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# Battle on the Ballot: Trends of Electoral Violence and Human Security in Nigeria, 1964-2019

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## Abstract

Over time, the politics of anxiety has increased the tension of winning elections in Nigeria. This anxiety propels candidates or party members to resort to unethical practices such as violence in a bid to win elections because politics in Nigeria has become a zero-sum game. Candidates and political parties prepare for election with the mindset of winning by all cost, including engaging in pre-electoral, Election Day and post-election violence. Hence, the act of violence has been entrenched in Nigeria's political space, such that every election cycle both governments, non-governmental organizations and international community engage in programmes that promotes peaceful election. The study is aimed at examining electoral violence from Nigeria's First Republic to date and its human security implications on democratic advancement in Nigeria. The paper adopted the culture of violence theory as its theoretical construct. The content analysis was used in the interpretation of secondary data. The paper recommends amongst others to strengthen the electoral management board and enforce relevant laws on perpetrators of electoral violence.

**Keywords:** Candidates, Cultural Violence, Electoral Cycle, Electoral Violence, Human Security, Political Parties, Thugs

## Introduction

Globally, most politicians, particularly in developing democratic societies often manufacture violent tactics for electoral gains. Electoral violence has a global footprint and impact, as such deserves necessary strategies to develop an understanding of how and when such violence occurs (or can be prevented) in a variety of circumstances (Stremlau and Price, 2009, p. 5). Birch, Daxecker, and Höglund (2020, pp. 4 & 4) argued that:

Electoral violence can result in casualty tolls that meet the threshold of civil war within days or weeks; when this occurs, it can undo years of peacebuilding and development work, it can undermine democratic institutions, and it can even trigger a civil war. Post-election violence after the 2010 polls in Côte d'Ivoire led to more than 1,000 civilian deaths, one million internally displaced people, and 100,000 refugees in neighbouring countries. Recent elections

in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Iraq, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe were similarly accompanied by high levels of conflict.

One of the consequences of electoral violence in electoral apathy and low participation (Shenga and Pereira, 2019, p. 3), which harms the choice of democratic leadership, thereby eliminating accountability to the governed. Omotola (2008) buttressed that electoral violence is counterproductive, irrespective of the motives, targets, actors, and forms. Whether it is the short or long run, violence poses a huge threat to the democratic foundation of competition, participation, and legitimacy. Hence, the United Nations system, supranational organization, regional, sub-regional, and non-governmental organizations through international observation ensures that international best practices in the conduct of the free and fair election were strictly adhered to. Election-related violence is devastating such as deaths and suffering, destroys communities and cripples local economies and development prospects as have been recorded at the end of every election cycle, which threatens human security. It also harms credibility and faith in democratic processes and institutions. Birch et al (2020, p.4) buttressed that “violence, even at levels below that witnessed in the most egregious cases, undermines the democratic character of elections by substituting free choice with coercion and by deterring participation.” The notion of violence-free elections is encapsulated in the term ‘free and fair’ elections, serving as a benchmark for determining the legitimacy of elections (Höglund and Jarstad, 2010, p.1).

Electoral violence in Nigeria has received international attention due to the devastating effects that are associated with the phenomenon. The pre and post-election violence have become an increasingly observable phenomenon. The existence and destructive forces of elections pose a huge threat to political transitions, some aspects of nation-building, and notions of democratization itself. Nigeria was left with deep scars by the violence that erupted in the aftermath of the Presidential election on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2011. Historically, the first general election that was conducted by Nigeria by Nigerians in 1964 was orchestrated with electoral violence, civil disturbances, abuse of human right, among others, that threatened the internal security of Nigeria, especially in the former Western Region which led to the collapse of the First Republic on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1965. The electoral violence in the Second Republic 1983 general election adversely impacted on democratic advancement, particularly the Oyo and Ondo states electoral violence recorded over 40 deaths and destructions of properties worth millions of dollars (Egwu, 2007).

After 16 years of military rule, Nigeria returned to civil rule in 1999. Since then, the Nigerian State has been engulfed in violence not limited to the election, but ethno-religious, insurgence, militancy, among others (Abimbola and Adesote, 2012, p. 1). In the 2003 election, Nigerians witnessed an unprecedented level of electoral violence and electoral fraud, ballot stuffing, intimidation, killing, assassination, among others. It was a triumph of violence. There were no elections, but merely the intimidation of voters and the selection of already decided the winners by elites and caucuses. Human Rights Watch reported that in April and May 2003, at least one hundred people were killed and many more injured during federal and state elections in Nigeria and most of the violence was perpetrated by the ruling PDP and its supporters (Human Rights Watch, 2004, p. 1).

In the 2011 general elections, the security challenges re-surfaced in three different stages: the pre-election, election, and post-election violence. Following the figure released by the Inspector General of Police Hafiz Ringim was shocking. According to Ringim, 520 persons were murdered in post-election violence in only Kaduna and the Niger States alone. Kaduna State recorded 518 deaths, including six policemen and two persons were killed in Niger State. Ringim also disclosed that 77 persons were injured in Kaduna State. Over 22 000 persons were displaced by the crisis in the Kaduna State. Ringim revealed that about 1435 houses, 157 churches, 46 mosques, 437 vehicles, 219 motorcycles, among others were set on fire (The Punch, 2 June 2011, p. 6). The devastating nature of 2011 electoral violence led to President Jonathan set up a panel headed by Sheikh Ahmed Lemu in 2011 to take a critical review of the level of violence and make recommendations. President Jonathan in his broadcast recalled that:

If anything at all, these acts of mayhem are sad reminders of the events which plunged our country into thirty months of an Indeed, the nation still bears some of the scars of other similar

events like the aftermath of the June 12th 1993 elections that brought our polity to the brink  
(The Vanguard 21 April 2011, p. 1)

The consciousness of the electoral violence in 2011 influenced the relative calmness in Nigeria. Though, the formation of All Progressives Congress as the nation's main opposition in the country led to several pre-election violence targeted at individuals in 2015. There were few states where electoral violence in 2015. The National Human Rights Commission revealed that over 58 people were killed in election related violence ahead of the 2015 general election. About 61 incidences of election violence happened in 22 states with 58 people killed. For instance, in Rivers State, the pre-election violence and post-election were unimaginable. Over 10 buildings were damaged, 21 properties destroyed, and about 97 allegations of killings (Ezeamalu, 2015). Several bye-elections emanating from the tribunal's cancellation of elections also recorded various pockets of violence in some parts of Rivers State from 2015-2017. 2019 was relatively different from the 2015 general election. Though, the Human Rights Watch disclosed that the 2019 general election was marred by widespread violence that led to the death of 629 people in the country (Nwezeh and Ifijeh, 2019).

