



Election Violence Landscape in Nigeria

*A Critical Intelligence Analysis
from 1999 to 2022*



**Election Violence
Incidence Tracker**



**BRAIN BUILDERS
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE**

For Enquiries:

+234 706 877 5529

brainbuilderedu@gmail.com



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Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI) is a nonprofit organization driven by passion to promote civic engagement, peaceful political participation, advancing civic liberties and championing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Over the years, BBYDI has been at the forefront of achieving the above-mentioned through data-driven researches and analyses, and championing of citizen-focused advocacies.

2, Shalom Street, TKP Junction, University Road, Tanke, Ilorin.
+234 706 877 5529 | brainbuilderedu@gmail.com

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Preface

The conduct of free and fair elections is a fundamental aspect of democratic governance and a cornerstone of peaceful and sustainable development. Unfortunately, Nigeria's election landscape has been characterised by violence and disputes, which have threatened the stability and credibility of the electoral process. This study seeks to provide a comprehensive examination of the election violence landscape in Nigeria from 2000 to 2022, with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of the root causes and trends of election violence in the country.

The study is divided into two parts, each providing critical insights and recommendations for addressing election violence in Nigeria. Through a comprehensive analysis of secondary data and big data, this study provides insights into the factors that contribute to election violence in Nigeria, including political, social, economic and historical factors. The first part of the study focuses on the determinants of election violence from the perspective of citizens, highlighting the key drivers of election violence and its impact on the electoral process. The second section of the study examines the spikes and variance in election violence over time, highlighting the factors that have contributed to the escalation of violence during electoral cycles and predicting locations where violence may occur during the 2023 general elections.

The findings of this study reveal that the persistence of election violence in Nigeria is due to a complex interplay of political, social and economic factors, including the use of religion, ethnicity, and other socio-economic

factors to manipulate voters, weak institutions, a lack of political will to address election violence, and poor management of the electoral process. While some of the findings of this study are consistent with those of previous academic and organisational studies, it is quite different in how it establishes how the public's information-seeking behaviour reveals an interest in understanding and possibly engaging in violence during campaigns and elections.

This uniqueness leads to the development of strategic action points for critical stakeholders to effectively address election violence and enhance the electoral process in Nigeria instead of providing general policy and managerial recommendations like previous studies did. The action points include strengthening the institutions responsible for conducting free, fair and peaceful elections, promoting political will to address election violence, improving the management of the electoral process, and addressing the root causes of election violence through social, economic and political reforms. In this context, I would say that this study provides a valuable resource for policymakers, civil society organizations, and other critical stakeholders in Nigeria, as well as for those interested in electoral violence and the democratisation process in Africa.

Executive Summary

Since Nigeria returned to democracy over 20 years ago, electoral violence has been a significant challenge for critical stakeholders, such as the government, security agencies, civil society organisations and individuals. As stakeholders seek solutions to the problem, this study identified methodological gaps. As a result, the key determinants of electoral violence have been ignored, including media reportage, distrust in the electoral body and government, and lack of transparency and accountability of the electoral process. The quantitative research collected and analysed data, reviewed existing academic publications and reports on electoral violence from national, regional and global organisations.

The determinants are expected show a high level of connectivity in 2023, with possibility of the citizens believing that violence is good and engaging in it when their demands (provision of public goods by elected officials and implementation of beneficial policies as well as programmes) are not met. The trend will continue until 2024, one year after the 2023 general elections, before plummeting in 2025. However, the increase in the determinants in 2026 suggests a possible renewal of interest in believing and engaging in violence, one year before the 2027 general elections. Nevertheless, our analysis establishes that in 2027, the occurrence of the determinants would be minimal and would pick up in 2028, one year after the 2027 general elections. This suggests possible post-election violence. In 2029, the determinants would also be at a lower level before increasing in 2030 and dipping in 2031.

For the 2023 general elections, our formulated Violence During Election Likelihood Index reveals that the Federal Capital Territory, Lagos and Kano states are the three dominant locations that would be volatile in Hotspot A. Oyo, Kwara, and Enugu states are expected to be hotspots for a number of violent incidents in Hotspot B. Ogun, Abia and Anambra are the three dominant states in Hotspot C, while Kogi, Bayelsa and Ekiti states occupy the first to third places in Hotspot D. In our view, these dynamics need to be addressed holistically by paying strategic attention to managing issues in the trust, electoral integrity, media consumption and performance constructs of our analysis. In this context, we offer the following 10 points for strategic actions;

01	Strengthen electoral institutions to ensure credibility, transparency and independence
02	Promote civic and voter education programmes that encourage peaceful participation in elections
03	Foster dialogue and collaboration between political parties and other relevant stakeholders to promote peaceful elections
04	Provide adequate security measures during elections to prevent violence and ensure public safety
05	Develop effective mechanisms for managing electoral disputes and addressing grievances
06	Encourage media impartiality and responsible reporting to avoid inflaming tensions
07	Strengthen the independence and ability of the judiciary to resolve election-related disputes
08	Promote campaign finance transparency to reduce the influence of money on elections
09	Strengthen the role of civil society organisations in monitoring and reporting incidents related to elections
10	Develop proactive risk management strategies to respond to times of increased risk of electoral violence



Introduction

Electoral violence is a global trend observed in many countries around the world. Different scholars and organisations have defined electoral violence with different approaches¹. A review of the approaches reveals that electoral violence means the use of force or the threat of force to influence the outcome of an election or to prevent citizens from exercising their right to vote. One trend that has been observed is the increasing use of technology in election-related violence. This includes the use of social media to spread disinformation, incite violence and intimidate voters, as well as the use of hacking and cyberattacks to disrupt electoral processes. Another trend is the increasing use of private security forces and militias in election-related violence. This includes the use of hired thugs to intimidate voters and disrupt polling stations, and the use of state security forces to intimidate opposition candidates and their supporters.

A third trend is the increasing use of voter suppression tactics, such as voter identification laws, gerrymandering and the manipulation of voter rolls to prevent certain groups of people from voting. The risk of electoral violence is often higher in countries with political instability, ethnic or religious divisions, weak institutions and a lack of democratic traditions. But cases of electoral violence have also been reported in developed countries.

These trends are not entirely different in Nigeria. In the early years, violence was often instigated by political parties and their

supporters and fuelled by ethnic and religious tensions. The 1960s and 1970s saw political killings and riots, and the presidential elections of 1983 and 1993 were overshadowed by widespread violence and allegations of electoral fraud. In recent years, electoral violence has taken on new forms, such as political thuggery and vote buying. The 2007 and 2011 elections were also overshadowed by violence. There were reports of clashes between rival political groups and allegations of electoral fraud. In the 2015 election, voting was relatively peaceful, but there were still reports of violence and vote buying in some areas. The 2019 presidential election was also marked by violence. There were reports of clashes between supporters of different political parties, as well as cases of voter intimidation and electoral fraud. In Nigeria, as in other countries, dealing with electoral violence is a challenge for various stakeholders such as security agencies, civil society organisations and individuals since the country returned to democracy over 20 years ago. While stakeholders continue to seek solutions to the problem, this study was undertaken after discovering methodological gaps and a lack of holistic views on the key determinants of electoral violence in Nigeria. In this context, our analysis demonstrates the potential usefulness of composite constructs of determinants and Big Data for identifying the dynamics of electoral violence that have occurred in the past and for predicting future trends.

¹Momen, M.N., Markony, G.A.U.Z. (2020). Election Violence. In: Romaniuk, S., Thapa, M., Marton, P. (eds) *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Global Security Studies*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-74336-3_37-1; Birch, S., Daxecker, U., & Höglund, K. (2020). Electoral violence: An introduction. *Journal of Peace Research*, 57(1), 3–14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319889657>

Research Strategy

The year 2000 represents a year after the country returned to democratic governance, while 2001 was two years after the return. 2003, 2007 and 2015 were the years for the conduct of general elections.

A quantitative research approach was used for data collection and analysis. This approach led to the adoption of longitudinal surveys, big data and systematic reviews of existing academic publications as well as election violence-related reports from national, regional, and global organisations. For the longitudinal survey, the yearly survey on socioeconomic and political issues and/or needs of the Afrobarometer, a regional think-tank organisation, was the source of data. The survey focuses on various aspects of Nigerians' daily interactions with the government at all levels, including members of the parliament at the national and state levels. The survey also considers interpersonal and intercultural relationships, including business transactions, among Nigerians at different levels of income status. We considered the survey appropriate for understanding determinants of election violence in Nigeria between 2000 and 2021 because of its comprehensiveness in terms of interrogating concepts relating to democracy, governance, performance, and accountability from the citizens' perspective. The survey is also useful because of its consistency over time in evaluating positive and negative outcomes of Africa's democratic governance system. Therefore, we believe that extracting variables of interest and formulating electoral violence determinants will go a long way towards revealing dynamics associated with violent incidents before, during, and after elections in Nigeria. It should be noted that Afrobarometer usually conducts the survey before, during, and after elections. We followed this approach by extracting variables from surveys conducted in 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2021. The year 2000 represents a year after the country returned to democratic governance, while 2001 was two years after the return. 2003, 2007 and 2015 were the years for the conduct of general elections. Unlike the years 2000 and 2001, which did not have general elections, the years 2005, 2008, 2013, and 2021 had general elections. From these timelines, we had a total of 23,262 respondents. The respondents were interrogated by the Afrobarometer's Research Team using the telephone and entered responses in the appropriate section of the questionnaire developed as the research instrument. This indicates that participants were recruited using the random sampling technique by employing the telephone numbers of Nigerians.

