

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF SECURITY AGENCIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

Jamaludden Muhammed Ali

Department of Defense and Security Studies,
Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna

And

Suleiman Danladi Ali

Department of Defense and Security Studies,
Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna

Abstract

The paper examined the role of security agencies in the management of electoral violence in Nigeria's fourth republic. It argues that historically, elections in Nigeria have been characterized by constant tales of violence, fraud and wanton destructions of properties and killings. It is against this backdrop that this paper examines the role of security agencies in managing these electoral challenges from 1999 to 2019 using qualitative approach. Data was sourced from secondary sources and analysed thematically. The revealed that despite the implementation of the electoral reforms, election violence has been the major bane of Nigeria's democratic sustainability since the emergence of the fourth republic. The paper also revealed that despite their diverse statutory and constitutional roles, security forces in Nigeria are increasingly drafted to provide electoral security. It concludes that despite the challenges associated with the involvement of security agencies in elections management, they remain pivotal to election monitoring, enforcement of law and order, protection of vital elections materials, venues, and counting centres. The security forces are also critical in the prevention of violence during all the phases and the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria.

Key words: Elections, Security Agencies, Electoral Violence, Management and Nigeria

Introduction

The intrinsic relationship between the successful conduct of free, fair, credible and acceptable elections and the institutionalization and consolidation of democracy in a nation is widely acknowledged. This arises from the notion that in a democracy, the role of the people is to produce a government, and elections are the institutional frameworks/arrangements for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of competitive struggle for the people's votes. Elections are thus often perceived as a procedure for regulatory competition for political power through competition for votes. Therefore, elections are the fundamental building blocks of democracy (Report of the electoral reform committee, 2008). The electoral system of any given country plays a fundamental role in sustaining and moulding the political behaviour of its citizens (Okolo,2000). The way and manner elections are conducted in a country goes a long way to determine the level of political culture, political participation and good governance in that country. These assertions give a clue to the importance of a credible and transparent electoral system in a country.

It has been established that the best approach for the emergence of political leadership in modern world is through the electoral process. Many countries are constantly refining and/or reforming their electoral processes to ensure the emergence of the right kind of political leadership. In Nigeria, the process of reforming the electoral process has been a recurrent one. Since the return to civil rule in 1999, which ushered in the fourth republic after many years of

military rule, the electoral law guiding the conduct of elections has been amended almost after every election leading to the enactment of the 2001, 2006 and 2010 electoral acts. There are a lot of challenges with the conduct of elections in Nigeria from the 1999 election to the 2019 general elections (Abdulahi, et.al., 2016; Akpan, 2017). Another point that has been documented is that, elections in Nigeria are constant tales of violence, fraud and bad blood. The challenges include among other things irregularities, which put the credibility of the entire electoral process in doubt; problems with the legislative framework which puts constraints on the electoral process; several organisations are not playing their roles to ensure credible, free and fair election. The electoral system does not give room for inclusiveness; lack of independence of electoral commissions; long process of election dispute resolution; irresponsible behaviour by politicians and followers manifesting in thuggery and violence; lack of effective democratic institutions and monetisation of politics (Adebayo, 2016; Ikyase, et.al., 2015). Therefore, money does not only determine who contest in electoral politics in Nigeria, but it also drowns votes and voices as godfathers openly confess about shady deals, funding or sponsoring elections for godsons and purchasing electoral victory. The end result of the challenges is that the votes of the citizens do not count. Despite the implementation of the electoral reforms headed by Justice Uwais, who was saddled with the responsibility to make recommendations on how to restore sanity to the nation's electoral process, election violence has been the major bane of Nigeria's democratic sustainability since the emergence of the fourth republic.

The Nigerian Fourth Republic, which birthed the emergence of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as civilian President in May 1999 was tagged as a controversial election that has grown out of flawed political processes, intimidation and outright brigandage, which combine to undervalue the democratic process. Though government has embarked on several reforms, yet it has continued to lack legitimacy as a result of the flawed elections. Also, the international community was largely benign and chose to accept the results of the 1999 elections for the sake of democracy, the 2003 and 2007 Presidential elections also won by the People's Democratic Party (PDP) were severely criticized. The reports of both domestic and international observers about the elections pointed out several shortcomings that made the elections unacceptable (Agbu, 2016). This is a fundamental pointer to the fact that something must have been wrong with the reform or other ingredients that can make Nigeria experience free and fair election and make her a true democratic country. It is on this basis that this paper beams its searchlight on the roles of security agencies in curtailing elections violence in Nigerian fourth republic. Apart from this introduction, the areas covered by this paper are; the evolution of election violence, and the weakness of the electoral acts/reforms in Nigeria's fourth Republic (from 1999 to 2019 general elections), the reasons for the pre, during and post-election violence and concrete plausible way forward to avoid future violence in subsequent general elections.

Conceptual Clarification

Election: An election may be defined as an act of choosing or selecting candidates who will represent the people of a country in the parliament and in other positions in the government. Election is also said to be a contest between competing political parties or groups for government power. Election becomes imperative as a result of impossibility of direct representation in the modern state, as practiced in the small ancient Greek City, due to rapid increase in population and expansion of cities; this paved way for the adoption of democracy as a system of government.

