

THE MILITARY, THE 2019 GENERAL ELECTIONS AND THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

A major issue that occurred in the general elections of February 2019 was the involvement of military personnel who also acted as security operatives. They were also given direct order to put the state on a lockdown shortly before, during and after the elections, with rapid consequences on the people's right and freedom. The major targets were the opposition members who did not belong to the ruling party. The pertinent questions to ask then are: What accounts for this? What are its implications on democratic consolidation? Data for the study were collected using the historical method and analyzed using qualitative analysis. This paper is not an exception to other papers which might have dealt extensively on military deployment in the 2019 elections. Other regimes since 1999 have also done the same by deploying military personnel during elections. This paper finds out that the military went against their rules of engagement and allowed selfish politicians to use them. It was also noted that, due to the high rate of insecurity in Nigeria, the constitution makes way for the military to come into action. Based on these findings, it was suggested that the security forces that exist in the country which includes the military and INEC, should work together to provide efficient security for the electorates, election materials and INEC staff during elections.

Keywords: *Democracy, elections, military, security.*

I. Introduction

Since the post-colonial era, the electoral processes in Nigeria, and elections had been characterized by violence and the involvement of the military. Most authors have written extensively on this subject matter in several kinds of literature. For Osumah & Aghedo (2010), Nigeria's recurring pattern of electoral violence should be seen as a manifestation of the growing disappointments and apprehension of the electorates and the deficiency of (INEC) to conduct widely accepted, free, fair and credible elections. Others have placed Nigeria's history of violence in

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elections within the doorstep of vote-rigging, doggy politics, ballot snatching at gunpoint, violence and acrimony, "thuggery, brazen election results falsification, the use of security personnel to wade off political opponents and the downcasting and intimidation of voters year-long (Oni et al. 2013); (Bekoe, 2011), (Adigbuo, 2008). To others, the inability of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to discharge its responsibility efficiently together with security personnel and agencies in the equitable discharge of their duties before, during and after elections, has threatened the attempt of Nigeria towards a democratic consolidation continually (Adigbuo, 2008).

As Geoege & Hounkpe (2010) argued that the involvement of security forces and the way they discharge their duties in elections in Nigeria can also be assumed as a part of the reasons for insecurity and violence during elections. It is not surprising that over the past 12years (2007-2018), one major issue which has attracted criticisms and public involvement from most Nigerians is the deployment of trained military personnel during elections in Nigeria. Some of these elections that are noticeable are the gubernatorial elections in Ondo and Edo states in 2012 and Anambra in 2013; not also forgetting that of Ekiti in 2014 and Osun in 2018. Instead of relying on the regular police to provide the security need for the elections, the Federal government deployed a cumbersome detachment of soldiers and other security personnel and agencies, to assist and ensure the fair and peaceful conduct of these elections in these states respectively. Consequently, this paper examines what accounts for the involvement of the military in the Nigeria general elections that took place on the 23rd of February, 2019.

Specifically, this paper examines the implications of the heavy deployment of military forces in Nigeria's elections vis-à-vis the country's unrelenting effort toward the consolidation of a democratic ethos in Nigerian politics. This is extremely important and necessary due to the reasons that elections ought to be a civic matter and its process should differ from war preparations against external aggression.

To achieve this, the paper has been partitioned into four sections with the first serving as an introduction. The second section focuses on the theoretical issues which are based on discoveries, the third presents an analysis of the events as they played out in the general elections of 2019, while the fourth and concluding part of this work, centres on the insights to possible complications of the seeming recovering pattern of electoral militarization or heavy military deployment during elections in Nigeria and the necessary measures to be taken towards this stemming tides.

Objective

The objective of this paper is to examine the use of the military in the 2019 general elections and the future of democracy in Nigeria.

Method of Data Analysis

Pure qualitative and documentary methods were used for data gathering and content analyses were employed for the analysis of the study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualization of Concept

Military

The military is an agency, established by law to defend the territorial integrity of a sovereign state from any external control or aggression. The military in Nigeria is divided into three. The army, Navy and the Air force; The Army protects the land from external control, which includes land borders with other countries. The Navy is the sea protectors; they remain in the sea, to protect the country from external control through sea passages and illegal entry of persons. The Air force as the name implies protects the country from airstrikes by another country or insurgents passages through the air to gain entry into the country. The Army, Navy and Air force are extremely important because they protect the sovereignty of the state from the external influence which may include forceful approach.

