



ADAMAWA STATE: Election Security Threat Assessment

Key Risk Factors:

- History of ethnic and religious tension worsened by recent sectarian killings.
- Popularity of three leading candidates.
- Perceived bias by law security agencies.
- Factionalization of PDP, which may weaken their support base and increase desire to rig.

Key Mitigating Factors:

- Improved capacity and integrity in election management by INEC under Jega's leadership.
- Better coordination of security agencies during elections.
- Training of all Area commanders and DPOs in Adamawa State on Election security.

Introduction

The gubernatorial election scheduled to hold on January 21, 2012 in Adamawa State is heating up the state already traumatized by sectarian killings and generating fears of possible outbreak of electoral violence. The fear is not unfounded given the state's history of deep ethnic and religious divisions, fierce competition for political power and presence of influential politicians. In this threat assessment, the various factors that may engender electoral violence are examined. The mitigating factors are equally discussed.

Brief History of Adamawa State

Adamawa State was created in 1991 with Yola as capital. The State is located in the northeast of Nigeria and shares land borders with Borno State in the north, Gombe State in the west, Taraba State in the south and the Republic of Cameroon in the east. Until 1991, Adamawa and Taraba States constituted Gongola State, which was created in 1976 by splitting then Northeastern State into three states: Bauchi, Borno and Gongola States. The major towns in Adamawa are Yola, Mubi and Michika.

There are 21 Local Government Areas in the State. These are: Demsa, Fufore, Ganye, Gireri, Gombi, Guyuk, Hong, Jada, Lamurde, Madagali, Maiha, Mayo-Belwa, Michika, Mubi North, Mubi South, Numan, Shelleng, Song, Toungo, Yola North, Yola South.



These local government areas are grouped into three senatorial districts:

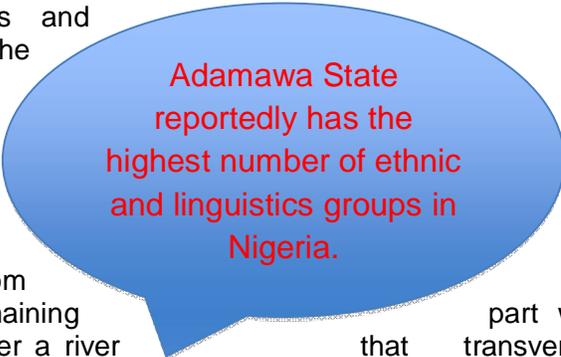
S/N	Senatorial District	Local government Areas in each district
1.	Southern Senatorial District	Toungo, Ganye, Jada, Mayo-Belwa, Demsa, Numan, Lamurde, Guyuk and Shelleng

2.	Central Senatorial District	Fufore, Gireri, Gombi, Hong, Song, Yola North and Yola South
3.	Northern Senatorial District	Maiha, Mubi South, Mubi North, Michika and Madagali

Ethnic and religious factors in Adamawa politics

Adamawa State reportedly has the highest number of ethnic groups in Nigeria, with an estimated 80 ethno-linguistic groups¹. Some of the larger ethnic groups are Mumuye, Higi, Kapsiki, Chamba, Margi (Marghi), Hausa, Fulani, Godogodo, Kilba, Gude, Wurkum, Jukun, and Bata. The Fulani ethnic group exercises political and economic dominance over other groups even though in numerical terms it is a minority group within the context of the overall population of the State. Christianity and Islam are the dominant religions in the state.

Ethnicity and religion constitute major divisions and instruments of political mobilisation in the state. The major ethno-religious contention is the perceived dominance of the Fulani and Muslims. An indication of this often cited by various analysts in the state is the alleged imposition of 'Adamawa' as the name of the State to reflect and sustain Fulani hegemony instead of Gongola, reportedly preferred by majority of the population. When Taraba State was created from Gongola State in 1991, it was expected that the remaining



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part will continue to be known as Gongola State, named after a river that transverse the state and following established tradition in state creation in Nigeria. For instance, Plateau, Kwara, Bauchi, Borno, Oyo, Ondo, Imo, Anambra and Rivers states from which Nasarawa, Kogi, Gombe, Yobe, Osun, Ekiti, Abia and Bayelsa States respectively were created retained their names. The only odd case so far is Adamawa State, named after a nineteen century Islamic Scholar and jihadist, Modibo Adama, who founded the Lamido dynasty.

