

SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT: TOWARDS 2015 ELECTIONS

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Executive Summary

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

- i. 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.
- ii. 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.
- iii. 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.
- iv. 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

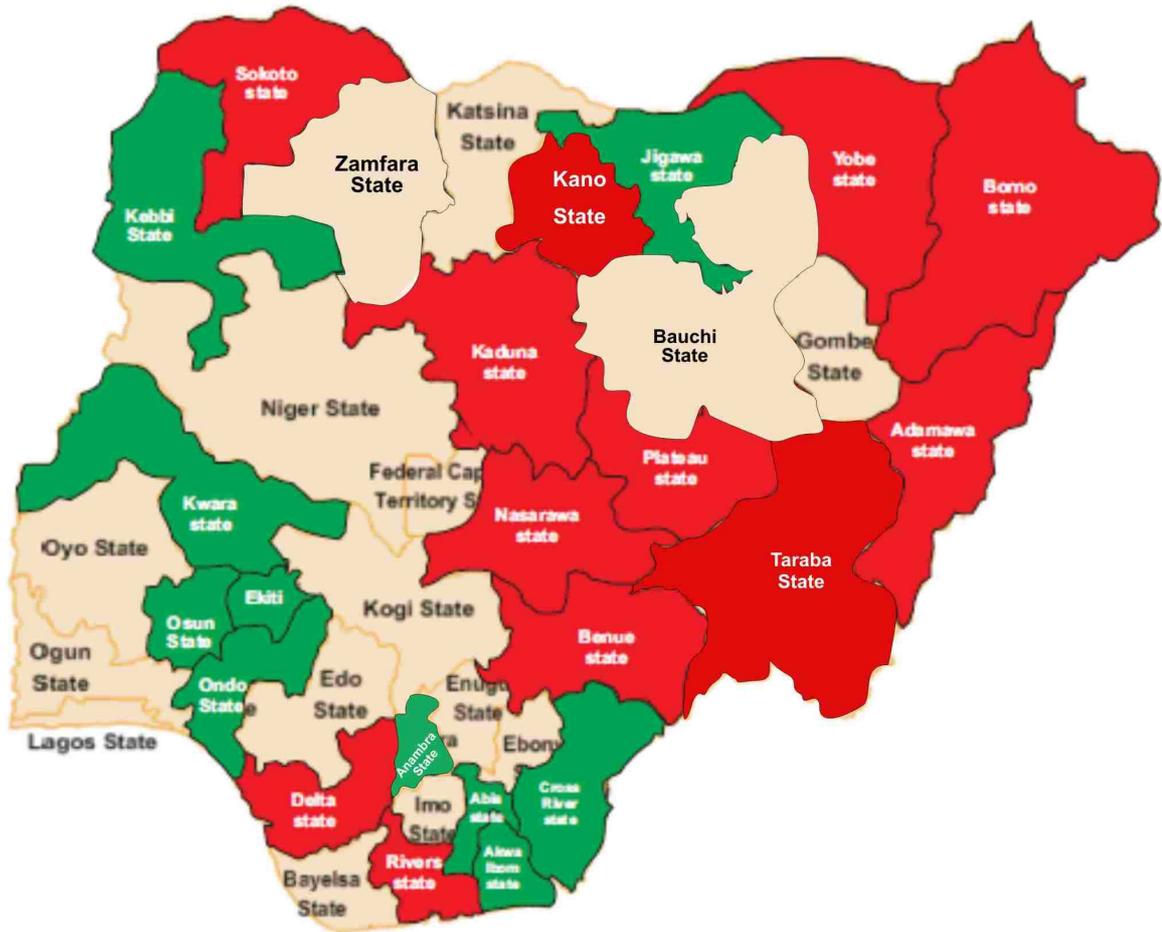
ruling elite do not manage the situation properly, it could escalate into a huge national crisis. Similar situation are also emerging at the state level where senatorial districts within states are demanding for a taste of the governorship;

- v. 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

- 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. A quarterly security situation review can be very helpful for INEC, law enforcement agencies and CSOs;
- ii. 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;
- iii. The government should intensify effort in addressing the Boko Haram insurgences to avoid disruption of election activities;
- iv. 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



SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR NORTH CENTRAL

Historical Context

The North Central zone¹ 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

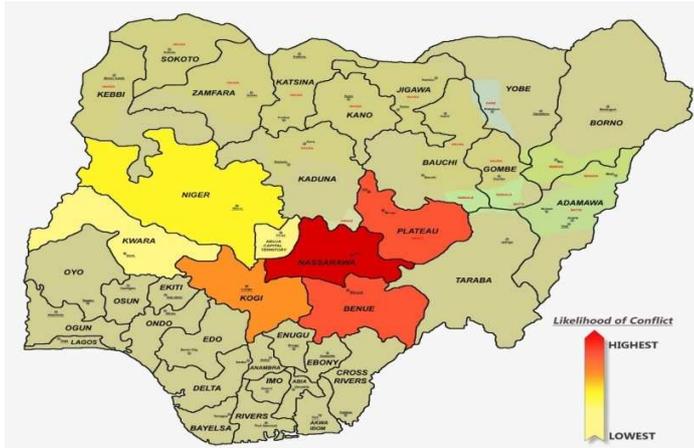
So far, public perception of security and insecurity in the North Central zone is evident in the fact that the military is currently involved in internal security management in all states of the zone, including the FCT. This situation raises serious concerns about the militarisation of the zone in the run up to the 2015 elections. One reality that is settled is the fact that the military will play a significant role before, during and in the aftermath of the elections, which makes a strategic engagement between INEC and the military an imperative².

Given the central role that INEC and security agencies are expected to play before and during the elections, it is expected that attention would be given to the institutional capacity of these entities in terms of the conduct of credible, free and fair elections in the North Central zone. Within the prism of the current political configurations, it is clear that the stakes are high in terms of competition among the political parties across the states that make up the zone.

Trend Analysis:

¹ 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.

² So far, the military is involved in the management of internal security management in 32 out of the 36 states of the federation. In the North Central zone and the FCT, the military is quite visible in these states.



The biggest threat to stability in the North Central zone as shown above is manifested in the series of communal conflicts, particularly between pastoralists and nomads, as well as the huge displacements of persons as a result of conflict in Nasarawa State. For instance, the communal conflict between Eggon and Alago in Obi LGA also led to the displacement of over 7,000 people into neighbouring Quanpan LGA of Plateau State.

There is overwhelming evidence of the militarization of the youths³ as evident in the systemic violence in the zone in the run up to the 2015 elections, which underlines the need for careful and sustained engagement by INEC, the security agencies and civil society. The key signal that is imminent, if not addressed, is such that the ballot box would be subservient to violence under an electoral process that is confronted with the twin challenge of political succession and recruitment⁴.