Elections

The election is the process of choosing leaders, members of a parliament or representatives by the voting system. Paki and Inokoba, (2016) aver that the sustainability and vibrancy of any democratic polity are longed on the effective and meaningful participation of the citizens of the state in the initiation and implementation of public policy as well as in the choice of their leaders. The election is viewed to be the process of choosing leaders through a vote. According to Bamgbose, (2012) election is the process of electing the officers or representatives of an organization or group by the vote of its qualified members.

Security Agencies

By security, we mean the condition of not being threatened physically, psychologically emotionally or financially. It simply means safety or protection. The role of security in credible elections and sustenance of democracy in Nigeria include: providing security for elections, safeguarding the lives and properties of citizens during the electoral process, ensuring and previewing a free and fair election, coupled with a lawful atmosphere for campaigning processes by all political parties and candidates without any form of discrimination, maintain the conducive environment, law and order around the polling and collation centres, providing effective security system for electoral officials at the voting and counting centres, the security of electoral materials, personal and citizens during the registration of voters, update revision and any other electoral event. Security agencies are those agencies created for the sole purpose of safeguarding, totally responsible for the safety and security of the people. Security

agencies can equally be divided into two parts; government-owned agencies which include the Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the Armed forces and a host of others, and also private-owned security agencies that also safeguard the interest of the private people. In sum, the role of security agencies is to ensure the safety of electoral materials when it comes to election issues and election officers before, during and after elections.

Security is a fundamental element necessary for the credibility of an election (Igini, 2013). They are given more autonomy to perform their constitutional duties without being directed by candidates' parties and government. They should also be moral in discharging their duties so as not to truncate the efforts of Nigerians to choose their leaders.

Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC)

The Independence National Electoral Commission is the body charged with the sole responsibility of conducting free, fair and credible elections in Nigeria. Since the attainment of independence, the Electoral Commission has taken different names, which include: National Electoral Council (NEC), National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON), Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) and now Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) respectively. This body conducts free and credible elections in Nigeria and has the right to register parties, voters and performs other electoral functions as prescribed by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Elections and Security in Nigeria: Some Historical issues

The election is fundamental to democracy and is often said that, whereas elections without democracy are impossible, likewise democracy without elections. The centrality of elections as an important aspect of a democratic process emphasizes credibility, accessibility, free and fair conduct of elections. Security is one of the most essential and fundamental elements necessary for the credibility of an election and must serve its purpose (Mike, 2013).

Mattias, Hounkpe and Geoege (2010) argue that election security constitutes a major component of the electoral process but, in emerging democracies, it is being hampered by series of factors, which include faulty legal framework, poor technical management of elections, poor management of the competitions involved among those ruling and opposition, poor management of elections disputes and previous roles of security personnel.

A report compiled by IFEs in (2013), explains that election security is often characterized by five types of conflicts:

- Identifying conflicts, which occurs during the registration process;

- Campaign conflicts, which occurs during campaign podiums;
- Ballot conflicts, which comes up on election day;
- Results conflict which outwardly shows as disagreements over election outcomes;
- Representation conflicts, which normally happens when elections are organized in such a way that they are nothing but zero-sum (IFES, 2013).

Attahiru Jega, arguing from an “Umpire” and a practitioner view, identified the major stampede to insecurity in Nigeria elections which includes: “gruesome attacks on electoral officials and their facilities; attacks on security personnel in course of duty discharge in the election, misuse of security commands and powers by politicians, especially the incumbents; attacks on opponents, attacks on public members, violence at campaigns; intimidation of voters; snatching of election materials; kidnapping and assassination of political opponents “(Jega 2012).

