ELECTION AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA, 1999-2020

Okorie Albert, PhD
Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka
Michael Bitrus
Department of Political Science, Adamawa State University, Mubi
Eze Stanley Ukata
Department of History and International Relation, Abia State University, Uturu

ABSTRACT
The article argues that the reoccurring infractions that have characterized electoral process in Nigeria, to large extent have undermined national security. This follows the failure of political leadership produced by successive elections in Nigeria to address basic needs of the masses. Moreover that violence usually associated with such elections has led to alienation, apathy and facilitated the decomposition of the physical safety of the state, which collectively sum up to national security. The theory of post colonial state was employed as framework of analysis. Data were generated using documentary method while qualitative-descriptive method was applied in the analysis of the data .The article recommends drastic cut in the benefits accruable to political offices as disincentive for intense struggle and contestation for power which gives rise to repeated flawed elections in Nigeria.

Keyword: National Security, Election, Violence, Politics of Exclusion, Governance.

1. INTRODUCTION
National security is a common parlance used by both leaders and the led to express the state of being free from physical harm or loss of cherished values like political stability or regime security, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the nation, economic reliance, environmental safety and sustainability, preservation of cultural heritage of the people among others. Moreover the attainment of national security is predicated on the realization and attainment of other goals of the state, such as advancement in science and technology, economic reliance, military superiority, political stability, effective and efficient exploration of natural resources, national cohesion, agricultural and food sufficiency, favourable diplomatic outings among others. This explains why national security is an all embracing concept that affects both leaders and the led.
The successful realization of the above goals or otherwise largely depends on the quality of political leadership that emerges from the elections. Therefore, election is critical democratic framework for choosing leaders of modern political societies. It serves as instrument of political choice, mobilization and accountability. In modern democracies, it facilitates the smooth transition from one civilian regime to another and helps in legitimizing sitting governments. In democracies where elections are free, fair and credible, it engenders development, because

leaders that emerge from the process are accountable and responsive to the needs of the electorates. However when the reverse becomes the case, it retards development and by extension compromises national security.

Unfortunately, given the indispensability of election in a democratic setting as the medium for emergence into political office and the political economy of the Nigerian state, elections particularly in developing states like Nigeria are usually characterized by desperation. Hence elections have become a political liability and a source of crises than being a political asset and legitimate force. Nigerian experience with electoral democracy since 1959 has revealed intense competition for power on the part of the political class resulting in various forms of electoral irregularities and violence. Similarly, Yaqub (1999) noted that the various experiences with competitive electoral politics in Nigeria have brought the worst in political thuggery, brigandage, rigging, manipulation of electoral results, ballot boxes snatching, arson, wanton assassination of perceived political opponents, unmediated and unrestrained destruction of lives and property among others.

The spate of irregularities including electoral violence which reached a crescendo in 2011, accounting for the loss of over 3000 lives and property estimated at three trillion naira, not only questioned the rationale for democratic rule but threatened the corporate existence of Nigeria (Orji and Uzodi, 2012, 2013; Human Rights Watch 2012). The impact of the above on governance and by extension national security remains enormous; as the masses are alienated from their leaders, disenchanted with government policies and become strong apathy towards electoral process. It is the reoccurring and catastrophic impacts of these phenomena on inclusive governance, physical safety of the citizenry and the state that underscores the imperative of this study. Thus this article sought to examine the link between election and national security in the present democratic dispensation in Nigeria.

Operationalization of Concepts: National Security and Elections

National security is devoid of universally acceptable definition but has been described as the concern of government about the stability and safety of a state. It encompasses the sum of what a nation does in order to safeguard itself as a sovereign entity. That is the physical protection of a nation's subjects, landscape, independence and even issues such as food security and national image (Okoroafor, et al, 2012). National security therefore transcends the boundaries of physical defense or military-strategic capabilities to include human security, food security, and environmental security among others. Ogunbanyo in Nwolise (2008:349) stressed further that security is more than military security or security from external attacks. For many inhabitants in developing countries, security is concerned with the basic level of struggle for survival. Therefore, in order to provide an integrated security assessment, the non-military dimensions of security should be added.

National security according to Nnoli (2006) is a cherished value associated with the physical safety of individual, groups or nation-states, together with a similar safety of their other most cherished values. It implies freedom from threats, anxiety or danger. National Security extends beyond the safety of the nation-state, the defense of sovereignty and territorial integrity by the military establishments and capabilities to the preservation of cherished values of the citizens concerned. Which means in addition to physical survival of the state and citizens, national

security include broad entitlements such as access to basic needs and social services like food, education, health, shelter and employment whose absence are the basic sources of insecurity in the state. National Security is closely related   to the outcome as well as the cause of development and good governance, which incorporate elements of human rights, fair play and distributive justice only in so far as they lead to physical safety (Nnoli 2006).

