

# Political Violence and Insecurity in Nigerian: Past and Present Experiences

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## Abstract

*Political violence is a major impediment to national security in Nigeria. The paper examined the political violence and insecurity in the past and present periods of Nigerian politics. It also assessed the causes and effects of political violence and insecurity challenges that confronting Nigeria society today, which emanated as a result of class struggle among the rich and the poor which epitomized to murder and assassinations, bombing of houses, cars, also kidnapping, armed attacks and many forms of crimes. The paper adopted the descriptive analytical approach. The secondary data collected were classified and analysed in a manner that ensured effective interrogation and presentation of the interests driving the debate on the subject matter to ensure adequate comprehension. The frustration aggression theory was used to explain the cause of political violence in Nigeria. The findings revealed that the causes of political violence were attributed to political leadership failure in the state but not poverty or unemployment. This paper will therefore examine the root causes of violence vis-à-vis insecurity, its effects and proffer strategies that will make the foreign investors and people to have a safe place to live in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Crisis, Governance, Insecurity, Political Leadership, Political Violence.

## Introduction

The history of Nigeria has been characterized by a variety of political violence and insecurity. This could be attributed to the coercive imposition and tradition brought together by colonial era (Folajimi, 2015). However, apart from these, scholars have identified leadership problem, ethnic crisis, religion crisis, Fulani herdsmen and farmer crises, as well as living standard of the people as the cause of political violence and insecurity in Nigeria (Aweing and Ogar, 2018). Consequently, violence is usually accompanied with wanton loss of lives and property, instability, infrastructural destruction among others, perhaps, no nation can survive a test of time when it's drowned in the menace of violence and moreover no nation can actually develop under the prevalence of crisis, violence and upheavals (Araba, 2021).

According to Bamgbose (2017), there is no doubt that there was crisis in the country. The emergence of political violence in Nigeria is sourced through the nature of party formation, which was ethno-regionally based. This was followed by the regionalization of Nigeria as created by Richard Constitution of 1946. Since attainment of political independence Nigeria has witnessed unprecedented political violence which is a serious stain to national security. Anweting and Ogar

(2018) observed that “at political independence, political violence took over the centre stage of nation security in Nigeria and its multiplier effect gave birth to factors that led to the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970”.

Nigeria is currently in the sixth of a multi-dimensional crisis, this is reflected not only in the lingering economic downturn but also in the simmering social tension and virtual political violence/paralysis. The country has simply under-performed vis-à-vis its enormous human and material endowments (Babawale, 2019). There are clear indications that the nation has experienced stagnation in various sectors especially within political arena. Naturally, various reasons have been adduced for this unfortunate state of affairs, these ranges from so-called “Nigerian factor” to imperialist manipulation but it is becoming clearer that the most critical of all the explanatory variables for the Nigerian condition is the failure of leadership (Araba, 2021).

However, this new understanding cannot be separated from the groundswell of current social forces and national movements seeking to redraw the national boundaries of their polities, primarily because of the desire for self-egoism and to be part of a democratic world. In fact, those who have championed alternative to democracy have either appeared less confident and quietened or are engaged in a process of re-examining their strong point in relation to other traditions of political and social thought (Araba, 2021).

Araba (2021) explains that it is, however, very germane to underscore the basis for earnest race toward democratisation, especially in Nigeria. First, is the fact that there is no feasible and viable alternative to liberal democracy to all and sundry, this internal pressure for political reforms have been of paramount preponderant in practicing a process of political liberalisation. Though in Nigeria opposition movements pressing for change are primarily urban-based and represent a coalition of interest and have been at the forefront of campaign for creation or restoration of democracy.

Answering and Ogar (2018) states that indeed, Nigeria’s political history since independence and particularly since second republic and forth republic elections crisis validates this observation. It lends credence to the view expressed by Chinua Achebe to the effect that the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership, there is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenges of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership (Achebe, 1985:1).

