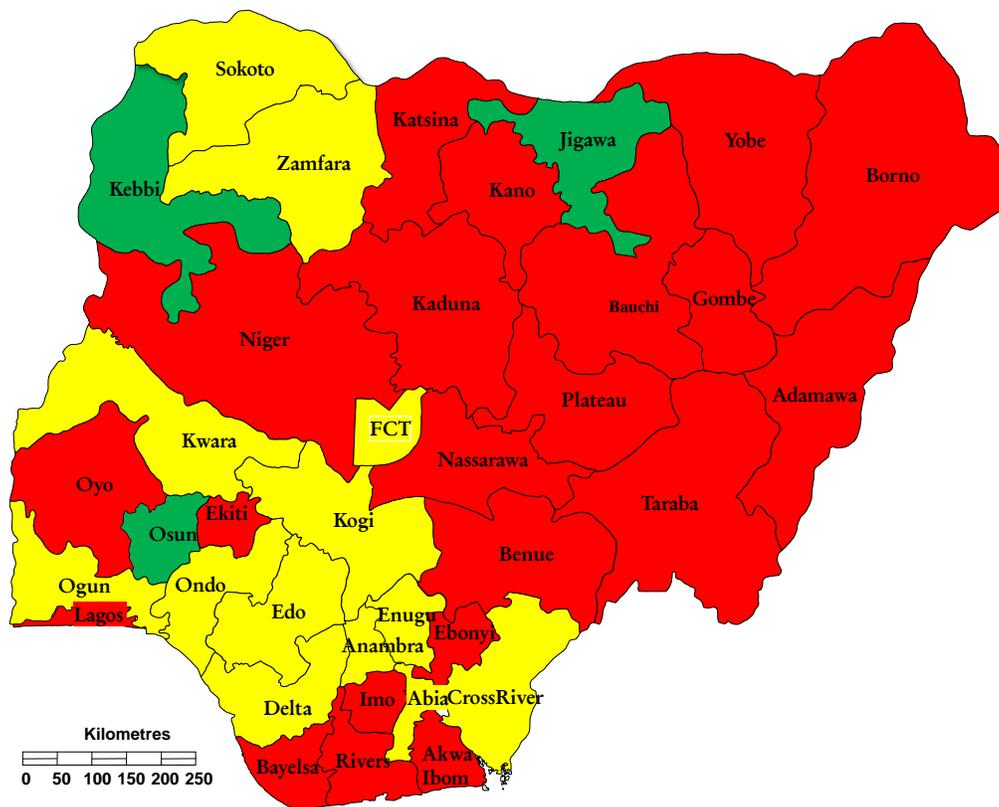


ELECTION SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT: TOWARDS 2015 ELECTIONS

**Eighth Edition
December, 2014**



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Eighth Security Threat Assessment: Towards February 2015 Elections December 2014

Background and Political Context

Political activities are currently at their feverish peak. Campaigns are on-going and political parties are conducting their primary elections and submitting candidates' names to the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC. At the presidential level, the polls mirror the 2011 elections with General Muhammadu Buhari who is now standing for the All Progressives Congress (APC) being the lead challenger while President Goodluck Jonathan is the candidate of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP).

The conduct of primaries by the two main political parties, the APC and the PDP is likely to be a major underlying factor on which to assess threats to the elections in February 2015. Though the party primaries were conducted without known records of serious violence by various political parties, they were however not without incidents such as alleged attempts to favour one aspirant over the other leading to staged "walk-outs" from the venue of the primaries. There were allegations of marked irregularities especially in the gubernatorial primaries in favour of some candidates. Party primaries for four (Adamawa, Borno, Yobe and Taraba) out of the six states in the North East geopolitical zone were held in Abuja for security concerns. The management of the grievances for those who lost in these primaries is crucial for peaceful elections in general.

The continuous advancement and sophistication of the Boko Haram group has been used by politicians to further heat up the polity and there are strong concerns regarding the ability of displaced persons to vote in the elections. To allay these fears, the Chief of Defense Staff, Alex Badeh, on Wednesday 17th December 2014 in Aso Villa assured Nigerians that elections will hold in all parts of the country in spite the activities of the insurgents.

INEC has continued with the distribution of permanent Voters Card PVC and Continuous Voters Registration. In Niger state, public holiday was declared on the 19th December to enable state public servants collect their PVCs. In Niger, a newspaper report says the former military President, Ibrahim Babangida, a former Head of State General Abdulsalami Abubakar and the Niger state Governor Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu were yet to get their permanent voter cards as at the time of this report. Except urgent measures are taken, Nigerians who are unable to collect their voters card might become resentful against the system during elections. Another worrisome situation and a potential source of conflict are the utterances of the political class that appears to be inciting the public on issue.

While political parties are raising money in billions largely from serving state governors, 22 states were allegedly unable to pay the salaries of civil servants before the Christmas break. There was an alleged threat by the Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN) to showdown¹ with federal government over its failure in paying salaries of those working in the nation's public service for three months. Although the Federal government has denied owning civil servants but workers strike at this point in time could have security implications. The current austerity measure by the Federal government as a result of dwindling oil price has come under huge criticisms by Nigerians and might set the tone for possible protest that might also threaten peace ahead of the elections. Perhaps most vehement of these threats is the incessant attacks on villages; on two occasions, Yobe State capital (Damaturu) came under attack and suicide bombers by insurgent in different states of the north east.

Preparations for the Elections

INEC has continued with the distribution of the Permanent Voters Cards (PVC) and continuous voters' registration (CVR) across the country following the schedule for distribution which was earlier made public by the Commission. INEC has reported to the public that it has distributed 71.35 per cent of the 54,341,610 number of registered voters across the country by December. However, Nigerians have started questioning the total figure of registered voters because the current figure is estimated to be far less than the figure expected on the register after earlier verification and cleaning processes (AFIS) by INEC. INEC has said previously that after AFIS there were 70,383,427 on the Electoral Register, the present figures indicate 54m on the electoral register.

