

Lessons from Nigeria's 2011 Elections

I. OVERVIEW

With the April 2011 general elections, Nigeria may have taken steps towards reversing the degeneration of its previous elections, but the work is not finished. Despite some progress, early and intensive preparations for the 2015 elections need to start now. Voter registration need not be as chaotic and expensive as it was this year if done on a continual basis. Far-reaching technical and administrative reforms of, and by, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), notably internal restructuring and constituency delineation, should be undertaken and accompanied by broad political and economic reforms that make the state more relevant to citizens and help guarantee an electoral and democratic future. The deadly post-presidential election violence in the North and bomb blasts by the Islamic fundamentalist Boko Haram sect since President Jonathan's 29 May inauguration indicate the enormous challenges facing the new government. It must show more determination to contain violence in society. Addressing chronic poverty and the North's underdevelopment – major grievances – would strengthen its hand.

The resounding, if controversial, victory of Goodluck Jonathan over veteran opposition leader General (ret.) Muhammadu Buhari was not the only significant change brought about by the elections. (He was the first southern minority leader to win the presidency, having become the incumbent by his predecessor's death in office.) 72 of 109 senators lost their seats. In the House of Representatives, 260 of the 360 members are newly elected. President Jonathan's People's Democratic Party (PDP) lost its two-thirds majority in the Senate and now holds the governorship in only 23 of the 36 states, compared to 27 after the 2007 elections. A major winner was the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), whose success in the South-West has returned this region to its tradition of being in opposition to the ruling party at the centre. Another winner was the All-Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), which wrested control of Imo state from the PDP; along with Anambra state, which it won in 2007, it now holds two core South-East states. In short, despite the presidency result, the polls shattered the PDP's one-time near invincibility.

After three flawed elections – 1999, that heralded the Fourth Republic, 2003 and 2007, the last being the most discredited – the 2011 polls were critical for Nigeria's fledgling

democracy and overall political health. The eve of the elections was marked by a blend of cautious optimism and foreboding. Attahiru Jega, INEC chair, and his team won plaudits for instituting important reforms, including to the voting procedure; the introduction of the idea of community mandate protection to prevent malpractice; and the prosecution and sentencing of officials, including the electoral body's own staff, for electoral offences. There were also grounds for pessimism: the upsurge of violence in several states, encouraged by politicians and their supporters who feared defeat; an ambiguous and confusing legal framework for the elections; and a flawed voter registration exercise, with poorly functioning biometric scans, that resulted in an inflated voters roll.

Few, however, predicted the violence that erupted in some Northern states following the announcement of the presidential results. With over 1,000 people killed, the protests made the elections one of the bloodiest ever. The polls were also riddled with malpractices, logistical deficiencies and procedural inconsistencies. Reported voter turnout of about 78 per cent in the South-South and the South-East during the presidential elections exceeded the national average by at least 50 per cent, suggesting electoral fraud. Yet, the polls were, on balance, the most credible to date. Across the country, the strength of the electoral process appeared mostly to have trumped its weaknesses. Domestic and international observers commended INEC for improved logistics and a smooth voting process.

A combination of electoral, constitutional and economic reforms is needed to make the 2015 polls truly free and fair and to ensure they are not tainted by blood. The proposals from the 2009 Uwais Electoral Reform Committee report should be widely published and reform efforts enhanced to make the system more inclusive; economic reforms should be introduced to reduce poverty and create jobs for restive young school-leavers and graduates. The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, which was signed into law in late May and guarantees the right of access of individuals and groups to information held by public institutions, and the new Sovereign Wealth Fund scheme are important steps forward. Constitutional reform should be done with a more holistic, less piecemeal approach, with the full involvement of the Nigerian people, who have long been demanding it.

President Jonathan pledged to transform the country during his campaign. Yet, his cabinet, a hodgepodge of recycled, failed and controversial ministers, party stalwarts indicted in the past, a few probable reformers and some technocrats, inspires little confidence among Nigerians. The new government's priorities should include:

- ❑ releasing funds to INEC so it can begin early preparations for the 2015 elections;
- ❑ directing INEC to compile, maintain and update the National Register of Voters on a continual basis, in accordance with Section 9 (1) of the 2010 Nigerian Electoral Act;
- ❑ using the Uwais Committee's extensive recommendations as the basis for a broad debate on constitutional reform, including a review of the simple-plurality electoral system for legislative elections;
- ❑ responding to the genuine grievances of those living in parts of the North that are considerably poorer than some wealthier Southern states and prioritising improving their dire living conditions, while not overlooking states with similar problems in the South;
- ❑ disclosing the results of the investigation into post-electoral violence, including the identities of those responsible and the causes, and working with state governments, local councils, traditional and religious leaders, relevant non-state actors and key local figures to prevent recurrence in 2015;
- ❑ prosecuting those responsible for electoral malpractices or post-electoral violence, regardless of their status; and
- ❑ putting more effective procedures in place for challenging possible massive rigging, as opposed to individual instances of abuse at polling stations.

II. THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

The National Assembly, presidential and state governorship and House of Assembly elections were, respectively, held on 9, 16 and 26 April 2011. Elections took place in 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), 774 local government areas (LGAs) and 8,809 wards. There were 120,000 polling units, with 73,528,040 registered voters, 65 per cent of whom were under 30. There were no gubernatorial elections in the ten states where governors had not yet completed their four-year constitutional

term.¹ The inconclusive Imo state gubernatorial election was re-run on 6 May.²

A. PRE-ELECTORAL MEASURES

On the eve of the elections, many Nigerians were torn between guarded optimism and sheer pessimism. On the one hand, INEC had made headway on electoral and logistical reforms. 52 political parties, including the ruling PDP, had signed the political code of conduct for the elections; and INEC had barred all political office-holders at all levels of government from monitoring or serving as party agents, unless they resigned their appointments.³ Voters were also encouraged by INEC's assurance that fraudulent results would be cancelled at the polling booths.

There were additional measures that boosted optimism, such as the planned revamping and revival of Registration Area Camps (RACs) where officials, ad-hoc workers (members of the National Youth Service Corps, NYSC) and voting materials would be accommodated on the eve of elections to ensure early arrival at polling booths. Police personnel who carried out unlawful orders inconsistent with ensuring the peaceful conduct of elections were to be held responsible. Political actors, including senior police officers, recommended at a national conference in March 2011 that vote collation should be done at public schools instead of local government secretariats in order not to give an advantage to ruling parties. These measures were reportedly largely complied with across the country.⁴

INEC chair Jega's announcement after the January gubernatorial re-run in Delta state that over twenty persons, including election ad-hoc workers and INEC officials involved in electoral offences, had been prosecuted and sen-

¹ The states are: Adamawa, Anambra, Bayelsa, Cross River, Edo, Ekiti, Kogi, Ondo, Osun, and Sokoto.

² For full analysis of the pre-election environment, the risk of violence, reform efforts, and technical preparations for the elections, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°79, *Nigeria's Elections: Reversing the Degeneration?*, 24 February 2011. For analysis of previous elections, see Crisis Group Africa Reports N°126, *Nigeria: Failed Elections, Failing State?*, 30 May 2007; and N°123, *Nigeria's Elections: Avoiding a Political Crisis*, 28 March 2007.

³ Another innovation (first used during the eventually annulled 12 June 1993 elections) was the idea of community mandate protection, based on a four-step process of voter accreditation (ie, a process of voter identification and subsequent delivery of voting materials by electoral officials), voting, ballot counting and the posting of results in public.

⁴ According to various reports by both the print and electronic media Crisis Group read and listened to in Nigeria during the 9 April National Assembly election and the 16 April presidential elections.

tenced, a first in Nigeria's electoral history, signalled that electoral fraud would no longer be tolerated. President Jonathan's repeated assurances to Nigerians as well as the international community that the elections would be credible contributed significantly to lowering the political temperature. Finally, the Chief Justice's strong words to judicial officers serving on the post-Election Petition Tribunal, were intended to signal the end to an era of fraudulent elections.⁵

Several factors, however, fuelled pessimism. INEC continued to grapple with an avalanche of court cases, including those on party primaries in which it was itself a respondent. There was no clear legal framework for the elections, given controversial and contradictory elements within and between the 1999 constitution, as amended, and the 2010 Electoral Act (with 2011 amendments) that were cited. Neither the National Assembly nor the justice ministry did anything to remedy the situation. Politicians determined to rig the votes, in particular incumbents, were linked in some states to illegal possession of Direct Data Capture (DDC) machines used for voter registration by some INEC officials. While the latter were prosecuted, suspected politicians have not been.⁶

Although overall the voter registration exercise seemed to have increased confidence, it was flawed and inflated in some areas and INEC spent large sums on controversial biometric technology. The voting procedure – dubbed Modified Open-Secret Ballot system (MOBS) – provided some defence against the inflated voters register as well as secret casting of ballots, open prior identification of registered voters and delivery of voting materials to them in the presence of other voters in the queue. Because it was announced only a fortnight before the elections and baffled many voters, however, some Nigerians believed federal lawmakers were deliberately trying to mislead the public.⁷

Violence has always accompanied – and marred – Nigeria's politics and elections. Since the return of the franchise in 1999 and before the April polls, thousands had died in electoral violence. Ahead of those polls, twelve states – Oyo, Ogun, Katsina, Kano, Benue, Borno, Gombe, Nasarawa, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Ebonyi and Anambra – were declared hot spots by the authorities, because of the

degree of acrimony among the political actors and parties. Of the twelve identified, only Bayelsa and Ebonyi were unscathed, but the destructive post-presidential election riots in major Northern towns and cities, including in states excluded from the official list of hot spots, defied these predictions.

B. ORGANISATIONAL AND LOGISTICAL PROBLEMS ON ELECTION DAYS

The April elections were imperfect, but they marked a welcome break from previous polls. INEC's integrity, its open-door policy that enabled several domestic election monitoring and civil society groups to play a key role in the electoral process, and its courage in postponing the 2 April National Assembly elections to 9 April rather than risk failure were crucial. Others who made important contributions were the NYSC members who worked as INEC's ad hoc officials; eminent Nigerians, mainly senior academics, who served as returning officers; and a determined electorate prepared every step of the way to defend their votes and protect the integrity of the system. Institutional support from the police, army and other security agencies as well as from domestic and international observers was equally invaluable.

The postponement of the National Assembly election on 2 April by INEC received mixed reactions. The process was well underway in several states when INEC chair Jega declared the postponement was necessary to "maintain the integrity of the elections and retain effective overall control of the process".⁸ The move was interpreted variously as part of "an elaborate attempt to rig them, a broad move to block such attempts, sheer incompetence, or a mixture of all three".⁹

INEC's official rationale for the postponement was the late delivery of result sheets from Japan, but there were rumours that the real reason was bickering between Jega and some of his senior officials, including Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs). Inherited from the previous INEC headed by Maurice Iwu, these officials were reportedly frustrated at their sidelining in critical contract decisions, the process of organising the election and the use of "eminent Nigerians" as returning officers.¹⁰ However, there was ample evidence that voting materials slated for use in North-Central, South-South and South-East

⁵ Chief Justice Aloysius Iyorgher Katsina-Alu warned them that "any substantiated complaint of impropriety against you will go before the National Judicial Council and you will pay dearly for such". See "Katsina-Alu warns corrupt judges, swears in polls tribunals", *The Guardian*, 22 March 2011.

⁶ Olalekan Adetayo, "54.9 million registered in 17 days – INEC", *Punch*, 4 February 2011.

⁷ See, for instance, Reuben Abati, "Two matters of state", *The Guardian*, 25 March 2011. MOBS was first used in January 2011 in the Delta state gubernatorial re-run.

⁸ See "Nigeria's elections postponed over logistical chaos", BBC News Africa, 2 April 2011.

⁹ "Nigeria: A nation divided", BBC News Africa, 4 April 2011.

¹⁰ Emmanuel Azikien and Okey Ndiribe, "How infighting bungled elections", *Vanguard*, 4 April 2011.

zones had not been received on schedule and justified the postponement.¹¹

Other problems included failure of some trained accreditors to show up at their duty posts; crowded and unwieldy polling booths, many of which exceeded the mandatory 300 voters per booth; and transportation difficulties experienced by some presiding officers. Logistical difficulties at INEC ran deeper than had been thought. For example, additional phone lines were not delivered on time, so the situation room had only twenty lines, not the 200 originally planned.¹² In the end, postponement may have been a blessing in disguise. It gave the commission breathing room to close off loopholes and rein in some unprofessional field officers.¹³ At the least, the false start did not end up as “a comprehensive failure”.¹⁴

¹¹ The company contracted to deliver Senatorial ballot papers and the bulk of the Report Sheets did so only at 9am (an hour after the beginning of accreditation), not the 5am deadline. Crisis Group interview, senior INEC adviser, Abuja, 6 April 2011. There were also reportedly allegations by the national coordinator of the Independent Election Monitoring Group (IEMG), Festus Okoye, that some electoral officers had been compromised. But there was little proof. See Yusuf Alli, “Lapses of botched polls, by observer group”, *The Nation*, 5 April 2011. The IEMG also alleged that some electoral officers exchanged NYSC members trained as presiding officers for friends, relatives and students with no training.

¹² See Jide Babalola, “Exposed ballots won’t affect elections, says Jega”, *The Nation*, 5 April 2011. Logistical inadequacies resulted not only in the shortage of result sheets, but also of ballot papers, stamp pads and ink. Election materials for Imo state surfaced at Ikoga in Badagry LGA of Lagos state and those for the latter in Abia state. *Daily Sun*, 3 April 2011. Similarly, Ilogbo, Araromi, Agunmo, Iyesi and Iledu, suburbs of Badagry, took delivery of materials meant for Ajegunle and Orile Iganmu in Lagos. Emmanuel Onyeché, “Election materials for Imo state appear in Badagry, Lagos”, *Punch*, 3 April 2011.

¹³ There were major problems with the voters roll. In Oyo state, some areas experienced a shortfall on election day of about 130,000 names from what had been publicly displayed shortly after the registration exercise; in Osun state, there was an excess of about 27,000 in a single Senatorial district; in Niger state, there was a significant difference between the election day and post-registration numbers. See “Editorial: Final test”, *The Nation*, 5 April 2011. In a Crisis Group interview on 6 April 2011 in Abuja, a senior INEC adviser recalled that the same logistical and technical problems were experienced at the beginning of the 2007 polls, but they went ahead. “The current INEC can make mistakes, but it is not crooked”, he said.

¹⁴ Olatunji Dare, “Election 2011: An umpire’s burden”, *The Nation*, 5 April 2011. See also “Nigeria, Final Report, General Elections”, EU Observation Mission to Nigeria, April 2011, p. 45; and “2011 Presidential Election: Final Report on Observation of Presidential Elections in Twelve Hot-Spot States in the Six Geopolitical Zones in Nigeria, March-July 2011 Report”, Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), Abuja, August 2011.

After the postponed National Assembly elections went ahead on 9 April, the leader of the Commonwealth Observer Group and former president of Botswana, Festus Mogae, declared that the electorate’s turnout and conduct at the polls were with “decorum and dignity”. He also said his group did not believe that logistical deficiencies and procedural inconsistencies detracted from the overall credibility of the process. The U.S. ambassador to Nigeria, Terence McCulley, lauded the National Assembly election as the first-ever “credible, transparent, free and fair general election”, and declared that it provided “a historic opportunity for Nigeria to consolidate its democracy and further expand its voice on the world stage”.¹⁵ The ECOWAS observation mission called the presidential poll “fair, transparent”. Not everyone agreed with these positive assessments, however. According to the prominent Nigerian constitutional lawyer Professor Itse Sagay, “the 2011 elections were far from free and fair”, even though they were better than 2007.¹⁶

¹⁵ See John Alechenu, “Elections: Nigeria has taken important step – Commonwealth”, *Punch*, 12 April 2011; “Presidential poll fair, transparent, says ECOWAS observation mission”, *Vanguard*, 18 April, 2011; Chris Agbambu and Adewale Ajayi, “US rates Nigeria’s elections high, says country made history with April polls ...” *Nigerian Tribune*, 29 April 2011. According to the EU Election Observation Mission to Nigeria, “the 2011 general elections marked an important step towards strengthening democratic elections in Nigeria, but challenges remain”. “Nigeria, Final Report”, op. cit., p. 1.

¹⁶ He pointed to the flawed registration and argued that elections did not take place in the South-South and South-East geopolitical zones, as evidenced by (a) huge disparities in the scores of the PDP and the other parties; (b) President Jonathan receiving millions of votes, but the governors who campaigned for him receiving only thousands; and (c) crooked elections in Delta and Akwa Ibom states, whose results INEC should have cancelled as it did in Imo state. However, he conceded that Jonathan would still have won, though by a lesser margin. See Bartholomew Madukwe, “2011 Elections far from free and fair – Sagay”, *Vanguard*, 11 May 2011. The ACN alleged, in a statement issued by Lai Mohammed, its national publicity secretary, that the elections were highly monetised, so parties and candidates were not competing on a level playing field. The party claimed that the federal government shared N108 billion (about \$0.72 billion) among the states for the presidential poll, with (unnamed) large companies contributing \$12 million each. The statement read: “from N500 million (about \$3.3 million) allocated to each state during (the National Assembly) election, the government has increased the allocation to the states for the presidential election to N3 billion (about \$20 million) each, to be used to compromise voters, security agencies and electoral officers”. *Daily Sun*, 15 April 2011. See also Reuben Abati, “Election 2011: Nigeria’s finest moment?”, *The Guardian*, 29 April 2011.

C. ELECTORAL MALFEASANCE, SECURITY AND TURNOUT

Polling days were marred by a long list of electoral malpractices. But they were also generally peaceful, so citizens across the country were able to exercise their right to vote.

There was a strong security presence, including deployment of soldiers, in some places, a phenomenon that made the many who recalled the bad practices of past elections nervous. Since the police and the army are federal institutions, their heightened presence in states controlled by the ruling PDP was, on occasion, unwelcome. When more troops were sent to potentially volatile Imo state ahead of its gubernatorial re-run on 6 May, the campaign manager of Rochas Okorocha, the opposition APGA candidate – who eventually won – described the move as “a blanket of pro-government security forces to protect PDP incumbent Ikedi Ohakim”.¹⁷

A report from a coalition of civil society organisations under the aegis of the Civil Society Election Situation Room concluded that security forces behaved unprofessionally in at least three states – Akwa Ibom, Imo and Katsina.¹⁸ Overall, the deployment of soldiers in potentially volatile zones proved to be a double-edged sword: it reduced violence and malpractice, but may have frightened away voters.

Malfeasance was recorded during the entire period, with the governorship election the worst affected. This is hardly surprising. State governors are very powerful in Nigeria, controlling immense resources for patronage; intra- and inter-party competition for the post is often volatile and turbulent.¹⁹ According to an estimate, about 40 people were killed and over 160 arrested during the National Assembly election on 9 April. In Delta state alone, eighteen people were arrested including a police corporal and a member of the NYSC.²⁰ Other incidents, which in some cases turned violent, included:

Missing names on the voter roll. There were protests in a few states by voters who discovered their sudden disenfranchisement during the gubernatorial polls. In the Kabuga area of Kano, about 900 voters could not find their names on the register. Zamfara state was more affected: in four units of Dasadau town in Maru LGA,

hundreds of voters boycotted the election in protest for the same reason, even though they apparently were able to satisfy electoral officials and party agents they were legitimate. The names of only 150 apparently eligible voters out of 600 remained on the list in Tudun Gabas village, a mere sixteen out of 1,000 at the Yartasha, Makaranta polling unit and 32 out of 600 in the Magaji Area Ward at Ode Ile Gangan, Kwara state.

Ballot snatching. Incidents were reported during the National Assembly election in Delta Central senatorial district, notably the Orogun axis. A similar incident in the Sapele axis reportedly led to several deaths in Warri. In the same state, during gubernatorial polls, fake INEC materials were seized in Ubulu-uku. About 26 people, including the aide-de-camp of a governor in the North-Central zone, were held for alleged possession of thumb-printed ballot papers and for attempting to snatch electoral materials.²¹ In Kebbi state, ballot boxes were reportedly snatched during the presidential poll in Baguda and Wasagu, while over ten people were arrested for snatching and destroying election materials belonging to Ido Osi LGA of Ekiti state. Five men were arrested in Niger state during the governorship election for attempted ballot box snatching.²²

The most significant arrest was of the PDP House of Representatives candidate for Nnewi North/Nnewi South/Ekwusigo Federal Constituency and an accomplice for a range of offences, including ballot box snatching, impersonation, multiple voting and canvassing for votes for candidates at polling centres on election day. Both men were also accused of seizing and tearing ballot papers at a polling centre where the candidate was trailing.²³

¹⁷ VOA News, 3 May 2011; *Vanguard*, 5 May 2011.

¹⁸ See Joe Nwakwo, “CSOs decry imposition of curfew in Imo”, *Daily Independent*, 27 April 2011.

¹⁹ Crisis Group Briefing, *Nigeria's Elections: Reversing the Degeneration*, op. cit., p. 5.

²⁰ Olusola Fabiyi, “39 people killed, 165 arrested nation-wide during National Assembly polls – INEC”, and “National Assembly Polls: Police Corporal, Youth Corps member, 16 others arrested in Delta state”, *Punch*, 14 April 2011.

²¹ Chioma Gabriel, “Nigeria: Flashpoints in Tuesday's elections”, *Vanguard*, 23 April 2011; Oladipo Taiwo and Abdulaziz Nmodu, “Governors on edge as voting begins”, *Leadership*, 26 April 2011. The aide-de-camp was detained not only for allegedly arresting security men on election duty in the state, but also for possession of firearms and ammunition. Two policemen were arrested for unlawful possession of firearms and for allegedly posing as CPC party agents.

²² *Daily Independent*, 27 April 2011; Muiyiwa Adeyemi, “11 people arrested for snatching ballot box in Ekiti”, *The Guardian*, 17 April 2011.

²³ The disposition of their case is not known. Chuks Collins, “Anambra Police arrest 56 for alleged offences”, *The Guardian*, 28 April 2011. On 11 April, security agents intercepted, at Wuse Zone two district of Abuja FCT, a consignment of hundreds of thousands of ballot papers meant for the 16 April presidential poll, *Punch*, 28 April 2011. On 29 August, Kayode Idowu, chief press secretary to the INEC chairman, announced that the Commission had successfully prosecuted and secured conviction of 24 electoral offenders. He said that INEC has so

Intimidation. Voter intimidation may not have been in the headlines, but former Information Minister Dora Akunyili (APGA), who lost a high-profile re-run for the Anambra Central senatorial district to former Anambra state governor Chris Ngige, said it was why she did not congratulate her opponent. Akunyili, who had also lost the initial election that was dogged by claims of bribery and harassment of the returning officer, said the contest was fraught with violence and fear.²⁴

Misconduct by INEC officials and politicians. INEC's tough stance on fraud did not rub off on all of its own officials and some politicians. A senior official with the National Population Commission (NPC) in Ondo state, who served as INEC ad hoc supervisor, was arrested on 9 April for illegal possession of election materials. In Ibokun, Osun state, about 50 thumb-printed ballot papers were found on a member of the NYSC serving as a presiding officer. In Bayelsa state, three INEC ad hoc staff were arrested for diverting election materials. A man who claimed to be an INEC official, but could not name his assigned unit, was arrested in Odo Otin LGA of Osun state with about five booklets of ballot papers.

An Ekiti PDP House of Assembly member, representing Efon constituency, was arraigned for illegal possession of weapons during the National and State Assembly elections. A senior Ogun state political functionary was arrested with six others on arms and ammunition charges, as well as illegal possession of over 90 voter cards. An Ogun state law-maker was found in possession of thumb-printed ballot papers.²⁵

Voting patterns varied. In the South-West, voters' vigilance, high awareness and growing confidence that their votes would be counted, combined with above-average perfor-

mance by the security agencies, resulted in reasonably well-conducted polls. Thuggery, intimidation and ballot stuffing and snatching were less frequent than initially feared.

In the South-South and South-East, what some analysts described as an "astonishingly high voter turnout" fit the pattern of the discredited 2003 and 2007 elections. Some results in the presidential election bordered on the farcical, with Jonathan winning over 97 per cent of the votes in seven states in the two zones – Cross River, Rivers, Delta, Abia, Imo, Anambra and Enugu – as well as 99.6 per cent in Bayelsa, his home state.

The South-South has a history of results being declared without elections ever taking place. The suspicion is that much of the voting in that zone was remotely controlled and guided. In many Northern states, underage voting was widely reported.²⁶

For various reasons turnout appears lower than previous elections, although the MOBS voting procedure may also have reduced figures by helping prevent misuse of the imperfect voter register.²⁷ Some citizens also may have been deterred by the 2 April postponement, a time-consuming new voting system or the massive deployment of police and army personnel. The post-presidential election violence likely had some effect on the subsequent gubernatorial polls. While in the South the electorate still trooped out in good numbers to vote for governors and lawmakers, in the North apathy, apparently due to Buhari's defeat in the presidential election, was rife, except in isolated pockets such as Kwara state.

far taken up 321 cases, 21 of which have been dismissed by the courts. See Okey Ndiribe, "2011 Poll: 24 Convicted for electoral offences – INEC", *Vanguard*, 30 August 2011.

²⁴ Ngige, who had defected from the PDP to the ACN after he was removed from power by the ruling party, won by 473 votes out of 139,000 cast. The returning officer in the first ballot claimed he turned down a bribe of N10 million (about \$67,000), a house and scholarships for his children from the APGA to declare its candidate the winner. See Emmanuel Obe, "Anambra: Confusion as run-away INEC official declares Ngige Senator-elect", *Punch*, 12 April 2011; and "Ngige wins Senatorial re-run in Anambra", *Punch*, 28 April 2011.

²⁵ Sunday Aborishade, "Ogun Commissioner remanded for electoral offences in Ondo", *Punch*, 12 April 2011; *Nigerian Tribune*, 3 April 2011; Alo Abiola, "Ekiti PDP lawmaker arraigned over illegal arms possession", *Leadership*, 29 April 2011; Charles Ogugbuaja, "Voters protest alleged disenfranchisement in Imo", *The Guardian*, 28 April 2011; "Corps member arrested for thumb-printed ballot papers", *Punch*, 28 April 2011; Fabiyi, op. cit.

²⁶ On the pattern of voting in the South-South and South-East during the presidential polls, Lansana Gberie has argued that "the official results of the balloting are certainly somewhat suspect ... they indicated perhaps some sophisticated tampering by the PDP, which has a notorious record of rigging elections". "The 2011 Elections in Nigeria: A New Dawn", Institute for Security Studies (ISS) Situation Report, 13 May 2011, p. 1. On under-age voting in the North, Crisis Group interviews, Abuja, Jos, Kaduna, Lagos and Ibadan, 9-20 April 2011. In addition, in Gombe state, the resident electoral commissioner (REC) and journalists ran into a police station for protection when angry under-aged youths who the REC had tried to stop from voting turned on him and his team. He told a local TV station that "more than half of the voters are under-aged". See Reuben Abati, "A new current in Nigeria's election?", *The Guardian*, 17 April 2011.

²⁷ The average voter turnout in the elections was about 52 per cent. This compares favourably only with the 1999 average of 52.2 per cent, but is lower than 2003 (64.8 per cent); and 2007 (57.2 per cent). Voter turnout has been falling while voter registration has been increasing. The figures in respect of the latter for 2003, 2007 and 2011 are 60, 61.5 and 73.5 million. See Crisis Group Report, *Nigeria: Failed Elections, Failing State?*, op. cit., p. 8. However, figures for previous voter turnouts are likely to be highly inaccurate due to fraud.

III. THE FEAR AND REALITY OF VIOLENCE

By far the most potent threat to credible elections was violence. Between 22 and 25 March, reckless and indiscriminate violence rocked a third of the 36 states: Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Bayelsa, Benue, Delta, Edo, Ekiti, Kwara, Niger, Oyo, Plateau and Taraba. As discussed, incidents of electoral malpractice sometimes turned sour and resulted in such violence.

The massive deployment of security personnel, including, controversially, the military, meant the level and intensity of violence was not as high as had been feared, however. Where bomb blasts and attacks did occur, they did not prevent voting. The rescheduled National Assembly elections on 9 April were heralded by a massive bomb blast within INEC offices in Suleja, near Abuja, causing an unspecified number of deaths and significant damage. There was also a bomb scare in Kaduna the same day. Two bombs exploded in Maiduguri, capital of Borno state and in Bauchi just before the presidential election on 16 April, claiming at least two lives.²⁸ A few days before the gubernatorial contests, three lives were lost when a bomb exploded in a private house in Kaduna close to the headquarters of the state's law-makers. On 24 April, three lives were lost when bombs exploded again in Maiduguri. Explosions also occurred a few hours before polling units opened on 26 April.²⁹

The worst violence followed the announcement on 18 April of the results of the presidential election and caught the security and intelligence communities by surprise. It ravaged fourteen Northern states and was reportedly most serious in Adamawa, Kano, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Bauchi and parts of Niger states.³⁰ Businesses, churches and houses were torched, looted or destroyed. Over 1,000 people were killed, including an unspecified number of NYSC members. Some female NYCS members were raped or

otherwise molested and assaulted. According to the Nigerian Red Cross, about 74,000 people were displaced.³¹

By most accounts, the perpetrators were mainly uneducated, poor and possibly intoxicated young thugs. Their ranks may have been swelled by some emerging Islamic fundamentalists and other young people angry that government has done little to help them.³² There were few, if any, indications that they had any link with political parties or that they were mainly CPC supporters. Yet some Nigerians berated the party and Buhari, its defeated presidential candidate, for not calling the rioters to order as soon as the violence broke out.

The riots fit into a discernible pattern of violence in the region. In recent years, Boko Haram and similar groups have been involved in two waves of violence in the North: one against ranking members of the ruling PDP and the police, as well as religious/traditional authorities; the other against the Christian community.³³ Although there was a clear sectarian slant to the rioting, the grievances of the protestors should not be reduced to this alone. As Crisis Group has previously argued in reporting on the North, sectarian violence is a convenient platform and camouflage for struggles over "such issues as citizenship, group and individual rights and communal distribution of public resources".³⁴ The violence is unlikely to have been driven

²⁸ BBC World News, 9 April 2011, reported that "Nigerians prepare to vote in parliamentary elections that have been marred by bloody attacks and chaotic delays".

²⁹ *Daily Sun*, 22 April 2011. The Maiduguri blasts were claimed by the Boko Haram Islamic fundamentalist sect, which threatened to spread violence to all the state's 26 local councils. See Ndahi Maruma, "Three bomb blasts rock Borno", *Vanguard*, 26 April 2011. In addition, a suspected Boko gunman killed one person and injured an unspecified number of voters on 26 April at a Maiduguri polling centre. *Daily Independent*, 27 April 2011.

³⁰ "Nigeria: Post-Election Violence killed 800, Promptly Prosecute Offenders, Address Underlying Causes", Human Rights Watch, 16 May 2011.

³¹ Chioma Gabriel, "Post-presidential election violence: North/South rally against mayhem", *Vanguard*, 23 April 2011. See also "410 injured, 40,000 displaced in Nigeria Violence", Nigerian Red Cross, 20 April 2011; and "Nigeria: Post-Election Violence killed 800, Promptly Prosecute Offenders, Address Underlying Causes", Human Rights Watch, 16 May 2011.

³² On the probable social roots of many of the protestors, see the editorial in *The Guardian*, "The Boko Haram menace", 11 February 2011. It said, many members of the sect are "restless and disenchanted with a life of idleness and hopelessness In an election time such as this and in a political system in which so much material benefits are at stake, the explosive mixture of religion and do or die politics makes the threat to the polity even more real and worrisome".

³³ Crisis Group Africa Report N°168, *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, 20 December 2010.

³⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 17, 20. Mannir Dan-Ali, editor of *Daily Trust*, suggested that "sometimes there is a pretence (Nigerians) have gone beyond religion and ethnicity, but it is the same all over the country". He added: "if Jonathan is able to do what he has been saying he will do, that will be a new beginning. If he addresses security and power and corruption that will be positive. It is only when the problems begin to be addressed that the question of where people come from will no longer matter". Cited in "Nigeria risks further bloodshed as divide grows", Reuters, 20 April 2011. A former senator, Hyde Onuaguluchi, argued that violence will persist until political leadership addresses basic issues, such as access to education, healthcare, shelter and employment. See Lawrence Njoku, "Arewa, others disagree on polls violence tribunal", *The Guardian*, 11 May 2011.

only by a “religious agenda” that merely “took advantage of a ‘political situation’”, as suggested by the president of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor.³⁵ Rather, ethnicity and religion appear to have been intertwined with socio-economic malaise and grievances about marginalisation.³⁶

Nor should the violence be reduced, as it has been by some analysts, simply to dislike of President Jonathan in the North.³⁷ His win may have furthered a sense of alienation there that unscrupulous and disgruntled elites may yet exploit for political ends. That Jonathan failed to win a single state in the far north is also significant. On the other hand, he soundly defeated former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, the North’s “consensus candidate”, in the PDP presidential primary in January 2011 and received at least 25 per cent of the votes in 31 of the 36 states in the April election, thus handily satisfying the constitutional requirement that a victor must top that figure in at least 24 states. Jonathan also fared significantly better in the North than Buhari in the South.³⁸

Several other factors were relevant to the rioting. Some protesters believed that because Buhari won in their immediate vicinities, he had become president. They equated victory in their own states to a Nigeria-wide victory.³⁹ Many believed he lost either because the votes had been tampered with in favour of his opponent or Northern leaders counted upon to deliver a Northern presidency had sold out; many probably believed both. It is also likely that some of the violence was premeditated – the public face of entrenched political, economic and religious inter-

ests in the North unhappy about perceived loss of power and its consequences.

Chief Barnabas Gemade, a former PDP chairman, said that “the problem arose from the fact that many of the politicians from the North gave the electorate the impression that it is the turn of the North.”⁴⁰ In accordance with the apparently now discarded PDP zoning system, power reverted after the term of President Obasanjo (South-West) ended in 2007, to the North through Yar’Adua’s election. Following his death, some Northern politicians argued that another Northerner should receive the next full term rather than the accidental Southern incumbent. According to Dr Chukwuemeka Ezeife, a former Anambra state governor and one-time political adviser to Obasanjo, “the idea of born-to-rule still exists in the North and must be washed out ...”⁴¹

Buhari, the CPC and their supporters had been frustrated by the results of previous flawed elections; Buhari had announced that this election, his third, would be his last. Many Nigerians believe that the courts decided not to cancel the results and order a re-run in the 2003 and 2007 presidential polls because it was not in the national interest, not because the legal challenges lacked merit. Before the 2011 elections, Buhari had called on young people to defend their votes, otherwise “if they allow the ruling party to mess them up, it is they who will suffer for the next 40 years”.⁴² Buba Galadima, CPC national secretary, warned that the party would not accept the results should its candidate lose, because it had no confidence in the ability of the security agencies to oversee credible elections.⁴³

³⁵ John Oba, “Sultan faults Oritsejafor on Buhari”, *Leadership*, 26 April 2011. It does not mean, however, that the religious angle does not matter. According to a senior Nigerian academic, “there is the perception that the Northern elite keep their youth uneducated and stupefied by religion in order to use them as foot soldiers in the battle for power”. Crisis Group telephone interview, Jos-Abuja, 17 April 2011.

³⁶ Jon Gambrell, chief correspondent in Nigeria for The Associated Press, has argued that “the roots of sectarian conflict are often embedded in struggles for political and economic dominance”. See Gambrell, “Opposition protests Nigerian elections in North”, *Nigeriaworld.com*, 18 April 2011.

³⁷ Jon Gambrell, “Opposition protests Nigerian elections in North”, *Nigeriaworld.com*, 18 April 2011; Gberie, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 17.

³⁸ Jonathan won all states in Nigeria’s Middle Belt, which is usually considered to include Kwara, Kogi, Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa, Adamawa and Taraba states. Buhari won all states north of the Middle Belt: Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara, Kano, Kaduna, Niger, Katsina, Jigawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Yobe and Borno. Of these, Jonathan received more than 25 per cent of the votes in all but Borno, Kano, Yobe and Bauchi.

³⁹ Akin Alofetokun, “Babangida Aliyu lambasts Buhari”, *Daily Sun*, 29 April 2011.

⁴⁰ Chioma Gabriel, *op. cit.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.* Most of the Northern governors supported Jonathan during the PDP presidential primary in January 2011. It was the PDP, not Jonathan, which jettisoned zoning, the practice of seeking a balance among the six geo-political zones (north-west, north-east, north-central, south-west, south-east and south-south) in enjoyment of the major political positions, such as president, vice president, senate president, speaker of the House of Representatives, and secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF). In the current dispensation, however, the south-west holds none of these positions, while the north has three: vice president, senate president and speaker of the House of Representatives.

⁴² Olamilekan Lartey, “Even before the votes were cast or tabulated, Buhari alleges rigging of election”, *Punch*, 17 April 2011. The Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), Nigeria’s largest domestic observer group, which deployed 878 observers to each of the twelve hot-spot states mentioned above (a total of 10,536 observers) during the presidential election, concluded that “the Election Day in many of the hot-spot states was generally calm, organised and transparent”. See “2011 Presidential Election: Final Report”, TMG, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁴³ *Daily Independent*, 30 March 2011. According to an observer, “some politicians had emboldened the youths with the utter-

The CPC initially alleged massive disenfranchisement of its supporters when the party logo was discovered to be missing from ballot papers on 2 April. Its officials also claimed that the spreadsheet used to collate results by INEC was skewed against the party and that the commission's computers were rigged to sway the count against Buhari in parts of the North and programmed in the South-East to deduct 40 per cent of the party's votes. The national chairman, Prince Tony Momoh, said that "we are not quarrelling with voting; we are quarrelling with collation".⁴⁴ In short, the party alleged that the counting and reporting of the presidential votes were blatantly doctored and manipulated in favour of a pre-determined Jonathan presidency. These claims merit further attention.

President Jonathan was credited with over 85 per cent of valid votes cast in all eleven states in the South-East and South-South regions with ten of them at 95 per cent and above and four above 99 per cent (one, his home state of Bayelsa, at 99.6 per cent). None of the other candidates had a state where turnout was above the national average and a share of valid votes in excess of 85 per cent, a feat President Jonathan achieved in nine states. According to Pastor Tunde Bakare, Buhari's running mate, "the inevitable reasonable conclusion from the incontrovertible facts is that no credible elections took place in the South-South and South-East zones and that these returns were basically concocted through fraudulent thumb-printing, stuffing of ballot papers and/or that the results were deliberately falsified in favour of Dr Goodluck Jonathan".⁴⁵

ances they made. Thus, when results started filtering out that Jonathan was cruising home to victory, the irate youths took to heart the earlier admonition for the rejection of any result that did not favour Buhari". See Jide Ajani, "The Jonathan Presidency: Crisis that rocked the North: Why violence escalated", *Vanguard*, 24 April 2011.

⁴⁴ Olawale Olaleye, "CPC to contest presidential poll results in 11 states", *This Day*, 24 April 2011. Edwin Madunagu, a veteran Nigerian communist and columnist, contended that Jonathan may not have won the election hands down, but had to be declared winner in the first ballot since anything could happen in the second. He said, "no one, not even the electoral body, knows the true result of the presidential election" and that, "given the 'power of incumbency'", Jonathan "was bound to win, or be declared winner". He added that the margin of error nationally "was high enough for the entire election and the system under which it was held to be nullified", Madunagu, op. cit. Ogbonaya Onu, ANPP chair, alleged that many voters and party agents became "commodities", bought by those who had access to public funds. See Festus Owete, "Election victories were bought, says ANPP Chairman", *Next*, 6 May 2011.

⁴⁵ The party called for a forensic audit of the thumb-printed ballot papers and claimed that if the "spurious votes" respectively allocated to the PDP and CPC were deducted, Buhari, not Jonathan, would win the popular vote by 12,144,540 to 11,391,331.

The voting pattern in those two zones did fit the mode observed in previous elections, so deserve to be viewed with considerable suspicion and as damaging the legitimacy of Jonathan's victory. It is to be hoped that the CPC challenge before the election tribunal sheds light on what exactly transpired and that at the least appropriate lessons will be learned that can be applied at the 2015 polls.

IV. LESSONS FROM THE RESULTS AND THE PROCESS

In the countdown to the elections, change was on the minds of many Nigerians. The last survey done before voting began indicated that the PDP faced meaningful losses of support in many states.⁴⁶ Change did occur, but not to the degree expected. For example, it had a net loss in governorships of only two states, and the initial euphoria in opposition ranks that only one third of the Senate was re-elected (36 of 109) was tempered by continued, if reduced, PDP domination of the upper house. Change in the House of Representatives was more far-reaching. 260 of its 360 members are new (over 72 per cent), spread across multiple parties.⁴⁷

A. PARTIAL LOSS OF POWER BY THE PDP

The blows suffered by the ruling PDP in the National Assembly and governorship elections, including in Ogun, former President Obasanjo's home state, represent a victory for a more diversified, democratic, representative and legitimate system of government. In the outgoing Senate, the PDP had 89 out of 109 senators. Now it has only 71, two short of the two-thirds majority that would allow it essentially to ignore any opposition. The main opposition parties, the ACN and CPC, and two others – the ANPP and Labour Party – share 37 senators, with the ACN alone boasting eighteen.⁴⁸ If the opposition parties resist the

⁴⁶ The poll was done between 20 March and 4 April and 13 and 16 April 2011 by IPSOS for *This Day* newspapers. Yemi Ajayi, "Guber Polls: Race to the wire as PDP faces losses in nine states", 24 April 2011. Thirteen states were mentioned: Bauchi, Bayelsa, Benue, Delta, Imo, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kwara, Niger, Oyo and Zamfara. The PDP lost only Imo, Oyo and Zamfara, respectively to the APGA, ACN and ANPP, but won Kano from the latter. Virtually all these states featured in a list drawn up by political editors during a round table with Crisis Group, Lagos, 24 January 2011.

⁴⁷ See "The New National Assembly", editorial, *Vanguard*, 6 June 2011. Some of the senators who were not returned had earlier failed to win re-nomination from their parties.

⁴⁸ Notable PDP senators who lost included Iyiola Omisore (Osun), first elected in 1999; Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello, Obasanjo's daughter; Isiaka Adeleke, a former Osun state governor; and Bode Olaju-

temptation of pork barrel and patronage politics, as well as offers to cross over to the government side, and keep their electoral promises, they could strengthen the quality of the parliament and the country's democracy.

Overall, the PDP now has four fewer governorships (23 of 36) than after the 2007 elections. Its share of the total seats in state Houses of Assembly dropped to about 64 per cent from about 70 per cent in 2007 (620 of 963 seats). President Jonathan's 58.89 per cent of the popular vote was much below Yar'Adua's nearly 70 per cent four years earlier.

The elections also redefined the country's power equation, with the PDP, ACN, CPC, ANPP and APGA, which wrestled Imo state in the core South-East from the PDP, as the major winners. The South-West recovered its political tradition of being in opposition to the ruling party at the centre, as did the core South-East states of Imo and Anambra. Sitting governors lost in Oyo, Imo and Nasarawa, and in Kano, where the governor was the ANPP presidential candidate, that party lost control of the state to the PDP. In Zamfara, the PDP speaker of the State House of Assembly lost to an ANPP candidate who was out of the country and whose campaign was run by his wives, friends and well-wishers.⁴⁹

The electorate demonstrated a degree of sophistication, voting sometimes for candidates and at other times for parties. Voting in the presidential election was for individuals, not parties. The entire ACN-dominated South-West and Edo state, except Osun where the ACN governor astutely shepherded the votes for his party, were emblematic of this trend, voting heavily for the PDP candidate, Jonathan. The president's strong support in Ondo state, where the Labour party is dominant, was not unexpected, but the same could not be said about the normally ACN states in the region, where he also did relatively well.

In the South-West, President Jonathan's good showing (for example, he won 1,281,688 votes – 66 per cent – in Lagos state) was perhaps because Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, former chair of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the country's foremost anti-corruption agency, did not excite voters and lacked a national plat-

moke (Ondo). Others were Yisa Braimoh (Edo), Adegbo Eferakeya (Delta), Ahmed Makarfi (Kaduna), Mahmud Kanti (Katsina) and Adamu Talba (Yobe). Olagunsoye Oyinlola, who has just completed his second term as Osun state governor, lost the state central Senatorial district election to Professor Olusola Adeyeye of the ACN. Dimeji Bankole, immediate past speaker of the House of Representatives, lost his bid for re-election to a relative political newcomer in Ogun state.

⁴⁹ Attahiru Ahmed, "Zamfara state assembly poll: Candidate in exile wins", *Daily Sun*, 28 April 2011.

form. Had the ACN-CPC alliance not been botched, perhaps the trend would have been different.⁵⁰

In a different part of the country, Niger state, the CPC won both the National Assembly and presidential elections but lost the governorship to the PDP. In Nasarawa state, where the CPC won the gubernatorial contest as well as one Senate seat to the PDP's two, President Jonathan was a convincing victor. The reverse was the case in Gombe, a PDP-governed state, where the ruling party won only one Senate seat to two for the ANPP, and the CPC's Buhari outpolled Jonathan by nearly 60 per cent to 38 per cent.⁵¹

The CPC failed in some states to build on its impressive showing in the previous week's presidential contest, at least partly because its gubernatorial candidates did not match Buhari's genuine popularity. It lost Katsina to the PDP – Buhari's home state, where he defeated Jonathan 71 per cent to 26 per cent. More significantly, the party could not repeat its feat in Kano, the region's economic hub, where Buhari had bested Jonathan 61 per cent to 16 per cent. Its gubernatorial candidate, Mohammed Sani Abacha (son of the late former president, General Abacha) finished a distant third with 175,143 votes while the PDP's Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso (governor of the state between 1999 and 2003 then defence minister) and the ANPP's Salihu Sagir Takai each netted over a million votes.

B. A "MINORITY" AS PRESIDENT

By far the most significant result of the elections is that for the first time a "southern minority" politician was

⁵⁰ Crisis Group telephone interview, University of Ibadan history professor from Jos, 10 April 2011; and Crisis Group interviews, political science professors, Universities of Jos and Ibadan, 15 and 20 April 2011. What made voting for President Jonathan "astute" or "sophisticated" (words used by Crisis Group interviewees) is that the ACN states did not vote for the PDP in the other elections, suggesting that the presidential vote was not so much for the party as for the candidate. Jonathan also appeared to have benefited from the underdog status many Nigerians usually attach to their compatriots from minority ethno-national groups. The claim by a section of the Nigerian media that the ACN party hierarchy may have contributed to Jonathan's presidential victory (by perhaps surreptitiously asking its supporters to vote for the PDP) was strongly denied by the party. The ACN has refused to be part of Jonathan's "coalition" cabinet, much as it did after Yar'Adua's 2007 election.

⁵¹ In Sokoto state, the PDP won the three Senate seats and eight House of Representative seats against all the odds. In Jigawa state, the CPC failed to make the expected good showing against PDP Governor Sule Lamido, who was re-elected despite being vilified for supporting the Southern Christian cause. The PDP swept the state's three Senate seats as well as ten House of Representative seats.

elected president.⁵² Many Nigerians undoubtedly saw his victory as a new beginning for the country.⁵³ In his inauguration speech, President Jonathan declared: “a decade ago, it would have been a mere day-dream to think that a citizen from a minority ethnic group could galvanise national support, on an unprecedented scale, to discard old prejudices and win the people’s mandate as president of our beloved country”. That he is now in office by popular vote rather than inheritance should boost his ability, and that of his team, to govern strongly and in particular, to transform the country’s political economy. There is, however, little unanimity about his capacity and political will to deliver, in particular to override entrenched (and strategically placed) senior officials who are not interested in reforms, let alone the transformation Jonathan preaches.⁵⁴

C. ENGENDERING NIGERIAN POLITICS: WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

Nigerian women’s political, economic and social rights remain largely neglected, as seen in the lack of gender equality and political representation. The national gender policy, which stipulates a quota of 35 per cent women in all governance processes, is observed mainly in the breach. Compared with South Africa, Mozambique, Uganda and Rwanda (the latter where 56 per cent – the highest percentage in the world – of national parliamentarians, including the speaker, are women), and even the world average (15 per cent), Nigeria’s ranking (118th of 192 countries) reflects a Lilliputian 7 per cent.

This is not for lack of a legal and statutory framework. Nigeria has committed to several international human rights

instruments.⁵⁵ While there is a lack of political will on the part of government, several other factors have also undermined the participation of women in electoral, decision-making and governance processes.⁵⁶ These include: social, cultural and religious constructs about the role of women in a patriarchal society; inadequate resources to run and sustain long and expensive election campaigns, combined with a lack of media attention; and growing political violence that reduces the attractiveness of elected office to women. Within the major political parties, there is scant mention of affirmative action for women in manifestos and constitutions. Few women candidates emphasise women’s rights in their platforms.⁵⁷

Since the 1999 return of democracy, representation of women in political office has fluctuated. Patience Etteh became the first female speaker of the House of Representatives after the 2007 elections but was impeached on corruption charges. In 2011, female candidates for the first

⁵⁵ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights, as well as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (known as the Maputo Protocol). Nigeria ratified the 1979 UN Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1985 and adopted the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. In a report released in March 2011, Amnesty International complained that, 25 years on, Nigeria has yet to implement CEDAW. Some states have adopted legislation to protect women from discrimination and violence, but the federal government has failed to combat a culture of impunity. “Nigeria yet to implement the UN Convention on Women – Amnesty”, *Vanguard*, 30 March 2011.

⁵⁶ The voting system is also an impediment to women’s representation. Women rarely do well in first-past-the-post voting systems. Parties are reluctant to allow women to run on their ticket for seats they believe they may win. The Uwais proposal to introduce an element of proportional representation to the system would likely do little for women. It proposed additional seats in the lower and upper houses to be elected through proportional representation, so that a quarter of all seats would be elected by that method. The Uwais proposal specifies that 30 per cent women must be included on the lists of candidates that parties would present for proportional representation seats but does not specify what position on the list the women would have. Even if parties were required to put women in prominent positions, only about 30 per cent of a quarter of all seats would go to women by this means – about 7 per cent – well below the goal of the formal gender policy.

⁵⁷ See “Nigeria elections reflect slow progress for women (AWID)”, <http://freerunonline.com.ng>, 20 May 2011; “University don decries marginalisation of women in Nigeria’s politics”, *PM News Nigeria*, 8 March 2011; Gumisai Mutume, “Women break into African politics”, *Africa Recovery*, April 2004; Toun Ilumoka, “Alhaja Mulikat Akande-Adeola”, in Jibrin Ibrahim and Amina Salihu (eds.), *Women, Marginalisation and Politics in Nigeria* (Abuja, 2004), p. 63.

⁵² President Jonathan hails from Otueke, a small town in Ogbia LGA of Bayelsa state. He belongs to the Ijaw ethnic group, the fourth largest in the country and the largest of the ethno-national groups in the oil-bearing Niger Delta region. A “Southern minority” signifies not belonging to either of the two major ethnic groups in the South, namely the Yoruba in the South-West and the Igbo in the South-East. It has been very difficult for Southern minorities to win the presidency, mainly because they have neither the population nor the political alliances to do so. Northern minorities have fared better, particularly during military rule, because they could easily be embraced and appropriated by the Hausa-Fulani ruling elite and, invariably, by the latter’s political allies in other parts of the country. Examples are Generals Yakubu Gowon (1966-1975) and Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993).

⁵³ Crisis Group interviews, Lagos, Abuja, Kaduna, Jos and Ibadan, April 2011.

⁵⁴ Crisis Group interviews, Abuja, January 2011; and Abuja, Kaduna, Jos and Ibadan, March and April 2011. Lansana Gberie lamented that “little else in Jonathan’s background, and nothing from his campaign platform, inspires much confidence. He has shown no inclination, apart from pursuit of his own ambition, to upset the powerful interests that underpin the PDP”, op. cit., p. 2.

time received financial assistance from the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, through the agency of the Nigerian Women Trust Fund,⁵⁸ but the returns were meagre. Only 26 women (seven senators and nineteen representatives) were elected, compared to 35 (nine senators and 26 representatives) in 2007. Fifteen of these (four senators and eleven representatives) were incumbents.⁵⁹

The unexpected decision of the new House of Representatives to ignore the zoning formula in allocating top political offices denied Mulikat Akande-Adeola (representing Ogbomosho North, Ogbomosho South and Orire Federal Constituency of Oyo state, South-West) the speakership. Modest progress has been made in some states, such as Oyo, where Monsurat Jumoke Sunmonu, the only female member in the 29-member House of Assembly, was elected speaker on 10 June. Anambra state has followed suit, and Adamawa state has a female deputy speaker. Three women each were elected to the state assemblies of Ondo and Ekiti states. Only one state (Lagos) elected a female deputy governor in 2011, but to do so has been a fairly common practice since 1999, especially in the South-West. No state has a female governor, and many state legislatures have no elected female members.⁶⁰

Several measures to reverse this trend and at least comply with the 35 per cent rule have been suggested: bring more women in through political appointments and reserve seats for women in parliament, as well as undertake comprehensive constitutional reforms that fully address women's

political, legal and social exclusion.⁶¹ Gender equity should be a priority of government at all levels. A first step should be to implement the statutory 35 per cent affirmative action. President Jonathan has come close to fulfilling his promise to do so by including fourteen women in his cabinet of 42 ministers (33 per cent).⁶²

All parties should also revisit and implement two recommendations in the Uwais Reform Committee report (see below): (a) political parties and associations should have at least 20 per cent women in their governing bodies; and (b) if proportional representation elections are included in reform of the electoral system, those governing bodies should include at least 30 per cent female candidates on their parties' lists.

V. TOWARDS 2015: ELECTORAL REFORMS

INEC, the National Assembly and central government have the joint responsibility of instituting broad-based and wide-ranging electoral reforms ahead of the 2015 polls. Already, INEC has announced that it has started work on internal restructuring and constituency delineation. President Jonathan has also promised to strengthen the electoral laws and enact other legislation in the next year to ensure better elections.

Only some of the recommendations contained in the Uwais Reform Committee report have been adopted.⁶³ These in-

⁵⁸ "50 million cash for female candidates", *The Nation*, 25 March 2011.

⁵⁹ The returning Senators are: Chris Anyanwu (Imo state), a prominent journalist and publisher; Nkechi Nwaogwu (Abia); Zanaib Kure (Niger) and Ayisha Alhassan (Taraba). The three others elected are: Helen Esuene (Akwa Ibom state); Nenadi Usman (Kaduna), Obasanjo's former deputy finance minister; and Oluremi Tinubu (Lagos) wife of Bola Tinubu, immediate past governor of the state and leader of the ACN. Lady Omoredede Osifo, president of Advancement for Women in Democracy (AWID), suggested female lawmakers sponsor a bill to give more bite to the 35 per cent quota for women representation in politics. Sabina Idowu-Osehebo of the Lapo Development Foundation, a women-oriented NGO, asked them to include in their efforts a push for reduction in the cost of governance in order to release money for development projects that would improve the lives of ordinary people. Ndubusi Orji, "The seventh national assembly: 26 women grace the chambers", *Daily Sun*, 6 June 2011.

⁶⁰ Jide Ojo, "Nigerian women and national development", *Punch*, 14 June 2011. There have been several earlier female speakers of state Houses of Assembly: Titi Shodunke Oseni (Ogun, 2003-2008); Eucharia Anazodo (Anambra, 2003-2004); and Margaret Icheen (Benue, 1999-2002). Ebiti Ndok of the United National Party for Development (UNPD) was the sole female presidential candidate at the April polls. There were four unsuccessful vice-presidential candidates.

⁶¹ These activists include Toyin Ajao, a feminist blogger and Peace and Security Fellow of King's College, London; Abiola Akiyode of Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC), Lagos; and Dr Bukola Adesina of the political science department, University of Ibadan. There is risk that Nigeria could go down the path of "state-controlled women's organisations and institutions which address women's issues in a non-threatening way and often act against the interests of women". Lisa Aubrey, "Gender, Development and Democratisation in Africa", *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, vol. xxxvi, no. 1 (2001), p. 104.

⁶² The Obasanjo government had only nine female ministers and Yar'Adua's, seven.

⁶³ The 22-member Electoral Reform Committee, chaired by Mohammed Uwais, a former Chief Justice of the country, was inaugurated on 28 August 2007 by President Yar'Adua. It was mandated, among other things, to look at all the issues and laws with a bearing on the electoral process and make general and specific recommendations to government (including, but not limited to, constitutional and legislative provisions and/or amendments) to ensure a "truly Independent Electoral Commission imbued with administrative and financial autonomy". Yar'Adua also charged it to "look dispassionately at [Nigeria's] peculiarities, specificities, historical experience, and those enduring dynamics which define [Nigeria] as a nation". See Lanre

clude constitutional amendments that reduced INEC's dependence on the executive by guaranteeing its funding in the federal budget; shortened deadlines for action on petitions contesting election results; reduced quorums for electoral tribunals; detailed requirements in the new Electoral Act for primaries to strengthen internal party democracy; and regulating the merger of political parties so as to reduce post-election, inter-party "carpet crossing". Several other important recommendations have thus far been ignored.⁶⁴

- ❑ staggering the electoral calendar so that presidential and gubernatorial elections would take place two years apart from federal and state legislative elections, in order to give INEC a breather and lessen the intensity of conflict and violence when all the polls are held, as currently, during the same month;
- ❑ establishing a clear calendar for local elections and integrating into INEC the organs responsible for organising local polls, currently a state responsibility;
- ❑ bringing back independent candidacies, as in the first republic (1960-1966), under two conditions: constituency-based nominations by verifiable signatures of at least ten registered voters in each ward in the constituency; and financial deposits by candidates that would be refunded if a candidate received at least 10 per cent of the total valid votes cast in the constituency;⁶⁵
- ❑ establishing two new structures, a Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission, and an Election Offences Commission, the latter empowered to prevent, investigate and prosecute electoral crimes, so INEC can concentrate on organising elections;
- ❑ ensuring that Parliament has a say in the appointment of resident electoral commissioners (RECs) in the states;
- ❑ strengthening the capacity of the police, including by recruiting new members, to ensure that the force is able to provide security at each of the 120,000 polling booths during elections;
- ❑ combining First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) and Modified Proportional Representation (MPR) systems and con-

sidering for appointments into the federal cabinet members of political parties that secure at least 2.5 per cent of National Assembly seats during general elections, so as to make the political and electoral system more inclusive;

- ❑ curbing election violence by addressing its root causes;⁶⁶ and
- ❑ prosecuting the offence of buying and selling voters' cards, according to Section 24 of the Electoral Act 2006, and barring those found guilty from standing for office and voting in elections for ten years.

The government should widely publish the committee's report without delay to encourage broad-based debate on renewed reform efforts. Local council elections, delayed for several years already, should be quickly organised. The committee recommended that such elections could be used to test the feasibility of proposed changes and build confidence in the electoral system.

In addition, INEC should make voter registration a continuous exercise. The process need not be as chaotic and expensive as it was in 2011 if it is done continuously, in full compliance with Sections 9 (1) and 10 (1) of the 2010 Electoral Act, as amended.⁶⁷ An authentic voters roll is central to the electoral process and must be a priority.

VI. THE CABINET AND PROSPECTS FOR THE REFORM AGENDA

President Jonathan has promised to transform Nigeria. In his inaugural address, he summed up his government's commitment to "transformative leadership" as follows: "Join me now as we begin the journey of transforming Nigeria I know your pain because I have been there. Look beyond the hardship you have endured. See a new beginning, a new direction, a new spirit". He may have been responding to critics like Lamido Sanusi, the Central Bank governor, who said he should tell Nigerians upfront whether his policies would be for the elite or for the mass-

Adewole, "April polls massively rigged – Yar'Adua admits", *Nigerian Tribune*, 29 August 2010. After having consulted broadly and held public hearings in twelve of the 36 states and received 1,466 memorandums from political interests, the committee submitted its report to government on 11 December 2008. A print copy has not been published, but it is available electronically.

⁶⁴ Crisis Group Briefing, *Nigeria's Election: Reversing the Degeneration*, op. cit., p. 7.

⁶⁵ Sections 65 (2) (b) and 106 of the 1999 Constitution would have to be amended to make provisions for individuals to run as independent candidates.

⁶⁶ "[O]nly sustainable, systemic reform measures can provide employment and curtail the profound phenomenon of youth unemployment, which feeds into, and fans, violence related to elections". Final Report, vol. 1, Main Report, Electoral Reform Committee, December 2008, unpublished, p. 61.

⁶⁷ Section 9 (1) stipulates that "the Commission shall compile, maintain, and update on a continuous basis, a National Register of voters, in this Act referred to as the 'Register of Voters' which shall include the names of all persons entitled to vote in any Federal, State, Local Government or Area Council elections". Section 10 (1) says that "... there shall be continuous registration of all persons qualified to be registered voters".

es.⁶⁸ So far, the president has set high standards for himself and his government. Nigerians and the international community should hold him accountable to them.

President Jonathan solemnly pledged that he would work to secure the country's future by ensuring medical care; access to first class education; electricity; and efficient and affordable public transport for all citizens. He also promised to reform the dilapidated and corrupt petroleum industry, which provides over 75 per cent of government revenues, and pledged to create jobs through partnership with the private sector.

Two pieces of legislation that have already been passed may facilitate reform and strengthen the president's ability to deliver on his promises. The first is the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, which was signed into law on the eve of the inauguration. Its champions consider it "a victory for democracy, transparency, justice, development" and believe it will "aid anti-corruption, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public institutions, support justice and ensure more open society".⁶⁹ The law proposes to do seven things:

- ❑ guarantee the right of access of individuals and groups to information held by public institutions, as well as by private institutions that use public funds, perform public functions or provide public services;
- ❑ require all institutions to proactively disclose basic information about their structures and processes;
- ❑ protect whistle-blowers;
- ❑ make adequate provision for the information needs of illiterate and disabled applicants;
- ❑ recognise a range of legitimate exceptions and limitations to the public's right to know but subject to a public interest test that, in deserving cases, may override such limitations;
- ❑ create reporting obligations in compliance with the law for all institutions affected by it, with annual reports to be sent to the Federal Attorney General's office, which is to make them available to the National Assembly and the public; and

- ❑ require the Federal Attorney General to oversee implementation and report annually to parliament.

The second is the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) Act, signed into law on 27 May 2011, to manage the new Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) scheme. Similar to those already operational in some 50 countries, the SWF, into which an initial sum of \$1 billion has already been deposited is to pool substantial oil revenues for the future rather than expend them in current budgets. It also is intended to serve as a bulwark against powerful lobby groups interested in big spending and replaces the Excess Crude Account (ECA), a pillar of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) stipulated fiscal reforms launched in the country in 2003. If practice matches precepts – and prudence and fiscal discipline become hallmarks of President Jonathan's government – the SWF could go a long way to laying the foundation for Nigeria's prosperity.

A reform-minded cabinet is a necessity. Three ministers are to form the nucleus of the president's much-touted National Economic Management team. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, a former finance minister (2003-2006) in Obasanjo's cabinet and World Bank Managing Director for Africa until her re-appointment to the finance ministry, is to provide macro-economic management expertise. She has promised to tighten fiscal policy, reverse ten years of deficit budgeting, support job-generating sectors and revive the battle against corruption.⁷⁰ Olusegun Agangu, immediate past finance minister, now in charge of the trade and investment portfolio, is an expert fund manager and will be the focal point for directing SWF investment. Professor Barth Nnaji, a prominent energy specialist and formerly a special presidential adviser, now power minister, is expected to provide leadership in meeting energy supply goals. Another crucial portfolio, agriculture and natural resources minister, has been given to Dr Akinwumi Adeshina, a World Bank expert, who has the task of ensuring food security in the medium term.

Some ministers seem particularly well-suited to their jobs. Returning Oil Minister Diezani Alison-Madueke, a controversial but knowledgeable insider, is not popular with powerful oil cartels and multinationals because she has reportedly been active in blocking some of their activities. Olugbenga Ashiru, one of a handful of career diplomats to be appointed foreign minister, will be expected to inject new life into foreign policy. Bukar Tijani, minister of state for agriculture and natural resources, is a former national coordinator of the food security program. Profes-

⁶⁸ "Sanusi to the North – stop dreaming of producing president in April", *Daily Independent*, 17 March 2011.

⁶⁹ Syndicated email by Edetaen Ojo, Executive Director, Media Rights Agenda (MRA), on "Freedom of Information Act Signals Consolidation of Nigeria's Democracy", 31 May 2011. MRA was one of the three organisations that started the campaign for the bill late in 1993, during the General Sani Abacha regime. The two others are the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO) and the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ).

⁷⁰ Okonjo-Iweala's record is mixed. In 2005, she won accolades for negotiating the cancellation of \$18 billion of Nigeria's then \$30 billion debt, but she had little success in other key sectors. She resigned after President Obasanjo moved her in 2006 to the foreign ministry.

sor Ruqayyatu Rufai, returning education minister, has much experience in the sector, and Labaran Maku, returning information and communication minister, is widely regarded as a progressive journalist.

However, there is some criticism of the cabinet's size (41 ministers and eighteen special advisers) at a time when citizens are being urged to accept cuts in social spending. And overall the cabinet appears at best a mixed bag, likely to mean different things to different people because it has a little of everything: a reform government, a PDP government, a business-as-usual government all rolled into one. Many of the some fourteen ministers reappointed from the previous cabinet have been accused of either serious abuse of power/office (but not formally charged) or incompetence or both. A few are senior or ranking PDP officials currently heading high-profile ministries. Many who voted for him had expected Jonathan to strike a deft balance between technocrats and party stalwarts but to keep his promise to appoint more of the former than the latter. Instead, he appears to have followed Obasanjo's example by doing the opposite, while yielding in a number of instances to the dictates of entrenched interests and forces that benefit from the country's stagnation.⁷¹

The government also fumbled its proposal, made public on 26 July, to replace the constitutional provision permitting two terms of four years for the president and state governors with a single term of six years. The idea had already been debated in several forums and platforms and is extremely controversial, not least because it resembles, in the minds of many Nigerians, an attempt to extend the present incumbent's term or Obasanjo's "third term" bid. It was poor judgment on the part of the new government to have made the proposal appear as if it were a priority. The mostly negative reaction has been strong and widespread.⁷²

⁷¹ Crisis Group judgments based on face-to-face and telephone interviews, Abuja, Kaduna, Jos, Lagos and Ibadan, June and July 2011.

⁷² According to a government statement, "the president believes that this single tenure when actualised will change the face of our politics and accelerate the overall development of our nation. If the proposed amendment is accepted by the National Assembly, the president assures that he will not in any way be a beneficiary". See Emman Oladesu, Joseph Jibueze and Eric Ikhilae, "Jonathan pushes one term for president, governors", *The Nation*, 27 July 2011; also, Augustine Ehikioya, Gbenga Omokhunu and Adekunle Jimoh, "Parties say no to one term", *The Nation*, 28 July 2011; Charles Koffie Gyamfi, "Akinola kicks against single tenure, amnesty to Boko Haram", *The Guardian*, 16 August 2011; Kingsley Omoso, "Understanding the single term proposal", *Punch*, 16 August 2011; and Leo Sobechi, "Single term will address challenges of power struggle, others", *The Guardian*, 16 August 2011.

Constitutional amendments and reforms should be pursued in a more holistic, less piecemeal, manner, perhaps via a sovereign national conference. Major elements might include decisive steps to erect true federalism through devolution of powers, resources and functions to the states and local councils; scrapping of the joint accounting system for states and local councils; and pursuit of social justice and constitutional democracy. This might be approached in part by developing an enforceable bill of rights and strengthening and enforcing the commitments of the state to the Nigerian people enshrined in Chapter 2 of the 1999 Constitution, "Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy", which envisages such goals as free education up to university level and a free adult literacy program.

VII. CONCLUSION

Nigeria may have broken, somewhat, the cycle of flawed and bad elections, but the challenges that lie ahead are many and daunting. Between now and the next general polls in 2015, far-reaching electoral, political and economic reforms are needed to help consolidate the modest gains made in 2011 and launch the country on the path of permanent and sustainable electoral change.

INEC requires fundamental reforms: organisational restructuring, including decentralisation, strengthening of state and local government offices, staff recruitment and training. Institution-building should be pursued with vigour and rigour. There is no need to re-invent the wheel, however. Both government and INEC should revisit, widely disseminate and implement the remaining recommendations contained in the 2009 Uwais Electoral Reform Committee Report. The electoral process should continue to be improved, and complaints and litigation should be resolved quickly. The entire process needs to be made as simple and people-friendly as possible. INEC's legal framework should be addressed, and it should seek domestic and international help to alleviate its weaknesses.

Government, working with other key political players and social actors, has the responsibility of constructing a system of disincentives to deter political and electoral malfeasance. This should be done through political and economic reforms that make the state relevant to most Nigerians. More attention should be paid to developing industrial and manufacturing capacity in order to create jobs for the army of restive and idle school-leavers and graduates who are readily used on the cheap as agents of political violence and electoral malfeasance. The current first-past-the-post electoral system should be reviewed and consideration be given, as proposed by the Uwais Committee, to introducing some degree of proportional representation. More generally, the political system turns elections into

a zero-sum game and is not a recipe for national unity. Through civic and voter education, as well as public statements and concrete actions, the government should foster greater public consciousness of what Nigeria means to its people and the values guiding the country.

Nigeria has the resources and the capacity to entrench a culture of credible elections, with all that would mean for sustainable democracy. But President Jonathan and his cabinet will need to summon the political will to lead that effort.

Abuja/Dakar/Brussels, 15 September 2011

APPENDIX A MAP OF NIGERIA



APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Action Congress of Nigeria (**ACN**), All-Nigerian People's Party (**ANPP**), All Progressive Grand Alliance (**APGA**), Congress for Progressive Change (**CPC**), Democratic People's Party (**DPP**), Labour Party (**LP**) and People's Democratic Party (**PDP**) – the seven political parties represented in the National Assembly out of the 62 officially registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

ACN – Action Congress of Nigeria; presidential candidate, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, former anti-corruption czar; won gubernatorial elections in Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states and has eighteen senators from eight states (Anambra, Benue, Edo, Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Osun, and Oyo).

ANPP – All-Nigerian People's Party; presidential candidate, Ibrahim Shekarau, immediate past governor of Kano state; won gubernatorial elections in Borno, Yobe and Zamfara states and has seven senators from four states (Borno, Kano, Yobe and Zamfara).

APGA – All-Progressive Grand Alliance; adopted President Jonathan as its presidential candidate; won gubernatorial elections in Imo state and has only one senator, from the same state.

CAN – Christian Association of Nigeria; founded in 1976, groups together numerous Christian denominations across the country.

CPC – Congress for Progressive Change; presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, former military head of state, was runner-up in 2011 in his third attempt; won gubernatorial elections in Nasarawa state and has seven senators from four states (Kaduna, Katsina, Nasarawa and Niger).

DPP – Democratic People's Party; did not put up a presidential candidate; has no governorship and only one senator, from Delta state, its main stronghold.

Electoral Act (2006) – established INEC and regulates the conduct of federal, state and area councils; was amended by the National Assembly in 2010.

Electoral Reform Committee – also known as the Uwais Electoral Reform Committee, after its chairman, former Chief Justice Mohammed Lawal Uwais; was inaugurated in August 2007 and submitted its yet-to-be published report in December 2008.

First Past the Post (FPTP) – Nigeria's present voting system, in which the winner is the candidate with the most votes in a single round of voting.

INEC – Independent National Electoral Commission, the election umpire; its chairman, Professor Attahiru Jega, assumed office on 1 July 2010.

LP – Labour Party; adopted President Jonathan as its presidential candidate; won no governorships in 2011 but rules Ondo state from the 2007 election; has four senators from two states (Ondo and Plateau).

MOBS – Modified Open Secret Ballot System; the voting procedure introduced by the INEC for the 2011 elections.

MPR – Modified Proportional Representation; voting system in which for some number of seats in a legislative body voters cast their ballots for party lists rather than individual candidates, and the parties are awarded seats in accordance with the percentage of the vote those lists have received; the Electoral Reform Committee has recommended consideration of such a system in Nigeria.

Nigerian Council of State – an organ chaired by the incumbent head of state (president), consisting of former heads of state and current state governors; advises the government on policy.

PDP – People's Democratic Party; ruling party at the centre since May 1999; won 2011 gubernatorial elections in eighteen states (Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bauchi, Benue, Delta, Ebonyi, Enugu, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kwara, Niger, Plateau, Rivers, and Taraba); has 71 Senators from Abuja Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and all states except Ekiti, Katsina, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Yobe.