

Militarization, Electoral Violence and 2019 General Election in Nigeria.

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Abstract : One of the major issues that drew comments and debates both within and outside the country on 2019 General Elections in Nigeria was the role of the military during the election. This paper examines militarization, electoral violence and 2019 General Election in Nigeria with the objectives of discovering the justification or otherwise for deployment of the military during elections and identifying the effects of militarization and electoral violence to Nigeria's democracy. Data for the study were collected using the documentary method and analyzed using content analysis. Policy theory of conflict was adopted as a framework of analysis. The paper found among others that deployment of military during election is not unique to 2019 election as other regimes since 1999 deployed soldiers during elections. The paper argues that in this era of insecurity in the country, the Nigerian Military is constitutionally empowered to provide security in civil activities such as election when called upon to do so but should be done in line with their rules of engagement and not to allow overzealous and win at all cost politicians to use them for any illegal activity. The paper recommends that INEC, the military and other security agencies should synergize and work hand in hand on how to provide security for election materials, INEC staff and voters during elections.

Keywords. Democracy, Election, Electoral Violence, Militarization, Military,

Background of Study and Statement of Problem

Elections are the major hallmark of every democratic society because it is the only condition for democratic governance, political stability and national development. A good electoral system is another hallmark of democratic governance. Paki & Inokoba (2006) aver that the sustainability and vibrancy of any democratic polity is hinged on the effective and meaningful participation of the citizens of the state in the initiation and implementation of public policies as well as in the choice of their leaders. For the citizen's participation in politics to be meaningful and effective, there must be a reasonable possibility that the participants' actions, whether individually or collectively will have the intended effect on policy or the policy makers.

One of the major issues that draw comments and debates both within and outside the country on 2019 General Election in Nigeria held on 23rd April and 9th March 2019, is the militarization of the electoral process in some parts of the country. This militarization further added another dimension to electoral violence which has characterized all elections in Nigeria since independence. Nwangwu (2015) identified that there are a lot of challenges with the conduct of elections in Nigeria since independence as elections in Nigeria have been inundated with stories of violence and malpractices. In a transitional democratic polity such as Nigeria, as noted by Inokoba & Zibima (2014), one real and formidable challenge to popular participation in the political process is the combative and militaristic nature of the electoral process. This ugly situation is a major hindrance to active participation of the citizenry in the electoral process. One could be tempted to think that the Nigerian territory is under siege or an insurrection is about to overrun the country, with the way politicians deploy police and soldiers to man the polling units during elections and that no other liberal state militarizes elections like Nigeria (Olukosi, 2019). Olukosi further added that professionally, soldiers have no business in providing extra security on election day but by default, it is their responsibility to defend Nigeria from external invasion and to quell all internal rebellions targeted at usurping or undermining the government. Nigerians have retained a phobia for the military because of how they ruled with fear and terror in the past.

Scholars such as Olaniyan and Amao (2015) posit that between 2007-2014, one issue which has drawn criticism and public fury from Nigerians is the deployment of the military during elections in the country. Most notable among these elections, were the governorship elections in Edo and Ondo States in 2012, Anambra State in 2013, and the Ekiti and Osun governorship elections in 2014. Rather than relying on the police to provide the security needed during the gubernatorial elections in the five states mentioned above, the Nigerian Federal government deployed large detachment of military men there to ensure peaceful conduct of the elections.

Hounkpe & Gueye (2010) argue that election security constitutes a major component of the electoral process but in respect of emerging democracies, it has been hampered by series of factors, which include; faulty legal framework, poor technical management of elections, poor management of competition and opposition, poor management of electoral disputes, and past roles of security forces. This scenario made Igbuzor (2010) to lament that because of the greed and desperation for power, the political actors in Nigeria have decided to re-engage soldiers outside their constitutional duties without giving a damn about the potential implications. According to Olokor (2019), even the nation's electoral umpire, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) admitted that soldiers and armed gangs were used to intimidate and unlawfully arrest its staff during the recent governorship election held on March 9, 2019, in Rivers state. The commission also expressed its displeasure with the role played by soldiers and armed gangs in Rivers State through its National Commissioner and Chairman of its Information and Voter Education Committee, Festus Okoye who disclosed that:

“Collation centres were invaded by some soldiers and armed gangs resulting in the intimidation and unlawful arrest of election officials, thereby disrupting the collation process. The commission therefore condemned the role played by some soldiers and armed gangs in Rivers State who disrupted the collation process and attempting to subvert the will of the people.