The Special Convention held by the ruling PDP triggered tensions, which became so dominant and visible with the emergence of the G7 made up of the Governors of Adamawa, Jigawa, Kano, Kwara, Niger, Rivers and Sokoto who in concert with the former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar staged a walk out and formed the New PDP under the leadership of Alhaji. Kawu Baraje. The defeat suffered by the group in the courts, provided three options; for the group to recognize the Bamanga Tukur led PDP, decamp to the APC, or move to the PDM. Five of the G7 governors have so far decamped to APC. One of the first test of the APC /New PDP relationship was the outcome of the local government elections in Offa ward that was conducted by the

³ This analysis was provided by Mr. James Shammah in Lafia, Nasarawa State. He drew attention to the extent to which the youths have been used as instruments for violence, which heightens tension in the zone and the country in general.

⁴ Interview with Mallam Shenu Umaru, Minna, Niger State.

Kwara State Independent Electoral Commission (KWASIEC), whereby the PDP candidate that won the election, Mr. Afolabi Olawole claimed he did not win the election.⁵

The New PDP⁶ (nPDP) has continued to engage the opposition APC with a view to forming a strategic alliance in the event of a break-down in reconciliation with President Goodluck Jonathan. Across The North Central, the Governors of Niger and Kwara are members of the New PDP, while the Governor of Nasarawa State, Tanko Almakura of the APC remains the only opposition in the zone. So far, the zone has witnessed massive mobilization by the APC in its bid to get supporters into its fold, as evident in the series of visits by leaders of the APC to the Governor of Niger State who is a member of the G7.

In Niger State, the balance of political power was designed to rest on a tripod of three principal ethnic groups – Nupe, Gwari and Hausa. Zone A is mainly Nupe, Zone B the Gwari and Zone C the Hausas. Across these zones, there are other smaller ethnic groups⁷. Since 1999, the Nupes have continued to dominate the political landscape, thus, raising the stakes on the ethnicisation of politics and political representation, with religion also playing a key role.

In Benue State the long standing agitation for power shift in a way that would provide for the emergence of an Idoma from Zone C has gained momentum. In the run up to the 2015 elections, there has been agitation for the Deputy Governor, Mr. Steve Lawani to be allowed to contest for the governorship election under the PDP. This move is meant to address the long-held discontents over the marginalization of the Idomas and Igedes by the Tivs⁸.

The demands of the G7 include: reversing the suspension of Governor Rotimi Ameachi of Rivers State from the PDP, reinstatement of Governor Ameachi as Chairman of the Nigeria Governor's Forum (NGF), removal of Alhaji Bamanga Tukur as the National Chairman of the PDP, as well as an end of what they referred to as impunity in Adamawa State where Governor Murtala Nyako is involved in a power struggle with the National Chairman of the PDP over the political control of the state.

⁵ See www.gistexpress.com/2013/09/05/pdp-candidate-refused-to-accept-victory-after-elections-were-rigged-i-did-not-win-this-election.html

⁶ The New PDP represents a faction of the PDP that staged a walk out during the Special Convention of the PDP in Abuja.

⁷ See Niger: Sliding Tackles for the Chief Servant, available at www.thenigerianvoice.com/nvnews/30595/1/niger-sliding-tackles-for-the-chief-servant.html

⁸ So far, the Tivs account for over 60% of the voters in Benue State, which has historically placed them at a vantage position in the state.

The youth question remains a recurring theme in the politics of the North Central zone. Here, emphasis is placed on mainstreaming youth participation in leadership and governance through an opening up of the political and social space. While there are evidence in the region about the extent of youth participation in the electoral and political process through both elective and appointive positions, more needs to be done in terms of the provision of level playing ground.

The political future of the elites will also play a central role in the surge in violence due to the gradual decline in their power and influence. The question of survival in the post-2015 political environment remains a key driver of uncertainty in the zone as most of the elected representatives are concerned about how to maintain their hold on political power. There is a clear and strong indication that a President Goodluck Jonathan victory will trigger serious conflicts and violence in some states of the North Central zone such as Niger, Nasarawa and Kwara, with its epicenter in Niger State, where he lost during the 2011 presidential primaries and general elections.

Recommendations:

- a) Security agencies should pay close attention to key violent hotspots in the zone, with a view to mitigating them;
- b) The criminal justice system of states that make up the zone should be strengthened to ensure proactive measures in the prosecution of perpetrators of violence and other forms of electoral offences;
- c) INEC should work with key institutions such as the National Orientation Agency (NOA) with a view to sensitizing the electorate on the need to eschew violence and work for credible elections;
- d) INEC should work with political parties and civil societies in the design of a code of conduct that will guide the activities of political parties before, during and after the elections;
- e) Inter-agency cooperation among security agencies should be strengthened to allow for effective intelligence sharing and early response.

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). Harboursing 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.

Political and Social Context

The North-East is politically divided between two rival political parties - the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) that is in power in Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe and Taraba states and the All Progressives Congress (APC) which controls Borno and Yobe States. Recent developments however indicate that internal wrangling within the PDP (if unresolved) is likely

to result in the PDP losing Adamawa to APC in which case the region will become equally divided between the two parties. All the states seem to have a defined history of party affiliation. The two states of Borno and Yobe have traditionally been opposed to the central government since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 having been controlled by All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) which recently merged with others to form the APC. On the contrary the PDP has been in power in Adamawa and Taraba states since 1999, while Gombe and Bauchi (previously ANPP) became PDP states in 2003 and 2007 respectively.

At the moment the insurgency of Boko Haram bedeviling the North-East region is likely to be the platform on which 2015 elections may be examined in the region. This is so in the light of Boko Haram's aversion to party politics evident from its attack on politicians and symbols of politics in the region since 2009. But this factor may also be complicated by other factors such as the anointing of candidates by political godfathers and resistance to such by the electorate and party officials as well as the in-fighting within the political parties especially the PDP. Of course the region's heterogeneity, being the largest in terms of ethnic diversity in the country may present yet another challenge, so also is the religious landscape of the region. While a good mix of Christians and Muslims are found in Adamawa and Taraba a sizeable proportion of Christians exist in the remaining states where Muslims dominate, this may continue to define the political tone as had it been in previous elections.

Preparation for 2015 Elections

From body language of candidates the political climate in the region seems to suggest that preparations towards the 2015 elections have commenced in all the states. This is more so at the level of candidates running for governorship of the states and to some extent candidates for the National Assembly especially the senate. Three state governors (Borno, Gombe and Bauchi) may seek re-election while the others who have completed their tenure may want to contest for the senate (perhaps except Taraba's governor who may not due to health reasons). It is in the latter states where the governors have completed their second term that anointment of candidates which typifies Nigerian politics may become more apparent. Already, the battle line is drawn in almost all the states for the governorship race. While in Taraba it is the southern senatorial zone led by Senator Emmanuel Bwacha against the other zones, in Adamawa it is likely to be between the combination of Governor Nyako and former Vice President Atiku against the current PDP Chairman Bamanga Tukur. It is currently perceived that both Tukur and Nyako will field in their children as candidates for governorship in 2015. In Gombe the rift between the former governor Danjuma Goje and the incumbent Dankwambo has finally been made public over who controls the PDP in the state, this has a lot to do with 2015 elections in the state.

Preparations at the level of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) sharply contrast with individual commitment by aspiring candidates. There appears to be no commitment by INEC apart from the proposed nationwide online training of ad hoc staff by The Electoral Institute (TEI). The voters register which remains one of the most significant aspects of the electoral process has yet to be updated despite the region's terrain which is rated among the poorest in the country, spanning from the mountainous terrain in the south to the vast sand dune landscape of the Chad Basin in the north where population is dispersed.