According to Benjamin (2009), election is the process that allows members of an organization or community to choose representatives capable of holding positions of authority and governing its administration. Nwolise, (2007:155) and Bamgbose (2012:206) defined election to be "a process of selecting the officers or representatives of an organization or group

by the votes of its qualified members”. To Anifowose (2003:21), election is “the process of elite selection by the mass of the population in any given political system”. As viewed by Salman (2008), “it implies that voters (Electoralates) are presented with alternatives, that they can choose among a number of proposals designed to settle an issue of public concern”. This invariably means that in defining fundamental essence of elections is the contribution they make to democratize governance.

The history of Nigeria’s elections shows that the 2007 general election is believed to be the worst election in history since it first held election in 1922, thus the compelling need to embark on electoral reforms is obvious in the fourth republic, having recorded the worst election in history (Report of the electoral reform committee, 2008).

Electoral Violence: Ladan (2007) describes electoral violence as any act of violence perpetrated in the course of political activities that may include any of the following act; thuggery, use of force to disrupt political meetings or voting at polling stations, or the use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral process, or to cause bodily harm. He therefore considers violence as part of political culture of Nigeria so much that all elections are almost violence ridden. Igbuzor gave a resounding definition of electoral violence thus:

Any act of violence perpetuated in the course of political activities, including pre, during and post-election periods, and may include any of the following acts: thuggery, use of force to disrupt political meetings or voting at polling stations, or the use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral process or to cause bodily harm or injury to any person connected with electoral processes (Igbuzor, 2010, p. 23).

In light of the above, electoral violence has to do with violence that takes place before, during or after elections in fragile democracy, resulting from the failure to meet the rising expectation of the electoralates. “From physio-psychological context one can establish that all violence; and especially political violence (electoral violence inclusive) are traceable to relative deprivation as gaps are created between expectations and capabilities (i.e., the lack of capabilities to meet the rising expectations). This then creates frustration that swells up to anger. When the anger reaches a threshold of intolerability it burst into aggression and subsequently into violence” (Yoroms, 2015). Similarly, Fischer (2002) defines electoral violence as, “any random or organised act that seeks to intimidate, physically harm, blackmail or abuse an electoral stakeholder in seeking to determine, delay or otherwise influence the electoral process” (cited in USAID, 2010: p.6). Ochoche (1997) noted that, “Any attempt at any stage of the electoral process to corrupt, influence or determine the outcome of an election beyond what it would have been objectively, does damage to the election and could be said to amount to electoral violence” (cited in Yoroms, 2015, p.8). Lastly, Straus and Taylor (2009) defined electoral violence as physical violence and coercive intimidation directly tied to an impending electoral contest or to an announced electoral result” (cited in USAID, 2010, p.6)

Security Agencies: Security agencies in Nigeria play an important role in ensuring the conduct of a free and credible election; there are several security agencies in the country, each performing specific functions. These include:

- a) Armed forces: Army, Navy, Air force.
- b) Intelligence and law enforcement agencies: Nigeria Police Force, State Security Services, Defence Intelligence Agency, Nigerian Intelligence Agency, Nigerian prison Services, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, Economic and Financial Crime Commission, Independent Corrupt Practices Commission, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps.
- c) Para-police regulatory agencies: Federal Road Safety Corp, Nigeria Custom Service, Nigeria Immigration Service, National Agency for Food and Drug Administration.

Safety and security of persons and properties is important for the conduct of free and fair elections. Therefore, security agencies in various countries strive to ensure security at various stages of the electoral process when conflict is endemic, especially in new democracies. In Nigeria, such critical and violence prone stages include delimitation of constituencies, voter registration, party primaries and nominations, campaigns and rallies, display of voters register, polling, counting of voters, and declaration of results, proceedings and verdict at tribunals. Since 1999, security personnel of the various agencies have been mobilised to provide security during elections. Though the police, being the primary civil force are largely responsible for the election duties. The increasing involvement of various security agencies in the election duty is closely attributed to the high incidence and threat of violence at stages of the electoral process. However, the deployment of various security personnel has in many cases, been associated with irregularities by incumbent authorities such as intimidation, electoral fraud, collusion with politicians to undermine free and fair elections and incompetence in handling problems at polling stations (Report of the electoral reform committee, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

The paper adopts the Relative Deprivation Theory and the the systems approach as its theoretical framework of analysis. While the relative deprivation theory provides the prism for understanding violence and by extension electoral violence, the system theory explains the relationship between security agencies as part of a system and elections. The relative deprivation theory was championed by an American professor of political science known as Ted Robert Gurr, who lived from February 1936 to November 2017. In his classical work ‘Why Men rebel (1970)’, Gurr explores why people engage in political violence (riots, rebellion, coups) and also examines the psychological frustration aggression theory which argues that the primary source of the human capacity for violence is the frustration aggression mechanism. Gurr argues that frustration does not necessarily lead to violence, but when prolonged and sharply felt, it often does result in anger and eventually violence. Gurr explain this hypothesis with his term ‘relative deprivation’, which is the discrepancy between what people think they deserve, and what they actually think they can get. He added that “the potential for collective violence varies strongly with the intensity and scope of relative deprivation among members of a collectivity (Gurr, 1970; 24). Relative deprivation mainly occurs when group of people or individual get the feeling of being unfairly disadvantaged in relation to other people, when this happen, there is likelihood of a rebellion. Just as frustration produces aggressive behavior on the part of an individual, so too does relative deprivation predict collective violence by social groups (political parties/followers).

