

Contentious Elections in Nigeria: Any Solvent in Sight?

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Abstract: The history of the Nigerian Electoral process is characterized by recurring contentious violence, hate-speeches and killings. From the pre-independence times to the present, this trend has not only persisted but increased in monumental proportions and disturbing dimensions. This paper attempts to present an overview of the elections that have so far been conducted in Nigeria since the pre-independence period till date, showing the contentious issues in each of them. It highlights the culture of electoral fraud in Nigeria showing ways in which elections are rigged in the country. It catalogues various hate speeches and killings at various times in the nation's electoral history. Finally the paper recommends electronic voting and other strategies for guaranteeing contentious – free elections in Nigeria.

Keywords: Contentious Elections, Hate-Speeches elections.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Two important factors that characterize the concept of democracy are 1. Efficient electoral system which produces persons who occupy offices and which removes people from office; and
2. The principle of representative government. Election is therefore a fundamental feature of any democratic process. People are supposed to choose persons whom they have confidence in to represent them in positions of responsibility, doing so in a peaceful, safe, orderly, free and unbiased manner. Since Nigeria began her journey to nationhood, one of her most intractable problems has remained the capacity to conduct free, fair and credible elections. It would appear that as the nation matures in her chronological age, she also mature in the sophistication of her electoral manipulative capabilities; Corruption, as a concept has remained the nation's trademark not only in the electoral processes but in fact all spheres of the nation's life (Nnaedozie, 2005).

In Nigeria, the 1959, 1964, 1983, 1999, 2003, 2007 down to the 2019 elections reveal that electoral fraud has been internalized and institutionalized in the electoral process, hence the epileptic political development in the country. This also explains why every election has remained contentious to a greater or lesser extent. We shall in this paper examine the following issues as we speculate the possibility or otherwise of any solution in sight:

- ❖ An overview of the elections in Nigeria

- ❖ The culture of electioneering fraud in Nigeria leading to contentious elections
- ❖ The place of hate speeches in facilitating contentious elections
- ❖ Violence and killings as ingredients of contentious elections
- ❖ Strategies for combating contentious elections in Nigeria
- ❖ Conclusion.

II. OVERVIEW OF ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA

Historically, elections in Nigeria have been very violent and bitter. All elections so far conducted in Nigeria were marked by serious problems ranging from vote rigging to electoral violence, voter fraud, intimidation, manipulation by electoral officers, falsification of election results, to mention a few. The results of the above scenario include low voter turn-out and the emergence of wrong candidates as leaders. That would partly explain the leadership failure that has characterized Nigeria's developmental history.

The election crisis in Nigeria pre-dated the nation's independence. The first nation-wide election in Nigeria took place in 1951 under the Macpherson's constitution. In 1954, the first extensive federal election was held using the direct principle except in the north where the election was indirect.

In 1959 the general election that would usher in the first post-independent Nigeria government was held. That election was so vigorously fought that the seeds of violence, contention, inconclusive elections and ethnicism were sown. The Action Group (AG) for the West, Northern People's Congress (NPC) for the North, and National Council for Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC) for the East, were the germinated seeds of sectional politics.

1964 witnessed another election, a unique federal election in which politicians were fed-up with the state of affairs and needed a change of leadership. Cracks had begun to manifest in the political marriage between NCNC and NPC. The crack resulted in the emergence of two broad coalitions – the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) made up of NPC and the UNNDP on the one hand, and the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) composed of NCNC and AG to contest the 1964 Federal elections. The election campaigns were characterized by violence, conflicts and hostilities, assault, kidnappings, irregularities, fraud, thuggery, molestations,

resignation of electoral officers and announcement of wrong candidates as winners (Ikelegbe, 1995).

The 1965 Western Region Election disaster, characterized by unprecedented election violence undoubtedly became a catalytic element that fast-forwarded the military intervention of 1966 which obliterated the first democratic experiment in the country. Between 1966 and 1979 the military was in-charge.

