

---

**NILDS**  
Journal of  
Democratic  
Studies

---

Copyright 2022

Published by

National Institute for

Legislative & Democratic Studies,

National Assembly,

Abuja.

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording or otherwise) without prior written permission of both the copyright holder and the publisher.

This journal is published subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition being imposed on the subsequent user.

## **EDITORS**

Dr. Adewale ADEREMI

Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Christopher O. NGARA

Editor

Dr. Lohna BONKAT-JONATHAN

Associate Editor

Dr. Ganiyu EJALONIBU &  
Mr. Patrick N. UDEFUNA

Editorial Secretaries

## **EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD**

Professor Abubakar O. SULAIMAN

DG. NILDS - Chair

Professor Sam EGWU

Independent National Electoral  
Commission, Niger

Professor Adele JINADU

Independent Researcher Lagos

Professor Habu MOHAMMED

Bayero University, Kano

Professor Usman TAR

Nigeria Defence Academy (NDA)

Professor Michael Abiodun ONI

Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo

Professor Shola OMOTOLA

Federal University, Oya-Ekiti

Professor Olajumoke YACOB-HALISO

Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo

Professor Terkura TARNANDE

Benue State University, Makundi

Professor Nuhu YAKUB

Sokoto State University, Sokoto

Professor Rotimi SUBERU

Bennington College, USA

**Information for Subscribers:** The Journal of Democratic Studies (NILDS-JDS) is published Bi-annually. For submission instructions, subscription and all other information visit <http://nilds.gov.ng> or email [nildsjds@nils.gov.ng](mailto:nildsjds@nils.gov.ng).

**Aims and Scope:** The NILDS Journal of Democratic Studies (NILDS-JDS) wishes to attract submissions of high-quality research covering all areas of democracy and political governance. It encourages the submissions of original contributions or authoritative research surveys that advances knowledge about democracy, politics, society, international relations, and legislative studies. The journal is interdisciplinary in scope and welcomes full-length articles, policy analysis, book reviews and research notes that draw from, or can advance knowledge and practice of democracy and governance. NILDS-JDS also provides a forum for interaction between policy and practice on questions of governance, law, constitutionalism, policy making and Institutional development, in order to catalyse policy debates among scholars, researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders. Articles to be published must meet the highest intellectual standard and be at the cutting edge of research in their field, making worthwhile contributions to democratic theory and practice. NILDS-JDS will only consider publishing manuscripts that make a significant contribution from either a theoretical, empirical perspective or a blend of both approach in terms of originality, rigour and reach. In particular, we do not wish to publish manuscripts which replicate existing results and/or are limited in scope/applicability and thus more suitable to specialized field journals.

# Contents

<b>Articles</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>CITIZEN DIPLOMACY AND DEVELOPMENT: RE-EVALUATING NIGERIA'S AFROCENTRIC FOREIGN POLICIES FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN WEST AFRICA</b> Olayemi Durotimi Akinwumi & Erunke Canice Erunke	7
<b>GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA: A STRATEGIC PANACEA FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE</b> A. O. D. Okoro	31
<b>THE TRAVAILS OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS AND THE CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN WEST AFRICA SINCE THE 1990s</b> Abdulkadir Salaudeen & Abdulkabir Abdulwahab	53
<b>ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN NIGERIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF 2016 AND 2020 GUBERNATORIAL CONTESTS IN EDO STATE</b> William E. Odion	79

<b>Articles</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>THE ROLE OF DELEGATES AND EMERGENCE OF CREDIBLE LEADERS FROM PARTY PRIMARIES IN NIGERIA</b> DII Christian Tsaro	<b>102</b>
<b>HUMAN INSECURITY AND THE CHALLENGE OF VOTER TURNOUT AT ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA, 1999-2019</b> Moses Saa-Aondo Andza	<b>122</b>
<b>PERVASIVE INSECURITY AND THE CHALLENGES FACING THE 2023 ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA</b> Abdulrasheed Abdulyakeen	<b>142</b>
<b>INTERROGATING GOVERNMENT'S MULTI-LEVEL APPROACHES TO ENDING ARMED BANDITRY IN THE NORTHWEST REGION OF NIGERIA</b> Kolade Gabriel Olubiyo & Mohammed, Nasiru Ibrahim	<b>172</b>
<b>IMPLICATIONS OF GLOBALIZATION ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IN NIGERIA</b> Anthony Emmanuel Edet, Patrick Nnadozie Udefuna & Quadri Kolapo Abayomi	<b>196</b>

# 7

## PERVASIVE INSECURITY AND THE CHALLENGES FACING THE 2023 ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA

**Abdulrasheed Abdulyakeen<sup>1</sup>**

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of Political Science, Al-Qalam University, Katsina, Katsina State. Email: [abdulrasheedabdulyakeen90@gmail.com](mailto:abdulrasheedabdulyakeen90@gmail.com)

## **Abstract**

*As Nigerians look forward to the general elections in 2023, there is growing concern that the nation's pervasive insecurity condition could offer a significant barrier, if not an obstruction, to those elections. This is the crux of this study. This paper examines Pervasive Insecurity and the Challenges facing the 2023 Elections in Nigeria. The study mapped out the issues and events that have been causing tensions prior the elections in 2023; the steps taken to reduce them nationally as well as the instances when no significant action was made to de-escalate the likelihood of conflicts and violence. 61FGD sessions and 46 KII interviews were used were utilized to qualitatively collect data. Six States: Sokoto, Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara, Niger, and Imo are among those adversely affected by violence and were chosen as case studies. They were content-analyzed to highlight the study's key findings. According to the survey, there is a huge arms market for weapons in Nigeria. Violent non-state actors get arms from both government and non-government sources. The paper concludes that if the spread of weapons is not stopped, the security issues caused by terrorism, banditry, and violent extremism will become worse, and government's efforts to restore order will be fruitless. The study recommends the need to ensure border security, strengthening of national intelligence and security institutions, and committing to the execution of a national, regional, and international framework against arms proliferation.*

**Keywords:** *Arms Proliferation, Banditry, Election, Extremism, Security,*



## **Introduction**

In the 90s, many African states held elections and successfully transitioned from military control and a one-party system to “multiparty democracies.” Unfortunately, majority of them have not been transformed to good governance because autocracy and its effects are still entrenched in many regions of the continent mostly because citizens’ basic rights are infringed; the rule of law is misapplied; and corruption is rampant. Other challenges to democratic consolidation include widespread insecurity, electoral fraud, electoral violence, poor governance, poverty, and underdevelopment.

Africa recorded 28 of the overall 39 democracies in the third wave of democracy in 1974 (Freedom House, 2006) but the number had grown thrice by the early 1990s (Huntington, 1991; Diamond & Plattner, 1994; Diamond, 2006). If Schumpeter’s (1947) definition of democracy as a form of governance in which major political officeholders are chosen in routine, fair elections, then about three out of every five independent governments worldwide are democracies (Freedom House, 2006). At the end of 2006, there were more than 140 democracies in the world, with half of the 48 African governments being classified as democratic regimes in which citizens may choose their leaders and replace them through elections that are relatively free and fair (Freedom House, 2006).