The state parades several influential politicians known nationally. These include Abubakar Atiku (former vice president), Bamanga Tukur, Jibril Aminu, Jonathan Zwingina, Paul Wampana, Buba Marwa, Nuhu Ribadu and Bala Takaya. The political alliance and contestation in the State are influenced by alleged determination of the Fulani elites to retain their dominance and the struggles of other groups to thwart the equation. In this respect, ethnic and religious rhetoric are liberally deployed in political mobilisation.

Some indigenes of the state argue that attempts by politicians who are non-Muslim/Fulani to become the governor of the state were often frustrated through diverse means including electoral fraud, condoned by security agencies and electoral commissions. They also claim that federal level appointments from the state are often given to the Muslims/Fulani. However, Boni Haruna, a Christian, was the governor of the state for eight years, from 1999-2007. In spite of this development, perceptions of ethnic and religious domination continue to colour politics of the state and tend to inflame communal conflict and electoral violence, currently in high display in the build up to the January 21 election.

¹ Ogoh Alubo. 2011. *Ethnic Conflicts and Citizenship Crises in Central Nigeria*. University of Ibadan: The Programme on Ethnic and Federal Studies, and Otite, O. (1990) *Ethnic Pluralism and Ethnicity in Nigeria*. Ibadan : Shaneson C. I. Limited.

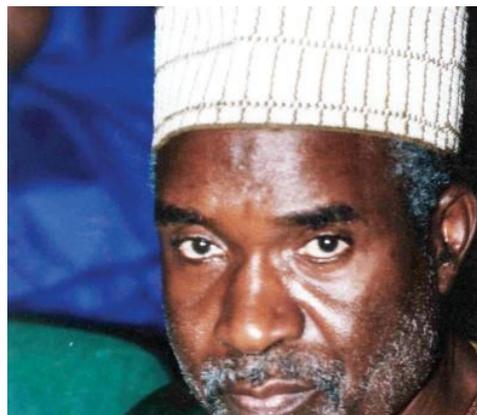
Parties and Candidates in the Gubernatorial Election

Five political parties are contesting the gubernatorial election, with the following as their candidates:

S/N	Political Party	Candidate
1.	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Murtala Nyako, incumbent governor
2.	Congress for progressive Change (CPC)	Muhammed Buba Marwa, former military governor of Lagos
3.	Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN)	Marcus Gundiri
4.	All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP)	Ahmed Usman
5.	African Democratic Congress (ADC)	Zainab Baba kwonchi

However, the contest will be fierce among the candidates of the PDP, CPC and ACN, given the strength of the parties and pedigree of their candidates. Nevertheless, Zainab Baba Kwonchi of the ADC, being the only female candidate and former Commissioner of Health in the state is expected to give a good account of herself given the numerical majority of the female population in the state although her party is relatively unknown and lacks structures for grassroots mobilisation.

Murtala Nyako, the PDP candidate, will not only count on the incumbency factor as the current governor of the state but also on the fact that his party has ruled the state since 1999 when the fourth republic began and has extensive structures in all the local government areas in the state. He will add to his advantage the fact that his party also rules at the federal level and has significant influence on all state institutions that would play critical roles during the elections, especially the electoral commission and security agencies. A testament to his access to the national seat of power was the fact that his re-election campaign was flagged off by no less person than the Vice President, Alhaji Namadi Sambo, who represented the president.



However, the PDP in Adamawa state has been characterized by factionalization and exclusion of opposing tendencies. In 2007, Atiku Abubakar was literally deregistered by a faction of the party state led by Nyako and Jibril Aminu to frustrate his presidential ambition, which forced him to leave the party. Effort by Atiku to return to PDP in 2010 was equally resisted by the duo and their followers. Paradoxically, in the build up to January 21 election, Atiku and Nyako have since reconciled and joined forces against Jubrilu Aminu in a classic case of no permanent friend/enemy in politics. The permutation of political pundits in the state is that this fallout and realignment of forces and parties may ripple public peace during the election as the gladiators try to outdo one another in winning the support of the people who have not seen much in terms socioeconomic development of the state.