After extracting relevant variables from the questions Afrobarometer asked the participants, we developed five constructs for measuring

election violence from the citizens' perspective. These constructs included the news media, trust, electoral integrity, citizen capacity and accountability, government, parliament and judiciary performance. The news media construct encompassed the extent to which Nigerians accessed newspapers, television, and radio stations during the periods of the surveys. The construct also asked whether participants saw these media as promoting understanding or inciting conflict. The trust construct was measured by considering the degree to which the sampled citizens reported to have trust in the president, chiefs, local government, police, army, law courts, political parties, national assembly, electoral commission, churches, mosques, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, or their relatives, neighbours, own tribe and other tribes. The key focus of the electoral integrity construct was the conduct of presidential and state elections in terms of credible and fair electoral processes that produce the outcomes. Since citizens are central to choosing or voting for political leaders and influencing others, we considered their ability to freely choose, influence others and government through expression of views on national issues and needs under the citizen capacity and accountability construct. This construct also covered the extent to which the sampled citizens believed they were patient, cooperative, at ease and honest. We measured the government, parliament and judiciary performance constructs through Afrobarometer's questionnaire item that asked the participants to indicate whether the performance of the president, governor, local government, national parliament, state parliament, judge or lawyer, and party was

good or bad during survey periods. Participation in social and political movements was developed as a sub-construct with the aim of revealing whether participants' responses that they signed petitions, attended election rallies and participated in demonstrations could be linked with seeing violence as good. To determine association or connection, all constructs were analysed alongside the "violence is good" variable. Two levels of data analysis were employed. The first level entailed the use of a simple frequency count and percentage for describing participants' views about democracy and national government performance. At the second level, we employed inferential statistics with the specific adoption of correlational and principal component analysis (PCA). At the first stage of using correlational analysis, we used simple linear regression analysis to determine the connection between the constructs and the key variable (violence is good). At the second stage of using it (correlational analysis), we employed PCA. PCA afforded us the opportunity to discover constructs that were mostly connected with the key variable of interest. Google Trends was the second source of data for analysis. It is a product from Google that normalises people's search interests on the Internet. It has different segments for archiving people's information-seeking behaviour. The results of the searches are usually normalised between 0 and 100. A zero score indicates a lack of in-depth Internet searches. When search normalisation reaches a score of 100, it means the public is developing a significant interest in the term(s) used for querying different sources on the

Internet. In this regard, we drew on the literature's existing conceptual understanding of information seeking behavior, which indicates that what people searched for and consumed (read, listened to, and watched) reflects what the news media considered happenings in a specific location and worthy of reporting. Therefore, the public interest in violence within the campaigns and elections category of Google Trends gave us data that could be compared with the frequency of violent incidents and their outcomes across Nigeria. In this report, data from Google Trends are proxies for public interest in violent incidents related to elections and the occurrence of the incidents across the country². To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study in the area of election violence in Nigeria within civic space that considers big data using Google Trends like what is available in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and some other countries in the global north, where the data source has been used for analysing political protests and predicting election outcomes³. Data from the tool was also analysed using a simple

frequency count and percentage. We extended the search normalisation use of the tool by employing Relative Search Volume (RSV) and Average Relative Interest (ARI) for constructing public interest in violence from the searches that Google Trends normalised within the campaigns and elections category. RSV represents the addition of the normalisation of violence search term by month before, during, and after election years. ARI focuses on the average performance of the term using national and state outlooks. We further developed the Violence During Election Likelihood Index (VDELI) using public interest in violence during previous elections (2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019) divided by the interest in violence prior to the 2022 general elections and multiplied by 100 to reveal states with possible violence during the 2023 general elections. The Index stresses the relativity of violent incidents during previous elections (2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019) with those that occurred in 2022, a year before the 2023 general elections, and reveals possible volatile states, including the Federal Capital Territory.

²Mellon, J. (2014). Internet search data and issue salience: The properties of Google Trends as a measure of issue salience. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties*, 24(1), 45-72.

³Mavragani, A., & Tsagarakis, K. P. (2016). YES or NO: Predicting the 2015 GReferendum results using Google Trends. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 109, 1-5; Prado-Román, C., Gómez-Martínez, R., & Orden-Cruz, C. (2021). Google trends as a predictor of presidential elections: the United States versus Canada. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 65(4), 666-680.



Part One

Electoral Violence Determinants from the Perspective of Citizens

From over 9,000 Nigerians sampled between 2000 and 2021, less than half reported being satisfied with democracy in 2000.

Since the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of democracy cannot be determined without considering the views of citizens being governed by political leaders at various levels, in our analysis, we consider the feelings and reactions expressed by Nigerians surveyed between 2000 and 2001 by the Afrobarometer. Specific attention was paid to satisfaction with democracy since the country's return to democratic governance in 1999 through the performance of elected citizens at national, state and local levels. Where the satisfaction was not good, we asked whether such perception can facilitate their participation in violence or believe that it is good to engage in it. This is necessary because scholars and professionals have constantly linked violence with the inability of the elected public officeholders to fulfil their campaign promises. Analysis reveals that Nigerians could only be reported to be satisfied with the ways the country has been practising democracy since 1999 in three years out of the 10 years Afrobarometer survey covered. From over 9,000 Nigerians sampled between 2000 and 2021, less than half reported being satisfied with democracy in 2000. Though the recorded percentage in 2001, two years after the country returned to democratic governance, was not encouraging, it was obvious that Nigerians still prefer the governance type over the previous military rule(s) (see Figure 1).

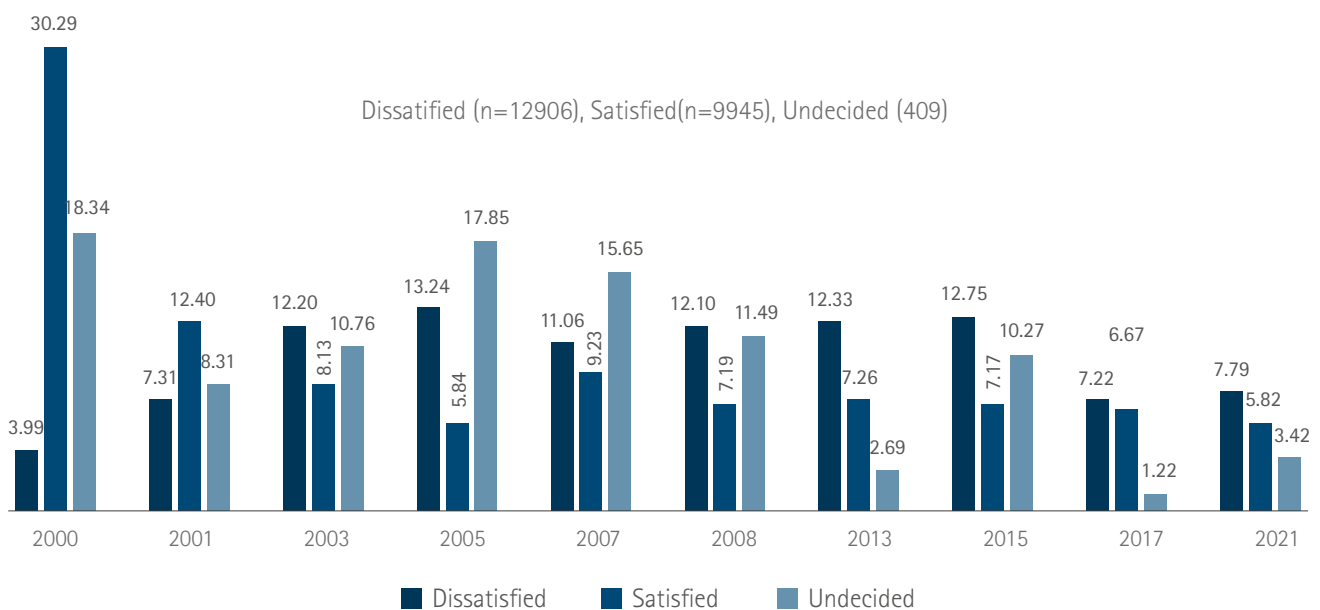


Figure 1: Citizen satisfaction with democracy
 Source: Afrobarometer, 2000–2021; Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative, 2023

Between 2003 and 2005, covering the period that the country had her first election under a democratic governance system, the satisfaction, hovering of satisfaction status around less than 20% was still not encouraging. The dissatisfaction status was high in 2005 and 2015.

The dissatisfaction could be linked to the performance of elected officials in the previous and during the years which tends to facilitate public criticism through various means. The year 2005 represents two years after electing former President Olusegun Obasanjo for a second term in office. In 2015, the current President Muhammadu Buhari had his first tenure. Again, the level of dissatisfaction expressed by the sampled citizens could be connected with the performance of the previous and new administrations. This position is further explored with analysis of sampled citizens with government performance at national level.

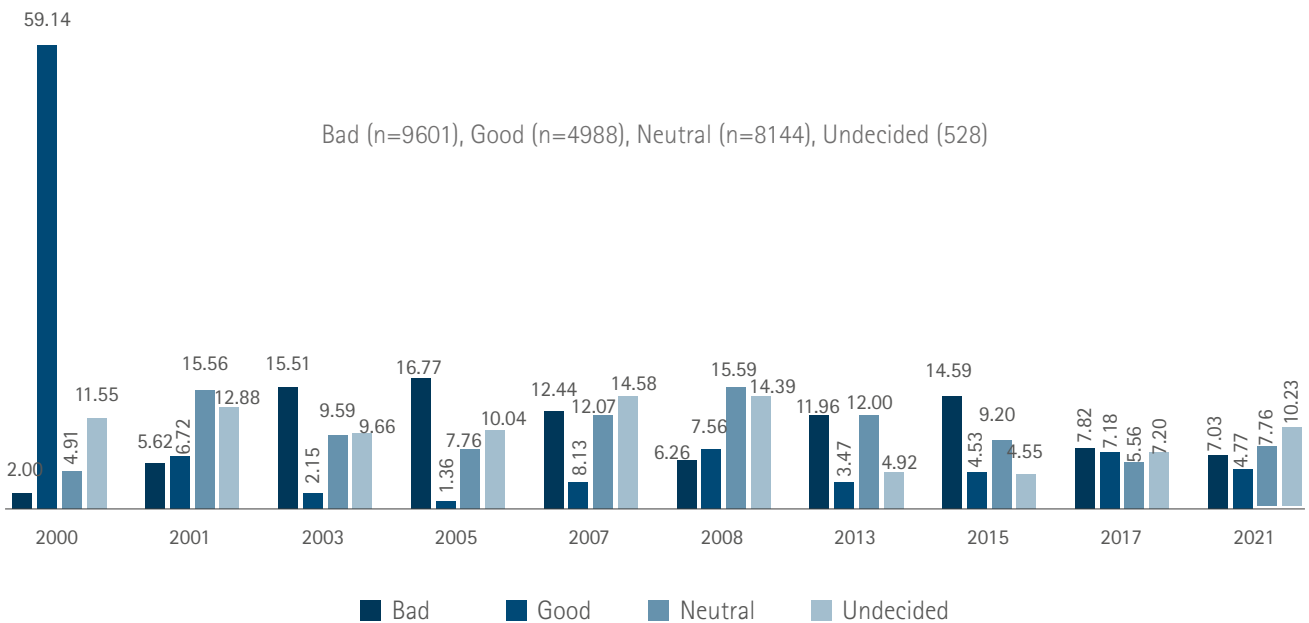


Figure 2: Citizen perception of government performance
 Source: Afrobarometer, 2000-2021; Brain Builder Youth Development Initiative, 2023

