

Insecurity and Electoral Administration in Nigeria

Aduku Alex Akubo

Mohammed Usman

Mercy Mabe Ocheni

Egwemi-Ugbeda C. Ejura

Grace Ladi Stephenson

Ottah Gabriel Alhassan

Yahaya Segun Alilu

TUKURA, Peter Tuwohu

Success Esomchi OBI (Corresponding Author)

Abstract: Elections are the leading mechanism for selecting governments and a cardinal feature of democratisation. The quest for fair representation, development, good governance, inclusiveness and a true sense of belonging has been the driving force for election. The conduct of credible elections remains one of the thorny and fundamental issues in a democracy. The trajectory of electoral administration in Nigeria is long and tortuous; it precedes independence and is punctuated by the elite's scheming and cunning, electoral fraud, gimmicks and violence. Nigeria has had its fair share of insecurity from diverse sources such as banditry, insurgency, recurring violent religious crises, ethnic, resource and poverty-induced militancy, and crises occasioned by the clamour for self-determination. This has left the electoral management body in a quandary and has undoubtedly imperilled the administration of elections in Nigeria and equally accentuated the temerity for a holistic approach in reversing the trend and engendering the right atmosphere for the administration of elections. It is revealed in this study that violence and various degrees of interruptions have taken the front burner in the democratisation process and are one of the dangerous dimensions in electoral administration in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: INEC, Election administration, Insecurity, Democratisation process & Electoral Security.

INTRODUCTION

Numerous security issues have plagued Nigeria's elections, and frequently, the main objective of the elections was not achieved. In Nigeria, it is nearly challenging to design elections without considering conflict and violence inextricably linked (Olurode & Hammanga, 2013). Elections in Nigeria carry the risk of a crisis, for which careful planning and preparation are necessary to prevent the crisis' crystallisation, which is frequently exacerbated in a climate of blatant insecurity (Onyekpere, 2013). The ensuing loss of life increased security budget spending, and damage to priceless government infrastructure foretell catastrophic effects on the nation's sustainable economic development (Adebakin & Raimi, 2012, p. 1) and poor electoral administration.

Nigeria's high level of insecurity has been attributed to several additional issues. For example, poverty has grown domesticated in Nigeria and is widespread throughout the country's regions, with the North East region of the Northern States experiencing the most significant increases. Many Nigerians have turned to criminal activities like "people trafficking, prostitution and various other social vices that were alien in the not too distant past" out of frustration over not having access to fundamental demands (social services) of life (Osarerenren - This Day, 2011, p. 18 cited in Omede, 2011: 93).

Elections are essential in forging a connection between leaders and the populace (Mattig, 2013). The democratic process revolves around elections, and every citizen's right to vote is their absolute sovereign right. They must do this without being subjected to pressure, unwarranted influence, or fear (Mömkes, 2013). Theorising election security is still tricky, risky, and difficult because of many different but related factors. First, the dynamic security architecture exists both inside and outside of national borders, as well as at their intersections. Second, the variables are numerous, and their connections are intricate and complex. Third, there are a lot of stakeholders in the international and national security architecture, and they could not just be motivated by security concerns but also by other non-security factors and limited considerations (Olurode, 2013). A breach in election security in a small area of a large country like Nigeria can spark a firestorm with effects that go well beyond the confines of the immediate neighbourhood. It can hinder political campaign movements, restrict voter turnout, and force candidates to withdraw from running for office—all of which cast doubt on the legitimacy of an electoral process. Not only would the elections lose their effectiveness or collapse,

but there might also be significant economic losses. Also possible are increases in and losses of life. Given the instability in Nigeria and its challenges to electoral administration, election managers must show a greater interest in and involvement in security-related matters. Security personnel are unquestionably valuable allies in this regard (Olurode, 2013). Election security is not just important; it is fundamental to having successful, practical, accessible, fair, credible, and long-lasting elections that increase participation. Fighting corruption, underdevelopment, and poor governance will be simpler as more people vote and their ballots are protected (Mattig, 2013).

