administrators should be adequately trained and monitored to ensure compliance with established rules and procedures;
- c. All political parties should be persuaded to sign a peace memorandum, stating their commitment to eschew violence and work peacefully before, during and after the election; and
- d. Election offenders were timely prosecuted and sentenced accordingly to curb impunity
- e. The fact that the elections, especially gubernatorial elections in the region, are staggered as a result of the outcome of court cases that redefined the electoral birthdays of some states, offers some respite. This is the case in Osun and Ekiti, whose gubernatorial elections will come up in 2014. That of Ondo will not hold until 2016, meaning only Lagos, Ogun and Oyo will have theirs in 2015. It suggests, ideally, that there should be

sufficient human resources for all associated agencies, namely INEC, security agencies and election monitors to ensure free conduct of the election;

- f. The main electoral umpire, the INEC, should have hopefully learnt a few things about how to and how not to conduct elections from its 2011 and subsequent elections. One can only expect INEC, despite seeming suspicion about the states of its independence, neutrality and professionalism, to prove the bookmakers wrong by doing the right thing;
- g. The ongoing sensitization of the populace by civil society organizations on the need to eschew violence before, during and after the elections, can help mitigate violence