Particularly in the North West, there are four major threats to security in the region within the next few weeks;

- I. Inciting and hate related campaign speeches, particularly at the lower level.
- II. Tardiness of INEC in the distribution of PVCs and the conduct of elections.
- III. Increasing threats of violence by politicians and youth groups
- IV. Partisanship of security agencies.

The party primaries have generated internal ill-feelings among contenders. While some of these ill-feelings have been properly managed in some cases, it is not the case in many others. In PDP, the situation in Jigawa is still not looking good as some of the major contenders for governorship are feeling short changed and there have not been any serious conciliatory efforts by the winning side; Similar situation applies in Sokoto, Katsina, Zamfara and Kebbi state. As politicians become desperate they begin to use foul language that could incite people. The primary elections

¹ <http://dailypost.ng/2014/12/19/civil-servants-threaten-strike-fg-fails-pay-salaries/>

also reveal lack of internal democracy among major political parties; “I think we should expect a violent election if things are not done properly.” was how one interviewee concluded.

The process of PVC distribution has been fraught with enormous logistics problems and missing data/names. There are allegations of deliberate effort to disenfranchise people, particularly in Kano and Sokoto states. The whole situation is already creating doubt on the capacity of INEC to conduct credible elections. This could be a major issue during elections, as people without PVC could insist on voting with their temporary cards.

In the reporting period, political parties concluded their candidates’ nomination processes on December 11. It would be recalled that INEC timetable had scheduled the conduct of party primaries for the window period of October 2 – December 11. Campaigns have also started in earnest. Many civil society groups and organisations have also been recruiting, training and deploying observers to track some aspects of the electoral processes such as campaign finance, electoral violence and media. Trainings are also being conducted for election observers while many CSOs have also scaled up their voter education and sensitization programmes.

In Borno State, dates for the registration and issuance of the PVCs were shifted twice most likely due to security concerns. INEC’s lack of clarity on this issue is already being interpreted especially in Borno as a sign of its unwillingness to hold election in the state. However, INEC has sets up a Task Force on internally displaced persons (IDPs) voting.

The political parties lack mechanisms to check irrational defection and this can be a security threat in a democracy. The primary elections and actions of politicians clearly show desperation to win the election by every means. This could be inimical to peaceful, transparent and credible elections.

As for INEC and the security agencies, much is needed to reassure citizens of the security of the elections. INEC is not telling Nigerians yet, whether insensitive materials are being moved from Abuja to the states or not. This could be received and interpreted by members of the public in different ways that can undermine peace either during or after elections.

Gender Dimension of the Election

With the dispute over PDP presidential nomination form being contested by a female aspirant Professor Akasoba Zainab Duke-Abiola and others gone silent, Professor Remi Sonaiya of the KOWA party remains the only female presidential candidate for the upcoming elections. The extent she would go in the election is likely to be predictable even as the elections approaches.

In the North East, as in the other zones, the participation of women in politics is low but the region is likely to make history with the emergence of Senator Aisha Jummai Alhassan as the gubernatorial aspirant of the APC in Taraba. Other notable female aspirants vying for elective posts are Hajiya Aisha Ahmed (PDM) candidate for senate of the Adamawa Central senatorial zone and Dr (Mrs) Asabe Vilita Bashir (APC, Borno) aspiring for the membership of

Gwoza/Chibok constituency in the Federal House of Representatives. In Adamawa State, APC screening committee disqualified a female gubernatorial aspirant for not been able to provide her tax clearance and the required number of nominators.

The uncertain security situation is also becoming a major threat to women's political participation. Some of the violence is also gender specific and difficult to contain in some deeply patriarchal societies. In response to the gender dimension of some of the security issues in Kano state for instance, the government has recruited 402 female corporate security personnel, who graduated from the State Corporate Security Training Institute. The appointees are posted to different government formations including schools and other government agencies.

In Akwa Ibom State, there is wide awareness about value of women participation in the elections. In fact, many of those who have relocated from places they originally registered with INEC, who are now seeking transfer are predominantly women, according to one INEC official interviewed for this report. The irony of the state is the back seat position women in Akwa Ibom has taken. No woman contested for political party ticket for positions at the state and national levels.

In Ogun and Lagos states, APC nominated women as the running mates of their gubernatorial candidates. Senator Oluremi Tinubu and House Majority Leader, Mulikat Akande Adeola both won the nomination of their political parties. Actress Funke Adesiyon made history as one of the two artistes who got their party nomination.

In the South East, Senator Chris Anyanwu, representing Imo East senatorial district has indicated interest for the governorship position in Imo state. Erhiatake Ibori, daughter of the former governor of Delta State, James Ibori who is running for a seat in the Delta State House of Assembly emerged one of the winners of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) primaries for the 2015 state House of Assembly election.

Presence and Activities of Non-State Actors

There are indications that the Nigerian military together with youth vigilantes and other volunteer groups have made advances in counter-insurgency operations that have put the Islamist group Boko Haram on the defensive in some parts of the region. Gombi, Maiha and Mubi towns in Adamawa have been reclaimed from the insurgents but the conduct of any elections in these areas is still under probability given the history of Boko Haram's vengeance and daring capacity for counter attack on the one hand and the group's avowed penchant for the disruption of the democratic process. On December 1, Damaturu and Maiduguri were attacked almost simultaneously, the latter by two female suicide bombers and the former by male fighters in military uniform. The incident in Maiduguri killed five people in the city's crowded Monday Market which occurred barely a week after a deadly attack by two suicide bombers in the same market that killed 78 people. The daring attack on Damaturu was targeted at gaining control of the Yobe State Government House that would have expanded the territory of Boko Haram's

‘Islamic Caliphate’. These incidents no doubt pose considerable threats to the coming elections in February 2015.