Gender in Politics

Like all other geopolitical zones of the country, socio cultural factors have largely prevented female participation in politics of the North-East such that the 35% affirmative action remains far from being realized. Nevertheless, of the three geopolitical regions of northern Nigeria, the North-East has the highest female representation in terms of elective positions (especially at the level of the National Assembly). Four states (Borno, Adamawa, Yobe and Gombe) have one female legislator each in the House of Representatives while Taraba remains the only state with a female senator. Chairmanship of local councils and membership of state houses of assembly have the worst record of female representation in the region. There is no female elected chairman in any of the states while Bauchi is the only state with a female member in the House of Assembly.

Despite their poor representation, elected women politicians appear to face far greater challenges both in the process of seeking for election and when occupying an elected office as well. Two main factors seem to govern female representation in the region – anointment by powerful political superiors (as in Gombe, Adamawa and Yobe) or by 'accident' through a protest vote against a male opponent that produces a female candidate as winner (Borno). Though these factors also apply to male politicians, they occur less frequently in favour of female than male politicians. The challenge faced by female politicians in the region may best be exemplified by the predicament of the female legislator in Bauchi State House of Assembly. The legislator has been under suspension for alleged misdemeanor and contempt which has lasted for over one year.

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. Throughout the region, proportion of female political appointees (commissioners and special advisers) is abysmally low ranging from 8% in Bauchi to 28% in Adamawa. Interestingly, even these appointments are largely into offices generally considered to be feminine such as ministries for women affairs, social development and those attached to the wives of the state governors.

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 Wukari/Ibbi (Taraba) and Tafawa Balewa (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.

Non-state Actors in Politics

The poor economic situation of the North-East in particular has made politics an attractive enterprise to many unemployed youths organized under different names in all the states. Previous elections, especially the 2007 and 2011 have demonstrated how these youths were effectively used as thugs to gain political advantage ranging from mundane intimidation of opposition and electoral officials, to snatching of ballot boxes and outright assassination of political opponents. That political factor is implicated in the insurrection of violent terrorist groups like Boko Haram and occurrence of communal conflicts within the region is of particular significance here.

The reported presence of terrorist activities in Borno, Yobe and to some extent Adamawa State where there is currently massive circulation of small arms and light weapons in the hands of Boko Haram raises a lot fears. Additionally, the heavy presence and activities of the military and occurrence communal/religious crises in the region have sufficiently militarized many youths such that military hardware may be used with little training once acquired. The sudden rise of an anti-terrorist youth force, the Civilian JTF and its counterpart BOYES in Borno immediately comes to mind here. While at present these groups have assisted in restoring peace in many parts of the state, they could nonetheless represent a ready-made reservoir of an exuberant force that may be unleashed on the opposition by the state government, their sole benefactor and financier.

Similarly, though *Sara Suka* in Gombe and *'Yan kalare* in Bauchi remain officially banned, there is the tendency for their resurrection given the desperation of the average Nigerian politician, poor economic situation and the practice of money politics during elections. The recent arrest of three suspicious Jalingo bound bus loads of youths along Wukari – Jalingo road by the police in

Taraba State and murder attempts of the late Taraba State Speaker Haruna Tsokwa and the current acting speaker are danger signals not only for Taraba but the North-East. Local council election slated for December in Yobe State will provide a litmus test of what may come in 2015 in terms of security during election.

Violent Hot Spots

Depending on the degree of violence that is currently prevailing or perceived to occur at a later date, violent hot spots in the North-East have been identified and categorized into three according to traffic light signals – red, amber or green. The measures used for the categorization include occurrence of terrorist activity, emergency rule, communal/religious conflict, bid for second term by incumbent governor, zoning arrangement by political parties, level of internal politics etc. Accordingly, the states of the North-East may be classified

Red: Borno, Yobe, Adamawa and Taraba

Yellow: Bauchi and Gombe

Green: Nil

Synopsis of Risk Factors

- i. Three states in the region have suffered violent religious extremism from Boko Haram.
- ii. Political Assassination: there are clear signals of politically motivated assassinations and kidnap in some states of the North-East.
- iii. Youth Vigilantes: Many people fear the hijack of such groups by politicians to gain advantage during elections
- iv. Religious/communal violence: There are pockets of areas with communal/religious violence which might extend to affect elections
- v. Anointing of unpopular candidates by political godfathers will result into conflict
- vi. Poor terrain of the region is likely to slow down the electoral process

Suggested Measures for Mitigation

- I. Identification and demobilization of armed groups and dislodgement of terrorist camps particularly in Borno and Yobe.
- II. Rapid response to poor economic conditions within the region is necessary.
- III. identification and prompt response to danger signs of communal/religious conflict through settlement of such disputes before 2015.
- IV. Justice to all parties and candidates by both federal and state governments
- V. Early preparations towards 2015 by INEC is required in view of the region's poor terrain.
- VI. Deployment of more security personnel (perhaps much more than other regions) to deal with the peculiar security problem of the region during elections.

SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR THE NORTH WEST

Context

The northwest Nigeria has historically been the hotbed of northern Nigeria politics. The last four months have been dominated by the internal crisis of the ruling PDP, the merger of the major opposition parties into APC, and the very recent defection of two PDP governors in the region into APC. The security situation is still precarious with intermittent Boko Haram attacks in Kano and some parts Jigawa state, communal violence in southern Kaduna and armed robbery and cattle rustling in Zamfara and parts of Kaduna and Katsina state. As we move closer to 2015 elections the security challenges of the region will be more about drawing a line between insurgency, criminality and politics.

Preparation for the Election

Presidential and Gubernatorial elections are already attracting the best of political attention. The political environment is increasingly been defined by contentions over presidential election and gubernatorial candidates across the major political parties. Only two of the seven state governors are eligible for re-election in 2015 – Muktar Ramalan Yero of Kaduna state and Abdul'Aziz Abubakar Yari of Zamfara state. The other five are completing their second and final term. For now it appears the contest is between PDP and APC, almost all the states are open for grab by either of the parties, although each of the parties are struggling to retain their turf. Only two of the states in the region (Kaduna and Katsina) have since 1999 been led by only PDP. Kano, Jigawa, Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara have alternated between PDP, ANPP and now APC.

With the coalescing of the major opposition parties into APC and the recent defection of two state governors into APC, the political climate in the region has shifted tremendously and has possibly changed some of the existing political structures and permutations. Series of political activities are been carried out in each of the states to galvanise action and strengthen membership base. APC has in the last three months held different rallies at different times in southern Kaduna, Zaria and Kaduna city. In Kano the merging parties of ANPP and CPC held a joint rally on the 30th of December.

Governance seems currently suspended, politics pervades everywhere in the zone. This is will likely remain so until the 2015 elections. Despite the increasing political activities in the region, there is no indication that the Independent Electoral Commission and other relevant agencies are doing much at the regional level in preparation to 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 despite the history of electoral violence in the region.