Out of 4,987 Nigerians who believed that performance was good between 2000 and 2021, over 70% were still dissatisfied with democracy. This percentage was not quite different for those who expressed bad feelings about performance at the national level. . Over 76% of 9,600 Nigerians who indicated bad performance status were dissatisfied with democracy during the studied years.

From these results, we found an important contradictory point which lies between believing that performance was good and at the same time dissatisfied with democracy, a tool that facilitates the election of public officeholders. However, an over 6% slight difference between those who believed that performance was bad and also dissatisfied with democracy could be a pointer that socioeconomic and political developments expected between 2000 and 2021 were not attained by the country as Nigerians expected. This could also be one of the reasons that 51.68% and 56.63% maintained a neutral position and did not respond to the question respectively (see Figure 3). In this regard, it would be difficult not to have some political and non-political violence across the country.

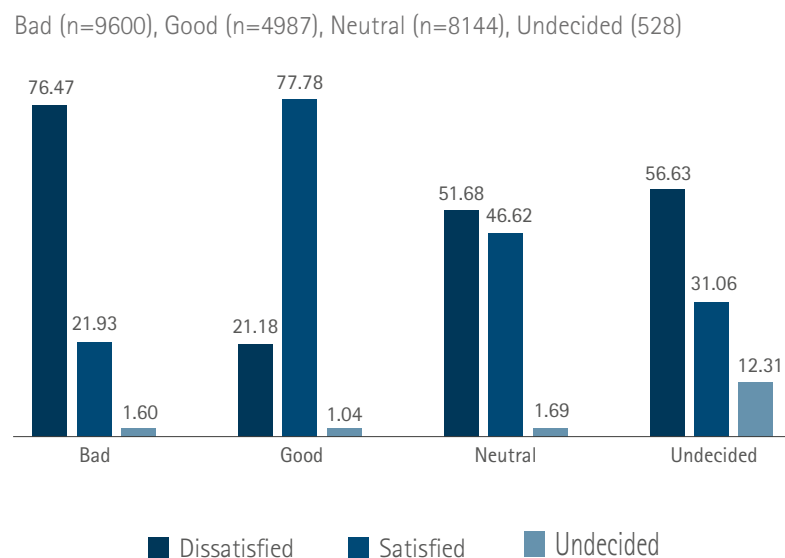


Figure 3: Citizen perception of government performance and satisfaction with democracy
Source: Afrobarometer, 2000–2021; Brain Builder Youth Development Initiative, 2023

Meanwhile, when analysis was carried out with the consideration of sampled citizens' possibility of engaging in violence startling outcomes emerged. From those who believed that performance was bad to those who maintained neutral and did not know whether to respond to the question, engaging in violence is not good. However, 58.12% of 3,789 citizens who indicated good performance status for the government considered participating in violence as appropriate. This outcome reinforced the previous outcome that Nigerians can engage in violence whether the government is performing well or not. If violence has been viewed through performance and democracy in these ways, what are the key determinants? We answered this question in the subsequent section of this part by focusing on news consumption, trust, the integrity of the previous elections, citizen capacity, accountability and performance (in a retrospective approach).

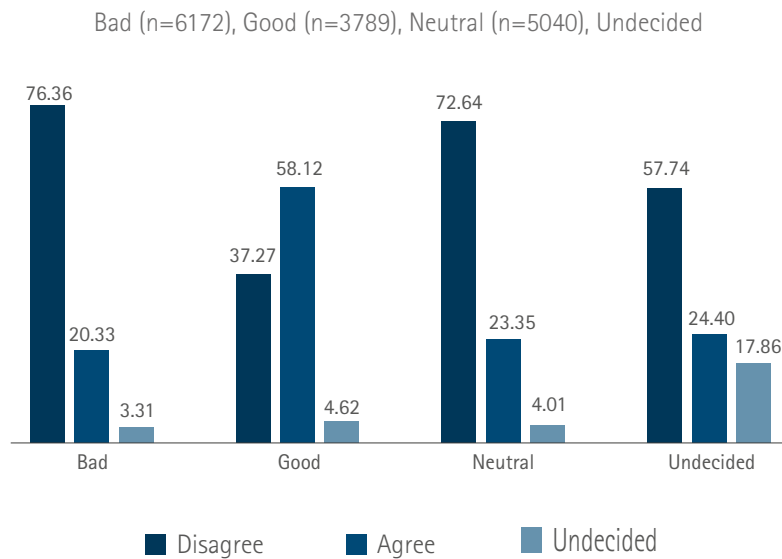


Figure 4: Citizen perception of government performance and whether engaging in violence is good
 Source: Afrobarometer, 2000-2021; Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative, 2023

1.1 News Media

Media is the heart of any society. In terms of advancing socioeconomic and political development, media organisations through their professionals must disseminate information capable of enabling people to take up various challenges and solve different identified problems. In this regard, between 2000 and 2021, Nigerians were asked about how they used and consumed content from radio, television and mainstream newspapers. Analysis shows that radio and television were the dominant means of accessing news about socioeconomic and political issues as well as needs. The majority of the sampled citizens reported using radio at least once a week and television once a month. This result suggests that the sampled citizens accessed their news preferences from other sources such as social media and opinion leaders which were not considered in the survey. On a surprising note, analysis reveals that radio was considered as promoting understanding more than television and newspaper. The consideration of television and newspaper as not promoting understanding aligns with the existing view that media hardly play its role due to the demands of the various competing special interest groups. A large number of different voices created something of a marketplace of ideas although some of the ideas resulted in violence based on the frame types such as demeaning personality traits and ethnicity employed for representing actors of the ideas⁵.

This approach to reporting political happenings remains significant tool being used by digital news media practitioners (bloggers) as well. Fake news, misinformation and disinformation were used during the previous elections and there are no indicators that they would not be used during the 2023 general elections. This view is premised on several false and misleading news reports and messages on social media platforms that were verified by various factchecking organisations from 2019 to 2022. As one of the key players in Factchecking ecosystem, our Fact Check Elections Unit verified more 80 news and messages with the high threat severity to the 2023 general elections. For instance, Mr Peter Obi, presidential candidate of the Labour Party, claimed that the Eastern Security Network (ESN) formed by the governors of the south east region. The claim was false because our factchecking approaches reveal that the security agency was established by the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB). One of the dominant viral on social media we verified in 2022 was the claim that the Lagos State Signage and Advertisement Agency (LASAA) issued a directive to restrict other political parties in the State from placing campaign billboards, except for the ruling All Progressives Congress. This message was deliberately disseminated to target Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu and his political party, the All Progressives Congress.

⁵Iruonagbe, T. C., Imhonopi, D., & Ahmadu, F. O. (2013). A conceptual review of mass media and political violence in Nigeria between 1999 and 2013. *New Media and Mass Communication*, 20, 12-20; Awofadeju, P. O., Adeyemo, A. L., Kwembili, C., & Adesanya, A. (2015). Political violence and media coverage in Nigeria: An analysis of Nigerian Tribune and Punch Newspapers of 2011 general elections in Osun State. *International Journal of Advanced Legal Studies & Governance*, 5, 79.; Jinmi-Ahisu, O. V. (2021). Media framing and electoral violence in Nigeria fourth republic. *Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies*, 4(2).

1.2 Trust

The performance status and level of satisfaction citizens express about the activities of elected officials concerning democracy largely depend on the level of trust they have in the people governing them⁶. This is not only applicable in the developed world. Citizens of the global south countries have over the years reported their distrust in governments. Afrobarometer, our dominant survey data source considered trust as one of the key variables of studying various issues and needs of people in Nigeria between 2000 and 2021. Sampled Nigerians during this period did not trust relatives, neighbours, their tribes, other tribes, the president, chiefs, local government, police, army, law courts, national assembly, the electoral commission and political parties. They had a high level of trust in churches, mosques, trade unions and non-governmental organisations. In other words, citizens believe in non-state actors more than the state actors in Nigeria's democracy project. These results primarily connect with the previous outcomes which establish how sampled Nigerians believed that governance and democracy between 2000 and 2021 did not deliver the expected results across the country. The low level of trust in close relatives and neighbours suggests the possibility of engaging in violence when issues arise. For instance, sharing of incentives such as money or materials from politicians and political parties could lead to violence if one of the beneficiaries feels that he

must have the largest share. The distrust in the electoral commission, political parties and security agencies reaffirm existing views from scholars and professionals that election outcomes lacking credibility could, in turn, create substantial space for violent opposition by the losing candidate(s), especially where the contests have a sectarian cast. Accusing fingers have been pointed to, and aspersions cast at, the security forces especially the police, and the military, which were allegedly ready-made state machinery for perpetuating electoral frauds⁷. The election tribunals and courts that citizens expect to be the last hope for ensuring "ideal democracy" are not doing much in addressing electoral breaches during various cases which usually led to post-election unrest⁸.

