

Electoral Violence and Nigeria's 2011 General Elections

Bamgbose, J. Adele

Department of Political Science, Lagos State University,
Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria, Zip code: 102001
E-mail: bamgboseja@yahoo.com

(Received: 23-3-12/ Accepted: 26-4-12)

Abstract

For several scores of years, Nigeria has earned an appellation for herself as a showcase of Africa's democracy. Paradoxically, every journey towards such democratic experiment had been laden with electoral violence even since the colonial days. With the rebirth of African liberalism in the 1990s, electoral violence returned in a more frightening dimension. This paper examines electoral violence in the concluded 2011 elections in Nigeria. The paper points out that unnecessary political ambition, ethnic politics, unemployment and monetization of politics are some of the causes of electoral violence. It equally points to the panacea for controlling such violence within the country's body politics.

Keywords: Nigeria, democracy, election, electoral violence, instability.

1. Introduction

Within the context of a complete break away from one-party and military dictatorships, African countries dived into competitive multiparty elections since the 1990s. Thus, as Ake puts it 'Issues of democratization and human rights are increasingly the world's interest in Africa overcoming a legacy of indifference to the fate of democracy on the continent' (Ake, 1991:32). Many of these African states that allowed elections to be held in them made a mockery of their transition programmes. In fact, Naomi Chazan pointed out the loss of legitimacy that has now characterised African elections when she pointed out that: 'Elections in Africa, after the initial euphoria associated with political stability during decolonization quickly came to be viewed as meaningless political rites. . .' (Chazan, 1979:136).

While not doubting the increasing nature of democratic transitions in African countries, Lemarchand concluded that, 'there are compelling reasons to fear that the movement towards democracy may contain within itself the seed of its own undoing' (Lemarchand, 1992:98). Celestin Monga identified eight problems with African politics which according to him are: the weakness of political parties, manipulation of the electoral process, a narrow political field, a constrained civil society, a controlled press, the absence of civility, privatised violence and politicised armies, and international support for dictatorship (Monga, 1997:156). However, Richard Joseph seemed to have captured African politics when he stated that 'of the

many factors impeding constitutional democracy in Africa, none appears more significant than the upsurge of political violence (Richard, 1997:3). It seems to us therefore that a proper understanding of political renewal in Africa should pay more attention to the role of political violence.

Thus in Kenya, President Daniel arap Moi resorted to political violence as a means of retaining power. Similarly Kibaki who succeeded him was guilty of 'daylight robbery and a civilian coup' (Bamgbose, 2008:54). In Zimbabwe, Tsvangirai withdrew from the run-off of 2008 in protest over political violence that killed over 120 people and displaced thousands (Bracking, 2010:1). The April 24 2005 Togo presidential election triggered off political violence resulting to the outflow of Togolese refugees to the neighbouring countries of Ghana and Benin (Bamgbose, 2009:109). In October 2008, two Belgian demographers, Andre Lambert and Louis Lohle-Tart, were invited by the European Commission to assess the 2005 – 06 voter registration process in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). After their consultancy was done, they wrote a devastating critique of the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Initially, the IRC had put the death toll at 5.4 million even though the original figure was not up to 5.4 million. These Belgian demographers put it at 200,000 deaths. Pertinent to note is that many lives were lost (Mamdani, 2010:15).

The aim of this paper is to examine electoral violence in Nigeria's April 2011 elections (especially the presidential election). In pursuing this objective, the paper starts with some conceptual clarifications, the etymology of electoral violence in Nigeria's April 2011. The paper points to major causes of electoral violence in the country and suggests ways of getting rid of electoral violence in the country's elections.

2. Conceptual Clarifications

For a proper understanding of this paper, it is necessary to define the following concepts: election, violence and electoral violence.

2.1 Election

In its strictest sense, there can never be a democracy without election. Transitions in numerous countries today have continued to reveal that democracy is possible without election. But what type of democracy is this? Huntington is however quick to point out that, a political system is democratic 'to the extent that its most powerful collective decision-makers are selected through fair, honest and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes, and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote' (Huntington, 1991:661).

In its proper sense, election is a process of selecting the officers or representatives of an organisation or group by the vote of its qualified members (Nwolise, 2007:155). Anifowose defined elections as the process of elite selection by the mass of the population in any given political system (Anifowose, 2003:21). Elections provide the medium by which the different interest groups within the bourgeois nation state can stake and resolve their claims to power through peaceful means (Iyayi, 2005:1). Elections therefore determine the rightful way of ensuring that responsible leaders take over the mantle of power.

In terms of its origin, election is totally alien to African political systems as election to the royal thrones in Africa from time immemorial has been through the royal blood. This phenomenon became diffused following the advent of colonialism. The traditional institutional systems and the social structures adapted from Western models coexist (Riggs, 1967:123). This means in effect that, the traditional institutions choose leaders through the lineage of royal blood while the western model imported to the transitional society does that through elections.

However, with the process of political decolonisation from 1945, there was an extension of the franchise and the scope of representative institutions which go with election process. The

fact however remains that in the transitional societies, elections have often been conducted in such a way as to give but a poor reflection of the popular will which have often been leading to violence.

2.2 Violence

African democracies without any shadow of doubt have become associated with violence even with the slightest provocation. Violence has even gone beyond African countries. It is a universal phenomenon. It has become something that is used by groups seeking power, by groups holding power and by groups in the process of losing power (Anifowose, 1982:1). Scholars differ on whether to consider violence as objective or subjective, on what to include or exclude as violence, and on how to classify the various forms of violence. The outcome of this made scholars to come up with many forms of violence.

