

## POLITICS OF URBAN VIOLENCE AND THE CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

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SHEU Habeeb Abidoye and ALAMU Adebola Omoniyi

*Department of Political Science, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo.*

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### **Abstract**

*Since the opening of fourth republic and return of civil rule in 1999, Nigeria has been battling with series of urban based violence. The challenge this violence poses to sustainable development is particularly worrisome given the enormous potentials of human and natural resources Nigeria is endowed with. There is hardly any government that assumes power since the birth of the fourth republic without identifying the imperative of fighting urban violence as one of the basis for socio-economic and political development. This paper seeks to identify, through content analysis, the implications of urban violence on the sustainability of development in Nigeria. The study revealed that urban violence has adverse consequences on development in Nigeria. The study, amongst others, recommended that the government should take drastic action on the illegal possession of firearms by the politicians and youths, provides room for security intelligence and surveillance, and the political elite should demonstrate strong commitment and willingness in pursuing good governance by empowering the economy to take care of the unemployed and poverty ridden populace.*

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### **Introduction**

Violence has become an endemic feature of most of the world's political system and one of the most important development challenges facing the world today. This is particularly true of developing countries, including Nigeria where violent conflicts become defining characteristics of the political scene especially since independence. Violence is not alien to Nigeria as the country had witnessed upsurge in its occurrence which played out in a variety of forms.

It is an unbeatable fact that violence in Nigeria has historical antecedents. A comprehensive study of Nigerian political scene will reveal that the period after independence was marked by divergent violent incidences. This is not to reduce the present to a mere echos of the past. The country at present is facing an unprecedented rise in urban violence

ranging from religious riots, ethnic violence, intra and inter party clashes, communal crises and other forms of violence (Agbaje, 2008).

The growth in urbanization in the fourth republic has posed to Nigeria, the challenges of urban violence and sustainable development. The fourth republic has particularly witnessed more violent incidences. The country stumbled from crisis to crisis and the indivisibility of the country has been subjected to doubt with a marked increase in the politics of bitterness, brinkmanship, ethno-religious antagonism, intolerance and growth in urbanization that makes urban areas the fulcrum of social, economic and political processes (Alanamu, 2005). The country at present is deeply enmeshed and suffused in violent clashes characterized by attacks, maiming and killings of several persons, loss of investments and properties worth several

billions of Naira. Most Nigerians sleep with one eye open, ever watchful of the recurrent unrest. There is virtually no part in the country where violent acts of diverse typologies have not ensued. On every single day, acts of violence take place across the country.

It is truism that this disturbing problem which takes horrible and terror dimensions has halted the sustainability of development in the country. Urban violence has become part of the most disturbing problems that have slowed down the pace of development in Nigeria. The political and socio-economic status of the country stands testimony to it. Urban violence in Nigeria has resulted in a lot of bloodshed, destruction of properties, social and economic dislocation and its attendant poverty, unemployment and insecurity. The situation has further disempowered both the rural and urban poor. The nation cannot boast of having achieved development with the larger percentage of its inhabitants wallowing in abject poverty worsened by incessant violence (Sheu, 2011).

In the face of the unbridled violence in the country, Nigeria is confronted with daunting developmental challenges which pose serious threat to the survival of the country. These developmental challenges include endemic rural and urban poverty, high rate of unemployment, debilitating youth unemployment, low industrial output, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, inadequate physical and social infrastructure, very large domestic debt, and rising stock of external debt (Ewetan, 2013)

Given the enormous potentials of human and natural resources Nigeria is endowed with, the expectation is that the country would rank high among the industrialized nations with the return of civil rule. However, the reverse has been the case as the country is faced with catalogue of challenges amongst which is urban violence

that has contributed to the crippling of the country's political and socio-economic development. The national concern on the implications of urban violence on the sustainability of political cum socio-economic development in the country prompts this study. The study seeks to identify, through content analysis, the challenge of sustainable development in the face of the incessant violence Nigeria is experiencing. Significantly, the study also proffers insight into the catalysts to the violence. Thus, practical policy recommendations are put forward on how to subdue violence in Nigeria.