Between 1989 and 2003, 44 of the 48 sub-Saharan countries held *de jure* elections (Lindberg, 2006). Many nations had adopted electoral democracy, especially after Huntington’s “third wave,” and many, including African governments, had made incredible progress toward democratic rule (Huntington, 1991; Bratton & van de Walle, 1997; Hyslop, 1999; Ake, 1996, 2000; UNDP, 2002; Luckham et al. 2003). Former United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan (Global Commission 2012, p.9) revealed that all but 11 nations in the globe had held national elections since 2000. He further stated that these elections “have never been more universal and essential, their benefits are, by no means, assured” (Global Commission 2012, p.9). Thus, if we consider democracies in this manner, electoral democracy is currently the most common form of governance in the world (Diamond, 1999; Freedom House, 2006).

“Elections remain the lifeblood of democracy because it is the constant confirmation of legitimacy for its leaders, and the bond that connects the leaders with the people,” said Princeton (2005, p. 2). There is no doubt that other factors also make democracy successful and sustainable. Some of the elements that contributed to the transition of these autocratic and authoritarian regimes to democratic ones in Africa have been documented by Sandbrook and Oelbaum (1991), Adejumbi (1998), Handley and Mills (2001), and Bofo-Arthur (2008). They contend that the fall of the Berlin Wall and the cessation of the East-West rivalry led to a decline in economic fortunes and created acute material destitution among the populace. This change seems to have damaged the attractiveness and political legitimacy of authoritarian regimes and dictatorships, and created the prospects for competitive multiparty elections and democratic politics in Africa.

Scholars have asserted that liberal democracy paradigm constituted a significant obstacle to bilateral and multilateral development cooperation between Africa and the West. They affirm that elections were included in the liberal democratic principles that multilateral institutions and other donor nations adopted as a condition for receiving help (Gyimah-Boadi, 2004; Bofo-Arthur, 2008). The pro-democratic movements that began after the Cold War started to spread over the African continent on the international front (Ninsin, 1998; Handley, 2008; Bofo-Arthur, 2008). In Zambia, as domestic and international pressure on the one-party system grew, the then-President Kenneth Kaunda permitted a discussion on the reintroduction of multiparty elections to take place at his United National Independence Party’s (UNIP) Fifth National Convention, held in March 1990. As a result, the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) won a resounding victory in the successful and largely free and fair election held in October 1991, and its chairman, Frederick Chiluba, was elected president (Matlosa, 2003).

A similar event occurred in Malawi in the early 1990s. At that time, Malawi appeared to be an unlikely candidate for democratization because Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda had ruled the nation for almost 30 years. In 1991, foreign aid funders pressured Banda to become more political and so Malawi held a

referendum in 1993 on whether the nation should embrace a multiparty system due to intense domestic and external pressure. Bakili Muluji was elected as president in the first multiparty elections held in Malawi under Banda in 1994 (Chunga, 2014). In September, 1981, when Ghana transitioned to a fourth republican status, advancement on the political front was necessary to maintain Western backing and, in particular, the continued flow of IMF and WB monies (Gyimah-Boadi, 2004; Boafo-Arthur, 2008; Handley, 2008). There was also increased and widespread appeal to tyrannical governments to adopt liberal democratic principles due to internal civic actions by quasi-political and civil society groups (Gyimah-Boadi, 2004; Boafo-Arthur, 2008) because, according to Ademajubi (1998), even if elections were permitted, their results were predetermined by the political elites since they aimed to disrupt the foundations of African leaders' dominance (Adejumobi, 1998).

But Luckham (1994), Bratton, and Van de Walle (1997) argued on the unlikelihood of elections in Africa by stating that since colonialism ended, majority of independent countries having elections have had one-party systems and military governments and described it as "garrison socialism" which accords little weight to the subject of elections and the political process as it is practiced across the continent. He reiterated that largely due to Cold War politics, "massaged" elections have become the standard in Africa. Adejobi (1998) also remarked that in Africa, dictatorships had been maintained and aspirations for multiparty elections have been ruthlessly suppressed with the active backing of the two power blocs (Adejumobi, 1998).

However, Diamond and Plattner (1994) challenged Luckham's claim and stated that democracy actually ended the Cold War. They argued that the democratic uprisings of 1989-1991 were responsible for the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of communism in Eastern Europe. As a result, "rapid changes in Eastern Europe and serving as a stimulant to Africa's drive to democratic government" were the results of the democratic transition in nations like Turkey, Greece, and Portugal in the 1970s and Argentina and Chile in the 1980s (Georg, 1993, p.36). In Africa, democracy confronted the daunting task of maintaining constitutional rule and election processes in the face of

violence, poor administration, and tyrants. These unconstitutional issues have posed major challenges to expanding human freedoms; fostering true political competition; increasing the accountability of leaders; de-escalating conflict; establishing the rule of law; and developing effective public institutions.

Election is a key component in overcoming obstacles. It is also a major pillar of democratic government which establishes regular avenues for political rivalry and provides opportunities for citizens to assess and replace leaders. Indeed, the ability to discern between democracies and other forms of governments, many of which would like to claim the moniker of democracy without upholding its requirements has grown to depend on the ability to hold open, fair, and competitive elections because according to Ibrahim(2008) it is difficult to speak of a functional democracy without honest elections (Ibrahim, 2008). Since Nigeria attained independence in 1960, the country's elections and governance have been keenly followed by both the domestic and global public. Nigeria's elections had largely been flawed because of systemic problems. The flaws in Nigeria's electoral process has been attributed to lack of political will by the leadership; lack of durable legacies; and dislocations of numerous institutions tasked with holding free and fair elections. Ujo (2002) and Abdulyakeen (2021) observe that in contrast to Nigeria's flawed electoral system, the international community has been exploring faster, smooth and acceptable techniques of electing representatives. Structural-flaws in election-conduct has become a major gap that this study seeks to correct in order to strengthen the future of democracy in Nigeria.

## **Background**

In the 2015 and 2019 elections, respectively, the most serious concerns were security, the economy, and corruption. Although there had been series of agitation by different socio-cultural groups for resource-control and self-governance, none of them conflated like the Boko Haram conflict in Bauchi, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) states because elections had to be postponed. In the events leading up to the 2015 and 2019 elections, insecurity became a major campaign issue because government efforts at mitigating insecurity had been unsuccessful and the situation had become bleak (Abdulyakeen, 2022).

Prior the 2023 presidential and general elections, the chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, through press conferences, consistently remarked that insecurity was one of the main obstacles to the success of the 2023 general elections. According to him, it is crucial to ensure the security and safety of voters, election workers, materials, candidates, party agents, election observers and monitors, the media, and transporters. Insecurity had become so pervasive that Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs), Prof Francis Chukwuemeka Ezeonu of Imo State said that elections may not hold in three Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Orlu, Osu, and Njaaba due to security while Prof Saidu Ahmed of Zamfara expressed similar concerns on the actions of bandits. Other notable leaders of political parties; civil society organizations; and faith leaders also expressed worries about insecurity.

### **Insecurity of Election in some Localities**

According to Gboyega, (2022), INEC may be compelled by security challenges emanating from armed non-state actors throughout the federation to hold elections in more than 686 towns in 2023. The affected wards and localities are spread across 90 local government areas (LGAs) and 18 federating states with 618 of the 686 affected localities found in just the north. According to the report of *Thisday Newspaper* (2022) the northern region “accounts for 90.1% of the dangerous localities.” (*Thisdays Newspaper*, 2022). Media reports also revealed that candidates will not be able to campaign in 69 localities just as INEC will not be able to hold elections in those places. The neighborhoods make up roughly 9.09 percent (*Thisdays Newspaper*, 2022).

