APRIL 2011: COMBATING THE NIGERIAN SECURITY CHALLENGE

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Abstract
The rising wave of violence in the run up to the April polls calls for concerted efforts from all stakeholders to stem the tide of the critical election are not to be threatened or marred. Across the polity, violent conflicts are raising fresh concerns on the prospects of smooth conduct of the polls which are less than two months away. In Amaimo, Ikeduru Local Government Area of Imo State, recently, unknown gun men disrupted the senatorial campaign rally of the Action congress of Nigeria. When the dust neared, an ACN Stalwart, Dr Charles Anokwa was discovered missing. There have also been reports of violence in Gboko, Benue State and Bayelsa State, between rival political parties. Also, on February 25, 2010, unexploded bombs were recovered at the VIP pavilion during the flag-off of campaign for re-election of Government Sullivan Chime of Enugu State. It is significant to up this undesirable trend in the bud before it becomes the hallmark of the coming elections. The paper identifies the absence and lack of democratic norms among politicians and the politics of winner takes all with scant regard for service delivery to the populace has enthroned a do or die” political culture in which contestants are determined to win at costs, and what ever means, fair or foul are the major threats to April 2011 elections. The paper concludes by positing that the playing of politics with bitterness could torpedo plans for peaceful polls. This is because violence has now become a way to settle scores, with lives sometimes lost in the process, as political assassinations have also been employed in some states. The paper enjoins Nigerian politicians to eschew playing of politics with bitterness.

Key words: Political Violence, Political Assassination, Electoral Fraud and Violence, Election.
Introduction

Former Governor of old Kano State Abubarkar Rimi died mid-last year after an encounter with bandits known as kwanta kwanta. He was heading for Kano from Bauchi when he had the encounter with the men of the underworld. They dispossessed occupants of their valuables and Rimi’s brother who sat in the front seat of the car was thoroughly beaten. Rimi was not attacked. He however, took ill, after the incident, was rushed to the Aminu Kano University Teaching Hospital but he lost the struggle shortly after. The man died.

Since his death, many Nigerians have been commenting on the state of insecurity in the polity. Insecurity takes various forms in different parts of the country. In the South-West, armed robbers have taken over, while in the North, cross-border bandits operate with the ease it takes hot knives to drive through butter. In the South-South, the fear of kidnapping is beginning of wisdom. The aged, titled men, clerics, government officials, academics, professionals, women and children are not spared. It is the latest multi-million naira vocation in the regions.

Specifically, the spate of kidnapping across the country, the incessant wave of crime and armed robbery attacks even on the operatives of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the recent use of explosives as terrorist instrument, the recent ramming of a cab under an aircraft in Calabar, all point to the fact that insecurity is fast becoming a norm in Nigeria. The usual government response whenever there is a major case of insecurity or security lapses is to call for investigations that never lead to any substantive improvement on the security situation.

Unlike Rimi, who died not because he was attacked, many Nigerians such as former Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige; Lagos politician Funsho Williams, Ogun State Governorship candidate of the Action Congress (AC) in the 2007 election, Dipo Dina among others have been killed by either suspected robbers or assassins. Till this day, their killers have not been arrested. All these people have just suffered the painful and a terminal fate that confronts many ordinary Nigerians on a daily basis.

Whether we accept it or not, Nigeria is steadily sliding into a state of lawlessness. Institutions that should respond promptly to the needs of the citizens are non-challant and inactive. The slow response of the Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital to the emergency case of the late Rimi captures the lethargic state of public institutions in the country. Countless Nigerians have met their untimely death because they never got prompt medical attention. Additional to the threat to lives by inadequate policing and violent crime or the inert state of our health institutions is the deepening socio-economic insecurity that also poses a threat to individual wellbeing and makes living miserable for many Nigerians while a few engage in squandermania.

Put differently, there is apparent anxiety in the land; and the government knows it. Jobless youths, restive and daring ethnic militias, unrelenting desperations of hired assassins, unprecedented rise in cost of living, and security agencies, these are seasons of anomie which portends danger to the nation.

One major task that should confront and obsess the Presidency, the Legislature, Security Agencies and the Federal Executive Council is the need to check the rising threat to lives and property across the country and the poor living conditions of many Nigerians as we approach the
April 2011 elections. Nevertheless, this insecurity in Nigeria has led to a terrible trouble of hopelessness.

The occasional assurances that government has the capacity to secure the nation and is already putting adequate measures in place to stem the state of insecurely in the polity have become trite in view of the orgy of violence that defines the daily life of the Nigeria populace. From rising cases of bomb blasts in Abuja and Yenagola, by suspected militants, rising cases of suspected political assassinations, through periodic attacks of by Boko Haram militants, to the unabated blood bath in Jos, Banchi and Maiduguri, the country is evolved in palpable insecurity which the security agencies look increasable incapacitated. On Friday, 29th January 2011, a gang of gunmen suspected to be assassins shot dead the All Nigeria People’s Party governorship candidate in Borno state Modu F. Gubio and six others. The mass killings are reminiscent of the September 13, 2010 tragedy when in known men stormed the Kano home of a State security service operative. Alhaji Garba Bello, killing him, his wife and his three children. In Sokoto State, a top ranking people’s Democratic Party member, Alhaji Dan Mana was on January 25, killed by five gun men who invaded his home. While the states’ police commands have attributed the killings to armed robbery, many in the states have traced them to political intrigues.

With the latest killings, the North seems to have formed other part of the polity where politically motivated killings have become the norm. There are however indications that the ongoing onslaught by suspected Boko Haram members account for most of the killings in that part of the country. On January 31, 2011, three persons, including a police man, were shot dead when suspected members of Boko Haram attacked a police check point in Maiduguri. Two members of the radical Islamic sect, also died in the exchange of fire that took place then. In Jos, Plateau State, hoodlums killed a police man and 16 others and injured dozens during the attack on a student’s hostel.

Recently, unknown gun men shot and killed a soldier and a police men in Dutse, Jigawa State. Also, what would have been another tragedy was averted in Bauchi, State when a bag containing explosive devices was discovered in church premises. The police and the SS told newsmen that an unknown bomber had gone to the United Methodist Church and dropped the lethal bag. The situation is alarming as the security agencies appear to have been overwhelmed. The Federal Government has characteristically proved in capable of steaming the slide.

The killings have led to fears that there is a gradual subversion of democracy in Nigeria. The fear emanates from the fact that violence is not constituent with the language of democracy. Democracy allows for legitimate disagreement, healthy competitions, pursuit of ambition, criticism, dissent, clash of ideas and debate. All these events must, however, take place in accordance with the law. That is why democracy always thrives in the environment of civil rule and constitutional order.

However, Nigerians have cause to be worried that these recent killings are political related. Political killings constitute a stain on our democracy because violent conflict can never be a permissible culture in presidentialism. The political assassinations, if viewed along side the communal clashes in Jos and the Boko Haram religion disturbances, create the impression that a huge national security challenge now confronts the polity. This paper seeks to examine the
mechanisms that we help security agencies to combat the rising insecurity challenges as Nigeria matches towards the April 2011 elections.

Theorising Insecurity Question in Nigeria

There are three major contending perspectives to the understanding of insecurity question. There is the armed robbery theory, wobble economy and opposition – ruling party theses. The Armed robbery theory posits that the high wave of armed robbery in Nigeria is primarily responsible for high level of insecurity in Nigeria. It also argues that in Nigeria, politics is extremely competitive and elections are perceived as zero-sum contests. The fallout is the increasing militarized nature of politics, the use of violence as an electoral tool, and the inculcation of a culture of violence in society. Again, this thesis recognizes the existence of armed groups of varying character and intent operating in Nigeria. However, today’s armed groups are better armed and trained, and increasingly sophisticated in their actions compared to those of the past.

The armed robbery thesis concludes by arguing that as a result of zero-sumness politics combined with the prevalence of armed groups provided an easy marriage between politics and violence. Armed groups have taken advantage of the opportunities presented by being hired hands, and have now developed their own bases of economic support (armed robbery) thereby freeing themselves from their political patrons.

The major proponents of this thesis include former President Obasanjo and other government apologists. They used this theory to explain the mindless murder of Bola Ige, Alfred Rewane, Dikibo, and Marshall Harry and other party chieftains sent to their early graves between 1999 and 2008. Keen observers and analysts of the polity have inflamed this thesis. They countered by positing that in all these high profile killings, the assailants’ drove away without taking a pin further weakens this conjuncture.

The proponents of this thesis stopped short of propounding the armed banditry thesis after the attack on former governors Akume, Ibori, Nnamani, Udenwa, Tinubu and Orji among others.