However, the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen Tukur Buratai in reaction to the allegations said that the military kept to their promise of ensuring that her men were above board during the election. The Army Chief further added even though the election of 23rd February cannot entirely be exonerated from rigging, but such did not come from the angle of the military. The Army Chief avers that with the commendable performance of the Nigerian Army in the 2019 General Election and considering the threat of insurgents and the high level of desperation usually expressed by politicians, which in most cases lead to violence, the military may have just secured a new duty in election conduct in Nigeria (Chukwudi, 2019). However, pundits and rights activists strongly argue that an election is a civil matter that civil authorities like the police should play a role and not the military (Chukwudi, 2019).

^ Militarization of election has been a recurring decimal in Nigeria's elections in the last decade and this has happened during the regimes of the two political parties that had captured power at the presidency since return to democracy in 1999. Oyeyipo & Oluku (2019) reported that in 2014, the PDP-led government deployed platoons of armed soldiers to Ekiti State for the gubernatorial election. A week before the election, the army banned two APC governors namely Adams Oshiomhole and Mr. Rotimi Amaechi from entering Ekiti State. During the election the voters were subjected to horrendous harassment by the armed troops. Oyeyipo & Oluku (2019) further reported that a House of Representatives member representing Nsukka/Igbo-Eze South Federal Constituency of Enugu State, Hon. Asadu Patrick, in his motion at the floor of the house after 2019 elections expressed disappointment over the involvement of military men in the election and called for the probe of the militarization by the House. Hon Asadu alleged that the Army Chief directed commanders and soldiers on how to operate during elections without any recourse to the relevant laws or the National Assembly and as an evidence referred to a Thisday Newspaper article of January 20, 2019, where the Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Tukur Yusuf Buratai, was quoted to have said that Nigerian Army cannot disobey any order given by the president,” when President Muhammadu Buhari gave the shoot-to-kill ballot box snatchers order (Oyeyipo & Oluku, 2019) ,

^ In another development Oyeyipo & Oluku (2019) reported that one of the 2019 election observers Integrity Friends for Truth and Peace Initiative (TIFPI) in their preliminary reports on the elections observed that there was alleged involvement and interference by men in Army and other security uniforms in elections in Imo, Rivers, Zamfara, Kaduna, Akwa Ibom, Edo, Kogi, Lagos, Kaduna, Kano and Ogun states where some politicians deployed their personal security attaches to disrupt elections on various fronts. It was also noted by the observer group that there must have been also the use of fake soldiers and infiltration of some of the security formations and suggested that the military authorities should investigate and bring to justice any of its men that may have interfered in the election in any of these states including possible infiltration in their circles. It is in the light of these that this paper examines militarization, electoral violence and 2019 General Election in Nigeria, with objective of discovering the justification or otherwise for deployment of the military during elections and its effects on Nigeria's democracy.

Conceptual clarification

Militarization

Bonn International Center for Conversion (2019) posits that militarization is a difficult term with many interpretations and definitions. From a qualitative perspective, militarization means to gear a state or a society toward the needs of a military environment or to subject a community to military requirements. In quantitative terms, militarization means that a state or an area is furnished with military personnel or military equipment and the necessary funds for that purpose. BICC (2019) further defines the concept as the process by which a society organizes itself for military conflict and violence. Farzana (2005) notes that militarization as a process normalizes the use of coercive structures and practices in all forms of social interaction and institutions. It is an ideology that privileges coercion, glorifies military power in the name of state security, institutionalizes methods of overlooking the due process of law, and criminalizes dissent in the interest of national security (Farzana, 2005)