### **Conceptual and Theoretical Underpinnings on Violence**

Violence is an extremely diffuse and complex phenomenon. It does not lend itself to a universal definition like other social science concepts. It is an intensely contested concept with numerous competing definitions. Rather than engaging in an unending task of universal definition of the term, scholars have resulted into judgemental definition. Notions of what is acceptable and unacceptable as violent act and what constitutes harm, are culturally influenced and constantly under review as values and social norms evolve. The wide dimensions of violence make the topic of violence one of the most challenging and sensitive to address. There are many possible ways to define violence, depending on who is defining it and for what purpose. A definition for the purposes of arrest and conviction, for example, will be different from one for social service interventions. The World Health Organization (W.H.O.) defines violence as: the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm,

maldevelopment or deprivation. (W.H.O. :2002: 36)

The definition covers a wide range of acts, going beyond physical acts to include threats and intimidation. Besides death and injury, the definition also includes the myriad and often less obvious consequences of violent behaviour, such as psychological harm, deprivation and maldevelopment that compromise the well-being of individuals, families and communities (WHO, 2002). Violence entails the use of physical force, usually with the purpose of injuring or damaging the object of the violence.

Caroline (2010) identifies the categories of urban violence as follow:

**Political Violence:** Political violence is the use of force against persons or things, a use of force prohibited by law, directed to a change in the policies, personnel or system of government and hence also directed to changes in the existence of individuals in the society and perhaps other society (Honderish, 1989; Alanamu, 2005). According to Anifowose (2006), political violence is the use of threat of physical act carried out by an individual or group of individuals within a political system against another individual or individuals, and/or property, with the intent to cause injury or death to persons and/or damage or destruction to property and whose objective, choice of targets, surrounding circumstances, implementation, and effects have political significance, that is, tend to modify the behaviour of others in the existing arrangement of a power structure that has some consequences for the political system. This is the most common type of urban violence; it is dangerous. It could be as a result of ideological or philosophical differences, and most often power tussle among the ruling class is a responsible factor.

Political violence sometimes occurs due to the struggle between the state and non-state actors, which can eventually manifest as guerilla warfare, para-military struggle, assassination and other kinds of armed struggle. It can also occur as structural violence. It may be as a result of deprivation in politics or total neglect of an area within a society.

**Economic Violence:** This occurs in an overpopulated urban centre, whereby organized crime like bank robbery, drugs and human trafficking are in practice. The entire system of such society is full of fraudsters, thieves, unemployed youths, miscreants, etc. Conflicts and urban violence result from greed and/or from grievance. According to Collier (2003) some people (referred to as conflict entrepreneurs) actually benefit from chaos or crisis while the overwhelming majority of the population is affected by the negative impact of conflicts.

**Socio-cultural Violence:** This is a reflection of what may likely occur when people of different backgrounds or ethnic origins are brought together within the competitive context; conflict between the groups easily occurs. The outbreak of violence among them results from their competition for power and wealth.

**Youth Violence:** Youth violence, according to WHO (2002), is defined as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, exerted by or against children, adolescents or young adults, ages 10-29, which results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm; mal-development, or deprivation

### **Concept of Sustainable Development**

The ambiguity and vagueness of the concept "sustainability" has made efforts aimed at ensuring that the environment continues to sustain and enhance human life

complicated. The concept of sustainable development was popularized through the publication of the UN sponsored report "Our Common Future" (often called the Brundtland Report). The commission has shown that the very substantial advances in living standard that had been enjoyed by countries since the Second World War have arisen from processes that cannot be sustained by underdeveloped nations (Asaju & Ajayi, 2011). The concept of sustainable development is the efforts at improving the socio-economic and ecological status and at exploiting and processing the environment or natural resources for the purpose of improving the quality of human life in such a way that the needs of the future generations are not jeopardized. Sustainable development is a notion, a movement, and an approach which has developed into a global wave of concerns, study, political mobilization and organization around the twin issues of environmental protection and development. Going through the multifarious explanations on the concept, Mohammed (2002), as cited by Adebayo (2011), identifies three important facts on it, namely:

- i. increasing the availability and widening the distribution of basic life sustenance, such as food, shelter and protection;
- ii. raising the level of living in addition to higher income, provision of jobs, better education, and greater attention to cultural and humanitarian values, all of which serve to enhance material well-being, but also to generate greater individual and national self esteem; and,
- iii. expanding the range of economic and social choice to individuals and nations by freeing them from servitude and dependence.

Several scholars have provided theoretical explanation for the occurrence and growth of violence. And for the purpose of this paper, Frustration-Aggression theory

and Social Disorganization theory are used.

The basis of the Frustration-aggression theory is found in the pioneering works of John Dollard and his associates and in later works by Leonard Berkowitz. Others who have employed this approach as a general basis for the explanation of violence are James C. Davios, Ted Gurr, Rosalind Feierabend, and Douglas Midlarsky. According to Adebayo (1994), the main thrust of this theoretical explanation is that there is a gap between the 'expectation and achievement' in the social life of the urbanized, which invariably leads to frustration and the urge to react (aggression), usually through demonstrations, riots, assassination, etc. Harlan and Joe (1933) state that the central premise of the frustration-aggression theory, simply put, is that aggression is always the end result of frustration. Given the requisite conditions, an individual whose basic desires are thwarted, and who consequently experience a profound sense of dissatisfaction and anger is likely to react to his condition by directing aggressive behaviours at what is perceived as being responsible for thwarting those desires, or at a substitute.

Scholars have also explored social disorganization theory to explain the relationship between socio-economic inequality, heterogeneity and violence. Social disorganization theory grew out of research conducted in Chicago by Shaw and McKay (Shaw & McKay, 1942). The social disorganization theorists argue that the concentration of economic disadvantage and social heterogeneity within cities, coupled with the lack of stability in residential occupation, produces community disorganization and the breakdown of social control, facilitating crime and violence. Social disorganization theory predicts that violence is aggravated by the socio-spatial characteristics of cities

themselves, such as their heterogeneity, inability to absorb surplus low-skill labor, uneven provision of services and jarring inequalities.

### **Urbanization and Violence**

In examining the relationship between urbanization and violence, scholars have explored the association between city size and violence. It is found that larger cities exhibit higher homicide rates than smaller cities. Cities with high residents have a higher risk of being the victims of a criminal act than cities with lesser population. Explanations for why large cities tend to have more crime and violence than small cities range in nature from structural to individual. While larger cities provide greater returns to criminal activity due to the concentration of wealth, criminals may also conclude that the higher density of population in large cities represents a bigger pool of suspects within which to hide and decrease the chances of being apprehended. Rapid shifts in population from the rural areas to cities produce political violence due to relative deprivation, the demands of urban life, and the politicization of migrants grievances by radical urban political movements (Gurr, 1970)

On why urban areas are prone to violence, Osaghea (1994) stresses that the first is that it serves as the fulcrum of social, economic and political processes and the city provides an enabling environment for conflict and violence. Secondly, fundamental mistakes in urban polices and planning create conditions that make violence endemic to cities. The rise of slum areas where deviant sub-culture prevails, acute shortages of housing that encourages overcrowding and informal settlement, insufficient policing, lack of recreational facilities and neglect of the peripheries of cities in the provision of essential services are some of the consequences of planning failures. Weiner (1996), states that the large

numbers of rootless, crowded, and often unmarried urban dwellers are easily prodded to violence and readily organised by political groups. Osaghea (1994) notes that some of those who migrated from the rural areas in search of a better life often get frustrated when their expectations are not met. They feel deprived because the system has proved incapable of providing jobs, houses, higher incomes, affordable education for the children, etc. Their frustration heightens when they compare their situation with that of the affluent.

In fact, urban areas are the hotbeds of violence, due to the concentration of different civic organisations, as well as the large reserves of violence prone segments of the population. Trade unions, professional associations, human rights organisations, women's organisations, ethnic associations, students' organisations and several other civic organisations are located in the cities. Strikes, lockouts, consumer boycotts, rent boycotts, riots, and demonstrations for which many urban areas have become notable are organised by these groups (Wirth, 1938).

Most of the militant and terrorist groups are based in the urban centres, and their targets are also situated in the urban centres most of the time. Urban areas have a larger concentration of poor homeless and unemployed people who could be easily recruited to disrupt the peace of the society. They could hijack a peaceful demonstration and turn it into a violent one. Such people often enjoy having confrontation with law enforcement agents. Cities tend to have large populations of miscreants who are prone to violence. They are the instrument of political violence where structural inequalities prevail. They are known to engage in collective action, such as challenging those in authority over such matters as educational policies and social amenities, on behalf of the society. The

features and attributes of urban violence include overpopulation, scarcity of urban infrastructures, unemployment, corruption and political injustice. Others are military or civilian coups, bloody ethnic militias, religious fundamentalism and conflicts, terrorism, armed robbery, suicide, riots, demonstrations, rape, hooliganism, child battering, police brutality, partisan counter violence and civil wars (Weiner, 1960). Violence occurs in all human societies, but violence in urban areas is more severe and more pronounced than that of the rural areas. Cities' control of the sensitive organs of government, economic and industrial infrastructures make the urban areas different from rural areas. The diverse opportunities in urban areas attract many people from different backgrounds to those areas. While in the process of competing for limited urban resources, urban dwellers often commit different acts of violence.

### **Overview of Violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic**

It would seem an exaggeration to say that the country has become a battle field where urban violence are constantly staged; but a cursory look at instances of violence would prove this fact. Thus, before the present democratic experiment in Nigeria, there were urban violence that claimed so many lives and properties (Mohammed, 2005). The major examples of such violent urban disturbance in Nigeria include the Maitatsine riots 1982, Kafanchan-Kaduna crises in 1987, Zangon-Kataf riots of 1992, Tafawa Balewa clashes in 1991, 1995 (Falola, 1998).

With the opening of fourth republic in 1999, violence in the country assumed a multifarious dimensions. Although no exact figures of casualties are available, the Kaduna riots of 2000 and Jos riots of 2001 claimed several hundreds of lives and generated violent wave effects across

neighbouring cities (Ikelegbe, 2005). Other cases include the 2001 Tiv-Jukun conflicts in Taraba and Benue States, Urhobo-Ijaw-Istshekiri clashes of 1999 in Warri, Delta State, the Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba clashes in Lagos, Ogun, Oyo and Kano States and the recurrent clashes between Hausa-Fulani and Igbo groups in Kano State and reprisal attacks in Onitsha. Hausa/Fulani-Yoruba clashes took place mainly in 1999-2000 in the wake of the transition from northern dominated military rule to a Yoruba-led civilian administration. One of the most worrisome of the major urban clashes in Nigeria is the Ife-Modakeke conflicts in the Yoruba State of Osun. These conflicts were caused by conflicting claims to land which were aggravated by governments arbitrary and inconsistent demarcation of local government boundaries.

From the year 2000, the terrain of urban violence in Nigeria was pushed into militancy with the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) based in South-western Nigeria on the lead, taking into their hands that which gives urban conflict a more violent and bloody disposition. Over eighty major eruptions were recorded in various sections of the country during the first fifty five months of the civilian regime of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. Ethnic and inter-communal conflicts became so pervasive that there is hardly any month without one form of disturbance or the other around the country (Imobighe, 2003). Tribal militia dominates the arena, the civil political environment made the situation increasingly wobbly. In the North and the East of Nigeria the elites had to also put together a surviving strategy by coming up with an organized body to contain the conflicting environment. Thus the establishment of Arewa Consultative Forum and the Ohaneze-Ndigbo, whose objectives were to have a common voice for the region they represented.

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Other communal organisations that also sprang up include the Middle Belt Forum of the Central Nigerian area and the association for the Southern minorities that includes organisations like Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND). In a more critical sense, the 21st century urban conflict in Nigeria is militia based using all forms of deadly weapons. Since then ethnicity became a huge social movement and human investment across the country. It is not only nurtured around the structure and ideology of ethnic nationalities, rather it is made to become the preferred mode of loyalty by Nigerians as opposed to the loyalty to the Nigerian state. In its extremities, it went to the extent of producing a culture of mass killings targeting people considered outsiders (settlers); the outlook was generally militaristic and violent. Plateau state is a

good example of this type of political environment. Another good example is Taraba State which is home to the Tiv and Jukun speaking peoples. In the case of Taraba, the conflict was based on ethnicity, and predates the birth of Nigeria itself (Alubo, 2006).

In the case of Plateau state located in the central region of the Nigerian area, for over a decade now the state has not witnessed peace, and the economy of the state flourishing on tourism is down (Abdussalam, 2010). The worst of it all in the history of urban conflict in Nigeria is the type of militant clash that cropped up at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the Boko Haram. Everywhere in the country is just like a war zone, experiencing one form of social unrest or the other, but more especially in the Northern part.

*Table 1:  
Some Cases of Violent Conflicts since the Return of Civil Rule in 1999*

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Violent Clashes</b>	<b>Years</b>
1.	Niger Delta Crisis	1999
2.	Shagamu crisis	1999
3.	Kano Reprisal Attack and Killings	1999
4.	Arogbo-Ijaw-Ilaye Crisis	1999
5.	Eleme-Okrika Communal Clash	1999
6.	Anguleri-Umuleri Clash	1999
7.	Odi Killings	1999
8.	Oleh-Olomoro Communal Crisis	1999
9.	Kaduna Mayhem	2000
10.	Aba Reprisal	2000
11.	Ile Ife-Modakeke Crisis	2000
12.	ZangonKatab Settler Conflict	2001
13.	Zaki-biam Conflict 2001	2001

13.	Zaki-biam Conflict 2001	2001
14.	Jos Indigene/Settler Crisis since 2001	2001
15.	Kafanchan and ZangonKataf Conflict	2001and 2011
16.	2011 Post-election Violence	2011
17.	The Boko Haram Insurgence 2001 till date	2010 till date

Source: Compiled by authors from several media reports.