In the North West, Kaduna has continued to experience increasing cases of violence especially in southern Kaduna. As the electoral politics heightens, some of the ethno-religious contentions in the state will continue to boil. The zone has also been affected by Boko Haram insurgency, especially in Kaduna, Kano, Katsina and Sokoto. Zamfara and Katsina have also been experiencing increasing cases of cattle rustling and rural banditry resulting in wanton destruction of lives and property.

In Kano, Kaduna, Katsina with the history of youth militancy, particularly the yan’daba, electoral politics is always an opportunity to perpetrate violence on behalf of their principals. The cases of raids and mass killings by bandits in southern Kaduna are also attracting non state security response from the communities. Militant youths called Area boys are major players in electoral politics and security in Sokoto state.

If the warning from the NOA that agents of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) are scouting to recruit Nigerian youths as fighters is anything to go by, the intelligence community must be vigilant and guard against this.

Within the South-South region, ex-militants have remained very visible in the political space in Rivers state, especially as local power brokers and security contractors. Within the period under review, Ateke Tom has remained very influential, calling the shots when it comes to local politics. Additionally, Ex-militant Joshua from Ekeremor play violent role as Lokpobiri Heineken seeks a third term in the National Assembly. Youths loyal to Heineken, armed with guns and axe attacked the PDP office in Yenegoa, Bayelsa state on December 7 when the party primary elections was held, however, they were successfully repelled by the police. The recurrent rise in piracy in the Niger Delta is also worrisome. Gunmen suspected to be pirates were alleged to have attacked and killed three soldiers of the Joint Task Force, JTF, and Operation Pulo Shield in the Nembe axis of Bayelsa. This event has raised the worries of people living in riverine areas about the possibility of conducting elections in their communities in the face of increasing piracy within the region.

Ex-militant Tompolo’s entry into the politics of Delta state as power broker at the gubernatorial level seems to have created suspicion among the Itsekiri in Warri South-West Local Government Area. The agreement, secured through Governor Oduaghan’s efforts last year, prescribes mutual access to opportunities between the Ijaw, Tompolo’s ethnic group, and the Itsekiri. Ethnic groups have had violent conflictive relationships and a history of war. As minority, the Ijaw have faced severe difficulty securing political positions within the local government and the state. Tompolo is reported to have been involved in making politicians including the flag bearer for the governorship elections next year. This feat is in part the result of wealth Tompolo has acquired from his company’s maritime security contract with the Federal Government. Recent reports of

his procurement of warships for that job have been criticized by groups in Itsekiri who feel threatened that the warship could be used to fight them in the future. In Delta state, Warri and Bomadi are places to watch closely. These are places of origin of Governor Oduaghan and Manager respectively; both have strong support of top ex-militants.

Meanwhile, the tension between the Itsekiri and Tompolo is still very high and might escalate. Koko, an Itsekiri socio-cultural group, Iwere Peoples Congress, IPC, has warned the former militant leader, Chief Government Ekpemukpolo, a.k.a, Tompolo, to stop threatening and harassing innocent prominent Itsekiri people within and outside the state. This warning was contained in a statement released by the group on Tuesday 9th December 2014 by its President General, Prince Ishola Ekwejunor-Etchie.

Secret cult activities remain integral to the politics of Edo state. No fewer than 10 persons were killed during an attack in Benin City just before the Christmas. This attack might trigger reprisals as one of those killed is a leader of the Odua Peoples Congress (OPC). Also, a 33 year old father of three, and 12 others were killed in inter cult rivalry. Experience shows that members of such groups are disposed to recruitment by politicians for the purpose of rigging elections. Edo South Senatorial District remains an area to watch for possible violence despite seeming APC youths' peaceful or favourable outlook with President Jonathan when it comes to the presidential elections next year. Also, three female police officers who went to make an arrest at Oregbeni quarters in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area of Edo were beaten and stripped naked. Furthermore, the activities of cult groups, robbers and kidnappers in the state remain most disturbing.

Thugs invaded INEC center in Abeokuta, Ogun State with guns and other weapons during the continuous voter Registration exercise in St Mary African Church School, Oke-Efon, Abeokuta. 10 persons have sustained injuries as a result. The high number of unemployed youths is worrisome as they remain ready recruits for politicians who want to perpetuate themselves in power by all means. While attention has been focused on the violence in the North East, it is worrisome that youth driven violence is capable of happening in any other part of the country for many factors namely; proliferation of small and light weapon, drugs, poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, provocative statements, among others.

Migration and Internal Displacement

As a result of the rising level of insurgency in the North East, there has been a corresponding increase in the number of internally displaced persons spread across the affected states but especially in Borno and Adamawa. At present, more than half of Borno's population has been displaced; the corresponding estimate for Adamawa State is one-third, most of whom are living in its capital, Yola. National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in December reported that it has officially registered over 850,00 IDPs in the three states of Borno, Bauchi and Yobe but this figure has been disputed as grossly lower than the actual figure. Two issues arise from

the burgeoning presence of IDPs in the region. The heavy caseload in these areas no doubt poses security risks while the IDPs themselves are likely to miss out on the elections.

Though three states are currently facing insurgent attacks, the worst hit is Borno. Nearly two million displaced persons, among them eligible voters from over 20 out of the 27 Local Government Areas of Borno State are now taking refuge in Maiduguri². While the number of eligible voters is not known, elections may not hold in affected councils, namely; Bama, Askira/Uba, Gwoza, Konduga, Chibok, Damboa, Dikwa, Ngala, Abadam, Marte, Mafa, Kukawa and Kala/Balge. Using Borno State as a case study for other states in the North East under Boko Haram attacks, according to the 2006 census, the total population figure in the state was 4,171,104. The breakdown of the aggregated of the figures in the affected LGAs are Bama 270119, Askira/Uba 143313, Gwoza 276568, Konduga 157322, Chibok 66333, Damboa 233200, Dikwa 105042, Ngala 236498, Abadam 100065, Marte 129409, Mafa 103600, Kukawa 203343 and Kala/Balge 60834. The total population of all these affected LGAs is 2,085,646 but when deducted from the total of Borno population (4,171,104), 2,085,458 will be left. In other words, using the 2006 population, little above 50% of the state population are currently either displaced or held down by Boko Haram, While this may not be an exact way to determine eligible voters in the state, one thing is obvious, many Borno citizens just like Adamawa and Yobe, willing to vote might not be able to do so owing to displacement occasioned by violence in the state.