Political Parties and Likely Candidates

There are now two major political parties in the geo-political zone, PDP and APC. The emergence of APC and the defection of two PDP governors have changed a lot of political

permutations in the zone. Naturally, this has heightened the internal political contentions within the political parties, particularly the APC. How these contentions or combustion are managed has implication for the security in the region and even the conduct of elections. Although none have openly declared his candidacy for the Presidential election, the zone is likely to produce an interesting array of candidates including General Mohamadu Buhari, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, Alhaji Sani Yeriman Bakura, Rabiu Musa Kawankwaso, Aminu Tambuwal for APC and Sule Lamido for PDP, assuming he remains in the party.

At the state level, it has been chains of possible candidates across the political parties. Because of the current merger of opposition parties and the increasing defection into APC, some interested individuals are yet to openly declare their candidature. Nevertheless, massive underground campaigns are going on. In Kano for instance, the major contenders for governorship include Sheik Ibrahim Khalil, Sagir Takai, Senator Kabir Ibrahim Gaya, Bello Sani Gwarzo, Nasiru Yusuf Gawuna, Ibrahim Kankarofi, Honourable Barau Jibrin and Suleiman Kawu Sumaila. With the defection of Governor Kwankwaso and his supporters into APC, it means most of those running under PDP will throw in for APC; this may include Deputy Governor, Abdullahi Ganduje. Under PDP in Kano, some of the likely candidates include Umar Ghali Na'Abba, Ambassador Aminu Wali, Mohammed Abacha among other. In Sokoto state, although the Speaker of the House of Representative, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal name has continued to feature prominently for Presidential election, he may also be on line for governorship under APC, others may include, Umar Bature, the Deputy Governor of the state, Muktar Shagari. Senator Abubakar Gada and former Ministers of Sport, Alhaji Yusuf Suleiman are likely contenders for governorship of the state under PDP.

Gender Dimension of the election

Like most parts of Nigeria, the zone has one of the least political representations of women in the country. Although the zone 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 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. Zamfara and Katsina have also been experiencing increasing cases of cattle rustling resulting in wanton destruction of lives and property. 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 quite 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).

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

Violent hot spots

The 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 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. With the merger of opposition political parties and recent defection of Kano and Sokoto state governors, the internal contradictions of APC has no doubt increased. Internal contestations coupled with historical grievances between opposing forces now in the same party could degenerate into violence in Kano, Sokoto and Kaduna. Some of the possible violence period may be during party conventions, registration of membership and selection of party flag bearers. The threat level will therefore be high in Kano, Kaduna and Sokoto.

Flood and Displacement

Flood and massive displacement of people was a major security issue in the last quarter. Heavy downpour has resulted in serious floods in parts of Jigawa, Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara state. In Zamfara state, about 900 houses and 300 hectares of farmland were destroyed in Shinkafi Local government area⁹. In Katsina state, several houses were destroyed by flood in Maigora, Unguwar Galadima and Maska villages in Faskari and Funtua Local government, while the government relocated Tudun Yan-Tuluna village in Chiranchi local government area to protect the people from flood.

⁹ Daily Trust, August 22nd 2013, pp 9.

Key Risk Factors

Because the region is prone to violence, it takes a small trigger for violence to erupt, especially in Kaduna and Kano state. 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 defection of Sokoto and Kano state governors is not only generating ripples in these states, it is deeply vibrating in the entire region. 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.
- II. Merger of opposition parties and 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. In the run-up to the 2011 elections, the failure of CPC to resolve most of the contentions over its candidates led to different levels of conflicts that almost destroyed the party. With this new development in APC there is definitely going to be a huge contention over control of the party, leadership and candidates, some of the contentions could spiral into violence.
- III. Divisive altercation between leading political gladiators is a major source of concern in Kano and Sokoto state. In Kano there is no love lost between Kwankwasiyya movement led by Governor Kwankwaso and Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau. Finding themselves in the same party is a huge contradiction. Their historical conflict has a strong potential for violence. Similarly in Sokoto, between Governor Aliyu Wamakko and his predecessor, Attahiru Bafarawa.
- IV. Electoral manipulation – vote ragging or perceived rigging will be the major trigger of violence in the region especially the Presidential election. It was perceived vote rigging that 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.
- V. Contention over candidates including zoning of presidential or gubernatorial candidates. There are emerging contentions over where the President of the country should come from. This is a continuation of the controversy that preceded the 2015 election and has continued to shape the national politics since then. Like what happened in 2011, if the ruling elite don't manage the situation properly, it could escalate into a huge national crisis. Similar situations 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.

- VI. Activities of insurgence groups like Boko Haram and Ansaru – especially in Kano, Kaduna and Katsina. There has been intermittent attack by these groups in parts of Jigawa, Kano and Kaduna state in the last few months.
- VII. 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 play out in every election, sometimes spiralling to violence. In the last three months there has been increasing cases of attacks on southern Kaduna communities in Jama'a local government of Kaduna state. In September 2013 gunmen raided Adu village in Attackar Chiefdom, seven people were reportedly killed. Other places attacked include Nimbia, Tajak, Katsak and Fakyo all in Jama'a local government.
- VIII. Cattle rustling and armed robbery: Zamfara and Kaduna state have also been experiencing a raising spectre of violent cattle rustling. About 160 people were killed 6,000 cows rustled in Zamfara state in last three months.
- IX. Political assassination: although there are no reported cases of assassination, the killing of a female Journalist, Aisha Usman of *Mahangar Arewa* by unknown gunmen should be treated as an alarm bell. As 2015 draws nearly differentiating between insurgency, criminality and politics could become more difficult as cases like this could be disguised as Boko Haram.

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.

- 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. A quarterly security situation review can be very helpful for INEC, law enforcement agencies and CSOs.
- II. The government and political parties should also encourage issues-based politics and avoid religion and ethnic identity based mobilisation. Inter party dialogue should be encouraged.
- III. The electoral commission should ensure free, fair and credible election. This can be achieved only if INEC commences early preparation for the elections. Some of these preparatory issues should include update of electoral laws, delimitation of constituencies and update of voters' register.

- IV. 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.
- V. The government need to invest in training of security agencies on election related security issues.
- VI. The government should intensify effort in addressing the Boko Haram insurgences to avoid disruption of election activities.

SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR THE SOUTH EAST

Overview

This report briefly analyzes what may likely, if not checked, pose a huge security threat in the southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria as we prepare for the 2015 general elections that will be conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and even the local council elections by State Independent Electoral Commission in the states that will be willing to do so. It is germane that these threats be carefully studied, understood and addressed in order to improve election security in the region and Nigeria in general. This brief explores the various contexts within which security threats occurs in the South East and further presents socio-economic and structural explanations for the threats.

Security threats to elections in Nigeria and the South East in particular is not a new phenomenon, considering elections organized over the years by the colonial authorities, military and civilian regimes. These regimes conducted elections under various degrees of security risks which in most cases escalated to violence. To avert the kind of tension and violent situations we have experienced before now, it is important that while preparing for 2015 elections there is utmost need for an assessment of security threats to be carried out across the country and particularly in the south East for the purpose of this report.

