

COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Institute of African Renaissance Studies



ELECTION WATCH

Management of Democratic Elections in Africa



“Creating a Community of Practice on African Election”

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1. Introduction

The Institute for African Renaissance Studies (IARS) wishes to announce the launch of a quarterly–*Election Watch Newsletter* – whose **purpose and objective** is to report on, monitor and analyze the challenging dynamics around elections and the electoral cycle in each of the 54 Member States of the African Union (AU). If this is done judiciously, then this lays open the challenges that a particular country needs to address or even the hurdles to be overcome in the next election.

In 2015, African is scheduled to hold 15 National and General Elections, representing 27.7% or nearly a third of the member states faced with the uncertain electoral result that emerges from a free and fair process.

Secondary Objective

The second and most important secondary objective that the *Election Watch Newsletter* seeks to achieve is to identify and offer intending Masters and PhD students and other academics, *potential research topics around the consolidation of democracy and elections as case studies*. This is a task that IARS, within the College of Graduate Studies (CGS), takes seriously and hopes to draw increasing interest and expertise towards the research and analysis of how societies continue to improve on governance and accountability in the integrated political, socio-economic, security and interactions with the global political systems as they consolidate their own democratic systems?

In a democracy, elections provide the constitutional opportunity for citizens to elect their own political leaders of choice. The electoral cycle includes aspects of the appropriate constitutional and legal call – or even extension – of a scheduled election; delimitation of constituencies; voter and candidate registration and coming up with a credible voters roll; campaigning In practice, if an incumbent is successful in holding onto power, then this provides renewed legitimacy and if, as in the recent case of the election in Mauritius of November 2014, the opposition – *L'alliance Lepep* leading the coalition, *Militant Socialist Movement (MSM) & Parti Mauricen Social Democrate (PMSD)* triumphed at the polls, with the process providing for orderly political succession. The ruling *Labour Party* and its ally, *Mouvement Militant Maricien (MMM)*, quickly accepted defeat and stepped aside.

Since the 1990s, the route to multiparty democracy and regular elections has been constrained by the past history and culture of the One-Party-State system. As experience has shown, democracy is an evolving experience and with a history of violence, emerging from the late 15th Century, *Treaty of Westphalia*, secured in the aftermath of the

debilitating *30 Years War* of 1618 - 1648 - that gave us the Nation State system as we know it today.

On the African continent, in the last half decade, the trend of weak, fragile and collapsed states has accelerated, as witnessed in Algeria, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Tunisia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic (C.A.R), Mali, Somalia, Madagascar, South Sudan and more recently, Lesotho, to cite but a few.

Methodology and Presentation Form

The short pieces to be received by the *Election Watch* editor, from anyone interested in writing up a contribution is styled along the *Op Eds* policy oriented articles. The piece (s) must begin with an introduction that provides the context of the debate, identifies the challenges – preferably offer some conceptual or comparative examples before making recommendations and conclusions. The newspaper titled and styled article is to have no footnotes – or these are included in the text if need be – and discussing the key electoral cycle challenges of any given state or sub-region of the African continent. The maximum size is 2000 words. Accepted contributions must be received at least a fortnight before the quarterly publication schedule with the first one expected to be out by the third week of March. This is in time for the *Seminar on Nigeria, Boko Haram and the implications of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)* scheduled on 24th March from 9 to 1 pm.

Conclusion

In the continuing march towards consolidating the African state within a multiparty democratic environment, the hosting of an election is sometimes removed from the traditional expectation of power-retention, legitimation and succession. In many instances, the issues are more complex and broader and it is hoped the Election Watch series of quarterly reports will make a contribution in highlighting these positive as well as negative challenges and hopefully, feed into the academic research and analysis.

2. Content:

2.2. South Africa General Election: 7 May 2014-Lessons Learnt? “Slipping of the Crown for the ‘Traditional’ Ruling Parties”?

South Africa’s 5th General election held, regularly and constitutionally on time, had a several firsts as well as confirming a number of developing trends, in its final result. First, the 400 seats available on a closed system, submitted by competing political parties on a *Proportional Representation* model, split the seats equally between the National Assembly, allocated 200 seats and the newly established, provincial legislative elections, spread across the 9 provinces also with 200 seats. This represents more than a theoretical model of devolution of power and influence from central government and strengthening the provinces. This step change in the layers of constitutional representation is pregnant with research opportunities. One obvious question to ask as social scientists and researchers is that, has this fundamental power relation’s change shifted authority and allowed fuller representation? (Aware that this question may only be possible to find empirical answers after reviewing the 2014-2019 political period.