The 1979 election revealed that politicians had not learnt any lesson during the military rule. The moment the ban on political activities was lifted, the old political parties reappeared under different names. The NPN, NNP, and UPN replaced the former NPC, NCNC and AG respectively. The politics of ethnicity and regionalism reappeared and fierce struggles prevailed amongst the parties as each struggled to produce the national president. The parties resisted the NPN's presidential election and challenged the NPN's presidential victory in the Supreme Court. Somehow the situation was managed and the nation plodded along especially in Ondo and Oyo as those in power battled to remain in power while the opposition strove to dislodge the incumbent and take over. The rigging strategies were widespread among all the political parties. Expectedly the NPN had the upper hand as it utilized the Federal Electoral Commission and a section of the Judiciary.

The rigged election result popularly tagged "Verdict 83" gave NPN victory in 12 States, UPN 4 States, NPP 2 States and PRP 1 State, and left GNPP, and NAP with no State. The result also gave the NPN two-third majority in the Senate and House of Representatives.

The violent street riots that followed the announcement of the results in the South West and parts of South Eastern States revealed that the Shagari Administration had lost grip of the nation. Expectedly Buhari military administration took over power which was in turn taken over by the Babandiga regime which embarked on the most protracted transition programme in Nigerian history. However it was unable to complete the programme as it annulled the June 12, 1993 Presidential Election won by M.K.O. Abiola.[

Then came the horrendous Abacha Administration which was truncated by death. The Abubakar Administration replaced Abacha's and successfully handed over power to Obasanjo Administration in 1999.[

The general elections of 2003 was the first held under a civilian administration in over 20 years. The public outcry that greeted the results of the elections as announced by INEC was unquantifiable. The PDP was announced as winner and this generated claims and counter claims of massive rigging protests by Civil Liberties Organization (CLO) which called for the cancellation of the election results.

Twelve political parties jointly rejected the results of the elections as announced. Threats also came from the All

Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) presidential candidate, General Muhammadu Buhari (Rtd.) and a group of Northern leaders to make the country ungovernable if the results of the elections of April and May 2003 were not cancelled and another election conducted (Ogbeidi, 2010). However somehow, the situation was doused. While INEC advised aggrieved parties to challenge the results in court, if they so desired, the European Union Election Observer Mission (EUEOM) in Nigeria confirmed serious irregularities by "new information received" especially in Cross River, Delta, Edo, Enugu, Imo, Kaduna and Rivers States (European Commission, Nigeria, 2003).

The General Elections of 2007 was significant in that for the first time in Nigeria's political history, a third consecutive election took place and one elected leader succeeded the other. Tension prevailed as sections of the country North and South agitated and clamored to produce the president. President Obasanjo hand-picked Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in the PDP convention as his successor to the disappointment of many who were equally interested to contest for the presidency. Yar'Adua of PDP won the election.

The rigging of elections this time increased in sophistication as it went scientific with electronic voting introduced by INEC. The elections, according to Iyayi (2007) surpassed the 2003 and 2004 elections in the level of fraud, violence and rigging, criminality and complicity by the various organs of State in the electoral farce that occurred. Both Human Rights Watch and the International Republican Institute were unanimous in asserting the monumental dimension of the electoral fraud (Jayum, 20

Presidential Elections of 2011 were held on 16th April in the wake of a heated controversy as to whether a northerner or southerner should be allowed to become president, given the tradition of rotating the apex office after the death of Umaru Yar'Adua, a northerner, when Goodluck Jonathan, another southerner assumed the interim presidency.

Immediately after the election, widespread violence erupted in the northern Muslim parts of the country. Jonathan was declared the winner on 19th April, 2011.

According to a gentleman's agreement within the ruling PDP, power is to rotate between the predominantly Muslim north and Christian south every two terms. This meant that the flag bearer of the party for the 2011 election was scheduled to be represented by a Northerner (Falola and Heaton, 2008). After the death of one term President Umaru Yar'Adua, a Northern Muslim, his Vice President took over as Acting President. The fact that Jonathan contemplated running for the presidency in his own right was controversial as Yar'Adua had only served one of the two possible terms as president after Southern Olusegun Obasanjo (Maja-Pearce Adewale, 2010).

The major rival was Muhammadu Buhari of APC. In September 2010, Independent National Electoral Commission

(INEC) postponed the election from January to April 2011 due to the release of a new electronic voter registration software. [

In December 2010 bombs exploded in Yenegoa, Bayelsa State during the gubernatorial campaign rally. Politicians and police said that the campaign of violence was aimed at disrupting the election. Various parts of the country experienced similar explosions leading to many casualties.