The antecedent has shown that the political elites have not fully come to terms with the referents of elections for democratic sustenance and national security. The political elites have refused to play by the rules of the game which demands politics of tolerance, conflict and consensus, bargaining, and compromise. Elections are seen as warfare, characterized by gangsters and political disorder in Nigeria. They prepare for elections as if they are going to war. After the 2003 election, President Olusegun Obasanjo was quoted as expressing worries of the;

... Total absence of any controls on spending by candidates and parties towards elections. I have said that we prepare for the elections as if we are going to war, and I can state without hesitation, drawing from my previous life, that the parties and candidates together spent during the last elections, more than would have been needed to fight a successful war (Smah, 2008, p. 74).

In Nigeria, electoral violence has become a recurring decimal since the first general elections conducted in 1964 by first Nigeria's indigenous Electoral Board – Federal Electoral Commission headed by the first Chairman Chief Eyo Esua (1964-1966) to date. Nevertheless, the paper is aimed at interrogating the causes of electoral violence and its impact on human security in Nigeria. The paper is imperative because there have been repeated outbreaks of electoral violence since the 1964 general election, and yet no serious steps have been taken to address the root causes of this electoral violence. The Nigerian authorities have failed to break the cycle of killings during the electioneering period by holding accountable those responsible.

### **Review of related literature**

In the past decades, there has been a surge in the literature the cause and effects of electoral violence. Ample of it agree to a strategic interpretation of the violence, others argued that it might be minor; however, the endpoint is deliberately geared toward influencing the electoral process (Burchard, 2015; Staniland, 2014). In the process of unraveling the disparity in election violence, the extant literature has pointed to changes that upsurge the incentives of political contenders to engage in violent tactics as a means of achieving a political goal. Some factors that enhance the competitiveness of the contest and raise the potential settlement from swinging the votes to their side include the nearness of the vote (Salehyan & Linebarger, 2015); if the incumbent is seeking re-election (Taylor, Pevehouse & Straus, 2017); even if the country appears to has been run properly in power (Ruiz-Rufino & Birch, 2020); and if electoral regulation encourages a winner-takes-all system (Fjelde & Hoglund, 2016). The fact remains that scholars over time, have highlighted changes in the limitations on political actors to engage in violence, which has limited the institution on the decision making powers of the relevant authorities (Hafner-Burton, Hyde & Jablonski, 2014). Hence, Fjelde (2020) argued that in understanding electoral violence, political parties are important actors. This is based on the fact that they tie elites to voters, which presents ladder to political power. Despite their crucial role in electoral competition, political parties are yet to be considered crucial in the booming literature of electoral violence. Onwudiwe and Berwind-Dart (2010) argued that inter-party clashes happen in the most electoral cycle, it is common in the post-

party primaries and during the post-election period, particularly when party supporters feel that the election was rigged against their candidates. The constituency affected usually experience election apathy and there are several cases of missing electoral materials or closed polling booths, or sometimes voters are intimidated into submission. Wahman and Goldring (2020) argued that pre-election violence is used to shrink the democratic space, thereby preventing effective campaign by opposition parties inside the party stronghold. Second, electoral violence is used in breaking the politics of territoriality and consolidate a party's presence within an area dominated by the opposition party. Agbu, Mohammed, and Garba (2019) argued that a political party's campaign in Nigeria is not based on ideology and issues; hence, they employ all form illegitimate means to win elections. The political parties strive to hate speeches to confuse the electorates, thereby diverting their attention and cause dissatisfaction among party supporters. Nigerian elections are characterized by an organized crime such as violence, harassment, killings, intimidation, snatching of ballot boxes, among others. Several factors such as government prejudice, political thugs, regional militia, ethnoreligious, party leaderships, and support groups encourage the electoral disparity in Nigeria. Young (2020) argued that election-related violence is a function of state repression which has been understudied. Over time, it has been empirically acknowledged that governments are common perpetrators of pre, during, and post-election violence, particularly when they anticipate the unfavourable result. This is carried out in various forms such as the incumbent and the ruling party agents use or threaten violence against the political opponents or potential voters during electioneering campaigns, during or after elections. The state-sponsored violence is viewed as the type of state repressive approach geared towards influence the outcome, achieving electoral gains, or election in favour of the incumbent. This is because "politicians want to stay in power" (Collier, 2010, p. 25). Nevertheless, these types of electoral violence have a negative consequence on the quality of democracy. Concerning elections in war turn countries, Smidt (2020) opined that credible elections are better approaches in stepping to democratic governance. Despite, the post-war challenges, the elections increase political competition and provide grounds for politicians to mobilize voters through the use of disinformation campaigns. Sadly, such disinformation campaigns are used as a platform to spread false information, hate speech, and rumours, which may cause panic and legitimize violence, and increase the preexisting tensions into violent protests and riots. These coercive actions are usually directed towards members of other distinct groups.

### **Theoretical framework**

The paper adopted the culture of violence theory as its theoretical construct. The culture of violence theory is an offshoot of cultural violence developed by Johan Galtung. Galtung defined culture as those aspects of humans that symbolizes sphere of our existence (Galtung, 1996, p. 176). Galtung identified religion, ideology, language, art, among others, as an aspect of culture that is used to legitimize or justify violence. Galtung further noted that "culture could be imagined and even encountered with not only one, but a set of aspects so violent, extensive, and diverse, spanning all cultural domains" (Galtung, 1996, p. 176). In this situation, cultural violence may metamorphose to violent cultures which may be warranted. The perpetrators of violence make it look legitimate so that after a long time it is acceptable in the community. Galtung argued that cultural violence makes the direct and structural look, even feel, right... or at least not wrong. Just as political science is about two problems-the use of power and the legitimization of the use of power" (Galtung, 1996, p. 176). Galtung buttressed that:

Cultural violence highlights how the act of direct violence and the fact that structural violence is legitimized and thus rendered acceptable in society. One way cultural violence works is by changing the moral colour of an act from red/wrong with green/right or at least two yellow/acceptable; an example being murdered on behalf of the country is right, on behalf of oneself wrong (Galtung, 1996, p. 176&177)

The cultural violence over the period has resulted in a culture of violence in Nigeria's political space. The fact remains that the culture of violence has invariably become a political culture since 1964 when the first electoral violence took place in the former Western Region, Nigeria. Political culture is a pattern of attitudes and practices held by people, which over the period have shaped their political behaviour. Every election cycle has experience intensified election violence. At present, political parties and candidates include violence act in their strategic plan toward achieving an electoral victory.

## Research Methodology

The paper adopted a qualitative method of data gathering technique. The paper made use of newspaper publications, journals and books on electoral violence in Nigeria and the world at large. The paper adopted a content analysis in analysing the data collected from the internet and library. These include the trends of pre, during and post-electoral violence in Nigeria from 1964 -2019 with a view of ascertaining its impact on human security. It is imperative to acknowledge that this survey is far from comprehensive of all cases of electoral violence, however, as many cases as possible as reported by the media of electoral violence in Nigeria both printed and electronic.