Uyangoda (2005) posits that it is the use of military power and force to solve political and social problems: it implies not just the deployment, threat or use of force, but also defining political and social conflicts problems that can be put down by force. When militarization operates at the national level, the ruling elites use militarist policies to maintain themselves in power. They resort to ideologies of militarism as a mechanism for state-building even though it is anti-democratic, and sometimes bordering on fascism. Mapuva (2010) posits that abuse of political offices in many African countries have been on the increase in recent years. This has been as a result of incumbent leaders trying to cling to power for a number of reasons ranging from prospects of arrest for human rights violations to being unable to contend with being an ordinary citizen. Through sinister machinations, political leaders have

employed a range of tricks and gimmicks such as militarization to rig elections. Khabele & Zounmenou (2011) noted that while there had been some progress in West Africa towards shedding the dark history of militarism that spanned the sub-region in the 1960s-1980s and embracing democratization, militarization remains a ghost that has haunted the democracy project that began in the region in the 1990s.

Electoral violence

The Nigerian experience with elections and electoral violence dates back to her colonial epoch, and since the attainment of independence, elections have been posing greatest security concerns especially over how to give security to election staff, materials needed for the elections as well as the voters and the candidates standing for the elections (Orji, 2014). Igbuzor (2010) sees electoral violence as any act of violence in the course of political activities. Nwolise (2007) defines it as acts or threats physically, psychologically, and structurally, aimed at intimidating, harming, blackmailing a political stakeholder before, during and after an election. Electoral violence according to him could occur in the form of physical assault, assassination of political opponents or people perceived as a threat to one's political ambition, burning down of public or opponents' properties, partisan harassment by security agents, arrests, forceful dispersal of rallies, or shooting, wounding or killing of people. kidnapping and hostage-taking, bombing of infrastructure, forceful disruption by thugs of political and campaign rallies, destruction of ballot boxes and ballot papers by thugs or partisan security agents. (Nwolise, 2007). Fischer (2002) gave further insight into what electoral violence is and noted that it is any random or organized act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an election with violence such as physical assault, forced "protection," blackmail, destruction of properties, or assassination.

Obakhedo (2011) argues that electoral violence is one of the greatest obstacles in Nigeria as it occurs within party (intra-party) and outside the party (inter-party). This affects the quality of election (outcome) results in the electoral system, the rule of law and democratic practice in Nigeria. Electoral violence affects the rating of elections "free and fair" as well as transparent by foreign observers. According to Sesan, (2012) electoral violence has really discouraged citizens' participation in the political process in many states. Uwa and Ologunowa (2013) posit that Nigeria is a heterogeneous country with diverse and overlapping religious and ethnic divisions. Nigerian culture is as diverse as its population, which is estimated to be around 180 million. With the regaining of political process in 1999 after over thirty (30) years of military rule, Nigeria looked set for a return to stability and the regaining of its position in the comity of nations particularly in Africa, however, this was not to be because since 1999 elections, the level and magnitude of electoral and political violence has risen and the political elites have often converted poverty ridden unemployed Nigerian youths into ready made machineries for the perpetration of electoral violence. This as noted by Uwa and Ologunowa is linked to the political system and institution that allow political elites to forming the bulk of the sponsors and perpetrators of electoral violence. Furthermore Hoglund (2006) observes that electoral violence can emerge from a variety of sources, such as state actors (military and police), political parties, guerrilla/rebel groups, and militia and paramilitary groups. However, political parties both those who hold government positions and the opposition have been key organizers of electoral violence. Political parties have also been known to pay thugs or make use of the youths wing to carry out the violence, and thus violent clashes became an element in the run up to elections (Hoglund, 2006). In the same manner, Biegon (2009) observes that a fragile state with weak political, economic and social systems is more prone to plunge into electoral violence which in turn makes the state more fragile and weaker.