However, Attahiru Jega did not mention a very important aspect of violence in Nigeria, which is performed by the security personnel deployed to safeguard elections. Intimidation of voters, oppression and victimizing members of political parties, whose party differs from that of the ruling party, and the extravagant show of force and the outright collaboration with politicians to carry out rigging. If the security measures put in place is challenging, the careful securing of the voters and candidates for election sake in Nigeria, is much more daunting and difficult, with some exemptions of static incidences. Elections in post-colonial Nigeria has rarely been peaceful; they have become a matter of warlike activities not only in killings and destructions but also in the death of democracy in itself, as seen in 1966, 1983 and 1993 respectively.

Nigeria began its post-colonial life, with great expectation, under a democratic order modelled after the British parliamentary system. It was expected that the potential greatness in Nigeria would be realized under a growing democratic life. However, this didn't happen, as the experiment that was supposed to bring about development, did not manifest just five years after its establishment through a fierce military putsch that did not only terminated the nascent democracy, but also the lives of several important principal political actors as at the time. There is unanimity of opinion that the First Republic collapsed was linked to the 1964/65 general elections which was conducted by the Tafawa Balewa government (Diamond 1988, Osaghae, 1998, HRW, 2007, Malo 2009, Onabamhoi, 2011).

The elections that were conducted were faced with complaints, violence malpractices, fraud and intimidation of voters and opposition members, which caused wild protests, inter-communal rioting, arson and also

the killings of more than 200 people in the western region (Anifowose, 1982; Osaghae, 1998). The total breakdown of law and order became a consequent attached to the elections. It was so shameful and became one of the staunch reasons for the military careerists to proceed to the political stage. Eventually, a series of events and happenings after the coupled to a thirteen-year military seize-power in the country.

In 1979, there was a nice shot at civilian rule when the military decided to hand over power to civilian authority, which saw President Shehu Shagari ascend the seat of power after a successful transition programme. Just like the case of the First Republic, the experiment lasted only four years and the reason for the collapse throws a cleric view to the issues that surround the 1983 general elections conducted by the president Shagari administration (Diamond 1988). The election was characterized by violence which was engineered by the ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN) using the electoral body and security operatives as a tool to perpetrate rigging and manipulations in the elections.

Reactions trill the fraudulently assumed violence in various dimensions and parts of the country (Onebamhoi; 2011). Perhaps, the most violent reaction occurred in Ondo state where massive destruction of property and killings were followed after the manipulation of election result favour the ruling party (Babarinsa (2003), Adele, 2012). A few months later, soldiers struck and the military vehicle and other automobiles were seen almost everywhere. They targeted many of the principal political gladiators, detention centres were filled up, suspended the constitution and all structures built around it; and by doing so, effectively and efficiently put the democratic order to a total halt. In the history of elections in post-colonial Nigeria, the most peaceful election ever conducted was annulled by Military President Ibrahim Babangida, its organizer, just before its conclusion; and this was to lead to series of events of cataclysmic proportions that almost brought the country to her knees. A final push to the precipice was averted when a "biological coup" was put to General Sani Abacha's self-succession plan in 1998.

Once again, the country returned to a democratic rule in May 1999 but after the return, electoral conduct had not fared better in terms of violence and insecurity. Indeed, most of the elections conducted have recorded massive violence in all the three phases: pre, during and post-elections. Although the 1999 elections did not record violence, the same cannot be said of the 2003, 2007 and 2011 elections respectively, President Obasanjo raised the alarm over cases of politicians raising private militias for political use (Adele, 2012).

The period witnessed instances of political assassinations such as the case of Herry Marshall and Dikibo, there were also protests and demonstrations over the preparations; the most spectacular being the November 2002 political disturbance in Kaduna that resulted in killings and destruction of property (Adele, 2012). In terms of fraud and loss of credibility, as well as violence, the 2007 general election is in a class of its own. The election was

generally regarded as fraudulent and marred with violence in different parts of the country where police stations, INEC offices and government buildings were burnt in protests (Levis, 2003, Adele 2012). Within a few weeks to the polls, there was an attempt to bomb the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) national office in Abuja through a bomb-laden petrol tanker. In 2011 the INEC office in Suleija was bombed and several poll workers were killed (Campbell, 2010). Also, protests over the elections result resulted in Wanton killings including the murder of nine young Nigerians on National Service, who were working for INEC as an ad-hoc electoral staff (Jega, 2012).