There is the increasing presence of internally displaced persons in the region that has added to the existing burden especially in Borno. The evacuation of hundreds of Borno refugees stranded in Cameroun into the state capital Maiduguri recently is a case in point. While a case has been made for the provision of voting centres for the internally displaced persons living in camps at the National Assembly, recent developments also indicate that these IDP camps may be unsafe. Additionally, security agencies intercepted a suspected suicide bomber who tried to gain entry into one of the IDP camps in Maiduguri. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has revealed that due to acts of terror especially in the North-east region, over 850,000 persons have been internally displaced³.

To address the right of the IDPs to vote, the Senate on Tuesday 16th December 2014 directed the Committee on Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to liaise with INEC to establish special polling units for internally displaced persons (IDPs) victims of insurgency in the North-East. In response, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) raised a Task Force on how to get Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to vote in the forthcoming General Election.

² <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/sunday/index.php/news/19307-shettima-applauds-inec-as-borno-residents-begins-collection-of-pvcs>

³ <http://sardaunamagazine.com/index.php/component/k2/item/17281-terrorism-over-850000-idps-in-31-camps-nema-reveals>

While the effort of INEC is commendable, this preparation might be coming too late and the deliberation could fail. Also worrisome is the fact that the largest proportion of displaced don't leave in IDP camps and the use of only IDP camps for IDPs to vote might at the end of the day amount to negligible vote. This is having in mind that there are no insufficient IDP camps in this region and most of them are either poor managed, capable of posing disease outbreak or are not own by government.

Recent Developments within the State Houses of Assembly

In PDP states, following the bequeathing of state party structure to the seating governors, majority of the returning state house of assembly members are those loyal to their governors. Activities in the State Houses of Assembly are reflecting some of the tensions in the political climate as February 2015 approaches. Also, provocative statements by senior party members were threatening. These inciting statements were however made alike by the two contending political parties. The pervasive inciting speeches and vague statements by prominent politicians could have security implication if caution is not taken.

The last appears not have been heard of the estranged relationship between APC law makers in Ekiti and Fayose. The Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Dr Adewale Omirin, has reacted to the alleged directive by Governor Ayodele Fayose urging the Ministry of Justice to write a memo authorising the state commissioner of police, Taiwo Lakanu, to arrest the 19 All Progressives Congress (APC) lawmakers. The APC lawmakers have continued separate plenaries in an undisclosed public building in Ado-Ekiti, the state capital. This contestation for supremacy in the state might degenerate into open confrontation that could blossom as presidential election approaches. Though there is no governorship election in the state, the plan by current members of the state house of assembly for re-election will certainly generate fierce competition that might lead to violence.

Violent Hotspots

We categorized the states according to the perceived level of threat using traffic light signals (green, amber and red). Red indicates presence of insurgency, intensity of politics with presence of different gladiators, violence that can lead to loss of lives and properties, Amber indicates presence of tension that have not escalated to earlier category under Red and Green is anything not Red or Amber. Most States fit into various categories depending on the level at which the analysis is done, that is either national or regional level. However, in this edition, analysis was done at the regional level to ensure that all possible threats and hotspots are identified and mapped accordingly.

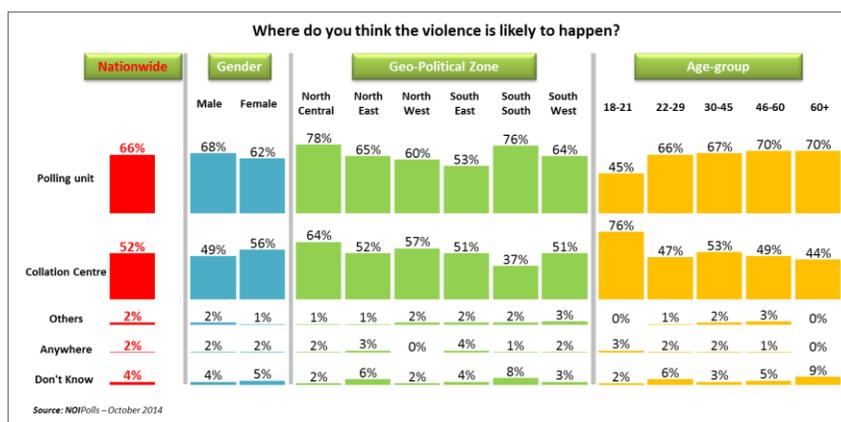
In periods like this, Kano, Kaduna, Zamfara and Katsina should be carefully watched. Following the party congresses Kebbi and Sokoto are heating up and need to be watched. In Sokoto Mukhtari Shagari's group is not looking happy and the intervention by the Vice President on behalf of the PDP appears to have failed to address the situation. In Kebbi there are protests

against the nomination of Bello Sarkin Yaki of PDP. Similar situation applies in Jigawa, where a group of PDP gubernatorial aspirants have been protesting against the nomination of Aminu Ringim.

It appears southern Kaduna, Kaduna city, Katsina and Kano city will be major flashpoints. The nature of violence may not necessarily be partisan; it could take different dimension including ethnic or religion, banditry and targeted assassination. Southern Kaduna has been experiencing ranging spate of banditry and violence with strong possibility of escalating reprisals attacks in other parts of the state.