The systems theory was originally proposed by Hungarian Biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1928. The system approach was first developed in the biological and social engineering sciences before it was adopted by social scientist in explaining social and organizational phenomena. David Easton (1965, p. 121) is a major proponent of the systems approach. The central tenets of the systems theory can be summarized as follows: A system can be perceived as a whole with its parts and their interdependent relationships; A system has its boundary and can be viewed in terms of its relationship with other systems; Systems have sub-systems and are also a part of a supra system; A system can be regarded as either open or close. A system interacts with its environment in terms of process that involves input, conversion, output of energy, information and materials. A system tends to re-energize or modify itself through the process of information feedback from the environment. For the electoral system to function effectively, it must be linked with the performance of the security system and vice-versa. The system theory emphasizes that an organization which functions as a whole and thereby comprising other sub-systems which function jointly to achieve the raison desire of the organization. It conceives an organization to be functional when all the sub-

systems are also effective and efficient. Its justification is in the functional interrelatedness of parts that enthrone the criterion of efficiency which is seen as an imperative for organizational survival and goal achievement. David Easton (1965) propounded this theory to justify his definition of politics as the authoritative allocation of values.

In his *System Analysis of Political Life*, he argued that the political system is a set of human interaction through which values are allocated authoritatively. Five concepts were introduced in the political system advocated by Easton or we may call it conversion process, they are environment, input, conversion, output and feedback. The theory's primary aim is to show interdependence of a system in such a way that any dysfunction in one of the parts affects the whole. The political system was seen essentially as a system of converting inputs into authoritative decision. To arrive at authoritative decision, the system takes input, demand and support. Demands are claims on how values are allocated. Support according to him exists when the environment backs up the system or is favorably disposed to it. Output emerges from the system in the form of authoritative decision and there is a process of feedback. Feedback is a process through which the system adapts its self to the environment by modifying its behavior and changing its interest structure. All these interactions culminate the system maintaining itself in equilibrium. For the purpose of this article, the major components of model are environment, input, conversion, output and feedback. For the purpose of this, election process as a political system which converts inputs from the environment into authoritative decision. The demand input will mean the demand for adequate security during elections periods. The input of support is also taken to mean the dedication, devotion, commitment by the security agencies. The feedback mechanism will be taken to mean the method through which the security agencies express their satisfaction or disenchantment with output produced. All these interactions culminate in the system maintaining itself in equilibrium.

Historical Background of Elections and Elections Violence in Nigeria

After many years of military rule and failed democratic experiments, Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999. However, Nigeria's journey towards the democratic process started long before independence in 1960. By 1923, the first set of political associations had been formed but the electoral process was restricted on the twin conditions of residence and property (Crowder, 1968; Adigwe, 1977; Fayam, 2008). In this period some indigenous political parties like the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), The Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), The Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), The Action Group (AG), amongst others evolved and elections were held until the period of the first republic (Sklar, 1963). Nigeria's post-colonial era has witnessed several elections and none of them has been free from one form of elections violence or another. For example, elections into regional houses of assembly in 1952 elicited widespread dissatisfaction among Nigerians due to their poor conduct (Falola, 1991). Similarly, in 1964 in the western region, elections between Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) and the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) were marred by massive violence which claimed many lives (Ige, 1995; Omotola 2007). This coupled with the elections' violence emanating from the 1965 western region elections helped to trigger the military coup that terminated the first republic in 1966. (Osaghae, 1998; Akinwumi, 2004).

Elections conducted in Nigeria's second republic did not fare better than the first republic. Although the elections of 1983 were organized by a civilian government, they were massively rigged and manipulated in favour of the ruling party, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). Consequently, the announcement of official results by Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) was greeted by outbreak of electoral violence that resulted in human and material losses (Egwu, 2003). The June 12 Presidential election under President Babangida also did not fare better, even though local government elections and gubernatorial elections had presided it. Despite the fact that it was adjudged as Nigeria's freest and fairest election in the post-

colonial era, President Babangida annulled the election and this led to intense political crises in the south western part of the country, which resulted in the termination of the third republic (Abimbola, 2012).

Election security transcends voting and other activities that take place on the voting day alone (Adele, 2011). It is also the deliberate prevention of electoral governance from distortions, violations and manipulations so that the legitimacy of elections can be guaranteed. In Nigeria, security agencies like the Police, Navy, Airforce and Army are saddled with the responsibility to provide security for the electoral process. However, sometimes the neutrality of security agents is called into question. For example, in the 1964 and 1965 regional elections, the police favoured the ruling parties and this caused some members of the opposition to resort to violent demonstrations which led to the killing of several people (Ige, 1995).