Closely related to the armed banditry thesis are the wobble economy thesis and the fallout it generates on the nation. This theory posits that as a result of the growing array if qualified and unqualified youths competing in the existing saturated labour market there is a tendency for them to be recruited and exploited as hired killers. It further argues that as a result of high level of poverty among Nigerians, the youths are adversely attracted to violent crime. These youths are lured and armed by “second-term politicians” who wanted to retain power no matter the cost arms them with guns. After these elections, none of these guns were recovered from these new merchants of death.

Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002:12) add that while the poor people in Nigeria rate insecurity as a key cause of poverty, they do not necessarily see poverty as a cause of armed conflict. While we are not necessarily disputing the linkage between poverty and violent conflict, the nature of that linkage remains to be clarified. In the first place, if poverty exists and has apparently existed as a pervasive and structural feature of the Nigerian state, why has it not produced the sort of conflict that we have witnessed in recent years?

It would appear that the thesis for the above link might well lie in relative deprivation rather than absolute poverty. So set against the inability of the government to provide basic
infrastructure and basic services for its populace, new conflicts have emerged through politicized agents who have used the conditions of the poor to address the responses or non-responses of the state to the lawful yearning of the citizens. This has led some groups to engage in and try to influence the political process themselves. These conflicts in Nigeria are purposeful in intent and directed at key targets, whether economic or political. Armed violence is about more than oil, ethnicity, or politics. In essence, such actions is about access to resources, whether through committing crimes, playing communal tension, stealing oil or winning elections.

The third thesis is the ruling-opposition party thesis. According to this perspective, the ruling PDP accuses to opposition parties and other branded anti-democratic forces of engaging in violent crimes to truncate democracy in Nigeria. According to the ruling party, the only way to get even with the government is to create crisis for it. This has supposed that it is far fetched but it is not possible. The ruling party cites the bomb blast in Osun, Ekiti Byelsa, Abuja and Ondo clashes, Jos and Bauchi ethno-religious conflicts to support their argument. Those who are opposed to this view accuse the ruling party of masterminding the “state-sponsored terrorism”. A case index is probably the allegation of the Action Congress and, Conference of Nigerian political parties and former Governor Orji Uzor Kalu that certain forces within the PDP are behind the blood letting in the country. The former chairman of the Board of Trustee of the PDP is at the centre of the accusation. This thesis reinforce Wole Soyinka’s nest of killers’ theory residing within the PDP thesis.

In view of the above theses, one can posit that Nigeria in recent times has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity. Inter and intra-communal and ethnic clashes, ethno-religious violence, armed robbery, assassination, murder, gender-based violence, and bomb explosion have been on the increase leading to enormous loss of life and property and a general atmosphere of siege and social tension for the populace (Ibrahim and Igbuzor, 2002:2). While communities and ethno-regional and religious groups fight each other, state agents and party officials have been involved in the perpetration of violence and destruction as reflected in the Odi, Benue, Jos and Rivers crises.

The state exists fundamentally for the protection of lives and property and ensuring the well-being of the citizens. As such, state-based institutions and agencies have responsibility for the security of the citizens. However, certain institutions and agencies are specifically charged with the responsibility for the security of life and property. They include the police, state security agencies, the military, immigration, and prison services.

For the purpose of this paper, insecurity refers to the breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic and political that have contributed to recurring conflicts, which Nigeria has witnessed over the years resulting in wanton destruction and loss of lives and property.

Theoretical Framework of Analysis and its Application

Human history is the history of civilizations (Huntington, 1996:40). Throughout history civilizations have provided the broadest identifications for people. As a result, the causes, emergence, rise, interactions, achievements, decline and fall of civilizations have been explored at length by historians, sociologists and anthropologist such as Annold Toynbee, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim and Oswald Spengler among others. Civilization refers to the overall way of
life of a people (their values, norms, institutions and world view) to which successive generations in a given polity have attached primary significance.

According to Huntington (1996:20); a civilization-based world order is emerging. Societies sharing cultural affinities cooperate with each other, efforts to shift societies from one civilization to another are unsuccessful; and countries group themselves around the lead or core states of their civilization. Put differently, in this new world the most pervasive, significant, and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups, but between peoples belonging to different cultural entities. Tribal and ethnic wars will occur within civilizations. In this new world, local politics is the politics of ethnicity; global politics is the politics of civilizations. The rivalry of the superpowers is replaced by the clash of civilizations. Huntington (1996:15) concludes by positing that “clashes of civilizations are the greatest threat to world peace, and an international order based on civilizations is the surest safeguard against world war”. Clash of civilizations refers to the controversial idea first used by Samuel P. Huntington in 1993 to describe the main cultural fault-line of international conflict in a world without communism. This paper will adopt this concept as its model of analysis.

Huntington (1993 and 1996) offered a new paradigm of world politics in which the principal patterns of conflicts and cooperation were shaped by culture, and ultimately by civilization. Huntington suggested that the civilizations that would determine the future of international politics were the “Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin America and possibly African” (Huntington, 1993:25).

For Huntington, the balance of power among civilizations is shifting: the West is declining in relative influence; Asian civilizations are expanding their economic, military and political strength, Islam is exploding demographically with destabilizing consequences for Muslim countries and their own culture. The “international system of the twenty-first century”, Henry Kissinger has noted,”… will contain at least six major powers – the United States, Europe, China, Japan, Russia and probably India – as well as a multiplicity of medium-sized and smaller countries” (Kissinger, 1994:23-24). Kissinger’s six major powers belong to five very different civilizations, and in addition there are relevant Islamic states whose strategic locations, large population, and/or oil resources make their influence in world affairs.

For Huntington, the clash of civilizations was a historical development. The history of the international system had essentially been about the struggles between monarchs, nations and ideologies within Western civilization. The end of the cold war inaugurated a new epoch, where non-westerners were no longer the helpless recipients of Western power, but now counted among the movers of history. The rise of civilizational politics intersected four long processes at play in the international system:

1. The relative decline of the West
2. The rise of the Asian economy and its associated “cultural affirmation”, with China poised to become the greatest power in human history
3. Its population explosion in the Muslim world and the associated resurgence of Islam and
4. The impact of globalization, including the extraordinary expansion of transnational flows of commerce, information and people (Baylis and Smith, 2005:545)
The coincidence of these factors was forging a new international order with cultural revival at the heart of it.

Baylis and Smith (2005) add that the world was becoming a smaller place, and this was raising human consciousness about cultural differences. Global economic changes had also weakened local loyalties. With Western original idea widely seen to have failed, communications sought to re-create some rooted past. Socialism and nationalism gave way to “Islamization, Hinduization and Russianization”. The “liberal idea” may have been presented as a new universal by the West, but its individualism, secularism, pluralism, democracy and human right had only superficial resonance in Islamic, Sinic, Hindu, Buddhist and Orthodox cultures. In reality, the differences between civilizations ran deep: they were about man and God; man and woman, the individual and the state, the notions of rights, authority, obligation and justice. Culture was about the basic perceptions of life that had been constructed over centuries.

Huntington (1993 and 1996) goes on to posit that culture worked at the level of motivation. States remained key actors, but civilizational politics became real when states and peoples identified with each other’s core cultural concerns or rallied around the ‘core state’ of a civilization. Cultural conflicts could be found at a ‘micro’ and a ‘macro’ level. At the former, groups from different civilizations were prone to conflict across local ‘fault-lines’ and by means of a “kin-country syndrome” were liable to bring in their wider brethren.

According to Huntington (1996: 162-3), the successor to the tsarist and communist empires is a civilization bloc, paralleling in many respects that of the West in Europe. At the core, Russia the equivalent of France and Germany is closely linked to an inner circle including the two predominantly Slavic orthodox republics of Belarus and Moldova, Kazakhstan, 40 percent of whose population is Russian, America, historically a close ally of Russia. In the mid-1990s, all these countries had generally come to power through elections. Close but more tenuous relations exist between Russia and Georgia (overwhelming Orthodox) and Ukraine (in large part Orthodox); but both of which also have strong senses of national identity and past independence. In the Orthodox Balkans, Russia has close relations with Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Cyprus, and some what less close ones with Romania. The Muslim Republic of former Soviet Union remains highly dependent on Russia both economically and in the security area. The Baltic Republics, in contrast, responding to the gravitational pull of Europe effectively removed themselves from the Russian sphere of influence.