Some state governors have openly called for violent attack on the opposition in the North; the case of Katsina has earlier been reported. Very recently, Jigawa state Governor, Sule Lamido made a similar statement when he called for a violent reaction to the opposition. As the country moves closer to the 2015 election, the internal contradictions of the two major parties have begun to manifest in all the states, these contradictions have strong potential for violence. The political contentions coupled with identity based historical grievances could degenerate into violence. The two major parties still harbour disgruntled members. As we move close to the elections some of them will begin to express their grievances. This could impact on security and even the conduct of election in most of the state.

Borno – All the 27 LGAs; Bauchi – Bauchi municipal, Azare, Tafawa Balewa; Adamawa: Yola, Mubi North, Mubi South, Madagali, Michika, Hong, Gombi, Maiha; Gombe: Gombe; Taraba: Jalingo, Wukari, Ibbi; Yobe: Damaturu, Gujba, Gulani, Potiskum; Uyo, Ikot Ekpene, Ibiona, Ikah and Etimekpo.; Bayelsa: The entire state will be hotspot for violence; Delta: Warri; Cross Rivers: Cross Rivers South Senatorial District; Imo: Isiala-Mbano region where both Ararume and Ohakim come from; and Owerri/Mbaise axis where Ihedioha and Agbaso hold sway and who feel it is high time they got the Governorship after so many efforts.



Source of table above: CLEEN Foundation election viability survey

Those who think violence will be an issues in February (15% of the total sample) further think that this will most likely occur in the polling units (66%) and collation centre (52%). When

analysed according to age group, there is a higher percentage of Nigerians aged 18-21 years who think violence will be conducted at the collation centre in comparison to the polling unit.

- **RED:** NC – Benue, Nasarawa, Niger and Plateau; NE – Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, Taraba, Bauchi, Gombe, NW – Kaduna, Kano and Kastina SS – Bayelsa, Rivers; SW – Lagos, Ekiti and Oyo SE – Imo, Ebonyi
- **AMBER:** NC Federal Capital Territory, Kogi, and Kwara; NW – Zamfara, Sokoto, SE – Enugu, Abia and Anambra; SS – Cross River, Delta and Edo; SW – Ogun and Ondo
- **GREEN:** NW- Jigawa and Kebbi, SW – Osun; SE - Ebonyi

Regional Analysis

In the North East, the continued bombings, killings and expanding sphere by the insurgents has cast doubts on the conduct of elections in the region in 2015. Internally displaced persons are on the increase due to insecurity in the region. Across the zone, the following LGAs are very volatile due to insurgency; (Bauchi) – Bauchi municipal, Azare; (Adamawa): Yola, Mubi, Madagali, Michika, Hong, Gombi, Maiha (Gombe): Gombe; (Taraba): Jalingo, Wukari, Ibbi; (Yobe): Damaturu, Gujba, Gulani, Potiskum, Aguta and Ohaji in Egbema Local Government.

There were fears in Darazo when supporters of two People’s Democratic Party (PDP) (Honourable Dayyabu Chiroma, who is the chairman, House Committee on Information, and Garau Adamu), Bauchi State House of Assembly aspirant in Darazo Local Government Area of Bauchi, on Sunday 30th November 2014 clashed in Darazo, the local government headquarters⁴ as a fallout of the PDP House of Assembly primary election. In the same LGA, the Bauchi state police command has intercepted a High Trailer loaded with ballot boxes at a check point in Darazo local government area of the state. Many Nigerians received the news with shock. Political parties have also taken advantage to start trading words.

In Adamawa State, two parallel PDP gubernatorial primaries elections were held (in Yola and Abuja). In Abuja, former EFCC Chairman, Nuhu Ribadu from Adamawa Central perceived to be backed the national PDP was declared winner while in Yola, the incumbent Bala James Ngilari (Adamawa north) was given the governorship ticket. In view of the political developments that ensued since the impeachment of former governor Murtala Nyako in the state, it appears the worst is yet to happen in the state. In Taraba State, the zoning of the governorship to the southern zone has led to the emergence of Mr. Darius Ishaku (former Minister of State for Niger Delta) as the PDP flag bearer but this was rejected by a section of the party. Similar situations marked the primaries in Bauchi and Yobe States where the national leadership of the PDP is likely to be

⁴ <http://tribune.com.ng/news/news-headlines/item/22939-supporters-of-pdp-house-of-assembly-aspirants-clash-in-bauchi>

dragged to court or being threatened over alleged irregularities. In Bauchi, former Minister of Police Affairs Dr Yakubu Lame has vowed to challenge the decision of the PDP in court while former Minister of State Finance Dr Yerima Ngama is considering other options (including dumping the PDP). But concerns over irregularities in the party primaries were not limited to the PDP alone. Within the opposition APC for instance, three of the four gubernatorial aspirants boycotted the primaries in Taraba two days before the elections for alleged favoritism of one of the candidates. In Gombe State, the All Progressives Congress, APC, has accused Gombe State Governor Ibrahim Hassan Dankwambo of intolerance and working to obliterate the APC presence and also victimize the party's members in the state. As the campaign trails travels nooks and crannies of the state, public peace might be disrupted if necessary measures are not taken for equal playing group for all political parties.

In the North West, there are no surprises on the gubernatorial candidates in the 7 states. The party congresses and primary elections have generated huge tension, contentions and even violent skirmishes in some of the states, but there are no major incidences of violence. The heightening political situation remains a major security threat. The security situation is still principally dominated by cases of Boko Haram insurgency, cattle rustling, banditry and rape. There are reported cases of skirmishes between pastoral communities and rural sedentary farmers in some parts of southern Kaduna, Zamfara and Katsina state. In Kaduna, Kano, Katsina and Sokoto inter party and intra-party tension and contentions are deepening, cases of defection and counter defections between the two major political parties are still going on. In Kaduna State, no fewer than 10 persons were on Saturday 27th December night killed by gunmen at the Tattaura village in Sanga Local Government Area. The continuous sacking of villages in Kaduna remains worrisome even as the election approaches. Allowing these attacks amidst this period of election could undermine the ability of INEC to conduct elections across the state. The massive presence of homeless youths, aimlessly walking the streets of Kaduna and the sharp divide between Muslims and Christians, could be a timed-bomb waiting to denote.