Fanon offered a three-fold categorisation of violence similar to what Galtung made in his article in 1969. These are: physical, structural and psychological violence. Physical violence involves somatic injury inflicted on human beings. Killing of an individual is an example of this. Structural violence is a condition of social injustice while psychological violence is injury or harm done to the human psyche which include brainwashing, indoctrination of various kinds and threats (JInadu, 1980:46 and 47).

Similarly, Gur gave a three fold categorisation of violence which are: turmoil or mass-based, relatively unorganised and spontaneous political violence (demonstrations, riots, strikes, and localised rebellions); conspiracy, that is, organised political violence which involves limited participation (assassination, coups d'état and small scale guerrilla wars); and internal war or organised political violence involving mass participation (terrorism, large-scale guerrilla warfare and revolution) (Cited in Osaghae, 2005:101). Alain Chesnais who studied violence in the 18th and 19th centuries stated that: 'violence in the strict sense, the only violence which is measurable and indisputable is physical violence. It is direct injury to persons; it has three characteristics: it is brutal, eternal and painful. It is defined by the material use of force' (Cited in Adebani, 2004:329). Alanamu while citing Salami categorised violence into two which are, direct and indirect violence. Direct violence refers to acts of deliberate attack on person's physical or psychological integrity. This has in this category all forms of homicide (genocide, war crime, massacres, murders, terrorism) as well as all forms of brutal actions such as kidnapping, torture, rape, maltreatment. Indirect violence covers harmful, sometimes even deadly situations or actions which, due to human intervention, do not necessarily involve a direct relationship between the victims and the institution (Alanamu, 2005:13).

Violence therefore is an encompassing phenomenon. It is organised in nature carried out by the people or government to cause harm or injury with the intents and purposes to carry out a desired objective.

2.3 Electoral Violence

Since violence can be defined as the illegitimate or unauthorised use of force to effect decisions against the will or desires of others (Kolawole, 1988:125), then Nwolise while quoting Albert defined electoral violence as all forms of organised acts or threats physical, psychological, and structural, aimed at intimidating, harming, blackmailing a political stakeholder before, during and after an election with a view to determining, delaying, or otherwise influencing an electoral process (Nwolise, 2007:159). Table 1 below best illustrates the three dimensions of Electoral Violence.

Table 1: Some components of the Three Dimensions of Electoral Violence

Dimension	Components
PHYSICAL	Physical assault on individuals during campaign, elections and when election results are released.

	Assassination of political opponents or people perceived as a threat to one's political ambition.
	Burning down of public or opponents' houses or cars.
	Shooting, shoot-outs.
	Killing of individuals.
	Partisan harassment by security agents, arrests, forceful dispersal of rallies, or shooting, wounding or killing of people.
	Kidnappings and hostage-taking.
	Bombing of infrastructure.
	Forceful disruption by thugs of political and campaign rallies.
	Destruction of ballot boxes and ballot papers by thugs or partisan security agents.
	Armed raids on voting and collation centres, and snatching of ballot boxes and papers from polling agents.
	Free-for-all fights.
PSYCHOLOGICAL	Threats against and harassment by security agents of opponents of the ruling regime or party, which create political apathy.
	Shoot-on-sight orders that breed fear in voters.
	Terror inflicted by political assassinations, which makes people scared to participate in politics or elections.
	Publication or broadcast of abusive, insulting, or intimidating material or advertorials.
	Threats to life through phone calls, text messages, etc.
STRUCTURAL	Coercion of citizens by government to register or vote.
	Exclusionary acts and policies.
	Unequal opportunities for political parties and candidates.
	Deliberate changes in dates, venues, or times of events to the disadvantage of others.
	Partisan delimitation of electoral constituencies and location of polling booths.
	Excessive fees for collecting party nomination forms.
	Unfree campaign
	Reliance on money and brute force instead of moral integrity and competence.
	Restraints imposed on voters.
	Use of the incumbency factor to give undue advantage to some candidates.
	Announcement of false or fraudulent results.

	Lengthy delays in announcing election results.
	Absence of (adequate) voting materials and election result forms.
	Delays in voting.
	Absence of electoral officers from pooling booths.
	Partisan behaviour of police and other security agents.
	Discriminatory acts and policies.

Source: Nwolise, O. B. 'Electoral Violence and Nigeria's 2007 elections' *Journal of African Elections* Vol. 6 No. 2 Oct. 2007 pp. 155-79.

3. The Etymology of Electoral Violence in Nigeria

The urge for democratic consolidation, the suspension of one party rule and military dictatorships have led to the multiplicity of elections in African states. Election therefore in terms of its origin is colonial in nature. Nothing was heard about elections until the advent of colonial rule because African countries though democratic according to their levels of development were devoid of elections and electoral processes.

With the exit of Lugard, the British Government was opportune to bring Clifford. The Clifford Constitution brought the elective principle into Nigerian politics which provided for voting in Lagos and Calabar. Restricted as this elective principle was, it was devoid of violence. But the same thing cannot be said of the subsequent elections. In fact, as the country advanced in her constitutional development, there were some centrifugal forces tending to hinder the much cherished amalgamation of 1914. One of such forces was that the colonialists resorted to the manipulation of elections along communal lines. Thus in 1951 election in Kano, the colonial administration tried very hard to frustrate Northern allies of Southerners opposed to the candidates of the emirs. The allies suffered diverse discriminations as they were not allowed to hold public meetings, intimidation and victimisation of greater proportion. Colonial manipulation of elections led to the poisoning of relations between the North and South with the resultant effect of a consequent increase in the social distance between members of their populations (Nnoli, 1980:122).