At the ‘macro-level’, a more general competition was evident with the principal division between the ‘West’ and to varying degrees, the ‘Rest’. According to Huntington (1993 and 1996) the West’s dominance was the most contested by the two most dynamic non-western civilizations, the Sinic and Islamic. Resistance to the West was most evident over issues such as arms control and the promotion of Western political values, which were regarded as a form of neo-imperialism.

Huntington’s thesis was highly contentious with critics pointing to conceptual and empirical problems (Murden, 1999) the treatment of culture was brief and the conclusions very pessimistic (Baylis and Smith, 2005:545). They went to posit that Huntington failed to tell the stories of interaction and synthesis that have always gone on between civilizations. Other scholars thought Huntington was needlessly constructing new enemies for the West, once it had lost the Soviet Union as its other, and that the clash of civilizations could become a self-fulfilling
prophecy. Baylis and Smith (2005) add that much of the criticism was based on caricature, but some reflected the enduring difficulty of using culture to analyze. He was also accused of downplaying the power of global economies and its culture and his failure to recognize the extent to which traditional cultures have been penetrated by global society and markets.

Notwithstand these pitfalls, Huntington initiated an important discussion about human motivations following the collapse of the Iron Curtain and about the emerging patterns of international conflict and cooperation. This model is equally significant because it is able to:

1. Order and generalize about reality
2. Understand casual relationships among phenomena;
3. Anticipate and if we are lucky, predict future development;
4. Distinguish what is important from what is unimportant; and
5. Show us what paths we should take to achieve our goals (Huntington, 1996:30).

The clash of civilizations may not have told the whole story of what was happening in the post-cold war world, but it told part of it. This model will be applied in the subsequent part of the work.

The Boko Haram and Jos Crises added to the already ugly dimension of insecurity in Nigeria. The criminal activities of these crises left countless numbers of lives in ruins and destroyed property worth billions of naira and death roll running into hundreds of thousands. Between 2009 and 2010, over 250 cases of extra-judicial and indiscriminate killings have being recorded in LEDAP’s 2010 impunity report. “These cases have happened over and over again without justice- a situation of impunity where people are being killed and there is no assurance that the killers would be brought to book have caused the general indifference that we find today,” Obiagwu said:

Situations like these perhaps account for why the Amnesty International report said within 2010, “Hundreds of people died at the hands of the police. Many were unlawfully killed before or during arrest in the street or at roadblocks, or subsequently in police detention. Others were tortured to death in police detention. A large proportion of these unlawful killings may have constituted extrajudicial executions. Many other people disappeared after arrest. The families of such victims rarely receive redress and are often left with no answers. Most perpetrators remain unpunished. Although the police have mechanisms to receive complaints from the public, these complaints are often unprocessed.”

The underlisted table captures the litany of political killings and kidnappings between 1999 and March 14, 2011

### The Litany of Kindaps and Killing in Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 9, 1999</td>
<td>Sunday Ugwu was killed by gunmen who mistook him for his elder brother, Ugwu, a member of the Enugu State House of Assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2000</td>
<td>Lai Balogun, a frontline politician and renowned architect was murdered.</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 18, 2001</td>
<td>Monday N, Tambari, a member of River State House of Assembly was assassinated.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
December 19, 2001 Odunayo Olagbaju, a member of Osun State House of Assembly was murdered.

December 23 2001 Bala Ige, Minister of justice and attorney general of the federation, assassinated in his Ibandan, Oyo State home.

December 28, 2001 - Dan Kemebigha, counsel to Odi youths in Bayelsa State murdered.

January 7, 2002- Ade Awonusi, confidential secretary to Muhammed Uwais, the former chief justice of Nigeria was assassinated.


November 2002 –Dele Arojo PDP governorship aspirant in Ogun State, Mohammed, a United Nigeria Peoples Party chieftain was murdered.

December 12, 2003-John Agbatutu PDP, Delta Central Senatorial District aspirant murdered

February 8, 2003-Ogbonnaya Uche, a chieftain of the All Nigeria Peoples Party, ANPP, Imo State, murdered.

February 22, 2003-Theodore Agbata, the principal secretary to the Imo State governor was murdered.

March 5, 2003-Marshal Harry, the South-South Vice Chairman of the PDP before he defected to ANPP was assassinated

March 20, 2003-Rasaki Ibrahim, a supporter of Mohammed Lawal, the former governor of Kwara State, was assassinated.

March 21, 2003-Anthony Nwodo, Secretary of ANPP Ezza North L.G, Ebonyi state assassinated

March 27 2003-Yemi Oni, Alliance for Democracy, AD, stalwart in Ekiti State, assassinated.

April 19, 2003 –Onyewuchi Iwuchukwu, ANPP stalwart in Ikeduru, Imo State was murdered.

April 20, 2003-Tony Dimegwu ANPP House of Assembly member Imo Sate murdered

May 3, 2003 –Joyce Fatal, former Nasarawa State commissioner for women affairs and social development, murdered

June 20, 2003-Ajibole Olanipekun, a lawyer and PDP member in Ibadan, Oyo State, was murdered.

October 2003-Chimere Ikoku, PDP chieftain and former vice chancellor of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, murdered.

January 6, 2004- Aminasoari Dikibo, South-South national vice chairman of PDP assassinated

March 3, 2004-Andrew Agowa, a member of the PDP’s Board of Trustees and Joseph Ngama, a police sergeant in the convoy of George Akume, Governor of Benue State, were killed.


March 7, 2004-Phillip Olorunipa, a Kogi State electoral commissioner, murdered

February 5, 2005-Sunday Atte, leader of the legislative council in Yagba East L.G Kogi State, murdered.

May 15, 2005-Alabi Olajoku, a political associate of Rauf Aregbesola, the then governorship candidate in Osun State and now governor of the state assassinated.

June 3, 2005-Lateef Olaniyi Alias Lati Osogbo, a close associate of the strongman of Ibadan politics, late Lamidi Adebidu assassinated.

July 27, 2005-Ayo Daramola a governorship aspirant of the defunct Advance Congress of  
Demarcates, Murdered.

July 30, 2006-Funsho Williams, a governorship  aspirant of PDP in Lagos State, assassinated. 
August 14, 2006-Ayo Darmola, a governorship aspirant of PDP in Ekiti State, assassinated.  
September 19, 2006-Mohammed Imam, Chairman of ANPP, Borno State Assassinated.  
October 5, 2006-Omalolu Fabobi, a former editor of the Punch newspapers and Executive  
Director of Journalists Against AIDS (JAAIDS) was assassinated in his car on his way back  
home in Lagos.

January 27, 2007-Ego Cordelia Uzoezie the then Anambra State Commissioner for women  
affairs alongside her son Kenechukwu were kidnapped at a Nsugbe on her way from Orizu  
College of Education Awka, Anambra State, where she had been a lecturer. The kidnappers  
demanded N50 million ransom.

January 27, 2007-Plus Ogbuawa, a business from Nnewi Anmabra State was kidnapped and N20  
million was demanded as ransom.

April 30, 2007-Cecilla Omehia, 70 years old mother of Celestine Omehia, Ex-governor of River  
State was kidnapped.

May 1, 2007-Sex expatriate staff of Chevron Nigeria Limited in Port Harcourt Rivers State were  
kidnapped.

May 30, 2007-Segun Awenebi, former chief security officers to Segun Agagu, Ondo State  
governor was murdered.

June 2, 2007-Four expatriate staff of Stumberger in River State House of Assembly was  
kidnapped.

June 26, 2007-Michael Stewart, son of a female member of the Rivers State House of Assembly  
was kidnapped.

July 5, 2007 – Margret Hill, three year old British girl in River State was Kidnapped.

July 2007- Samuel Amadi son of Chief Francis Amadi, an Irieble community Leader, River State  
was kidnapped.

August 25, 2007- Hansel Selborgu 70-years old mother of Werinpre Selbaragu, ex-speaker of  
Bayelsa State House of Assembly was kidnapped.

September 8, 2007 About 11 members of the PDP in Ese-Odo, Ondo State, were kidnapped  
September 14, 2007, Segun Oladimeji, fondly called Segelu, A PDP members of the House of  
Representatives representing Akinyele/Lageli Federal Consistency, Oyo State was assassinated.  
September 2007- David Ward a Briton and Worker with Hydro-Dive Limited of Rivers State  
was kidnapped.

October 9, 2007 Jeffy Kolomonibo, 82, blind and father of Ebioudu Kolomonibo a member of  
the Bayelsa state House of Assembly was kidnapped.

October 29, 2007- Joseph Edem, ten years old boy at his school in Calabar Cross River State was  
Kidnapped.