336 of these 680 communities were in the Northwest. 200 of the 336 in the Northwest are located in Zamfara State. The report also identified about 168 other communities in the North-east. Gombe is the only state where neither a community nor a ward was identified as dangerous. In Borno State, elections were prohibited in approximately 79 wards (Audu, 2022). 114 wards in the North-central found to be prone to insecurity were located in the axis of Plateau, Niger, Kwara, and Nasarawa (Idayat, 2022). 55 communities in the Southeast (Abia, Anambra and Imo) have been classified as red zones. According to

research-findings, Ondo State, particularly Owo and Ose Local Government Areas as well as ten communities were prone to volatility because of “its proximity to Kogi State, where ISWAP insurgents had infiltrated” (Sunday & Ityokura, 2022).

According to the former INEC Chairman, Attahiru Jega (2022), “Election integrity and even the legality of the outcome will be questioned unless they are held in a setting that is calm and secure. Election integrity is threatened by security concerns. If election preparation and administration are hampered or disrupted, the results will be partially or completely invalid. As we anticipate the general elections in 2023, there is growing concern that the nation’s pervasive insecurity condition could offer a significant barrier, if not an obstruction, to those elections. “Security concerns would represent the most serious hazard to the integrity of the election process if they were not appropriately and effectively handled.”

This paper will attempt to answer the following questions: What are the security issues? How will presidential candidates tackle them in the country? What contextual factors must they take into account when addressing insecurity in Nigeria? The electorate, public and media must critically analyze the presidential candidates’ strategies and plans to determine their effectiveness, even if they only exist on paper.

## **Conceptual Clarification**

### **Election**

Elections, according to Ninsin (2006), are a process of choosing leaders that take into account, the standards of behavior that emerged from the democratic ideal and call for widespread participation. Although Aderibigbe (2006) slightly concurs with Ninsin, Aderibigbe’s position is limited because he did not state that elections may not always yield national leaders because there are also students’ leadership or other organizational roles.

Scholars like Diamond, Linz, and Lipset (1989), Sandbrook (1998, 2000), and Sorensen (1993) have identified elections as the center of democracy. According

to them a liberal democracy is a form of government that permits nearly all adult people with the right to vote to participate in free and regular elections while also ensuring a number of civil and political rights. They argue that the fundamental characteristics or components of liberal democracy include citizen political participation, political party competition, and the granting of civil and political liberties, such as freedom of expression, association, and the press, which are essential for fostering the integrity of political competition and participation. These three traits undoubtedly have some connection to the idea of elections in one way or another.

According to Rose (1978), authorities are better able to control resources to compel obedience from the populace the more consent authority has obtained through elections. Additionally, electoral alternation significantly boosts popular confidence in and support for democracy (Bratton, 2004). Elections have been given a significant attention by Lindberg (2006) as he asserts that even without relying so heavily on fairness in elections; it appears that repeated competitive elections have improved civil rights through fostering citizens' awareness of democracy.

Lindberg (2006) further noted that one of the crucial elements in the growth of democracy is the repetition of elections, including those that are "imported." Elections are a typical feature of contemporary democracies, despite the fact that there are many disagreements over what exactly defines a democracy. Therefore, the holding of elections and the quality of such elections are institutionalized attempts to realize democracy's core principle rule of the people, by the people. No other mechanism comes before inclusive, competitive, and legitimate elections as a crucial component of self-government, despite the claims of other academics that elections alone do not constitute democracy (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997). While democracy involves more than just holding competitive elections on a regular basis, Dumor (1998) emphasizes that it is more or less required for stakeholders to engage in a way that strengthens democratic culture and practice. It is debatable whether an election is not the most significant component of modern democracy.

In their 2009 critique of elections as a tool for democratization, Rakner and Van

de Walle (2009) drew attention to the situation in Africa, where they asserted that opposition parties are generally unable to effectively compete with ruling governments. They said that despite the regularization of elections in regions like Africa since the late 1980s, democratization was still seriously threatened by the weakness of opposition parties. The emphasis on election processes as the requirement for democratic deepening has also drawn criticisms from an increasing number of scholars, including Santiso (2001), Carothers (2002), and Fawole (2005).

According to Fawole (2005), elections do not necessarily encourage greater public participation. Fawole claims that vote buying and electoral cheating are rampant in African elections and that they have thus devolved into mere formalities of politics. However, it is still true that “conducting a continuous series of *de jure* participatory, competitive, and legitimate elections not only strengthens the democratic quality of a system but has favorable impacts on the growth and development of civil freedoms in society” (Lindberg, 2006; p.18). There can be elections without democracy, but there cannot be democracy without elections, affirmed by Levitsky and Way (2002).

Election critics like Marxists have often questioned the democratic nature of elections, contending that they serve as a tool for the ruling class (Adejumobi, 1998). Despite these concerns, Marxists, nonetheless, view elections as a step in the right direction in the fight for popular democracy. Karl Marx, a German philosopher, contended that liberal democracy’s institutions and levels, which include regular elections, must be treated seriously since they represent the process of political emancipation required to bring about human emancipation and liberty. According to Marx, those procedures and institutions represent the greatest conceivable step toward emancipation within the framework of the capitalist social order (Marx, 1975 quoted in Adejumobi, 1998, p.4).

## **Security**

Robert McNamara (1968) asserts that security and development go hand in hand and that security is impossible without progress. Security is development rather than military power, hardware, or conventional military activity; however these



things can still be included. Security is also not conventional military activity. He said that any society that strives for adequate national security in the face of food shortages, population growth, low levels of productivity and income, slow technological advancement, insufficient and ineffective public utilities, and ongoing unemployment issues has a false sense of security. He further stated that national security is a sense of self-assurance that the tragedy of conflicts and the issues of international politics can be avoided by good management. This is done to ensure that the state and its institutions can continue to exist in a largely undamaged manner (McNamara, 1968).

Undoubtedly, the most topical issue in Nigeria and throughout Africa is insecurity. Eme and Onyishi (2011) describe insecurity as activities that represent a breach of peace and serenity that result in the loss of human lives and property in society as caused by historical conflict, sociopolitical, ethno-religious, and economic reasons. Otto and Ukpere (2012) view insecurity as the absence of security, which they defined as the presence of peace, safety, happiness, and the protection of human and natural resources, among other things. Insecurity can be captured at micro and macro levels. In Nigeria, for example, insecurity at the macro-level can be subsumed in four different ways: ethno-religious conflict; politically motivated violence; organized violent groups; and violence based on the economy (Eme and Onyishi, 2011; Raimi, Akhuemonkhan, and Ogunjirin, 2015).