Perhaps owing to the lives lost after the 2011 general elections the Nigerian government resulted in the heavy deployment of security personnel during elections as witnessed in Edo, Ondo, Anambra, Ekiti and Osun states. However, of all the mentioned elections, those of the last two were the highest where over a hundred thousand security forces, comprising the police, Army, security agents, civil defence corps and other paramilitary forces, were deployed. The two states were in a total lockdown with both human and vehicle movements restricted.

We also recalled what happened in Akwa Ibom state, where some criminals even had to cut off the genitals of some men in the name of politics and political - demons who want to do anything to hold political office. In that kind of situation, how would a person who calls himself a labour leader come out publicly to say the government should not secure people? I don't agree with them. Inherent in the rationalization of the Nigerian President is the notion of supreme power of the state to maintain the security of lives and property. This flows from the earlier experience of widespread destructions and killings during elections.

This explains the presence of a high number of security forces, an occurrence that was witnessed for the very first time in Nigeria. In course elections, the job of the security force thus became a major argument for, in what looks like a possible means to persecute the opposition, a large number of members of All Progressive Congress (APC), their opposition members, were arrested and detained before the election while leaving members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

This became a major issue in the Nigerian polity as several people rose in condemnation of the trend but the president continued to maintain his position that he will continue to deploy heavy military personnel during elections, and the process, turn elections into something of warfare. Thomas Hobbes had long held a non-optimistic view of human nature by arguing that man is by nature not only controlled by greed and avarice but can be controlled by the superior power of the force (Olurode, 2013). As a counterpoise to the violent inclination of human beings, Hobbes had conceptualized an all-powerful garrison state. To him, an absolute state is a price to be paid for moving away from the lawlessness of the state of nature.

In that sense, the state holds all the rights to ensure the protection of the people by all means. To prevent recourse to anarchy and a total break-down of law and order that exist, the state is justified to deploy high tactics (Olaniyan, 2007). To a large extent, the Nigerian government's resort to excessive militarization of elections can be said to drive from the Hobbesian tradition. Elections in Nigeria are likened to warfare, where casualties are recorded. To prevent this cycle of bloodletting, the state resorted to employing maximum force. But such force became problematic because of several issues. What are these issues and how do they play out?

Understanding the Deployment of the Military in the General Elections of 2019

As argued by Akinnaso (2004) particularly when situated within the confines of electoral politics in Nigeria, the term militarization has come to imbibe an extended cultural meaning, consisting of three semantic components:

1. The deployment of security forces, which consists of military, police, the Department of State Security Service and other security operatives:
2. The deployment always occurs closely before or during an election; and
3. Most elections are always centred to conquer opposition states (Akinnaso, 2004).

In the general elections of 2019, all of these characteristics were constant features of the elections with both the proponents and opponents of the heavy troop deployments competing for space in Nigeria's political circles. Some political observers argued that the involvement of the military in Nigeria elections is necessary, considering the cases of violence that characterized the pre-election campaigns by the members of the main political parties, People Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressive Congress (APC) which participated in the election.

However, others saw such deployment as a significant attempt by the ruling All Progressive Congress-led Federal government to intimidate the People's Democratic Party candidate, Atiku Abubakar, to pave the way for the incumbent President Buhari to manipulate the electoral process. This can be further argued following the directives of the President Buhari to the military to be ruthless against election tampering. The opposition flag-bearer of the PDP Atiku Abubakar spoke on national television a day after President Muhammadu Buhari ordered Nigeria's armed forces to be ruthless with anyone who interferes with the polls.

In Atiku's opinion "The military forces have no activity to render" in the country's presidential and parliamentary elections. (VOA news.com, February 19, 2019). Hounkpe & Geoeeye (2010) argue that election security constitutes a major component of the electoral process but in respect of emerging democracies, it has been hampered by series of factors, which include; faulty legal framework, poor technical management of elections, poor management of competitions by both the ruling party and the opposition, poor management of electoral issues and

quarrels and also, the past roles played by security forces and personnel.