February 8, 2008- 15 years old son of Ogochukwu Onyiri, Secretary PDP. River State chapter  
was kidnapped.

February 7, 2008 Seinye Briggs wife of Lulu Briggs, the Executive Vice Chairman, Moni Pulo  
was kidnapped.
March 23 2008- Stevenson Odemwingle, lucky Martin and two staff of Manatan Oil Company Okirika, River State were kidnapped.

March 25, 2008 Mrs Ejiogu wife of Samuel Ejiogu a politician in Etche, Rivers State was kidnapped

March 29, 2008- Five staff of Express oil Awoye Ondo State were kidnapped

April 2008 Sarah Nwakaudu, a 75 year old women from Umuehia, Abia State, was Kidnapped

April 6, 2008 Patricia Asiota, wife of a member of House of Representative from River State and Chidi Nzerim, 11, a student of Broakstone International school Ikwerre, River State, were Kidnapped at different locations.

April 20, 2008 Nogzi Nneji, wife of Frank Nneji ABC Motors bosses in Imo State, kidnapped.

April 26, 2008 Patrick Mbamalu Okeke 73 years old traditional ruler Abagana Njikoka council Anambra State, Kidnapped

May 2008 Celestine Ngobiwu, member of Imo State House of Assembly, representing Obowo Constituency, Imo State, Kidnapped.

May 2008- Simon Iwunze, a member of Imo State House of Assembly representing Mbano Constituency in Imo State.

May 2008 Christopher Chukwu, an octogenarian, kidnapped

June 8, 2008 Bob Izua, a Managing Director of Bob Izua Motors Benin City, Edo State, kidnapped. He was released after a N5 million ransom was paid.

June 14, 2008-Two Germans and Four Nigerians at Dodo Creeks, Ekeremor council area, Bayelsa State were kidnapped.

JUNE 19, 2008- Ginikach Udeagu, daughter of Ebere Udeagu, Former Deputy Governor of Imo State was kidnapped.

July 21, 2008-Arthour Okowa 76, father of Ifeanyi Okowa , the then sectary to the Delta State Government was kidnapped

August 2, 2008-Two years old son of the bursar of Anmabra state was kidnapped

August 11, 2008-Azubuike Emerergini chairman of Port Harcourt City L.G. was kidnapped.

August 13, 2008 Wife of Wole Adekoya, the permanent secretary in the ministry of water resources in Ogun State was kidnapped.

August 15, 1008, - Barineme Fakae, a professor and vice chancellor of River State University of Science and Technology was kidnapped.

August 17, 2008 – Abayomi Ogundei, an Editorial Board member of this DAY newspaper was shot dead in Akowonjo Lagos State.

August 25, 2008 – Kelechi Nwankpa, Charman of Obingwa Council in Abia State was shot dead on his way to his office. His driver was kidnapped and later released after payment of N10 million ransoms.

September 9, 2008 – Two expatriate, a Britom and an Irish national working with Pan Oceanic Oil Corporation in Warri, Delta State were kidnapped.

November 15, 2008 Joseph Dimobi, a member of Anambra State House of Assembly, representing Aniocha 11 Constituency Anambra State, kidnapped.

January 6, 2009 Effiong Nelson former Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly speaker, Uyo, kidnapped.

February 1, 2009 – Abuja Adiele, former attorney general of River State kidnapped


August 2009, Nkem Owoh, popular actor and comedian, popularly known as Osuofia, kidnapped along Enugu Port Harcourt Expressway.

August 23, 2009- Godwin Okere, chairman GUO Motors, Kidnapped at All Saints Anglican Church, Onitsha, Anambra State.

September 2009 – Waje Yayok, the secretary to the Kaduna State government kidnapped from his residence in Kaduna.

September 20, 2009, - Bayo Ohu, assistant news editor. The Guardian newspaper was assassinated at his Egbeda residence, Lagos.

October 28, 2009 – Simon Soludo 78, father of Chukwuma, Soludo, the then governor, Central Bank of Nigeria, was kidnapped

December 2009- Chijioke Iheaku 40, a lawyer kidnapped and later murdered

January 2010. Eze Samuel Ohiri, traditional ruler of Oredo in Mbaiteoli L.G. Imo State. Father of Festus Ohiri and Cousin Josiah Ohiri were murdered by kidnappers.

March 2, 2010- Justice ABC Egu, president of customary court of appeal, Ugoeze Pauline Njemanze, wife of Eze Emmanuel Njemanze, the Ozuruigbo of Oweri, Professor Sam Omenyi, deputy vice chancellor (Academics) Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Akwa, Professor Egwuatu, director of academics, the dean of studies of the same university, and three journalist working for a South-African based on sports television outfits, were kidnapped along the Sam Mbakwe, Airport Road, Owerri, Imo State.

March 4, 2010- Ademola Adegbile, Chairman of the PDP, Atiba L.G Oyo State, murdered

March 15, 2010 Stella Odimegwu, wife of Chief Festus Odimegwu, former chief executive officer, Nigerian Breweries, kidnapped in Assah Ubirielem. Orsu L.G. Imo State

May 21 2010 Polycarp Ndubueze Medical director, Chika Medical Centre, Osina, Ideato South L.G. Imo State kidnapped.

May 26. 2010 Osaro Osifo, a dentist at the Central Hospital, Benin City Edo State, kidnapped.

June 13, 2010 Sunday Njoku, the traditional ruler of Umebulu community in River State was kidnapped in Church

July 11, 2010 Wahab Oba, chairman, Nigeria Union of Journalists, and three other member of the union and their driver, kidnapped of Obingwa L.G Abia State.

December 30, 2010 Lateef Salako, alias Elewe Omo, the Factional leader of Oyo State chapter of National Union of Road Transport workers (NURTW), was killed at a primary school in Ogbere-Olunloyo, Ibadan, Oyo State, during the PDP L.G congress.


January 1, 2011 Lukman Adeshina and Taiwo Adeshina, tow brothers were shot dead by a police corporal at a checkpoint after their refusal to give N20 bribe at Ikirun-Osogbo Road, Ikirun, Osun State
January 29, 2011 – Modu Fannami Gubio, a governorship candidate and Goni Sheriff, a brother to Borno State governor, Ali Modu Sheriff were shot dead by unknown gunmen alongside five other people on them at the palace of the Shehu of Borno
February 15, Justice Theophilus Nzekwu a Judge in Iho Imo State was kidnapped and police orderly killed
February 15, Mr Celestine Nwadinobi a District Manager with PHCN Warri died three days after he was released by kidnapers in Orlu, Imo State.
February 17, a nine year old Erere Darah was kidnapped in Sapele Delta State
February 22, an 80 year old woman, Mrs. Nzeribe Obianuju was kidnapped at Owerri Imo State
February 26, Dr A Anokwa an Action Congress Leader in Ama Imo, in Imo State was kidnapped.
February 27, Rev. Fr. Prosper Okwujere was kidnapped at Eku Delta State
March 12, Jerry Ugwu and his five year old daughter were kidnapped at Abapka Nike Enugu
March 14, Vice Chairman Ani Ocha South of Delta State, Mr. Chinechi Mekeoma was kidnapped

Compiled by Murtala Aleem

Increasingly, fears about the possibility of this year’s general elections being marred by violence are growing. With 43 days to the elections billed to commence with the National Assembly polls on Saturday April 2, 2011, a more reassuring political climate has become necessary. Just recently, Catholic women raised the alarm over the high level of insecurity in parts of the country in the build-up to the April general election. In a statement, the President, National Council of Catholic Women Organisation (NCCWO), Chief (Mrs.) Felicia Onyeabo, said it was a matter of grave concern that the country was ravaged by deep-seated animosity, religious intolerance, ethnic bigotry, cruelty, political thuggery, kidnapping and wanton assassinations. According to her, recent bomb blasts in several parts of the country and increasing number of unresolved cases of murder and kidnapping were sad reminders that the security challenges were getting out of hand. The NCCWO President said they are worried that as the April 2011 elections drew nearer, the security situation may worsen, hence the call on President Goodluck Jonathan to "intensify his current efforts at enthroning good governance, as well as use the security apparatus at his disposal to deliver his promise of credible, free and fair election." Mrs. Onyeabo noted that the over 20 million registered members of the organisation had resolved to organise a nationwide prayer rally/vigil to ask God to "save our country from imminent political and social unrest, and to save our country from anarchy and doom." (Avwode, 2011:17)

The prayer rally took place between February 12 and 13. This just goes to show how concerned Nigerians are about the current state of violence in the country even as they are getting ready for the April general elections.