Insecurity includes seven components such as economic security; food security; health security; environmental security; personal security; community security; and political security when analyzed at the micro-level (Tadjbakhsh, 2008; Raimi, Akhuemonkhan, and Ogunjirin, 2015). In light of this, Adebakin and Raimi (2012) stated that absence of any of these components results in a state of insecurity that is marked by phobia, threat, and fear. Security therefore, is crucial to the nation's long-term economic and political development. According to Courson (2008), the federal government provides 150 million Naira (\$1.3 million) monthly to military authorities for logistics to promote peace, security of people and property, including the protection of oil infrastructure in the Niger-Delta (Courson, 2008). The Nigerian government has consistently expended funds

on security but the threat to life and property has subsisted. Due to insecurity, some multinational companies in Nigeria have relocated their staff (Enterprise Resilience, 2008).

### **Post-Independence Party Politics and Elections in Nigeria**

This section examines Nigeria's political parties and elections prior and post independence. One of the essential components for choosing leaders into public offices in any democratic government is the platform of political party system.

Nigeria commenced its self rule by adopting the British Parliamentary System. The Northern People's Congress (NPC) won 134 seats (the highest votes) in 1959. The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC) won 89 seats. The Action Group (AG) won 73 seats. The NPC and NCNC later formed an alliance and it led to the election of their respective leaders as Prime Minister (Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa) and President (Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe), respectively. Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe of the NCNC served as president with only ceremonial authority and Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa of the NPC served as Head of Government but the government was divided and tumultuous until the elections in December 1964, which the NPC and the AG's Ladoke Akintola group jointly won. Due to a 1963 leadership dispute, AG split into two groups, each group was led by Ladoke Akintola and Obafemi Awolowo, respectively. The opposition was created by the latter faction working with the NCNC. Infractions and violence were reported during the 1964 elections (Ogenyi; 2015).

During the 1964-1965 elections, a serious violence occurred. It degenerated into fracas and loss of lives and consequently led to the first brutal military coup in Nigeria in 1966. During the coup, Prime Minister Balewa and several notable Northern politicians/elites were killed. The Nigerian Army got into power under Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi. The military abolished all political parties. Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi ruled from January 15, 1966, to July 29, 1966 and was toppled in a coup after six months (Tyana, 2018; Abagen and Tyana, 2020; Feinstein, 1973). Lt. Colonel (and later General) Yakubu Gowon, the highest ranking officer in the Nigerian Army became Nigeria's Head of State on July 29, 1966, following the second military coup. He ruled the country from July 29,

1966 to July 29, 1975. Gen. Yakubu Gowon was in power when the 30-month civil war occurred (1967-1970). On July 29, 1975, General Gowon was deposed in a military coup. General Murtala Ramat Mohammed came onto power. His administration was vibrant, radical but lasted for only six months (Abagen & Tyona, 2020). He was succeeded by General Olusegun Obasanjo who ruled from 1976 to 1979.

After a presidential and general elections organized in 1978, General Olusegun Obasanjo, in 1979, transferred control of the country's administration to the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) led President Shehu Shagari (Abagen & Tyona, 2020) after the latter had won the election. This marked the beginning of the second republic in Nigeria. According to Oenyi (2015), some of the prominent political parties and their leaders in the second republic include Alhaji Shehu Shagari of National Party of Nigeria (NPN); Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN); Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe of the Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP); Mallam Aminu Kano of the People's Redemption Party (PRP); Mallam Ibrahim Waziri of the Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP); and Dr. Tunji Braithwaite of the National Advanced Party (NAP).

Previous ethnic and religious attitudes followed the election with allegations of wrongdoing which drew in the mirth and merriment from the restoration of democracy. Tyona (2019) stated that Shagari's presidency was marked by widespread corruption. The government led by President Shehu Shagari was accused of corruption and incompetence because he did not develop the economy. So, he was toppled by a military coup. General Muhammadu Buhari was made the new Head of State on December 31, 1983. According to Tyona (2020), the military coup orchestrated by Major-General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, General Muhammadu Buhari's Chief of Army Staff, put an end to the military regime of President Buhari on August 27, 1985. On August 27, 1985, General Babangida succeeded General Buhari as Nigeria's sixth Military Head of State. He later declared himself "Military President" (Tyona and Abagen, 2019).

General Babangida created a "Transition Programme" to democratic governance. For this, he approved the creation of two political parties: the Social Democratic

Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) (Abagen & Tyona, 2020). Presidential and general elections were held and conducted but Babangida annulled the presidential election that was adjudged the fairest and freest in the history of the nation. The election was widely believed to have been won by Chief MKO Abiola of the SDP. Babangida declared an Interim National Government (ING) which was led by Ernest Shonekan, a businessman. The ING lasted for nearly three months in order to stem the terrible tide. On November 17, 1993, General Sani Abacha overthrew the ING interim-president and became the new Head of State of Nigeria (Tyona & Abagen, 2019).

According to Ezonbi (2014), the Abacha administration was unable to put a democratic programme in place. He established the Congress for National Consensus (CNC), the Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN), the Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM), the National Center Party of Nigeria (NCPN), and the United Nigerian Congress Party in order to transform from a military head of state to a civilian president (UNCP). But his death on June 8, 1998, put an end to all the plans. The Nigerian Armed Forces put its Commander-in-Chief, General Abdulsalami Abubakar in power. Abubakar restored democratic governance in the nation. For the restoration, three of the nine political organizations were officially registered as political parties. They include People's Democratic Party (PDP); All Peoples Party (APP); and Alliance for Democracy (AD). General Abubakar organized elections and after the results were announced he handed power over to the democratically elected civilian president, General Olusegun Obasanjo. The Fourth Republic was established on May 29, 1999. General Olusegun Obasanjo's (Rtd.) was elected on the PDP ticket and served two terms, totaling eight years, from 1999 to 2007.

Obasanjo handed power over to late Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, the PDP's presidential candidate in 2007. It was alleged that PDP lost the 2007 election to the now-defunct All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP). ANPP sought redress in court but was unsuccessful. Death shortened the life of late Yar'adua but his tenure was completed by his Vice-President, Goodluck Jonathan. Jonathan's tenure ended in 2011. Buhari contested the presidency and won in 2011. He defeated President Jonathan by garnering 12 States' or 12 million (22%) votes,

as opposed to 24 States' or 22 million (58%) votes (Ogenyi, 2015). Since 1999, the Nigerian state has maintained its commitment to democracy.

### **The 2015 Election and the Change Revolution**

In 2015, fourteen candidates ran for the office of president in the general elections. The prominent candidates include General Muhammadu Buhari of the APC and incumbent President Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of the PDP. Oluremi Sanaiya, the only female contender in the KOWA party, competed among other contestants. Ogenyi (2015) noted that for the electorate, the election was premised on the need for continuity and change. In response to the current socioeconomic needs, continuity supporters thought the Jonathan's Presidency would be a better alternative.

Sekoni (2015) affirmed that the notion that a regime of emancipation of the oppressed was established on March 28, 2015, must have been conveyed to voters by the promise of change inherent in the Buhari/APC campaign. Observers have paid greater attention than in the past to how the APC presidential candidate was made. The general consensus has been that since 1959, the nation has not had a President who voluntarily elected to serve. They pointed out that former President Shehu Shagari publicly admitted in 1979 that all he wanted was to become a senator so that he could use his talent to serve Nigeria. General Olusegun Obasanjo was chosen in 1999 by a group of military dictators to run for president of a party founded by former military leaders and their civilian supporters with the intention of advancing military rule. General Obasanjo selected Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in 2007. The same powerful group that recruited Yar'Adua also attracted Dr. Goodluck Jonathan to the presidential ticket. But only General Buhari had independently and consistently sought the presidency for twelve (12) years. The merger of other political parties coalesced into APC and got Buhari elected on March 28, 2015.