The many different types of elections, including electoral violence, codifying elections, purchasing votes, carrying ballot boxes, shooting, and setting fire to polling places. Elections in Nigeria have historically been depressing innuendos and incidents with a lack of enduring customs and procedures and numerous disruptions and dislocations. These anxiety-inducing factors have tainted the perception of elections as a planned, logical, or systematic means of choosing political officeholders under a party banner. This creates tension and discrepancies in the analysis that have been an issue in election treatises (2017). In previous elections, there were apparent essential inadequacies linked to insecurity-related problems (Igini, 2013). The eight sections of this paper are as follows: introduction; conceptual clarifications; insecurity in Nigeria; and conclusion. An overview of the electoral system in Nigeria was also covered. After examining the relationship between insecurity and the electoral system in Nigeria, it was decided upon, and suggestions were given on creating an effective voting system in Nigeria in the face of insecurity.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The paper employed documentary approach to interrogate the effect of insecurity on electoral management in Nigeria and its multiplier implication on democratic consolidation and overall socio-economic and political development of Nigeria. The choice of documentary analysis was pertinent because the paper was primarily concerned with identifying and selecting relevant literature and evaluating evidence in academic research. This paper investigation was undertaken in the essence of critical inquiry to bring to the limelight, the contribution of poor electoral management on democratic ethos and sustainability in Nigeria which gradually progresses to poor political development in Nigeria.

FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Election: "The most fundamental component of contemporary representational democracy is the election. It is a way for electorates to periodically choose their representatives into various positions of administration (Igini, 2013: 43). A state's eligible inhabitants choose their political representatives through the election process for Medaiyanose (2018: 136), who are then expected to address the problems of the people as a whole on their behalf. It is a procedure by which representatives are chosen to manage governmental affairs. To put it another way, the election is understood to be the act of selecting by voting the representatives of the people who would be charged with carrying out the clearly defined governance duties. Election includes all preparatory actions taken before, during, and after. Therefore, how a state organises and executes its elections is a good indicator of that state's level of political development.

Security: According to section 14 (2) (b) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria's constitution, the welfare and security of the populace must be the state's primary goals. The security and well-being of the people are jointly stated as the only goals in this declaration (Okeke, 2022). Every requirement is present when one desires to grasp security. All people, both governmental and non-governmental, are excessively concerned about security (Akpan, 2017). The need for security becomes a vital issue of political thought and action in a world of perceived improbability and danger. It channels a broad yearning for more dependability, stability, and tangibleness in the face of the terrifying forces of unpredictability, rapid transformation, and complexity. Ironically, however, there is no consensus on what the phrase "security" means, and it does not lend itself to any prognosis. Instead, it delineates the boundaries of a hotly contested terrain (Boemcken and Schetter, n.d.). "Security is regarded as a state in which citizens are free from any dangers to their lives and means of subsistence, free from bodily damage, diseases, unemployment, and human rights violations wherever they may be found inside a sovereign nation" (Ndubuisi-Okolo Anigbuogu, 2019, p. 8). In order to foster sustainable human development and to advance regional, national, and international peace and stability, security might be viewed as a "public good" (Hussein, Gnisci and Wanjiru, 2004:11). According to the United Nations Development Programme (1994), security is defined as protection from covert and harmful interruptions of daily operations at homes, workplaces,

communities, etc. The realism school views security in terms of warfare, recommending various military measures to counteract security concerns (Akpan, 2017). According to the "human security" perspective, threats and challenges to security go beyond law and order and national defence to include all political, economic, and social concerns that provide a life free from danger. The state has lost importance in favour of individual security. However, these two things are not incompatible (Hussein, Gnisci and Wanjiru, 2004:11). The military's emphasis on security changed after the Cold War from several angles. There have been many viewpoints on security, especially at the personal level (Olurode, 2013; Bawa, 2013).