Party nominations processes have been concluded. There are no major surprises. In governorship election, it is generally a two horse race between APC and PDP, except in Katsina state, where PDM and APGA have produced some strong and relatively popular candidates. In Kaduna, Governor Ramalan Yero has been returned by PDP against Nasiru El-Rufa'i of APC, in Kano it is Abdullahi Ganduje of APC against Sagir Salihu Takai of PDP. In Sokoto it is Aminu Tabuwal for APC against Abdallah Wali of PDP. Katsina state APC has produced Aminu Bello Masari against Musa Nashuni. Zamfara has Abdulaziz Yari of APC against former governor Mahmud Ali Shinkafi of PDP. Kebbi PDP has produced Bello Sarkin Yaki against Atiku Bagudu of APC. In Jigawa is Aminu Ringim of PDP against Ibrahim Hassan Hadejija of APC.

In north central particularly in Kogi State, communities have been sacked by herdsmen attacks and recently, robbers killed four mobile police officers in Okene. The officers were killed by armed robbers, on the night of Tuesday, December 23, during an attack on one of the banks. The shape that violence might take in Kogi state is not clear as there is no governorship election in

the state for now. In Plateau State, the emergence of Gyang Pwajok an alleged cousin of the incumbent governor as PDP governorship flag bearer has created internal and external hatred against the party. Some communities are currently threatening refuse him access to their land for him to campaign. Some persons were feared killed in a dawn raid on Ashigye, a settlement at the outskirts of Lafia, Nasarawa State capital, on the 3rd of December when some gunmen attacked a convoy of Migli farmers along the Ashangwa and Amawo road. The tension in the state was further aggravated by the rumors of the governor's death but for prompt intervention. Meanwhile, tension in different communities remains very high.

Mass protests greeted the party nomination processes and procedures in the south west as many of the aspirants kick against the outcome of the party primaries organised by their respective political parties. In Ondo State, parallel primaries were organised by two different factions of Peoples Democratic Party in the 'Sunshine state' while petitions to appeal panels and court litigations have become the order of the day. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) press on with preparation for the elections as list of nominated candidates for Senate, House of Representatives and presidential seats were submitted to INEC on Thursday, December 18, 2014. Unease still envelope Ekiti State as the intra-state assembly crisis remain unresolved with the Governor presenting the state's 2015 budget to the Group of Seven PDP lawmakers just as the 19 APC lawmakers headed to court to reclaim their right. The controversy as to who is in control of the machinery of the Ogun State chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party seemingly appears to have taken a new turn as the Independent National Electoral Commission has accorded recognition to the Buruji Kashamu-led faction of the party. The Commission has given recognition to the parallel primaries conducted by the Kashamu-led faction of the party. This could however lead to unhealthy alliances that might further threaten the relative peace within the south west and Ogun state specifically.

In the South-South, the agitation by the Ogoni people remains threat to public peace and the conduct of election in Ogoni land in February 2015. On the 29th, youths protested against perceived political and environmental marginalization by political parties in Rivers State. There were also cases of youth restiveness and agitation in parts of the south-south by ex-militants, protesting against nonpayment of their allowances.

Grievances arising from the primary elections of political parties in Cross River States are critical categories for understanding current security threats in the state. The key actors—political parties, candidates, their followers, as well as election managers, civil society and incumbent political leaders are shaping the structure of political conflict.

In the South East, Governor T.A. Orji has chosen Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu from Obingwa LGA, as his successor, and ensured that his name was accepted by the INEC as the PDP gubernatorial candidate for the February 2015 general elections. However, the Aba people, who are a formidable force in Abia politics, have stridently made it clear that he was not a candidate fit to be foisted on the people of Abia after T.A. Orji. Already, allegations of tax evasion and

misappropriation of public funds under his watch is becoming prominent in public discourse. But, given that virtually all the incumbent members of the Abia House of Assembly were not returned and the PDP have been smart to pick the Speaker of the House as the running-mate to Dr. Ikpeazu, thereby swaying all the members with their supporters to PDP.

Among the opposition, there is also total confusion as APGA, is yet to clearly define who its candidate is between Reagan Ufomba and Alex Otti. As a new entrant into the party through one faction, Dr. Alex Otti, “has no chance of picking the ticket of APGA as Chief Reagan Ufomba has been on ground and has been doing his thing quietly” claims a Chieftain of APGA from Isiala-Ngwa. But the delay from Reagan is because he is “waiting for the Supreme Court verdict on the Victor Umeh vs Maxi Okwu case on the leadership of the party. One major issue that would likely decide the fate of the elections is the role of the churches in the State. It must be stated that there is serious apathy on the part of the people as they believe that their votes would not count, and so nobody has bothered to go and collect their PVCs except those who think they can make some money out of having it at all. Security-wise, the presence of the military in the state has helped to maintain some sense of public safety among the populace. There is significant reduction of kidnapping cases and other crimes.

