



## Security Threat Assessment: Towards 2015 Elections

### Key Risk Factors:

- Internal crisis in the ruling party
- Insurgency in the North East and communal, ethnic or religious contentions in parts of the country
- Defection of G5 governors to opposition party and possible disagreement over leadership/ candidates
- Contention over candidates including zoning of presidential or gubernatorial candidates
- Non collaborative engagement of informal policing groups

### Key Mitigating Factors:

- Coordinated activities of election security stakeholders;
- Collaboration with informal policing groups
- Early preparation for the election by INEC and security agencies
- Prosecuting of Electoral Offenders
- Collaborating between security agencies and early response to identified threats
- Sensitization of citizenry on election security issues

### Political Context

Political discourse in Nigeria in the last few months has been dominated by the internal crisis of the ruling PDP, the defection of the G7 governor's to form the New PDP (nPDP), the increasing campaigns by the major opposition, APC, and the more recent defection of G5 (of the nPDP G7) governors to APC. The security situation in several parts of the country remains very precarious with intermittent Boko Haram attacks despite of the State of Emergency in some states in North East. Communal violence, armed robbery and kidnapping are also still prevalent in several other parts of the country. Currently, there is one form of military deployment or the other in over two thirds of the 36 states in Nigeria. As we move closer to the 2015 elections, the security challenges in various parts of the country will be more about drawing a line between insurgency, militancy, criminality and politics. And this would be one of the defining features of the 2015 election.

### Preparations for the Elections

The body language of most political actors in the country seems to suggest that preparations towards the 2015 elections have commenced in earnest throughout the six geopolitical zones and in all the states. The political environment is increasingly been defined by contentions over the presidential election and gubernatorial candidates across the major political parties. However, preparations at the level of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) are yet to tangibly match the individual commitment of aspiring candidates and the security realities on ground. The voters register is yet to be updated, the relevant amendment to the electoral laws are yet to be carried out and there seems not to be any election specific security plan and strategy despite the security threats across the country. Given INEC's performance during the recent election in Anambra state, there is a general fear that a repeat in the 2015 election will certainly cause major violence across the country.

### Gender Dimension

In all six geopolitical zones of the country, socio cultural factors continue to undermine female participation in politics even as the 35% affirmative action remains far from being realized. Despite their poor representation, elected women politicians appear to also face far greater challenges both in the process of seeking for election and when occupying an elected office as well. Female representation by appointment into political offices could provide a veritable source of bridging the gender gap in politics but this does not seem to add much to the avowed 35% affirmative action in all the states.

## Presence and Activities of Non-State Actors

The poor economic situation in the country has made politics an attractive enterprise to many unemployed youths organized under different names in all the states. The militarization of the youths as instruments for systemic violence during elections underlines the need for careful and sustained engagement by INEC, the security agencies and civil society. The terrorist activities in Borno, Yobe and to some extent Adamawa State where there is currently massive circulation of small arms and light weapons raises a lot fears. Additionally, the heavy presence and activities of the military and the occurrence of communal/religious conflicts, especially in some Northern States, have sufficiently militarized many youths such that military hardware may be used with little training once acquired. The rise of an anti-terrorist youth force, the Civilian JTF, immediately comes to mind here. While at present these groups have assisted in restoring peace in many parts of the state, there is need to review their operations and develop an institutional oversight / accountability mechanisms to check possible excesses that might develop.

There are also several non-state actors involved in security related activities across the country, most of them existing as informal policing groups otherwise known as vigilante or neighbourhood watch groups in all the states. State governments have either directly been funding some of these vigilante outfits or have purposely established them with the justification that the state needs to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety and security of the people living within the State and boost economic activities.

An increase in cult activities among young peoples in some south east states, especially Ebonyi and Imo was also noticed. This does not portray good for future elections because of high patronage by some politicians to some of these groups.