⁶ Alemika, E. (2004). Corruption, governance performance and political trust in Nigeria.

⁷ Collier, P., & Vicente, P. (2008). Votes and Violence: Experimental Evidence from a Nigerian Election. Department of Economics (University of Oxford); Campbell, J. (2010). Electoral violence in Nigeria. Council on Foreign Relations; Idowu, W. (2010). Corruption, the Police and the Challenges of a Free and Fair Election in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 12(7); Omodia, S. M. (2011). Political elites and the challenge of free and fair elections in the Nigerian Fourth Republic. *Canadian Social Science*, 7(5), 111-115; Adibe, J. (2015). INEC and the Challenges of free and Fair elections in Nigeria. Independent National Electoral Commission; Akinyetun, T. S. (2021). The Prevalence of Electoral Violence in the Nigerian Fourth Republic: An Overview. *African Journal of Democracy and Election Research*, 1(1), 73.

⁸ Bribena, K. (2021). Legal implications of Post-Electoral Violence in Africa: The Nigerian Experience. *African Journal of Development Studies*, 2021(si2), 161.

1.3 Electoral Integrity

As pointed out previously, electoral violence manifests in various forms which are pernicious and potent in undermining fair contest⁹. Trust and integrity in the electoral processes that produced the results are important in knowing the possibility of having violence before, during and after elections. Analysis of the views of Nigerians between 2000 and 2021 indicates a belief that presidential elections conducted during this period were less credible while state elections were quite credible. This outcome could be discerned from the violent incidents that occurred during the period, especially the 2011 and 2015 presidential elections. However, the level of credibility the sampled citizens showed for state elections suggests that there were governorship elections believed to be quite honestly conducted by the electoral body, signifying that the performance of electoral management bodies is associated with citizens' assessment of election quality in Nigeria and that citizens demand electoral management body with impartiality and professionalism¹⁰.

1.4 Citizen Capacity and Accountability

Since sampled Nigerians expressed some levels of credibility about the previous elections, we expect that they must have certain capacities to ensure their choice of candidates and participation in the elections. Therefore, it is

necessary to examine specific determinants for assessing the quality of the elections. The ability to influence others and the freedom to choose and influence government through the expression of various views were considered. Analysis shows that the majority were able to influence their friends, colleagues and family members while voting for preferred candidates was not improved. Our data shows that the ability to exert various forms of influence was static during the period, most importantly regarding expressing views on different socioeconomic and political issues and having governments that responded appropriately. Beyond influencing others and the government, it is necessary to consider the extent to which citizens are also ready to be responsible and responsive to democratic ideals or principles towards mutual benefits. Analysis of patience, cooperation, being at ease and honesty with each other was conducted. The results indicate that sampled citizens were in between being patient and impatient. This is also found in being cooperative and honest. These results have several implications. For instance, when they are dissatisfied with the performance of elected officials, there is a tendency for engaging in violence. Working towards preventing or resolving emerged violent incidents is also unlikely because of their uncooperative tendency. When honesty is elusive among them spreading misleading information capable of leading to violence would not be difficult¹¹. Therefore, attending election rallies and demonstrations becomes easier.

⁹ Ebiziem, E. (2015). Electoral violence and sustenance of democracy in Nigeria, A critical appraisal of 2015 presidential election. *Journal of Political Science and Leadership Research*, 1(8), 37-51.

¹⁰ Kerr, N. (2013). Popular evaluations of election quality in Africa: Evidence from Nigeria. *Electoral Studies*, 32(4), 819-837.

¹¹ Badejo, A. O. (2012). Predisposing factors to youth involvement in electoral violence in Lagos metropolis. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 3(3), 312-316.

1.5 Government, Parliament and Judiciary Performance

As revealed previously, the majority of sampled citizens were not satisfied with the performance of the national government and democracy in particular. In this section, we expatiate the previous insights by examining the performance of presidents, governors, local governments, national and state parliaments. We also considered political parties, judges and lawyers. Our analysis reveals that the majority were not satisfied nor unsatisfied with the performance of presidents, governors, local governments, national assembly and members of the judiciary. Astonishingly, our analysis shows that sampled respondents were somewhat satisfied with political parties and state parliaments despite that they expressed their unsatisfactory position about the performance of elected officials. To further broaden our understanding of how the components facilitated consideration of violence by the sampled citizens, we carried out further analysis to establish the extent to which each of the components could determine whether engaging in violence is good. According to our analysis, trust, news media consequences, news consumption, electoral integrity and performance are more discerned from the possibility of engaging in violence (see Figure 5). This reemphasized the earlier results that when citizens have less trust in political actors and the electoral body (INEC), they are likely to engage in violence. It also suggests that news media reportage of issues related to elections is not helpful in convincing citizens from considering violence as not good. However, further analysis of how the components resonate with considering violence as good reveals mixed results.

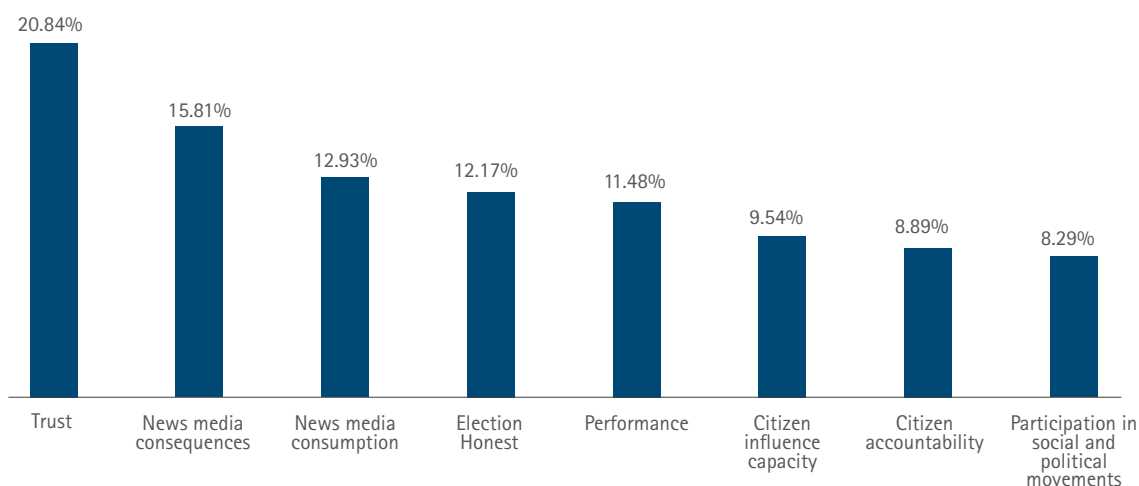


Figure 5: Dominant components that explained whether engaging in violence is good¹²

Source: Afrobarometer, 2000-2021; Brain Builder Youth Development Initiative, 2023

¹² Principal Component Analysis was carried for determining constructs that explained whether engaging in violence is good

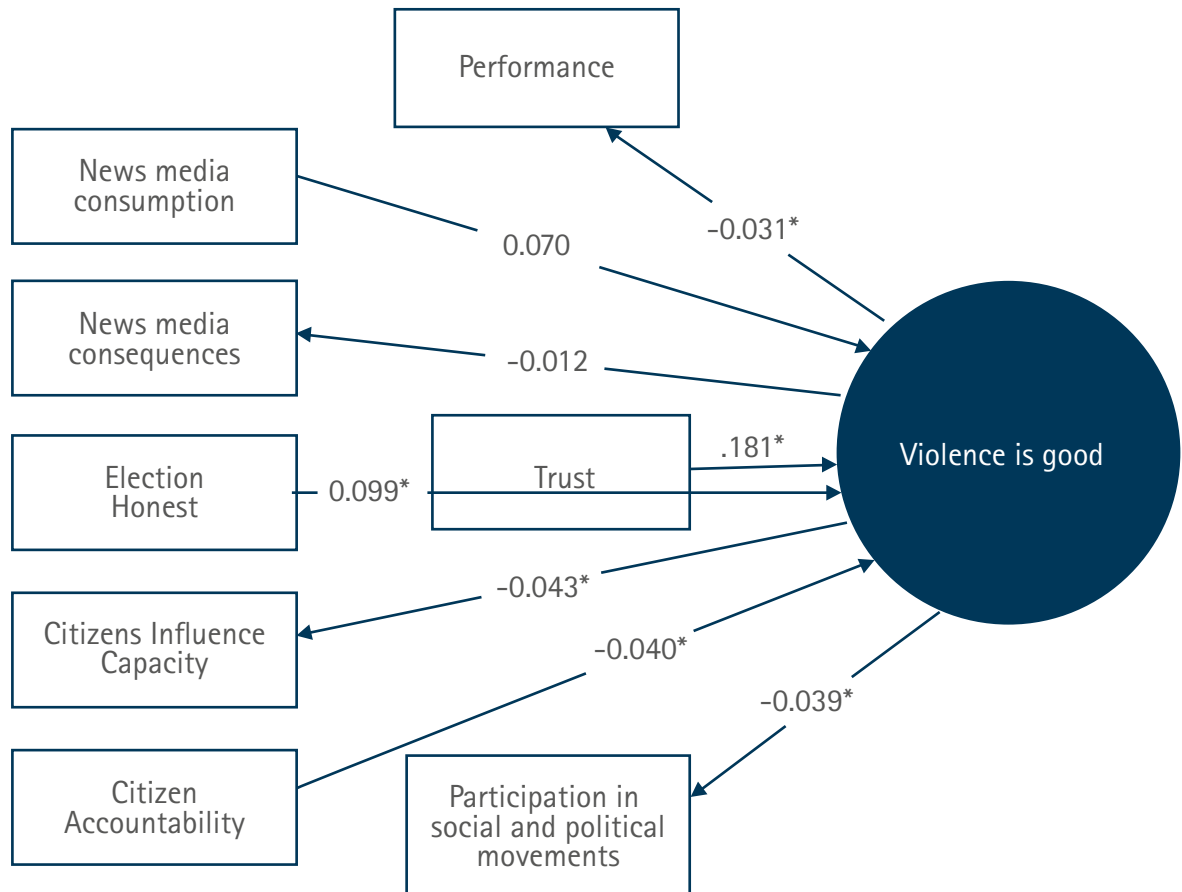


Exhibit 1: Resonance of key determinants with violence¹³
 Source: Brain Builder Youth Development Initiative, 2023

¹³ Linear regression analysis was carried out after forming the constructs.