There will be no gubernatorial elections in Anambra State in 2015, and APGA has adopted President Jonathan as their presidential candidate for the 2015 general elections, thus leaving the battle at the National Assembly elections, where the money-bags will likely clash. None of the serving Senators – Andy Uba and Margery Okadigbo (PDP), or Chris Ngige (APC) – is stepping down. With the entrance of former Aviation Minister, Stella Oduah into the race, it is bound to get tough. On the other hand, Mr. Ernest Ndukwe wants to take over the Anambra South senatorial seat presently occupied by Andy Uba. Also, the recent defection of some APGA legislators to the PDP portends a serious contest for the National Assembly. This is essentially due to the risks of violence during the legislative elections. A lot of fireworks are expected around those eyeing the seats of Senators Andy Uba (PDP) and Margery Okadigbo (PDP). From information gathered from discussions with politicians in the State, it seems Senator Chris Ngige’s Senator of the APC may not win the February 2015 elections owing to his poor performance in the last elections and coupled with the seeming non-acceptance of the party by the State. According to Okoye Udineke from Nri, Anaocha Local Government, “Ngige has lost his magic; nobody takes him seriously anymore as he has not done anything for anybody since he has been at that Senate position”. Hon. Ekwunife and Victor Umeh, former National Chairman of APGA, are among the aspirants ready to take over from him.

Recent developments in Ebonyi State, especially with the outcome of the PDP primaries shows that the Deputy Governor, Dave Umahi, in concert with Anyim Pius Anyim and Sam Egwu, have outmanoeuvred the political calculation of Governor Martin Elechi, thereby heightening political tension in the state. The rumour of purported plans to impeach the Governor by the House of Assembly, suggests that there could be problems during the elections. Again, with the

Governor losing his ambition to go to the Senate, the Governor's supporters have decamped to the Labour Party in a suspected bid to help him actualize his ambitions on that platform.

December 2014 saw the end of the political crisis in Enugu State between Governor Sullivan Chime and Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu, with the resolution of the conflict of interests between the two major actors that underpinned political tension within PDP in the State. While Ekweremadu got his position, the Governor decided to shelve his ambition to run for the Senate in exchange for his preferred candidate to be accepted as the PDP gubernatorial candidate for the February elections. With the election of Hon. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi as the PDP gubernatorial flagbearer for the 2015 general elections by the delegates in the PDP primaries, ensuing political tension now is between the PDP and Senator Ayogu Eze, who claims to have the authentic delegates' list for the primaries. It is rumoured that the Governor's camp is jittery as Ayogu seems to have a genuine card to play given that has been boasting that he would teach both the Governor and Ekweremadu a lesson for trying to retire him politically. Ayogu's angst is based on the calculations that did not guarantee him his ticket to go back to the Senate in the event of the adoption of Ugwuanyi, thereby leaving him stranded. The contention now is "who has the authentic delegates' list", which may prove critical in determining the outcome of a legal tussle that would be decided in the courts by January.

Meanwhile, Senator Ayogu Eze reportedly fled to Niger Republic in order to evade an alleged killer squad sent to kill him. Notwithstanding, there is no serious risk of violence as the matter is internal to PDP. Given the popularity of the PDP in the State, anybody that eventually emerges would be supported by the party as the PDP would not want to risk losing the State to any opposition. More so, the opposition parties are weak in the State.

The potential for violence in the 2015 general elections in Imo State, especially the gubernatorial contest, is high. Major contenders from the PDP, Emeka Ihedioha, Ikedi Ohakim and Ifeanyi Araraume are slugging it out after a tense primaries election. APGA has a formidable kingmaker, Martin Agbaso and Col. Emmanuel Iheanacho. Both PDP and APGA have formidable structures in the State and are investing heavily to recapture the state, while Okorocho's APC wants to retain the State and show that it is a force to be reckoned with. The PDP has been bolstered by the reconciliation of various factions earlier in the year, but it has not stopped the fierce quest by all those interested in Okorocho's job. The contest is potentially explosive as those who are interested in the job are all veterans in their own right and are not ready to back down. According to Ifeanyi Iwuoha, a staunch PDP member, former Governor Ikedi Ohakim, is billed to decamp to PPA to actualize his dream of "let's-do-one-more-term" after the expected court judgment that would likely change the entire scenario in January.

Police and Government Security Forces

There was a jailbreak in Minna Niger State, on the 6th of December 2014 which culminated in the suspension of the comptroller of Prisons by the Minister of Interior. More than 200 inmates escaped in the attack on the prison in Tunga. This incident was the third of its kind in the past two months in Nigeria. As jailbreaks become frequent, no one is verifying claims that fleeing inmates have been rearrested. More than 300 inmates broke out of a prison bombed by gunmen in southwest Ekiti state some few weeks back and 144 escaped from the North-central Kogi state on November 3 when gunmen bombed a prison wall. As the general elections approaches, the continuous escape of these potentially dangerous individuals into the streets poses a great threat to the conduct of violent free elections.

There has been long agitation for reforms within the Nigeria prison system as most of the prisons are crowded, poorly structured, weak walls, with more cases of awaiting inmates. Criminal Justice (Release from Custody) (Special Provisions) Act Cap C40 LFN, 2004 is currently before the National Assembly for amendment. While hope for this may not yet see the light of day, this reform does not sufficiently address the issue of poor funding, corruption and poor structure in the system. In recognition of continuous cases of inmate awaiting trial, a court presided over by Justice Mohammed Lima gave ruling in a suit instituted by Messrs. Victor Emenuwe, Onome Inaye, Kabiru Abu, Osagie Iyekepolor, Modugu Odion for and on behalf of inmates of Nigeria Prisons, against Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Controller-General of Nigeria Prisons Service, directing the Defendants to ensure that the Applicants are not disenfranchised. Many innocent Nigerians are languishing in Nigeria prisons and might not get to vote in the forthcoming elections.

In a similar development, the Premium Times Nigeria reported that the Nigerian Army's 7 division General Court Martial convicted 54 soldiers for conspiracy to commit mutiny and sentenced them to death by firing squad. In another report, 203 soldiers were alleged to have been secretly prosecuted and dismissed. In spite of the likely political hijack of current challenges with discipline, the Nigerian military has warned politicians against inciting soldiers to mutiny. However, the Nigeria Military has denied alleged secret trials and dismissal. While discipline is a sacred commitment in the regimental world of the military, excessive exercise of disciplinary regimental rules shrouded in secrecy could further dampen the morale of soldiers confronting insurgents.