Since then, the country became exposed to diverse electoral violence. Thus the Richards Constitution which divided the country into north, east and west set the stage for violent electoral battles among the three main ethnic groups. However, apart from the pockets of electoral violence that took place in 1952 (the case of Azikiwe's defeat in Western Regional House of Assembly and how he eventually settled down in the east and displaced Chief Eyo Ita and became the premier of the NCNC, and that of the electoral violence that followed the 1959 general elections), the real electoral violence emerged in 1964 federal election. To contest the election, two major allies were formed that is, The Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) consisting of NPC, NNNDP and Midwest Democratic Front (MDF). The second alliance being United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) consisting of NCNC, AG, NEPU and UMBC. On the election day, as a protest against the arrest and imprisonment of UPGA members who were to contest election in the North and West, UPGA leaders directed that their supporters should boycott the election. Ofeimun declared that 'It was an election so-well orchestrated with violence and so much normlessness that, Nnamdi Azikiwe, the President of the newly declared Republic, initially refused to call Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister, to form a government' (Ofeimun, 2011:72).

It was not however long when similar occurrence took place in 1965 in the Western Nigeria when election came up in that region. In 1965, the stage was set in the western region for both the Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNNDP) and Action Group (AG) to determine which of these two political parties would rule the electorate. Before the commencement of the election, there were all indications that there was not going to be peace in the region. Earlier,

the government party agents alone had their own identity discs duly countersigned, the electoral officers were nowhere to be found while large number of ballot papers mysteriously disappeared from the police custody. By September 30th, the NNDP announced that 15 of its candidates had been returned unopposed. The legal action instituted by AG to stop the 15 unopposed candidates failed.

More serious disturbances marred the election. Thus on the eve of the poll, an electoral officer was shot dead in the electoral office at Ibadan. On the polling day, two electoral officers and two polling agents were shot dead. Contradictory election results were heard from radio and on pages of newspapers. At a time, Akintola was announced the winner. At the other hand, Alhaji Adegbenro was announced. This further polarised the division between the two leaders. The press conference that he (Alhaji Adegbenro) gave in which he declared that he had formed his own government led to his arrest. The then Governor, Joseph Fadahunsi refused to receive him but called on Akintola to form a government. Large scale killing and looting actually followed as the youth went on rampage, burning the house of NNDP members. This even went beyond electoral violence in the west, because scores of the delegates who arrived for the Commonwealth Conference in Lagos were killed a mile from the airport. The western riot became the final straw which the military capitalised upon to take over power from the civilian by January 15, 1966.

The 1979 elections were not elections supervised by the civilians rather, they were supervised by the Obasanjo's military regime. There was not much violence given the fact that the military played midwife to the elections and transition. The only outstanding disagreement was the controversial Supreme Court decision on the winner. Earlier, both FEDECO and the military had 13 as the two-thirds of 19. But after the elections, controversy was raised over the meaning of one quarter of the votes cast in each of at least two-thirds of all the States in the Federation. The military in collaboration with FEDECO, decided to appoint Shagari as the president by reinterpreting the meaning of one-quarter of two-thirds of nineteen (Falola and Ihonvbere, 1985:70).

With the 1983 federal elections, the military had quitted the stage and did not supervise these elections. *Ipsa facto* those who could not demonstrate their acts of vandalism and thuggery during the 1979 elections had the ample-time to demonstrate during the 1983 elections. The most violent of the mayhem took place at Ondo State where the carnage reached the level of public mayhem similar to those in 1964-5. The ostensible cause was the popular reactions against rigged gubernatorial elections which followed a National Party of Nigeria (NPN) candidate in an overwhelmingly Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) state. In the violent demonstration the entire families of politicians were wiped out, and hundreds of houses were set on fire including the state headquarters of FEDECO. Three months after the 1983 elections were held, the Second Republic was swept into oblivion. The Army struck and the much tottered democratic experiment was jettisoned through the military coup of 31st December 1983. As a result of much vacillation on the path of both Buhari and Idiagbon to commence another transitional programme, they were overthrown in a palace coup and this brought in Babangida who commenced a fruitless transitional programme. Babangida succeeded in plunging the nation into a more violent nature when he cancelled the presidential election on 12 June 1993. Babangida stepped aside in August 1993 which paved way for an interim government led by Chief Shonekan which was swept into oblivion following the palace coup led by General Sani Abacha. Abacha was suddenly struck with death while he was planning to transform himself into a civilian president.

General Abubakar succeeded Abacha and started another transitional programme which necessitated the regime's supervision of the 1999 elections. Local and international observers reported widespread irregularities in the polls with electoral fraud in favour of one or the other candidates. Olu Falae who was a joint candidate for both the Alliance for Democracy (AD) now Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) and All People's Party (APP) now All Nigeria's People Party (ANPP) showed his displeasure of the elections but did not pursue his appeal against the declaration of Obasanjo as winner of the presidential elections to the

Supreme Court (Olukoshi, 2000:25).

The 2003 elections were conducted by the Obasanjo regime during which electoral violence added to the political assassination. The president himself warned early in 2002 that politicians were raising private militias that could make the 2003 elections bloody and indeed it was bloody. In fact, every thing pointed to this, because a spate of violence had already preceded the elections. In November 2002 disturbances broke out in Kaduna, several high profile killing with clear political overtones led to the heightened security concerns. Thus the actual conduct of the elections brought some welcome surprises as there were few deaths during the 12 April National Assembly elections and the presidential and gubernatorial races a week later. There was abundant evidence of large scale rigging, fraud, and intimidation in many parts of the country (Lewis, 2003:142). The Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) that monitored the 2003 election reported the irregularities that besmeared the election when it stated that:

. . . Twenty-nine of the registered political parties that either contested or did not contest the elections have variously rejected the results as announced by the INEC declaring the results as fraudulent. Both Domestic and International Election Observers documented massive irregularities that characterised the elections and refused to endorse the elections as free and fair. Some political parties and their candidates decided to challenge some of the results before the various Election Petition tribunals and have gone ahead to do so while others declared “mass action” to pressurise a government without popular mandate to abdicate power (Iyayi, 2005:11).