Buba Marwa, the candidate of CPC is a retired Brigadier General, former military administrator of

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Borno and Lagos States and until recently a prominent member of the PDP who left the party on account of his dissatisfaction with the way the gubernatorial primary was conducted. The emergence of Marwa and his populist rhetoric of implementing free education, free healthcare for nursing mothers and children, as well as empowerment of the youths, has energized Adamawa gubernatorial election campaign trail. There have been reports of decamping of supporters from parties, especially, PDP to CPC, largely due to his emergence. Similarly, though his party is relatively new on the political party map of the fourth republic, it has a huge following among the mass, especially young people in the northern part of Nigeria. The party did very well in the April 2011 presidential and National Assembly elections, though blighted by allegations that its members fueled the post elections violence that followed the presidential election. This allegation is yet to be established in a court of law.

However, political analysts in Adamawa State argue that Marwa faces a lot of hurdles in actualizing his ambition, principally because of where he comes from in the state, given the politics of zoning in Nigeria. Marwa is from Michika in the northern senatorial district of state, where Boni Haruna, the former governor of the state hails from. The argument is that Marwa should not have come out now because the northern zone produced Boni Haruna who ruled for two terms of four years. Instead, Marwa should have allowed the southern zone, which incumbent Governor Nyako represents, to have its run of two terms. Feelers from Marwa's camp suggest that he is unruffled by this argument and continues to energetically pursue his ambition. The major fear of political watchers in the state is how his youthful supporters would react if they feel that the election is rigged against their candidate, given the already charged political atmosphere, not helped by outbreak of sectarian violence in parts of the state.



Marcus Gundiri, the candidate of ACN, is an engineer by profession and the only Christian in the race for Adamawa government house. Although a green horn in politics, he has managed to attract a huge following within a short time of entering the race with his gospel of change, based on his argument that the resources of Adamawa State have not been properly deployed for the benefit of the people and that he is the candidate that would do just that.



Being the only Christian in the race, it is expected that the religious and ethnic factors may play to his advantage if he decides to go that route, although it would certainly contradict his change mantra. However, a major hurdle facing his candidature is the fact that his party's stronghold is the southwest region of Nigeria and there is a perceived reluctance on the part of the national leadership of the party to invest seriously in building a national base and in supporting candidates contesting elections outside of the region. Ironically, the two presidential candidates that have contested under the platform of ACN come from Adamawa State (Abubakar Atiku and Nuhu Ribadu) and both lost in the state.

The internal divisions in PDP and stiff competition among the parties, candidates and their followers are capable of igniting electoral violence during campaign, at the polling station and after the declaration of results and need to be paid attention to by stakeholders.

Threat of Boko Haram

The northeast region is known as the hotbed of Boko Haram activities in Nigeria. Until recently, Adamawa State was one of two states apparently immune from the group's campaign of bloodletting. The other been Taraba State. However, that image of an oasis in a desert of terrorist

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attacks by Boko Haram came to an abrupt end towards the end of the first week of January when the group claimed responsibility for to days of sectarian attacks that left over 60 people dead in the towns of Mubi, Jimeta-Yola and Lamurde. The incident has brought the state to the centre of the Boko Haram discourse and its likely impact on the gubernatorial elections. Already, the CPC has accused the PDP of sponsoring the attacks and targeting its members in a bid to dislodge its chances of winning the elections. The PDP in turn has made similar allegations. Even though non of the allegations have been proven, the inability of security agencies to fish out the attackers and their masterminds have not helped matters and have fed into the vibrant rumour industry in the state as to who could be behind the violence and for what purpose. The state government followed by declaring a 24-hour curfew, which has been interpreted by opposition parties as an attempt to prevent them from campaigning freely. Going into a highly contested election with this level of violence, suspicion and mistrust may make it difficult for candidates who lost the election to accept defeat rather than incite their followers to violence. Already the campaign organization of Buba Marwa has alleged a plan by an unnamed opponent to kill him and other prominent persons that support him in the state. This development clearly constitutes a threat to security during the election.

Economy of Adamawa State

The main occupations of the people of Adamawa State are agriculture, cattle rearing, craft (pottery making, metalwork, leatherwork, calabash decoration, mat weaving, canoe carving, and cloth dyeing.), fishing and employment in the formal sector (civil service and private enterprises). The major crops grown in the state are maize, cotton, groundnut, millet, groundnut, cassava, yam, gum Arabic, sugar cane and tea. Adamawa State is also endowed with mineral deposits such as limestone, iron ore, lead and zinc, which are yet to be properly explored.. There are very few large scale industries in the State. Production at the Sugar cane farm and industry located in Numan, which is the largest industrial firm in the state, has been epileptic over the past two decades. The State government is the largest employer of labour. The rates of illiteracy and poverty are very high, especially among the youth, a potent factor in the availability of and deployment of thugs for electoral violence.