Trust, media consumption, electoral integrity and citizen accountability are more connected with seeing violence as good (see Exhibit 1). This suggests that having a strong level of trust in political actors and fellow citizens is critical to not considering violence as the best solution to electoral issues. This outcome has also reaffirmed that consuming media content, especially news about political events, is important to reducing or eliminating electoral violence in Nigeria. It is also essential to build strong electoral institutions and civic environments towards ensuring freedom of choice and participation in activities leading to election conduct and after elections. The failure to have strategies and tactics that ensure strong and acceptable political, media and civic systems would continue to be a significant determinant for considering violence as the best solution to address various irregularities before, during and after subsequent elections. Trust, electoral credibility and performance are dominant determinants that need to be considered by concerned stakeholders as of 2023 (see Figure 6). In all, the severity of considering violence as good would be enormous during pre-election years than during the elections (see Figure 7).

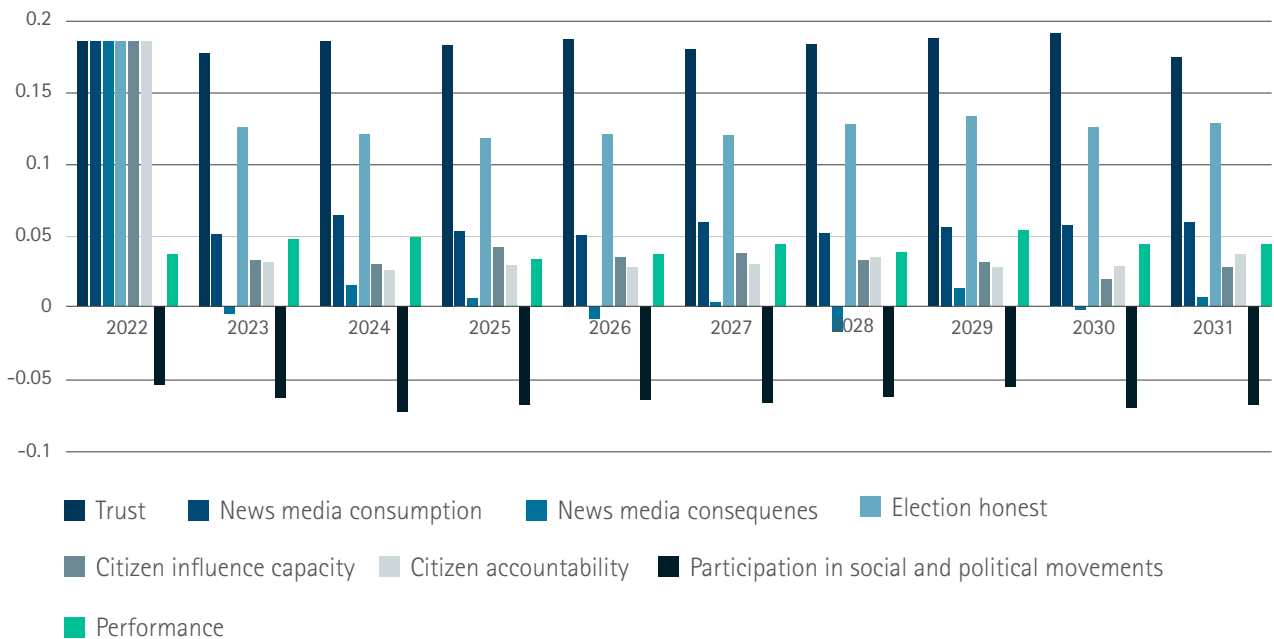


Figure 6: Future trends of the key components with whether engaging in violence is good¹⁴
 Source: Afrobarometer, 2000-2021; Brain Builder Youth Development Initiative, 2023

¹⁴ Cross-correlational analysis of the constructs was carried for determining the future trends

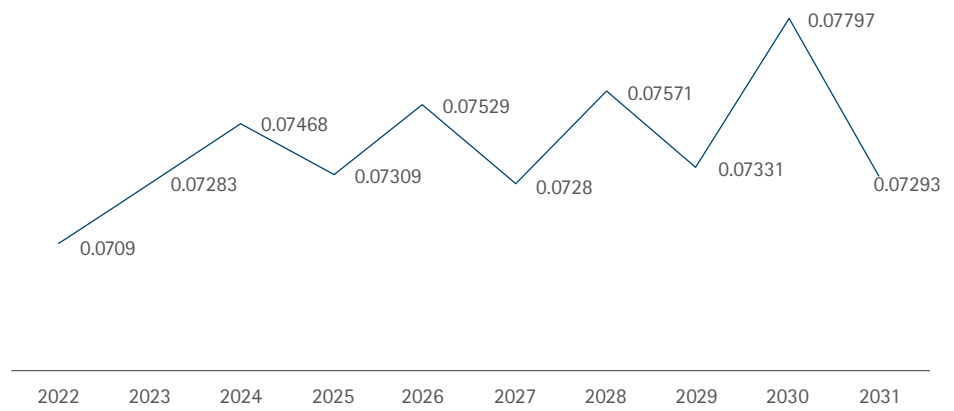


Figure 7: Severity of future trends of the key components with whether engaging in violence is good¹⁵

Source: Afrobarometer, 2000-2021; Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative, 2023



¹⁵ Standard deviation of responses to the key components was used for determining severity of the future trends



Part Two

Spikes and Variance in Election Violence

During an electoral cycle, it is crucial to gather and act on information from the news media or from people. Citizens would use news stories for the good of all when they were accurate and disseminated through news media that had better structure and conventions for producing the information. However, political actors and citizens who do not believe in sustained peace and order would appropriate it towards achieving their hidden agenda when the production and dissemination of false and misleading information during the electoral cycle dominate. Following this line of thought, we examine election violence spikes and variance in this section while taking into account the public's interest in "violence" during elections and campaigns using the digital source (Google Trends). This is significant to us because earlier findings indicate that the vast majority of the sampled citizens used news media. In particular, we believe that young people who are primarily the targets of disgruntled political actors and other stakeholders search online for information that can deepen their understanding of violent events covered by news media. Apart from young people, other interested parties use the Internet to research various sources on the appropriate responses to learn how to handle reported incidents. We also look at previous elections with a focus on the number of fatalities related to violent election incidents.

2.1 Public Interest in Election Violence from Digital Sphere

Similar to the findings in Figure 6, our analysis shows that, despite being one of the elections marred by violence and fraud, public interest in violence was higher before than during the 2007 general elections. This is also observed in subsequent general elections. The examination of the interest further establishes that interest in violence during campaigns and elections has been on the rise since 2007. In the 2011 general elections, the public developed a low interest in violence before its being widely characterised by violent incidents. Over 50 people were killed after its rescheduled for March 28 and April 11, 2011. Our analysis also reveals people usually had interest in violence mostly a few months leading to elections and after (see Figure 9). We also find that the public usually developed a significant interest in violence in January and December. This suggests that people are most interested in knowing about violence at the beginning and end of the year. This does not mean that other months are not important while considering possible solutions to election violence. It only indicates that concerned stakeholders need to prioritise the two months.

¹⁶ Moody, B., (2007). Violence, abuses taint Nigerian election. Reuters, April 20, 2007. Available from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-election-idUSL2149632920070421>

¹⁷ Purefoy, C., (2011). Violence marks run-up to Nigerian elections. CNN, March 31, 2011. Available from: <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/03/31/nigeria.elections/index.html>; Ibeh, N., (2015). 58 Nigerians killed in 2015 pre-election violence so far – Rights Commission. Premium Times, February 13, 2015. Available from: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/176802-58-nigerians-killed-2015-pre-election-violence-far-rights-commission.html>

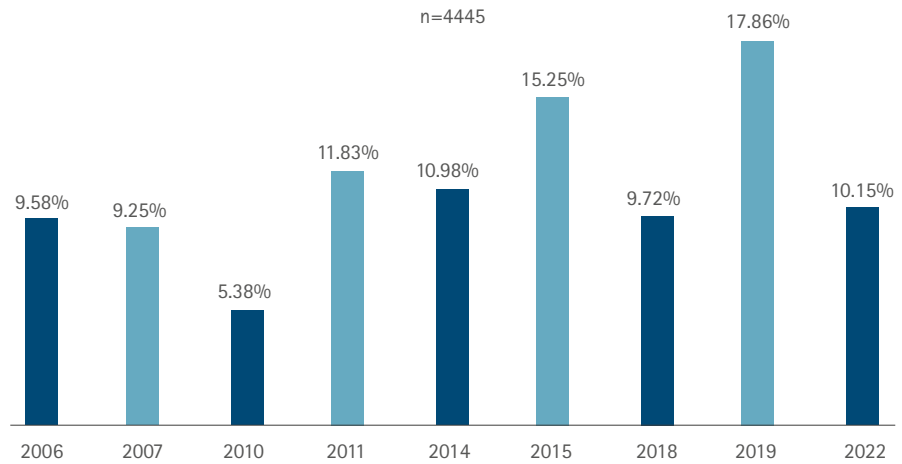


Figure 8: Public interest in violence during campaigns and elections
 Source: Google Trends, 2023; Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative, 2023

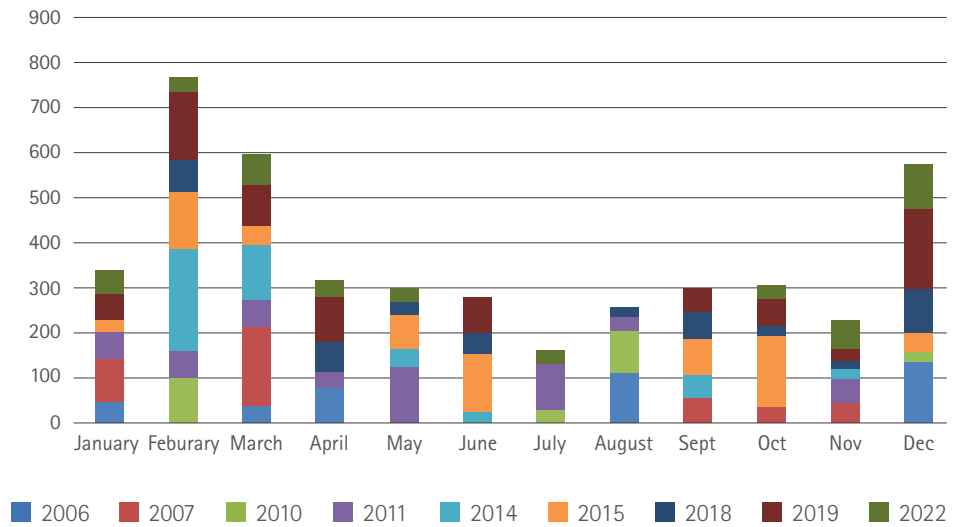


Figure 9: Public interest in violence during campaigns and elections by month across pre and during election years
 Source: Google Trends, 2023; Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative, 2023

Out of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, our analysis reveals that public developed interest in violence during campaigns and elections in 20 states and the Capital.