The human security approach has also made it clear that any effort to address security-related issues must be based on consultation and collaboration with various sets of actors, many of whom frequently have conflicting interests, such as civilians and soldiers, government officials and non-governmental organisations, local, national, and international actors. Despite this consensus, it has been challenging for international actors to agree on a single authoritative definition of security that enables the international community to effectively address a variety of challenges and threats, such as violent conflict, crime, emancipation, economic hardship, and environmental degradation (Hussein, Gnisci and Wanjiru, 2004:11). Election security debates have emerged as a result of this, competing for disciplinary space in political science but being most intimately linked to an understanding of the dynamics and character of election conduct. In particular, the relationship between the electoral body, such as INEC in the specific case of Nigeria, with the electorates and the security forces is one of the traditional questions of political participation in elections that electoral security is notable for rearticulating in a unique way that places the security domain front and centre in the electoral process. Election security, in particular, has disputed the presence of overt or covert risks to free, fair, and credible elections and has maintained that all stakeholders should be guaranteed security during elections (Olurode, 2013; Bawa, 2013).

Election security is any measures used to safeguard human and material resources during an election. We embrace the broad idea of protecting the integrity of the voting process and its goals when we talk about election security. Integrity in this context relates to the consistency of behaviour, principles, expectations, and election results. It also refers to procedures and actions taken to uphold the rule of law's perspective on the integrity of the electoral process. The continuation of the security of the electoral process depends on the observance and application of all

legislative requirements that are set forth for the elections. (2013) (Onyekpere). Igini will be (2013: 44). The integrity of voters, electoral staff, election documents, candidates, election monitors/observers, and other stakeholders involved in the electoral process depends on election security. Therefore, the security of participants and materials are the main areas of attention for security needs for electoral purposes. Participants in the election process include voters, candidates, media professionals, election managers/staff, and observers. Election security depends on how reliable the technology is, how resilient it is to malfunction and intentional distortions, and how many electronic procedures are used to facilitate elections. Both sensitive and non-sensitive items are utilised in elections. Ballot papers, result forms, and envelopes with official legal marks or stamps are considered sensitive materials as opposed to ballot boxes, cubicles, and other election-related materials that are not sensitive.

According to Olurode and Hammanga (2013), "we have in mind the security of personnel, security of election material, and security of information when talking about the extent of INEC's security mandate. These security issues were not caused by a complete lack of security staff but by relatively inefficient policing, cooperation among security officers, and improper use of security personnel. Election security typically involves ensuring the safety of the voting process and creating a calm and secure environment so voters can participate in the election without fear or intimidation before, during, or after casting their ballots. The objectives of electoral security include the physical protection of structures and equipment, the privacy of voters, candidates, and party representatives, as well as the safety of the body overseeing elections and the community at large. Additionally, it includes communications and information related to elections, computers, software, and information security (Onyekpere, 2013). From the time election materials are developed until they are transported and distributed to the appropriate stations, they must be carefully protected. The safety of election workers and others who supply these services must be protected, regarding the creation and advancement of materials (Hassan, 2013).

According to Otiye (n.d.: 6), whether an election is successful or unsuccessful relies on how well INEC, political parties, election observers, the media, and security agencies perform their respective roles. Recognising the roles of security in elections is appropriate. All parties involved must effectively perform tasks, including the para-military, military, and police forces. A durable and entrenched democratic rule can only be produced by a well-secured electoral process (Mediayanose, 2018).

The word "insecurity" can mean many different things. It denotes threat, risk, ambiguity, lack of security, and lack of protection. Insecurity is defined by Beland (2005, Ndubuisi-Okolo and Anigbuogu, 2019: 8) as "the condition of worry or anxiety resulting from a real or perceived absence of protection." It alludes to a lack of or insufficient freedom from risk. This suggests that the absence of peace, order, and security is what insecurity is.