The cause of political violence is attributed to political leadership failure in the state but not poverty or unemployment. More so many respondents were of the view that the deteriorating security situation in Nigeria to come as a result of political violence that is why Oladoyin (2018:82) amplifying Thomas Hobbes argument for the cause of political violence in societies, traces the origin of violence among men to their natural equality. He writes: - Nature has made men so equal in the faculties of body and mind - (that) the difference between man and man is not so considerable so that one man could there upon claim to himself any benefit to which another may possess. Given this equality they all feel that they have same hope of acquiring these benefits. Competition arises and with this, enmity. In Hobbes words: and therefore, if any two men desire the same thing

which they nevertheless they cannot both enjoy they become enemies. The result is an attempt to subdue one another.

## Conceptual Review

Violence or threat of violence is a universal phenomenon. Violence has been used by groups seeking power, holding or losing power. Violence has been pursued in the defence of order by the privilege in the nature of justice by the oppressed, and in fear of displacement by the threatened (Held, 2017). Violence has always been part of the political process, protest activities of one form or other efforts to dramatize grievances in a fashion that will attract attention and ultimately the destruction or threatened destruction of life and property appear as expression of political grievance even in stable, consensual societies and the ultima-ratio of political action is forced (Smith, 2018).

The word “violence” defies any precise definition that is commonly accepted, the concept often serves as all variety of protest, militancy, coercion, destruction or muscle flexing which a given observer happens to fear or condemn. The frequent conceptualization of force and violence tends to confuse the legality and legitimacy of specific acts. Force is often taken to mean legal and legitimate use of violence by a government for the protection of the state, while violence is interpreted as illegal and illegitimate acts carried by non-governmental individuals and groups (Anifowoshe, 2016).

Political violence is the use of almost of threat of physical act carried out by an individual or people with the intent to cause injury or death to persons and for damage or destruction to property and who its objective, choice of targets, victims, surrounding circumstance, implementation and effects have a political significance, that is tend to modify the behaviour of others in the existing arrangement of power structure that has some consequences for political system (Banjo, 2017).

Political leadership according to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2012) says a leader is a person who guides or directs a group of people, while leadership refers to anybody or a group of people who leads. Leadership therefore presupposes the provision of direction and purpose by the leader for a (his/her) particular group. Political leadership as such refers to persons or group of persons in positions of political authority, which involves those who make the authoritative allocation of values for the state. This includes the President, Ministers, Governors, Local Government Chairmen, Director General, Councilors, etc. They are saddled with the function of guiding, directing and propelling the society towards its desired goals (Adejumobi, 2018)

Adejumobi (2018) explains that the sources of leadership are many and varied. Max Weber identified the charismatic traditional and legal rationale bases. The charismatic model being political authority based on the sterling personal qualities of the leader which endears him to his fellowship. This is the position of the prophet, messiah or political leader, whose organisation consists of himself/herself and a set of disputes. The political leadership of any given society must serve the greatest good of the greatest majority and it must have the capacity achieving the goals which will benefit the masses that is who constitute the bulk of the population in most societies.

Okotoni (2017) defines crisis as a situation that is extremely difficult or dangerous, when there are many challenges that is such as serious economic, financial, political and social crisis. Governance crisis is a situation that is characterized by political violence, poor management of resources due to lack of competent leadership resulting to corruption, state insecurity, political instability. Failed state is one of the governance crisis' symptoms, where the state is tense, deeply conflicted, dangerous and contested bitterly by warring factions including herdsmen, kidnapping, robbery, etc.

Smith (2018) sees security as a system of maintaining law and order in the society in a bid to have a crime free environment in a good atmosphere which is aided by securing structures put in place by governments or concerned agencies that responsible for such. Likewise, security is the condition of being, that is, free from danger and threat. Impliedly, security actually exceeds every facet of human endeavor because it shields public, properties and information from of societal peril. Then, insecurity is the opposite of word of security in the sense that insecurity is the breach of peace.

Governance is a concept which refers to exercise of political power, influence and authority and which carries along with administration and law. It connotes the way political power is exercised to achieve state jurisdiction (Omoleke & Olaiya, 2013).

They explained further that governance is inextricably interwoven with taking decisions that impact, directly or indirectly, on the citizens and the media which influence such decisions. The UNESCAP (2009) has popularly defines 'governance' as the process of decision- making and process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). In recent period, 'governance' has been extrapolated to mean the positive outcomes of government policies on the administration of citizens (Omoleke & Olaiya, 2013).