The election results were reported in the international media as having run smoothly with relatively less violence and voter fraud in contrast to previous elections especially the widely disputed 2007 elections. A reporter described it as the most peacefully run election since the restoration of democracy twelve years earlier (Adam, 2011). Similar observations were made by Carson (2011) and David (2011) that though in a reduced dimension, there were rigging, voting by underage children, and snatching of ballot boxes. Buhari claimed that his supporters in the south were not allowed to vote.

The election sparked off violence and riots in the northern parts of the country. According to Human Rights Watch, about 140 people were killed in political violence before the election alone between November 2010 and 17th April, 2011. Other authors have reported much higher casualty figures (Ayoade, 2012). [[[[[

The 2015 General Elections in Nigeria were held on 28th and 29th March 2015 the fifth quadrennial election since the end of military rule in 1999. The incumbent president sought his second and final term. The elections were postponed by six weeks, from 14th February 2014 to 28th March due to the poor distribution of Permanent Voters Card (PVC) as well as the efforts to curb the persisting Boko Haram insurgency in the north eastern States (Independent, 2015). The election was extended to 29th March due to delays and technical problems with the biometric card readers.

It was the most expensive election ever held in the African continent (BBC, 2015). Opposition candidate, Muhammadu Buhari won the presidential election by more than 2.5 million votes (James, 2015). Incumbent Jonathan conceded defeat on 31st March before the results from all the 36 States had been announced. The election marked the first time since Nigeria gained Independence in 1960 that a sitting government peacefully transferred power to an elected member of the opposition. [

Jonathan ran the PDP primary elections unopposed on 10th December 2014, receiving the party's nomination. However this was thought by many to be against an unwritten rule that the PDP's presidential candidacy should alternate between Muslim Northerners and Christian Southerners, and opposition to Jonathan's candidacy had led to the defection of dozens of PDP members of the House of Representatives (BBC, 2014).

Although Jonathan appeared to have a higher media and public opinion rating, the strength of the opposition and the "Bring Back Our Chibok Girls" slogan were veritable issues to contend with – Buhari's was perceived as being better equipped to fight corruption as well as Boko Haram insurgents who at this time were said to be in full control of Thirteen Local Government Areas of Borno (and other swathes of land) and two, in Yobe and Adamawa States (Hassan, 2015).

The postponement of the elections attracted wide-spread condemnation especially from the Western countries (USA and UK). On the election day, the electronic voting process was flooded in that the incumbent president himself could not be accredited by the card reader, and this was shown live on national televisions.

However, in spite of all the shortcomings and challenges, the International community appeared satisfied that a significant effort had been made to ensure a fairly free and credible elections in 2015 (ECOWAS, 2015). The 2019 Nigerian general elections were held on 23rd February, 2019 to elect the President, Houses of Representative, and Senate. The elections had initially been scheduled for February but the INEC postponed them by one week as a result of logistic challenges.

In some areas, elected materials could not arrive in good time while in some areas electoral violence led to delays.

The elections were indeed the most expensive ever held in Nigeria, costing N69 billion (us \$625 million) more than the 2015 elections (Krish and Ozibo 2018, Abdalla 2019).

The incumbent president won his re-election bid, defeating his closest rival, Atiku Abubakar by over 3million votes. He was sworn in on 29th May 2019. Similar elections were held for the houses of Senate and Representatives. Expectedly, similar reports and complaints of election malpractices and in some cases imposition of candidates were received from across the country (Premium Times. 2018).

The presidential election witness several persons/candidates from other parties who made bold to challenge Muhammadu Buhari, even if they knew the outcomes of the election. They included Chike Ukaegbu a 35years old for AAP, Donald Duke Ex. Governor of Cross River State, for SDP; Fela Durotoye for Alliance for New Nigeria, Oby Ezekwesili, former Minister of Education and leader of "Bring Back our Girls" campaign, Tope Fasya for Abundant Nigeria Renewal Party; Rabiu Kwankwaso former governor of Kano State; Sule Lamido, ex-governor of Jigawa State, Obadiah Mailafia for African Democratic Congress, Kingsley Moghalu former Deputy governor of Central Bank, Gbenga Olawepo – Hashim an oil business mogul and several others.