In 2003 and 2007 several cases of electoral malpractice by security officers were reported especially in rural polling areas. Security personnel in several places deliberately did not report to their places of duty on voting day, thereby allowing thugs room to operate and wreak havoc on voters. In sharp contrast to the prevalent practices all over the world where security forces play no other role in the electoral process beyond their constitutionally assigned duties, Nigeria's case has been different and has remained a major cause of worry, violence and insecurity (Hounkpe, 2010).

Elections Violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

The annulment of the June 12 Presidential elections by General Babangida caused extreme discontent in Nigeria's political arena. Consequently, political groups calling for a return to democratic rule sprang up across the nation. This forced President Babangida to form an Interim National Government (ING) headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan. Tragically, the ING was short-lived as it was overthrown by General Sani Abacha. However, with the death of General Abacha on June 8 1998, General Abdulsalami Abubakar instituted a transition programme that would restore democratic rule in Nigeria by 1999. This led to the formation of Nigeria's electoral body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and its inauguration marked the start of the journey to Nigeria's 4th Republic. Vested with its new powers, INEC set the agenda for the country's political activism, which culminated in the registration of three political parties, namely; Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Peoples Party (APP) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) (Dode, 2010; Abimbola, 2012). The 1999 general elections saw the emergence of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo of the PDP as President of Nigeria, followed by the candidate of the alliance between APP and AD. The 1999 general elections witnessed its irregularities; however, these were not as pronounced as previous elections. Another general election was conducted in 2003, which saw Chief Obasanjo winning a second term as President. This election was described as the "most fraudulent election" in the history of Nigeria (Ezirim and Mbah, 2014). Figures were randomly manufactured in collation centres and Government Houses in a bid to return chief Obasanjo to power. This malpractice by the ruling PDP was regarded as the most sophisticated in Nigeria's electoral history (Ezirim and Mbah, 2014). Both internal and external observers agreed that the elections were massively rigged in favour of the ruling party, the PDP which triggered electoral violence. For example, the Human Rights watch report noted that between April and May 2003, about one hundred people were killed during federal and state elections in incidents of violence perpetrated by the PDP (Human Right Watch, 2011).

The general elections of 2007 were no different as it reeked of all manner of irregularities and the brazen attempt to disenfranchise the electorate and announce fictitious results, even in areas where no elections took place. This sad situation was worsened by voter intimidation by the police and military in many places, non-delivery of election materials, hijack of ballot boxes, thumb printing of ballot papers, incarceration and humiliation of

independent elections observers, bribery of electoral officers, etc. Prior to the elections, President Obasanjo had declared that for him and the PDP, the 2007 elections was “a do or die affair” (Tenuche 2010). This election brought the late President Umaru Yar’Adua to power. However, he admitted that the elections were flawed (Abimbola and Adesote, 2012) and he set up a committee known as the Electoral Reform Committee headed by Justice Mohammed Uwais to fashion out a transparent system that would ensure the conduct of credible elections and thereby deepen democracy in Nigeria. The 2011 elections were genially acceptable by both local and foreign observers in comparison to 2003 and 2007. However, it was not entirely free of violence. The 2015 general elections were keenly observed by local and international observers. As part of its attempt to ensure the 2015 elections were not engulfed by violence, the United States Secretary of state, John Kerry visited the country, an indication that the U.S was following the elections with keen interest. In order to prevent the mayhem and catastrophe which characterized previous elections, the presidential aspirants signed a peace accord for non-violence pool in Abuja. Events preceding the 2015 elections were rough as many politicians were assassinated and others kidnapped. Campaign offices of perceived opponents were burnt while some campaign convoys were stoned, including that of President Goodluck Jonathan in Bauchi and Katsina States.

Security Agencies, Constitutional Responsibilities and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

However, Law enforcement officials have an important role to play in the prevention and control of these acts. At the same time, they have to maintain a balance between the need for electoral security and maintenance of order, and non-interference with the rights of those participating in the elections. The Uwais report on electoral reform (2008) has highlighted some of the responsibilities of the Nigeria Police Force in elections or electoral processes, being the nation’s primary civil force. These include:

- a) Guaranteeing peace and safety throughout election process,
- b) Restoring peace and safety after disorder that may be engendered by delimitation of constituencies,
- c) Safeguarding the security of personnel, materials and values for voter registration,
- d) Safeguarding the security of life and properties of citizens during voter registration, political campaign and voting.
- e) Ensuring the safety of electoral officers before, during and after elections,
- f) Providing security for politicians during campaign,
- g) Ensuring and preserving a free, fair and safe atmosphere for election campaign by all parties and politicians, without discrimination,
- h) Maintaining peaceful conditions, law and order around the polling units and collation, or counting centres,
- i) Ensuring the security of sensitive election materials at voting and collating or counting centres and during transportation. The police have the responsibility of ensuring that election materials are not hijacked, destroyed, or fraudulently altered by any group or person,
- j) Ensuring that politicians do not intimidate, corruptly induce or manipulate the electorate at voter registration and polling centres, and
- k) Maintaining security around the election petition tribunals.