## **Theoretical Framework**

Theories about the causes and process of political violence should be relevant to the explanation of political riots, revolts and revolutionary movements in Nigeria. To understand the transitions from powerful protest to conflicts, riots and then revolt, it is necessary to trace the complex interactions between activities tactics and demands and how government responds to them. To understand why some of administration lose or devoid the capacity to accommodate rebels or repress them, or to providing explanations of political violence can be grouped into three broad groups that is conflict, frustration-aggressive, violation, structural and political process theories (Banjo, 2017).

One prominent root of frustration that gave rise to its extensive scrutiny in the field of social psychology is competition between multiple parties Anwating and Ogar (2018) emphasized that competitive encounters are at least partly frustrating as the contestants block each other's attempts to reach the disputed goal and threaten each other with a total loss. While this mainly applies to zero-sum games, in which the victory or gain of one party implies the loss of the other, it can also result from multiple parties with different goals competing over shared or limited resources. The psychological frustration-aggression explanation of political violence has the central premise that aggression is always the result of frustration. However, it is not only the contestants who can cause frustrations. Similar to superior opponents, incompetent or selfish cooperators can also generate

frustrations as their detrimental behaviour may prevent individuals from attaining personal achievement, or groups from reaching a common goal in cases where successful cooperation is essential.

As games or game-like scenarios provide an optimal testing ground for the causes and consequences of these social contingencies for frustration, many seminal studies on the frustration–aggression link have made use of them. Historically, many of these were field studies of naturally occurring inter-group conflicts, such as given the requisite conditions, individuals or groups who feel frustrated in the attainment of their desire and demands often react by directing aggressive behaviour at what is perceived as being responsible for thwarting those desires, as a substitute. The systemic hypothesis offers a socio-structural explanation for the origins of most acts of violence. For a proper understanding of the problem of political violent behaviour, which is necessary to occur? When groups feel alienated and there is a further feeling that such alienation is entrenched, ethnic mobilization (Midlarsky, 2015).

Anifowose (2016) in his own attempt at looking at the stasis of class relations as a cause of political violence in societies, used his theoretical postulations i.e. (the modernisation theory and the frustration - aggression theory) to state that there is a paradoxical relationship between modernization and political disorder. According to him, developed and affluent nations provided a model that produces stability and modernization in societies, while developing states produces instability. His study also shows that the processes of modernization in Nigeria undoubtedly gave rise to cleavages and political conflict (such as those between the economically developed South and the more backward North). These cleavages and conflicts between the two areas were the result of the lack of proper understanding of the concept and advantages of interdependence in a federal system by the Northern and Southern politicians in Nigeria. Again, his study revealed that a society in which the modernizing leaders are committed to a rapid expansion in the number of educated persons within the population but where there is no corresponding increase in the level of economic opportunities is most conducive to political violence.

## **Methodology**

The study utilized secondary sources of data. The secondary source of data was drawn from academic journal articles, textbooks, and internet sources.

## **An Overview of Nigeria Politics and Political Violence on National Security**

A fundamental problem to Nigeria's party politics is a corollary to a democratic practice is anchored on un-restructured colonial Nigerian State. Carefully designed by the bourgeoisie and deliberately handed over to the Nigerian elite, this unbridled state (Nigerian nation) has continued to wallow to abysmal failure regardless of the system of government in operation. One system of government has followed the other in quick succession. This has consequently heightened the nation's political instability and resultantly robbed the country of democratic aspirations. It, therefore, seems that global democratization that has been sweeping through the globe has not been meaningful to the country (Bamgbose, 2021).

Bamgbose (2021) opines that power has continued to be monopolized by the elite who sees nothing good in transforming the society despite a series of changes in the government. But what type of changes? Changes that have left the unstructured system unchanged. The recent development not only in Nigeria but indeed Africa has made us to doubt the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan's statement who opined in the 1960s that "A wind of change is blowing over Africa". The impact of such whirlwind has not been felt in Nigeria and indeed in Africa, but it has been marred by failure from country to country. Thus, the military regime which has become an institutionalized pattern of African politics is insincere in its disengagement policy. The military elite devised multi-dimensional means to remain in power.