It is important to note that in the 2015 Presidential elections, General Muhammadu Buhari of the APC won with 15,424,921 million votes cast across 21 states, defeating incumbent President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan with 12,853,162 million votes cast across 15 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT),

Abuja (*Channels Television News*, 2015). It was momentous for the APC to win both the presidential and national assembly elections. In addition to winning the presidential election by a margin of 2,571,759,000,000 votes, the APC also confirmed a majority in the Red Chambers of the National Assembly in the political period from May 29, 2015, to May 29, 2019, due to its over fifty-eight seats in the 109-member Senate. The results of the elections demonstrated that most Nigerians had become more open to issue-based politics than religious and ethnicity-based politics. And it mattered greatly that President Jonathan and his Peoples Democratic Party were seen to have performed poorly on the critical issues of eradicating corruption and containing insecurity in Nigeria.

## Methodology

The unit of analysis consists of forty-four (44) local government areas (LGAs) that were specifically chosen from communities at risk of banditry in Niger, Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara States in North Western Nigeria; Niger in North-Central Nigeria; and Imo State in South-East Nigeria during the inquiry period (2015-2022). From Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara, seven (7) LGAs each, eight (8) from Kaduna State, five (5) from Imo, and eleven (11) from Sokoto were chosen. Table 1 below shows the lists of the selected LGAs from the states of Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara, Sokoto, Niger, and Imo.

**Table 1: Unit of Analysis**

S/No	State	LGAs
1.	Kaduna State	Chikun , Kajuru, Kachia, Zangon-Kataf,Kauru, Lere, Birnin-Gwari, Giwas
2.	Zamfara	Maru, Tsafe, Bakura, Anka, Maradun, Gusau, Bukkuyum
3.	Niger	Rafi, Munyan, Shiroro, Magama, Mashegu, Mariaga, Wushishi
4.	Sokoto	Illela, Rabbah, Sabon-birnin, Isa, Wurno, Gada, Goronyo, Tangaza, Gudu, Dengen-Shuni, Kebbe
5.	Imo	Orsu, Orlu, Oru East, Oru West, Njaba
6.	Katsina	Batssari, Danmusa, Faskari, Jibiya, Kankara, Sabuwa, Safana

**Source:** Field Research, 2022

The study collected data using qualitative methods. Focus Groups Discussions (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews were conducted to get detailed and individualized accounts from stakeholders in the study area. Given the security/access of the study settings, which were only available during the day, the interviews and FDGs were deemed appropriate to gather quality data in a timely manner. The qualitative technique generated different views to the knowledge, gave a fair stakeholder impression, and reduced bias responses.

In various states of Nigeria, no fewer than 40 local governments had experienced significant attacks and as a result, elections could not be conducted in those places. Kaduna, Zamfara, Imo, Niger, and Sokoto are some of the most affected states as terrorists, bandits, and unknown gunmen’s activities spiraled in many of the states’ LGAs. The study carefully selected participants for interviews and focus group discussions from security personnel, traditional leaders, youth and women associations for inclusiveness. The snowballing sampling technique was used to locate the key informants that could offer useful information regarding pervasive insecurity and the challenges facing the 2023 Elections in Nigeria.

**Table 2: Stakeholder groups and number of informants**

No	Stakeholder Type	Method-ological tool	Katsina	Zamfara	Kaduna	Niger	Imo	Sokoto
1.	Security Agencies	KII	24	21	19	15	9	18
2.	Traditional Leaders	KII	7	6	6	6	2	5
3.	Leaders of Youth Associations	FGD	7	6	7	6	4	7
4.	Leaders-Religious Associations	FGD	7	6	6	7	3	6
5.	Women Association	FGD	7	6	6	5	4	7
	Total		52	45	44	39	22	43

**Source:** Field research, 2022

107 qualitative interviews were conducted with members of the five stakeholder groups who took part in the research between January and August 2022. Table 2 shows the breakdown of the total number of stakeholders interviewed. Every FGD and interview was conducted in either Hausa or English. Responses were later translated from Hausa into English. The interview's ethical guidelines called for voluntary involvement, no damage to subjects, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, rewards and goodwill for subjects, candor with subjects, and ethical reporting.

### **Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

The researcher ensured the validity of the instruments by making sure that the contents of the instruments are consistent with both the objectives and assumption of the study. Also, efforts were made to ensure that all aspects considered relevant to the study are adequately covered. Therefore, for high validity, external criterion method was adopted and was achieved by checking how correct the findings of a particular instrument is by comparing the results with existing knowledge as well as the findings of the research got from interview. The above methods were carefully employed so as to ensure that the study is highly reliable and valid.

In order to ensure that the instruments are reliable and provide accurate testing of assumption of study which would in turn, enable a dependable and objective deduction, inferences and conclusions, internal consistency method was adopted. This was achieved by crosschecking information with other sources of data collection and by ensuring that the facts and figures collected from other sources mentioned earlier are accurate and would remain the same if the collection is repeated over time. To ensure that the instruments have high reliability, the interview was structurally constructed in a simple, concise and unambiguous manner so as to allow easy understanding of the questions by the respondents and so as to ensure consistency in their answers.



## **Pervasive Insecurity and the Challenges Facing the 2023 Elections in Nigeria**

### **Poverty and Unemployment**

Since poverty and unemployment have consistently challenged Nigeria's population, especially the youth, some of them have become eager recruits to criminal groups. Sheikh Ahmed Gumi revealed that "in his endeavor to talk with bandits in Kaduna State, he identified a graduate of ABU Zaria among the bandits and one of their commanders spoke English fluently" (Gumi, 2021).. This confirms the statement describing Nigeria as the World Poverty Clock (*Sahara Reporters*, 2018 cited in Mashi and Katsina, 2019).

According to Dr. Yemi Kale, the Statistician General of the Federation, the Northwest and Northeast geopolitical zones have Nigeria's highest rates of poverty, with 77.7% and 76.3%, respectively. He also predicted that the rate of poverty in the regions would continue to rise (*Nigerian Tribune*, Tuesday 14 February, 2012). When compared to those in the southern part of the country and the average citizen, 80.9% of people in the Northwest of Nigeria live in squalor, according to 2015 estimates from the United Nations on the multi-dimensional poverty index (UN, 2015 cited in Abdullahi, 2019). The unemployment rate has increased significantly under the Buhari government, rising from 12.48 percent in 2016 to around 19.7 percent in 2020. African Development Bank (ADB) Chairman, Dr. Akinwumi Adeshina in a recent report by the Bank, claimed that 40% of Nigerian youth are jobless.

According to International Crisis Group (2020), Nigeria's Northwest has the country's highest rate of poverty. The poverty rate in all seven Northwestern states in 2019 was higher than the national average of 40.1 percent, with Sokoto (87.7 percent), Jigawa (87 percent), and Zamfara leading the way (74 percent). Currently, the zone has Nigeria's highest percentage of out-of-school children, including those who never attended school, which results in cohorts of young people without formal education (ICG, 2020). Many families lack access to decent healthcare, education, and basic security of life, and a sizable portion of young people in the Northwest lack prospects for meaningful employment. As a result of this, some of these unproductive adolescents have become cattle rustlers and rural bandits in the area (Abdullahi, 2019).