The general observation and conclusion of Nigerians regarding the 2003 election was that no election could be conducted in Nigeria under a civilian government without corruption, electoral malpractices and violence of highest order.

However, as the 2007 election drew near, President Obasanjo told the surprised Nigerians, other Africans and the world at large that the 2007 elections would be a ‘do-or-die affair’ (Nwolise, 2007:165). The 2007 elections when it actually came were most deadly and frightening in nature. Thus in Rivers State, a police station was attacked and burnt by unknown assailants a night before the election day. In Anambra and Rivers States, voters were faced with violence and intimidation. The INEC offices in Onitsha North, Onitsha South, Nnewi South and a local government office in Akwa North, Anambra were burnt in protest. In the same vein, violence marred election in other parts of the nation. In Ekiti State, there was a confrontation between the PDP and Action Congress supporters and election results were blatantly falsified in many areas. Violence was equally reported in the northern state of Katsina, where opposition supporters burnt down government buildings in protest as the announcement that the PDP had swept the state’s gubernatorial polls. Soldiers clashed with angry voters in Nasarawa state. In Oyo state, PDP thugs beat up opposition party officials and hijacked ballot boxes.

The 2007 election therefore was generally perceived as the worst in the history of election administration in Nigeria. The election brought most fraudulent practices. These illegalities were later settled by the judiciary but before this, those affected had their positions stolen. The international monitors commented that:

The 2007 state and federal elections have fallen short of basic international and regional standards for democratic elections. They were marred by poor organisation, lack of essential transparency, widespread procedural irregularities, significant evidence of fraud, particularly during result collation process, voter disenfranchisement at different stages of the process, lack of equal conditions for contestants and numerous incidents of violence. As a result, the elections have not lived up to the hopes and expectations of the Nigerian people and the process cannot be considered to have been credible (Adebayo and Omotola, 2007:207).

In every respect, the 2007 elections (State, Local and Federal elections) had come and gone but the wounds created and the injustices perpetrated continue to linger. Apathy increased in leaps and bounds as many were discouraged taking part in politics. It was amidst this uncertain political climate that the nation entered the year 2011, another year of election.

4. The 2011 Elections

For several scores of years and irrespective of what happened in the past, Nigerians had for long developed a deeper love for democracy. This love had been demonstrated in the time past whenever there is a need for this. Thus in spite of the ills that followed the 1999, 2003 and 2007 elections, Nigerians still showed their willingness to elect their leaders even in the 2011 elections. Such started with a time table which was set and adjusted later for convenience. To prevent electoral violence during the elections, a meeting of the 36 state Governors of the Federation which was presided over by the Chairman of the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF), Bukola Saraki was held on 8 February 2011 at Abuja in which the Governors signed an undertaking having the following objectives, to:

commit to free, fair, credible and transparent electoral process in the upcoming elections,
 remain unflinchingly committed to democracy and the integrity of the electoral process,
 refrain from using religion and ethnicity as vehicle from political campaign,
 commit to promoting peaceful, religious and ethnic co-existence,
 do our best to ensure the coming elections are devoid of any form of manipulation, thuggery, violence, rigging and any other form of underhand tactics,
 consistently educate and remind our supporters, and party members not to do anything or take any action capable of compromising the electoral process,
 promptly and loudly denounce, and even disown any of our supporters engaged in any act that might diminish credibility of the forthcoming elections,
 do nothing that will weaken, muzzle or destabilize opposition parties in our various states; and
 respect the wishes of the electorate as expressed through the ballot box (Jimoh, 2011:3).

Paradoxically, in spite of the undertaking, violence could not be ruled out.

4.1 Cases of Electoral Violence in Nigeria's Six Geo-Political Zones

Nigeria, a country of considerable land mass having an area of 913,072 square kilometres has a distance of 1,120 kilometres from west to east and a distance of 1,040 kilometres from south to north (Afigbo, 1991:14) is divided into six geo-political zones as reflected below:

- a. South-West comprising Oyo, Lagos, Ogun, Ekiti, Osun and Ondo States.
- b. South-South made up of Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta, Akwa-Ibom, Cross-Rivers and Edo States
- c. South-East consisting of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States.
- d. North-Central having Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger and Plateau States.
- e. North-West made up of Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara States and
- f. North-East having Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe States.

We shall commence on how violence swept through these six geo-political zones beginning with South-West zone. The first taste of such electoral violence started with ruinous political

campaigns in almost all the states of the federation. Ruinous as violent clashes ensued among supporters of political parties which led to the death of several people and many were injured less than nine days to the general elections. In Ondo State, three people were shot dead in Obanla area with four people reportedly injured in Iro street in a clash between supporters of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the ruling Labour Party (LP).

The electoral violence and irregularities that marred the election at Ondo State prompted the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) to submit a 47 page petition to the election tribunal in Akure seeking a rerun of the polls. Meanwhile, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had already declared the Labour Party (LP) candidate, Rapheal Nomiye as a winner in the National Assembly election. The ACN had claimed in a petition EPT/ODS/NAE/HR/2/2011 that the election was marred by violence, unprecedented irregularities, voter intimidation and various instances of ballot snatching in two riverine councils of Ilaje and Ese-Odo which made up the constituency (Bello, 2011:7).