The parading shift in the conceptualization of national security, entails that national security also encompasses the right to a sustainable environment, the protection of cultural and religions identity, which individually and collectively has serious implications for the physical security of citizens and the survival of nation-states. Therefore national security is grand strategy towards the preservation of the totality of a nation-state. The citizens and their means of livelihood, the leaders and their regimes, the institutions of the state, state's sovereignty and territorial integrity, ethnic and other social groupings, the environment and ecosystem against internal or external threats and attacks. Accordingly, national security must include the capacity to provide the citizens with social, economic and political conditions conducive to happiness and relative prosperity (Nnoli 2006). As rightly observed by Al-Mashal (2003:14), national security should address "the physical, social and psychological quality of life of a society and its members both in domestic setting and within the larger regional and global system"

National security can best be conceptualized as the totality of actions and frameworks towards protecting a state from all factors that may constitute impediments to its growth and survival. Considering the meaning of, and implications associated with national security, it is important to state that security is a matter that bothers on the posture, well-being, stability and development of a nation. It becomes parameter to express the status of a nation among comity of nations in areas like citizen protection, freedom and well-being, property and other critical infrastructures.

Election
Election could be perceived as institutionalized procedure for choosing office-holders by eligible voters in the state. Election according to Ushie (2005) is a procedure, recognized by the rules of a state or an organization, whereby all or some of the members of the state or organization choose a smaller number of persons or a person to hold office of authority in the state or organization. It is an official or formal procedure through which public officers are filled or specific policy measures are decided. Elections usually take place when two or more candidates are vying for one position either in the public or private sector. Election, despite its role as a medium for the emergence of leaders, equally serves ceremonial functions. Citizens of a State usually have sense of participation in their political process, when they are given the chance to express their will through voting for their preferred candidates. In the same vein, governments that emerged through free and fair elections, equally enjoys legitimacy and stability emanating from the fact that its power is derived from the people. It is largely a process and procedure of transforming votes into representation in modern democracies.

Election and National Security: Theoretical Expositions
The article adopted the Marxist theory of the post-colonial state as expounded by Alavi (1972), Ake (1985, 2003), Ekekwe (1986), Ihonvbere (1989, 2000) Ibeanu (2003) as framework of analysis. The post-colonial state attempts to explicate tersely how the serving ruling class in the

post-colonial country like Nigeria has slowed down the pace of the development of the electoral system. The theory is hinged on the assumption that the political class of the contemporary post-colonial state relentlessly devises several means to perpetuate their stay in power, hence utilizing all machinery of the state power to assume dominance over others.

According to Ake (1985), all post-colonial states are usually associated with very limited autonomy. Thus, post-colonial states are usually programmed to reflect and indeed protect the selfish individual interests of the greedy political elites. This tendency seems to have stunted efforts towards democratic consolidation in Nigeria. As Jakubowski (1973) earlier observed, the ruling class is both politically and economically dominant and constantly creates new avenues for holding down and exploiting the ruled or proletarian class. This was premised on the understanding that interpretation of the link between resources and politics most times is anchored on the pluralist and investment theories, though not without the theoretical and methodological challenges such pose to the budding post-colonial democracies.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the post-colonial states do not represent the public welfare but that of the dominant ruling classes. Accordingly, Ekekwe (1986:p17) averred that "in the periphery of capitalism factors which have to do with the level of development of productive forces make the state, through its several institutions and apparatuses, a direct instrument of accumulation for the dominant class or its elements". Essentially, the theory views the state as an instrument of primitive accumulation by the dominant class and their collaborators (Alavi, 1972).

The relevance of the above theoretical assumptions to the article is multivariate. Firstly, the low autonomy of Nigerian state made it possible for the wealthy political class to hijack it as an instrument for the advancement of their socio-economic and political agenda, including using the state apparatus to manipulate the electoral processes in order to perpetuate themselves in power. Given the low autonomy that had characterized the Nigerian state, it could no longer mediate inter-class conflicts emanating from social relations of production and reproduction of material existence. This includes mediating impartially over electoral contests and conflicts among contending factions. Election is an aspect of this material reproduction process, because it is the legitimate process for ascendancy into political positions. This position further facilitates capital accumulation and domination by the privileged class.

Electoral irregularities emanate following the desperation of the ruling class to remain in power and maintain the existing mode of production that favours them. In their desperation to win elections and foist their candidates on the masses, they resort to electoral malpractices such as rigging, snatching of ballot boxes, assassination of rival candidates, arson, thuggery among others. To achieve these goals, they usually co-opt the coercive arms of the state, especially the police and army. This explains the brutality, intimidation and harassment meted out to the electorates by security and law enforcement agencies during elections in Nigeria. In some cases these crises are further aggravated when the oppressed masses attempt resisting their excesses, through demonstrations, riots and other forms of mass actions.

Secondly, the absolute and over-developed nature of post-colonial Nigerian State made it intervene virtually in all aspects of our national life including the electoral process. The State does not just intervene but their intervention is fraught with biasness in favour of the dominant class. In Nigeria, the ruling party usually has unfettered access to state functionaries and

resources while opposition parties pass through difficulties to secure audience and basic necessities for running their affairs. Most times, opposition parties are denied access to public utilities during their major functions or subjected to pass through rigorous process in securing such facilities.