These interpretations of insecurity highlight a crucial point: persons who experience it are unsure or uninformed of what would happen and vulnerable to risks and hazards when they do (Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anigbuogu, 2019).

ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION

Election administration includes, in particular, voting registration, border sets, and election management organisations. The sum of all actions taken to ensure electoral success and victory is known as electoral administration. Achieving a successful electoral outcome entails utilising all available resources, including the persons and organisations coordinated by the electoral administration authority. The planning and execution of elections for elective public (political) offices by an electoral body are known as electoral administration. Election administration is choosing candidates fairly and impartially for public office. Such an effort, which aims to achieve peaceful and orderly elections in a democratic system, invariably entails well-coordinated action by both men and women. Election administration's overarching objective is to make sure that the democracy on which such elections are founded is maintained as a system for selecting the people's representatives regularly (Ighodalo, 2008 in Oni, Erameh and Oladejo, 2017: 45). Election administration, according to Ajayi (2007, referenced in Akubo and Maduagwu, 2021: 60-61), is the management and organisation of all phases of the electoral process. Election strategy, organisation, and administration are all included. Delineating voting districts, registering political parties, and determining who is eligible to vote are all aspects of the pre-election process.

Additionally, it entails checking and vetting election candidates. Before the actual election day, these essential tasks must be completed. Voting by registered voters, vote counting, results collation, the announcement of final results, and declaration of victors are all activities that take place on election day. Election day activities also include

election monitoring, observation, and reporting by domestic and international election observers to assess the elections' freedom, fairness, openness, and credibility. Affected parties and candidates may file complaints and lawsuits following an election. Unique selection panels or tribunals established for that purpose typically adjudicate these complaints and lawsuits.

According to Oni, Erameh, and Oladejo (2017: 45), Election administration extends beyond activities on election day. It is a procedure that takes place before and after the election. For instance, sufficient preparations must have been made before election day about voter registration, purchasing necessary equipment, such as communication devices and cars, voter education and sensitisation, and hiring and training poll workers. After the elections, there can be protests and disputes about the total or partial results, which could prompt people to look for electoral justice. The help of election administrators in providing the appropriate election documentation for litigants to pursue their cases is also a significant factor in whether the lawsuit procedure is successful or unsuccessful (s). This demonstrates how vital election administration is to the consolidation of democracy and electoral government.

INSECURITY IN NIGERIA: AN OVERVIEW

Nigeria's security condition seems elusive and insurmountable. The ongoing security threat in every state in the nation has yet to be adequately addressed by the government at all levels. The government's security system cannot ensure safety and security in Nigeria due to ongoing security issues, which raises doubts about whether security can be guaranteed there (Oyeyemi, 2019). Nigeria has had its fair share of instability brought on by a variety of factors, including civil war, insurgency, violent religious crises that reoccur frequently, militancy caused by poverty and ethnic divisions, as well as crises brought on by calls for self-determination. Therefore, it is clear from Nigeria's history over the past five to six decades that security continues to dominate the public conversation (Adediran, 2018).

According to Oyeyemi (2019). Nigeria's insecurity problem may resemble that of the early 1980s economic crisis brought on by the decline in commodity prices. Price hikes from OPEC, privatisation, economic emancipation, deregulation, currency depreciation, the Cold War, politics, and the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). The rise of Boko-Haram in the states of Borno and Yobe. The gang then became a menace to Nigeria

and other nearby countries because of its criminality and terrorist actions; the height of this is insurgency, banditry, and kidnapping.

A country's ability to survive depends heavily on its level of security. Without sufficient protection for people and property, the system will be plagued by anarchy, turmoil, and eventual collapse. This is why a state's ability to defend against threats to its fundamental interests and values is considered a key component of security, which is a dynamic condition (Omede, 2011, p. 92). States have several different concerns when it comes to security. It could be cultural, ideological, economic, or military.