In Ado-Ekiti, the Ekiti State Capital, two supporters of the PDP identified as Ayo Kehinde Faluyi and Michael Ipindola were killed by assassins dressed in police uniform during a brawl between the supporters of the PDP and the ruling Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN). The clash in Ado-Ekiti caused pandemonium as the corpse of one of the casualties, Ayo Michael was dropped at the Governor's office by the protesting members of the PDP in the state.

Ogun state had before the elections thrown itself into a confused state by presenting two controversial lists of candidates to Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Adetunji Olurin and Gboyega Isiaka. However during the campaign, no fewer than two people died in a clash between supporters of the governorship candidate of the Labour Party (LP) and commercial motorcyclists (Oladoyinbo, Nwaoko and Olukoya, 2011:1 and 4).

At Osun state, the leadership of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) accused Elijah Adewale, Governor Babatunde Fashola's Special Adviser of leading hooligans from Lagos State to Osun State to foment trouble during the National Assembly election. It was pointed out that the assignment of the immigrants was to scare the electorate from performing their civic rights (Faturoti, 2011:7). The squad being sponsored by the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) in the state was allegedly spearheaded by Prince Sola Adewumi, Dr Elijah Adewale, Dr Gbenga Ogunleye, Chairman, care taker committee of Obokun and Taiwo Fatiregun, Caretaker Chairman, Oriade Local Government. This could not be far from the truth as six members of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) were later arrested and arraigned at the magistrate court at Osogbo over alleged arson and political violence.

States in the South-South were equally engulfed with electoral violence. Thus in Akwa-Ibom, political campaign took a destructive dimension when both Ikot-Ekpene and Uyo were turned into theatres of political war. The face-off was between loyalists of the PDP and ACN. The ACN had its gubernatorial campaign rally at Ikot-Ekpene while the PDP had its own in Mkpat Enin and Abak Local Councils at Uyo. Different versions of the cases of the quarrel were advanced, but, it was certain that the quarrel took place between the supporters of ACN and those of the PDP which resulted into the death of many while several were wounded. The presidential campaign office of Goodluck Jonathan/Namadi Sambo situated along Abak Road was set ablaze. Some 127 Peugeot, 307 Salon Cars and 157 Keke NAPEP tri cycles belonging to the state government were burnt. About 20 other vehicles belonging to well meaning Nigerians were equally burnt at different locations. About 51 suspects were arrested in connection to the political violence at Uyo (Akpan-Nsoh, 2011:22 and 23). Akwa-Ibom is also a place where a Diaspora aspirant had his mother brutally assassinated.

In Edo State, protests came over the way the primaries were conducted. Matthew Uroghide who lost to Ehigie Uzamere in Edo south alleged that he won, while Theo Okoh and Onikolease Irabor both claimed victory in Edo Central as they alleged that the announced winner, Herberta Okonfua rigged the process. There were also protests from House of Representatives and State House of Assembly aspirants (Aliu, 2011:65).

Electoral violence in Cross River has been on the low side as there were no reported cases of politically motivated killings. However, at Ugep, there was violence and some people were injured and cars destroyed while guns were used freely. The violence led to the arrest of one of the aspirants to the Federal House of Representatives, Mr Patrick Okomiso and the

incumbent member, Chief Bassey Ewa.

In Delta State, the re-scheduled Delta North Senatorial district primary was marred by sporadic gunshots at the Cenotaph venue, Asaba. The State chairman of the party, Chief Peter Onyeluka Nwaoboshi escaped being lynched by some angry delegates during the senatorial rerun. The crisis was more fuelled when Nwaoboshi upbraided the panel members for presenting a fake list of delegates. The delegates thus lost patience and hell was let loose.

States in the South East shared in the electoral violence. For instance, at Izzi Local Government of Ebonyi State suspected thugs loyal to a political party unleashed terror on St. Stephen's Catholic Church, Iziogo in the local council. What however snowballed into the violence was at an ANPP Chieftain and the senatorial candidate for Ebonyi North Senatorial District, Fidelis Nwankwo went to St. Stephen's Catholic Church on that Sunday in company of his colleagues, Senator Ucha, the ANPP governorship candidate and Emma Uguru, the House of Representatives candidate for Izzi/Abakaliki Federal Constituency. It was after the service and when the people were about going home that the thugs descended on them. The thugs broke into the home of the Catechist, burnt his motor cycle, destroyed the yam barn and inflicted cuts on one person. In all, five motorcycles were burnt (Sobechei, 2011:15).

Enugu witnessed attack targeted at opponents of the state government. Such attacks by members ranged from disruption of meetings and gatherings, destruction of posters and billboards of aspirants. The aim was basically to scuttle the ambition of the new comers by the incumbents so as to retain the hold of government on the political structure. Former aspirant to Enugu West senatorial zone of the PDP, O. A. U Onyema severally had his billboards and posters destroyed by his opponents in a bid to cow him. One of the claimants of the governorship candidates of the PDP, Chief Anayo Onwuegbu also severally had his billboards smashed by alleged opponents on the pretext that he did not secure the approval of the State Ministry of Environment before mounting the campaign billboards and posters.

In another development, in the build up of the battle to control the soul of the PDP between Chime and his opponents, former military administrator of old Imo state, Commodore Anthony Oguguo and former adviser on local government affairs to Chimaroke Nnamani, Chief Sam Ejiofor had their homes invaded by political thugs.

In Abia State, the entire campaign process was defined by sheer hostility. In fact, this was described as the battle front. In Adamawa State, an event organised by the Ihiala leaders of thought was disrupted when gunmen suddenly stormed the venue brandishing dangerous weapons, and started shooting.