Secondly, just before the country prepared for the 2014 election, the legislators passed the *Electoral Amendment Act of 2013* whose provisions, allow for those in diaspora to exercise their vote while outside South Africa. The provision of this Act also came into force during the 2014 election. A general observation of the adoption of this Act is, it forced political parties to begin to have an outward looking-international relations type-foreign/policy frame of policy perspective as they approached the May 2014 Election. More seriously however, is the retrospective questions: what were the key drivers, political parties and constituencies (even global regional areas) that drove the diaspora inclusion vote to become of the 2014 election? Did this provide representation to benefit any local party or constituency? In practice, the available evidence shows that 26 400 expatriates registered to vote in in pre-registered post poll from 28th, 29th and 1st April from 7 am to 8 pm each day. In disaggregating the location expatriates, 9 863 were registered in London while 1 539 were in Dubai.

Third, the result of the May 2014 Election in South Africa is interesting in confirming a continental trend—ruling parties are finding it difficult to hold on to traditionally large majorities in any free and fair election.

Yr	Poll	ANC	DA (DP)	Third
2014	24.1m	62.1%	22.2%	6.3% EFF
2009	23 m	65.9	16.6	7.4% COPE

2004	20.6 m	69.6	12.37	6.9%	IFP
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Political parties: African National Congress (ANC); Democratic Party- later changed to Democratic Alliance in 2000; Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP); the Congress of the People (COPE) and Economic Freedom Party (EFF). Statistics available on the Electoral Commission of South Africa website: www.elections.org.za/content Accessed on 16 March 2015

What do the stats reveal? A lesson to be drawn for South Africa and the rest of the continent is the obvious one, that ‘traditional’ ruling parties are facing declining high and dominant popular electoral support. In a related case study, also captured in this issue of *Elections Watch Quarterly*, in Mozambique, the ruling party, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), in power since 1975, witnessed its mass appeal evaporate as it plummeted from a 2008 high of 75% to 51% in the October 2014. This is an important trend for which ruling political parties, election monitors, researchers and analysts have to take note of.

The second and final trend evident in the patten covering the last three South African elections is how the third parties have become an endangered species. In the run up to the 2014 Elections, the Inkatha Freedom Party experienced serious internal implosion that gave birth to Zanele ka Magwaza-Msibi’s National Freedom Party (NFP) before both factions then gave way to the EFF who also swept away the Congress of the People Party (COPE). As the short history of COPE was to show, the debilitating leadership struggle between Mbazima Shilowa and Mosiuoa Lekota created lasting damage.

Martin Rupiya



2.3. Zambia Presidential Election, 20th January 2015, “‘Sick-Presidents,’ Lessons and Implications?”

Early this year, on 25 January 2015, a low turn out of 32.36%, Zambians went to the polls – presidential contest – to choose the successor of the late Michael Sata who had died whilst in office, in a London Hospital on 29 October 2014. Sata was the second Zambian President to die in office after Levy Mwanawasa died in Paris, France, on 19 August 2008. This election was therefore meant to have a candidate serve out the remaining term of the late President Sata, until the next scheduled election in 2016.

Because of the Mwanawasa experience, worsened by the combative Sata who refused to acknowledge that he was sick in spite of the obvious signs, voices were raised to have the health of the incoming president checked and confirmed by an independent body before candidates would be allowed to run. In order to regulate this innovation, it required the motivation of a bill through parliament to result in appropriate constitutional changes. However, in the rush to choose a new leader, these voices were drowned out.

Barely weeks into office, on 9 March 2015 whilst officiating at a Women’s Day event, President Edgar Lungu collapsed and was rushed to the nearby Maina Military Barracks hospital. Why he collapsed is between a triangle of voices emerging from the state, supporters and opposition – claiming “he had malaria and collapsed from exhaustion,” “there is a narrowing of the esophagus – whose remedy requires high-tech equipment currently unavailable in Zambia,” and therefore he had to be airlifted out of the country and finally, the unrelenting opposition claim, “the President must stay away from the bottle – accusing him of heavy alcohol drinking.”