However, the contemporary understanding of security goes beyond the actual physical defence of a region through military action, emphasising the supply of a higher standard of living and the encouragement of sustainable growth. This means that a greater level of living can be achieved through, among other things, ensuring health, and economic, human, physical, environmental, and food security (Bello, 2011: 60).

The stakes have increased as a result of developments both globally and locally in Nigeria over the past few decades. Domestic violence caused by chieftaincy disputes is on the rise. Cases of sophisticated armed robberies, kidnappings motivated by money, persistent oil bunkering, sea piracy, killings committed by rival cults, and ritual-related murders and killings are also on the rise in Nigeria due to the new threats of terrorism, banditry, insurgency, and farmers-herders conflict.

ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

An election is a viable mechanism for perfecting representative government, and voting is the leading form of political participation in democratic societies and liberal democratic theory. Credible elections constitute a significant factor in democracy and good governance. Elections in democracies support the entrenchment of popular will representation and secure the political system's legitimacy (Towne, Aihie and Igiebor., n.d.). In Nigeria Onwudiwe and Berwind-Dart (2010: 3) revealed that:

Election-related conflicts are distinctive, signifying discontent around tightly interwoven social and economic concerns. These concerns include dissatisfaction with government performance, competition for

resources, inter- and intragroup distrust, joblessness, and anger at an abundance of unscrupulous politicians with little respect for due process or the rule of law. During election periods, underlying social and economic concerns collide with hopes and fears of change, raising tensions and the likelihood of violent competition. This is particularly true in Nigeria, where chronic instability, poor governance, communal disputes, gang-related fighting, and violence sponsored by power brokers fosters long-standing grievances. Economic incentives, preexisting anger, and opportunistic desires for revenge can be powerful incentives for violence. Fresh anger at election injustices under the aegis of a government still perceived as promising only modest accountability for electoral crimes is a worrisome factor.

Elections in Nigeria have historically been conflict-ridden (Jega2007: 249). Election conflicts typically fall into four related categories: intraparty feuding, interparty clashes, electoral-events violence, and communal unrest (Onwudiwe & Berwind-Dart, 2010, p. 3). The campaigns preceding elections are invariably marked by pettiness, intolerance, and violence. There are several reported incidences of intra-party, as well as inter-party, violence and conflicts, including abductions and assassinations. Elections and their outcome have often been neither free nor fair, characterised by violations of the process (both inadvertent and Willful), corrupt conduct by officials, rigging of results (Jega2007: 249). How the election is steered in a country defines, to a great extent, the degree of political culture, political participation and governance in a country. This perceptibly depends on the effectiveness and efficiency of a country's electoral system and the electoral management body's neutrality, independence and competence (Tonwe, Aihie and Igiebor., n.d).

INSECURITY AND ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA: THE NEXUS

Agenda setting, planning, and strategic coordination are the three main areas where INEC is in charge of security (non-operational). INEC has consistently taken aggressive steps to establish the direction for managing election security (Anyanya, 2013). Due to the inability to ensure such elections in terms of pre-election, election day, and post-election processes, the credibility and, as a result, the acceptability of elections in Nigeria have been exceedingly contentious and litigation. Such failures to guarantee elections frequently led to political crises and governance failures, and recurring military interventions disrupted democratic rule

(Igini, 2013). Given the circumstances in Nigeria, it is widely believed that only a massive deployment of security forces, including the military, can allow for free, fair, and generally satisfying elections. When we refer to security personnel, we don't just mean members of the traditional Nigerian Police Force; we also mean members of State Security Services, the Nigeria Security Civil Defense Corps, the Nigeria Immigration Service, the Nigeria Prison Service (now known as the Nigeria Correctional Service), the Nigeria Customs Service, and parallel members of other organisations, in addition to members of the Nigerian Armed Forces (Olurode & Hammanga, 2013). This belief in the necessity of security personnel in the administration of our elections has been motivated by the widespread violence that has become the norm, including thuggery and a variety of electoral malpractices that have appeared repeatedly and prominently in our elections and have become their signature. In some unenthusiastic circles, electoral malpractices, violence, and intimidation are largely inextricably linked to elections in Nigeria. The conclusion that only effective enforcement can secure the election environment is logical. History and experience lend credence to this cynical viewpoint, which is shared by most political actors and the general public (Olurode & Hammanga, 2013).