Electoral violence took the same ugly situation among the North-Central States. In Benue State, the campaign turned into a disaster when a convoy of the Benue State Deputy Governor, Steven Lawani on his way back from a rally in Gbajimba, Guma Local Council ran into an ambush by armed political thugs. While most of the vehicles in the convoy escaped the attack, the bus in which the Chief Press Secretary to the Benue State Deputy Governor, Mr. Ejembi Ogwuche could not. He was shot in the head and hand while the driver Mr Inalegwu Ode, had nine gunshot wounds (Nwakaudu, 2011:12). In another development, the political opponents at Benue State also attacked and wounded Rt. General Lawrence Onoja, the Benue South ACN Senatorial Candidate. The face-off in Benue State was between supporters of PDP and ACN.

In Niger State, the trouble there started with violence during the campaign. In Suleja for instance, hand-held explosives were thrown into the venue of the Niger East Senatorial campaign flag-off by unidentified persons. Angry youth protesting the results of the elections stormed the Nigerian Christian Corpers Fellowship Secretariat in Minna, Niger State Capital and locked 50 corps members serving in the State in the building and set it ablaze.

The lucky ones among these corpors were relocated to the army barracks at Minna for safety. Thus in Plateau state, the flag-off of the Labour Party (LP) Gubernatorial campaign led by Pauline Tallen was marked with a sad beginning as twelve of the party supporters was involved in a ghastly motor accident on their way to Jos.

Within the North-West States, electoral violence became the order of the day. Kaduna State

became another centre of violence occasioned by the protests against president Goodluck Jonathan's victory at the polls. In the violence, several people were said to have been killed while properties worth billions of naira, including churches and mosques were set on fire. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) headquarters as well as houses belonging to Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chieftains in Hayanbanki and Tudun Wada were set ablaze by the irate youth. Other areas that the violence reached included Kafanchan and Zonkwa. In other places such as Zaria, several people were reportedly killed while Baptist Church was razed by an angry mob alleged to be supporters of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). In areas such as Angwar Muazu, Kabala West, Rigasa, Kawo, Angwar Romi and Sabo, angry youth mounted roadblocks attacking perceived political opponents (Akhaine, 2011:16).

At Kano State, especially during the primaries, there had been cases of disagreements over the primaries. For examples, Governor Ibrahim Shekarau of the ruling All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) had fallen apart with his deputy, Alhaji Abdullahi Tijani Gwarzo over his support for Alhaji Sagir Takai, as the governorship candidate of the party. On the other hand, within the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the governorship ticket was controversially handed over to (Rtd) General Lawal Jafaru Isa, former military administrator of Kaduna State instead of the much-touted Mohammed Abacha. Even though, the position was surrendered to Mohammed Abacha, the aftermath of the election was not favourable. The violence started on 18 April 2011 by 10.00 am defied political, ethnic or religious interpretation as virtually all segments of the Kano society were badly affected.

Aside, property worth hundreds of millions of naira owned by the Emir of Kano, Dr. Ado Bayero, the Galadima Kano, Alhaji Tijani Hashim, chieftains of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) like former speakers, House of Representatives, Ghali Umar Na'Abba and Salisu Buhari were reduced to rubble. The All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) Elders Committee leader and former presidential candidate of the defunct National Republican Party (NRP), Alhaji Bashir Tofa's residential building was also burnt. Hundreds of Kano residents were severely injured, their cars damaged by the aggrieved youth who claimed the presidential candidate of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) was denied victory at the polls (Abuh, 2011:12).

At Zamfara State, thousands of youth went on the rampage in Tsafe Local Government area of the State whereby they destroyed dozens of shops and vandalised three churches. Major roads were also barricaded, bonfires were made to disrupt vehicular movement while about 47 suspects were arrested. The violence that broke out in Katsina state escalated to many areas such as Malumfashi, Kankara, Daura and Jibia which claimed scores of cars and at least five churches. The PDP Secretariat, Kankara private residence of local PDP Chieftains and Governor Shema campaign office were destroyed in the melee.

In the same vein, nearly all the States in the North-East also experienced violence. At Gombe, 17 people lost their lives during the post-presidential poll violence in Gombe and 100 suspects were arrested. The Acting Head of Clinical Services and Training of the Federal Medical Centre, Gombe, Dr Ali Shaliza stated that 71 patients of post-election violence were brought to the hospital. The violence also resulted into about 300 casualties to be attended to by the Red Cross (Sabiu et al, 2011:53). In Bauchi State, 10 Youth Corpers who served as election umpires, a Divisional Crime Officer (DCO) and a policewoman lost their lives. Over 4,500 people were displaced following the mayhem unleashed on the residents of Bauchi of supporters of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). Four INEC offices were equally burnt down in Bauchi, Dambam, Misau and Jama'are local government areas while 500 laptops used for the voter registration exercise were looted by the irate youth.

In Taraba State, many people were shot dead by the police during a protest at Mutum-Biyu headquarters of Gassol Local Government Council. Also in Ardo-kola Local Government Area of Taraba State, four cars were burnt following the alleged attempt by one of the political parties to tamper with the results of the presidential elections. Those who lost their lives were the youth that took to the streets in the town over the alleged manipulation of the presidential election results. The Secretariat of the PDP in Gassol Local Government area was not left out as the entire building was burnt down by protesters. Following the protest, tension

escalated in the State Capital paralysing both economic and financial activities. In Adamawa State, irate youth were up in arms in Madagali and Mubi Local Councils claiming that the election result figures were changed overnight.

Touched by the monumental destruction caused by the mayhem, the president in his broadcast to the nation said:

If anything at all, these acts of mayhem are sad reminders of the events which plunged our country into thirty months of an unfortunate civil war. As a nation we are yet to come to terms with the level of human suffering, destruction and displacement, including that of our children to far-away countries, occasioned by those dark days (Onuorah, 2011:1).