Nigeria's unemployment rate is 23.1%, while the youth unemployment rate is 55.4%, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2019). There can be no security when unemployment and poverty are rising. As Liolio (2012) correctly noted, the structure of the local economy and degree of poverty will determine how successfully people are recruited into the organization. This shows that there is a direct correlation between increase of armed banditry, high rates of poverty and unemployment.

### **Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) Proliferation**

Armed bandits use Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) to inflict violence on their targets and confront government security. After President Ghadafi's dictatorship in Libya fell in 2011, the porous borders between Nigeria and the Niger Republic allowed inflow of weapons from the Sahel and the Maghreb into West African nations and down to Northwest Nigeria.

The porous border between Nigeria and the Niger Republic made the sale of guns exceedingly profitable, inexpensive, and accessible to criminals. President Buhari responded to the killing of 70 people in Zaroumaraye, a border town between the Niger Republic and Mali, by saying that "terrorists and other criminals now pose security challenges to other countries, like Cameroon, Chad, Niger Republic and Nigeria," as a result of the looting of Libyan arsenals in the wake of Gadhafi's overthrow (*Premium Times*, January 8, 2012). Nigeria is reported to have approximately 1,400 illegal border points but 84 approved land border control sites. However, due to the dry Sahel vegetation and open Savannah landscape, the entire stretch along the northern borders with Benin Republic, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon are all potential crossing points for illegal arms traffickers and other criminals. The success anticipated in the fight against banditry would, at best, remain an illusion, according to security experts.

In Nigeria, the availability and distribution of SALWs have been facilitated by armed banditry. For instance, in Zamfara State, bandits and rustlers surrendered over 100 weapons and ammunition in 2018 and over 500 weapons and ammunition in 2019 (Nwantoh, 2019). The State Government also recovered 216 AK-47 rifles from the bandits, including light machine gun rifles,

LAR rifles, and a number of ammunition hoards (Ahmed, 2019). Due to the amnesty programme in 2017, bandits in Katsina State handed in over 400 AK47 firearms (Adoyichie, 2019). Bandits in Sokoto State gave up 102 AK-47 rifles (Maruf, 2019). Recently, a gun runner caught in Katsina admitted to having sold more than 10,000 weapons and rounds to robbers (Ibrahim, 2021). Not only do the bandits utilize these weapons, they also sell them to other criminal groups operating in the nation.

As these guns travel around the nation, criminal activities spiral. Olamide (2018) stated that the escalation in conflict is evidence of how easy it is for criminals to obtain small arms and other weapons (Olamide, 2018 cited in Mashi, et al, 2018). According to the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), the spread of weapons increases the likelihood of bloodshed and violent conflicts and, as a result, poses a threat to slow down development. It can also result in massive physical and human devastation, violations of human rights, and a pervasive atmosphere of instability and insecurity (GIABA, 2013). Table 3 below shows some statistical data regarding SALWs proliferation in Nigeria over time.

**Table 3: SALWs proliferation**

S/N	DATA ON SALWS PROLIFERATION	YEAR	SOURCE	COMMENT
1	21, 407, 903	2010	Nigeria Custom Service	This figure accounts for only seized weapons.
2	3000	2012	Nigeria Custom Service	This figure accounts for only seized weapons
3	58,889	2013	Nigeria Custom Service	This figure accounts for only seized weapons
4	31, 285	2014	Nigeria Custom Service	This figure accounts for only seized weapons
5	350,000,000	2016	United Nations/ UNREC	Data backed by research
6	1,300, 000	2017	PRESCOM	Data backed by research
7	350,000,000	2018	Federal Government of Nigeria	Government provided data

**Source:** *Compiled by the author from data collected from Nigerian Tribune, June 13, 2018 and Vanguard, August 02, 2018*

According to Table 3 presented above, the increase in the flow of arms between 1999 and 2003 intensified militant activity, and the doubling of this inflow between 2003 and 2009 aided the emergence of the Boko Haram and fostered its operations. Armed bandits have emerged as a result of the ongoing supply and inflow of arms since 2009, and their activities pose a serious threat to the country's economy and educational system.

In the south-eastern and south-western regions of the country, the supply of weapons has also given gunmen and separatist organizations more confidence. Overall, the government has struggled to stem the tide of insecurity arising from weapons proliferation but has made insignificant success. People are more likely to engage in violent behavior as long as they have access to weapons, particularly in a nation where dreadful socioeconomic conditions serve as justifications for crime and aggressive behavior.

### **Internally Displaced Persons**

Millions of people get displaced after conflicts. This poses a serious problem to national security. Over 200,000 people have been internally displaced in the states of Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara, according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR, 2019). Majority of them are women and children (Famine Early Warning System Network) (FEWS NET, 2019). According to the International Organization on Migration's rapid assessment, Katsina state has the next-highest number of internally displaced people (IDPs), with 16,257 and Zamfara has the most, 38,113 (IOM, 2019). Due to their lack of access to food, inadequate housing, and medical care, the people are faced with life-threatening conditions while in displacement.

In Zamfara alone, there are around 22,000 widows and 44,000 orphans (blueprint, 2019). Some of the IDP women engage in transactional sex and prostitution as a "negative coping mechanism." Others have been forced to join the bandits as food vendors, informants, weapons and drug suppliers/carriers, and provide other essential needs for the bandits. The Katsina State Police Command detained four (4) ladies in May 2019 who were cooking for and providing information to bandits about potential crimes (Oyelude, 2019).

## **Illicit Drug Intake**

Drug abuse is another factor cited as a major contributor to violence and conflict. The results of this study demonstrated that the intake of hard substances such as heroin, cocaine, marijuana, alcohol, and tramadol impact on the aggressive conduct displayed by some herders, bandits, and kidnappers. A respondent in Jibia LGA of Katsina State claimed that the area had recently seen a growth of subpar drug stores where criminals and kidnappers could buy alcohol. During the FGD in Batsari, another respondent affirmed that illegal drug trade is expanding in the communities near the state borders. Most of the hard drugs cross land boundaries. Respondents further acknowledged that some young people from towns and cities sold drugs to criminals who lived in the forest as a quick way to get money.

In a notice published on 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2018, former Defense Minister of Nigeria, Mansur Dan-Ali, a retired one-star general from Zamfara State, revealed that state failure brought on by corruption, the dissolution of institutions of governance, de-institutionalization, poverty and inequality, a lackluster security architecture, and a climate of impunity that pervaded the country led to growing insecurity. The establishment of a Presidential Advisory Committee on the eradication of Drug Abuse, led by Brig. Buba Marwa (rtd), in December 2018 is the best thing the present administration has accomplished (Cited in Odinkalu, 2018; Abdulkabir, 2017; Afolabi, 2013). The issue of ungoverned and ungovernable landmass also contributed to the emergence of unregulated areas as seen in the table below:

## **2023 Elections and the Challenges of Combating Insecurity in Nigeria**

The following factors made it difficult for Nigeria to address insecurity:

**Geographically ungoverned spaces:** Geographically ungoverned spaces are difficult for security personnel to govern and to seek out criminal hideouts since they lack the necessary equipment. A police officer said: “Throughout the entire course of these operations in Zamfara, Kaduna, and Katsina, not a single armored personnel carrier can be employed to get access to the hideout of some of these outlaws” (Interview, Birnin-Gwari, 15 June, 2022). It appears

that Nigeria's security services are not fully prepared to fight banditry: A police officer with a dated gun and just 10 rounds of bullets cannot take on a criminal with a sophisticated rifle and an unlimited supply of ammo. According to a police officer who was a respondent, majority of the bandits, "used brand-new rifles, more than the AK-47 that we frequently use, some of which I, as a police officer, have never seen in my life" (Interview, Munyan, 23 July, 2022).