Across the five states (Imo, Abia, Enugu, Ebonyi and Anambra) of the region, the common security threat among them is lack of intra-party democracy. The hardly existed internal democracy within all the political parties in the region particularly the popular ones (People's Democratic Party, All Progressive Congress, All Progressive Grand Alliance and the Labour Party, among others) has become a source of concerns by the ordinary citizens and politicians alike. One critical point that was particularly highlighted by sources available is the manner in which tensions arising from lack of certainty in the practice of sharing elective and appointive positions by the different ruling political parties in the various states. This culture of impunity has done more harm than good to the people.

However, election insecurity does not usually come to many observers by surprise because of the unacceptability of the power-sharing arrangement as opposed by aggrieved political party members or sections of difference clans or ethnic group. This scenario, using frustrated aggression theory, poses a great security threat in the sense that aggrieved individuals who get frustrated do everything possible to sabotage whatever developmental efforts embarked upon by the state. This they do through joining forces with opposition, using the local and print media to pitch the people against the government which most time lead to destruction of

infrastructures, kidnapping and killing of perceived oppositions, land disputes and communal clashes where traditional and community rulers or leaders are enthroned or dethroned as the case may be.

In sum, south easterners are as worried about 2015 elections as they are about insecurity in the region. Given the practical example of the recent election in Anambra state, there is a general fear that if INEC replicates their action(s), during the November 16, 2013 governorship election Anambra, across Nigeria by 2015, the kind of violence that will erupt cannot be imagined in the history of elections in Nigeria.

This brief is made up of the introduction which serves as the overview and following is the section that examines the specific situations in various states of the South East and what the people think about the likely solutions as 2015 elections draws near.

Analyses of situations in the five states (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo)

Abia State

The incessant insecurity situation in Abia has somehow reduced or being checked because of the killing and relocation of some of the most wanted bandits that either worked for politicians or held the state hostage for a while. As we approach the 2015 general elections, there is palpable tension in Abia state over who succeeds the incumbent Governor Theodore Orji, whose tenure ends on May 29, 2015. Available data drawn from an analysis by Nwogu¹⁰ shows that after the state was created out of the old Imo state in 1991, its founding fathers envisioned that succession to the governorship position might generate animosity among the cultural groups that make up the state. So, to nip the matter in the bud, they came up with a document known as 'Abia Charter of Equity', which principally provides for the rotation of the governorship position among the cultural zones that make up the state.

It was based on this charter that Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu, who ruled the state from 1999 to 2007, hails from Abia North senatorial zone, while his successor and current governor of the state, Chief Theodore Orji is from Abia Central senatorial zone. By 2015, the two senatorial zones of Abia North and Abia Central, would have ruled the state for eight years apiece. Going by the Abia Charter of Equity, some say, Abia South senatorial zone which is made up of Ukwa/Ngwa sub-ethnic group, should produce a successor to Governor Orji. But some parts of Ngwa land like Isiala Ngwa South, Isiala Ngwa North, and Osisioma Ngwa local government areas constitute part of Abia Central senatorial zone. And the people from these three local governments' areas

¹⁰ Matthias Nwogu (2013) 'Tension In Abia Over Who Succeeds Governor Orji'. Leadership Newspaper, September 10, 2013

say they must take part in deciding who succeeds Governor Orji, despite their being in Abia Central senatorial zone.

The danger now is that come 2015, some politicians from these three local government areas have started insisting that the next governor of the state must come from the area. They say the Abia Charter of Equity, recognizes old Bende and Aba divisions, rather than senatorial zones as basis for power rotation. The three local government areas of Isiala Ngwa South, Isiala Ngwa North, and Osisioma Ngwa, belong to the Ukwa/Ngwa sub-ethnic group. As the argument over which zone should produce the next governor of the state endures, some political pundits say the Abia Charter of Equity should be consigned to the waste bin of history, on the basis that it lacks legal backing. There are proposals that the Abia state House of Assembly should act fast and legalize the Abia Charter of Equity but this is met with frustration due to varying interests.

The agitation of Ngwa people lumped into Abia Central senatorial zone that one of their own should succeed Governor Orji, has the potential of scuttling the aspiration of the people of Abia South Senatorial zone to govern the state. It is therefore the inability of the political actors in Abia particularly among the ruling party, PDP, to resolve this power sharing model amicably will likely escalate to violence and breach of peaceful co-existence across the state by 2015. Meanwhile, it is important to note that Umuahia the state capital is quite peaceful because the incumbent governor is from there unlike successive governments. So, criminals from the area had to relocate in order to make the area governable for e government.

Anambra

The governorship election in Anambra state is a clear indication that the electoral management body, Independent National Electoral Commission, might be the principal actor that will fuel crisis not only in Anambra but across Nigeria if care is not taken. Even though by 2015, the only elective positions that will be contested in the state is federal and state parliamentary positions and the presidency. The governorship tussle which is usually keen contested will not hold by then.

The security challenge in the state as regards the 2015 election is the increase in political thuggery and the inhuman task force set up by the state governments. These militant groups (notorious of them are *mpiwazu boys*, *peter obi police*, *black and yellow men*, and *olu ani men*, among others) are being used by politicians to destabilize peace. The recent importation and migration of thugs from neighbouring states by political associates from other regions into Anambra has given a great concern to Anambra people. This situation they believe will not only cause violence in the state but may lead to cross-border or inter-state conflict if not addressed now before the 2015 elections.

The infiltration of churches by politicians and the backing or endorsement of politicians by religious leaders is a thing of worry in the state. This act by the church has remained an indelible mark in the heart of some Christians in the state thereby doubting and protesting against their religious leaders. Some are calling for the removal or sanctioning of certain religious leaders from their stations' where violence erupted due to their engagement with politicians.

Anambra state is one of the states that have not had elected local government officials for a long time. It is pathetic in the state in the sense that since 1999 the state has not had any form local government election. Successive governments have refused to conduct local government elections due to mostly personal and selfish reasons. The people of the state are of the view that if they are allowed to elect their representative at the local government level now then 2015 elections will be a work over on the condition that people's mandate will be respected. However, the state capital and its environs are relatively peaceful basically due to government strong presence in the area.

Ebonyi

There is increase in cult activities among juveniles in Ebonyi state and this does not portray good for future elections in the state because of high patronage the politicians give this different cult groups. Just like many other states, most members of the opposition parties in Ebonyi were formerly in the ruling PDP. They left the ruling party due to ill-treated melted on them prior to the 2011 general elections in the state. According to the aggrieved persons that are now mostly in APC, if there is free and fair elections in Ebonyi state by 2015 they strongly believe that the PDP will not win election in the state because it has not achieved anything in the state. For them, elections or achievements are not done by militancy, hardness or demonstrating a kind of impunity which are associated with the incumbent government.

Among the other security threats perceived in Ebonyi is the movement of the factionalized PDP members to other parties forming alliances to make the state ungovernable if the incumbent tries to impose any candidate on the state. An addendum to this scenario is also power sharing tussle among different communities and political elite interests in the state. There is urgent need to harmonise these different views before 2015 because of its potentials to cause communal clashes

In Ebonyi today, notorious among the 'militant' groups who people are scared of as 2015 election is approaching is the Ebonyi Youth Assembly under the leadership of one comrade Chinedu Oga and the other is Aguogboriga vigilante group. Most of the sources spoke to attest that the nefarious activities of these groups if not checked and controlled will jeopardize peace

in the entire state by 2015. Incidentally, these groups are said to be enjoying both government and elite patronage.