In the last three months, or thereabout, the media have been awash with reports of violence and arms build-up. And in December last year, an angle that looked like sponsored terrorism was actually added to it. With these, political observers are of the view that much as Nigerians would love to build on the gains of almost 12 years of democracy and prove to the
world that they can conduct a free, fair and credible election, large-scale violence and political thuggery could jeopardise the venture. Apart from the bombings that caused serious tension nationwide on the eve of Christmas and New Year, other violent acts with direct political implications have continued to rock the nation.

Late January, what was described as the climax of serial killings in the North East zone of the country was recorded in Borno State. In one fell swoop, gunmen killed the cousin of Governor Ali Modu Sheriff, who doubled as the governorship candidate of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) in Borno State, Alhaji Modu Fannami Gubio, at his father’s residence in Lawan Bukar ward, Maiduguri. Also killed was the elder brother of the governor, Alhaji Goni Modu Ngala, two policemen guarding the gubernatorial candidate and four other people, including a hapless kola-nut seller, a shoe shiner and a 10-year-old boy. Four other people who received serious injuries were rushed to undisclosed hospitals.

Until his death, Gubio, 51, was the Commissioner for Finance, while Goni Modu was a former Chairman of Ngala Local Government Area. The gunmen, said to number about eight, allegedly arrived at the area in an unmarked Sports Unity Vehicle (SUV) and a motorcycle before they fired several shots at Gubio and other people around him.

The Boko Haram sect later claimed responsibility for the act. A distraught former member of the House of Representatives, Dr Haruna Yerima, called on the Federal Government to declare a state of emergency in the state. In his words: "Borno is now a lawless society because no single person is safe as a result of the prevailing lack of security in the state," he said. After the blood chilling Borno killings, in less than one week, three soldiers and a policeman were killed while many security men were hit by bullets during encounters with gunmen who mostly operated with motorcycles in the state. It would also be recalled that unknown gunmen had, last October, killed the North-East Chairman of the ANPP, Awala Ali Ngala, in his house. Until his death, he was also touted as a likely successor of Sheriff.

An exasperated Governor Modu Sheriff branded the horror as nothing "but purely political killing". Sheriff said the heinous job was professionally done, perhaps beyond the efficiency of the Islamic fundamentalists. That was before the sect claimed responsibility. The radical group had claimed in a statement: "As we have been telling everybody around the world, these attacks we are launching, just like the one we launched on the eve of Christmas in Borno and Jos, are being done in order to propagate the name of Allah and to liberate ourselves and our religion from the hands of infidels and the Nigerian government." (Abidde 2011:12 ).It warned people not to go close to where security agents or politicians are living. But the Borno State Police Command spokesman, Lawal Abdullahi, dismissed the threat and asked members of the public to go about their legitimate businesses as the police were on top of the situation, add that the group would soon be brought to book. An Islamic scholar found it hard to believe the group’s claim and described their action as un-Islamic. Imam Abdurasheed Abubakar, the Director, Centre for Inter-Religious Relations in Africa, declared: "These people are not Islamic and I think there is a political undertone, because there is nowhere in the Koran where their activities are recognised. They kill and maim, which is not in the Koran"(Okpara 2011:7). The development forced the Federal Government to hurriedly convene a meeting of the Security Council the following Monday, Jan. 31, presided over by Vice-President Namadi Sambo at the State House, Abuja. At the end of the meeting, the Minister of Police Affairs, Humphrey Abba,
told State House correspondents that the various security challenges facing the country would be addressed before the elections to ensure that they were conducted under a peaceful atmosphere. The minister, who declined comments on the agenda of the meeting, said that government had the capacity to deal with the security situation and was already putting adequate measures in place in that direction. "April elections will be very peaceful. I can assure you of that. By the grace of God, it will be peaceful (Avwode, 2011:17).

The killings you are referring to are security challenges and we are already addressing them. The killings are part of the security issues and they are being addressed." Those who attended the meeting included the Chief of Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Oluseyi Petinrin; Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant-General Azubuike Ihejirika; National Security Adviser (NSA), Gen. Owoye Azazi; Director-General of the State Security Service (SSS), Ita Ekpeyong; the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Hafiz Ringim; Director-General of National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Ambassador E. Oladeji; Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hajia Salamatu Suleiman, and representatives of the Chief of Naval Staff and Chief of Air Staff (Okpara 2011:7).

Towards the end of last year, the country recorded a spate of violent incidents that put it on the edge. In Ibadan, just two days before the New Year, the city was in the grip of violence. The factional chairman of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Alhaji Lateef Salako (a.k.a Eleweomo), a staunch supporter of the Oyo State Governor, Chief Adebayo Alao-Akala, was shot in the head at one of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) ward congress venues. He died instantly. In Niger State, a similar scenario played out. Two people were reported dead while many others sustained serious injuries after violence erupted during the PDP primaries in Edati Local Government Area of the state. Besides the loss of lives, no fewer than eight vehicles and two motorcycles were reportedly burnt during the exercise. The violence erupted as a result of what the delegates described as "manipulation of result and discarding of the zoning arrangement" agreed upon in the area. As in other cases, dangerous weapons like machete and dagger were freely used, while the policemen on duty were said to be helpless as the thugs unleashed terror on one another.

In Delta State, barely 48 hours to the Delta State governorship rerun last December, the office of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Ughelli, Ughelli North Local Government Area was razed by suspected militants in the state. The blast occurred a few hours to the visit of President Goodluck Jonathan to the city of Warri for the rally of the PDP candidate in the rerun, Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan, who eventually won the election. The incident allegedly left three persons injured and the office building burnt. The office, located on Post Office Road, Ughelli, was said to have been set ablaze around 1:00am by a group which threatened to attack more INEC facilities if it failed to conduct a credible rerun. The suspected attackers said they were members of the ‘freedom fighting strike’ squad of ‘Delta Democratic Militia’. Such has been the level of violence even as Nigerians eagerly look forward to the general election in April.

Yinka Odumakin, National Publicity Secretary of the Afenifere Renewal Group (ARG) and chieftain of the Save Nigeria Group (SNG), did not only express worries about the development. He also blamed the political class for it.
Odumakin said: "It is worrisome that bombs are flying like hangers all over Nigeria in the build-up to the elections. Unfortunately, there is failure of leadership in the country, as no serious effort has been made to get the perpetrators." (Avwode, 2011:50). Odumakin lamented a situation whereby every act of violence is quickly politicised. He wondered why nobody had been called to explain what he or she knew about such acts of terror on the people and in the land.

All we see is politics being played when the polity is being threatened. The Plateau State Governor (Jonah Jang) once said ‘special citizens’ are behind bombings. Has he been asked to name them? Odumakin also posited that time has come for Nigerians to unite and create what he called a Third Force that would ensure the realisation of their ambition of free, fair and credible elections in April. According to him: “Patriotic forces must at this time come together and form a Third Force that can redirect the future of this country. Otherwise, desperate politicians may delete Nigeria from the map if the spate of violence, bombings and killings are not checked” (Avwode, 2011:51).

Also speaking on the issue, elder statesman and security buff, Chief Alfred Krubo Horsfall, at an interactive session with journalists at his Ikoyi, Lagos home recently, blamed the development on "those who are opposed to the new slogan of free and fair election; those who would want the status quo to remain the way it had been when they rigged elections with impunity," (Abidde, 2011:12) noting that it pays such people to have a disorderly situation. He said: Many people want the status quo to remain. It is only during such moments that they can manipulate the system and rig elections. They have seen that the direction is such that would lead to credible, free and fair elections. They have seen the appointment of a man of integrity (Professor Attahiru Jega) as the boss of INEC. Chief Alfred Krubo Horsfall goes on to add: They have noticed that the trend is to make the votes of Nigerians count. But to be able to do what they know how to do best, rig elections and impose their cronies, they must make the situation tense. And it is by creating violent situations like this that they can get such an opportunity to realise their dreams and visions. But just how ready are the security agencies, particularly, the Nigeria Police and the politicians, who are the major players?

When contacted, the Force Public Relations Officer (FPRO), Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Olusola Amore, told The Nation that the Police were determined not to fail. He said the Delta State rerun election was a test case for the Nigeria Police Force and INEC. Amore said the Police were already collaborating with other security agencies to ensure that the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja are adequately covered during the general election. He said the Police are ready to tackle the issue of violence by ensuring that those who are involved in any act of violence would be arrested and charge to court. He said the punishment that would be meted out to those found guilty would serve as a deterrent to others. He said: "The rerun election in Delta State was a test case for INEC and the Nigeria Police Force and we cannot afford to fail Nigerians. You saw the DIG ‘B’ (Deputy Inspector General of Police, Operations), Audu Abubakar, led the operation and it was successful. However, for the general election, the Police and other security agencies are collaborating to ensure that it is hitch-free. For instance, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, the Nigeria Immigration Service, the Nigeria Customs Service and other security services will collaborate to provide
security and to ensure that all the states are adequately covered. "For the 2011 elections, the Police will not negotiate the issue of violence with anybody. Anybody found to be involved or instigating violence, no matter how highly placed, will be made to face the law. So, we are adequately prepared for the elections (Okpara 2011:7).