What is clear is that once the president fell sick, the economy has registered concern with the country’s currency, the Kwacha losing ground, sometimes as much as three times in a single day against international currencies. The International Monetary Fund has also warned about desperate efforts to “loosen the fiscal policies” just before the 2016 scheduled elections in order to curry favour with some constituencies.

The challenge that elections – presidential has shown us in Zambia includes – is it time that the health of potential and sitting presidents be an issue of concern to the electorate that is ultimately provided for within the constitution? The Zambians appear wearied by constant and repetitive presidential elections and the voices that had been ignored in the run up to the January 2015 election may now haunt the country. Elections are an expensive process

and the continual returning of the country to electoral mode is not healthy for the economy.

As Zambia prepares for the 2016 Presidential and General Elections – there is sufficient areas of concern that good research may begin to raise awareness as well as develop options for the electorate and the new government.



2.4. Lesotho General Elections 28 February 2015, “Fighting the Demons of Coalition Governing?”

The 28 February 2015 have come and gone. Held amidst a deepening political, economic and security crisis that included the aborted military coup of 30 August’s 2014 and therefore with “the military confined to barracks,” the result has provided further stalemate.

The opposition and former Prime Minister, Dr Pakhalitha Mosisili and leader of the Democratic Convention (DC) has returned to office, leading a seven party coalition against Dr Tom Thabane’s All Basotho Convention (ABC). The latter won 50% of the 80 Seats under the constituency based system but is now out in the cold. Augmented by the 40 special category seats, Thabane and the ABC were swept out of power as one of his coalition partner and recent nemesis, Deputy Prime Minister M. Metsing leader of the Lesotho Democratic Congress (LDC) switched sides and now supports Mosisili and the DC.

While the core challenge before the SADC intervention and inspired snap election, the country faced a number of substantive challenges. These included a weak and fragile state – that has not been consolidated since 1966 when the country received its independence from Britain and planned its first multiparty democratic election in January 1969. While Dr Ntsu Mokehle and his party appeared to triumph at the polls, the ruling Chief Leabua Jonathan who later transformed the military to turn against citizens in an effort to maintain and retain power later annulled this. This phenomenon is still very much a characteristic of the political and military conduct of the elite in Lesotho.

Today, in Lesotho, half of the population is celebrating the return of the Congress – a party that had run the country for 15 years since 1998. However, the rest of the population appears uneasy and concerned – and this is the case with senior appointments in the civil service, the diplomatic corps, the four arms of the Police, the Army, the Intelligence and the Correctional Services – serving in institutions that have become highly politicized and which everyone has been calling for reform before the elections.



2.5. Mozambique Elections, 15 October 2014, “A Power, Wealth Sharing & Response to the long-delayed FRELIMO & RENAMO Force Integration - Election” The significance of the recent election held in Mozambique appears to have gone almost unnoticed and yet – this is one of the most fundamental social engineering process, importantly, based on national consensus and signed agreements ever noted in the southern African region.

In October 2012, Alphonso Dhlakama moved into the bush – threatening the return of the civil war if the long outstanding issues from the 1992 Rome Treaty that the ruling party, FRELIMO had felt reluctant to comply with and therefore ignored implementation. Once in his old base of Gorongosa – cadres from RENAMO started a low level but brutal insurgency, shooting at cars, buses and trucks and killing occupants and drivers, effectively cutting off the region from the rest of the country. In response, the then President, Armando Guebuza, elected to engage in dialogue instead of launching a counter military operation. This strategy paid off as, in September 2014, as the country prepared for the October Presidential and General Elections, Alphonso agreed to return to Maputo and participate in a far reaching political power sharing, wealth sharing and force integration agreement. In rapid fashion, the ruling party dominated Parliament passed an Amnesty Law for Alphonso and his band of armed men and women to be protected from the acts of war that they had been perpetrating in the last two years. Secondly, the same House also passed a special grant for providing compensation to former RENAMO “residual forces” for purposes of assisting with DDR, SSR and civil reintegration. On the latter, a separate but complimentary agreement was also reached in which 35 Officers drawn from each side – totaling 70 and 23 Officers drawn from Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Cape Verde, Italy, United States and the United Kingdom to monitor for 135 Days the implementation of the force integration. This agreement by a former liberation movement government and ruling party is unprecedented. As we write, in February 2015, the presence of this Military Monitoring Force known by its Mozambique acronym ECHOM has been extended by another 60 days. A Brigadier from the Botswana Defence Forces (BDF) is the leader of the SADC contingent.