As we noted previously, this suggests the level of violence that occurred in the states (see Figure 10) and the Capital Territory before and during previous general elections. However, just because public interest in violence was low in certain states does not mean that there were no violent incidents there. It only indicates the level of Internet use inequality that exists in the country and citizens' lack of interest in seeking information about the term in the States (see Figure 10).

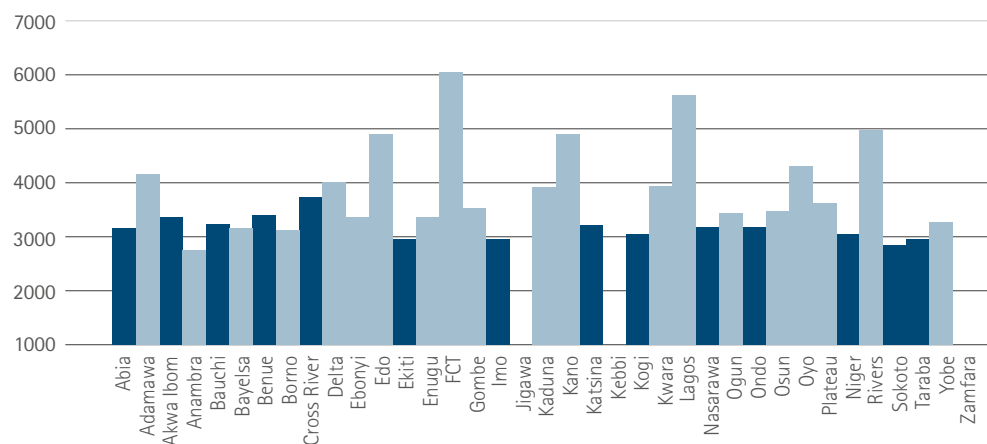


Figure 10: Average relative public interest in violence before and during 2007 to 2019 general elections (including 2023 general elections) by state
 Source: Google Trends, 2006-2022; Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative, 2023

The Violence During Election Likelihood Index was determined from the total of 89,565 searches. After employing a data reduction strategy and following the stated protocol for developing the index, a total of 25,813 searches were used to determine four categories of hotspots (see Exhibit 2) for the 2023 general elections. The FCT, Lagos and Kano states are the three dominant locations we expect to be volatile in Hotspot A. Oyo, Kwara, and Enugu states are expected to be hotspots for a series of violent incidents in Hotspot B. Ogun, Abia and Anambra are the three dominant states in Hotspot C, while Kogi, Bayelsa and Ekiti states occupy the first through third positions in Hotspot D. As we discussed in the subsequent sections, The Capital Territory and the states were the epicentres of various election violence before, during, and after previous elections.

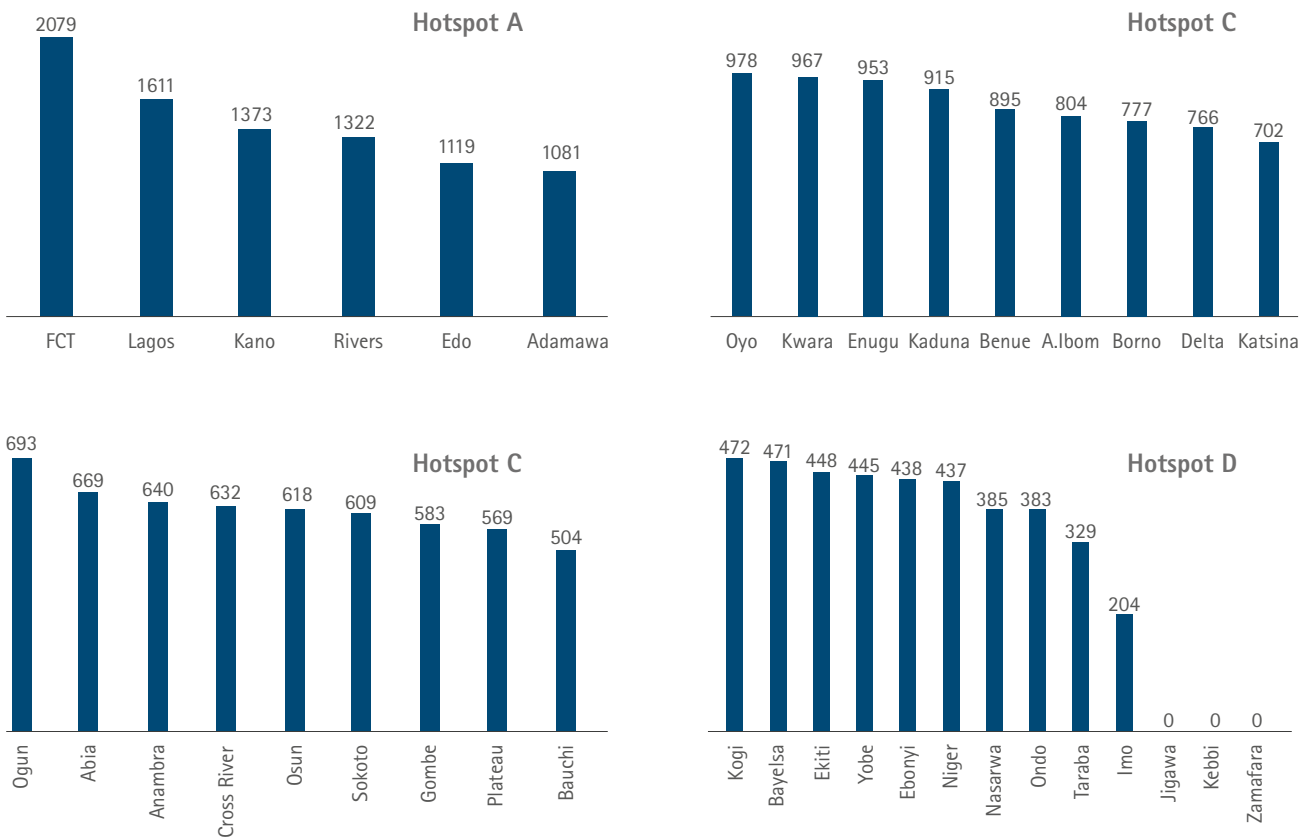


Exhibit 2: Hotspots



2.2 Outcomes of Election Violence from Various Electoral Cycles

Typically, violence occurs before, during, and after elections in both physical and non-physical forms. The most common forms of physical violence are murders and arson. Violence has been a factor in the nation's general elections from the first republic to the fourth, with varying degrees of fatalities. 200 Nigerians lost their lives and numerous homes were destroyed during the elections in 1964 and 1965. There were 80 fatalities during the 1999 general elections that elected President Olusegun Obasanjo, while there were 100 fatalities during the general elections in 1993. The same number of deaths was recorded in 2003. As previously stated, the 2011 general elections were more tainted by severe election violence than others. According to reports, 800 people were killed during the elections. In the six months between the start of the election campaign and the start of the general and supplementary elections in Nigeria in 2019, an estimated 626 people were killed¹⁸. According to general statistics released in 2022, 1,149 people were killed during the elections in 2011, 2015, and 2019. The southern and northern states were frequently mentioned as sites of violent incidents and high death rates during the elections¹⁹.