It is also the responsibility of the Nigeria Police to enforce the various provisions of the Electoral Acts in the country (Report of the electoral reform committee, 2008).

Apart from the Nigerian police, other security forces that have played major roles in the management of electoral violence in Nigeria’s fourth republic include the Nigeria Security and

Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the Nigerian armed forces and the State Security Service. The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) is a para-military agency of the Nigerian Government set up to provide measures against any form of attack or disaster on Nigeria and its citizenry. It was statutorily empowered by the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps Act, 2003 and amended by Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps Act No. 6 of 2007. By section 3(1) of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps Act, 2003 (as amended by Section 1 of Act No. 6, 2007), the functions of the Corps that are essential to this paper are:

1. assist in the maintenance of peace and order and in the protection and rescuing of the Civil population during the period of emergency;
2. maintain twenty-four-hour surveillance over infrastructures, sites and projects for the Federal, State and Local Government-
 - (i) enter and search any premises and seize any material suspected to have been used in vandalization or suspected proceed of vandalization;
 - (ii) enter and search premises of any suspected illegal dealer in petroleum products or material used by Power Holding Company of Nigeria, Postal Services, Nigeria Telecommunication or for any other public utility or infrastructure;
1. have power to arrest with or without a warrant, detain, investigate and institute legal proceedings by or in the name of the Attorney-General of the Federation in accordance with the provisions of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria against any person who is reasonably suspected to have committed an offence under this Act or is involved in any-
 - criminal activity;
 - industry espionage or fraud;
 - activity aimed at frustrating any government program or policy;
 - riot, civil disorder, revolt, strike, or religious unrest; or
 - power transmission lines, oil pipelines, NIPOST cables, equipment, water board pipes or equipment vandalisation
1. monitor the activities of religious bodies and trade associations;
2. monitor, investigate, and take every necessary step to forestall any planned act of terrorism particularly-
 - cult and Ethnic militia activities;
 - criminal activities aimed at depriving citizens of their properties or lives; or
 - syndicate activity aimed at defrauding the Federal, State or Local Government;
3. monitor, investigate, and take every necessary step to forestall any act of terrorism and report same to appropriate Federal Security Agency;
4. provide necessary warning for the civilian population in times of danger;
5. evacuate the civilian population from danger areas;
6. carry out rescue operations and control volatile situations;
7. assist in the provision of emergency medical services, including first aid, during any period of emergency;
8. detect and demarcate any danger area;
9. assist the Federal and State Fire Service in Fire-fighting operation;
10. provide intelligence information to the Ministry on any matter relating to-
 - crime control generally;
 - riot, disorder, revolt, strike or religious unrest;
 - subversive activity by members of the public aimed at frustrating any government programme or policy;
 - industrial action and strike aimed at paralyzing Government activities; a
 - any other matter as may be directed by the Minister; and

- have power to arrange and mediate in the settlement of disputes among willing members of the public.

It is evident from the broad functions of the NSCDC, that it is given adequate powers to play significant roles managing electoral violence in Nigeria. The Armed Forces is responsible for the defence of the country against any form of external aggression. Section 217(1) of the 1999 Constitution established the Armed Forces comprising of an Army, a Navy an Air Force and such other branches of the armed forces of the Federation as may be established by an Act of the National Assembly. Section 217(2) provides that: “The Federation shall, subject to an Act of the National Assembly made in that behalf, equip and maintain the armed forces as may be considered adequate and effective for the purpose of-

1. defending Nigeria from external aggression;
2. maintaining its territorial integrity and securing its borders from violation on land, sea or air;
3. suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the President, but subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly; and
4. performing such other functions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly.”

Armed Forces Act was enacted pursuant to *Item 38 of Part I of the Second Schedule to the 1999 Constitution*. Section 1(3) and (4) of the Armed Forces Act provide that:

(3) The Armed Forces shall be charged with the defence of the Federal Republic of Nigeria by land, sea and air and with such other duties as the National Assembly may, from time to time, prescribe or direct by an Act.

(4) Notwithstanding the generality of the provisions of subsection (3) of this section-

(a) the Navy shall, in particular, be further charged with-

(i) enforcing and assisting in co-ordinating the enforcement of all customs, laws, including anti-bunkering, fishery and immigration laws of Nigeria at sea;

(ii) enforcing and assisting in co-ordinating the enforcement of national and international maritime laws ascribed or acceded to by Nigeria;

(iii) making of charts and co-ordinating of all national hydrographic surveys; and

(iv) promoting, co-ordinating and enforcing safety regulations in the territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone of Nigeria;

(b) the Air Force shall, in particular, be further charged with-

(i) enforcing and assisting in co-ordinating the enforcement of international law, conventions, practices and customs ascribed or acceded to by Nigeria relating to aerial or space activities in the Nigerian air space;

(ii) co-ordinating and enforcing of national and international air laws acceded or ascribed to by Nigeria; and

(iii) delineating, demarcating and co-ordinating of all aerial surveys and security zones of the Nigerian air space.