Under the cover of elections, Mozambique undertook positive political power sharing; wealth sharing and even implemented long-delayed integration of forces that should have happened some twenty years ago. First, Mozambique has entered into a ‘renewed’ phase of DDR & SSR – providing fresh lessons for researchers. It is also true that the country ruling

party, as its popularity ebbs, amidst the newly discovered mineral riches, has elected to adopt the consensus building and non-confrontational route. Is this likely to be sustainable given the allegations swirling around the Cistac daylight assassination? Third, to what extent is the hand of the external player coming from the minerals commercial interest driving state policy? Finally, SADC has been engaged in different security interventions most of which await writing up, its participation in Mozambique and Lesotho in 2014-15 is something that offers graduate, post-graduate students and other academics, serious questions around the social engineering that is taking place in that country.

Under the cover of elections, Mozambique undertook positive political power sharing; wealth sharing and even implemented long-delayed integration of forces that should have happened some twenty years ago. First, Mozambique has entered into a 'renewed' phase of DDR & SSR – providing fresh lessons for researchers. In comparative terms, what is happening in Mozambique, of liberation movement in government returning to address severance entitlements for war veterans is not unique. In southern Africa, empirical studies show that Namibia was the first, to establish a stand-alone Ministry of War Veterans responsible for their comprehensive rehabilitation, concerned with health, education, pensions and residential accommodation support. South Africa also took up this example when the then Minister Lindiwe Sisulu piloted legislation and reform of the Defence to now include the Department of War Veterans. Angola and Zimbabwe have adopted slightly different approaches but all ultimately aimed at responding to the long-term effects of the contributions and presence of war veterans existing in largely capitalist economies? Without adequate resources, any government attempting to comprehensively deal with this phenomenon will become bankrupt. Hence the challenge is not to ignore the phenomenon of the unfinished business but in response – create a win-win where the individual plays a part – agreeing to be retrained and retooled for new opportunities through scholarships and other awards in kind whilst the state mobilizes and shares the limited resources from the fiscus. In Mozambique – the move towards opening up and creating policy options that harness the windfall from the minerals bonanza is a correct way of addressing the surviving and largely impoverished war veterans from both sides of the conflict. However, to better understand the lists to be submitted by RENAMO to the SADC Military intervention team.

Even after the political agreement, on 3 March 2015, Constitutional Law Professor Gille Cistac was shot and killed as he left a restaurant in central Maputo. Cistac was believed to be the brains behind advising RENAMO on its constitutional claims for *autonomous regions rule* in the Manica, Sofala and other provinces in associated with the power struggle in the

country. This is the area rich in mineral wealth where global Multinationals, Government and the people of Mozambique have emerged as major contestants. There is evidence that Cistac had even approached the Attorney General, claiming that he was receiving death threats and seeking state protection weeks before he was killed.

It is also true that the country ruling party, as its popularity ebbs, amidst the newly discovered mineral riches, has elected to adopt the consensus building and non-confrontational route. Stated differently, what has been the impact on public policy against the background of (minerals) wealth sharing? Is this likely to be sustainable or will this be sidetracked by corruption and hardliners, given the allegations swirling around the Cistac daylight assassination? Third, to what extent is the hand of the external player coming from the minerals commercial interest driving state policy? Finally, SADC has been engaged in different security interventions most of which await writing up, its participation in Mozambique and Lesotho in 2014-15 is something that offers graduate, post-graduate students and other academics, serious questions around the social engineering that is taking place in that country.



2.6. Nigerian National and Presidential Elections: 28th March – 11th April 2015, “An Election against new Political Parties, the threat of Boko Haram and the AU MNJTF?”

The Postponement of Nigerian Presidential and National Assembly Elections (March 28th and April 2015)

Electoral and Security Implications at Whose Interest?