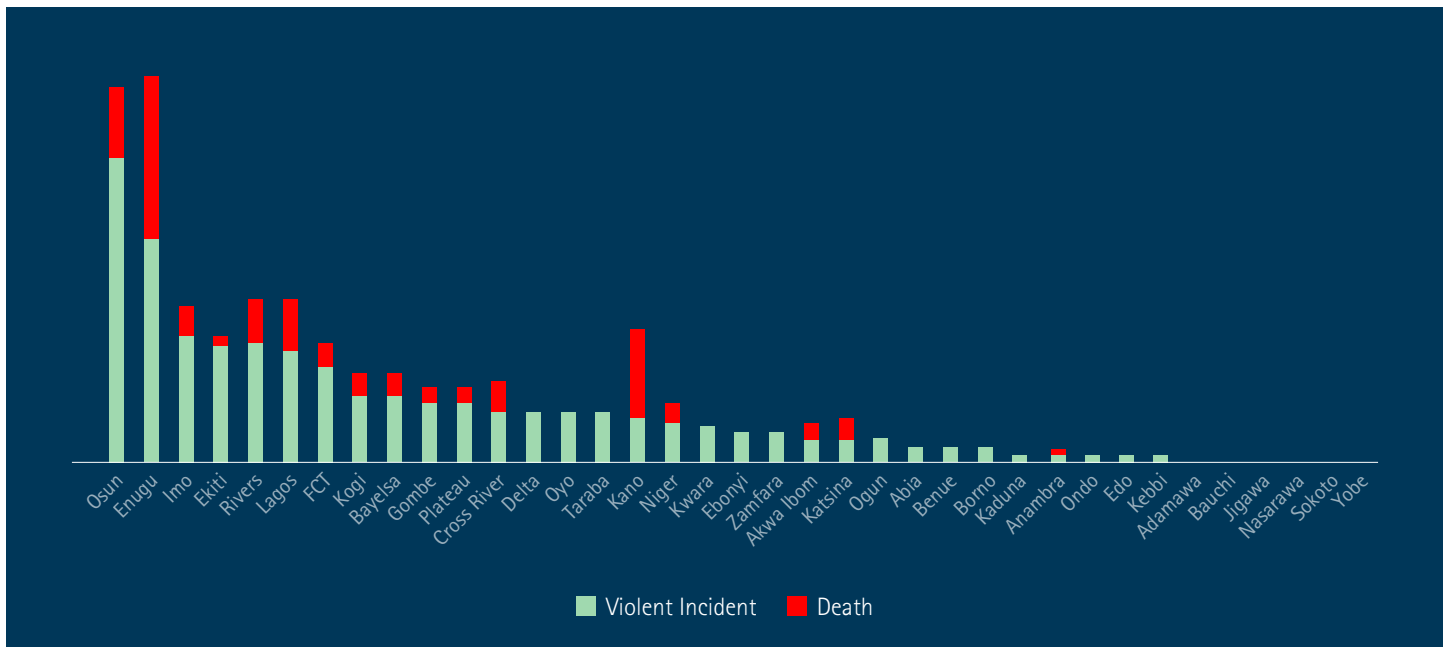


Figure 11: Incidents of Election Violence and number of related deaths between January and December 2022
Source: Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative, 2023

¹⁸ Sanni, K., (2019). 626 killed during 2019 Nigeria elections – Report, Premium Times, July 30, 2019. Available from: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/343971-626-killed-during-2019-nigeria-elections-report.html>

¹⁹ Adelani A., & Olokor, F., (2022). Electoral violence: 1,149 Nigerians killed, INEC suffers 42 attacks, decries rising insecurity, The Punch, April 19, 2022. Available from: <https://punchng.com/electoral-violence-1149-nigerians-killed-inec-suffers-42-attacks-decries-rising-insecurity/>

Our tracking of 255 violent incidents in 2022 show that similar to the previous elections, where people were killed and properties were destroyed before the conduct of the elections, three south-western states held the top three, fourth, and sixth spots in the list of the ten states with the most violent incidents.

Our tracking of 255 violent incidents in 2022 show that similar to the previous elections, where people were killed and properties were destroyed before the conduct of the elections, three south-western states held the top three, fourth, and sixth spots in the list of the ten states with the most violent incidents (see Figure 10). One of the unexpected results of our monitoring is that the number of incidents discovered in Enugu state nearly resulted in corresponding fatalities. This was also discovered in Lagos state, where 15 incidents were discovered, resulting in 7 deaths. The incidents in Kano state appear to have had the opposite effect, with more fatalities than occurrences. With three fatalities from nine incidents, Kogi and Bayelsa states followed a similar pattern. Overall, our analysis demonstrates that the southwest and southeast regions were more volatile in 2022 than the other regions in terms of violent incidents. States in the northwest and south-south regions require special attention from the involved parties when it comes to preventing fatalities. This also applies to states in the south-east region (see Figure 11).

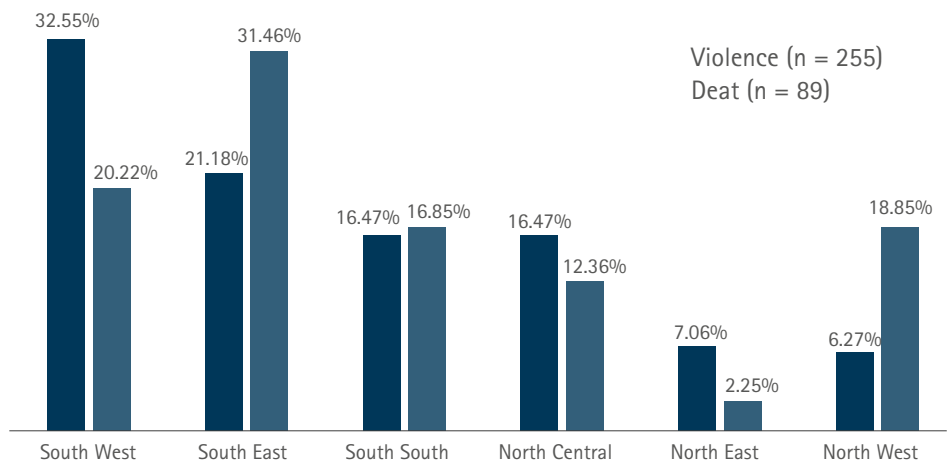


Figure 12: Violence incidents and death rate between January and December 2022
 Source: Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative, 2023

2.3 The Role of Political and Non-Political Actors in Violent Election Dynamics

Our analysis from 2000 to 2022 shows that Nigerians have generally been dissatisfied with the country's democratic practices. The dissatisfaction is connected to the performance of previous and current administrations and a lack of attainment of expected socioeconomic and political developments. The analysis also shows that a significant percentage of citizens believe that participating in violence is appropriate when trust in various institutions and political actors is low. Additionally, presidential elections were seen as less credible compared to state elections. The analysis also reveals that citizens were dissatisfied with the performance of political leaders and institutions and that a low level of trust, consuming misleading or false information from news media and electoral malpractices or irregularities are more connected with seeing violence as good. The interest in violence is also found to be higher at the beginning and end of the year. In all, our analysis reveals interplay and overlap of the

interest of the political and non-political actors during elections through their activities that connect with initiating and sustaining violent atmosphere. The connection of consuming news media content with seeing violence as good attests to established view that political actors can use rhetoric to manipulate citizens into violence, which can fuel feelings of anger and aggression. Instead of fulfilling their electoral promises, political actors can also offer monetary or material incentives to citizens in order to gain their support or participation in violence during elections. Where it is obvious that they would not have substantial votes, as our tracking and mapping of hotspots indicate, political actors may use violence as a tool to threaten or intimidate citizens in order to gain control of a location (village, town, city and state) or demographic group. It is important to recognize that violence is not the only tool used by political actors to influence election outcomes and that other methods, such as intimidation and propaganda, are also used, by owning the media structures and influencing professionals through financial inducement.



Reflective Insights

The findings have thrown up similar lines of recommendations associated with several previous studies or reports on election violence in Nigeria, specifically for political parties, candidates, politicians, among others. For instance, our study has reestablished the need for stakeholders to take critical actions regarding the issues of diminishing trust, negative media consequences, poor governance and poor performance across the country. With a collective effort from all stakeholders, an environment where Nigerians can have faith in their democratic institutions and experience free and fair elections can be created. Our study has also reaffirmed the need for political actors to compete in ways that make every state and the country as a whole safe and secure for citizens to exercise their right to vote without fear of violence or intimidation. Similar to the previous reports, our study equally points towards continued prioritisation of stakeholder engagement during electoral cycles to ensure that citizens are provided with an environment that is conducive to constructive dialogue. In this regard, the political actors have a responsibility to set the tone and provide safety and security to all individuals involved in the electoral process, before, during and after the electoral cycle. It is only through responsible stakeholder engagement that we can reduce the potential risks of violence and destruction. By engaging in meaningful dialogue and collaboration, violence can be avoided and citizens can feel more secure in exercising their right to vote.



Strategic Actions for Critical Stakeholders

While our reflective insights based on the emerging results emphasise the role of political actors in reducing or eliminating violence during electoral cycles, this section focuses on the specific actions stakeholders should consider during and after the 2023 general elections. This is important as our analysis shows that election violence determinants from the citizens' perspective would keep rising and dwindling from 2023 to 2031 (see Figures 6 and 7). In 2023, the determinants are expected to be at a high level of connectivity, with the possibility of the citizens believing that violence is good and participating in it when their demands (provision of public goods by elected officials and implementation of beneficial policies as well as programmes) are not met. The trend will continue until 2024, one year after the 2023 general elections, before plummeting in 2025. Apparently, the dip could be linked to the premise that many Nigerians must have agreed with the outcomes of the elections and decided to move on with building the country alongside the elected officials. However, the increase in the determinants in 2026 suggests a possible renewal of interest in believing and engaging in violence, one year before the 2027 general elections. Nevertheless, our analysis establishes that in 2027, the occurrence of the determinants would be minimal and would increase in 2028, one year after the 2027 general elections. This suggests possible post-election violence. In 2029, the determinants would also be at a lower level before increasing in 2030 and dipping in 2031. In our view, these dynamics need to be addressed holistically by paying strategic attention to managing issues in the trust, electoral integrity, media consumption and performance constructs of our analysis.



01

Strengthen electoral institutions to ensure credibility, transparency and independence

This action point is not new. It has already been mentioned in several reports and academic publications. However, it is important to emphasise it again because our study has provided prescient insights. Nigerians will continue to be dissatisfied with electoral institutions, especially the Independent National Electoral Commission, as long as political actors interfere in their affairs. For example, the national assemblies (the Senate and the House of Representatives) must reconsider the appointment of the head of the commission, which is done exclusively by the president. From a constitutional perspective, the Assemblies have the constitutional power to review the President's submission. However, this has largely failed to show that the executive does not interfere in the affairs of the commission. State assemblies must also work to improve state electoral commissions. The conduct of local government elections after the governors have been in power for two to three years is an indication of intent to create enabling environment for violence before, during and after the election because the opposing parties and their supporters have perceived

this exercise mainly as a means of creating division and structural violence for the new government. Strengthening electoral institutions is not the responsibility of parliaments alone. Members of the civic space also have a strategic role to play. Rather than working indiscriminately towards strong and sustainable democratic institutions, civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations need a coordinated strategic approach. The idea of numerous organisations working on the same idea without sharing knowledge and insights during electoral cycles would not be enough to ensure strong electoral institutions that Nigeria needs in 2023 and beyond. Therefore, key stakeholders and regulators in the civic space need to define their strategic interests in terms of coordinated programmes that will ensure strong electoral institutions. Nigeria, for example, has reached a stage where members of the civic space need to focus on the application of participatory action research to develop intervention programmes. It is our understanding that the top-down approach, whereby NGOs implement interventions without involving beneficiaries from the beginning, has proven ineffective over the years. We know that NGOs/CSOs are a product of society. They cannot play the role expected of them if they do not have an appropriate legal and juridical framework. Therefore, we expect parliaments and the judiciary to step up their efforts to hold the government accountable when it tries to interfere in the affairs of the civic space.