Many, however, would say it is easier said than done. In a country where people of substance are hero-worshipped and money literally means everything, they would rather adopt a wait-and-see attitude. Beyond that, there is the issue of logistics. If in the conduct of just a rerun gubernatorial election in Delta State, the Police had to deploy 23,000 men, the natural question is whether the Police have enough men at its disposal to go round all the 36 states and the FCT come April?

Whatever the level of preparedness of the Police and INEC for the April election, this is one exercise Nigerians would like to have full reward for all their hopes and aspirations. The Nigerian political environment is becoming charged every day. The crises in Plateau, Bauchi and Borno States, the spate of kidnappings, which has now shifted from the Southeast to the South-South Geopolitical Zone and many pending court cases challenging the conduct and outcome of party primaries, are threatening the conduct of the April elections. Labaran Maku, Nigeria’s minister for information and communications captured the apprehension of most Nigerians, when he declared that the present growing insecurity in the land is a threat to the April elections. The minister has observed that “with the level of insecurity and political killings going on in the country, the quest for free and fair elections come April 2011, may be but a lip service” (Abidde, 2011:12)

The assassination of the all Nigeria Peoples Party ANPP, governorship candidate in Borno State Fannam Gubio further heightened tension, not only in the state but throughout the whole country. The former governorship candidate was killing after Fridays’ Jummat service at the state capital, Maiduguri. An Islamic sect, Boko harem claimed responsibility for the murder, although Governor Ali Modu Sheriff said the murder was politically motivated. Just recently the party met to choose his replacement. According to the Sect Flyer: “Out target is only the police and traditional rulers; we are not after the masses. We are against the Sheriff administration, which killed our leader and many of our members (Avwode, 2011:51).

The attack on security agents by the sect is now a daily affair. The state commissioner of police, Mohammed Abubakar, said the attackers often make away with the AK-47 riffles of the slain officers. Mustafa Bala, a Maiduguri resident identified three major causes of insecurity in Borno State. Apart for the Boko Haram sect, Bala noted that raids by Chadian rebels and politically motivated assassinations are putting the government and people of the state on edge. Chadian rebels who are fighting the government along Nigerian/Chadians borders often carry raids in Maiduguri to replenish their supplies (Avwode, 2011:51). Like in Borno, the sectarian crises in Jos, Plateau State have continued to assume a dangerous dimension. On Christmas Eve, bomb explosions in front of Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Kabon and at the crowded drinking joint in Angwan Rukuba and at the Kabon Satellite Market all in Jos local Government left about 32 people dead and 74 others injured. This is a dangerous dimension introduced in the now over nine years crisis, which has raped peace in the ancient city of Jos known for its peaceful co-existence (Abidde, 2011:12).
The reprisal attacks by both sides of the conflict have left many people dead. This disrupted the recent concluded voter’s registration exercise being conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission. The security situation in Jos has worsened since November 2008. The ability of the federal government to provide adequate security in the state will depend on whether the April elections will hold in the state or not. The government has resisted pressure to declare a state of emergency as was the case in 2004. Just recently the federal government deployed about 849 soldiers to the state to help maintain peace. The soldiers were drawn from different army formations in the country, including 1 Brigade Sokoto, 3 Brigade Kano, 40 Division Engineers, Kaduna and 31 brigades Minna. There were allegations that members of joint task force, ITF, earlier posted to maintain peace the state have compromised and have taken sides in the conflict. The Chief of Army Staff, COS, Lt-General Azubuike Ihejirika accused politicians in the state of masterminding the crises. Last week, women from the state staged a peaceful demonstration at Plateau State government house demanding urgent solution to the crises. The women had also protested at the National assembly in Abuja where they urged the federal government to bring peace to the troubled city or allow the two warring sides to determine who controls the city of Jos. The deployment of troops in the state may be part of the decisions reached at the security meeting held last Tuesday in Abuja where the governors of the three troubled northern states, Plateau, Bauchi and Borno were invited. The meeting was presided over by Vice President Namdi Sambo and was attended by service chiefs. Bauchi State has also known no peace since 2009. Although the state was able to quickly contain the Boko Haram uprising in 2009, there have been occasional sporadic outbreaks of violence. The January 28 outbreak of violence in Tafawa Balewa local government of the state left about 20 dead. Bauchi State is a suspected flash point for political violence during the April election, Governor Isa Yuguda’s former deputy, Abubarkar Ghadi has picked the All Nigerian Peoples Party, ANPP governorship candidate for the April election. This pitched him against the governor who is running on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP. The supporters of the two candidates are likely to clash during the electioneering campaign or on Election Day. Even the nation’s seat of power, Abuja, was not spared of the bomb attacks. A twin bomb attack on October 1 during activities marking Nigeria’s 50th independence anniversary left 12 persons dead and a number of others inured. The New Year Eve Bomb Explosion at Mogadishu Barrack. The conclusion therefore that can be drawn from the various security reports indicate that these disturbances are targeted to wards the disruption of the April polls. Even at peace times the credibility of some election conducted during crisis are often in doubt. Afarkruya Gadzama former director general, State Security Service, (SSS) has warned that the coming general elections may turn bloody, if certain security measures were not taken. According to him “the rate at which the government ignores intelligence reports on security issues had given birth to the current state of violence across the country” (Abidde, 2011:12). In the words of Dr. Osisioma Nwolise the government should do more to ensure credible elections. What we have now is urban terrorism and it is through the Dutch option, where internal terrorists group are not allowed to operate from within the territories, that they can be controlled (Avwode, 2011:51).
Associated with this is the spate of kidnappings and associated crimes. The academic and non-academic staff unions of university of Oyo are currently on strike over the kidnap of their colleague, Dr. Memfín Ekpo, an associate professor in the department of pathology at the university. Dr Ekpo who was kidnapped no January 16 was recently released by his captors. Again, the paramount ruler of Nsit Ubium in Akwa Ibom State Edidem Robert James Obot was assassinated by unknown gun men. The mother of the Congress for Progressive Change, CPC, and senatorial candidate for Kebbi south, Hajiya Fatima Sadiq Yelwa was kidnapped last week in her Yauri town.

Perhaps, the greatest threat to the April polls is the countless number of cases seeking to stop INEC from accepting the candidacy among the lists presented to it by the parties. Virtually all major political parties are in crisis since the conduct of the primaries to select their candidates for the election.

Mohammed Abacha, the son of the late Head of State, General Sani Abacha has filed an action in court seeking to stop the CPC from felting Brigadier Jafaru (rtd) as its gubernatorial candidate for Kano State because he was the validly nominated candidate of the party during the primaries, having scored the highest vote of 144,066. INEC, CPC and Jafaru, CPC National Chairman as well as the Party’s Chairman Board of Trustees, BOT, General Mahammadu Buhari (rtd), were joined in the suit.

The crisis in the Enugu State chapter of PDP is another case before the court Chief Anayo Onwuegbu and 38 others have obtained a court injunction restraining INEC from accepting Governor Sullivan Chime as the a PDP governorship candidate for Enugu State. The Oyo State chapter of the party has also obtained a restraining order from the court stopping INEC from accepting the nomination of Governor Alao Akala as gubernatorial candidate for Oyo State. The electoral body has rejected the lists from Uyo and Ogun States, which was submitted to it by the PDP.

This is not the first time the nation’s election is threatened by court cases. Nigeria’s most freely presidential election won by late business mogul, Alhaji Moshood Abiola was scuttled in 1993 by court orders. The same court processes nearly truncated the 2007 general elections. Some of the pending cases in court were later disposed of after the election. But the Supreme Court judgment, which was delivered two weeks before the presidential election nearly, affected the conduct of the election. INEC was forced to reprint ballot papers meant for the election to accommodate the presidential candidate of the Action Congress. AC, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar who was excluded from the race based on the report of administration panel set up by the presidency, which indicted him of corruption. INEC’s Director of Public Affairs, Emmanuel Umenger, said the court injunctions are not capable of derailing plans for the elections.