The opposition alleged that there were massive irregularities including ballot box snatching, vote trading, and impersonation. There were also claims that catches of

explosives were found by police (The Mercury News; 2019). Atiku having lost the election, filed a case in the Nigeria Supreme Court, alleging wide-spread irregularities in the election exercise. The court dismissed the case including the one that stated that Buhari lied about his academic background. With the safe-landing by the Supreme Court. Buhari retains his place as the sitting president of Nigeria till 29th May, 2023, we pray.

From the foregoing we can observe that there has not been any post Independent election in Nigeria that was devoid of contentious elements. The pattern of contention has remained perpetual and manifested to a greater or lesser extent depending on what things were seen and reported. Undoubtedly, however, there is no doubt that Nigeria as a nation is very far away from getting it right in our electoral behavior.

Efforts have not been successful to guarantee a free, credible and non-contentious election. On the contrary, killings and hate-speeches have preponderated in our political history. Some authors have attempted to capture just a glimpse of the recorded instances of politically motivated killings and hate speeches that have punctuated our electioneering history. To those issues we may now turn.

III. THE CULTURE OF ELECTORAL FRAUD IN NIGERIA

The term “Culture” refers to an institutionalized way of life of a people that is handed over from one generation to another. Electoral fraud qualifies to be constructed as part of our political culture because it appears to have come to stay. Each successful election evolves its own rigging strategy with each contestant making spirited efforts to “out-rig” the other.

Some authors have tried to articulate various ways by which Nigerians rig elections. These, according to Jayum (2011), and Okoye (2013)

They include:

1. Compilation of fictitious names in voters’ registers
2. Illegal compilation of separate voters’ list
3. Abuse of voters’ registration revision exercise
4. Illegal possession of ballot boxes
5. Illegal printing of voters card
6. Stuffing of ballot boxes with ballot papers
7. Falsification of election results
8. Illegal thumb-printing of ballot papers
9. Voting by under-age children
10. Printing of forms EC8 and EC8A used for collation
11. Deliberate refusal to supply election materials to certain areas.
12. Announcing results in place where no elections were held
13. Unauthorized announcement of results
14. Harassment of candidate’s agents and voters.
15. Change of list of electoral officials
16. Box-switching and inflation of figures

With the recent introduction of electronic voting system, efforts will likely be made to ensure that the system is truncated so that fraudulent practices will persist in our electoral process.

IV. HATE SPEECHES IN NIGERIAN POLITICS

The use of hate speeches have become a significant aspect of Nigerian’s electioneering behaviour. It would appear that the behaviour became most prominent when President Goodluck Jonathan expressed the desire to run for the presidential election after the death of President Yar’Adua. And the after he contested and won, and served for one term and decided to contest again the Northern Political Leaders unleashed a barrage of hate speeches on him. Below is a sample of hate speeches which have been burfisculated by Mba, Nwangwu and Ugwu (2019).

S/N	DATE	HATE SPEAKERS	HATE SPEECH	CONTEXT OF THE SPEECH	SOURCE
1.	8 March 2012 Alhaji Lawal Kaita	PDP chieftaincy and former governor of old Kaduna State	A Northerner must become president in 2015 or Nigeria will divide. We hear rumours all over that Jonathan is planning to contest in 2015. Well, the north is going to be prepared if the country remains one. That is, if the country remains one, we are going to fight for it. If not, everybody can go his way.	At a press conference in Katsina, the former governor stated this while commenting on the stand of the PDP on consensus at its convention.	Premium Times, 8 December 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/151053-nerve-lawal-kaita-shame-junaid-mohammed-femi-fani-kayode.html
2.	4 May 2012	General Muhammadu Buhari	If what happened in 2011 (alleged rigging) should again happen in 2015, by the grace of God, the dog and the baboon will be soaked in blood.	Mr. Buhari stated this in Kaduna while addressing members of the Congress for Progressive Change from Niger State who paid him a courtesy visit.	Binniyat, L. (2012). Vanguard, 15 May. Retrieved from: http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/05/2015-il-bebloody-if-buhari/
3.	2 June 2013	General Muhammadu Buhari	The military offensives against the Boko Haram insurgents are anti-north.	He stated this while featuring as “Guest of the Week”, a Hausa programme of the Kadunabased Liberty Radio	This Day, 3 June 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/buhari-military-offensive-against-boko-haram-anti-north/