It was in order to investigate and nip such disturbances in the bud that the Federal Government constituted a 22-man investigation panel. The members of the panel included: Sheikh Ahmed Lemu as Chairman; Justice Samson Uwaifo (rtd) as Vice Chairman; Rev. Father Idowu Feron; Alhaji Muhammadu Danmadami; Chief Ajibola Ogunshola; Mrs Lateefat Okunnu; M. B. Wali; Dr Timiebi A Koripamo-Ajari; Peter Esele; Alhaji Muhammed Ibrahim; Prof. Femi Odekunle; Ambassador Ralph Uwuche, Alhaji Bukar Usman; Sheikh Adam Odoko; Major-General Muhammed Said (rtd); P. C. Okorie; Shamsuna Ahmed; Major-Gen I. P. Ngubane; Alhaji Sani Maikudi; Rear Admiral I. Hotomi serving member of the National Youth Service Corps and Mr. F. F Ogunshakin as Secretary.

The terms of reference of the panel are:

To investigate the immediate and remote cause(s) of the pre-election violence in Akwa Ibom State as well as the tide of unrest in some states of the federation following the presidential election and make appropriate recommendations on how to prevent future occurrence,

To ascertain the number of persons who lost their lives or sustained injuries during the violence,

To identify the spread and extent of damage to means of livelihood and access the cost of damage to personnel and public property and places of worship and make appropriate recommendations,

To investigate the sources of weapons used in the unrest and recommend how to stem the tide of illegal flow of such weapons to the country; and

To examine any other matter incidental or relevant to the unrest and advise government as appropriate (Muanya, Omofoye and Onochie, 2011:1).

However, the findings and recommendations of this investigation panel are yet to be out at the time this research was conducted.

Akintunde while referring to Kalu Ezera pointed out that Nigerian leaders were determined to make democracy work in their country (Akintunde, 1967:1). However, the history of elections in Nigeria has consistently taken along with it element of violence because a cursory look at the First Republic till date has depicted that these elections were not all that free from rancour and acrimony. What are then the factors responsible for electoral violence in Nigerian politics?

Unnecessary Political Ambition: Unlike before, Nigerians have become highly politicised. In fact, the demand to participate in politics keeps on increasing in geometrical progression while the absorbing capacity of these participants increases in arithmetic progression. This leads to a very high competition among the participants who are prone to take the most extreme measure in order to win and maintain political power.

Ethnic Politics: This has become highly pronounced in Nigerian politics. The colonialists

who ruled us in the past poisoned the minds of Nigerians against Nigerians. Thus in 1951 election in Kano, the colonial administration tried hard to frustrate Northern allies of Southerners opposed to the candidates of the emirs. Similarly, after the election that brought Goodluck Jonathan in, some disgruntled elements rose up in the North chanting 'Ba muso' meaning they do not like the president because he is not from the north.

Unemployment: Unemployment also contributes immensely to electoral violence. Many of these people who are jobless enter politics with the intents and purposes of causing confusion.

Monetization of Politics: In the time past, political offices did not attract money as it is today. The government had made politics more financially attractive that nobody wants to engage in any other profession than politics. Thus as it is now, the 109 senators receive ₦4,066,212,458.00. The 350 members of House of Representatives receive ₦11,496,523,333.00. The 36 State house of assemblies receive ₦17,129,465,597.00 while about 600 Councillors receive ₦74,766,456,000.00 per annum (Audu, 2010:1 and 7). Seeing these gargantuan benefits Nigerians determine to enter into politics and win at all cost.

To combat this ugly phenomenon of electoral violence, government should reduce the salaries and allowances of these political office holders. Nigerians are now aware of this robust pay packets and this is why there is a clamour for a reduction in their salaries and allowances. Most of these people who enter into politics do so because of financial benefits rather than the services they will render to their wards and constituencies.

There is no doubt that the police has let down the nation. *Ipsa facto* the advice here is that since the police cannot effectively monitor elections in Nigeria, the Army should be used. The Gowon administration made use of the Army in 1973 population census. In the same vein, the army should be used in supervising elections. The fact remains as far as Nigeria is concerned that the people fear and respect the army than the police.

Government should provide more jobs for the populace. Provision of jobs should not be treated with levity. This should be treated with all seriousness as millions of people are roaming Nigerian streets without jobs.

People should be educated to seek redress in the court rather than take laws into their hands. What exist in the nation today is that people cannot accept defeat without exhibiting the act of violence. This is not good for democracy. The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon realised this recently when he pointed out that 'Democracy is premised on the ballot box and not on violence' (Ban Ki –moon, 2011:2).

5. Conclusion

Political violence or electoral violence has continued to threaten the democratic experiment in Nigeria. This has done incalculable damage to Nigeria's democracy having stifled many democratic experiments in Nigeria. Electoral violence has now taken another dimension fiercer than before because associating with the present electoral violence is political assassination. Urgent steps should be taken to control this ugly phenomenon.

References

- [1] A. Abuh, Kano: Protests galore over primaries, *The Guardian (Lagos)*, (2011).
- [2] W. Adebaniwi, 2004. *Democracy and Violence: The Challenges of Communal Clashes*, In A.A.B. Agbaje, L. Diamond and E. Onwudiwe (eds), *Nigeria's Struggle for Democracy and Good Governance*, Ibadan University Press.
- [3] P.F. Adebayo and J.S. Omotola, Public perceptions of the 2007 Nigerian general elections, *Journal of African Elections*, 6(2) (2007).
- [4] A.E. Afigbo, Background to Nigerian federalism: Federal features in the Colonial State, *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 21(1991).
- [5] S. Akhaine, Violence up North, *The Guardian (Lagos)*, (2011).