Folajimi (2015) agrees that Nigeria is a multi-national society, an amalgam of both majority and minority ethnic groups. The politics of Nigeria before and after independence was dominated by the various groups making competing claims for special consideration or demanding specific rewards in the policy process. Nigeria is a country with many ethnic groups, many languages and cultures. The heterogeneous nature of the country has led to a lot of ethnic, religious and political crises among the people of Nigeria. Sadly, it has been observed that some Nigerians hide under ethnic identity to perpetuate violence and cause crises in the country, however, there is a need for unity among the citizens of the country, in order to bring progress and development in Nigeria.

Banjo (2017) states that, in the case of Nigeria, political violence of different degree engulfed many parts of the country in her effort at democratization in late 1990s. It is instructive not to fall into the temptation of generalizing that same set s of factors were responsible for the causes, intensity, gains and losses of these mass violent riots and this has informed the selection of Lagos, Port-Harcourt, Lokoja, Makurdi, and Benin cities which in most instances as the commercial capitals bore the brunt of violent activity.

Okotoni (2017) states that, the Nigerian political system had suffered from series of inner and intra party competitions or put in order words 'party wrangling' that had resulted into major political crises. These political crises had caused the demise of the three republics that the country had passed through. Nigeria has had her fair share in breach of peace, insecurity and rise in crime, political violence. The era of colonial masters (1914 -1960), the motion in the House that the country should become a self-government by Chief Anthony Enahoro in the year 1956, it was resented by the northern delegates. During 1960-1966, referred to as first republic, witnessed several crises before its collapse on January 15, 1966. Bamgbose (2017) opines that prominent among these crises was the political turmoil in the then Western Region election, leading to the declaration of the state of emergency on September 30, 1965 by Prime Minister, 1962/63 another census came up following the cancellation of census of 1962 that full of perpetrating immunerable irregularities and 1962 Action Group crises was the idea of strengthening national unity which resented by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the idea of ensuring national unity came from Chief S. L. Akintola and Chief Ayo Rosoji who wanted to join federal Prime Minister's coalition.

Okotoni (2017) added that "No responsible government of the federation could allow an explosive situation such as that which now exists in Western Nigeria to continue without taking adequate measures to ensure that there is an early return to the region of peace, order and good government". There were also series of serious riots in Tiv land in 1960 and 1964. The cumulative effect constituted the remote causes that led to the first military coup on January 15, 1966, while the

immediate cause was attributed to the selfishness and corruption of the politicians. The coup and counter coups aggravated ethnic tensions and antagonisms that led to mass killings in July and September 1966.

Taking into cognizance, the degenerating of progressive consciousness and nationalism in Nigerian partisan politics and the deepening primitive accumulation in the process of capitalist transformation of the country, ethnic politics is acquiring more prominence in the struggle for power and national resources control. The reason is that the process of primitive accumulation and formation of the dominant class in Nigeria has transcended ethnic boundaries just as the consequences of the obnoxious act which is translated into hunger, deprivation and abject poverty of the majority of the Nigerian people (Abdullahi, 2015).

The failure of the political class has led to the total loss of faith by the electorates in the possibility of genuine election in Nigeria. In fact, political apathy and indifference has resulted, the masses have vowed not to be fooled again. Inherent in this failure was the National Conference of 2014 by President Goodluck Jonathan administration and again the frustration that followed the sell out and inconsistency of Nigerian political class increased political disorderliness and economic woes (Odour, 2023).

Banjo (2017) states that political violence in Nigeria witnessed several crises: The Attahiru Rebellion of 1903 in Sokoto, The Aba Women Riot of 1929, The General Strike of 1945, The Egba Women Democratisation of 1948, Kano Riots of May 1953, The Action Group Crisis of 1962, Operation wet of 1964 in Western Nigeria, The 1965 Western Region Election Crisis, Nigerian Civil War of 1967, Ali-must-go student Riot of 1978, The Kaduna State Executive/Legislative Crisis, Anti-SAP Riots of 1988, The Federal Election Crisis of 1993 (NADECO Riots of Annulment of Chief M.K.O. Abiola Presidential Election of 1993), ASUU Strikes 1992. It is true that Nigeria's independence was achieved without bloodshed or the stress of political violence, the pattern of political violence in the first republic was set by Tiv Riots. Thuggery and vandalism thus became integral part of party politics in that era.