It is evident from the provisions of section 217(2)(b) and (c) of the 1999 Constitution, it is quite crystal clear that the functions of the armed forces transcend defending Nigeria against external aggression, but extends to suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities when called upon to do so by the president. According to Brigadier-General Patrick Ogah: “The military which is a critical element of national defence alongside other security agencies would have to ensure that the territorial integrity of the nation and indeed, internal security of the nation is assured” (Ogah, 2013).

Another important security agency that plays major roles in the management of electoral violence in Nigeria is the State Security Service. The DSS was established mainly for the

purpose of effective conduct of national security, the National Security Agencies Act^[40] was enacted. The National Security Agencies Act (NSA Act) disbanded the Nigerian Security Organisation and created three security agencies in its place. Section 1 of the NSA Act established these three agencies namely:

1. the Defence Intelligence Agency;
2. the National Intelligence Agency; and
3. the State Security Service.

The NSA Act also charged each of these three agencies with the conduct of the relevant aspect of the national security. By section 2(3) of the NSA Act, the State Security Service is charged with the responsibility for:

1. the prevention and detection within Nigeria of any crime against *the* internal security of Nigeria;
2. the protection and preservation of all non-military classified matters concerning the internal security of Nigeria; and
3. such other responsibilities affecting internal security within Nigeria as the National Assembly or the President, as the case may be, may deem necessary.

It is evident from the discussion above that these security agencies play critical roles in ensuring internal security of Nigeria. Their broad responsibilities, though they vary, all seek to ensure peace, stability and harmony in Nigeria. These security agencies have played vital roles in ensuring sustainability of democracy in Nigeria.

The Roles of Security Agencies in Curbing Electoral Violence in Nigeria

Security forces that are poorly trained, unequipped, erratically paid or politicized can exacerbate electoral violence through forceful tactics and incompetence; rough, even lethal rules of engagement by police in Zimbabwe in 2008 are examples of such tactics. Rules of engagements can also allow riots to continue and expand. For example, in East Timor (1999), despite a substantial Indonesian security presence, including the army and national police, the local militia was still able to rampage and kill, injure, and displace thousands of independence supporters (USAID, 2010, p.9). The causes of electoral violence in Nigeria have been attributed to poverty/unemployment, ineffective security agencies, weak penalties, weak governance and corruption and small arms proliferation (Campbell, 2010). Security is indispensable to the conduct of free, fair and credible elections. From the provision of basic security to voters at political party rallies and campaigns to ensure that result forms are protected, the whole electoral process is circumscribed by security considerations (Olurode, 2013).

Past elections in Nigeria had clearly shown the bias position of some security agencies, who are supposed to be absolutely neutral and impartial in supervising the system to ensure fair play and security of life and properties (Akpan, 2017; Abdullahi, et al. 2016). Thus, they are obviously found to be active collaborators in subverting the process. In most cases, they succumb to government influence, collect bribe to harass and intimidate voters. More so, they provide cover for electoral officials and politicians to destroy electoral materials, intimidate voters, or fully engage in electoral violence just to rig elections. These actions give rise to protests and subsequent violence by aggrieved individuals and parties.

Against the back drop of the challenges associated with elections in Nigeria, the volatility of our nation and the innumerable flashpoints growing in Nigeria, the conduct of elections cannot take place without these security agencies playing a role. The role of the security forces in the fourth republic include: election monitoring, enforcement of law and order, protection of vital elections materials and intervention in trouble spots during elections. Security operatives assigned to monitor elections must adequately understand the entire electoral process in order to prevent, detect and avert irregularities in elections. They must understand the purpose of necessary electoral documents. Be able to identify sensitive materials as well as knowing what will constitute an electoral offence under the law. Without these,

security operatives may become a waste of space and manpower in the electoral process. The Nigerian experience has shown that manipulation of elections starts at the point of registration of voters. Despite the clear provisions of the section 12 of the Act stating who qualifies to register as a voter and forbidding multiple registrations, Nigerians appear to have perfected the act of underage voters' registration and multiple registrations. Politicians divert the registration materials to a place of choice where the perceived supporters of their adversaries will be denied the opportunity to register. Furthermore, with the collusion of INEC agents, these irregularities have a smooth path. Stories of manipulations of voters' registration abound, particularly, with regard to the use of the data capturing machines. Apart from actual monitoring of the registration process for the sake of transparency, intelligence gathering is quite essential. Here, the role of security operatives come to fore. Several Nigerian newspapers reported stories of recovery of diverted voters' registration material and apprehension of the perpetrators. For example, the Vanguard newspaper of January 26, 2011, reported that SSS recovered 3 diverted DDC machines in Bayelsa. The arrest of the suspects and recovery of the three DDC machines by men of the State Security Services, SSS, is coming on the heels of the alarm raised Tuesday, by the campaign organisation of Timi Alaibe, the Labour Party governorship candidate in the state over an alleged plot by certain persons to skew the on-going voters registration exercise in the state. The recovery of the machines in two separate operations by men of the SSS and Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, followed a tip off from members of the public. The security forces also monitor the following elections to ensure that there is no outbreak of violences: presidential election, gubernatorial elections, National Assembly elections (Senate and House of Representatives), House of Assembly elections; and Council elections. According to Buba (2013), the supervision of the involvement of security agencies in the electoral process is necessary and important, because they could be potential source of intimidation, undue influence or compromise to skew outcomes of elections. The task force could as well determine tasks to be carried out and intervention methods. The Police Service Commission does this surveillance but on a limited scale and success. A more effective outfit made up of all the security agencies is likely to do better. It may not be out of place to point out that security agents on special security assignments in troubled spots were manipulated by their pay masters at the States levels to harass and intimidate opposition parties.