## Electoral violence and Human Security in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, electoral violence is the type of violence that is associated with elections, such as before, during and after the election. Electoral violence is a common phenomenon among fragile democracy occasioned their inability or failure to meet the expectation of the electorates. Politics in Nigeria is a zone sum game, hence, parties and candidates adopt unethical means of gaining victory in the election which include the use of violence. The threat of violence might be during the electioneering campaign, Election Day and after the result has been declared. However, the human security impact of electoral violence is immeasurable, particularly when it extends to non-electorates such as children who may suffer from physically, psychologically and structural violence. Human security is people-centred security. A kind of security that is associated with human freedom. It is the state protects its citizens from an internal threat. The concept of Human Security became known in 1994 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The purpose of the human security concept is to broaden security along several dimensions. The logic is to expand “beyond territorial defence, national interests and nuclear deterrence to include ‘universal concerns’ and the prevention of conflicts, but also crucially a cooperative global effort to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment” (UNDP, 1994, p. 22). Hence, security was “shifted from nation-states to that of ‘people’, and to be ‘people-centred’ was to be ‘concerned with how people live and breathe in a society, how freely they exercise their many choices, how much access they have to market and social opportunities – and whether they live in conflict or peace” (UNDP, 1994. p. 23). Hence, security includes various kinds of threat from different sectors emanating from economic insecurity, food insecurity, the environment insecurity, health insecurity, personal insecurity, community insecurity, political insecurity (electoral violence). Based on the General Assembly of the United Nations resolution 66/290, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2012, paragraph 3 agreed on “the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair. All individuals, particularly vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential...” (United Nations, 2016, p. 6). The cycle of electoral violence in Nigeria since 1964 has created fears in citizens, their communities, neighbourhood, societies and the country at large. The risk kept increasing in every election cycle leads to political apathy. The citizens hardly enjoy safety during general election periods. There are various kinds of electoral related threats on electorates identified in this study. They include:

1. Physical assault on individuals during the electioneering campaign,
2. The assassination of political opponents or people perceived as a threat to one’s political ambition,
3. Burning down of public or opponents’ property and cars among others,
4. Shooting, shoot outs by mercenaries or political thugs,
5. The killing of individuals, electorates and party members,
6. Partisan harassment by security agents, arrests, forceful dispersal of rallies, or shooting, wounding or killing of people,
7. Kidnapping and hostage-taking,
8. The bombing of infrastructure,
9. Forceful disruption of political and campaign rallies by thugs,
10. Destruction of ballot boxes and ballot papers from polling agents,
11. Threats against and harassment by security agents of opponents of the ruling regime or party, which create political apathy,
12. Shoot-on-sight orders that breed fear in voters,

13. The terror inflicted by political assassinations, which makes people scared to participate in politics or elections,
14. Publication or broadcast of abusive, insulting, or intimidating material or advertorial
15. Threats to life through phone calls, text messages, among others,
16. Coercion of citizens by the government to register or vote or be denied certain national facilities,
17. Deliberate changes in dates, venue or times of events to the advantages of others,
18. Absence of free campaign,
19. Announcement of false or fraudulent results,
20. Lengthy delays in announcing election results,
21. Delay in voting,
22. Partisan behaviour of police and other security agents, and
23. Discriminatory acts and policies.

## **Trends of electoral violence in Nigeria**

### **The First Republic-1964/65**

Electoral violence can be traced as far back as 1962 following the Awolowo-Akintola clash popularly known as the Action Group Crisis, the NPC-dominated federal government had declared a state of emergency in Western Nigeria, sacked the AG-controlled regional government (under the premiership of Chief S.L. Akintola) there and appointed the Prime Minister's physician, Dr Majekodunmi, as the Region's Sole Administrator. The state of emergency ended on 31 December 1962. The people of Western Nigeria had expected that a fresh election would be held at the end of the emergency, but the federal government merely reinstated Chief Akintola as the premier because the political atmosphere in that Region was not conducive for holding fresh elections (Ojo, 2012, p. 11). Thus, up till 1965, Chief Akintola never properly faced the electorate. He was appointed as premier of the Western Region by the AG leadership in 1959 to succeed Chief Awolowo following the latter's resignation to contest for the position of prime minister. Another regional election was, however, due on 11 October 1965. Generally, African politics are conceived in 'zero-sum' terms, that is, the notion that the winner takes all. This often makes the ruling party mobilize every available state apparatus to entrench itself in power to the detriment of the opposition (Ojo, 2012, p. 11).

The electoral battle between the alliances produced a political stalemate which, for the first time since the 1914 amalgamation, left the country without a legally constituted central government for about two days. The outcome of the election was a breakdown of law and order, killing and burning of properties of political opponents, among others. The resultant violence claimed the lives of several hundreds of people on both sides of the conflict. There was a widespread drenching of houses and people with petrol before setting them alight. Among the casualties of the violence was the governor of Western Nigeria, Chief Odeleye Fadahunsi, whose house was burnt in the Mushin area of Lagos on 3 November 1965 (Tribune, 16 November 1965). The Tribune-press building was burnt on 7 November (Tribune, 8<sup>th</sup> November 1965). The 1965 election represented the ultimate debasement of the democratic process through chicanery and thuggery.

The exact number of the victims and the value of properties lost in the 1965 post-election crisis in Western Nigeria may never be known. According to a Federal Government estimate, the violence had claimed the lives of over 160 persons by 13<sup>th</sup> January 1966 – these were 64 civilians killed by the police, 91 killed by other civilians, and seven policemen among others (Daily Express, 14<sup>th</sup> January 1966). The UPGA, however, estimated that casualties of the 1965 crisis ran into hundreds. Whatever might have been the number of the dead and the maimed before, during and after the 1965 election, one incontrovertible conclusion is that the crisis robbed Western Nigeria of the contributions many of the people who were killed or permanently disabled would have made to the educational, social, economic and political advancement of that region (Ojo, 2012,p.11).

### **The Second Republic-1983**

During the Second Republic, the election rigging was even worse than the abrupt first republic. There was unimaginable rigging during voting, vote-counting, and announcement of results (Olaoye, 2007). The Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) was the electoral umpire that midwife the Second Republic general election. In 1983 general elections, the umpire was accused of rigging the election in favour of the ruling party National Party of Nigeria (NPN) (Onafagoro, 1981; Kurfi, 1983, pp. 222-223). In a spontaneous reaction to the official results released by FEDECO, mayhem was unleashed on the two Southwest states of Oyo and Ondo. The violence was organized in protest against perceived manipulation of the governorship polls in the two states, widely acclaimed as electoral strongholds of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), in favour of the candidates of NPN, which controlled the centre. There was a loss of lives and properties worth millions of Naira including the headquarters of FEDECO in Oyo and Ondo states were affected (Egwu, 2007). Abe (2008, p. 170) disclosed that the 1983 election was bedeviled intensified violence by the states sponsored thugs, arsonists, and unrestrained assassins that unleashed terror and fear on opponents and voters. The violence continued until the military toppled the Second Republic on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 1983.