“Aggrieved party members have every right to seek relief from the court and INEC is ever ready to respect any validly obtained court order” (Avwode, 2011:17).

Nigerians are still apprehensive of the possibility of these litigations affecting the April polls. Emmanuel Okere, an Abuja based public affairs commentator, agreed that since INEC’s preparation for the coming election is time bound, it cannot afford any distraction brought about by incessant litigations and court injunction. He wants the parties to put their house in order and ensure a smooth conduct of the selection process with out any rancor.
Manifestations of Insecurity in Nigeria

The underlisted are the various manifestations of conflict and insecurity in Nigeria:

Ethno-religious Conflict

Communal and societal conflicts according to Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002) have emerged as a result of new and particularistic forms of political consciousness and identity often structured around ethno-religious identities. In all parts of Nigeria, ethno-religious conflicts have assumed alarming rates. It has occurred in places like Shagamu (Ogun State), Lagos, Abia, Kano, Bauchi, Nassarawa, Jos, Taraba, Ebonyi and Enugu State respectively. Groups and communities who had over the years lived together in peace and harmony now take up arms against each other in gruesome “war”. The claim over scarce resources, power, land, chieftaincy, local government, councils, control of markets, “Osu caste system” and sharia among other trivial issues have resulted in large scale killings and violence amongst groups in Nigeria. In these conflicts, new logics of social separation and dichotomy have evolved in many communities in Nigeria. There is the classification of the “settler” and “indigene”, “Christian” and “Moslem”, and “osu” (slave) and “Nwadiala” (free born). These ethno-religious identities have become disintegrative and destructive social elements threatening the peace, stability and security in Nigeria.

Politically Based Violence

Politics in the current civil dispensation like the previous Republics have displayed politics of anxiety which has played down on dialogue, negotiation and consensus. The anxiety is as a result of perceived or real loss of power by an elite stratum. Put different the quest for political power is among those elites that won it before, those that lost it and those who want it back.

Currently, politicians are already strategizing about the control and retention of power come 2011 elections. To this end, inter and intra-political party conflicts have become rife in which politicians are deploying large resources to out-do each other, changing the rules and legislations of the political game, distorting laws and employing violence and political assassination to settle political scores. Party meeting, campaigns and conventions have become war threats where small and light weapons like guns and cutlasses are freely displayed and used to rig elections, harass and intimidate electors. Also, a spate of politically motivated killing is rife. The most shocking of this killing is rife. The most shocking of these killings was the murder of Chief Bola Ige, Funsho Williams, Dikibo, Ogbonna Uche, and Marshall, among others Onyemaizu (2006:10) adds: A resort to violence, including armed militancy, assassination, kidnap, et cetera, have somewhat suddenly become attractive to certain individuals in seeking to resolve issues that could have ordinarily been settled through due process. The end-products of such misadventures have often been catastrophic. They include the decimation of innocent lives, disruption of economic activities, and destruction of properties among others.

The predilection of most of the politicians is not for election but selection. This lack of party internal democracy is already being revealed in the party primaries, and “selection” of national executive officers of the parties. Even politicians themselves are afraid of what the
forthcoming general elections between 2010 and 2011 portend. An atmosphere of political insecurity is fast engulfing Nigeria’s nascent Fourth Republic.

**Economic-Based Violence**

In a popular parlance, this thesis is also known as “political economy of violence”. Recent writings in the mass media across the globe and across political divide have laid much emphasis on the role of resources in generating conflict which is a major cornerstone of economic-based violence. Cries of resource control and revenue sharing regularly rent the air between proponents and opponents.

Although by no means limited to oil in the Niger Delta, the most prevalent campaign about the link between resources and conflict focuses on oil and the Delta region. Put differently, there is evidence to suggest that oil has given rise to vertical and horizontal conflicts between National, State and society or between dominant and subordinate geo-political zones, classes and groups across Nigeria, given the pivotal role that oil plays in the restructuring power relations in Nigeria.

It is however true those other types of resource driven conflicts have received less attention in the debate. Assets such as grazing and farming and water resource, have tended to give rise to horizontal conflicts that involve communities across the geo-political zones.

The other thesis is that conflict in Nigeria is poverty induced. This explanation is closely related to relative deprivation, rather than absolute poverty. As a result of the above, the inability of the state to provide basic services for the populace, generate new conflict or renew old ones manifested through politicized agents who have used the conditions of the poor to address, the responses or non-responses of the state to the legitimate yearnings of the people.

**Organized Violent Groups**

Organized violent groups take varying dimension and forms. These include: ethnic militia, vigilantes, secret cults in tertiary institutions and political thugs. Various reasons and circumstances account for their emergence. The causes of the manifestations include the culture of militarism that has its antecedents in military rule, the failure of the state and its institutions, economic disempowerment, the structure of the state and Nigeria’s federalism, non-separation of state and religion, politics of exclusion, culture of patriarchy and gerontocracy and ignorance and poor political consciousness (Ibrahim and Igbuzor, 2002:7).

**Thematic Explanation of the Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria**

A thematic explanation of the causes of insecurity would show that improper funding of the police and other security agencies is the major cause of insecurity question in Nigeria. This cause stems from the fact that there are inadequacies in the security agencies, modern communication equipment, sophisticated arms and ammunition so that the security agencies will be able to contain these criminal gangs. Also, the allowances and salaries of these security agencies are hardly paid, their welfare is nothing to write home about.

As a result of the above, the Nigerian populace are bound to suffer the kind of scandal with its political elites running around in shame.

Monetization of the labour market is another cause. This theme posits that as a result of high unemployment, graduates without jobs have gone a lot of mental torture in the process of security jobs and in the process they have been involved in all sort of fiscal indiscipline and corruption and other social vices. These army of unemployed force themselves into the police
force and other para military and military agencies. The fallout of such a situation will be trying to cover lost ground by enriching themselves illegally and colluding with criminal gangs. As Oladepepo (2005:13) posits:

It is irony of the Nigerian situation that the nation’s law enforcement agents are even more corrupt than those they are supposed to police. This has sometimes been blamed on the manner and caliber of men and women recruited in the Nigerian security out fit. Merit and good character are thrown to the winds during recruitment as men and women of questionable character including criminals, bribe their way into the force …. Little wonder therefore that many of the recruits hide under uniform to wreck havoc on the society.

Gross party indiscipline and infighting among political gladiators is another. It is worthy to be noted that a sizeable proportion of those who have suffered attacks in recent times have been members of the ruling party and leading opposition parties and their allies. Politics in Nigeria are beset with acts of gross misconduct, lack of internal democracy, blackmail, and indiscipline. Their act ranges from disobedience to the party’s constitution, to in-fighting among party leaders and their hangers-on. Take for instance, the political wars between and among governors and their deputies, the legislature and the executive, godfathers and their god sons, political dynasties, state and Abuja politicians among others.

Aside from the bad eggs in the force, the poor welfare of the police, military and para-military personnels, with lack of adequate working tools, inadequate personnel is another factor that promotes insecurity in Nigeria. The International Institute for Strategic Studies as cited by Olonisakin (2008:20) captures this when he posited that the police-population ratio in Nigeria is 1:450. At a minimum, citizens ought to have easy access to the police and feel safer as a result of the protection they offer. Yet Nigeria has failed to meet the standard set by the United Nations for effective policing. What are the impacts of all these shortcomings? The next part of the paper will address this.

**2011: Combating the Nigerian Security Challenges**

Nigeria it is said is a country varying nationalities, majority of who are said to have been cohabiting involuntarily in the pursuit of common but largely unrealistic interests. This binding pursuit, according to some analysts, has over the years remained a mirage. The apparent lack of a workable and masses friendly judicial system has also made things worse, while the country is held together by the few who are only interested in whatever that suits their yearnings and aspirations. The cabal has succeeded in entrenching the culture of impunity in the country thereby turning it to a laughing stock in the comity of nations.

According to analysts, national security should ideally be defined as the ability of the Nigerian state to successfully pursue her national interests, being able to protect the core values of the state and the willingness to maintain same through peaceful co-existence and not through the reign of terror. They argued that the state must view individual, regional and national security run a holistic perspective as there are interplays among all the three dimensions. For instance Mr Segun Ojo, said while commenting on the security situation in the country: “If the individual is not secure, the state cannot be secure, and if the state is under attack from internal or external forces, the state and the individual cannot be secure.”( Avwode, 2011:17)
While referring to the recent development when the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Hafiz Ringim, disclosed that over N15 billion had been released to the police to purchase equipment and other necessary logistics, with a view to ensuring the success of this year’s general elections come April, Ojo said that:

Why must we wait till this time before we can think of equipping the police? Does it mean that it is only during the election period or other national assignments that the lives and property of the people have to be protected? Where were these people when some sections of the country were in serious crisis? Have we forgotten so soon the crisis in Jos, Borno, Bayelsa, Port Harcourt, Warri, among others where several lives were wasted, and till today with no justice? Now, an exercise that concerns them directly is around the corner and they would not want to entertain anything that can jeopardize their chances to perpetuate themselves in office. I think this is most unfortunate. It speaks of a huge sense of irresponsibility and callousness on the part of our leaders. This is because a great nation, with true leaders, will always be mindful of the lives of her citizens (Okpara 2011:12).