4.	2 August 2013	Junaid Mohammed	Let me say this, if without the consent of the law, they rig the election the way they rigged 2011 election, there will be mayhem in Nigeria.	A telephone chat with the Vanguard Newspaper	Vanguard, 23 August 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/08/there-ll-bemayhem-if-jonathan-rigs-2015-polls-junaidmohammed/	
5.	29 Nov. 2013	Junaid Mohammed	There would be bloodshed if Jonathan stood for the 2015 elections.	In an exclusive interview with Sunday Sun from his base in Kano, Kano State	Sunday Sun, 1 December 2013. Retrieved from: http://sunnewsonline.com/new/2015-therellbloodshed-jonathan-runswarns-junaid-mohammed/	
6.	23 January 2014	Malam Nasir El-Rufai, APC chieftain	The next elections would be bloody and many people are likely to die. The only alternative left to get power is to take it by force.	The APC chieftain spoke at the Transformed to Transform (the T2T) Nigeria Conference and Career Fair, held at the Yar'Adua Centre, Abuja.	Punch, 28 January 2014. Retrieved from http://www.punchng.com/news/sssde-tains-el-rufai/	
7.	6 April 2014	Vice Admiral Murtala Nyako (rtd.) former governor of Adamawa State	The Jonathan's administration counterterror operation against Boko Haram insurgents is tantamount to a "full-fledged genocide" against the North.	The former governor stated this in a memo he addressed to the Northern Nigeria Governors Forum.	Odunsi, W. (2014). "Full text of Nyako's letter", Daily Post Newsletter [Online] 19 Apr. Retrieved from: http://dailypost.ng/2014/04/19/pdpruning-governmentimpunity-led-evil-mindedpersons-full-text-nyakosletter/	
8.	26 Nov. 2014	General Muhammadu Buhari APC presidential aspirant	The country may be overrun by the dreaded Boko Haram sect in the next four years should the PDP be allowed to continue in power.	The then APC presidential aspirant stated this in Asaba during a meeting with APC delegates from the South-South in preparation for the 10 December Congress of the party.	Definitelykingsley.com. Friday, 28 November 2014. Retrieved from: http://www.definitelykingsley.com/2014/11/boko-haram-will-run-over-nigeria-except.html	
9.	27 Nov. 2014	Alhaji Atiku Abubakar	A vote for PDP in 2015 General Elections is a vote for continuation of insurgency	In Enugu during an address to Enugu State delegates of the APC national convention.	http://www.osundefender.org/?p=187850	
10	19 Nov. 2014	Ibrahim Shehu	Shema, Governor	You should not be bordered with cockroaches of politics. Cockroaches are only found in the toilet even at homes. If you see cockroach in your house, crush them (apparently referring to his political opponents).	At PDP political rally in Katsina, Katsina State.	Premium Times, 19 November 2014. Retrieved from: www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/171411-katsina-governor-shemacaught-video-urgingsupporters-crush-kill-politicalopponents.html/amp
11.	2014	Ima Sadiq, an Islamic cleric	Muslims vote for Buhari. It is a sin to support a non-Muslim	Through his Twitter handle, the cleric Canvassed support for Buhari's candidature.	Twitter handle, Saturday, 27 December 2014	
12.	2014	Professor Ango Abdullahi, Secretary of the Northern Elders Forum	Those who vote for Jonathan and the PDP in 2015 will be considered an enemy of the North	During an interview in his office in Bauchi.	Vanguard, 15 October 2014. Retrieved from: http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/10/2015-well-regard-anyonevote-pdp-enemy-north-nef/	
13.	5 May 2013	Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari, the leader of the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteers Force (NDPVF)	There will be no peace, not only in the Niger Delta, but everywhere if Goodluck Jonathan is not president by 2015, except God takes his life, which we do not pray for.	At a press conference in Abuja after a meeting with the Special Assistant to the President on Niger Delta Affairs.	Vanguard, 5 May 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/05/there-will-be-no-peace-ifjonathan-is-not-returned-in-2015-dokubo-asari/	
14.	23 April, 2014	Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, APC national leader	It is going to be rig and roast. We are prepared not to go to court but drive them out	He spoke at his investiture as the Chancellor of Ladoké Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho and award of Honourary Doctor of Science in Management Science.	Vanguard, 24 April 2014. Retrieved from: http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/04/ekiti-osun-guber-pollsl-rigroast-tinubu/	