Thirdly the arbitrariness of the Nigerian state does not equally help matter, thus constituting huge challenge to national security. The privileged class observes only those laws that promote their interest. Electoral laws are unpredictable as changes are frequently made in them to reflect the changing interests of the dominant class. The changes in sequence and timetable of elections in Nigeria as experienced between 2007-2019 attest to above assertion. Because Nigerians were not carried along in the enactment and changes in those legislations discontentment, dissatisfaction and mass unrest usually become the logical fallout.

In the case of Nigeria, the concept of democracy has become difficult to define and this is because, the very factor which qualifies a democracy has been difficult to attain in Nigeria. The irregularities and malpractices that characterize elections in Nigeria engender unimaginable conflicts that consume lives and properties. During election, the ruling parties employ all devices using their incumbent power to suppress any opposition from other parities. They commit the national resources especially finance using it to influence the security agents to protect and safeguard their manipulations during elections. The consequences and grievances emanating from the electoral fraud and misconducts as manifested by the opposition parties affect both our development and democracy. Most of the civil unrest which Nigeria is facing today like the recent Boko Haram have been linked to the dissatisfaction of those who felt not favoured in the 2011 presidential election.

Similar scenario is applicable to other sectors of our national life. State resources are arbitrarily allocated in favour of political affiliates and cronies at the expense of languishing majority. This creates poverty and hostile environment, where unemployment and joblessness pervade. The unemployed youths become easy tool in the hands of the dominant class in achieving their electoral robberies. As rightly observed by Jega (2012), electoral violence in Nigeria is largely a function of worsening social conditions and the emergence of pool of young people who are easily enticed into violent activities by politicians. The masses who have been impoverished by the arbitrary and harsh policies of the State become vulnerable to violence and resort to such at any available opportunity. Such violence is usually accompanied by massive looting and plundering of public and private property as experienced in the 2020 *EndSars* protest in Nigeria. Election in such hostile environment becomes an affair of the mighty and powerful, where rigging, arson, intimidation, snatching of ballot boxes among others become the norm rather than aberration. The violence lingers even after the elections as the sham called elections had already created cracks and divisions within the polity. This is because the defeated class has no other option than to protest the electoral outcomes, through others means available to them. This accounts for the post-election litigations, riots, demonstrations and other forms of mass action in Nigeria. As in the case with Nigeria, when such mass actions are not adequately addressed, they escalate to outright war as expressed in the Nigeria civil war, sub-nationalist agitations, ethnic militancy, and Boko Haram insurgence among others.

2. METHODOLOGY

The documentary and observation methods were deployed in gathering data for the study. These methods help the researchers to glean information and data from already documented sources on the character of election in Nigeria. Therefore, we essentially relied on articles from journals and Nigerian newspapers, official publications of Federal Government of Nigeria, non-governmental organisations, and political parties, among others on the subject matter. The justification of these methods is that it well-suited for contextual analysis and useful when the task is to glean, illuminate, interpret and extract valuable information in order to draw inference from the available evidence.

Qualitative-descriptive method based on logical deduction was applied in the analysis of data generated in the study. It is the technique for making inference by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of message (Stone 1966). The application of this technique involves examination of documents in order to generate information or inference based on the canons of scientific research. The justification of this method is that it enables political inquirer to scrutinize the content of a document in order to understand its underlying structure, ideas and concepts and to quantity the message it relates (White 1983).Besides, content analysis can be used to delineate the characteristics of the communication itself, the causes or circumstances of the communication, and the effects of the communication on the audience.

Election and National Security: The Link

Right from the first republic the process of emergence into power by political leaders had been the major challenge confronting the realization of Nigeria's developmental goals. The intense contestations and malfeasances that had trailed elections in Nigeria right from 1959 undoubtedly had threatened the corporate existence of the nation, produced unpopular and unaccountable leaders, and alienated and engendered mass apathy towards electoral process and governance at large in Nigeria .Therefore to establish the link between election and national security we tried to examine the followings .

Flawed Elections and Poor Governance in Nigeria

As noted earlier electoral processes in Nigeria since 1959 have been characterized with irregularities that have severally threatened its corporate existence. Joseph (1987), Osaghae (1999) and Iwu (2008) remarked that elections no longer serve as basis for choice making as electoral malpractices have become integral part or Nigerian electoral system. Unfortunately, given the indispensability of elections in a democratic setting as the media for emergence into political power and the economic value attached to such political positions, elections particularly in developing states are usually characterized by desperation. Rather than being a political asset and legitimate force, instead, elections since independence in Nigeria have become a political liability and a source of crisis.