Ringim, who said the money also covered other aspects including retraining of policemen, disclosed that,

It is on record that the Federal Government has given the police more than N15 billion for the purchase of equipment, to train manpower, purchase other necessary logistics and to pay the allowances of men and women of the force that will take part in the 2011 general elections. The police force, the Inspector General of Police, the men and women of this great service have no excuse or whatsoever and we will not fail. Come 2011 general elections, there will be free, fair executed general elections. We have shown the world, we have shown the people of this country that we are capable, from what is done in the primaries so far. (Okpara,2011:12)

Analysts have contended that they are not particularly opposed to the amount provided to the force by the Federal Government, but maintain that, such amount is not even enough to equip the police adequately for them to be able to discharge their duties effectively and efficiently. Their concern is about the timing and the yardstick for judicious use of the said amount. A similar things happened in 2003 and later we got to know that the money was allegedly squandered by the then IG, Mr Tafa Balogun. What is the assurance that this year’s largesse’ to the police force will not go the way of others before it?

There have been several ethno religious and other communal conflicts in the country, but in recent times, these problems appear to be escalating at an intolerable rate. Ethnic and the other criminal activities perpetrated individually and collectively have created a sense of insecurity, breach of trust and peace and are likely to affect legitimate social and economic activities in the country. These problems also have the damaging consequence of giving bad signal to the rest of the world that Nigeria is not a safe and a secure place and as such, not suitable for economic investment and activities. This is particularly important in view of the efforts being made to create the desired atmosphere to attract foreign investment.

While speaking with the Nigerian Compass, a political analyst who is based in Osun State Dr Rueben Adeboye, noted that beyond the effects of security concerns on the economic fortunes of
the country, the nature of the security challenges facing the country also have implications for the country’s political system. He said: Social cohesion among various groups and interests is important in the process of national political development. Therefore, the constituent parts of the country must be and indeed feel that they are being carried along in the process of national governance (Abidde, 2011:7).

Experience has shown that widespread discontent and loss of confidence in the system have way of affecting national political stability. Invariably continuing escalation of violence and crises across the country will impinges on the survival of our democracy.

So, there is the challenge to rethink and improve on policy and institutional means of dealing with security concerns arising in the country. At the political level, the federal, state and local governments should evolve programmes of cultural and political education and orientation that seek to enthrone the fundamentals of democracy so that the political contestants as well as the generality of the people imbibe principles and practices essential for sustainable democracy. Such programmes must also address specific tendencies that create security breach and concerns in the country.

Adeboye added that a process of legislative and constitutional review should be initiated to assess the country’s constitution and amend or expunge as necessary areas that have been found to give rise to conflicts and security problems.

The process, he said should also introduce new provisions and legislations that will ensure better and more effective interplay of interests among all groups and stakeholders in the country. Such exercise, the analyst added, should also embrace ways of making the country democratic space more open free, fair and tolerant as it is being practiced the world over (Avwode, 2011:50).

Among the specific lingering political issues that should be addressed are: the establishment funding and activities of the electoral body; the laws relating to political parities and their activities; local and state government relationship allocation of national resources and revenue; citizenship rights; devolution of security powers to states and local governments.

In addition, the legislative and constitutional review should also embody security sector reforms that will make the security agencies and institutions more effective in combating crimes and other threats to national security and make them accountable to the democratic political system and structures. These democratic structures include the states and local governments.

I think it will not be out of place to give a more concrete understanding and or explanation to the definition of governors as the chief security officers of the state,” he said, adding that democracy is a sought after value though not a perfect system of governance, even conceptually, going by the explanation given by Aristotle, it is the least evil of all possible forms of government.

To this end, it has been argued that due to the opening up of the political space and its encouragement of competition in an environment where the institutions for the management and regulation of the competition are weak, the tendency for competition escalating to violence is high.

There appears to be disequilibrium between the demands for the benefit of democracy and the capacity to respond individually and institutionally to these demands.

Nigerian, accordingly, is said to be blessed with array of leaders, institutions and other individuals that for long were schooled in a particular way, and have never known any other way of doing things other than the non-accountable, non-democratic and non-people friendly style.
These, the analysts say, must be looked into thoroughly with a view to repositioning the country for the genuine development (Okpara, 2011:7).

**Recommendations**

Nigeria cannot be talking of free and fair elections when political assassination is becoming the norm. No free choice can be made by the electors when an orgy of violence is alien to democratic creature. If the purpose of the pursuit of power is to serve the populace, then there is no justification for blood-letting. It is significant to recall that in our political history, we have a long list of unresolved cases of political assassinations. From the case of Bola Ige to Funso Williams, Harry Marshall, Dikkibo, Alfred Rewane to Dipo Shina, to mention a few, the killers remain unknown. To safeguard our nascent democracy, we challenge our security agencies to move fast and unravel the perpetrators of this crime and their sponsors. Until this is done, the criminals will carry on with the notion that they can always get away with murder. The security agencies should tighten security and be more proactive across the polity and put control measures in place that will effectively monitor the flow of small arms and light weapons. Though, it may sound naïve, but we appeal to politicians and ethno-religious politicians to eschew blood-lettings. They should known that violence will only destroy the present democracy as it can only breed unrest. Politicians should be in their rethorics come out strongly to deplore violence. There should be a consensus against violence among politicians and ethno-religions identities. The recent Code of Conduct signed by the thirty six State Governors to fight against these vices in the forth coming elections is a welcome development.

Again, though there are fertile grounds for violence owing to the gross incapacity of the security agencies to maintain law and order, there are growing fears that violence have become a major tool being used by contending political forces to seize control, preparatory to 2011 elections. Violent crimes can be nipped in the bud if the intelligence units of the police and other security agencies are strengthened. There may be an urgent need for the affected state governments to restrict operations of commercial motorcyclists.

The Jonathan administration should rise to the security challenges as whispers of complaints are turning into howls of anger and resentment. The Boko Haram menace, the Jos- Bauchi sectarian violence and the serial political assassinations across the polity are capable of pushing the nation’s security agencies and internal security to the cliff. All these menace can only be curtailed through the participation of the local populace in the maintenance of law and order.

Though the 1999 constitution says that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government”, the lack of capacity by the Nigerian State to meet the minimum function of government is largely due to the centralized command structure of the Nigeria Police Force. While modern nations, including the Anglo-Saxon Axis, including the United States of America, Britain have opted for local policing, Nigeria remains mired in a policing system that has become unwieldy and out dated.

Furthermore, government should create jobs, and provide social security system and pay her workers beyond the current minimum wage payable to workers in an effort to checkmate the manifestation of economic insecurity in Nigeria.

Politicians need to realize that this orgy of violence is putting every body at risk. If security of lives and property is not guaranteed, then nobody can talk of free and fair elections in April.
Conclusion
Elections in Nigeria have also been tractions. It appears nothing has charged in the way Nigerians conduct politics and elections. Instead of respect for the rule of law and orderliness that we see in some other countries, election in Nigeria are conducted with such daredevilry and acrimony as to raise question as to the real intentions of those seeking elective offices. The politics of winner takes all with scant regard for service delivery to the people has enthroned a do or die” political culture in which the political competitors are determined to win at all costs, and by whatever means, fair or foul. They have failed to develop a culture of respect for democratic norms and ethos. There is no conscious effort to build a sustainable political culture that will en throne fair play and respect for rivals. Nothing fuels this despicable culture of violence during elections more than the desperation to win. This problem is further aggravated by youth unemployment, which makes an army of idle, hungry and angry youths available for hire by politicians to carry out their noxious designs.

The playing of politics with bitterness, which has become a norm in Nigeria could torpedo plans for peaceful elections come April 2011 elections. I enjoin Nigerian politicians to eschew playing politics with bitterness. Aspirants to elective offices should strive to move away from the thuggery and violence that have characterized our politics for many years now. They should seek to win offices through the power of persuasion and track record of past performance that can endear them to the electors.

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