Challenges of Involving Security Agencies in Elections Management in Nigeria

It is evident from the discussion above that the role of security agencies in elections management is primarily to maintain law and order to enable the electoral management body – INEC to conduct free and fair elections. However, security agencies are sometimes accused of partisanship, partnership and outright support for some politicians and political parties. According to Mediayanose (2018) security men have been accused of belonging or being used by one or more political parties against others. He also argued that sometimes, security men are used to intimidate both electorates and the opposition parties. In addition to the foregoing instances of direct involvement of security forces, it has also been reported that the electorates feel intimidated by the presence of armed security forces and this sometimes account for the low turnout of voters during elections. These challenges notwithstanding, the complex insecurity in Nigeria and violence that tend to characterize the electioneering process demands that the role of security agencies in elections management should not be undermined. They continue to play critical roles in providing security for election materials, electorates, candidates, and the INEC officials. These have been their instrumental roles since Nigeria's return to civilian democracy in 1999. It is therefore safe to state here that the discourse on consolidation of democracy in Nigeria's fourth republic is not complete without critically interrogating the roles of security agencies, which is the major contribution of this article.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Electoral violence has become a recurrent decimal anytime there is general election since 1999 till date. Security is without doubt a key ingredient for a violence free election and for the process to be perceived as effective. Effective security during elections should not be equated with mere physical presence of security agents. It includes the presence of security agencies, and also their professional roles in terms of being impartial, protecting all political actors and voters and protection of electoral materials, venues, counting centres and prevention of violence during all the phases of the elections. Security according to the Aberystwyth and Copenhagen School seeks to develop a socially oriented transformation by exploring and elucidating human emancipation's barriers and possibilities; which incorporates the basic needs of human desire and fundamental rights.

The paper recommends that prior to deployment of security agents - before, during and after election - there must be proper briefings on roles and responsibilities. Security deployment must also be professionally executed to curb compromise by erring security officials. Security agents must be alive to their responsibilities in ensuring the safety and security of INEC officials, INEC infrastructures, voters and election observers, during and after elections. Law enforcement officials on election duty should ensure that electoral offences published by INEC are either prevented or controlled or do not take place on election days. These offences range from canvassing for votes; persuading any voter not to vote for any particular candidate or not to vote at all at the election; shouting slogans concerning the election; being in possession of any acid, offensive weapon or missile or wearing any dress or having facial or other decorations which in many events is calculated to intimidate voters; loitering without lawful excuse after voting or after being refused to vote; to the offence of voting or attempting to vote, when one's name is not in the register of voters; among others.

The curricula for the training of the police at all levels should include modules on democracy, elections, political parties and constitutional/statutory provisions on elections. The independence of the police force should be guaranteed by strengthening its autonomy from the control of the government of the day, the police force should be strengthened in areas of communication, weaponry and transportation for effective mobilization, deployment and enhanced performance.

References

- Abdullahi, D., Baba, T. Y. & Musa, A. (2016). Role of Security Agencies in Curbing Election Violence in Nigeria: *International Journal of Social and Administrative Sciences*, 1(1), 1-7.
- Abimbola, J. O. & Adesote, S. A. (2012). Political practices and the quest for good governance in Nigeria. In V.O. Edo & E. F. K. Salami (Eds.), *Issues and trends in Nigeria's development: A festschrift for Rev Fr. Abiodun, F Akinseye*. Ibadan: John Asher Publishers.
- Adebayo, H. (2016, December 12). *INEC, police, army culpable in rivers elections violence — Report*. Premium Times. Retrieved on 24 February 2021 from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/217694-inec-police-army-culpable-rivers-elections-violence-report.html>
- Adele, J. (2011). Comparative analysis of security challenges of elections in Nigeria. In Olurode, L., & Jega, A., (Eds.), *Security challenges of election management in Nigeria*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
- Adigwe, F. (1977). *Essentials of Government for West Africa*. Ibadan: University Press.
- Agbu, O. (2016). *The Nigerian state and politics in the fourth republic*. Retrieved on 24 February 2021 from <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https.semanticscholar.org>

[/6430/61b5f3a44a723e3f76bbb121ef5fe4a2ddc3.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwio9MX6m47sAhWSVBUIHVWsDw0QFjAYegQIDBAB&usq=AOvVaw3Ak1hvpK1GhqKt0c3ZL5Vx.](#)