### **The Aborted Third Republic 1993**

There were many elections with cases of election rigging that took place under the Babangida regime, following the annulment of the results of the June 12, 1993, presidential election. Olaoye (2007) noted that the “1993 election was believed and adjudged by the 3000 accredited local and international observers to be fair and the best in Nigeria’s political history.” On June 14, 1993, the election results were announced in many states. The results showed that the Social Democratic Party (SDP) under the flag bearer of Chief M. K. O. Abiola had won 14 states as announced by the National Electoral Commission (NEC) chairman, Prof. Humphrey Nwosu. Oshun (1999) disclosed that “the thirty (30) states had already indicated a victory for the SDP.” Despite the fairest nature of the 1993 election as acknowledged by electoral observers and Nigerians, the presidential election was annulled on June 23, 1993, by General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida. Obadare (1999, p. 10) disclosed that:

In his 23 June 1993 broadcast, General Babangida had alleged that the two parties subverted the electoral process by bribing voters and that there was an expected conflict of interest between the personal businesses of the presidential candidates (Moshood Abiola for the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Bashir Tofa for the National Republican Convention(NRC).

One point which deserves to be underscored relating to how political violence in the aftermath of the annulment fed on the realities of social life, especially in Lagos and perhaps other urban centres in the country. Urban centres in Nigeria usually contain a mix of the rich and the poor, with the latter always in a clear majority (Adisa, 1995). The June 12 crisis was mostly in Lagos and other parts of the country where bombs were detonated by the military juntas to install fears. There were few political assassinations such as Chief Alfred Rewane, Kudirat Abiola, among others. Babangida did not only annul the results of the 1993 presidential election, but the presumed winner Chief M. K. O. Abiola was also imprisoned and subsequently died behind bars.

### **The Fourth Republic 1999- 2019**

Historically, in Nigeria, a transition from military to democracy has been rough showing occasional relapse to authoritarianism. The quality of an election conducted by the military is one of the mechanisms for gauging the extent of democratic consolidation, and over the years has shown evidence of progressive decline over the polls conducted. Nigeria’s Fourth Republic has survived six general elections (1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019) with almost all associated of electoral violence without military interruption, except in 1999, however, it is profound evidence of sustainable democratic governance in Nigeria. All of these elections were marked by controversies, just as their processes and end products encountered credibility and legitimacy crises (Yagboyaju, 2011, p. 93). The Fourth Republic has been engulfed by electoral violence with over 4,000 killed since the emergence of the Fourth Republic (Nwezeh and Ifijeh, 2019). However, it is imperative to note that in Nigeria that, when the military is transiting to civil rule; the elections are guarded to deliver the candidates they prefer, there was always minimal violence in regards to the election.



### **The Electoral violence-2003**

In the 2003 general election, there was more blatant and widespread electoral violence that was unimaginable. There were political assassinations, intra-party violence, and community unrest, particularly in the Niger Delta region. The 2003 election cycle marked the unchecked proliferation of another worrisome development, such as the hiring and arming of militias to serve narrow political ends in the Niger Delta region. Politicians and party bosses found a ready supply of unemployed youths, willing to perpetrate violence in exchange for pay and firepower. As a result, these young men comprised a significant percentage of the lives lost leading up to the 2003 polls (Onwudiwe and Berwind-Dart, 2010, p. 3).

Human Right Watch (2003) reported that between April and May 2003, over one hundred people were killed and many more injured during federal and state elections in Nigeria. It was widely believed that the majority of abuses were carried out by the ruling Peoples Democratic Party's (PDP) members and supporters. There were apathy and elections did not hold in many polling centres occasioned by candidates intimidation and threatened voters in a bid to falsify results. However, the 2003 general election was significant for Nigeria as the country's first sustained transition from one civilian government to another.

Based on Human Rights Watch (2003) briefing paper titled "Nigeria at the crossroads: human rights concerns in the pre-election period," disclosed that many politicians took the advantage of increasing poverty and unemployment to recruit young men to leash mayhem on their opponents. For example, in Kwara state, there was a conflict between the supporters of the governor and other political stalwart leading to the killing of state party chairman in August 2002 and the bombing of a newspaper office in November 2002 respectively. Some of the crisis that culminated in electoral violence was the fallout of PDP primaries. There electioneering period recorded politically-motivated killings in the southeast and the southwest. In central and northern states, some politicians relied on religious/ethnic sentiments to mobilize support for their candidature, stirring up sentiments that sparked communal violence in some areas.

Another post-election report of Human Rights Watch (2003) titled: "Testing democracy: political violence in Nigeria" described the degree of violence that was carried out during the election. This report was collected based on daily activities that took place in this period. The incidence includes: Early March – Sokoto: PDP/ANPP clash between armed supporters; March 2<sup>th</sup> – Enugu: ANPP gubernatorial candidate petitions police regarding telephone calls threatening assassination if he does not give up his bid; March 3<sup>rd</sup> – Ebonyi: State chairman for the ANPP reports shooting attack on him while in a vehicle; March 4<sup>th</sup> – Rivers: Explosion damages medical clinic owned by the secretary to the state government; March 4<sup>th</sup> – Edo: At least one person killed in PDP/ANPP clash after PDP state governor's campaign convoy is attacked; bus and several houses burnt; March 4<sup>th</sup> – Ekiti: State ANPP leader dies of injuries from an acid attack in late December 11<sup>th</sup>; March 5<sup>th</sup> – Abuja: Marshall Harry, ANPP Vice Chairman for the South-South Zone, shot dead in his Abuja residence; March 6<sup>th</sup> – Cross Rivers: Several supporters injured and four cars vandalized in an attack on ANPP senatorial candidate's convoy; March 7<sup>th</sup> – Abuja: Protest against Plateau State governor comes under attack by state government thugs, leading to several injuries and destruction of vehicles; March 10-11<sup>th</sup> – Kebbi: PDP/ANPP clash in which two reported seriously injured, eleven homes burned, fifty-three people arrested; March 11-12<sup>th</sup> – Lagos: Seven people feared dead in PDP/Alliance for Democracy (AD) clash; March 13<sup>th</sup> and subsequent two weeks – Delta: Scores of people reported killed in Okerenkoko and other villages around Warri following clashes between Ijaws and Itsekiris in a dispute over additional electoral wards in Warri, and clashes between Ijaws and the military; March 13<sup>th</sup> – Imo: State officials announce armed attacks on residences of deputy governor and secretary to state government; March 14<sup>th</sup> – Ondo: Convoy of Gani Fawehinmi, presidential candidate for National Conscience Party (NCP), seriously injuring his driver; March 15<sup>th</sup> – Oyo: At least seven injured after attack on AD supporters at governor's campaign rally; March 15-16<sup>th</sup> – Kebbi: At least 200 homes burned during PDP/ANPP clash (Human Rights Watch, 2003, p.3 & 4); and both Alhaji Ahman Patégi and Dele Arojo who were the People Democratic Party Chairman and governorship hopeful in Kwara and Ogun states respectively were murdered.