By

Chika Charles Aniekwe PhD and Ibraheem Bukunle Sanusi

Policy Brief for UNISA

I. 2015 General Elections: The Rough Road-the 5th Multiparty Election since 1999

Since its return to democracy after long and torturous years of military dictatorship, Nigeria elections has never come as close as we are witnessing currently between the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which has ruled the country since 1999 and the All Progressive Congress (APC). The PDP faces stiff competition with the APC under retired Major General and former President Muhammadu Buhari. The PDP since 1999 has faced criticisms for corruption, unemployment, poor infrastructure and most topical, the security occasioned by the consistent activities of insurgent group Boko Haram.

As always expected the Nigerian elections have generated interested beyond the country, the sub-region and internationally due to the diversified interest associated with the experiment in democracy in the African’s most populous state and arguably the most important country on the continent given its geopolitical location, demography and historical influence. During the post-cold war era, Nigerians role, personal sacrifice and investment in resolving conflict in West African countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone are well documented. Nigeria plays the role of West African democratic watchdog even during its long history of military dictatorship. Stated differently, even as Nigeria was under military rule, it was able to export democracy in West Africa by supporting democratic processes in neighbouring countries.

However after 2011 elections¹, Nigeria political space has been shrouded by intense political rivalry and disagreement as to whether the President should come from the North

¹ When the incumbent President Goodluck E Jonathan got elected following the demise of Yaradua

or South². Though unconstitutional, there is a perceived sense of agreement between Nigeria political elite that power should rotate between the two sides. The election of Goodluck Jonathan in 2011 fired up the polity and brought back the North-South political divide which appeared to have been handled since 1999 with the election of Obasanjo in 1999 and 2003 and Yaradua in 2007.

This perceived sense of political injustice also resulted in several intra-party disagreements within the PDP and eventual cross carpeting of several key figures of the PDP mostly from the North to the APC. There were also reports of agreement that after the completion of the next term from 2011 to 2015, that the incumbent would vacate power for Northern President. High profile personalities including former president Olusegun Obasanjo echoed this sentiment that, he was part of the deal that meant that the incumbent was to leave office in 2015 in order for Nigerian to maintain an agreed political formula that would help sustain peace in Nigeria based on rotational Presidency³.

The Nigeria current security state is also another important dynamic to the political rough road. The security situation has clearly located the Nigerian elections in an unfamiliar terrain. The on-going security challenge in the North Eastern axis where insurgent group Boko Haram has firmly established itself presents a peculiar challenge to Nigeria ahead of the elections. Most of Boko Haram operations are in the North East, where APC is supposedly stronger than PDP. Therefore the threat of Boko Haram according to analysts possesses considerable threat to APC given that elections might not be conducted if security situation remains precarious in the region. In fact Boko Haram activities poses significant threat to the election because many could be disenfranchised in the region and any serious infraction could trigger unparalleled post election protest and possible violence in Nigeria if the status quo remains the same after the election.

Ironically, amidst the security and democratic challenges, diversification of the Nigerian economy have improved, the growth in non-oil sector has been faster than any other time in history. The expansion of the middle class has been nothing less than outstanding and has grown to 600% since 2000⁴. Nigerian economy has also surpassed South Africa as the biggest economy in Africa. Amidst, all the economic strides, poverty remains high, growth is

² There is an argument that a Northerner should be allowed to finish the term started by Yaradua based on an unwritten rule in Nigerian since 1999 for power exchange between the North and the South

³ The President's persistent determination to contest against what could be defined as king makers' wishes made these elections a very rough one in Nigeria history since 1999.

⁴ Rise of the Middle Class in Sub-Saharan Africa," Standard Bank Blog, August 20, 2014,

uneven and promise of electricity remains unfulfilled. More than 50% have no electricity⁵. Despite the perceived positive economic outlook, Nigerian voters and political actors has paid little attention to economic indicators but more on security and governance outlook⁶.

Another rough patch is the now less attractive militancy in the Niger Delta. Recall the activities of militants in the Niger Delta prior to the amnesty initiated by President Yaradua after 2007 elections. Ahead of the elections, former leaders of militants groups in the Niger Delta have been releasing threats of violence against Nigeria state should the incumbent failed to remain in office after the elections. These rhetoric from former militant leaders places Nigeria between the deep ocean and the dead blue sea. While, the election of Buhari could minimize the activities of Boko Haram based on his military acumen and regional experience, it could also trigger renewed militancy in the Delta region. If Goodluck remains in power, the Niger Delta militancy could continue to stay under the radar but the activities of Boko Haram will remain a threat to Nigerian security unless alternative security approach and strategy are urgently put in place. The election of Buhari could in fact be the new dawn for Nigeria in term of governance and anti-Corruption but could rather create a twin pillar of violence and security threat at both end of the Nigeria axis; Boko Haram in the North and Militancy in the South because the Niger Delta militant could reappear if their threat is to be used as a gauge.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has also faced mounted criticism ahead of the elections especially the Chairperson. Some of these criticisms include the controversial proposals to create 30,000 new polling units (to relieve pressure on the existing approximately 120,000 units), which the Chairperson withdrew after critics, accused him of planning to favour northern constituencies⁷. There are also reports accusing INEC capacity gap during registration exercise and raising concerns about insufficient permanent voters' cards, stolen cards, and other irregularities including the asymmetric distribution of the Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs). Although INEC confirmed that it has moved the PVCs to the various distribution hubs in the states, evidence from INEC list of registered voters and distributed PVCs shows that higher number of distributed PVCs are in the Northern part of Nigeria. This added another controversial twist to the electoral debate

⁵ Joe Brock, "Nigerian Poverty Rising Despite Economic Growth," Reuters, February 13, 2012,

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/13/us-nigeria-poverty-idUSTRE81CoKR20120213>

⁶ Nigerians equally measure Nigeria progress based on it international political visibility and leadership in the African continent as well as its roles in ensuring a unified ECOWAS in the committee of countries. These appear to be lacking since 2007.

⁷ Joe Nwankwo and Temidayo Akinsuyi, "INEC Commissioners Battle Jega Over 30,000 Polling Units," Daily Independent, November 10, 2014, <http://dailyindependentnig.com/2014/11/inec-commissionersbattle-jega-30000-polling-units/>.

and many have accused INEC of trying to cripple the incumbent by holding back on the PVCs for the South. The report from Lagos by INEC that it discovered and dismissed ad-hoc staff that refused to give cards to voters has intensified the erroneous conspiracy theory.

As Nigeria prepare again for the elections, the challenges rests around: a) the INEC, b) the 68 million registered voters and their Permanent Voters Card (PVC); c) the introduction of card reading machines, d) the security questions posed by Boko Haram and e) the drastically falling oil world prices – that have witnessed a 50% fall in state revenues and the threat of renewed militancy in the Niger Delta region⁸. What then are the electoral and security implications for the recent postponement and at whose interest?

II. *Electoral Implications*

Firstly, the postponement puts Nigeria democracy under question since the May 1999 return to civilian rule after years of agonising and protracted military dictatorship. Therefore, from democracy point of view, the postponement of the election has raised concern regarding the sustainability of Nigerian democracy. Recently the former President of Nigeria. Olusegun Obasanjo remarked that he hoped that the Presidency is aware of the wider democratic implication of the postponement and urged Nigerians to resist any attempt that would invite the military back into power.⁹ Therefore such statement from an elder statesman has heightened concerns on the entire election debate and raised fear in Nigerians as to whether there is more to the postponement.

The Postponement also presents an opportunity for INEC to step up its preparations and ensure that all eligible voters receive their cards before 28 March to avoid disenfranchisement of willing voters. Numerous other commentators remarked that, at least, it should provide INEC the needed time to ensure that PVCs are distributed across North and South¹⁰. Importantly, the postponement presents INEC the chance to test the Biometric card reader, which will be used in Nigeria for the first time¹¹. The fact that INEC never tested the biometric card reader in any of the by-elections conducted last year raises

⁸ As a consequence of the new energy commodity of natural gas from frackking – that has been mooted as making USA self-sufficient by 2030, f) recent difficulty on the streets with oil pumps empty “where Buhari is now claiming that of the 4 existing crude oil processing plants – 2 where built during his short but brief term

⁹ <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/3c171960-b07e-11e4-9b8e-00144feab7de.html#axzz3T1nuXoOa>

¹⁰ According to Obasanjo, “I sincerely hope the Presidency is not going to the broke and saying look dammit. It is either I have it or nobody has it. I hope we will not have a coup and I hope we can avoid it <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/02/mimiko-faults-obasanjo-election-postponement/>

¹¹ Experience from Namibia shows that it take between 5 to 8 minutes for the operator of card reader to deal with a voter before the voter is cleared to vote¹¹. This delay resulted in the extension of voting in Namibia to the next day and in some high-density areas for two days. Compare Namibia; a country of about 2.1 million people and around 1.1 million voters to Nigeria, a country of about 180 million people and around 68 million voters. If it takes 5 to 8 minutes based on Namibia experience to get through card reader before voting it is likely that INEC underestimated the technical rigour and time required by the card reader before voting

serious question of preparedness of INEC with regards to the use of the biometric card reader machine.