Theoretical framework

Policy Theory of Conflict

This theory was developed by Adenyi Theophilus Okechukwu in 2016 in his book titled: *Elements of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution*. The main tenet of this theory is that bad policy whether public policy or policy from private individuals trigger conflict which in turn leads to loss of lives and properties both at inter-personal, national and international levels. The assumption of the theory is that bad, abhorrent, detested and unfair policies can lead to a violent conflict. The theory seek to explain why some programme of action of government instead of bringing peace and cordiality, and atmosphere of cohesion and tranquility may lead to bitterness, animosity, resentment, malice and acrimony and thereby bring about conflict which often is destructive and intractable due to the bias, preconceived notion, favoritism, partiality of the policy formulators against a particular group or individuals especially in the distribution of limited resource, power sharing, resolution approach to conflict among others (Adenyi, 2016) .

Policy as noted by the theorist is a statement or programme of action of government, institutions or individuals towards the realization and attainment of a goal or objective. In the process of formulation of a policy, policy makers (government and individuals) in most cases formulate it to achieve a particular objective and in so doing, when it favours a particular group in the society and dis-favour others especially public policy that emanates from government. The group or person/persons that the policy favours may capitalize on it to suppress and intimidate the disfavoured group or persons and thus creating conflict. In most cases the policy formulators formulate the policy to favour a particular person or group simple because they or he/she is at the corridor of power or close to government without evaluating the consequences, just to achieve a particular objective. Such policy in most cases are influenced by the group or individual(s) it favoured to enable them achieve their parochial interest and thus create conflict which if not resolved or prevented on time may become violent and destructive. Whenever such policy is formulated, the group, individual or individuals that the policy discriminates against or disfavours will show disenchantment and resistance against the implementation of the policy and may employ every means such as demonstration and violence to express their rejection or grievances and which may degenerate into an intractable dimension. Government being the formulators of the policy (public policy) will in turn resort to the use of conflict suppression mechanism by mobilizing all its apparatus such as the police, army and bureaucrats to enforce compliance with the policy against the agitating group or individual(s). In some case government often infiltrate the disfavoured group and use

some of them to whittle down their opposition and resentment to the policy after which the moles are rewarded with appointment or financial rewards.

Policy when formulated requires an extensive evaluation and appraisal so as to remove all the would be grey hairs for the benefit of all and sundry but when the reverse is the case, the consequences will be disastrous. Adeniyi (2016) further noted that bad policy can lead to both physical and structural violence as well as negative peace. The theorist gave instances of where bad policies have led to conflicts to include:

1. The policies of the West led by the United States against the Eastern European blocs led by the Soviet Union and vice versa that led to the negative perception that precipitated the cold war from 1945 to 1989 which led to the rivalry between capitalist states against socialist/communist states and which divided the world into two ideological blocs, in spite of the fact that the United States and USSR played leading role together to end the WWII and the defeat of Nazi Germany.
2. The United States of America's policy under ex-President George Bush Jr against the government of Saddam Hussein of Iraq and against extremists and fundamentalists in the Middle East which led to the unilateral invasion of Iraq by the U S, which in turn gave rise to sectarian violence and terrorist activities in the region. It also led to crackdown on Islamic fundamentalists and extremists and their imprisonment or detention without trial at the famous "Guantanamo Bay", and which the entire Muslim world detest and abhors.
3. The US policies against the State of Palestine in favour of Israel on the statehood of the former as well as the occupied West Bank which the U S and her allies have continued to use their veto powers at the United Nation to block the recognition of Palestine as a Sovereign State and which is responsible for all the criminalities, agitations, hatred among others against the U S interest and their allies in the region and among Muslim world. So also is the cruel and abominable 9/11 terror attack in USA in 2001 was an unfortunate reactionary measures by al Qaeda against US policies. The recent recognition of the Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by President Trump administration in spite of disapproval from the United Nations is another example where bad policies cause conflict.
4. In Nigeria, it was the bad policies of former President Olusegun Obasanjo in handling agitating groups that exacerbated militancy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria as well as the destruction of Odi and Zaki Biam communities.
5. The inter/intra communal war/conflict between Oruku and Umuode communities of Enugu State which has continued to threaten the peace of the state due to the unpopular, biased, discriminatory and divisive policies of past governments in the state against Oruku people which seek to expel, drive, eject and uproot them from their ancestral home at Aguefi land which is the entire right hand side of the community so as to establish Umuode people there as an autonomous community in spite of the fact the Orukus who are the aborigines in the area constituted over seventy nine percent (79%) of the entire habitation in Aguefi land.
6. The Aguleri/Umuode conflict which was triggered by the colonial flawed policies on land especially as it affected Otuocha Land.
7. The above examples among others are instances where bad policy precipitated, triggered and exacerbated conflicts some parts of the world.