The report disclosed that in some cases, political violence has been carried out in locations where violent conflict was already a problem. In July 2002, two people in Taraba were killed and twenty were wounded in inter-factional disputes at the PDP primaries. In Benue, at least seven persons died in a conflict between the PDP and the ANPP on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2003, in Jato-Aka, the home town of the ANPP's gubernatorial candidate Paul Unongo. The crisis was triggered by the killing of a guard at a hotel owned by Paul Unongo (Human Rights Watch, 2003,p.4).

### **The Electoral Violence 2007**

Alemika and Omotosho (2008) noted that the events preceding the 2007 elections generated controversies, conflicts, litigations and cynicism about the fate of the electoral process and the country's democratic transition such as the attempt by President Obasanjo to secure a third term in office; Intra-party competition for nomination (especially within the ruling People's Democratic Party, PDP) led to violence and assassination of opponents; among others.

The build-up to Nigeria's 2007 general election was characterized by pre-election violence, such as political assassinations, killings and armed clashes between rival political factions. The party primaries among the candidates were selected which led to an increase in violence. Based on Human Right Watch in Lagos, over 70 incidents of election-related violence between November 2006 and the middle of March 2007 across 20 of Nigeria's 36 states. These incidents carried a combined reported death toll of at least 70 people; with many more injured (Human Right Watch, 2007). Ahead of the 2007 general election, thus between the end of 2006 and mid-March 2007, recorded serials of violence, especially from rival factions of various political parties pitted against one another; and the vast majority of these cases involved violence within the ruling PDP. Much of that violence was related to the controversy surrounding a broad range of alleged irregularities in the selection process (Human Right Watch, 2007).

The Human Right Watch (2007) report revealed that between November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006, and March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007, over four assassinations and seven attempted assassinations of Nigerian politicians, party officials and other individuals who were directly linked to various electoral campaigns were recorded. And seven of those ten incidents were connected to the PDP primaries or other intra-PDP rivalries. The two most notorious murders related to the PDP primaries occurred in July and August 2006, where the murder of two PDP gubernatorial aspirants Funsho Williams of Lagos State and Ayo Daramola of Ekiti State respectively. Arrests were made in the case of Daramola's murder, although the architects of his assassination have not been formally identified or prosecuted (*BBC News Online*, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006).

In Bayelsa and Delta States respectively, over seven attacks on campaign offices, party secretariats and homes of candidates. Most of the incidents were related to factional or electoral disputes within the ruling PDP. The majority occurred during a brief rash of such attacks in Delta and Bayelsa states in late 2006 (Ogwuda, 2006). In Asaba, the capital of Delta State, the homes of the two candidates were bombed and the PDP secretariat, set ablaze in three separate incidents (Folaranmi, 2006).

The climax of the violence was the clashes and armed supporters of rival political factions, the period recorded over 17 factional clashes in ten different states between supporters or thugs armed by opposing political factions. The majority of these arose out of controversies surrounding the PDP primaries Oyo, Bayelsa, Edo, Akwa/Ibom, Lagos, Rivers, Niger, Delta, Borno, Ondo, Bauchi and Ogun states. The Oyo State was known for the clash between faction loyal to Governor Rashidi Ladoja and his estrange political "godfather" Lamidi Adedibu have led to violence on multiple occasions (Human Rights Watch interviews, Ibadan, February 7th, 2007).

Both sides have drawn their armed support from Oyo State's notoriously violent chapter of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW). Human Rights Watch (2007) revealed that several union members who had been shot and wounded during fighting between the Union's rival factions during the first week of February 2007. At least four people were killed (Oyedele, 2007).

## The Electoral violence 2011

The 2011 electoral violence was different from the others. The electoral violence took ethno-religious coloration. Several events were surrounding 2011 electoral violence ranging from the demise of President Umar Yar'Adua and President Goodluck Jonathan assumption of office as the incumbent president, the submission of Justice Uwais electoral reform committee report, zoning formula of the PDP and their party primaries, to President Jonathan declaration as to the winner of the presidential election. It was estimated that the 2011 post-election violence in Nigeria left over 800 people dead. The protest after the declaration of President Goodluck Jonathan as the winner degenerated into a violent riot and sectarian massacre in the northern states Kano, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Kaduna, Jigawa, Katsina, Sokoto, Niger, Yobe, and Zamfara and Akwa Ibom in South-South Zone of Nigeria.

In the North East – the presidential rally by the ANPP candidate was disrupted by gunshots fired close to a petrol station led to a stampede that the lives of four persons (Daily Sun 30 March 2011, pp. 1 & 6). In the capital of Borno State, the ANPP gubernatorial candidate Alhaji Modu Fannami Gubio was murdered in the broad daylight in Maiduguri on the January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011 by gunmen on a motorcycle. Governor Ali Modu Sheriff's brother, Alhaji Goni Modu Sheriff, was murdered. He was the former chairman of the Ngala Local Government Area. He was killed along with four people, including a 10-year-old boy (The Nation 31 Jan 2011, p. 1). The eve of the presidential election in Maiduguri, two people were killed; five civilians and two soldiers' sustained injuries emanating from suspected Boko Haram terrorist at Gwange suburb (Sunday Tribune 17 April 2011, p. 5). Maiduguri the capital of Borno State was described as a battlefield. There was an explosion of bombs are two different election venues killing two people and leaving over ten persons injured. A bomb exploded during the accreditation of voters, which left ten persons injured, while another bomb occurred at the Abaganaram Collation Centre and killed one Ahmed Maira Abihud, a student of the University of Maiduguri. Four persons were injured, while another ad-hoc staff of the INEC Abihud died instantly (Sunday Tribune 17 April 2011, p. 5). In Bauchi state, there was a violent clash between the PDP and CAN that left two-person dead. Twenty houses and five cars were destroyed in Katanga Warji, headquarters of Warji Local Government Area in the North East, where the clash took place (Nigerian Compass 30 March 2011, p. 1). Six members of the NYSC were killed in the post-electoral violence in Bauchi State after the declaration of Dr Goodluck Jonathan as the winners. Eighteen people and two policemen were killed by the rioters who alleged rigging of the poll (Nigeria Compass 20 April 2011, p. 1). Migan Local Government Area, part of INEC building was burnt down and injured two voters by the irate youths (Sunday Punch 17 April 2011). Most villages in Tafawa Belewa and Bogno local government areas in Bauchi State were invaded. Over 50 Christians were killed and about 100 buildings were set ablaze by the attackers. The villages attacked include Imbira, Mingil, Goshkarbo, Namu, Gongo Fada, SabonLaji, Yola-Bogoro and Goshe. The youths were targeting their voter's cards were (Nigeria Tribune 9 April 2011, p. 4). In Adamawa, properties worth millions of Naira was destroyed by irate youth. However, the former Governor Murtala Nyako imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew. Several youths were arrested (Vanguard, 20 April 2011 pp. 1 & 5). In all, it was estimated that at least 92 at last count had been in the North-East zone concerning 2011 electoral violence.