Enugu

Enugu state is generally seen as the most peaceful and secured state in the region. Enugu is among the state capitals that people find worthy of living because of the peaceful co-existence in the state. However, in terms of politics that is geared towards 2015 elections, the cordial relationship and peace which the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party, PDP, Enugu state chapter, is known for before in the state is now under threat as the 2015 general elections approach. The intention of Sullivan Chime, governor of the state, to deny two-term members of the National Assembly from the state return tickets is heating up the polity in the state.

It is no longer news to political actors in the state that during a meeting with the federal lawmakers, the governor told them that Enugu is a poverty-stricken state and that membership of the National Assembly should be seen as a poverty alleviation programme. He insisted that those who have served as federal lawmakers for two terms or more must give way for others and look for other things to do so that new people would go and have a share of the pie. Chime did not, however, foreclose the opportunity of the affected lawmakers holding other political offices, outside the National Assembly. Ten out of the eleven NASS members from the state were said to be at the meeting when Chime stated his position. Based on Chime's criteria, only three members of the House of Representatives who are serving their first term were qualified to seek re-election. They include Stella Ngwu, representing Igbo-Etiti/Uzo-Uwani federal constituency; Toby Okechukwu, Awgu/Aninri/Oji River federal constituency and Kingsley Ebenyi, Enugu East/Isi-Uzo federal constituency.

Unfortunately, using the governor's criteria, those who are not qualified include senators: Ike Ekweremadu, Enugu West and Ayogu Eze, Enugu North. Others are members of the House of Representatives and among them are Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, Udeni/Igbo-Eze North; Peace Nnaji, Nkanu East and West; Offor Chukwuegbo, Enugu South/Enugu North; Ogbuefi Ozomgbachi, Udi/ Ezeagu and Patrick Asadu, Nsukka/Igbo-Eze South. Although Gilbert Nnaji is serving his first tenure as a senator, the fact that he served two terms in the House of Representatives, also ruled him out.

However, some of the federal lawmakers reportedly voiced out their disappointment before the governor. They told Chime that Enugu belongs to all of them and nobody should impose his wish on others. One of the senators alleged that the decision was targeted at him because the governor was itching to replace him with one of his aides and reminded him that there was no such agreement in the first place.

It is therefore this protracted intra-party discord that poses serious security threat to the peace in the state as 2015 election draws near. The people are asking for amicable solution to this in order to sustain all the developmental strides by the incumbent governor. Looking at this scenario critically and possible security threat to the state, the whole of Nsukka need to be carefully monitored because people of the are bitter and seriously agitating that it is their turn to produce the next governor of the state

Imo State

The emergence of the APC and the association of the incumbent Governor Owelle Rochas Okorocho (ORO) formerly of the APGA have left many doubting a peaceful conduct of election in the state by 2015 considering the tense manner and circumstance ORO emerged as governor in 2011. Our findings reveal that ORO is neither a bona-fide registered member of APC nor is he welcomed back to APGA that he abandoned and continues to castigate. The argument is that ORO left APGA due to many reasons some of which is his continuous disagreement with the party leadership which led to the removal of his deputy. As he left APGA to *join* and/or associate with the APC, part of the key conditions for being a full member of the APC is that like other parties that merged to form APC, all of them handed over their individual party registration certificates and mandates. Unfortunately for ORO he does not have access to these vital requirements therefore could not submit any document till date. This dicey situation have left the *Imolites* wandering of what will be the fate of ORO in 2015 even when he is said to be currently having serious issues with his present deputy, and the PDP and APGA on the other hand are strategizing and mobilizing seriously to take over the state by 2015.

Imo state is one of the states like Ebonyi in the region that is experiencing rapid increase of cultism among juveniles. Just like Ebonyi, members of these different cult groups are either primary school dropouts or they still in secondary schools. The activities of these boys spread across different local communities in Oguta¹¹ local government area and this has extended to other local government areas. They engage in stealing, kidnapping, escalating communal conflict, raping and maiming unsuspected victims or people they are paid to attack. We realised that there is need for concrete efforts in curbing the nefarious activities of these boys.

Meanwhile it is important to remind us that ORO is one of the governors that are agitating for state policing. However, unknown to Nigerians and particularly the *Imolites*, state police outfit have already taking-off in Imo state. It was shocking to see that two different vigilante groups operate in the state. The first and the popular one is the local community vigilante which are organised by the communities. But there is the 'superior vigilante' being recruited and funded

¹¹ Oguta North and South LGAs are largely seen as most volatile areas in the state because of their history of crime and violence.

directly by the state government. This group is known as Imo Security Network and they are back by the State House of Assembly. The group is well armed like the Nigeria police but not well trained like them. This group's allegiance is to the governor and not to any community. It is worrisome that Imo people are scared of this so-called state vigilante groups due to the way they operate and terrorize people particularly the perceived opponents. Not even the commissioner of police can question their activities even when they are mixed up with the police in certain operations.

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.

Risk Factors

High stake for control of oil rich states

High stakes for control of the South South states stem from increased revenue that accrue to the states since 1999 when the proportion of revenues distributed on the basis of the derivation principle was increased to 13 per cent. Although intended to plough back resources to oil producing communities and uplift living standards of persons resident affected by the deleterious effects of oil production, derivation revenues have largely been deployed to boost the political fortunes of key figures, especially state governors of the states. While executive positions in Nigeria are generally lucrative, they are even more so in states with huge receipts from the Federation Account.

Governors of oil rich state are known to use the resource for accumulating political influence both locally and nationally. For instance, it is widely believed that Governor DSP Alameiyeseigha of Bayelsa State was a main funder of ill-fated project to oust President Olusegun Obasanjo in the 2003 elections. Governor Peter Odili of Rivers State is widely believed to have bankrolled several hegemonic projects of the ruling party between 2003 and 2007. The application of oil wealth was also evidenced in the emergence of Odili as the strongest presidential aspirants in the primaries of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for the 2007 elections. Similarly, Governor James Ibori of Delta State is believed to have funded the presidential campaigns of Late Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in the 2007 elections.

In the current dispensation, Governor Rotimi Amaechi of Rivers State is believed to have deployed oil wealth to cultivate national political relevance under the aegis of the Nigeria Governors' Forum. It is also believed that it was the oil wealth factor that explains the emergence of Governor Godswill Akpabio as leader of the factional PDP Governor' Forum

purportedly established to undermine Amaechi's influence. Thus, control of the oil rich states is not only important for individual candidates but political parties who need the resources of the fat cows to operate in a political environment where money counts.

The stakes for controlling the geo-political zone is expected to increase in the 2015. This is because while the ruling party will seek to ensure that Jonathan who hails from the region wins a landslide victory, the opposition party would seek to make significant inroads to demonstrate that the president is not popular in his home-base. This is especially the case as opposition parties are working on the assumption that president Jonathan will soon break his silence and announce his long-suspected ambition to serve another four- year tenure.