Momoh and Adejumbi (2019) explains that the period of General Olusegun Obasanjo era was 'Ali must go' of student unrest 1986 tender to give the impression that political violence in Nigeria cities was on the downward trend, also the period of General Ibrahim Babangida epoch the Lagos riots that were occasioned by Mobile police brutality in 1988 shattered this illusion and were soon followed by Major Orkar coup of 1990. Pro-democracy riots of 1993 took a detour with the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election, and the trajectory of political events after that, up till 1994 when full-blown military dictatorship re-emerged in Nigeria, putting the search for democracy in abeyance and the cause of democracy in retreat serve as critical examples of the political violence in Nigeria.

The Nigeria Fourth Republic (1999-2024) forms and modalities of masses reaction underscore the magnitude of political violence witnessed in all parts of Nigeria states. Several and controversial of general elections occurred in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019. The implications of the 1999-2019 presidential elections crisis were very serious and they nearly threatened the unity and corporate existence of Nigeria. ASUU strike of 2009, 2014 and 2020, End SARS and End bad

Governance are still fresh in Nigerians mind and it's lead to political violence in Nigeria (Oyuru, 2023).

## **Causes of Political Violence in Nigeria**

Adefarasin (2015) opines that Nigeria is blessed with both human and natural resources, yet it is quite evident today that political independence has failed to match with political and economic independence. Nigeria has refused to develop and join the country of Nations, simply because of lack of effective leadership. It is gratifying to note that the majority of the leaders that have emerged in Nigeria after political independence have exhibited bad leadership qualities. They are not concerned about the development of the nation, as corruption, bad democratic principles and mediocrity have become the norm,

Adeyemo (2015) agrees that crises or conflict may arise as a result of misrule, frustration, discontentment/ dissatisfaction with the status quo, personality conflict, unhealthy rivalry/competition, incompatible interests, oppression, victimisation by the ruling class, Ethnicity, tribalism, nepotism, insecurity, ethnic domination, racial segregation, loss of territory or land, desire to secede or overthrow foreign rule, misperception, suspicious, misunderstanding or class struggle. In Nigeria, the central causes if conflict are unhealthy rivalry over resources especially mineral resources such as gold, crude oil, iron ore. Rivalry over resources and appointments are sometimes very tense and explosive, besides, conflicts in Nigeria arise over identities this type of conflict arises from ethnic or tribal clashes, Conflicts and wars are encouraged and sustained by human beings also they can be terminated by human beings.

Bamgbose (2017) states that the Aba women in 1929 was a revolt against colonial policy which tried to tax non-working women in Aba. The policy was not well received by women who did not have any viable means of livelihood. The Aba women leaders sent an alarm bell to all non-working women in Aba and urged them to resist any attempt to force them to pay tax. The District Officer sent out his tax collectors to enforce the law by obtaining an accurate census of all the women in Aba and its environs. On that faithful day, the clashed with both parties ended with 50 women lost their lives but did not die in vain. The riots marked the beginning of women emancipation in Nigeria and determination to fight for their basic rights and advancement in the Nigeria society this led to violence. The Kano riots May 1953 was caused by disappointment over the question of independence for Nigeria or independence motion tabled by a private Action Group member in the House of Representatives named Chief Anthony Enahoro, for Nigeria in 1956. The Northerners strongly opposed a definite date because they were not ready to undertake the burdens of independence. The Action Group send delegation under the leadership of Chief S.L Akintola's mission resulted into riots in Kano on 16<sup>th</sup>, 1953 in which 36 people were killed and over 250 wounded (Bamgbose, 2017).

Adeyemo (2015) opines that the Action Group crisis of 1962 from personality clash between Chief Obafemi Awolowo, then leader of the Action Group (AG) and also leader of the opposition in the Federal House of Representatives and his Lieutenant, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola, then Premier of the former Western Region of Nigeria. The conflict between Chief Awolowo and Chief Akintola was the idea of ensuring national unity came from Chief Akintola and Chief Ayo Rosoji, they

wanted to join the federal prime minister's coalition. At the meeting of regional house of convened to rectify the executive decisions, the henchmen of Sir Akintola began a serious fight, at a reconvened meeting violence broke out again. Amidst this chaotic situation, the regional legislature was unstable to meet, this prompted the federal government to declare a state of emergency in the west and Dr. Majekodunmi was appointed as the Administrator.

The 1965 Western Region Election crisis, there was election rigging in 1954, 1959 and 1964, but none was so serious as the 1965 Western Region election. By December 1964, the former Western Region of Nigeria was politically divided and unstable partly because of the 1962 Western Region/Action Group crisis and partly because of internal political bickering. Serious disturbance marred the elections, at the close of the elections, both parties claimed victory and on 12 October 1965 Alhaji D.S. Adebajo, the leaders of Action Group announced the formation of an interim government, Alhaji D.S. Adegbenro and many of his supporters were taken to detention. Even the formation of government that later followed by Chief S.L. Akintola and his party was followed by large scale looting and killing of political opponents. Violence in the region continued until January 15, 1966, when the Nigeria Armed Forces intervened and took over the administration of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Babawale, 2019).

The Nigerian civil war was caused by remote and immediate factors. There was disagreement and personality conflict between Lt. Col. Ojukwu who was then the military governor of the former Eastern Region and Lt. Col. Gowon former Head of State and Commander-in- Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces. In addition, there was an outbreak of public riots which led to mass killing of Igbos who lived and worked in Northern Region. However, the immediate cause was the secession of the former Eastern region as the 'Republic of Biafra' the federal military government under the leadership of Lt. Col. Gowon therefore opposed the secession and forswore the indivisible oneness of Nigeria (Adeyemo, 2015).

Several reasons have been adduced for ethnic violence, insecurity, breach of peace and political instabilities in the country. These include among others, over-concentration of public power at the federal, weak judicial system, injustice, nepotism and a culture of impunity, high level of corruption, weak (political, economic, social and traditional) institutions unpatriotic, unscrupulous and greedy leaders, lack of information technologies, boundary disputes, ignorance, intolerance among various ethnic groups and communities, unequal distribution of resources among others (Okotoni, 2017).

Criminologists and social scientists have agreed that there is a crime challenges in Nigeria, although, they may not all agree as to the nature and process of criminality in Nigeria. However, to say that there is a crime problem in Nigeria, it is not a new discovery; for if the existence of crime in any society is no aberration, the talk of a crime problem in an ever-changing society is to beg the question. The problem, it seems to me, is not the existence of crime as with crime control, to approach these challenges, the existence of crime as a social phenomenon must be examined in relation to the existence of society itself (Isokun, 2015).

Isokun (2015) suggests that the socio-political culture of any society of any society has a bearing on the nature and level of criminality existing in the particular society. In this context she thanks

God, that is, Almighty God created man, that is, man also made society and society made its criminals. Makinde (2013) affirmed that security have contributed negatively to the social-economic development in Nigeria as these challenges have resulted in increase in the cost of governance and also in peoples being prevented from carrying out their legitimate businesses.

Oyuru, (2023) opines that the period of fourth republic (1999 – 2020) has witnessed the highest era of insecurity and breach of peace in Nigeria. It is, perhaps, the most traumatic, distressful and lawless era that the nation had ever witnessed thousands of lives are daily lost to insurgency, kidnaping, terror attacks, armed robbery, political thuggery and assassinations.

Boko Haram insurgency that killed more than 300,000 people in the far Northeast of the country, alongside are the Fulani herdsmen, who constantly terrorize many communities and farmers by destroying their farms and properties, burning their houses, kill and maim their victims in various parts of the country. The Niger Delta Avengers also emerged that specialized in vandalising oil and gas pipe installations resulting in loss of billions of naira on daily basis.

More so the citizens were of the view that the deteriorating security situation in Nigeria state came as a result of political violence that is why Erunke (2008:138) amplifying Thomas Hobbes argument for the cause of political violence in societies, traces the origin of violence among men to their natural equality. He writes: - Nature has made men so equal in the faculties of body and mind - (that) the difference between man and man is not so considerable so that one man could there upon claim to himself any benefit to which another may possess. Given this equality they all feel that they have same hope of acquiring these benefits. Competition arises and with this, enmity. In Hobbes words: and therefore, if any two men desire the same thing which they nevertheless they cannot both enjoy they become enemies. The result is an attempt to subdue one another.