Elections and electoral administration are significantly impacted by insecurity. Therefore, unstable, undemocratic, or rigged elections constitute a denial of the accepted fundamentals of democracy and, in fact, provide clear proof that democracy does not exist. They are typically characterised by all types of electoral malpractices and irregularities, such as manipulating the laws and procedures governing election conduct to suit particular outcomes, restricting some participants' access to voters and the resources at their disposal to reach voters before election day, and stuffing ballot boxes with ballots well in advance of the actual voting (Igini, 2013). Other types of electoral fraud include the seizure or hoarding of electoral materials, the falsification of election results, the use of law enforcement to intimidate, injure, or disenfranchise eligible voters, the murder of political opponents on election day or beforehand, and the manipulation of post-election judicial procedures to obviate or skew results that ought to reflect the will of voters as expressed in the ballots (Igini, 2013). Nigeria's electoral system is too cumbersome and bureaucratic compared to most other African nations, and our elections are too expensive and more intimidating. In actuality, election administrators, political parties and their candidates, electorates, and other stakeholders, face a monumental challenge in organising elections. The need-to-win-at-all-costs mentality of Nigerian politicians, a lack of stakeholder trust, and the winner-take-all political system are all contributing factors to this

dilemma. IV) The ineffectiveness of our elected officials, etc. (Olurode & Hammanga, 2013).

Election insecurity is the most significant danger to Nigeria's current democratic system. As a result, ensuring election security is crucial to prepare for every election cycle's pre-election, election, and post-election phases. Therefore, any election management body that is sincere about securing elections must concentrate on software issues like stakeholder trust building, ensuring the accuracy of the technology used in election processes, educating voters and other key participants about security issues and their role in ensuring security, and institutionalising a credible electoral process through a solid legal electoral framework that is managed professionally, impartially, and inclusively (Igini, 2013). Since Nigeria's independence, its political leadership has experimented with numerous electoral bodies and passed enabling legislation to guarantee free and fair elections to eradicate the irregularities typically connected with the nation's electoral process. Reforms have not improved the situation; on the contrary, they have made it worse because electoral faults, most notably electoral violence, continue to be a regular occurrence in our political life (Okoye, Gabriel, 2017).

Security and a politically neutral and calm election atmosphere that ensures the impartiality of the electoral umpire are prerequisites for holding legitimate elections in Nigeria. Voters should be willing to cast ballots for the candidates they support. The adoption of the election results will not be contested or questioned till these are completed (Okoye, Gabriel, 2017; 68). As a result, security is essential for holding credible, accessible, and fair elections. Election security is necessary to create the right conditions for electoral officials to carry out their duties, for voters to freely and safely travel to their polling places to cast their ballots, for voters to freely and safely hold rallies and campaigns, and for a variety of other stakeholders to fulfil their legal obligations under the Constitution and the Electoral Act. Effective security planning, coordination, and deployment are essential to the success of electoral procedures (Okoye, Gabriel, 2017).

HOW TO ENGENDER EFFICIENT ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA AMIDST INSECURITY

Election guidelines and other remedial measures also were provided in order to ensure full compliance.

To implement these security arrangements nationwide during elections, state offices of INEC are directed to make specific directional security arrangements. Hence, the Independent National Electoral Commission, conscious of the security challenges of past elections and the need not have a repeat of the same experience, established in the 36 states and FCT what is called the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES). Joint State Election Security Committee is made up of: the state Resident Electoral Commissioner (including the Administrative Secretary, Head of Operations Department and Public Affairs Officer), various security agencies, namely, the Police, Department of State Security (DSS), the Navy, the Air Force and officers of para-military organisations such as Customs, Correctional Services, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the Civil Defence Corp etc., to plan and coordinate security of elections. The State Commissioners of Police chair the committee. At the Local Government level, this structure is replicated with the Divisional Police Officers (DPO) as heads of the committee (Igini, 2013, p. 51).