Bitter feuds and rivalry among key political actors

The deterioration of relations among key political actors in various states in the region possesses is a continuing risk factor. The state likely to be worse affected by this factor is Rivers State where Governor Amaechi has been embroiled in disputes with President Jonathan and his allies. The face-off has culminated in the decampment of Amaechi from PDP to the newly formed opposition All Progressive Congress (APC). The battle for the soul of Rivers State in 2015 has already ignited incidents of violence notably in the Rivers State House Assembly, where a minority group of legislators plotted to overthrow the leadership of the pro-Amaechi legislature. Some clashes have also been recorded between supporters of Amaechi and supporters of Barr. Nyesom Wike, coordinating minister of education- the acclaimed leader of Jonathan's allies in the state. The feuds have resulted in a total war with both parties using both legal and extra legal means to achieve their aims. For instance, while Jonathan's allies have taken over control of the PDP in the state, Amaechi's supporters have indefinitely suspended the operations of the pro-Wike Obio Akpor Local Government Council.

To a lesser degree similar feuds are emerging between politicians in other states. Of concern to analysts is the situation in Akwa Ibom State where Governor is estranged with his former deputy governor (Nsima Ekere) and former secretary to the state government (Umanah Okon). The former allies of the governor were unceremoniously removed from office for declaring their interests to run for the governorship in 2015.

Extreme mobilizations among anxious ethnic and communal groups over shaky power sharing arrangements

Complicating the feud among politicians in the different states is the jostling of ethnic and communal groups for relevance in the 2015 election. This anxiety has stemmed mainly from perceived threats to existing power arrangements. For instance, in Akwa Ibom State, the estrangement of Akpabio with his quondam friend and SSG Umanah Okon Umanah stems

from Akpabio's expressed sympathy for the election of his preferred candidate from Eket Senatorial District as the next governor of the state. Umanah is an Ibibio from Uyo Senatorial District. While Akpabio has hinged his support for an Eket candidate for the governorship on the fact that the zone has not produced a governor since 1999, Umanah and his allies feel the governor breached an agreement to support him in return for the role he played in mobilizing the dominant Ibibio people to support Akpabio who was opposed by prominent Ibibio leaders in 2007 and 2011 elections. Akpabio is from the minority Annang ethnic group.

Similarly, the feud between Amaechi and Jonathan has been complicated by ethno-political factors. Amaechi's group claims Jonathan's preferred candidates for the governorship are from Rivers East Senatorial District which is not supposed to produce the governor since the district also produced both Celestine Omehia and Amaechi who have been in power since 2007. While Amaechi is believed to be fronting Senator Magnus Abbe, an Ogoni from Rivers South East that has not produced a governor, the Jonathan camp is believed to be fielding either Wike, Amaechi's ethnic kinsman or Senator Thompson Sekibo, who his Dame Patience Jonathan's Okrika kinsman. The Ikwerre and Okrika make up Rivers East Senatorial District.

In Delta State where the Delta North Senatorial District feels it is its turn to produce the next governor, there are concerns that the mobilizations by prominent Urhobo politicians to engineer emergence of their kinsman as governor. Interested politicians from Delta North including the serving speaker of the State House of Assembly and Chief of Staff to incumbent Governor Uduaghan are perceived to be committed to ensuring that they do not lose their own turn. The insistence of the Urhobo to produce the next governor is partly linked to the history of the creation of the state. Some key leaders of the Urhobo led advocates for the creation of Delta State have not accepted the inclusion of Anioma people of Delta North Senatorial District in the state.

Similar ethno-regional sentiments are being mobilised in the quiescent Cross River State. Prominent politicians from Cross River South Senatorial District want to fill the slot while the people of Cross River North claim it is their turn as they have not produced an elected governor since 1999. Governor Donald Duke (1999-2007) was from Cross River South while incumbent Governor Liyel Imoke is from Cross River Central. Although Governor Imoke has reportedly expressed support for a candidate from Cross River North, there are fears of surprises. The fears are hinged by widely believed reports of a pact by the so-called Three Musketeers (Duke, Imoke and Gershom Bassey) to govern the state successively for 24 years. The snag is that Bassey like Duke is an Efik from Cross River South. The fears of interested politicians and people of Cross River North Senatorial District has been heightened new narratives deployed by proponents of return of power to Cross River South. This narrative claims that the recognized basis for power sharing

is the Cross River South and Cross River North. Cross River North is made up of the Central and North districts while Cross River South includes the South District. Groups from the North District are mobilizing to resist this narrative and the rumoured hidden agenda of Imoke to install his friend.

The South South is vulnerable to violence along ethnic lines due to intense competition among numerous ethnic and communal groups to power and resources.

Proliferation and political mobilization of cults and armed groups

Fears of violence in the 2015 election are also linked to evidence of proliferation and reincarnation of militant groups across the region. A similar pattern in the lead to the 2003 elections had adverse implications for human security. The fear is most pronounced in Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers states where ex-militant leaders are believed to be rebuilding their networks in preparation for the 2015 elections. Some ex-militant leaders have already taken sides in political conflicts in their states. For instance, Ateke Tom of the Niger Delta Vigilantes and Germans confraternity has openly threatened to challenge Amaechi for working against the interest of the president. Asari Dokubo of the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) has equally threatened violence in the region if Jonathan is not re-elected.

These threats are taken seriously given the amount of resources and arms at the disposal of some of the groups. Moreover, the capacity of ex-militant leaders to influence electoral outcomes is evident in Bayelsa State where some of the militants that benefit from the largesse of the amnesty programme sponsored and manipulated elections of their candidates during the last local government council elections.

Uncontrolled flows and dissemination small arms and light weapons

The uncontrolled flow of weapons in the region from the porous waterways of the Gulf of Guinea is another threat to election security. There is wide perception that weapons are being traded in the region and that some political interest groups are stockpiling weapons as part of their war-chest for the 2015 elections. Arms proliferation was also a key threat to security during the 2003 elections especially in Bayelsa and Rivers state.

Organized crime and deployment of proceeds of illicit trade in commodities for political contestation

The transition from militancy to organized crime in the Niger Delta is another source of concern to residents and security analysts. Large scale oil bunkering and crude oil theft continues unabated in the region and some of the proceeds of oil theft have previously been linked to manipulation of electoral outcomes. Suspected involvement of highly placed so called sacred

cows in the illicit business has reinforced perceptions that slush funds from oil theft will be applied for political purposes.

Hotpots

Rivers State – Red. Very high risks

Bayelsa, Delta and Akwa Ibom- Amber-High risks

Cross River and Edo- Green- Medium risks. There will no governorship election in Edo in 2015.

Triggers of violence

Events likely to trigger violence include the following:

Rivers State

If the Supreme Court judgement results in the toppling of Amaechi, his supporters will most likely resort to violence. The same response will follow any successful attempt to impeach the governor by force.

Violence is also likely if the police authorities taken action to arrest Amaechi or his allies given the perception that Police Commissioner Mbu is working for anti-Amaechi interests.

Rivers State is also likely to boil over the insistence of Amaechi to suspend the Obio Akpor LGA Council which was reinstalled by the Court of Appeal.

Delta State

There is likely to outbreak of violence in Delta North is the PDP primaries results in the election of a person that is not of Anioma Origin.

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.

Key Security Threats Issues in the Gubernatorial Election

The race for the highest political offices in the six states of the south west may have commenced. Yet, it is too early to state categorically the candidates to watch out for in the gubernatorial election. However, it is possible to prognosticate into likely scenarios. First, we need to understand the fact that only two of the serving Governors, namely Raji Fasola and Olufemi Mimiko of Lagos and Ondo states respectively, are second termers. 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 successors. Their body language will, therefore, be crucial identifying potential candidates of their parties.

Second, the first termers, namely Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti, Raufu Aregbesola of Osun, Abiola Ajimobi of Oyo and Ibikunle Amosun of Ogun states, are candidates to watch out for in their parties. This is not to say that their candidacy will be automatics, without contestation from other members of their parties. 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). The realignment of political forces and party defections, especially in Ogun and Ekiti states, remain potential sources of security threats.

Synthesis of Security Threats

- 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;
- Language of violence: The signs are not encouraging. Both ruling and opposition parties have been using foul language to express their desire to retain and/or capture power at all cost. This has manifested in states such as Lagos, Ogun, Ondo and Osun, among others.
- 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;

- 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;
- The merger of leading opposition parties into the All Progressive Congress (APC) may help streamline party politics into two traditions, namely the progressives and the conservatives. Consequently, electoral contest may become more intense and the south west will remain the focal point for contending parties. Attention should be paid to this;
- The seeming hostility of the northern governors against the reelection bid of President Jonathan may make the south west more strategically located in the calculations of the ruling PDP. Such an agenda may be prosecuted using the federal might. If executed, such poses its own unique security challenges;
- 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;

Potential Flash Points

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. This study identifies the most violence-prone states and areas in the 2015 elections as follows:

- **Lagos state:** Lagos 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. The PDP has 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. The purported security contract to the Fasheun faction of OPC only adds troubling twists and turns to the issue. Yet, it is home to Senator Ahmed Tinubu, one of the Chieftains of the APC. However, a major issue that could generate serious security threats in the state is the increasing agitations by Christians that the state has been governed only by Muslims since 1999. The demand for a Christian Governor in 2015, if not well handled, could spark religious violence before, during and after the election. Another important factor that could pose some security threats in the state and deserves adequate attention relates to the massive influx of migrants, or better still, those displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency from the northern part of the country.
- **Ogun state:** Under the control of the PDP for an uninterrupted period of eight years until 2011 when the ACN 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 signs are already emerging. The defection of Gbanga Daniel into the Labour Party, and the official handover of the party structure in the state to him, is a testimony. Gbanga Daniel will like to prove a point –that he merited the trust reposed in him by the labour party. Only time will tell how such realignment will alter the power and security equation of the state. Although the state regulated and largely funded vigilante group has reportedly not been known to be politically involved, the question many are asking is how long they can remain non-partisan, especially as the 2015 election approaches. The question of internal zoning arrangement in the state is also crucial. Major cities such as Abeokuta, Ijebu, Sagamu, Sango Ota should be kept under close monitor.

- **Oyo state:** The state is also a potential flash point in the 2015 elections. First, the incumbent is also a first term, who has expressed his desire to seek reelection. Second, the state has two former Governors, Raheed Ladoja and Alao Akala, both one 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 strategic importance of the place was underscored by the fact that when Akala and Ladoja used the place for the official commemoration of their purported merger, during which some pocket of violence reportedly occurred. 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 CAN (now APC). Overall, the state capital, Ogbomosho and Oke Ogun axis of the state requires adequate attention. The state has also played host to many returnee migrants displaced from the north by the Boko Haram insurgency.
- **Osun state:** The state 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 term seeking reelection. Moreover, the PDP lost power to the incumbent in a most acrimonious and contentious judicial politics. Groaning under the anguish of such a defeat, they are desperate to reclaim power. The alleged religious fundamentalism of the governor may make desperate politicians foment religious problem clandestinely. This is particularly

worrisome, given protracted controversy over the reclassification of schools in the state in manners many have interpreted as anti-Christians. The controversy over the policy reached a crescendo when the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Osun state chapter, declared in a recent press conference that the policy could promote terrorism in the state. This deserves close security monitoring.

- **Ekiti State:** The incumbent Governor also came to power after a protracted, albeit controversial judicial politics. 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. However, a most troubling dimension that could generate security threats in the state has to do with the intra-party conflict of the ruling APC over the governorship ticket of the party in 2014. The 'war' over this issue between the incumbent, Kayode Fayemi and a member of the House of Representatives, Michael Opeyemi Bamidele has been generating security concerns in the state. The recent defection of Bamidele to the Labour Party has only added troubling twists and turns to the development. This is because his defection is already generating tensions within the Labour Party and Bamidele is being accused of a hidden agenda aimed at capturing/hijacking the party structure at the state, local government and ward levels, for which some members of the party have threatened to confront him. The situation is gradually getting out of hand with the clash between old members of the party and loyalists of Bamidele at the Labour Party secretariat in Ado Ekiti. This should be closely monitored.

- **Ondo State:** The state is 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 (now part of 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. Unconfirmed sources have it that Kingsley Kuku, Chairman of the Niger Delta Post-Amnesty Implementation Committee, has emerged as a strong gubernatorial candidate to watch in the state. If validated, his actions and/or inactions will prove vital for the security of the elections in the state come 2015/2016.

Threats Mitigation Factors

- 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;
- 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 taken 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;
- 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;
- The two states where the incumbent will not rerun, having had two terms, are potentially better positioned to witness lower level of violence;
- The main electoral umpire, the INEC, should have 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;
- 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; and
- The 2011 post-election violence and attendant woes, credited largely to the corruption of the election, have been monumental in all ramifications. The scar may remain in the collective sub-consciousness of many in the country. That may help reduce the proclivity to violence; and

Conclusion and Recommendations

As this security threats assessment reveals, the potentials for violence during the 2015 in the south west are glaring. The signs are already there for all those who care to see as articulated in the foregoing scenarios. In order to mitigate these threats, the following recommendations are considered imperative:

- There is need for all institutions connected with the administration of the election to embark on confidence building with all political stakeholders in the election, most notably the ruling and opposition parties, civil society organizations and the people at large. In particular, INEC and security agencies should meet periodically with these actors to assure them of their neutrality, impartiality, willingness and ability to act in a

way that will ensure free, fair and credible elections. This is crucial in the wake of ongoing abuse of power by the ruling PDP at the centre;

- Notable potential flash points identified across the various states should be given more security protection, together with more election observers, in such a way that no ballot station will be left uncovered;
- 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;
- There is need for demilitarization of the mind through social mobilization of the people on the need to shun violence before, during and after the election. This is a task for political parties, INEC, civil society organizations, mass media and the generality of the people;
- All adhoc election administrators should be adequately trained and monitored to ensure compliance with established rules and procedures;
- 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
- It is time to election offenders were timely prosecuted and sentenced accordingly.