15.	2014	Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari, the leader of NDPVF	2015 is more than do-or-die. You are a man and I am a man, we are going to meet at the battlefield	The militant leader spoke at a strategy meeting with former Niger Delta militants organised by the Niger Delta Development Commission	News Express, 3 May 2014
16.	2015	Patience Jonathan, former First Lady	Wetin him dey find again? Him dey drag with him pikin mate, old man wey no get brain, him brain don die pata pata (What is Buhari looking for? Old man that does not know his age. Your brain is dead).	During the PDP women presidential campaign rally in Kogi State	Reported by The Express New, 4 March 2014
17.	2015	Patience Jonathan, former First Lady	Our people no dey born children wey dem no dey fit count. Our men no dey born children throw away for street. We no dey like the people for that side (Our people do not give birth to Uncountable children. Our men don't give birth to children that they dump in streets. We are not like people from that part of the country). Apparently, the former first lady was referring to the almajiri system in northern Nigeria.	At a campaign rally in Calabar, the capital of Cross River State	The Nation, 10 March 2015
18.	2015	Patience Jonathan, former First Lady	Anybody that come and tell you change (that is, the APC slogan), stone that person... What you did not do in 1985, is it now that old age has caught up with you that you want to come and change...You cannot change rather you will turn back to a baby	Calabar, the capital of Cross River State	The Nation (2015). "The Complete Works of Patience Jonathan", on Sunday, 15 March.
19.	2015	Peter Ayodele Fayose, the Governor of Ekiti State	Buhari would likely die in office if elected, recall that Murtala Muhammed, Sani Abacha and Umaru Yar'Adua, all former heads of state from the North West like Buhari, had died in office.	In January 2015, the Governor stated these repeatedly in front page newspaper advertorials.	19 January 2015, ThisDay and other national dailies

INCIDENCE OF POLITICALLY PREDICATED KILLINGS IN NIGERIA 1999 – 2010

Politically motivated killings are the climax of desperation and have featured to a significant extent in our nation's history. Such killings heighten tensions before, during and after elections. They also make our elections more contentious

than they would ordinarily have been. When such deaths occur it becomes obvious that political opponents must have been responsible, thus seeds of enmity, forgiveness and vendetta are sown. Below are samples of politically motivated killings as displays by

(Boridedum, Abang and Nwigbo, 2016)

DATE	NAME	POSITION	CIRCUMSTANCE
18/04/001	Eze-Odimogwu Okowkwo	Chieftain of ANPP, Anambra	Murdered
19/04/001	Hon. Monday Ndor	Member- Rivers State House of Assembly	Murdered
23/08/009	Chibueze Idah & Ogbonna Odimbaire	All members of PDP in Ebonyi State	Murdered
29/08/001	Victor Nwankwo	A younger brother of Arthur Nwankwo founder Eastern Mandate	Murdered
9/12/001	Hon. Odunayo Olagbaju	Member-Osun State House of Assembly	Murdered
23/12/001	Chief Bola Ige	The Attorney General of the Federation & Ministry of Justices	Murdered
5/08/002	Ahmed Pategi	Chairman PDP Kwawa State	Murdered
01/09/002	Bar. Barnabas Igwe and his wife	Chairman Nig. Bar Ass. Anambra State	Murdered
08/02/003	Ogbonnaya Uche	Contestant on the platform of ANPP Imo State-Senatorial Candidate	Murdered