The theory is used in this work to explain why the deployment of the military during elections as a policy has attracted condemnation, misgiving and ill-feelings among the political class especially the opposition parties as such policy is meant to favour the ruling party against the opposition parties. This scenario played out during 2015 election when the former government now the opposition party (PDP) in the country use same military during the General Election of that year and also 2019 under the current regime.

As explained in the theory that a group that a policy favours may capitalize on it to suppress and intimidate the disfavoured groups and thus creating conflict. In 2019 General Election, where there were violent clashes were states and constituencies where the opposition held as their strong hold because they resisted militarization policy. Another justification for the application of the theory here paper is that while the opposition parties are crying foul of the militarization process, the ruling party and their friendly opposition parties hailed the deployment of the military during the election.

Methodology

Data for the study was sourced from secondary sources such as institutional and official documents, journals, articles, textbooks, newspapers, magazines and other written materials that contain information on the conflict while analysis of the data generated was done using content analysis.

Data Analysis

The justification for deployment of the military during elections

Despite wide spread condemnation of the military for militarizing elections in Nigeria especially in 2019 general elections, some schools of thought argued that the military has a duty in an election as provided by the law, one of the proponents is a Civil Society Organization; International Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law (Intersociety, 2015) whose report affirmed that having perused and ransacked the 320 sections of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 with its last amendments, they could not come across in the same Constitution where a section frowns at the involvement of the military in elections in Nigeria

whether staggered elections, by elections, run-off or general elections. The Armed Forces according to them were constitutionally empowered with the following duties:

- Defending Nigeria from external aggression”(S. 217 (2) (a),
- Maintaining Nigeria’s territorial integrity and securing its borders from violation on land, air or sea” (S. 217(2)
- Suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the President, subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly” (S. 217 (2) (c);
- And “performing such other functions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly” (S. 217(2)
- Section 218 of the same Constitution clearly provides: “The powers of the President as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federation shall include powers to determine the operational use of the armed forces of the Federation”.
- Supplementary Section 26, under Part 1 of the Third Schedule to the Constitution provides that “The National Security Council (which includes the Chief of Defense Staff as the head of the armed forces and the National Security Adviser) shall have powers to advise the President on matters relating to public security including matters relating to any organization or agency established by law for ensuring the security of the Federation”.
- In Supplementary Section 17 of Part 1 of the Third Schedule, the Constitution provides that the National Defense Council shall have power to advise the President on matters relating to the defense of the Sovereignty and territorial integrity of Nigeria”.
- In Section 8(3) of the Armed Forces Act of the Federation under its Part 3, the operational use of the armed forces by the President is defined to include the use of the armed forces in Nigeria for the purpose of maintaining and securing public safety and public order.”

The News Express on its editorial column of 21st February, 2015 reported that the armed forces of the country are constitutionally conferred with defence and security roles in Nigeria internally and externally and that the Armed Forces of Nigeria have never been involved in the duty of conducting elections in Nigeria’s polling units or electoral wards. They have never been sighted in any polling unit except where public safety is under threat or breached. They have never been part of INEC’s ad hoc staff or in collection, collation, declaration and announcement of results of elections. It is also a truism that Nigeria is in a state of intra state war and gross security threats requiring military watchdog round the clock. The roles played by the military in Nigeria during polls are purely in defense and security of Nigeria’s internal and external protections.