02

Promote civic and voter education programmes that encourage peaceful participation in elections

As with action point one, members of the civic space, the media, the National Orientation Agency, the Ministry of Information at the local, state and federal levels, and religious organisations have a crucial role to play in ensuring peaceful participation in the elections. Political actors are also needed, but they had better be at the bottom of the funnel when it comes to creating the needed peaceful environment, as their various antics detract from the genuine efforts of the other actors. In other words, political actors need to be constantly monitored by civil society actors, media representatives and religious

leaders by focusing on their counterproductive strategies for the electoral process. If the monitoring activities are carried out strategically by the actors concerned, for example, by using legal means to prevent candidates and political parties that have orchestrated and sustained violent activities before the elections, citizens will understand the importance of voting, actively participate in the electoral processes and make informed decisions about how they vote. We need more synergy between NOA, information ministries and media organisations in coordinated behaviour change campaigns using traditional and new media. As our study shows, it is essential to consider a Big Data approach to understand what citizens discuss, share and seek about violence during the electoral cycle. This is important as the young population continues to grow and develop interest in using new technologies for political engagement and participation.



03

Foster dialogue and collaboration between political parties and other relevant stakeholders to promote peaceful elections

All Nigerians must rise to the challenge of promoting communication and cooperation among the country's political parties, civil society, conflict resolution and peace organisations to support peaceful elections. All relevant parties must come together to discuss their concerns and seek solutions to the problems that have led to disagreements among the various parties to ensure a peaceful electoral process in Nigeria. This may mean allowing open discussion on issues such as government policies, sustainable electoral reforms, security measures and poverty alleviation tactics. In addition, fostering cooperation between these parties can help them formulate plans to create a safer environment that will allow political opponents to coexist peacefully. We can ensure that elections in Nigeria are peaceful by encouraging this kind of communication and cooperation between political parties and other key stakeholders.

04

Provide adequate security measures during elections to prevent violence and ensure public safety

It is the responsibility of both state and non-state actors to ensure a secure electoral process. Nigeria cannot be exempted from countries where elections are overshadowed by violence and intimidation. However, the country can reduce the high level of distress and the severity of the consequences by genuinely putting in place a coordinated and sustainable legal framework for security agencies before, during and after elections. The lack of political will to sustainably fund the agencies must also be addressed. The staff of all security agencies must be adequately funded regardless of the constitutional provisions that set them up. This is especially true for staff training, as well as improved access to technologies such as facial recognition systems that can help identify potential threats before they arise. In addition, the government should ensure that citizens have access to impartial information about their candidates so that they can make informed decisions when it comes time to cast their vote. With these steps, we can help create an environment where elections are free from violence and intimidation and allow citizens to express their opinions peacefully. This action point must be seriously pursued by the police, army, civil defence, paramilitary and community security organisations.

05

Develop effective mechanisms for managing electoral disputes and addressing grievances

There is more to be done in terms of how the electoral body, civil society, conflict resolution and peace organisations have defined mechanisms for dealing with electoral conflicts and redressing grievances. First, the electoral body must complement the efforts of parliaments and the executive by ensuring effective internal control of its staff so that they do not engage in corrupt activities that call into question the outcome of the elections. If this is ensured, there are usually no systemic problems that would later lead to physical attacks. Secondly, electoral tribunals need to step up their efforts to interpret and adjudicate complaints brought to them by political actors (candidates and parties). Perceived misinterpretation of evidence by actors has led to post-election violence in some states. This can only be countered if judges in tribunals and courts (appellate and high courts) are impartial and fair to all parties. In order to address the problems related to the elections in a holistic manner, the National Peace Committee must intensify its activities and not only invite political actors, media representatives and members of the civil space to the signing of the

peace agreement. The committee needs to incorporate participatory action research in its activities to gather critical information from states and communities where violent incidents are likely to occur after the elections. This will help provide the necessary support to other actors such as security agencies and community organisations. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) should be explored for resolving disputes to relate to human rights violation. In addition, channels of communication should be established between political candidates and their constituents to enable open dialogue between politicians and voters. By implementing these measures and providing adequate resources for their successful implementation, Nigeria can ensure that its elections remain free and fair.

06

Encourage media impartiality and responsible reporting to avoid inflaming tensions



The media system and structure are central to a safe and fair electoral environment. Nigerian media organisations and their owners must put the interest of the country above personal interests and the profit motive. During the electioneering period, the media should unite people, not divide them. Many Nigerians rely on media reports before they act. Therefore, media organisations and media practitioners should not pursue agendas and frames that create and sustain tension during the 2023 general elections and likely in subsequent election periods. The Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria, the Nigeria Guild of Editors, the Nigeria Press Council, the Nigeria Union of Journalists and Online Media Practitioners should discourage organised persuasive communication that contains elements of propaganda, fake news, misinformation and disinformation by political actors and is widely reported in the mainstream media. Now that the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) has been changed to the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), we expect effective monitoring of political advertisements and sanctioning of actors who failed to comply with the necessary requirements of promoting candidates, political parties and their

agendas. The idea of taking sides with political parties is out of date worldwide, especially in fragile democracies. Manipulation of information to serve the interests of certain people is the greatest curse and disservice to the Nigerian people. Therefore, there is an urgent need to improve access to media and alternative resources such as debate platforms without the intention of intimidating any candidate to create a level playing field.

07

Strengthen the independence and ability of the judiciary to resolve election-related disputes

Pre-election cases are heard by the State and Federal High Courts before being heard by the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Nigeria. This process has been largely manipulated by some politicians and political parties with the help of some members of the judiciary. This is one of the reasons why Nigerians do not have much confidence in the judges and the judicial system. The Nigerian Judicial Commission, the National Assembly, the Nigerian Bar Association, the State and Local Judicial Commissions must form a strategic synergy to reform the various existing legal and institutional frameworks. Nigeria must perform the functions expected of it based on the UN Fundamental Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary to which it has subscribed since 1985. Section 17(e) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), which guarantees the independence, impartiality and integrity of the Nigerian judiciary, should not be a mere paper tiger. It needs further reforms to strengthen the independence of the judiciary in Nigeria and bring it in line with international standards.

08

Promote campaign finance transparency to reduce the influence of money on elections

The provisions of the Electoral Act 2022, the 1999 Constitution and the campaign guidelines of the Independent National Electoral Commission must be more than paper tigers that are not effective during the campaign period. The agencies (ICPC and EFCC) responsible for monitoring and managing corrupt practices must intensify their efforts to monitor campaign finances. Political actors and other stakeholders should not only be threatened on the pages of print media, online platforms and broadcasters. The action requires a combination of traditional and technological measures to prosecute the illegal financing of election campaign activities. Political parties, party conferences, security agencies, commercial banks and captains of industry must be involved in a group and/or commission that monitors the flow of illegal funds before, during and after elections. Monitoring the flow of money before and during elections will help identify the places/areas where money could be used to influence voter decisions. Implementing the approach after the elections would help identify political actors and other stakeholders who are likely to use such funds to create and sustain post-election violence.

09

Strengthen the role of civil society organisations in monitoring and reporting incidents related to elections

The development sector is synonymous with sustainable democracy in any country. Nigeria cannot be an exception when it comes to having a strong civil space for strong political institutions. Parliaments and members of the judiciary must continue to see actors in this space as strategic partners for sustainable democracy in Nigeria by ensuring a safe and fair environment for effective development practices during the electoral cycle. This cannot necessarily be achieved if members of the space work indiscriminately to monitor and report incidents related to the elections. In our view, it would be highly beneficial if national, regional and international donors or partners supporting local NGOs/CSOs strategically select and fund organisations that focus directly on pre- and post-election risk monitoring and reporting. This will greatly help other actors who need the insights from monitoring and reporting to make strategic decisions. The Peace Committee and the NHRC, for example, would have the opportunity to find an effective solution and build peace if collected data and insights are available.



10

Develop proactive risk management strategies to respond to times of increased risk of electoral violence

From the first to the second part of our analysis, it is obvious that managing pre- and post-election risks in a dynamic society like Nigeria requires proactive rather than reactive management strategies. Conventional views in previous reports and academic publications have largely pointed to the ineffectiveness of the strategies adopted by stakeholders. In our view, in most cases, the stakeholders concerned have mainly used reactive strategies. This needs to be changed, considering the severity of future trends in the determinants of electoral violence from the perspective of citizens and their information behaviour in relation to campaign and electoral violence. The development of proactive risk strategies should be the responsibility of the police, army, civil defence, paramilitary and community safety organisations, supported by media organisations, who are expected to report information that will de-escalate should violent incidents occur across the



country. Media organisations are, in our view, a reservoir of intelligence that could be used to develop proactive risk strategies. For example, what is reported in the media during the day usually makes it easier for people to search the internet. Those who do not have access to the internet got their information from those who do. In this regard, mainstream media consumers and new media users are opinion leaders who need to be strategically captured on various digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and others to build a strategic profile and identify hotbeds of violence before, during and after elections.

Election Violence Landscape in Nigeria

*A Critical Intelligence Analysis
from 1999 to 2022*



**Election Violence
Incidence Tracker**



**BRAIN BUILDERS
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE**