

Nigeria Elections and Violence:

Synthesis of the National Picture and Regional Dynamics and Recommendations for Action

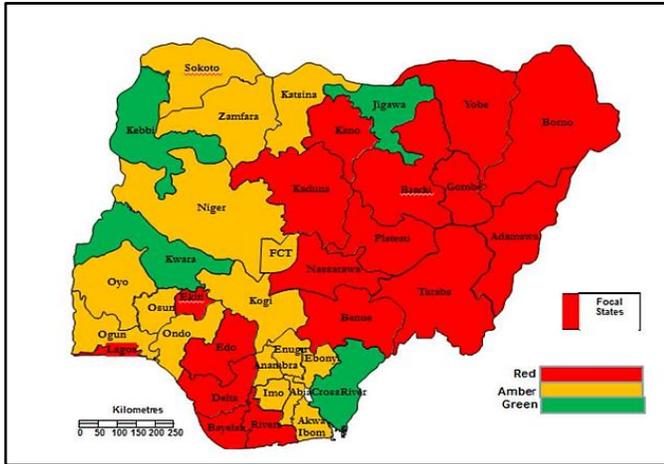


Figure 1: CLEEN Map of Hot Spots for Election Violence (Monograph Series No. 22)

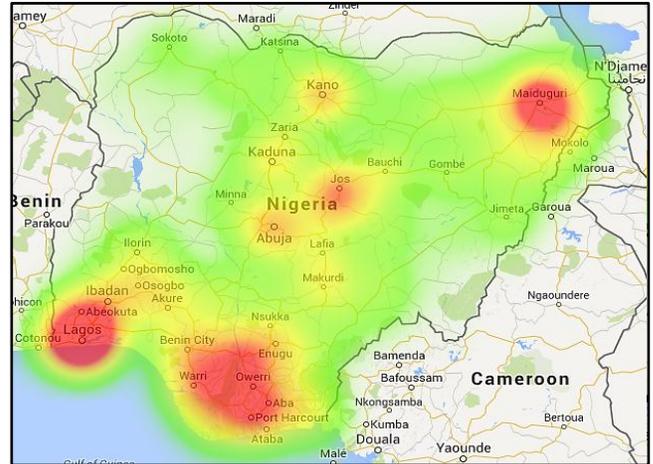


Figure 2: Violence Heat Map Jan 2009-Nov 2014

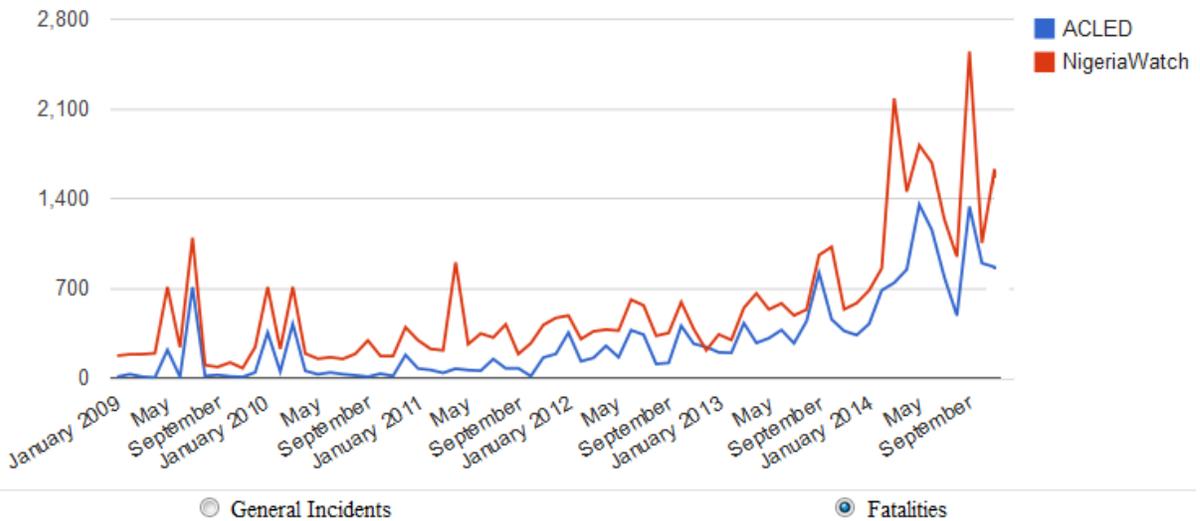


Figure 3: National Monthly Fatalities (Screenshot of Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org)

Introduction

Since Nigeria's return to democratic and civilian rule in 1999, election periods have brought uncertainty and volatility, resulting at times in violence. The Peace and Security Working Group of Nigeria is concerned about the potential for violence around the upcoming presidential, national assembly, gubernatorial, and state assembly elections scheduled for February 2015. Through a series of discussions, members, composed primarily of local and international civil society members engaging with donors, government actors, diplomatic missions, and opinion leaders, have produced a draft analysis of state and federal-level scenarios that examine the risk of election-related violence. Based on these scenarios, the group has also developed a set of recommendations for civil society, donors, and government actors that can be feasibly implemented in the limited time remaining before the elections are scheduled to begin.

This document follows initial analysis and perceptions of state-level actors on conflict and political dynamics and potential scenarios in seventeen states: Abia, Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Benue, Borno, Delta, Edo, Imo, Kaduna, Kano, Nasarawa, Plateau, Rivers, Taraba, Yobe and Zamfara. Consultations were held with government ministries, departments and agencies, civil society organisations and activists, security agencies and communities in the states concerned. Altogether over 30 sessions were held with groups across these 17 states. The Peace and Security Working Group, after reviewing trends evidence at the state level, looked at national political and conflict dynamics.

Several organisations are doing work to understand and mitigate possible election violence. The aim of this summary is to facilitate planning and coordination for the prevention of the worst of these scenarios and to be able to respond quickly if they do. This can be done through supporting state and national level actors and in the following ways:

- Adjusting current programme interventions
- Developing and funding new programme interventions
- Strengthening our individual and collective voices for action
- Using diplomatic channels e.g. through a Friends of Nigeria consisting of embassies that take action

The Peace and Security Working Group promotes peace and conflict mitigation at the national level. Its constituent sub-groups (looking at the Middle Belt, Niger Delta and North-East) focus on coordination around mitigation at state level. A synthesis of national and regional political dynamics follows.

National Level Analysis

Please see the document "PSWG National Level Scenarios" for a list of potential scenarios.

At a national level, some of the factors that might violently undermine the elections include:

- Legality factors
- Intimidation
- The influence of non-state actors
- Clashes between farmers and pastoralists
- Ethnic and religious violence
- Militant and cult groups in the south-south
- INEC logistic setbacks
- Inter-party and intra-party conflicts,
- Party zoning and consensus candidacies

Besides these factors, other current national situations and dynamics will likely have an impact on the elections, including the role of media, the falling price of oil, the crisis in the North East, disenfranchisement of voters, gendered dynamics of conflict including gender inequality and the lack of attention paid to the security needs of people with disabilities.

The role of the media in preventing electoral violence is crucial as it can increase the population's potential to mobilise and also to dispute false rumours that have the potential to cause violence. Increasing situational awareness at a local level with social media and traditional media such as local radio could help mitigate electoral violence.

The falling price of oil greatly impacting the economic situation in many states, especially in the Niger Delta, could be an important political factor for the 2015 elections that could result in violence as people's livelihoods are altered due to the changes in fuel subsidies. The drop in oil prices has decreased the value of the Naira. Fears that this could potentially lead to a freeze in the circulation of cash could cause increasing tensions.

The 18 month long State of Emergency in the three states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa in the North East region was not extended in November of 2014. This could impact electoral violence as political parties disagree on whether or not to extend the state of emergency. Further, the non-extension of the state of emergency may affect government efforts to combat insecurity in the North East and elsewhere in Northern Nigeria.

Nationally, the perceived or actual disenfranchisement of voters could contribute to violence following the 2015 elections. Disputes could arise regarding distribution of Permanent Voter Cards if distribution is unequal among states and LGAs, particularly in the Northern region where violent unrest is prevalent. Furthermore, the announcement by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in December 2014 that the estimated 1.5 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) would not vote unless the electoral law was changed, which seems highly unlikely, could further exacerbate tensions.

An issue that has not received enough attention has been the security needs of people with disabilities. According to the World Report on Disability by the World Health Organization in 2011, approximately 25 million people in Nigeria are living with a disability. Their voices and experiences have not been integrated into state response and analysis of election violence. For example, women and men with disabilities may be unable to be in queues for the long periods of time required and report violence and harassment against them when trying to vote.

Another issue that is often overlooked in elections is the gendered nature and impact of violence. Men, especially young men, may feel pressure to prove their 'manhood' by taking part in politically motivated violence due to gender norms. There is already some anecdotal evidence that the numbers of girls being raped is increasing in the run-up to elections due to beliefs that this will lead to power, status and wealth. Furthermore, women may be specifically targeted and may experience harassment, violence and reduced freedom of movement as a result. This, together with the fact that women make up only 12 percent of those in the current National Assembly, 7 percent of the Senate and 6 percent of the House of Representatives, has serious repercussions not only in terms of levels of violence against women and girls but also in limiting women's voice, agency and participation in decision-making.

The political dynamics of the forthcoming 2015 elections are still evolving, and it is perceived that the unpredictability of the elections will play out in different ways. State level concerns surrounding election violence can be grouped by region (Niger Delta, Middle Belt, North East, North Central, and North West). A synthesis of regional dynamics follows.

Regional Level Analysis¹

These regional groups do not correspond to the geopolitical zones of Nigeria but are instead grouped according to geographic area and type of risk of violence.

Niger Delta

Please see the folder “Niger Delta Scenarios” for detail by state.

The states included in the following analysis within the Niger Delta are Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, Imo, and Rivers. In the Niger Delta, the primary concerns surrounding the 2015 elections and potential for violence involve zoning issues, ethnic tensions, polarisation between parties, the potential for sexual violence and intra party tensions.

Political zoning involves dividing key political positions among different regions. This practice has the potential to create problems and lead to violence due to high expectations among voters that the political leadership will rotate both nationally and by state. In states such as Abia, Akwa Ibom, Delta, and Rivers, zoning arrangements, which some feel to be a means of ensuring regional representation and others see as undermining the democratic will of the people, have the potential to cause violence depending on who ends up winning the respective gubernatorial elections.

Along with zoning issues, the closely related issue of ethnic tensions has the potential to cause violence between groups. Niger Delta states where this issue was highlighted include Akwa Ibom, Delta, and Rivers states.

Polarisation between the major parties, APC and PDP, has caused a considerable amount of violence in the Niger Delta in the past year. States where this has been an issue include Edo, Imo, and Rivers states. Intra party tensions have been most prominent within the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Due to these intra and inter party tensions, party defections have occurred at a high profile level, notably in Edo State and Rivers State.

Middle Belt

Please see the folder “Middle Belt Scenarios” for detail by state.

In the Middle Belt region, this analysis focuses on Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, and Taraba states. The most likely causes for electoral violence in this region are ethno-religious tensions, high levels of intimidation, intra party tensions resulting in defections and relating to zoning issues, and inter party polarisation.

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Electoral violence in this region exists in starkly different forms. In Benue state, electoral violence has been in the form of specifically targeted attacks and assassinations, usually seen in the pre-election phase. In contrast, in Nasarawa and Taraba states, electoral violence has been most notable post-election and has been an escalation of demonstrations and protests into violent riots.

Ethno-religious tensions are heightened in the time of elections as differences in ethno-religious groups are highlighted by differences in political preferences and as different parties appear linked to different religions. Political contentions combined with historical grievances among people of different ethno-religious identities can cause violence. In this region, inter-communal clashes such as those between semi-nomadic pastoralists and settled agricultural populations also have the potential to cause electoral violence

Intra party tensions are seen in this region through a history of party defections in Plateau and Taraba states. In these two states, violence can occur during primary elections due to issues related to zoning practices within each party.

Inter party polarisation and deepening tension can contribute to violence because of the high levels of competition between the parties. Therefore, high levels of voter intimidation and rigging of elections are possible, with such challenges possibly occurring in Benue, Nasarawa, and Taraba states.

North East

Please see the folder “North East Scenarios” for detail by state.

In the North East region, the following analysis focuses on Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states, which have been under a state of emergency since May, 2013. In November 2014, the House of Representatives did not extend the state of emergency. The primary concerns for election violence in the North East region involve the main question of whether elections can be held, given the widespread violence and crisis throughout the North East.

In the past decade, the North East has experienced widespread crisis due to violence from Jama’atu Ahlu Sunna Lih Dawati Wal Jihad (JAS). This activity has implications for the upcoming 2015 elections for many reasons. For one, both ruling and opposition parties blame the other for failing to reduce the violence. In Borno, citizens created the Civilian Joint Task Force in an attempt to act against JAS. In this area, there can be low levels of trust between security agencies and communities, which has the potential to cause low voter turnout in the event that elections take place. If the elections do take place, JAS could potentially lash out because of their opposition to participation in elections. If the elections do not take place, there are perceptions that inter party tensions will heighten as each party might blame the other, either for taking political advantage of the situation or for simply failing to bring an end to the violence.

The JAS crisis has also caused substantial displacement of persons, especially in Borno. In the event that elections do occur, many who are unable to vote as a result of displacement may feel disenfranchised, which could lead to violent protest, if their preferred candidate does not win. In Adamawa state, ethnic tensions between Muslims and Christians could result in violent crisis following election results, as

religious groups tend to be split between PDP (an increasingly Christian voter base) and APC (an increasingly Muslim voter base).

North West

Please see the folder “North West Scenarios” for detail by state.

In the North West region, the following analysis focuses on Kaduna, Kano, and Zamfara states. Primary concerns regarding possible electoral violence in this region involve ethno-religious tensions, perceived lack of internal democracy, inter party tensions, and the possibility of postponed elections due to JAS activity in nearby states.

In both Kaduna and Kano states, ethno-religious tensions could lead to electoral violence as ethnic groups are highly polarised in both states. This is also related to inter party polarisation and suspicion of election rigging by supporters of both parties. Related concerns include political thuggery and ballot snatching. In Zamfara state, high levels of inter- and intra-party tensions have the potential to cause violence as the PDP attempts to regain control of Zamfara from APC leadership. Former cases of defection from ADP to PDP have caused violence. Further defections could trigger rioting and electoral violence.

The possibility of postponed elections could heighten tensions as it could be seen as an abuse of power by current government officials.

Election Engagement Recommendations

The recommendations below represent the Peace and Security Working Group’s analysis of feasible measures that can be undertaken before and during the elections. These recommendations are not comprehensive and are instead intended to provide a basis for quick, targeted action among civil society actors and donors, government agencies, and political parties.

For Civil Society and Donors

- **Look for opportunities to support quick impact projects targeting young women and men and other groups vulnerable to violence to boost employment and/or engage at-risk communities in high-risk states**

Although Nigeria has seen economic growth of 7 percent over the past decade, unemployment has also doubled during this time. The country currently maintains the highest rate of unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa. Evidence points to correlation between youth unemployment and rising violence throughout the country with poverty, inequality and exclusion structural drivers of conflict and violence. Lack of alternative sources of livelihoods is consistently given by young women and men as motive for joining militias and gangs. This is of particular concern before, during and after the 2015 elections given Nigeria’s history of electoral violence.

Therefore, the Peace and Security Working Group recommends donors and civil society consider funding and implementing community impact projects (CIPs) or quick impact projects (QIPs). These are small-scale, rapidly-implementable projects designed to mitigate violent conflict over the next three to six months by promoting economic and educational opportunities for young women and men. CIPs and QIPs are designed to provide short-term stabilisation; however, they should also consider how targeted participants will be integrated into longer-term economic recovery interventions. Government and state institutions, commercial companies and registered and non-registered NGOs, mission components, including the military, UN agencies and international agencies can all be implementing partners for QIPs.

Quick Impact Projects should be:

- small-scale and low-cost
 - designed to be of benefit to the population
 - planned and implemented within a short-time frame
 - usually visible to the population
 - done in consultation with representatives of national or local authorities and with participation of local communities
 - selected in an impartial and transparent manner
 - include both women and men
 - sensitive to considerations of gender, ethnicity, age and vulnerability
 - selected and implemented in accordance with the principles of ‘Do No Harm’
-
- **Ensure that all interventions, advocacy and messaging integrates the needs and realities of groups already marginalised, such as women and people with disabilities**

Nigeria is marked by extreme social exclusion and violent division. There are millions of women and men in the country who are and feel ‘left out’ of employment prospects, educational opportunities, institutions and decision-making. Nigerian society is deeply gendered with gender intersecting with other identities such as ethnicity, geographical origin, age, poverty and religion to give women, men, boys and girls greater or lesser power. At over 80 million, women and girls constitute 49% of the Nigerian population yet have consistently worse life chances compared to men. Despite the numbers of people with disabilities, they continue to be marginalised from decision-making processes, disproportionately impacted by violence and their needs and realities not reflected in decisions made – and in civil society programmes.

The Peace and Security Working Group recommends that civil society and donors take steps to ensure women and people with disabilities are included in all interventions, advocacy and messaging around elections. This means not only are specific efforts made to ensure meaningful participation but that programmes are designed or adapted to their particular realities and opportunities to maximise benefit to them taken.

- **Leverage existing projects and relationships with state government to ensure social services continue to be delivered during election season**

Government ministries, particularly at the state level, struggle at times to maintain basic social services, such as paying salaries for teachers and other government workers, and providing funding to keep health

and other public services running. These challenges are particularly heightened during the pre-election period as attention and resources are diverted toward elections and security. Furthermore, perceptions by the public that government leaders are diverting government resources toward their campaigns, and in turn reducing social services, are dangerous in an environment where citizens are already highly distrustful of their leaders.

Civil society members already collaborating with state government leaders should make deliberate efforts to ensure that basic services continue to be administered at or above the typical level of service. Where public servants are getting paid on time, and services are available, Nigerians will be less restive and less likely to engage in vitriolic finger-pointing that may breed violence. Civil society actors and state government actors should create joint plans for accountability during this crucial time and ensure that key deadlines and goals for services are met. Civil society actors should build on positive relationships with governments to provide linkages to the public and to promote dialogue between government actors and citizens in order to ensure good communication about the continued delivery of services.

- **Incorporate non-violence and voter education messaging into existing development activities**

Past electoral violence in Nigeria has been fuelled by acts or rumours of electoral fraud and the perception that authorities have a partisan bias. Media outlets are often seen as partisan and lack objectivity and credible platforms to counter rumours. The 2015 elections will be more challenging due to greater political tensions and a more fragile security situation. Breaches in the ruling party and the emergence of a strong opposition coalition mean that the election will be hotly contested. At the same time Boko Haram insurgents continue attacks against civilians in the North East and Criminality on the rise in the Middle Belt and Niger Delta.

To address these issues, agencies of government, i.e. INEC, the National Broadcasting Corporation and the National Orientation Agency, as well as civil society, should enhance the role of citizens in promoting credible elections and reducing the potential for violence. Donors should increase funding for sustained media campaigns to partners to leverage on existing platforms.

- **Increase bi-partisan, inter-religious, and inter-ethnic messaging around non-violence at local levels**

Politicians and opinion leaders at local levels have been spreading alarmingly inflammatory messages in the build-up to the elections. Political leaders in various states have already challenged results of the primaries in ways that may prevent communities' and constituents' peaceful acceptance of results. Furthermore, low visibility of strong religious and traditional leadership in the most at-risk localities means that few voices are countering the calls to "win at all costs."

Traditional leaders, religious leaders, and civil society leaders should increase their peace messaging and make more public appearances across lines of division to promote peace. Civil society and donors can support these messages by helping to host such events and leveraging their relationships with local civil society and local leadership to amplify voices of peace. Existing peace messaging campaigns are contributing to this effort. But more should be done by international and local organisations to facilitate

peace messaging quickly and in the most at-risk states. Media can also support these efforts by providing free airtime for local leaders wishing to talk about peace and hosting dialogues between opposing politicians, as well as different ethnic and religious groups, focused specifically on preventing election-related violence.

- **Increase inter-religious calls for non-violence at the national level**

With the increase of negative and inflammatory rhetoric regarding Muslims and Christians in the North and South it is certain that as we move closer to the elections the rhetoric instigated by politicians and their supports will increase. With a lack of understanding between the inter-religious communities, particularly between in the South, there is a crucial need to highlight moderate northern religious and youth leaders to a national audience to debunk negative perceptions on both sides and mitigate tensions. On a national level, messages are mixed, with some political leaders calling for non-violence, though many others implicitly condoning violence with vague language about unacceptability of results.

For effective understanding, dialogue and mitigation, actors should develop a robust strategy on North/South ethnic and interfaith tolerance through trainings, working in collaboration with relevant existing bodies. These actors that can increase their collaboration to implement ethnic and religious tolerance activities include the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), relevant agencies of government, the private sector, other civil society actors and eminent personalities. Strong religious leaders on both sides should join forces to condemn violence publically and to call for their constituents to remain calm even in the event of an unfavourable outcome. These religious leaders should also continue to work with political leaders behind the scenes to condemn violence. Existing projects are already targeting civil society and pop figures on a national level. Implementing partners, both local and international, can continue to encourage religious and traditional to call for peace on a national stage, which will in turn put pressure on local leaders and local populations.

- **Increase coordination and synergy around data and information generated**

The weeks in the lead up to the elections have seen increasing focus and action by a number of actors, including when it comes to data and information gathered.

The Peace and Security Working Group welcomes and encourages this while stressing the need for intensified efforts to share information and create links in order to ensure coordinated response. To the extent that this is already being done, more opportunities to create and maximise synergies should be pursued.

For Media

- **Increase interaction with civil society to pass on voter education, non-violent messaging and share information**

Civil society efforts have focused on increasing levels of voter education and promoting non-violence. Media platforms have wide reach and influence that can multiply and intensify these efforts so that more

people are educated so they are ready, willing and able to participate in the electoral process and that they are less likely to use violence.

Media organisations should work closely with civil society to raise awareness of voters on electoral and political processes. Reporting around elections should be sensitive to conflict dynamics so that reporting does not intensify tensions that already exist. They should also use their platforms to promote non-violence and in the event of violence breaking out, proactively host on air or publish those with influence to call for peace.

- **Ensure balanced reporting focused on issue based politics**

Past electoral violence in Nigeria has been fuelled by acts or rumours of electoral fraud and the perception that authorities have a partisan bias. Media outlets are often seen as partisan and lack objectivity and credible platforms to counter rumours. The 2015 elections will be more challenging due to greater political tensions and a more fragile security situation. Breaches in the ruling party and the emergence of a strong opposition coalition mean that the election will be hotly contested. At present, much of the discussion around elections has focused on personalities and on attacking opponents rather than detailing manifestos for delivery once in office. Objectivity, fairness and balance in reporting are crucial.

The media should promote engagement in elections from potential voters based on candidates' positions on issues and encourage candidate to clearly articulate their manifestos as to what they will do if elected to power. This is to enable voters to decide which candidate for whom to vote based on this and to be able to hold politicians to account for pre-election pledges.

- **Monitor and denounce inflammatory/ dangerous speech by political actors**

On local, state, and national levels, political actors have sent mixed messages, calling for calm at times but too often inciting violence with inflammatory rhetoric. A lack of accountability means that politicians have been able to use polarising language without strong voices decrying these harmful speech patterns. To some extent, media actors have been trying to counter inflammatory speech, but more effort needs to be made to enhance a culture of unacceptability around inflammatory and dangerous political speech. Media, in both traditional and social media forms has considerable influence in either promoting or reducing conflict. Media reporting has great potential for creating or exacerbating already existing tension, which is already particularly heightened around election time. Monitoring shows the already high and constant prevalence of hate speech across the nation. To date, this has particularly focused on place of origin and religion.

The Peace and Security Working Group therefore recommends that media actors, working in concert with civil society, systematically and publically acknowledge dangerous political speech. Those who work in media should not only refrain from publishing hate speech themselves but take efforts to combat and counter dominant narratives of hate as they occur. Media actors should host regular radio and television programming that identifies harmful speech and invites public discussion on the damage caused. Written media outlets should provide regular space for identifying inflammatory speech and ensure editorials and opinion articles come out strongly against this. Media hosts should also invite powerful figures calling for

peace to counter these messages. Further, given the amount of hate speech being published on social media, media organisations should raise awareness of ways in which people can report hate speech that they come across to platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, whose terms of service this violates.

For Government

- **Create and implement a communications plan to convey key updates to public**

Uncertainty around election processes and events has heightened tensions across the country and produced an increasingly high traffic of rumours around electoral procedures. These rumours have bred deeper feelings of insecurity and decreased the public's trust in INEC and other agencies to conduct elections in a transparent manner. For example, only in December did INEC announce that Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs) would not be able to vote. Before this announcement speculation around this decision allowed for theories about politically-motivated decisions to flourish, further eroding trust in the electoral process. Nigerians are largely unaware of key electoral decisions until they are announced, and do not know when to expect such announcements, which has resulted in, at turns, either disengagement from the electoral process or highly active, and often damaging, uninformed speculation.

INEC, federal agencies, legislators, and the office of the President, should create a comprehensive communications plan about what will be shared with the public and when. Where key decisions still need to be made, INEC should make this clear and, where possible, invite open debate. The government should set deadlines for key decisions internally, if this is not already being done, and communicate these to the public in order to ensure transparency. The federal government should also consider creating a regular forum for updates, such as a weekly situation report, ideally via radio, which will provide a platform for announcing key decisions and keeping the public informed of decisions yet to be made.

- **Implement quick impact projects targeting youth to boost employment and engage at-risk communities in high-risk states.**

Although Nigeria has seen rapid economic growth of 7 percent over the past decade, unemployment has also doubled during this time. The country currently maintains the highest rate of unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa. There is also evidence that points to the correlation between youth unemployment and rising violence throughout the country as poverty, inequality and exclusion are structural drivers of conflict and violence. Lack of alternative sources of livelihoods is consistently given by young women and men as motive for joining militias and gangs. This is of particular concern before, during and after the 2015 elections given Nigeria's history of electoral violence.

Therefore, the Peace and Security Working Group recommends Nigerian Ministries, Departments and Agencies, particularly those which are involved with youth employment and empowering programming, consider funding and implementing community impact projects (CIPs) or quick impact projects (QIPs). State governments can use existing employment schemes to create quick wins engaging young women and men. These should be small-scale, rapidly-implementable projects designed to mitigate violent conflict over the next three to six months by promoting economic and educational opportunities for young women and men. CIPs and QIPs are designed to provide short-term stabilization, however they should

also consider how targeted participants will be integrated into longer-term economic recovery interventions. MDAs should also coordinate in design and implementation of these programmes to ensure a common approach. Specific steps should be taken to minimise risks that these CIPs and QIPs will be used to mobilise young people for party political purposes around elections and there be built in transparency over selection of beneficiaries and operation of the projects in order to ensure this. See above (#1) for more elaboration on QIPs.

For Security Agencies

- **Increase information-sharing and collaboration with INEC, Government, and others on security-related issues, particularly at the local government and state levels**

At present, there are a number of government actors working on elections, including a number of security agencies, the elections management body INEC and other Ministries, Departments and Agencies. Although there have been efforts to coordinate, more are needed to enable effective response.

Security agencies should intensify efforts to share information and collaborate with others working on elections, including INEC, in order to enable better planning and response to violence.

- **Ensure response is gender sensitive and takes into account the differential nature and impact of insecurity on women, men, girls and boys and those with disability.**

The impact of violence and conflict is not uniform. Conflict affects women and girls differently to men and boys. Women and men with disabilities are more likely to experience violence, find it more difficult to escape violence and are less likely to receive support.

When planning and implementing response to election-related violence, security should take this into account and ensure that the security needs of all are taken into account and plans consciously attempt to minimise the impact on groups particularly vulnerable to violence.

For Political Parties

- **Increase public dialogue around non-violence by and between political leaders.**

The Nigerian state faces challenges in its democratic transition having emerged from authoritarian military rule into a nascent democracy in 1999. Conflicts playing on ethno-religious dynamics and pastoralist/ farmer tensions, the JAS insurgency, high rates of unemployment among young people and the attitude of politicians together with the Southern Kaduna crisis, the Niger Delta militancy and Nasarawa mbatse militia are some of the indicators that threaten not only the 2015 election but also the corporate existence of Nigerian. If urgent steps are not taken, the types of violent conflicts that characterized the 2011 post-election are likely to be replicated in the 2015 general elections.

As elections approach, it becomes imperative for stakeholders to engage in public discussions on free, inclusive and non-violent elections. The discussions should include political parties, the media, security agents, public institutions and other stakeholders on the best approach to address violence.