From the military circle, Oghenahogie (2019) reported that the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Abayomi Gabriel Olonisakin, on Thursday 4th April, 2019 justified the deployment of officers and soldiers for the conduct of 2019 Nigerian general elections which the CDS referred to as a legitimate duty occasioned by the prevailing situation in the country. According to Oghenahogie the CDS in an orientation programme for new National Assembly members elect said that the deployment of troops in the elections, especially in Rivers State and other parts of the country is legal. According to him (CDS) “if military personnel were not deployed for the elections, the security of the country would have been jeopardized, adding that the crisis would have been worse . He also stated that the deployment of military personnel is constitutional and that the military personnel’s role could be described as their “secondary responsibility”. In the same manner, Ebonugwo & Kumolu (2019) reported that the Acting Director of Defense Intelligence Colonel Onyema Nwachukwu stated that the military especially the Nigerian Army performed creditably during the elections in line with the rules of engagement which defined their conduct and that the Army’s role is contained in Section 271 of the 1999 constitution which stipulates that the military can be deployed to assist the police in the maintenance of law and order. The Director of Army Public Relations Col Sagir Musa debunked the allegation and vehemently contended that the Army did not engage in any partisan involvement during the elections and went further to describe the allegations as baseless. He reiterated the neutrality of the Army during the elections and further accused politicians of confusing members of the public by giving military uniforms to hoodlums to perpetuate violence during the elections. Col Sagir also stated that it is on record that the Nigerian Army has been globally applauded by many individuals, foreign and local observers for its sacrifice/roles in creating an enabling environment for a secure, transparent and peaceful conduct of the election (Ebonugwo & Kumolu, 2019)

Okechukwu, Ugwu & Onu (2016) identified that in Ekiti State governorship election appeal, Justice Abdul Aboki, in his lead judgment held that “even the President of Nigeria has no powers to call on the Nigerian armed forces and to unleash them on peaceful citizens, who are exercising their franchise to elect their leaders. According to them, “Whoever unleashed soldiers on Ekiti State, disturbed the peace of the election of June 21, 2014; acted in flagrant breach of the constitution and flouted the provisions of the Electoral Act, which required an enabling environment by civil authorities in the conduct of elections.

Judicial pronouncements on militarization of elections in Nigeria

Judicial pronouncements on militarization of elections in Nigeria shows that the Courts have in several judgments frowned at the involvement of the military in elections. That is why the opponents of military deployment during election based their argument on the fact that it puts fear on the electorate and that there are subsisting judgments of courts barring the military from involving its personnel directly in elections in Nigeria. One of such judgments is a Federal High Court Sokoto Division judgment where Justice Aikawa in the suit marked: FHC/S/CS/29/2014 among others, restrained the President and Commander in-Chief of the Armed

Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and INEC from engaging the service of the Nigerian armed forces in the security supervision of elections in any manner whatsoever in any part of Nigeria, without the Act of the National Assembly

The Court of Appeal in *Yussuf vs Obasanjo*, 2005, 18 NWLR (PT956), 96, ruled that, “It is up to the police to protect our nascent democracy and not the military, otherwise the democracy might be wittingly or unwittingly militarized. This is not what the citizenry bargained for in wresting power from the military in 1999. Conscious step or steps should be taken to civilianize the polity to ensure the survival and sustenance of democracy.

In another ruling in the case between *Buhari and Obasanjo*, 2005, 1 WRN 1 at 200, the same Court of Appeal held that “In spite of the non-tolerant nature and behavior of our political class in this country, we should by all means try to keep armed personnel of whatever status or nature from being part and parcel of our election process. The civilian authorities should be left to conduct and carry out fully the electoral processes at all levels.” To stamp the authority of the two subsisting Appeal Courts judgments barring the military in elections as part of the laws of the land.

The Supreme Court in *Buhari v Obasanjo*, 2005, 50 WRN 1 at 313, further held that “the State is obligated to ensure “citizens who are sovereign can exercise their franchise freely, unmolested and undisturbed”

Effects of militarization and electoral violence to Nigeria’s democracy.

One of the effects of militarization, and electoral violence to Nigeria’s democracy is voter’s apathy. There was wide spread apathy on the side of Nigeria voters during the 2019 General Election and as *Olukosi (2019)* puts it militarizing the Nigerian elections indirectly contributed to low voter turnout. Because of the precedent of aggression in Nigerian soldiers, most electorates dread them to the extent that they do everything to avoid them. Out of the 72 million people that registered for the 2019 presidential election, only 35.6% voted. The turnout is lower compared with the 44% that was recorded in 2015. Additional, militarizing elections in Nigeria may lead to the loss of life. In the just concluded presidential elections, soldiers allegedly killed six people who attacked them in *Abonnema Town* in *Rivers state* when soldiers are given too much room to participate in politics, there is a small but significant risk of untoward consequences.