In the North West Zone - the North-West zone experienced intensified post-electoral violence. The zone did not witness relative low violence in the pre-election era and on Election Day. However, after the declaration of Dr Goodluck Jonathan as the winner, there was simultaneous violence all over the North West zone that led to the destruction of lives and properties. Over 20 churches and houses assumed to belong to members of Peoples Democratic Party were destroyed (National Mirror 19 April 2011, pp. 1-3; 53). In Katsina State, the home state of the General Buhari, irate youths burnt down worship centres, business shops, and private houses in six local government areas and other villages in protest against the declaration of Dr Jonathan. All the houses identified with PDP posters were torched and the party secretariat in the area was destroyed (National Mirror 19 April 2011, pp. 1-3). In Kano State, the stronghold of General Buhari, the irate Muslim youths were uncontrollable as they attacked Christians and non-natives, and other notable politicians such as the two former Speakers of House of Assembly, Salisu Buhari and Ghali Na'Abba. The multimillion Naira factory on Hadejia Road belonging to Salisu Bohr was also vandalized (National Mirror 19 April 2001). No specific number of deaths in Kano State post-election violence. In Kaduna State, more than 65,000 people were displaced and properties worth millions

of naira were destroyed. The Vice-President's house, Namadi Sambo was burnt down by the angry protesters. The irate youths forcefully opened Zaria Central Prison and freed all inmates. The INEC offices in Malabalindo, Trikania, Sabin Tasha, Ungwan Sarkin Naragi, and Kawo were set ablaze. The Christian dominated communities in the southern Kaduna State, including Matsirga, Zonkwa, and Kafanchan left more than 500 dead, burning down their mosque and properties. Hence, the Kaduna State Government imposed a 24-hour curfew on the metropolis and its environs (Human Right Watch, 2011).

In the North Central Zone- The zone witnessed electoral violence. In Plateau State, two people and one was injured in the capital of Plateau State during the registration of voters at Tina Junction in Jos (Daily Sun 18 January 2011, p. 7). In Niger State, two bomb explosions on Thursday 18 January at a PDP rally in Suleja killing at least thirteen persons and injured over twenty persons. Some of the injured security personnel include members of the Federal Road Safety Corps and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence (The Punch March 2011, p. 1). At Sabon Gari, an area dominated by the Igbos, a female officer of the Civil Defence Corp's hand was severed and three cars were burnt. Five churches in Angwan, Maitunbi, Kaje, Shango, and other areas of the town were burnt down. Curfew was declared in five major towns of Minna, Kontagora, Suleja, Bida, and New Bussa to contain the spread of the violence. In Benue State, a gunman shot and killed Emmanuel Ajibo, who was an aide to the ACN senatorial candidate for Benue State. A campaign train was attacked by armed thugs at near Igumale community, the Ado LGA headquarters in Benue State (The Nation 19 March 2011).

South-East Zone - The south-east was relatively calm except in Ebonyi State where six persons were killed in Amuda Ezza North Local Government Area and others sustained various degrees of injuries (National Life 26 April 2011). Three persons were allegedly shot over who takes charge of the Direct Data Capture machines at registration centre at Ndiike Amugu Ikino community in Ebonyi State (Daily Sun 20 January 2011, p. 6).

South-South Zone - the electoral violence took place at Akwa Ibom State where the post-election violence claimed over 50 lives. Members of ACN invaded the PDP secretariat and burnt 800 brand new Peugeot and 500 tricycles packed in the premises. In the Goodluck campaign office, the properties include 200 brand new Peugeot, 307 cars; 500 brand new tricycles; Goodluck/Sambo Campaign office was burnt down, the Fortune International High School owned by Senator Aloysius Etok was also burnt down with school children in session, over 20 Toyota Hiace buses were burnt of Godswill 2011 Campaign Organization, nine Hilux jeeps belonging to the Akwa Ibom State government were destroyed or vandalized. This incident was after the ACN took to the street in protesting the alleged killing of 20 of their party men (Nyong, 2011; Daily Sun 24 March 2011, p. 6). In Delta State, four persons were killed in election violence in Ughelli North and Ogume Ndokwa local government areas of Delta State respectively (Daily Sun 24 March 2011, p. 6).

South-West Zone - since 1964, the south-west has been seen as a flashpoint in every election cycle. In Ondo State, over 10 persons died and many sustained injuries in a violent clash between the ACN and Labour Party at Imeri in Ose Local Government Area (Saturday Punch 19 March 2011, p. 7). One person was shot dead by a stray bullet unidentified hoodlum working for a political party (Saturday Punch 19 March 2011, p. 7). In Ekiti State, two people were shot dead by men in police uniform in the Kota area of Omuo-Ekiti on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011 (Daily Sun 24 March 2011, p. 12). In Osun State, five supporters were killed on 30 December 2010 in Ife town. A cache of arms was recovered by the police in Atakumosa Local Government Area in the residence of a member of the House of Assembly of Osun State. The items recovered include 14 live cartridges and 19 Italian pump-action rifles, expended ammunition, and a long cutlass (The Nation 7 April 2011, pp. 1-2). In Oyo State, a factional leader of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, Alhaji Lateef Salako (Eleweomo), and two others were killed in a clash between his loyalists and other suspected thugs in Ibadan (Nigeria Compass, 31 December 2010, pp. 1 & 50). In Ekiti State, Mr Toyin Akinlade, 27 years old was killed by unknown gunmen (The Nation 30 December 2010, p. 5). Late Akinlade was a former councillor and incumbent PDP Secretary in Ido-Osi Local Government Area (National Life 25 March 2011, p. 35). In Ogun State, at least three were killed at the Labour Party campaign rally in Ikenne L G A (National Life 25 March 2011, p. 35). At least five vehicles were burnt and others were destroyed at the clash between the PDP and the Accord Party on Iwo Road, Ibadan (Sunday Tribune, 13 March 2011, p. 12).

The degree of destruction and loss of lives occasioned by the terrible security situations in two states propelled President Jonathan as cited in The Nation newspaper that:

... they killed and maimed innocent citizens. They set ablaze business premises, private homes and even places of worship. In some cases, they showed utter disrespect to all forms of authority, including our most revered traditional institutions. They systematically targeted population groups. They singled out and harassed nationalistic politicians. They intimidated travellers (The Nation, 21 April 2011, p. 9).

Overall, the destruction of lives and property in the pre, during and post-election in 2011 was unimaginable. Following the figure released by the Inspector General of Police Hafiz Ringim was shocking. According to Ringim, 520 persons were murdered in post-election violence in only Kaduna and the Niger States alone. Kaduna State recorded 518 deaths, including six policemen and two persons were killed in Niger State. Mr Ringim also disclosed that 77 persons were injured in Kaduna State. Over 22 000 persons were displaced by the crisis in the Kaduna State. Mr Ringim revealed that about 1435 houses, 157 churches, 46 mosques, 437 vehicles, 219 motorcycles, among others were set on fire (The Punch, 2 June 2011, p. 6)

### **The Electoral Violence 2015**

The National Human Right Commission revealed that over 58 people were killed in electoral related violence ahead of the 2015 general election. About 61 incidences of election violence happened in 22 states with 58 people killed. Though, most of the violence during the run-up of the 2015 general election, particularly in the northern region was attributed to Boko Haram terrorist organization. However, the electoral violence was serious in the following states - Lagos with eleven incidences and twenty-two people were killed; Kaduna with 3 incidences and 9 people killed; and Rivers with one incidence and at least 6 deaths (Ibeh, 2015). Though, the 2015 election was relatively peaceful until 2011. In Rivers State, the fierce clash between the APC and PDP led to several killings and destruction of properties ranging from electioneering campaign to Bye Elections. Egbueze and Ojirika (2017, pp.6&7) disclosed that:

...violence erupted at a Governorship party rally organized by All Progressives Congress (APC) for their candidate Dakuku Peterside in Okrika, the hometown of President Goodluck Jonathan's wife Patience [in Rivers State]. In a press conference that same day, Dakuku Peterside accused the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) as masterminding the attack. He further confirmed that over fifty persons were critically lying injured at Casely Harrison Specialist Hospital, Port Harcourt. This attack was beside other attacks on the party offices at Andoni, Omoku, Ogu, Okrika and their billboards across the State. The then Governor of Rivers State, Rotimi Amaechi filling an interview on Channel Television openly accused the wife of Mr President Her Excellency Dame Patience Jonathan for the attack at Okrika

In the same vein, Ebiri (2015) cited in Ogele (2020, pp.8&9) disclosed that:

There were incidents of sporadic gunshots in Buguma in Asari Local Government Area and the burning of houses in Bera in Gokana Local Government Area of the State...unknown gunmen opened fire at a vehicle convening security men around Whimpy area of Obio-Akpor, killing one of the security personnel on the shot... A young man was also stabbed to death during a fracas between All Progressives Congress and Peoples Democratic Party supporters at Kpiti in Tai Local Government Area during the accreditation an exercise...A soldier shot dead a voter at Oghale-Eleme in Ward 3, Unit 002 in Local Government Area following a heated disagreement at one of the polling units. Mr Chris was killed because he refused INEC materials to be hijacked by political thugs. In Ozuoha in Ikwerre Local Government Area, one person was allegedly killed and another inflicted with machete cut. In Buguma, there was an incident of sporadic gunshots which enabled the gunmen to hijack electoral materials meant

for Ward 4, 5, and 6. At Bera in Gokana Local Government Area, irate youths torched the resident of a PDP chieftain and destroyed several cars.

The Security agents were not exempted in the violence that emanated in the 2016 rerun of National Assembly election, SaharaReporters (2016) reported that most brutal incidents occurred (during Saturday's rerun) in Ujju community near Omoku in "Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni LGA of Rivers State, where a police patrol team was ambushed. In the ambush, 10 policemen scampered into the bush. The Mobile Police organized a rescue mission. Regrettably, the team discovered that DSP Alkali Mohammed of Mobile Police Unit 48 was beheaded along with his orderly. The patrol vehicle was taken away with the weapons. Three policemen escaped. Five were missing in action."

### **The Electoral Violence 2019**

Based Human Right Watch Reported submitted to President Muhammadu Buhari on Democracy Day on 12 June 2020, the group disclosed that 2019 general election was marred by widespread violence that led to the death of 629 people in the country (Nwezeh and Ifijeh,2019). In the presidential elections, a young officer of the Nigerian Army and six others were killed in Abonnema Town, Rivers State (**Ebiri, 2019**). This killing triggered a reprisal attack on the community that led over the death of a hundred youths in Abonnema town. Okechukwu, Chukwuka and Chikwado (2019,p.89&90) disclosed that 35 death was recorded in the presidential election; a soldier beat up a party agent at INEC office in Bori Rivers State; thugs assisted by soldiers killed an opposition Party agent in Umudo/Umuwala area of Owerri; thugs, assisted by soldiers invaded polling units and carted away ballot materials in Ajaokuta, Kabba/Bunu, Olamaboro, Ijumu; 58 people killed with Rivers State accounting for 30 of the deaths in both the Presidential/National Assembly Election/ Governorship and House of Assembly Election; 20 people were abducted including INEC staff by unknown thugs in Kastina State; and in Khana, Gokana, Ikwere, Eleme Tai, Oyibo, Ogu/Bolo Local Government Councils, in Rivers State. The Police SARS was accused of invading collation centres and abducted some electoral officers, shooting and killed people.

### **The root causes of Electoral Violence in Nigeria**

The nature and character of the ruling class are crucial in the determination of the rules for and the process of political competition. This character shapes the forms of political organizations or parties that emerge or that are allowed to participate in the competition for state power. In discussing the nature and character of the ruling class several factors are important such as the degree of patriotism of the class, the nature of the values that it subscribes to as a class, the degree of its ideological cohesion, among others (**Iyayi,2004**).

Nigeria was integrated into the world capitalist system through her colonization by the British imperialist whose sole aim was to maximize profits through the production process. Capitalism is anchored on exploitation and Nigerian elites inherited a system of economy which was exploitative - the direct use of coercive power for expropriation. In Nigeria, many politicians seek power to promote primitive accumulation. Politics is now seen as a vehicle for making quick and easy money. This rent-seeking and rent - collection mentality of Nigerian politicians can be seen from the desperation of incumbents to hold on to power by any means. The counterweight to this is the determination and the desperation of the elites outside to get into power by any means necessary. To these elites, the result of getting control of political power is justified by whatever means is employed. This means include violence. Ake (1978,p.71) argued that:

...When the process of primitive accumulation is directed against specific factions of the bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie, it is equally counter-productive... that those elements of the petty bourgeoisie or bourgeoisie who are expropriated and or liquidated by the politically hegemonic faction are likely to be the ones that have entrepreneurial skill. More importantly, using violence to expropriate other members of the ruling class increases the level of insecurity within this class for everyone, including the hegemonic faction. This sets in motion a vicious circle of extremism and political violence. Insecurity makes political actors struggle even more grim and tenaciously for political power and the high premium on political inclines political

actors to use a method which will produce the desired result rather than confine them to a method of competition which is moral or legal.

Nevertheless, as a facilitator of the capital development process, the Nigerian state is a major owner of the means of production. Buoyed by the expanded oil revenues of the early 1970s, the state effectively dominated all aspects of the national political economy (Jega, 2000, p.30). This is because the imperialist did not even develop an indigenous bourgeoisie in the country, but tied the entire production process of the state. At the juncture, the state became the biggest employer of labour. As noted by Joseph (1991, p.56), the expansion of petroleum products and the resultant increased revenues heightened “the centrality of the state as the locus of the struggle for resources for individual development as well as group security.” Under this guise, entrance to the Statehouse provides an opportunity for primitive accumulation. To sustain state control for economic gains, the politicians employ a series of strategy to carry out the nefarious act. Ake (1978, p.71) argued that:

Sometimes it is done under the cover of political conflict; some people are denounced for many political crimes and then murdered or imprisoned and their property seized. Sometimes, it is done gangster style. Sometimes it is done under the cover of religious or ethnic conflict; a religious or ethnic group denounced for being unpatriotic and subversive or economic exploited of other groups, and popular hatred is built up against them. Then, under cover of this popular antipathy, the unfortunate group is abused, sometimes to a point amounting to genocide, and their property is taken from them...

As the hegemonic faction of the ruling class continue to successfully use force to expropriate another faction of the ruling class as well as peasants and workers, the concentration of energy on politics is reinforced. The consciousness of political power becomes so strong, that once one that has political power can have everything else including economic wealth. At this point, violence becomes inevitable. However, apart from the primitive accumulation which is the character of the ruling class in Nigeria, other factors could be considered as part of what propels electoral violence in Nigeria. Other factors could trigger electoral violence include the degree of stakes; expectations; outcome; and incentive.

**Stakes:** This is a scenario where the politicians involve all it has to stake in politics as an investment, especially in conditions of high scarcity, poverty and inequality. At this point, the candidate believes that winning a state office key to livelihood, not just for an individual, but for his or her entire clan, faction, or even ethnic group, parties and candidates who may often refuse to contemplate the consequences of failure. Sisk and Spies (2009) pointed out that based on the reports from the studies on election-related violence, the perpetrators are often viewed the process as ‘patronage politics’ or a system in which politicians are gang-like ‘bosses’ that control resources (such as access to jobs and income) and dispense public services such as housing, health care, or lucrative government contracts. They further argued that elections in this aspect are often seen as opportunities to engage in corruption and economic rent-seeking. This, in turn, leads to highly fictionalized politics, such as along religious, sectarian or ethnic lines, or along party-political divides.

**Expectation:** This aspect is associated with a higher expectation of the candidates and his supporters on a dividend of electoral success. The candidate and his supporters or party men may expect or imagine the fruits of victory or the perils and risks of loss. Sisk and Spies (2009) argued that elections may exacerbate social conflict under conditions of high uncertainty about the outcomes and situations of high certainty alike; exploring the linkage between expectations and violence is a complicated problem. For example, when there is doubt about the outcome of the election; when the margins of victory are very close; and there is a greater likelihood that allegations of fraud will lead to frustration and potentially too violently clashes, or where parties may use violence to affect uncertain outcomes by trying to limit voter turnout of opponents’ expected supporters.

**Outcome:** This is associated with post-election violence. It is a situation where the announcement of results generates violence. When parties are sure that loss or exclusion in an electoral contest is certain, particularly when they are in the minority (to fail not just once, but again and again due to patterns of identity voting), the certainty of outcomes is also a strong causal driver of violence; the post-election violence stemming from the

announcement of 2011 presidential elections in Nigeria seem to fit this pattern. When a party or faction expects to be systematically excluded from political power, they may well turn to violence to either prevent their exclusion or to prevent the election's success. The exclusion could bring about violence, which is often caused by supporters and peripheral elements rather than the party members or officials themselves. That electoral process produces winners and losers is an indicator of their capacity to catalyse or to open 'windows of vulnerability' to violence. When a strongly insecure party or faction expects to be systematically excluded from political power, it may well turn to violence to either prevent its exclusion or to prevent the election's success (Höglund, 2004).

**Incentives:** This involves the roles of so-called ethnic entrepreneurs-political leaders who articulate beliefs in kinship bonds and common destiny, and who mobilize and organize groups to press group claims. The elements are common in Nigeria even before her political independence attainment. They are known for the ethnic entrepreneurship kind of politics. They may be perceived as benign 'interest aggregators' who serve a critical representative function, or as manipulative and exploitative power-seekers who mobilize ethnic themes for their aggrandizement. The manipulation of identity to frame disputes in ethnic terms by political leaders heightens the breadth and depth of inter-group conflict. Ethnic outbidding-and mass responsiveness to 'playing the ethnic card'—is an acute problem because a moderate multi-ethnic centre is often unable to sustain itself against the centrifugal (outward-spinning) forces unleashed by the heated rhetoric of ethnic intolerance.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The electoral violence in Nigeria has been on the rise since the first general election was conducted in 1964. The tactics employed by the political actors kept evolving and unending. A critical appraisal of the Nigerian political system reveals that election violence has been entrenched as a political culture. Each election cycle has been associated with violence leading to loss of lives and properties. The 2011 electoral violence has been the most devastating among all the electoral violence since the attainment of political independence in 1960. Hence, President Jonathan decided to set up Sheikh Ahmed Lemu electoral violence panel of 2011. Amongst others, the report blamed successive regimes for not acting on previous reports on electoral violence by bringing perpetrators to book, noting that was what facilitated the widespread of electoral violence in 2011 considering the degree of impunity exhibited by the perpetrators. Sadly, electoral violence has continued since after Lemu's report, which is an indication that the government lacks the political will to address, make or enforce laws relating to electoral violence.

### **Recommendations**

1. There is an urgent need for electoral reforms to address or eliminate all forms of threats linked to electoral violence such as electoral rigging, vote-buying, overspending by the political parties or candidates, among others.
2. The electronic and printed media must give equal access and attention to all the political parties' jostling for power. Denial of opposition to media space and airtime to sell their programmes may result in unconstitutional means of expressing their discontent and frustration.
3. Political party formation and subsequent inter-party coalitions or mergers must be based on ideological stance as the only way of eliminating violence brought by ethnic and religious bigots
4. The Electoral Management Board (EMB) should be restructured completely to avoid interference and manipulation to earn public confidence.
5. , Nigeria is likely to enjoy a stable democratic system devoid of electoral violence if they level of poverty is reduced, employments are provided for the growing youth population, other basic amenities.
6. The government should establish or where they exist, enforce laws that would effectively sanction or taking punitive measures on politicians found culpable in electoral violence.



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