The alleged report of government institutions serving the interest of a seating government is worrisome and could further undermine the little confidence and trust members of the public have in such institutions. The invasion of the All Progressives Congress office in Lagos and the alleged failure of the Department of State Security Service to hand the suspects over to the police for prosecution within the time frame allowed by law could fester into tension. The fragility of this period requires prompt security efficiency but such promptness must be guided by caution

and proactive information disclosure to douse caldrons capable of undermining public peace that could spiral into chaos.

Synthesis of Key Risk Factors

Boko Haram insurgency in the north east: Until the situation in the north east is addressed we cannot rule out the possibility of more attacks across the country. In the last three years, all the states in the north east and some parts of North West (Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa) have been attacked by Boko Haram. It is even more likely now that electioneering is fast picking up. Criminal elements and political party thugs can disguise as Boko Haram to perpetuate mayhem on opposition and innocent Nigerians;

Inadequate logistics and welfare for security agents on election duties pose a serious danger to the electoral process as this will make them susceptible to political influence. CLEEN Foundation in its preliminary reports on Ekiti and Osun governorship elections observed this; Inability of electorates to obtain their PVC and register during the CVR exercise is tinder box that could cause violence during the forthcoming general elections in the entire South West. INEC has repeatedly announced that only those who have PVC will be allowed to vote.

Campaign speeches: inciting statements and hate messages by desperate politicians across the party divides could be a major risk of political violence. Reported statements by the Governor of Jigawa state and Katsina are some prime examples. Many politicians are moving around party thugs and armed youth groups. This could create clashes between parties if their paths get to cross in campaign locations.

Distribution of PVC: the distribution of PVC is major issue in the zone. There are a lot of complaints in many of the states about the possibility of disenfranchisement due to challenges of distribution of PVC. Some voter fail to receive their PVCs before the election, could attempt to use their temporary voters card to vote. Failure to honour those cards could generate tension and if not properly managed it could result to violence.

Rural banditry and cattle rustling: Since the beginning of the year rural, bandits and cattle rustlers have continued to make life miserable for poor rural communities in Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara state. Violent attacks have continued to kill and displace people in these states. These attacks are almost becoming regular. In September scores of people were killed in Zamfara and hundreds displaced. In southern Kaduna, the almost regular skirmishes are major threat to security in the state. There are two dimensions of risks in this regard – first is the risk of ethnicisation - some of killings can easily be manipulatively attributed to some historical conflicts and therefore justify reprisal from the other side. Second, the engagement of vigilante groups to combat this banditry could be a preparatory process of recruiting election and ethnic militia.

Partisanship of security institutions: There are strong cases of partisan control of security institutions in the country. The Federal government has been accused of being partisan in its use of the Police, Military and the DSS. This could be major threat to security as we get close to elections. The feeling of political repression could be major risk factors. The incidence of police invasion of the national assembly and how police supported a minority faction to impeach a Speaker of Ekiti State house of Assembly is not only a clear reflection of partisanship but also suggests that security agencies could be used for the 2014 elections. Opposition parties are already reacting to that, some state governments have instituted their own security outfits which could serve as counterforce to the federal security agencies. The leadership of APC led a peaceful demonstration to the police Headquarters in Abuja.

Electoral manipulation: – Vote rigging or perceived rigging will be the major trigger of violence in the region especially the gubernatorial and Presidential elections. It was perceived vote rigging that triggered the 2011 post-election violence. It appears certain that vote rigging or perceived manipulation of the electoral will trigger violence in Kano, Kaduna and Katsina state.

Recommendations

To mitigate possible violence will require a nuanced understanding of the politics of the region and respond to some of the key concerns of the people.

- I. PVC and Continues Voter Registration. The increasing accusation of possible disenfranchisement by opposition political parties could be major threats to the election particularly in Kano state; INEC should respond to this with all seriousness. All the cases of missing data in voters registered should be addressed through extended continuous voter registration. INEC should ensure all registered voters received their PVC.
- II. The electoral commission should ensure free, fair and credible election. This can be achieved only if INEC commences early preparation for the elections. Some of these preparatory issues should include update of electoral laws, effective distribution of PVCs, update of voters register and training of ad hoc staff.
- III. Inter party dialogue should be encouraged. Although some of the gains in this area are being reversed, Sokoto state government sets a good example a few months ago when it taken a number of steps to remove potential triggers and force candidates to adhere to agreed-upon norms. For example, state officials banned the large campaign posters that have previously instigated fights between opposing supporters. Roundabouts were rented to banks for advertising space instead. Sustaining this initiative will require support from relevant quarters and replication in other states.
- IV. Election stakeholders – including security agencies, INEC, political parties and civil society groups must work together in preparation for the 2015 election and mainstream conflict management in their plans. A quarterly security situation review can be very helpful to INEC, law enforcement agencies and CSOs.

- V. The increasing cases of rural banditry and cattle rusting are not getting the required attention. It is very important to understand and deal with this new security challenge before it builds a life of its own. Allowing it to fester could be major risk for national security.
- VI. The recorded cases of violence in the country are partly a reflection of the level of small arms. Efforts should be made to reduce the level of small arms proliferation in Nigeria. It may be important to revisit the report of Presidential Committee on Small arms and the Presidential committee on Post Elections violence. These committees have made useful recommendations on how to deal with these issues.
- VII. The electoral commission and relevant agencies should engage different stakeholders including youth groups, political parties, security agencies, religious leaders, traditional rulers and women on the need for violence free election.
- VIII. The federal government need to invest in training security agencies on election related security issues. Ensure impartial engagement of security agencies, build interagency collaboration including collaborating with state government instituted security bodies.
- IX. The federal and state governments should intensify effort in addressing the Boko Haram insurgences to avoid disruption of election activities.
- X. The government and political parties should also encourage issues based politics and avoid religion and ethnic identity based mobilisation.