Table 1 Incidence of Militarization and electoral violence in 2019 General Elections in Nigeria.

Location	Incident	Source
Presidential/National Assembly Election	35 death	Civil Liberty Organisation (CLO)
Abonema Rivers State	Two soldiers killed	
INEC office in Bori Rivers State	Soldiers beat up Party agents	Ebuzor (2019)
Umudo/Umuwala area of Owerri	Thugs assisted by soldiers killed an opposition Party agent	Ebuzor (2019)
In Ajaokuta, Kabba/Bunu, Olamaboro, Ijumu	thugs, assisted by soldiers invaded polling units and carted away ballot materials	Ebuzor (2019)
INEC Office at Aba Road Portharcourt	Soldiers allegedly invaded the office and started partisan screening ov voters	Ebonugwo & Kumolu (2019)
Presidential/National Assembly Election/ Governorship and House of Assembly Election	58 people killed with Rivers State accounting for 30 of the deaths	Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room
Kastina State	20 people were abducted including INEC staff by unknown thugs	Centre For Democracy and Development
Mile 2 Area of Lagos	A Centre for democracy and Development observer was arrested by soldiers	Centre For Democracy and Development
Akwa IbomState. Poling Unit 2 Afaha Nsit Ward	A Centre for democracy and Development observer was abducted by thugs and requested for ransom	Centre For Democracy and Development
Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State. Poling Unit 15, Ward 04	An election observer was abducted by political thugs	Centre For Democracy and

	for reporting and sharing photos of an underaged with permanent voters card.	Development
Lagos	An unknown politician slapped a BBC Journalist in a brazen show of power	Centre For Democracy and Development
Khana, Gokana, Ikwere, Eleme Tai, Oyibo, Ogu.Bolo Local Government Councils in Rivers State.	It was alleged that Police SARS invaded poling units, collation centres and abducted electoral officers , shot and killed innocent persons.	

Another implication of militarizing elections in Nigeria is that it heats up the polity, and puts fear on voter, which may eventually lead to the disruption of activities days to elections.

Findings

This paper makes the following findings:

1. That there is no provision in the organic law of Nigeria (1999 constitution as amended) that prohibited the Armed forces from assisting or being called upon to provide internal security during elections however there are subsisting judgments of the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Nigeria that bars the military from any engagement election duties, thereby creating a conflict between the constitution and the case laws of Nigeria in respect to deployment of the military during election.
2. That the deployment of the military is not unique to 2019 general election as all the past regimes from 1999 till date deployed the military to maintain security during elections.
3. That in 2019 general election, some military personnel compromised and abandoned their line of duty and allowed desperate politicians to use the to cause violence during the election especially in Rivers, Kogi and Imo States.
4. That one of the most serious effect of militarization and electoral violence apart from question of credibility of the process and loss of lives and properties is voters apathy as only about 35% of registered voter voted during 2019 general election.

Conclusion

Election is a civil affair where the citizens are constitutionally empowered to exercise their franchise, however in a country that has witnessed series of breach of security from the political class during elections since independence, as well as the current spate of insecurity in the country, it is incontrovertible that considering the lack of capacity of Nigeria Police in providing security in the country, the military has a duty to assist in ensuring safety of lives and properties during elections.

The paper argues that in this era of insecurity in the country, the Nigerian Military is constitutionally empowered to provide security in civil activities such as elections when called upon to do so but should be done in line with their rules of engagement and not to allow overzealous and win at all cost politicians to use them for any illegal activity. The paper recommends that INEC, the military and other security agencies should synergize and work hand in hand to work out modalities for provision of security for election materials, INEC staff, voters as well as all those involved on election duties. Furthermore the paper recommends that the military authorities should educate and give orientation to their officers and men on how to conduct themselves during election duties so as to eschew any form of compromise.

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