III. Security Implication

The African Union at its recently concluded January Summit of the Heads of State approved the deployment of 8700 troops as a Multinational Joint Taskforce to combat Boko Haram¹². While the process of deployment is being perfected, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria through the Lake Chad Basin Commission intervention have strengthened coordinated response. Most of the territories earlier under Boko Haram have been liberated. Recall that, security was the major reason for the postponement of the election by the INEC chairperson after consultation with National Security adviser and the National Council of States¹³. Therefore for Nigeria, the postponement of the election could produce positive or negative security implications. Given the approval for a coordinated response to Boko Haram, significant gains could be made before 28 March for a safe environment for the conduct of the elections. Alternatively, Boko Haram could intensify its activities and expand its grip on other areas thereby creating doubt on the conduct of the election on those areas. However whatever the electoral and security implications are, whose interest if the postponement serving better?

IV. Whose Interest is the Postponement Serving?

The gainer from the postponement should be viewed from the points articulated in the security and electoral implications and the response by Nigerian electorate. In doing so, it is important to point out that it also depends on the security balance and outcome of the joint coordinated effort by Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger against Boko Haram. In the immediate period leading to 14 February, the momentum appeared to favour the opposition party and most of the analysts blamed that lack of momentum on the side of the ruling party to the lackadaisical response of the Nigerian government to the Boko Haram threat and the increasing corrupt appetite in the Nigeria public life.

The announcement by INEC did not take many by surprise because the rumour was on-going before it was finally announced. Some analysts argue that it favours the Presidency given than he has lost momentum before the postponement and that this could serve as a momentum swing for him if the outcome of the joint military action is positive and INEC distribute PVCs card better and widely especially in the South.

On the other hand, several points have been made that the postponement favours Buhari for seemingly clear reasons. The first is that, the postponement cannot change the current

¹² Peace and Security Council 484th Meeting at the Level of Heads of State and Government Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 29 January 2015

¹³ INEC press conference on the Postponement of the 2015 General Election

Nigeria governance and corrupt situation and that it gives the opposition opportunity for renewed call for an alternative government. Secondly, is that although, positive security outcome appear a better for the incumbent, it could as well raise a serious question why the President waited for so long before decisive action. There is also another argument that the postponement and a positive security outcome favour Buhari because more people will be able to vote in the North East, which is a perceived strong hold for Buhari.

Additionally, the postponement might have as well dented further the chances of the incumbent given the reaction of from former President after the postponement. The public denouncement and the tearing of PDP membership card by the former president could as well be a final nail in the coffin for the incumbent. As expected and as political theory has proven, political elites influence voters directly and indirectly through their action. The action of Obasanjo could further influence voters against PDP thereby limiting further the chances of the incumbent.

V. Recommendations

As Nigerians awaits the outcome of the melodramatic conclusion to the long anticipated 2015 general elections, different stakeholders must learn lessons from the on-going democratic and electoral tension.

Firstly, INEC has an opportunity to erase any possible blame from its side and must as a matter of balance and integrity ensure that it increase its effort to ensure distribution of the PVCs across all regions, states and even wards. This will in essence exonerate INEC from any potential blame.

INEC should also use this time to ensure proper testing of the biometric card reader to avert any potential technical hitches come 28 March. Any technical deficiency could lead to retinue to electoral litigations after the elections.

The Nigerian army must ensure that it operation in conjunction with the joint taskforce is concerted, targeted and effective against Boko Haram in order to create an atmosphere where election could be conducted and to ensure that no Nigerian electorate is disenfranchised due to security concern. Every willing and eligible Nigerian must be provided the platform, environment that is secured enough for them to cast their vote.

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