## **Effects of Political Violence on National Security in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, many people see politics as a do or die affair (Adejumobi, 2018). This is as a result of the electoral system that encourages cut-throat competition practised in the country. The first effect of this is absolute disregards for the rule of game as dictated by the Constitution. As a result of this, the likelihood exists that the participants will not accept the result of any electoral contest in good faith. There is also the undue belief that politics is about the winner taking all, even to the extent of the looser being denied his basic fundamental human rights. Ogunidiya (2015) states that the acrimonies that characterize the electoral process and the winner-takes-all mindset makes the winners and incumbents forget that the office is for service and temporary, while the opponents, because of harassment and intimidations they face, are unable to cope with the post-election trauma.

Disharmony among party members has led to severe political violence, subsequently affecting the electoral process as well as its result. Intra-party crises have made party members take political decisions with anger, intimidation and or inducement of others. These have heavy consequences on the electoral processes, practices and post electoral activities. Due to these unsavory acts, some election results have been found short of following the dictate of law and are thereby upturned. Most political parties see elections as a “must win” and this has been identified as the most difficult

challenge facing the process of credibility election and the sustenance of our democracy (Ogundiya, 2015).

A country that is always bedeviled by constant and needless political violence cannot have political stability and by implication will be eluded by human and security of the country. This is because without peace and near tranquility in a country, security will remain a mere dream and aspiration (Aweting and Ogar, 2018). It is no news that the dastardly state of Nigeria economy is a reflection of its democracy which many have described as being in a state of comatose for a very long time. All indices of security are at their lowest in the country, while respects for fundamental human rights are still not guaranteed. There is wanton wastage and corruption which have crippled infrastructures, social services and security and the consequence of this is loss of confidence in the country by local and international investors who eventually fled and ply their trade in neighbouring countries. The rudiment of these problems was mostly political violence which have remained an unfortunate part of the nation's security system and has made many people went through "a hell of hard time" (Agbaje, 2016).

Agbaje (2016) explains that because of the threatening level of unemployment, graduate trooping out at the tertiary institutions now see politics as a means to make fast money at the expense of the people and thereby becoming instruments of political violence and shenanigan. That is why many promising Nigerian youths are used to unleash terror in the name of politics on defenseless students by money bags in politics. Unfortunately, most of these youths are in these nefarious activities for peanuts. All over the world, it is agreed that the foundation of democracy is a strong rule of law, which treat everybody equally and is also supreme. This is why judicial institution must at all times perform its function of protecting the people and guaranteeing respect for the letters and spirit of the constitution. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, this is far from reality as the law is trampled upon each time there is electoral violence. Political violent perpetrators and vote riggers have confessed to their sins with no consequence visited upon them (The Nation, April 3, 2006).

These acts of political violence which subverted the free will of the people was able aided by some security agencies in working alliance with some political rough necks and again the law was unable to do justice in the case. In order to escape the long hand of law, suspects in political assassination wriggled their ways into the senate or house of representative where they are protected, and the case die off and we have also witnessed a situation where the chief executive withheld allocation meant for the running of a state in utter display of impunity and disdain for the rule of law. However, the application of justice is different when the suspect or culprit is ordinary citizen. Maximum punishments are decreed for the poor for the same offence in which high profile politicians have walked out freely. Consequently, the people can no longer trust the government as there seems to be two sets of rules in the same country, and the high ups are treated as untouchable (Araba, 2021).

Another costly consequence of political violence is the loss of integrity by such country among the comity of nations. This is a reason why some advance countries have declared Nigeria as a country prone to violence during election and warned their citizens to be wary of visiting the country at such period (Bamgbose, 2021). Without doubt, this is a serious dent on the integrity of the country and a set back to its international reputation especially in global environment where respect for human rights and dignity was fast becoming the order of the day and the guiding principle for

democratic practices in all civilized nations. Such negative image continues to show Nigeria as a nation not moving towards the most desired enduring democracy which has been seen as the antidote to political instability, bad governance, corruption, insecurity, poverty and civil-wars ravaging many African and third world countries until Nigeria leaders realise this and practice democracy according to the rules of best practice, our image will continue to suffer in the comity of nations,

Babawale, et.al. (2017) states that reasons for military takeover of government in Nigeria have always been traceable to unending feud among political parties which often have their roots in intra-party crises which led to political violence in Nigeria. Since the collapse of the first republic, there was ample evidence that the melee occasioned by the internal crisis of Action Group was what skyrocketed to political violence which eventually dragged the military into taking the rein of power. It is therefore imperative to state that wanton destruction of property, political killings, terrorism and all forms of undemocratic activities are direct invitation to military intervention in politics.