## Migration and Internal Displacement

The occurrence of conflicts within the North-East has led to massive redistribution of population that may likely impact on the conduct of elections in 2015. Massive displacement of people away from hot spots of violence from Borno and Yobe States in particular underscores the need for early update of voters register so that people are not disenfranchised. More importantly, internally displaced persons due to insurgency in these states are perceived to be disenchanted with the way and manner their welfare has been handled by governments so that voter apathy may be imminent in some areas. In other areas where communal conflict is responsible for displacement of people as in Taraba and Bauchi, there is likely to be remnants of light weapons within the population for use during elections. Above all, the dislodgement of Boko Haram sect from the cities to camps in the surrounding forests is likely to affect the 2015 elections in the event they launch attack.

## Violent Hot Spots

The States have been mapped according to identified hotspots 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. The measures used for the categorization include history of violence, degree of control by incumbent and relationship with the federal government, stability of internal state party politics, existence of terrorist/militant activity, state of emergency or communal/religious conflict, bid for second term by incumbent governor, zoning arrangement etc.

- **RED:** NC – Nasarawa, Plateau, Benue; NE – Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Taraba; NW – Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto; SS – Rivers, Delta; (None for SE and SW)

- **AMBER:** NC – Kogi, Niger; NE – Bauchi, Gombe; NW – Kastina, Zamfara; SE –Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo; SS – Edo, Bayelsa; SW – Lagos, Oyo, Ogun
- **GREEN:** NC – Kwara; NW – Jigawa, Kebbi; SE – Anambra, Abia; SS – Cross River, Akwa Ibom; SW – Ondo, Ekiti, Osun; (None for NE)

### Synthesis of Key Risk Factors

- The increasing conflict within the ruling party is a major risk factor. The recent defection of the G5 governors is not only generating ripples in their states, but it is also deeply vibrating in the entire country. The political forces within the party and beyond are strengthening position; if these internal conflicts are not properly managed they could escalate into violent political conflagration in 2015.
- The defection of PDP members into APC could be a major security concern. With the history of mutual distrust, political contentions and almost annihilative posturing of contending forces now in the same party, it appears the APC may not be big and elastic enough to accommodate these varied groups. With this new development in APC there is definitely going to be a huge contention over control of the party, leadership and candidates, some of the contentions could spiral into violence.
- Vote rigging or perceived rigging will be the major trigger of violence especially around the presidential election. It was perceived vote rigging that led to the 2011 post-election violence. The level of awareness amongst citizens is very high now and so will be the drive for mandate protection; manipulation of election result could result into violence.
- There are increasing contentions over where the President of the country should come from. This is a continuation of the controversy that preceded the 2011 election and has continued to shape the national politics since then. Like what happened in 2011, if the ruling elite do not manage the situation properly, it could escalate into a huge national crisis. Similar situation are also emerging at the state level where senatorial districts within states are demanding for a taste of the governorship;
- Activities of insurgence groups, like Boko Haram and Ansaru, and local militia remain a major threat to elections, particularly in North East Nigeria.

### Mitigating Factors and Recommendations

- Election related stakeholders – including security agencies, INEC, political parties and civil society groups must commence preparation for the 2015 election and mainstream conflict management in their plans. A quarterly security situation review can be very helpful for INEC, law enforcement agencies and CSOs;
- The electoral commission should ensure early preparation for the elections. Some of these preparatory issues should include update of electoral laws, delimitation of constituencies and update of voters' register;
- The government should intensify effort in addressing the Boko Haram insurgences to avoid disruption of election activities;
- The existence and prevalence of informal police groups such as vigilantes across the country underscores the need for collaboration between the formal and informal policing groups in the country, provided there is a framework for such collaboration and partnership. Mapping, identifying and capacity building for informal policing groups should be considered in order to strengthen community participation in election security management. There is a need for development of a code of conduct for these groups and issues such recruitment, training, accountability needs to be addressed in the Code of conduct.

- v. The criminal justice system should be strengthened to ensure prosecution of instigators/perpetrators of violence and other forms of electoral offences. This would serve as a warning signal and deterrence to future offenders;
- vi. INEC should work with key institutions such as the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to sensitizing the electorate on the need to eschew violence and work for credible elections;
- vii. Inter-agency cooperation among security agencies should be strengthened to allow for effective intelligence sharing and early response to identified threats. Security agencies should pay close attention to key violent hotspots with a view to policing them effectively and mitigating threats to security around the elections.

### Map of Threats Assessment by States