Synthesis of security threats

From the foregoing background analysis of the politics, economy, electioneering campaign, inter-group relations and governance of Adamawa State, the following threats to peace and security are identifiable in the build up to the January 21 gubernatorial elections:

- Long-standing ethnic and religious polarisation and suspicion in the state, which often find expression during electioneering campaigns and general elections.
- History of factionalization, exclusion of opposing tendencies and *godfatherism* in state branch of PDP, which was aggravated recently by lack of transparency and due process in the conduct of the party's gubernatorial primary that produced Murtala Nyako as the candidate of the party.
- High level of poverty and illiteracy, especially among the youth, which may facilitate availability of young persons to be recruited as thugs to perpetrate electoral violence.
- Activities of Boko Haram in the northeast, which has spread to Adamawa State with the killing of Christians in Mubi and Yola and the inability of law enforcement and security agencies to bring the perpetrators to justice. This may compel candidates to arm their followers as the sectarian attacks have been given political coloration and interpretation by the CPC and PDP, the two leading parties.
- Proliferation of small and light weapons in the northeast region of Nigerian due to the activities of Boko Haram, porous borders and problem of banditry in Adamawa State may provide weapons and persons that may be employed for electoral violence by unscrupulous politicians.
- Gross inadequacy of vehicles and communication equipment for patrol by the police in the State, may hamper calls for backup and response to distress calls.

- The worsening incapacity of law enforcement and security agencies in Nigeria in the production and utilisation of actionable intelligence continue to undermine effective response to general insecurity in the country, which increases during elections.

Threats mitigation factors

On the positive side, the possibility of electoral violence in the Adamawa gubernatorial elections may be mitigated by the following factors:

- Improved electoral management by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which has resulted in enhanced public confidence in the impartiality of the Commission. This may moderate the tendency for people to take laws into their hands because of perceived connivance between politicians and INEC officials.
- Improvement in logistic arrangements for the conduct of the election may also minimize inadequacies such as late arrival of electoral materials or insufficient quantities of the materials, which often trigger violence at polling stations. The fact that the gubernatorial election will hold only in Adamawa State on January 21 gives INEC the opportunity to concentrate its human and materials resources to improve on its record in the state.
- Withdrawal of orderlies attached to elected officials and other politicians in general elections of April 2011 helped in minimizing the abuse of police power by the politicians. If this practice is maintained, electoral violence associated with such abuse will be minimized.
- Better coordination of security agencies for election security, which INEC facilitated in the April 2011 elections and has sustained in subsequent elections. This has resulted in fewer violence instigated directly or indirectly through incompetence, corruption and partiality by security agencies.
- Security is generally better in elections conducted outside the scheduled general elections due to deployment of additional personnel from other states. This measure reduces extent and scale of electoral violence.
- Training of all Area Commanders and Divisional Police Officers (DPOs) in Adamawa State on election security by the Justice for All (J4A) programme of the Department for International Development (DFID) in the first week of January 2011 enhanced their ability to discharge their functions effectively drawing practical experiences from performance of security agencies in previous elections.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Threats to security before, during and immediately after the gubernatorial election scheduled for January 21, 2012 in Adamawa state include ethnic and religious polarisation; contentions within and between political parties; negative perception of government performance among members of some groups in the state; high rates of poverty and illiteracy; proliferation of arms and violent gangs in the some of the neighbouring states and sectarian killings in Mubi, Jimeta-Yola and Lamurde.

Election security in the state will be enhanced if the following steps are taken:

- Political parties and candidates avoid inflammatory statements that may invoke violence.
- Negative mobilisation of religious and ethnic statements are condemned by political parties and individuals involved in such actions appropriately sanctioned.
- The government avoids undue interference in the decisions and operations of INEC and security agencies.
- INEC and security agencies are seen to be impartial in their decisions and actions and adhere to the guidelines developed by the Police Service Commission for police officers on election duty. The guideline requires police officers on duty to be punctual at their posting during election, professional in handling problems, effective and impartial in enforcing applicable laws.
- The borders and routes connecting the Adamawa State to its neighbours, especially Gombe and Borno States are adequately policed to prevent infiltration of the state by hired thugs or violent gangs during the election.