Separating security from the election is inherently problematic as an inherent interrelationship exists. Since the viability of the electoral system is determined by the political environment, the election should be termed free, fair and credible to the extent that security is maintained in line with stipulated electoral guidelines, law and order (Akpan, 2017).

If the above measures are complied with, there is every need to put in extra effort if the objectives are to be achieved Igini (2013: 52) prescribed that:

Having taken the steps mentioned above, the security agencies for elections must operationalise the goals of securing the electoral process by instituting a joint security strategy, training and deployment of security personnel after ensuring that a credible and reliable electoral system and process design is in place and that effective statutes of deterrence are known to all role players, while also monitoring and coordinating security challenges involved during campaigns and rallies, by effectively using communication channels, and clarifying rules of engagement. Additionally, the established codes of conduct for stakeholders were reviewed at meetings purposely convened for stakeholders to understand and appreciate the laws and what constitutes breaches and punishments.

CONCLUSION

Any nation's life revolves around elections. Beyond rhetoric, security is vital to the existence of every nation and is not simply essential. This essay argues that electoral security is essential to election administration, and with it, the overall success of the election may be realised. The study discovered that uncertainty is a significant hindrance to the democratic process since it can lower voter turnout, restrict political campaign activity, and encourage candidates to withdraw from the race—all of which cast doubt on the validity of an election. Not only would the elections lose their effectiveness or collapse, but there might also be significant economic losses. Also possible are increases in and losses of life. Given the instability in Nigeria and its challenges to electoral administration, it is necessary for election managers to show a greater interest in and involvement in security-related matters.

Additionally, it made a note of the various election-related behaviours, including electoral violence, election manipulation, purchasing of votes, hauling of ballot boxes, shooting, and arson. These anxiety-inducing factors have tainted the perception of elections as a planned, logical, or systematic means of choosing political officeholders under a party banner. This creates tension in the analysis and contradictions that have been an issue in election treatises. Elections in Nigeria have historically been depressing innuendos and incidents with a lack of enduring customs and procedures and numerous disruptions and disruptions dislocations. Elections in the past have had glaring critical deficits that have been linked to insecurity-related variables.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is apt to align this study with recommendations that were made to advance electoral security by a celebrated expert Igini (2013: 58):

- i. Every election cycle should be preceded by a review of the legislative framework guiding elections, namely, the constitution, electoral act and election manual of the national EMB as it pertains to election security to identify gaps which can undermine election security. In this connection, the provision of section 150 of the Electoral Act that gives power to INEC to try electoral offenders without express power and capacity to investigate should be reviewed, as well as the uncertainties inherent in the electoral law that allows political parties to nominate candidates through opaque processes, and which outcome the law

prohibits INEC from questioning. These are threats to election security and should be amended.

ii. Recurrent failures to expeditiously prosecute and convict election offenders have also undermined election security by increasing the sense of impunity on the part of potential electoral offenders. This trend must be curbed by instituting the commission of the electoral offence, a specialised commission that should be enabled with resources, capacities and competencies to investigate prosecute and ensure the conviction of electoral offenders; such a commission should therefore have police units whose task it is to investigate and present

iii. Also, there is the need to institute a quick process for investigating and resolving complaints, as is the case with the just concluded United States General Elections (2012), where almost 398 out of 400 pre-election petitions and complaints had been resolved by the authorities, particularly the supreme courts in the various states.

iv. The continuing education of voters and other political stakeholders remains a preventative imperative to secure elections by helping to reinforce positive democratic practices and curbing deviant democratic behaviours.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

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