**Lack of security personnel:** Another major problem to combating banditry and other types of crimes is the lack of trained and experienced workforce to undertake policing. Responding, another police officer said: "The security infrastructure we have in the nation cannot handle the current crisis. There are 500,000 police officers on the Force. How can they properly cover the entire 774 local government areas while addressing the nation's many security challenges? There is no doubt that we are underpoliced. Effective police intervention is not possible in this situation (Interview, Kankara, 29 August, 2022).

**Bribery and corruption in the legal system and security agencies:** In many of the cases, infamous bandits who had been apprehended were later released from police custody or pardoned by the court after their families or associates had paid a judge or police official a significant bribe.

The persistence of security concerns has also been exacerbated by the porous borders and the proliferation of SALWs. The security personnel interviewed revealed that the more bandits captured, the more the weapons received, and the more the bandits recruited.

### **Stakeholders' Views on Long-Term Security Mitigation Strategies for the 2023 Elections**

Nigeria's banditry and insecurity has spiraled out of control. It has become a serious national emergency with far-reaching geographical effects. According to the data collated, the stakeholders offer perspectives on how to mitigate banditry, insecurity and militancy in Nigeria:

Grassroots vigilantes and state security personnel working together in harmony.

The study showed that in order to combat banditry, there needs to be a tactical synergy between local vigilantes and state security personnel. This is required due to operational difficulties brought on by the army's incomplete understanding of the banditry area. As a result, neighborhood watch organizations and local vigilantes are needed, as they are more familiar with the area (KII, Maradun, 41, Anka 28 and Jibia 53, 2022). The vigilantes should be adequately taught, equipped, and supervised on defence tactics. Potential excesses and misuse should be prevented. The effectiveness of the collaboration between local vigilantes and state security personnel in decimating Boko Haram insurgency illustrates the potential significance of this kind of community policing in stopping banditry (KII, 25; Sabuwa, 2022).

### **Stationing Sufficient Security Troops in Banditry-Prone Areas and Deployment**

There is widespread skepticism about the ability of the Nigerian government to provide adequate security for its citizens and others living within its territorial boundaries in light of the recurrent incidents of these sources of insecurity and the ongoing assurances of the government to control the situation (KII. Maru, Orsu, Orlu, Oru West, and Njabe, 2022). It is therefore, necessary to put sufficient troops in banditry-prone areas.

### **Improving Community-Security Personnel Relations**

Security initiatives frequently ignore proactive participation and deeper linkages between security and the local populations. This practice is a successful strategy that enables local communities, authorities, and security providers to collaborate and identify regional solutions to the security issues they confront (KII, 45, Batsari, Zurmi and Tsafe 47, 2022). By connecting local level successes to national and regional reform processes and frameworks, the strategy can support more general peace building and state building. Usually, the emphasis is on selecting the best tactical strategy to eradicate banditry throughout the country and in the region. The report highlights that successful civilian-security partnerships should be the primary means of resolving complex crises (KII, 34, Sabuwa, 2022).

## **Construction of Infrastructure, Network of Rural Roads**

Communities experiencing violent conflict confront the most difficult road obstacles because their already meager infrastructure suffers from destruction or deterioration, which worsens their already precarious economic situation and the fault lines that initially sparked conflict (KII, 40, Maaradun & Kankara, 2020). In other words, roads can strengthen the sense of “togetherness” or social cohesiveness among the entire population through enhancing connectedness and accelerating state unification. Roads allow security officers to communicate more swiftly and easily with one another (KII, 52, Munyan & Magera, 2022).

## **Conclusion**

This study identified the issues and occurrences that raised significant tensions prior the 2023 elections. It also analyzed the national efforts to de-escalate them. It depicted the instances where no significant steps were taken to reduce the likelihood of disputes and violence.

In order to achieve this, the researchers looked at the numerous official and unofficial systems put in place at the state and federal levels, evaluating the degree to which stakeholders were mobilized to lower the likelihood of election violence. Given that it had supported and encouraged the actions of terrorists, bandits, and other extremists in the run-up to the 2023 elections, the proliferation of arms poses a serious threat to peace, security, and development. Although the conflicts and criminal activities for which they are used are not caused by the proliferation of arms, the widespread availability, accumulation, and illicit flows of such weapons have the tendency to escalate conflicts, undermine peace agreements, intensify violence, negatively impact on crime, impede economic and social development, and obstruct the growth of social stability, democracy, and good governance.

In Nigeria, the fight against terrorism, banditry, and all other types of organized violence can never be won as long as the threat of the proliferation of weapons exists. The security situation is deteriorating and the nation is heading towards the precipice. Containing the illegal inflow of weapons has to be treated as national emergency.



## **The Way Forward**

1. The security infrastructure needs to be urgently reorganized by the government for efficient intelligence gathering.
2. To reduce unemployment in the nation, programmes for eradicating poverty, opening up employment opportunities, and providing subsidized loans for small and medium-sized businesses should all be made available.
3. In order to eradicate the threat of banditry in the nation, both kinetic and non-kinetic methods should be used.
4. The fight against corruption needs to be comprehensive through reviewed curriculum for higher moral values and national loyalty in educational institutions, aggressive pursuit of national sensitization and moral rebirth campaign by the National Orientation Agency, strengthening of anti-corruption legislations and institutions for effective performance.
5. To stop the smuggling of weapons into the country, the land borders must be effectively policed. This can be achieved through the institution of community policing.
6. To ensure that children grow up with a culture of values that is ingrained in them, parents should teach their children respect for established authority, hard work, and tolerance for one another.
7. A calm climate encourages both foreign and local investors to invest in the region and the nation as a whole. Therefore, government should always be vigilant in preventing security issues from getting out of hand.

## References

- Abagen, F.T, & Tyona, S. (2018). The impact of arms proliferation on Nigeria's national Security. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies (IJIRAS)*, 5(6) 188-194. Available on [www.ijiras.com](http://www.ijiras.com), ISSN: 2394-4404.
- Abagen, F.T, & Tyona, S. (2020). Interrogating the challenges of Nigeria's foreign policy: Fifty-Nine years after Independence, 1960-2019. *A Journal of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Nigerian Defense Academy, Kaduna*.5 (9).
- Abdul Kabir, S. (2017). Causes and Incisive Solutions to the Widespread of Kidnapping in Nigeria Current Administration: Under Scholastic Scrutiny. *Journal of Political Science and Public Affairs*.
- Adebakin, M.A. and Raimi, L. (2012). National Security Challenges and Sustainable Economic Development: Evidence from Nigeria. *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences*, 1 (1), pp.1-30.
- Adejumobi, S. (1998). *Evolving Democracy and Good Governance in Africa: What Future?* In Adesida, O. & Oteh, A. (Eds.), *In Visions of the Future of Africa*. Abidjan.
- Aderibigbe, S. (2006). *Basic Approach to Government*. Ikeja: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited.
- Adesida, O. & Oteh, A. (Eds.), *In Visions of the Future of Africa*. Abidjan.
- Adeyemi, K. (2011). Jega worried over electoral violence. *The nation*. March 27<sup>th</sup> 2011.5 (17).
- Ake, C. (1996). *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Washington: The Brookings Institution.
- Alimeka, O. (2011). Post-Election Violence in Nigeria! Emerging trend and lessons. *Clean Foundations*. [Elogspot.com](http://Elogspot.com)....i post-election violence in Nigeria.
- Arowolo, D., & Lawal, T. (2009). *Political Violence and Democratisation in Nigeria (2003- 2007)*. *Journal of Contemporary Politics*, 2 (1), 172-181.
- Audu, B. (2022). Democracy under Threat: Why the Security Risks to Nigeria's 2023 Elections must not be overlooked. *Global Challenges* (1<sup>st</sup> December, 2022).
- Bello, S. (2014): Challenges and Opportunities in Nation-Building and Democratic Governance: Perspectives on Politics in Nigeria, Bello, S. and Yusuf, M.M (Ed) in *Popular Participation and Democratization in Nigeria under the Fourth Republic*, Africa Research and Development Agency (ARADA). Ahmadu Bello University Press Limited, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria, 11-28.
- Bratton, M. (2004). *The 'Alternation Effect' in Africa*. *Journal of Democracy*, 15 (4).147-158.
- Bratton, M., & Van de Walle, N. (1997). *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Courson, E. (2008). Federal government contributes 150 million naira (\$1.3 million) to the military every month. Except from *Borom to Bust in Nigeria* written by Will Connors, in the *Washington Post*, September 15, 2008. Accessed on January 2021. Available online on link [http://www.ocnus.net/artman2/publish/Africa\\_8/From\\_Boom\\_to\\_Bust\\_in\\_Nigeria\\_printer.shtml](http://www.ocnus.net/artman2/publish/Africa_8/From_Boom_to_Bust_in_Nigeria_printer.shtml).and
- Diamond, L. (1999). *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Diamond, L. (2006). *Is the Third Wave Over?* *Journal of Democracy*, 7 (3).p. 34-45.

Diamond, L., & Plattner, M. (1994). *Introductions in the Forum for Democratic Studies*. Washington D.C: National Endowment for Democracy. p. 24-35.

Dumor, E. (1998). *Keynote Address*. In J. R. Ayee (Ed.), *the 1996 General Election and Democratic Consolidation in Ghana* (p. 157-166). Accra: Gold-Type Ltd.

Eme, O.I. and Onyishi, A. (2011). The challenges of insecurity in Nigeria: A thematic exposition. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 3 (8), pp.172-185.

Emelike, O. (2022). What worsening insecurity means for 2023 election. *Business Day* (July 10, 2022).

Ezonbi, B. (2014). Post-colonial political parties in Nigeria: The old face that refused to disappear in V. Egweni, T. Wuam and C.S. Orngu (Eds). *Federalism, Politics and Minorities in Nigeria: Essays in Honour of Professor G.N. Hembe*. Lagos: Bahiti and Dalila Publishers, pp.539-559.

Fawole, A. (2005). *Voting without choosing: interrogating the crisis of 'electoral democracy' in Nigeria*. In L. Kasongo, *Liberal Democracy and Its Critics in Africa: Political Dysfunction and Struggle for Social Progress* (p. 150). London: Zed Books.

Feinstein, A. (1973). *African revolutionary: The life and times of Nigeria's Aminu Kano*: Davision Publishing Ltd.

Freedom House. (2006). *Freedom in the World*. Washington: Freedom House.

Gadu, I. (2015 April, 12). Buhari's victory and the West. *The Nation*, p.18.

Gboyega, A. (2022). Insecurity Threatens Conduct of 2023 Elections in 686 Communities. *Thisday Newspaper* (19<sup>th</sup> October, 2022).

Huntington, S. P. (1991). *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Idayat, H. (2022). Insecurity and Nigeria's 2023 elections. *Punch News Paper* (14<sup>th</sup> September, 2022).

Idike, A.N (2014): Democracy and Electoral Process in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects of E-voting Option. PP. 122-149 in *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (AJHSS)*. 2(2). P.12-22.

Lindberg, S. (2007). *The power of elections revisited. Elections and Political Identities in New Democracies*. Yale University.

Lindberg, S. I. (2006a). *Democracy and Elections in Africa*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Odusote, A. (2014): Nigerian Democracy and Electoral Process since Amalgamation: Lessons from a Turbulent past. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR- JHSS)*, 19(2) P. 25-37 [www.iosrjournals.org](http://www.iosrjournals.org)

Ogenyi, E. (2015, April, 17). The change revolution: The Voice, Backpage.

Osita, A. (2016). *Elections and Governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic*. Dakar, CODESRIA

Otto, G. and Ukpere, W.I. (2012). National security and development in Nigeria. *African Journal of Business Management*. 6 (23), pp. 6765-6770, 13 June, 2012 Available online <http://www.academicjournals.org/AJBM> DOI: 10.5897/AJBM12.155 ISSN 1993-8233

- Princeton, N. L. (2005). *Electoral Reform: The Next Milestone in Nigeria's Democracy*. Retrieved July 02, 2014, from [www.cfr.org](http://www.cfr.org/nigeria/electoral-reform-next-milestone-nigerias-democracy/p81-91): <http://www.cfr.org/nigeria/electoral-reform-next-milestone-nigerias-democracy/p81-91>.
- Sandbrook, R. (1988). *Liberal Democracy in Africa: A Socialist Revisionist Perspective*. *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 22 (2), 21-34.
- Santiso, C. (2001). *International cooperation for democracy and good governance: towards a second generation?* *European Journal of Development Research*, 13 (1), 154-180.
- Santiso, C., & Loada, A. (2003). *Explaining the Unexpected: Electoral Reform and Democratic Governance in Burkina Faso*. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41 (3), 395- 419.
- Sekoni, R. (2015 April, 12). 2015 election verdict and Nigeria 2. *The Nation*. P.14.
- Sunday, O. and Ityokura, M. (2022). Insecurity: Nigerians worried over threat to 2023 polls despite assurances. *The Guardian* (09 November, 2022).
- Tadjbakhsh, S. (2008). Human Security. HD Insights, HDR Networks February, Issue 17. Human Development Report Office United Nations Development Programme NHDR Workspace.
- The Cable News (2020). 12 killed as gunmen raid Kaduna communities. [www.thecablenews.ng](http://www.thecablenews.ng). Accessed on December 30, 2020. 4.43pm.
- The Sun (2022). Road to 2023: INEC and security challenges ahead of 2023 polls (21<sup>st</sup> September, 2022).
- Tyona, S. (2018). 2015 Gubernatorial polls: An analysis of electoral violence and horror in some states in Nigeria. In B. Ezonbi and C.E. Jonah (Eds.), *Security, Elections and Electoral Violence in Nigeria*, Polac Security Series 1(4):p. 68-76.