Yaqub (1999) noted that the various experiences with competitive electoral politics in Nigeria have brought the worst in political thuggery, brigandage, rigging, manipulation of electoral results, snatching of ballot boxes, arson, wanton assassination of perceived political opponents, unmediated and unrestrained destruction of lives and property. The impact of the above in the

electoral process, and by extension national security remains enormous; as the masses are alienated, disenchanted and develop apathy for the entire electoral process. This breeds legitimacy crises and underdevelopment, as the electorates who ought to participate actively in the process and make the needed inputs for the development of the polity are scared away by hostile political climate created by desperate politicians. The consequence becomes the emergence of the mighty but unpopular to position of authority. The emergence of such leaders has always led to disputations over electoral results, cancelations and re-conduct of elections. Besides, crisis of legitimacy sets in hence the mobilization of human and material resources for the attainment of state goals becomes impossible as the masses owe no allegiance to the governing class.

On the other hand national security goes beyond defense of territorial integrity, sovereignty and physical safety of the state, to involve protection of cherished values, environment/ecosystem and various means of livelihood of the citizenry. The implication of the above is that security of lives and property is at the core of social contract between the citizens and the state. It is on this understanding that citizens surrender part of their rights to the "powerful leviathan", who in return provides common goods including security and welfare. The protection of the above is the primary responsibility the state owed the citizens.

In modern democracies elections are the only acceptable platforms for emergence of leaders, whose duties in turn are to see that public goods are fairly and equitably delivered to all segments of the people. Unfortunately infractions in the electoral process since 1999 have facilitated emergence of authoritarian regimes in Nigeria. This arises given that fraudulent elections usually produce unpopular candidates and autocrats. This crop of leaders in turn is not accountable to the electorates rather at the service of the forces that brought them to power. These processes have been producing leaders whose mandates were drawn from patron finance rather than the power of the ballots. In return the policies of these leaders while in Government are usually skewed to advance economic interest of their patrons rooted on primitive accumulation. The resultant effect was inability of national budgets which had continued to grow to address critical needs of the masses, and further deepened the impoverishment of the masses. Furthermore the irregularities that characterize elections in Nigeria have disconnected and alienated the masses from their political leaders, consequently instead of the latter to be committed in improving the welfare of the electorates, they rather struggle for state resources to enable them pay rents to the patrons that brought them to power in order to secure their return mandate. This has led to unprecedented cases of corruption on the part of political office holders, to the extent that Nigeria has continued to occupy abysmal position in the corruption perception index as shown in table one below.

Table 1: Nigeria's Position in the Corruption Perception Index, 1999-2020

Year	Score	Rank	Total
1999	1.6	98	99
2000	1.2	90	90

2001	1.0	90	91
2002	1.6	101	102
2003	1.4	132	133
2004	1.6	144	145
2005	1.9	152	158
2006	2.2	142	163
2007	2.2	147	179
2008	2.7	121	180
2009	2.5	130	180
2010	2.4	134	178
2011	2.4	143	177
2012	27	139	174
2013	25	164	177
2014	27	136	175
2015	24	163	183
2016	22	152	178
2017	26	162	179
2018	17	154	180
2019	20	162	181
2020	19	154	182

Source: Compiled by the Author from Transparency International Reports on the Corruption
Perception Index, 1999-2020.

The above are common scenarios in Nigeria and account for the neglect of the Niger Delta region, decaying infrastructural facilities, high poverty and unemployment rate. The control of state resources by this crop of leaders has created abject poverty in the midst of affluence; as corruption becomes the order of the day. The implications of the foregoing on the lives of the citizenry are catastrophic as acute unemployment, poverty and insecurity pervade the nation amidst wealth bestowed on us by nature. As shown in table two unemployment rates in Nigeria has been abysmally alarming despite high hopes and expectations placed on the fourth republic leaders, between 1999 to 2020.

Table 2: Unemployment Rate 1999-2020

	Nigeria
2006	12.3
2007	12.7
2008	14.9
2009	19.7
2010	21.4
2011	23.9
2012	24.3
2013	28.5
2015	4.3
2016	21.4
2017	**23.1**
2018	**23.6**
2019	**21.4**
2020	**-**

Source: World Development Indicators (WDI) 2020 and
Nigerian Breau of Statistics (20200.

From the table above, we can see a consistent increase in unemployment rate with a sharp drop to 4.3 percent in 2015. It was argued that the drop did not reflect the actual condition, with the figure climbing up to around 10.4% in the last quota of 2015 and had continued upwards till date according to the National Bureau of Statistic (NBS, 2020 & WDI, 2020).

Statistics on poverty have also been grim as poverty has permeated all nooks and cranny as over 90% of Nigerians live below poverty line. Ojejobi (2016) noted that United Nations Report on Nigeria's Common Country Analysis (CCA) described Nigeria as one of the poorest and unequal countries in the world, with over 150 million of her population living below the poverty line. Table three below shows that Nigeria is among the countries that harbour large population of people in multi-dimensional poverty around the world.