- Akinwumi, O. (2004). *Crises and conflicts in Nigeria: A political history since 1960*. Verlag.
- Anifowose, R. & Enemuo, F. (2003). *Element of politics*. Lagos: Sam Iroanusi Publications.
- Bamgbose, J. A. (2012). *Electoral Violence and Nigeria's 2011 General Elections*. *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 4(1), 205-219.
- Banire, M. (2018). Election monitoring and the role of security operatives in midwifing lasting democracy. M.A Banire and Associates
- Benjamin, G. (2009). *Elections*. Microsoft ® Encarta © 1993-2008 Microsoft Corporation.
- Brigadier-General Patrick Ogah, *Law and Security in Nigeria: The Role of The Military* (Nigerian Institute of Advance Legal Studies) Retrieved on 24 February 2021 from <http://nials-nigeria.org/pub/LBrigadierGeneralOgah.pdf> .
- Buba, A. (2013). New security challenges of election management in Nigeria: Towards 2015. In Lai Olurede (Ed.). *Election security in Nigeria: Matters arising*. INEC & FES Nigeria.
- Cambell, J. (2010). Electoral violence in Nigeria. *Contingency Planning Memorandum*, No. 9
- Crowder M. (1968), *West Africa under colonial rule*. Benin city: Ethiope Publishing Corporation.
- Dunnes, S. (2006). *Focus on elections and security*: ACE Network.
- Egwu, S. (2007). *The context and lessons of the 2003 elections in Nigeria*. In I. Albert, D. Marco & V.O.A Adetula (Eds). *Perspectives on the 2003 elections in Nigeria*. Abuja IDASA.
- Falola, T., Mahadi, A., Uhomoibhi M, Anyanwu, U. (1991). *History of Nigeria 3: Nigeria in the 20th century*. (pp. 55-73) Ibadan: Longman Nigeria Plc.
- Gurr, T. (1970), *Why men rebel*. NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Human Right Watch (2004). Nigeria: Post-election violence killed 800: Retrieved on 25 January 2022 from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/05/16/nigeria-post-election-violence-killed>
- Igbuzor, O. (2010). *Electoral violence in Nigeria*. International Foundation for Election Systems. Asaba: Action Aid Nigeria.
- Ikyase, T. J. & Egberi, A. E. (2015). Political violence and democratic stability in Nigeria: Reflecting on the past and charting the way forward. *Review of Public Administration and Management*, 4 (8).
- Ladan, M.T. (2006). *Enforcement of electoral law and electoral violence in Nigeria*. Retrieved on 18th March, 2022 from www.gamji.com/article6000/NEWS6681.htm.
- Mediayanose, O.E. (2018). The role of security in credible elections and sustenance of democracy in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration, Finance and Law* 13, 134-142.
- NSCDC (2013). History of Nigeria security and civil defence corps. Retrieved on November 13, 2013 from <http://www.nscdc.gov.ng/index.php/about-nscdc/history-of-nscdc>
- Nwolise O.B.C. (2007). *Electoral violence and Nigeria's 2007 elections: Journal of African Elections*, 6(2).
- Okolo, G. (2002). *Education and political stability in Nigeria: Journal of the Tai Solarin College of Education*, Ijebu-Ode.
- Olurode, L. & Haamanga, M. (2013). *Employment of security personnel in elections challenges from field experience*. In L. Olurode (Ed.) *Election security in Nigeria: Matters arising*. Abuja: Fredrich Ebert -Stiftung (FES).
- Olurode, L. (2013), (Ed), *Election security in Nigeria: Matters Arising*. Abuja: Fredrich Ebert -Stiftung (FES).

- Omotola, J. S. (2007), Godfathers and the 2007 Nigerian General Elections. *Journal of African Elections*, 6 (2), 134 -154.
- Osaghae E.E. (1998). *Crippled Giant: Nigeria since Independence*. London: Hurst and Company.
- Sklar R.L. (1963). *Nigerian political parties: Power in an emergent African nation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Tenuche, M. (2010). Rhetoric of president Olusegun Obasanjo and the 2007 general elections in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 12 (1), 1520-5509.
- USAID, (2010); *Electoral security framework: Technical guidance handbook for democracy and governance officers*. Creative Associates International, Inc.
- Uwais, M. L. (2008). *Report of the electoral reform committee: Volume 1- Federal Republic of Nigeria*; December.
- Vanguard (2011, January) SSS recovers 3 diverted ddc machines in Bayelsa. Retrieved on November 14, 2013 from <<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/01/sss-recovers-3-diverted-ddc-machines-in-bayelsa/>>
- Vanguard (December 13, 2011). *SSS arrests 6 over theft of DDC machines*. Retrieved on November 14, 2013 from <<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/12/sss-arrests-6-over-theft-of-ddc-machines/>>
- Yoroms, G. J. (2015). *Electoral violence, arms proliferations and electoral security in Nigeria: Lessons from the twenty-fifteen elections for emerging democracies*. Department of Political Science, Bingham University, Karu, Nasarawa State.