When this happens, the constitution will be held in abeyance and fundamental human rights will be on hold. This political earthquake if it happens and military takes over will go a long way to show that our politicians have not learnt from the history of the nation. Military interregnum has always retarded the growth of democratic culture in the people and weaken democratic institution. This is dire consequence of political violence and insecurity if not quickly curtailed (Babawale, et.al 2017).

## **Government Responses to Political Violence and Insecurity in Nigeria**

Nigerian elections had been marred by political violence. Some of it by soldiers and police officers, Human Right Watch (HRW) said. Successive government has not taken concrete steps to address the widespread political violence, and to ensure accountability for human rights abuses by soldiers and police. Another tactic employed by the government to douse the festering political protest was actually a dastard act. Apart from general (protest-spot) killings carried out by the police to stop the spread and intensity of the violence in the two cities, with the death toll as high as hundreds (because of Ekpoma and Ilesa killings), 1992 and 2007 respectively, the government devised a diabolical way of curtailing the pro-democracy forces (Erunke, 2008; Banjo, 2017).

The election periods included persistence attacks by factions of the insurgent group Boko Haram in the northeast, increased communal violence between nomadic herdsmen and farmers spreading southwest from north-central states, and a dramatic uptick in banditry, kidnapping, and killings in the northwestern, states of Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara. Security forces have failed to respond effectively to threats to people's lives and security. The government first of all adopted silence, apathy and indifference, it initially tried to bluster its way through, intending to give the impression that is either the government was not aware of people's riots and demands or to the extent that the rioters are engaged in futile efforts (Okotoni, 2017).

The federal government action and reaction to the political violence was in two ways directions, the first was international and the internal. In handling the international dimension, the then federal

government responded by mounting extensive of Anti-Euro-American propaganda of government control media. The government reacted by sharpening its propaganda instruments, these are government media houses as represented by Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Daily Times and New Nigeria. A slot on NTA Network News, dubbed 'Rent-a-Crowd' gained widespread notoriety, Nigerians were daily shown how some elements in some State of the country have staged contrived 'Pro-government peaceful demonstration, to give impression that the federal government is loved and respected by the masses. The most-filthiest aspect of the solidarity demonstration was not only use of official cars of government, but the fact reports confirmed the demonstrators were actually paid in cash before they demonstrate (Banjo, 1997; Erunke, 2008).

The lack of meaningful progress and lack of political will in addressing the prevalent political violence, as well as lack of accountability for rights abuses has leads to continuous violence across Nigeria. Despite police chains of increased security measures to ensure peaceful voting, there seem to have been little or no police response to reports of threats and acts of violence by hired political things and soldiers against voters and election officials.

## **Conclusion**

The paper concluded that the failure of the political class has led to the total loss of faith by the citizens in the possibility of casting their vote during the next coming election in Nigeria. In fact, political apathy and indifference has resulted that, the masses have vowed not to be fooled again. Again, the frustration that followed the sell out and inconsistency of Nigerian political class brought increased in political disorderliness and economic woes.

## ***Recommendations***

Based on the foregoing findings it can be said that political violence has insecurity consequences on the people as such, the following suggestions would help in solving the questions of political violence and insecurity in Nigeria.

Truly, it is hard to manufacture any alternative to true democracy that makes any sense at all in terms of principle, logic and practicality. It is imperative to recognize the fact that the polity is not in crisis in the sense that major social forces are in conflict. There will be no democratic presidency establishes the rule of law, upholds justice and transforms progressively, a state which is still constituted as a means of oppression to a state which will not be oppressive for being controlled by an elected government.

Political leaders should play a role in building effective government through their constitutional duties and mandates. The core of the crises in Nigeria is the inability of political leaders to adhere to good governance practices. Political leaders should be honest and transparent when spending public funds.

Government should initiate good pro-poor policies that would help in reducing the high level of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria at large.

Government should endeavour to satisfy all competing interest, competing for the control of political and security of lives and properties by introducing measures or policies that would carry everyone along in the country.

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