Table 3: Number of Persons in Multi-Dimensional Poverty around the World

Country	Year	Population in Multidimensional Poverty (million)	
Ethiopia	2019	78.9	88.2
Nigeria	2019	88.4	50.9
Bangladesh	2018	75.6	49.5
Pakistan	2017/2018	83.0	45.6
China	2018	71.9	5.2

Source: Human Development Report Office in HD I Report (2019).

The above table shows Nigeria with a high percentage of multi- dimensional poverty in 2013. Likewise Nigeria profile in Human Development Index is regrettable. The Human Development Index is a statistics of life expectancy, education and per capita income. Nigeria ranked 152 out 188 in 2015 (Nwabughtogu, 2016), 152 out of 187 countries in 2014 (Ibrahim, 2014). Table four below is a summary of Nigeria's position in Human Development Index between 1999-2020.

Table 4: Nigeria's Position in Human Development Index (HDI) and Ranking, 1999-2020

Year	HDI	Rank
1999	0.456	146
2000	0.439	151
2001	0.455	136
2002	0.466	148
2003	0.463	152
2004	0.466	151
2005	0.466	158
2006	0.448	159
2007	0.470	158
2009	0.425	158

2010	0.423	142
2011	0.459	156
2012	NA	NA
2013	0.471	153
2014	0.504	152
2015	0.463	154
2016	0.455	151
2017	0.473	153
2018	0.411	158
2019	0.455	154
2020	0.453	153

Source: Compiled by Author from Data produced by the United Nations Development
Programme (UNDP) Human Development Reports for the period. Available at:
www.undp.org/content/undp/en/hme/librarypage/hdr/

From the table above, it is evident that we are still in the category of countries with the poorest development index, despite the country's huge natural resources endowments. The point been made so far, is that the failure of the electoral processes to produce creditable leaders who ought to have addressed the basic needs of the masses amount to insecurity. This is in view that security is closely tied with survival and welfare of the citizenry, the absence of which constitute insecurity itself.

Flawed Elections and Politics of Exclusion in Nigeria
Election remains the only acceptable means of choosing leaders in a democratic system. It allows peaceful change of government and representation. In a representative democracy, elections help in institutionalizing the process of succession. It creates a legal framework for handling inter-elite rivalries and providing a modicum for popular backing for the new ruler (Hughes and May, 1988). Election also helps in deepening the process of popular participation in government. In this sense, eligible adults have the right to vote and be voted for. This invariably gives them opportunity to participate in decision making process as well as governance of their affairs. The idea of voting during an election was common in the West and posses some forms of social sanction and authority. This procedure was imported into the developing countries which has however given rise to situations in which the procedure exists but the element of choice does not

(Mackenzie and Rokkan, 1968).

Aside impoverishment of the masses, electoral irregularities have led to exclusion of greater segment of the populace from decision making and compressed the democratic space. Above scenario has engendered lingering conflicts and violence between democratic forces such as the labour unions, ethnic groups, civil society organizations, professional bodies and the state. It is the agitation by these forces to make government accountable and responsive to needs of the masses that found expression in sub-national movements across the country since 1999. It is the same deprivation that intensified militancy in the Niger Delta region between 2007 to 2009 and saw to the eruption of Boko Haram insurgence in Northern Nigeria, as well responsible for the resurrection of sub nationalist and separatist agitations in Nigeria.

Threats and out assassination of perceived political opponents and their supporters are major challenges to inclusive political participation in Nigeria. It has been a common practice for strong political opponents to be hacked down via assassination where intimidation and coercion failed. Acknowledging the threat posed by the scourge, the former Director of State Security Service (SSS) Mr. Douglas Dogo attributed the spate of political killings in Nigeria to desperation among politicians to outwit one another for political relevance. He further pointed out that the jostling for elective political offices remains a veritable threat to the survival of the system (Adeyosoye, 2005). Though the acts may be publicly condemned by those in authority, several cases of politically motivated assassination are yet to be tracked let alone prosecuting the culprits. As a result of the state inaction the menace has become a common phenomenon, and poses serious threat to political participation .Table five below shows some cases of high profile politically motivated assassination in the fourth republic; the list is not in any way exhaustive.

Table 5: Names of Victims of Political Assassination, 1999-2020

S/N	Names of Victims	Dates
1	Mr Odunayo Olagbaju, a Member of the Osun State House of Assembly.	Dec. 21, 2001
2	Chief Bola Ige, former Attorney General and Minister of Justice of the Federation.	Dec. 23, 2001
3	Alhaji Ahmed Pategi, Chairman, PDF Kwara State Chapter.	August 15, 2002
4	B arri st er B ar na b a s I g w e, C h air ma n , Nigerian Bar Association, Anambra State Chapter, and Abigail Igwe.	Sept. 1, 2002
5	Mr Dele Arojo, a Gubernatorial Aspirant in PDF.	Nov. 25, 2002
6	Alhaji Isyaku Muhammed, National Vice-President UNPP, North-West.	Dec. 2002