- [6] J.O. Akintunde, The demise of democracy in the first republic of Nigeria: A causal analysis, *Journal of African Studies*, Odu, 4(2) (1967).
- [7] I. Akpan-Nsoh, Political violence, death berth in the land of promise, *The Guardian (Lagos)*, (2011).
- [8] C. Ake, Rethinking African demoracy, *Journal of Democracy* 2(1) (1991).
- [8] A.S. Alanamu, *Political Violence: An Introductory Note*, In A.S. Alanamu, (ed), *Issues in Political Violence in Nigeria*, Hamson Printing Communications, Ilorin, Nigeria, (2005).
- [9] A. Aliu, Edo: Huge cost of primaries, *The Guardian (Lagos)*, (2011).
- [10] R. Anifowose, *Violence and Politics in Nigeria The Tiv and Yoruba Experience*, (1982), Nok Publishers, Nigeria.
- [11] R. Anifowose, 2003, *Theoretical Perspectives on Elections*, In R. Anifowose and T. Babawale (eds), (2003), *General Elections and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria*, Nigeria: Friedrich Ebert.
- [12] D. Audu, Facts and figures of earning of public office holders, *The Liberation*, (2010).
- [13] J.A. Bamgbose, Kenya presidential elections and the fallacy of democratic experiment, *AAU: African Studies Review, A Journal of History and International Studies*, Adekunle Ajasin University, (2008).
- [14] J.A. Bamgbose, Presidential election and refugee crisis in Togo, *Journal of Intra-African Studies*, (2) (2009).
- [15] Ban Ki-moon, Democracy is premised on the ballot box and not on violence, *The Guardian (Lagos)*, (2011).
- [16] N. Bello, ACN petitions tribunal over defeat in Ondo legislative polls, *The Guardian (Lagos)*, (2011).
- [17] S. Bracking, Democratization through power – sharing: Is riding the tiger a necessary evil or unfortunate distraction? *The Constitution* 10(1) (2010).
- [18] N. Chazan, African voters at the polls: A re-examination of the role of Elections in African politics, *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, XVII (2) (1979).
- [19] T. Falola and J. Ihonvbere, *The Rise and Fall of Nigeria's Second Republic: 1979-84*, (1985), Zed Books Ltd.
- [20] G. Faturoti, Osun PDP alleges influx of trouble makers, *Saturday Independent (Lagos)*, (2011).
- [21] S. Huntington, Democracy's and third wave, *Journal of Democracy*, 2(2) (1991).
- [22] F. Iyayi, Elections and electoral practices in Nigeria: Dynamics and implications, *The Constitution*, 5(2) (2005).
- [23] L.A. Jinadu, *Fanon: In Search of the African Revolution*, (1980), Fourth Dimension Publishers, Enugu.
- [24] A.M. Jimoh, Governors signs undertaking for free fair polls, *The Guardian (Lagos)*, (2011).
- [25] D. Kolawole, *Political Violence- A Case Study of Ondo State*, In V. Ayeni and K. Soremekun (eds), *Nigeria's Second Republic*, (1988), Nigeria: Daily Times of Nigeria.
- [26] R. Lemarchand, Africa's troubled transitions, *Journal of Democracy*, 3(4) (1992).
- [27] P.M. Lewis, Nigeria: Elections in a fragile regime, *Journal of Democracy*, (2003).
- [28] M. Mamdani, Congo and Sudan: Lessons for Nigeria, *The Constitution* 10(1) (2010).
- [29] C. Monga, Eight problems with African politics, *Journal of Democracy*, 8(3) (1997).
- [30] C. Muanya, T. Omofoye and B. Onochie, Government raises probe panel on election violence, *The Guardian (Lagos)*, (2011).
- [31] O. Nnoli, *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*, (1980), Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- [32] O.B.C. Nwolise, Electoral violence and Nigeria's 2007 elections, *Journal of African Elections*, 6(2) (2007).

- [33] S. Nwakaudu, Bloodstains on Benue's Campaign trails, *The Guardian (Lagos)*, (2011).
- [34] O. Ofeimun, Elections and electioneering in Nigeria: How we got to where we are today, *The Guardian (Lagos)*, (2011).
- [35] Y. Oladoyinbo, S. Nwaoko and O. Olukoya, Violence mars campaigns in Ondo, Ekiti, Ogun as PDP, CAN, LP supporters' clash leave 7 dead, *Nigerian Tribune (Ibadan)*, (2011).
- [36] A.O. Olukoshi, Economy and politics in the Nigeria transition, *African Journal of Political Science*, 5(2) (2000).
- [37] M. Onuorah, Jonathan: violence reminds of civil war, vows enough, *The Guardian Lagos*, (2011).
- [38] E.E. Osaghae, Violence in Africa: State, Ethnic and Regional Dimensions, In I.O Albert (ed), *Perspectives on Peace and Conflict in Africa, Essays in honour of Abdulsalami A. Abubakar*, (2005), John Archers Press.
- [39] J. Richard, Africa, 1990-1997: From Abertura to closure, *Journal of Democracy*, 9(2) (1997).
- [40] F.W. Riggs, *Bureaucrats and Political Development: A Paradoxical view*, In J. LaPalombara (ed), *Bureaucracy and Political Development*, (1967), Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- [41] M. Sabiu, et al., Presidential election fallout: 43 killed, 4500 displaced, *Nigerian Tribune*, (2011), (Ibadan).
- [42] L. Sobechi, In Ebonyi, thugs target local church, *The Guardian (Lagos)*, (2011).