0/03/003	E. Emenike	Chieftain of ANPP Imo State	Murdered
0/02/003	Theodore Agwatu	Prin. Sec. to Imo State Government	Murdered at her residence
5/03/003	Harry Marshall	National Vice Chairman of ANPP	Murdered at his residence
0/03/002	Rasak Ibrahim	Supporter of former Governor of Kwara State, Lawal	Murdered along the Road
1/03/003	Hon. Anthony Nwudo	ANPP House Assembly Candidate in Ebonyi State	Murdered in Abakanki
9/04/003	Onyewuchi Iwuchukwu	ANPP Stilwart-Imo State	Murdered in Ikeduru
0/04/003	Toni Dimegwu	Vocal member in Imo State House of Assembly	Murdered
2/05/003		Delta State	Killed in a political Rally
4/03/004	Aminasoari Dikibo	National Vice Chairman of PDP South South	Killed on his way to Delta State.
03/03/04	Andrew Agom	Member board of Trustee of PDP and his Police	Killed on their way to Abuja
01/03/04	Philip Olotumpa	Resident Electoral Commissioner Kogi State	Murdered in his Residence
15/05/05	Alibi Olajoku	Political Associates of Commissioner of Works-Lagos State	Murdered on the Road
27/07/005	Anthony Ozioko	Assistant National Director; Research and planning	Murdered in his Residence
0/06/006	Jesse Arukwu	Governorship aspirant on the platform of Adv. Congress Democrats AC	Murdered in his Residence
2008	Engr. Eman Ekpenyong – Mr. Mathias Ekpenyong Akwa Ibom	PDP Start works in Uyo LGA	Murdered in their Business premises
2009	Miss Philomena Udonung	The mother of a PDP Governorship Aspirant	Kidnapped and murdered after even after ransomed was Paid
2009	Chief Paul Inyang	PDP Starlwart and a contestant for the State chairmanship Position	Murdered in the church
1/02/09	Elder Nse Ikpe	PDP Starlwart-Uyo L.G.A.	Kidnapped
1/01/01 0	Gen. Edet Kpan Rtd	Former Director, NYSC	Kidnapped in the church and two other members of the church killed during the process
9/09/1999	Sunday Ugwu	Killed by Gumen who mistook him for his elder brother Ugwu Nwabueze, a member of the Enugu state House of Assembly	Murdered
Dec.2000	Lai Bohagun	A failure politician and renounced architected	Murdered
Feb.4, 001	James Ibon	Then governor of Delta State	Occupied death in exchange of gun fire between two faction of PDP
Mar.1, 002	three students reportedly killed at Effurun Delta State after a P.B.P rally turned violence		
Mar.4, 004	Luke Shugaba	Chairmanship candidate in Bussa LGA, Kogi State	Murdered
July. 27,006	Funsho William	A gubernatorial aspirant of P.D.P in Lagos State	Murdered
Aug. 14,006	Ayo Daramola	A Gubernatorial aspirant of P.D.P in Ekiti State	Murdered
Aug.12, 002	Janet Olajake	P.D.P Leader in Odigbo L.G.A Ondo State	Murdered
Sept.14, 007	Segun Awunusi	Former Chief Security officer to Olusegu Agagu, Ondo State Governor	Murdered

The want on political violence and the assassination of political opponents in Nigeria as a reoccurring event gives the impression that democracy has degenerated and its survival uncertain.

STATE	GOVERNORS REMOVED BY LAW	REPLACED GOVERNORS
Osun State	Prince Oyiwola (P.D.P)	Rauf-Arcgbesola (A.C.N)
Edo State	Prof. Osungbor (P.D.P)	Com. Adamus Oshomore (A.C.N)

as few and far between as the visit of angels, the opposition or other parties had managed to win just a sprinkling of councillorship positions. This scenario does not often reflect the exact democratic reality on ground. The electronic voting system, if and when correctly implemented is likely to reinforce the earlier point made above regarding financial and other benefits of elected officials, in eliminating or at least attenuating the scourge of contentious elections in Nigeria.

V. CONCLUSION

From the forgoing, elections in Nigeria have traditionally remained contentious largely because of their lucrative nature. The unfortunate trend is very likely to continue for a long time to come until, as a nation, we unanimously resolve or are forced to make the elective offices less financially attractive than they are at the moment. The unemployment situation in the country has worsened the matter, by compelling Nigerian Youths strive relentlessly to be part of the action at the least opportunity in politics.

Perhaps, if employment opportunities were available for our youths, if enabling environments were created for entrepreneurial engagement for the youths, many would most likely pursue that other alternative. The argument is that if people had other viable means of livelihood, they would not gravitate towards politics nor would they see it as a do-or-die affair.

There is no doubt also that if we are serious as a nation about achieving a high credibility level in our electioneering practices we need to apply electronic voting system making sure that the machines are not manipulated in any way to the advantage of any group.

It remains for me to appreciate once again the National Association of Resident Doctors for the opportunity to address us all.

God Bless us all.

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