7	Chief Ogbonnaya Uche, Senatorial Candidate under the ANPP, Imo State.	February, 2003
8	Hon. Monday Ndor, a stalwart of ANPP, Rivers State.	Dec. 2003
9	Chief Emenike, a Chieftain of the ANPP, Imo State	March, 2003
10	Mr Theodore Agwatu, Principal Secretary to the Imo State Governor.	Feb. 2003
11	Mrs Emily Omope, a former member of the AD.	March 3, 2003
12	Chief Marshall Harry, a Chieftain of the ANPP.	March 5, 2003
13	Chief Bode Olanipekun, SAN	March, 2003
14	Chief Aminasoari Dikkibo, National Vice-Chairman of PDF, South-South	Feb. 6, 2004
15	Engr. Funsho William, PDF Gubernatorial Aspirant in Lagos State.	June, 2006
16	Dr Ayo Daramola, PDF Gubernatorial Candidate in Ekiti State.	Sept. 2006

Source: The Guardian, Sunday March 9, 2003. The Vanguard, Sunday May 23, 2018

It is a common scene for major disagreements among patrons especially over allocation of public offices to snowballs into violence. At times the major financiers of the party instigate artificial crises employed to alter, change or influence by force or coercion, the electoral behaviour of electorates or voting pattern or possibly reverse the electoral decision in favour of a particular group or political party. Hence desperation by party patrons to capture power by all means has been a single most important factor that hinders free and fair election and by extension undermined political participation and the entire democratization project since 1999. The over ambitious candidates that anticipated loss in a yet-to-be conducted election, and political party that felt cheated or deprived by the unfairness of the electoral process often engineer electoral violence.

In a bid to have their way the patrons instigate violence as weapon to intimidate their opponent who may not have the resources to employ violence .This account for the increasing rate of politically instigated inter-communal, ethnic and religious conflicts. The artificially induced crises compel potential aspirant with political ambition to withdraw or alternatively seek for patrons who will sponsor them; as those patrons are expected to have resources that could match that of the opponent. The implication is that decent Nigerians are discouraged from joining political parties and participating in political activities in the country.

The birth of fourth republic was welcomed with monumental fanfare and enthusiasm, but the character of political leadership that emerged from the election changed the story. The fact that

they manipulated the processes and got to corridors of power, caution was thrown to the winds. At the beginning the masses had no other option but to support given overwhelming preference of democratic to military rule, irrespective of the sharp practices associated with the elections. However, rather than deliver dividends of democracy as expected from them, looting of public treasury, flamboyancy and impunity become the order of the day. Consequently, the democratic forces that have lost confidence in Nigeria political leadership mobilized into Odudua People's Congress (OPC) in the West, Movement for Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in the East, Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) in the North, Movement for Emancipation of Niger Deltans (MEND) and other forms of criminalities including kidnapping of prominent Nigerians. The 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2011 general elections, equally witnessed monumental irregularities that produced leaders that owed not their electoral victories to the masses. And since then has been pursuing elitist policies that do not accommodate basic needs of the masses. The point been made so far, is that the failure of the state to conduct free, fair and credible election led to apathy and alienation of the masses from politics and governance processes in Nigeria.

Flawed Elections and Decomposition of Physical Safety of the State
Aside the failures of the political leadership that have emerged through flawed elections to address basic needs of the masses, violence that characterize elections constitute another challenge to national security. Violence has become an integral part of electoral process in Nigeria. The menace has succeeded in whittling the physical safety of the state and severally threatened the cooperate existence of the country. Evidence abounds of various forms of electoral violence, since 1959 when the first election was held in Nigeria. Similarly, the fourth republic elections – 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 witnessed monumental irregularities including unprecedented violence that claimed over 3000 lives and property estimated at three trillion naira in 2011 general election (Orji and Uzodi, 2012; Human Rights Watch 2012).

Indeed, elections have largely been responsible for political, ethnic, religious, and communal violence that have ravaged Nigeria since 1922, when British colonial authorities introduced Elective Principle. In Nigeria elections are to a large extent considered as "do or die" affair. In the words of Etannibi Alemika, "politicians turn electioneering campaigns and elections into warfare in which violence, ethnic, religious and other forms of primordial sentiments and prejudices are employed (Rosenau, *et al* 2015). In the present democratic dispensation electoral violence has been a reoccurring decimal, as elections are riddled with tension, conflicts, crises and fraud such that it is difficult to use them as a barometer of measuring people's choice (Agbaje and Adejumobi 2006). Naturally man not only likes to be at the theatre of power, but seeks to be in its centre. Violence and other state apparatus are used by power mongers, power holders to either retain or secure power. This situation gives birth to arson, looting, killings, massive destruction of lives and properties and the breakdown of law and order (Dudley cited in Enojo, 2010). The figure below shows dimensions of electoral violence that have characterized elections in Nigeria, since 1959.

Figure 1: Dimensions of Electoral Violence in Nigeria
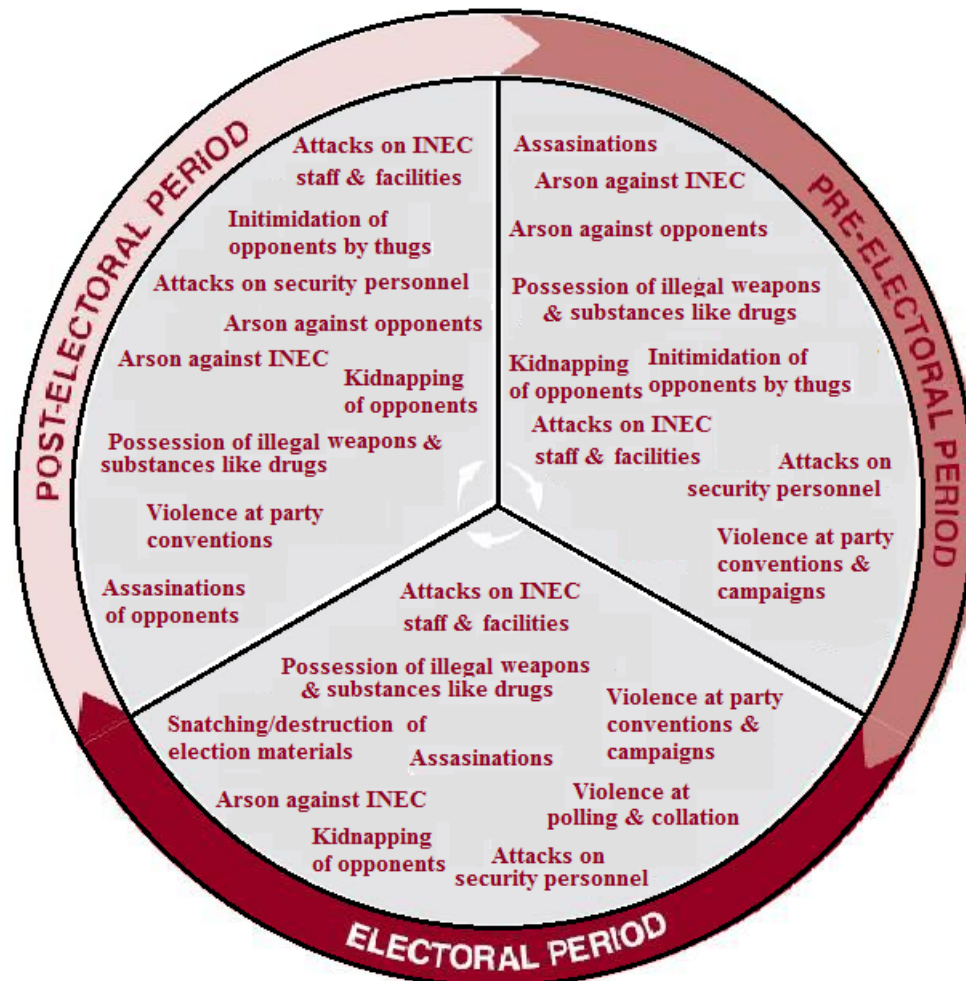
Source: Jega A.M (2012), The Electoral Process and Security Sector Synergy.

Within these periods electoral results were disputed and the judiciary awarded judgments to preferred candidates. Internal party democracy was thrown overboard, as the highest bidder pick tickets of the ruling political parties, which was akin to victory at the polls. Since is winner takes all contest, contestants resort to all manner of violence to intimidate, main and eliminate their opponents to secure electoral victories. Most often, losers in the contests extend the violence to state establishments and official especially electoral bodies and security agencies. Also private investment and lives are not spared as in most cases turns to war of all against all. Akhakpe (2014) averred that the present security crisis in some parts of Northern Nigeria is an extension

of post 2011 general election violence. Also the resurgence of militancy in the Niger Delta region is an expression of dissatisfaction with the outcome of 2015 presidential election. As shown in table six, the fourth republic has recorded unprecedented proliferation of ethnic militia groups in Nigeria. The activities of these groups have resulted in several cases of violent conflicts involving religious groups, communities

Table 6: Ethnic Militias in Nigeria,1999-2020

S/N	Militias Groups
1	Egbesu Boys of Africa – EBA
2	Chikoko Ijaw National Congress – CINC
3	Ijaw Youth Council – IYC
4	Ijaw Peace Movement – IPM
5	Isoko National Youth Movement – INYM
6	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta - MEND
7	Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force – NDPVE
8	Ijaws National Youth Movement – INYM
9	O'odua People's Congress - OPC
10	Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereignty State of Biafra – MASSOB
11	Arewa People's Congress – APC
12	Indigenous Peoples of Biafra – IPOB
13	Niger Delta Avengers – NDP
14	Bakassi Boys – BB
15	Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People – MASOP
16	Egbe Atenifere – EA
17	Egbe Llosiwaju Yoruba – ELY
18	Mkpoko Igbo (Union of Igbos)
19	Northern Elders Forum – NEF

Source: Author's Compilation from Media Reports, 1999-2020

In sum electoral frauds do not just exert negative impacts on the legitimacy of the government and stability of the system alone it equally affects national security in Nigeria. It is in the light of the failure of election to produce credible leaders that will address the needs of the masses and the circle of violence that has characterized such elections that this article concludes that elections have eroded national security in the present dispensation in Nigeria.