### **Causes of Urban Violence in Nigeria**

#### **Struggle for Resource Control and Gains:**

Violence emanates generally from socio-economic and political injustices in society either at the inter-personal level, inter-group or state interaction. These injustices may hinge on sharing of resources including leadership positions, the way human rights and freedoms are handled, or on the handling of demands, and jointly owned assets. These can bring about clash of interests, opinion and values. Violence arises from problems basic to all populations, the tugs and pulls of different identities, the differential distribution of resources and access to power, and competing definitions of what is right, fair, and just (Nwolise, 2004). It can be gleaned from this assertion that the perceived injustice in the sharing of resources and political gains and proceed in the country causes violent conflict.

**Ethnicity and Problem of Identity:** The destruction of human groups on the basis of their ethnic affiliation, national identity or other group membership has a long history. Identity-based conflicts have occurred more frequently in recent decades. Violence is increasingly perpetrated against individuals on the basis of their belonging to a particular group (e.g. ethnic, religious, national, clan, caste), often by individuals apparently acting on behalf of another group (Sheu,

2011). The violence in Nigeria explains this ugly situation. Ethnicity provides the demarcation for violence in the country. Hatred along ethnic lines drive violence. The intolerance among the different ethnic groups spawns violent conflict in Nigeria.

**Political Causes:** The violence in the country can also be attributed to political factors. Different ethnic groups that make up Nigeria are simply self-centered. This is expressed in their reluctance to accept one another, share political power in form of appointment, elective and representative positions and other benefits. There is competition among these groups in the control of the inhibited territory and all the political resources that emanate from it. They see one another as seeking to deny others access to power. This they are committed to resisting. Thus violence always arises during elections, appointments and other political activities (Onuoha et al, 2010).

**Ownership of Land/Territory:** The question of the ownership of land has degenerated into urban violence for decades even before independence and it has been used overtime as thoroughfare to launch attacks. It is seen among ethnic groups as one of the underlying causes of violence in the last decade. Closely linked to the question of ownership is that of



representation in the government formed along indigene/settler dichotomy, both at local government and state levels.

**Competitive Partisan Political Activities:**

Political entrepreneurs who fan the embers of violent crisis evidently mobilize negative ethnicity, religious schism, sentiments and pitch one political group against another. Also, competitive partisan political activities are used as avenues through which groups are mobilized, identities rigidly reinforced and, often infused with excessive political hatred.

**Religion and Religious Intolerance:** To the Christians in the country, violence is employed to forcefully bring down Christianity and impose Islam on the people of the country particularly in the northern state. Also some Muslims see the violence as religious persecution meted out against their faith, and needing to be resisted. It is worthy of note that a number of mosques and churches are set ablaze and destroyed during violence in different areas in Nigeria (Onuoha, Gaiya & Namiji 2010).

The blind and fixated mental and psychological negative attitude towards religious beliefs and practices constantly manifest themselves in violent outburst in Nigeria. The inability to recognize and accommodate views and opinions of others is one of the major sources of urban violence in the country. The religious adherents in the country have demonstrated intolerant attitude and this has led to the eruption of violence overtime.

**The Action of the Press:** The action of the press sometimes play negative role in violence outbursts in major cities. The attitude of the press in over blowing incidents of urban political clashes in the country through junk and sensational journalism fuels the embers of enmity and

disunity among supporters of political parties. The mass media also misinform the public on *casualties* recorded during violence and this spur reprisal attacks.

**Competitive Political Activities:** Electoral competition has been identified by some scholars as one of the causes of violence. Electoral competition arouses violence. Political violence and pogrom are usually caused by political elites who play on existing tensions to entrench their own power or advance a political agenda.

**Poverty and Socio-economic Problem:**

The problem of poverty also account for violence in Nigeria due to such problems as unemployment, inadequate housing and social amenities. The current economic depression in Nigeria worsens the problem of poverty thereby partly responsible for the fuelling of violence. A large proportion of the youth who are able-bodied but idle, unemployed, frustrated and aggrieved with the social system are willing and ready to be recruited and mobilized to engage in political violence because such offers them the opportunity to break into public and private property and cart away whatever they can find and the monies given are used to fend for themselves and cater for their needs (Imobighe, 2003).

**Implications of Violence on Sustainable Development in Nigeria**

The most important function of any government is the protection of lives and properties of its citizens. The safety of people and their property are at the centre of national security concern and sustainable development. Hence, one of the dire consequences of violence in Nigeria is the loss of lives and properties. The destruction of properties also further depletes the standard of living of the residents as it compounds the problem of poverty and

unemployment which threatens national security and sustainable development in the country.

A secured environment attracts foreign investors and investments that contribute to development. This is however hampered by the incessant violence in the country. Violent clashes have destroyed infrastructures and create political instability and insecurity. The destruction has led to deterioration of the economic environment and reduction in the desired levels of factors of production. This has also affected severely the quality and functioning of institutions, the expansion of technology and social outcomes.

Not only do people living in violent areas suffer injuries, death and have their properties destroyed, they may also be displaced from their homes and lose their means of survival. Children are especially adversely affected by the destruction of physical capital and the deterioration of economic conditions given the age-specific aspects of many human capital investments. Violent conflict results in deaths, injuries, disabilities and psychological trauma to able men and women who are needed for sustainable development. And this has been worsened by outbreaks of infectious diseases and the destruction of health facilities.

Education is very vital in any sustainable developmental programme. The nation is striving to put in place amenities for the purpose of elevating the education standard of the country. This is, however, hampered by incessant closure of schools and institutions in places where violence ensued (Adebayo, 2011). Violence and associated physical destruction often interrupt the education of children through the damage to schools, absence of teachers, fears of insecurity and changes in family structures and household income. For example, in the northern part of the country

that is extremely violent, school year and calendar are disrupted. Schools are often closed, buildings and supplies are destroyed, teachers and students are killed and forced to become refugees.

Incessant violence is not only barbaric but also inimical to sustainable economic development of the nation. This is because, apart from the fact that many virile men of the nation are seriously affected in the crises which consequently led to their death, the country's source of revenue is equally affected. Crises in the Niger Delta, for example, had shaken the country to her root, as the source of the 'goose' of the country was greatly affected with the damage of pipelines that convey the oil which is the mainstay of Nigeria's economy (Adebayo, 2011).

### **Conclusion**

It is evident that violence may not be totally eradicated in Nigerian polity. The reoccurrence of violence in many parts of the country is a testimony to it. However, it could be reduced to the barest minimum. The line of political identity frequently coincides with ethnic affiliations and political allegiance in the country. Capitalizing on such condition, many political rivals have instrumentalized the political and ethnic diversity to manipulate and mobilize support. Each outbreak of violence worsens suspicions and deepens polarization. Violent conflict often broke out between various groups over access to state resources. The high level of poverty, religious intolerance, competitive political activities, struggle for resource control and political power, action of the press, ethnicity and ownership of territory and economic deprivation have been identified as key factors that have trapped Nigeria in violence generally. Subordination, discrimination and a politics of reciprocal fear, resentment and revenge have often combined to push

the country to the brink. Youths, feeling the pain of social marginalisation, economic exploitation and political exclusion are easily recruited as foot-soldiers by conflict entrepreneurs. Emerging evidence of different resolves and dialogues in the country shows that the situation is not beyond repair, hence the recommendations below.

### **Recommendations**

- It is unfortunate that incidents of violence are not properly investigated and when it is done, punishment is not properly imposed. Thus, a decisive and obstinate action should be taken to find out the instigators and perpetrators of violence and appropriate punishment should be meted on them.
- Governments should take drastic action on the illegal possession of firearms by the politicians and youths. Illegal possessors should be prosecuted accordingly irrespective of their positions in the society.
- Urban violence can be tackled

through poverty alleviation programmes. In this respect, it is imperative that the economy should be empowered by the government to take care of the unemployed and poverty ridden populace. The Nigerian political elite must demonstrate strong commitment and willingness in pursuing genuine democracy and good governance.

- The Nigeria press can play a big role towards averting violence and promoting national peace and security. The objectivity of the press in reporting incidence of violence will promote harmony and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria.
- Government should provide room for security intelligence and surveillance. There is need for development of an early warning system for raising alarm on the imminent eruption of violent uprising. Such warning system will enable the law enforcement agents to intervene promptly in urban tension before it escalates into violent outburst.

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