3. CONCLUSION
The fundamental objectives and directive principles of the state policy under the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria provides for social-economic and political rights. Full implementation of these provisions no doubt will enhance national security. These rights were extracted from the economic, social and cultural rights as adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966. However failure of the Nigerian state despite abundant resources to give effect to these rights largely accounts for intractable security challenges confronting her. Government has neither

provided enough essential services, nor built the needed social and physical infrastructure in large parts of the country, necessary to ensure that these rights are observed. Therefore, beyond protecting its sovereignty and territorial integrity, it is imperative for the state to address some other critical issues such as unemployment, poverty and corruption that pose great challenges to national security and indeed the very corporate existence of the country. Drawing form the foregoing, the article recommends drastic cut in the benefits accruable to political offices as disincentive for intense struggle and contestation for power which gives rise to repeated flawed elections in Nigeria.

REFERENCES

Agbaje, A. & Adejumobi, S. (2006). 'Do votes count? The travails of electoral politics in Nigeria, *African Development*, XXXI(3), 25-44.

Ake, C. (1985). *Political economy of Nigeria.* Lagos: Longman Publishers.

Ake, C. (2003). *Democracy and development in Africa.* Ibadan: Spectrum Books.

Akhakpe, I., (2014). *Bureaucracy and good governance*, Pumark Nig Ltd, Lagos.

Alavi, H. (1972). *The State in the post colonial societies; Pakistan and Bangladesh* New Left Review 74.

Al-Mashal, T. (2003). National security, determinants and analysis; *African Journal of Peace*: 4(3).

Ekekwe, E. (1986). *Class and state in Nigeria.* Lagos: Longman.

Enojo, K. E. (2010) Political violence and ethno- religious conflicts: Implications for sustainable development in Nigeria's fourth republic . Available at https://oer.kogistateuniversity.edu.ng/read/political-violence-and-ethno-religious- conflicts-implications-for-sustainable-development-in-nigerias-fourth-republic. Accessed on 29th November, 2020.

Human Rights Watch. (2011). *Reports of high scale violence in the 2011 general election in Nigeria.*

Ibeanu, O. (2003). The state and the market: Reflections on Ake's analysis of the state in the periphery. *African Development* 18(3).

Ihonvbere J.O. (2000). Politics of constitutional reforms and democratization in Africa; *International Journal of Comparative Sociology,* 41(1):9-25.

Ihonvbere, J.O. (1989). The 1999 presidential elections in Nigeria: The unresolved issues in transition in Nigeria? *A Journal of Opinion* 27(1), 59-62.

Iwu, Maurice, 2008, 'Electronic voting and the future of the electoral system in Nigeria', *The Nigerian Electoral Journal*, Vol.2. No.1.

Jakubowski, F. (1973). *Ideology and super-structure.* London: Allison and Bissly.

Jega A.M. (2012) *The electoral process and security sector synergy ,* INEC, Abuja.

Mackenzie, W. J. M. & Rokkan, S. (1968). "Elections" In *International encyclopedia of social sciences*, Edited by: Sills, D. L. New York: Macmillan and Free Press.

Nnoli, O. (2006) *National security in Africa: A Radical new perspective*, Enugu: Pacrep Book Series.

Nwolise, Osisioma, B. C. (2008). "National security and sustainable democracy" in Emmanuel O. Ojo (ed.), *Challenges of sustainable democracy in Nigeria*. Ibadan: John Archers

(Publishers) Limited, pp.347-355.

Okoroafor, N. Chikwen, U. & Enoch , S. (2012). Ramifications of national security :The food component; *Journal of Global Studies*: 6(2).

Orji, N. & Uzodi, N. (2012). The 2011 post elections violence in Nigeria; Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC).

Osaghae, E.E. (1999a) "Democracy and National Cohesion in Multiethnic African States: Nigeria andSouth Africa Compared", Nations and Nationalism, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp.259-280.

Richard, A. J. (1987). Democracy and prebendal politics in Nigeria: The rise and fall of the Second Republic. (African Studies Series, 56). ix, 237 pp. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1987. £27.50, $42.50.

Stone, P.J., Dunphy, D.C., Smith, M.S., Ogilvie, D.M. (1966). The general inquirer: A computer approach to content analysis. MIT Press,Cambridge, MA.

Ushie , T. (2005). Election and democratization in Nigeria; Nigerian *Journal of Democratic Studies* :5 (3)

White, L. (1989) *Political analysis. techniques and practices.* California: Book/Cole Publishing Company.

Yaqub, N. (2002). "Political parties in the transition process" In B. Onuoha and M.M. Fadakinte. eds. *Transition politics in Nigeria: 1970-1999*. Lagos: Malthouse Press Limited.