This scenario made Igbuzor (2010) lament that because of the agreed and desperation for power political actors in Nigeria have decided to reengage soldiers outside their constitutional duties without giving a damn about the potential implications. According to Olorok (2019), even the nation's electoral body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) attested to the fact that soldiers and armed men were used to intimidating and illegally arrest its staff during the gubernatorial election held on 9th of March 2019, in Rivers state. The commission also expressed its unhappy view by the role played by military men on a uniform and armed gangs which include the police and the Civil Defence Corps in Rivers state through its National Commissioner and chairman of its information and voter Education Committee. Festus Okoye disclosed that: "Collation centres were invaded by several soldiers and armed men, which resulted in the intimidation and illegal arrest of election officials, thereby causing havoc in the collation process. The commission, therefore, criticized the role played by these soldiers and armed men in Rivers state who disrupted the collation and electoral process and also attempted to thwart the will of the people. However, the chief of army Staff, Lt. Gen Tukur Buratai in his reaction towards the allegations; said the military kept to their promise of ensuring that there are peace and tranquillity in the election. The Army boss added that, though the 23rd February election cannot entirely be declared rigging free, such acts did not emerge from the military. The Army chief explains that with the plausible performance of the Nigerian Army in the General Elections of 2019, and also considering the threat of insurgents coupled with the high level of desperation that is expressed by so-called politicians, which may tend to lead to violence in some cases, the military personnel may just have secured for themselves a new obligation in the conduct of the election in Nigeria (Chukwudi, 2019). However, scholars, and rights activists strongly postulate that elections are civil matter; which in turn, explains that civil authorities like the police force should play duty and not the military (Chukwudi, 2019).

The involvement of the Military in the election has always been a recurring issue in Nigeria's elections in the past decades and this issue has occurred during the administrations of the two political parties which has taken control of power at the federal level, since the return to civil rule (democracy) in 1999. Oyeyipo & Oloko (2019) asserts that in the year 2014, The PDP-led administration deployed platoons, armed soldiers, to Ekiti state for the gubernatorial election. Few days before the elections the Army placed a ban on two APC governors' namely: Adams Oshiomole and Mr Rotimi Amaechi from entering Ekiti State. During the elections, voters were subjected to horrible harassment by the armed personnel. Oyeyipo & Oloko (2019) further reported that a member of the House of Representatives, representing Nsukka/Igbo-Eze South Federal Constituency of Enugu State, in the person of Hon. Asadu Patrick, in his motion at the floor of the House after 2019 elections, expressed some disappointments over the involvement of military personnel in the election and called for the probe of the militarization by the House. (Oyeyipo & Oloko, 2019).

Oyeyipo & Oloko (2019) assert that one of the 2019 election observers, the Integrity Friends for Truth and Peace Initiative (TIFPI) in one of their preliminary reports on the elections, explains that there were an alleged involvement and interference by Armed personnel and other security agencies in elections in Rivers, Imo, Kaduna, Zamfara, Kogi, Akwa Ibom, Edo, Lagos, Kano and Ogun states where some politicians released their security aids to disrupt elections on various points.

It was equally noted by the same observer group, that there has also been the use of impostors posing as soldiers and the infiltration of some of the security formations and also suggested that the military authorities should therefore investigate and bring to justice any of its men that may have interfered in the election in any of these states including possible infiltration in their domains.

III. Theoretical Framework

The major focus of any sovereign state is to cultivate military professionalism power to serve the essential national interest while guarding against the abuse of power that can threaten the existence and the well-being of the people. The framework of analysis employed for this research work is Elite theory. The elite theory came into being as a counter to the revolutionary theories anchored on social class analysis. The classical-exponents of the elite theory are two Italians, Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, and Roberto Michels, a Swiss. These theorists attempted to cut through the trappings and window dressing that obscured the real process of politics that absorbed the full attention of the traditional method of analysis.

In this regard, Vilfredo Pareto in his work: *The-Mind of Society* (1935) avers that 'every society is governed by elite'. In the same understanding, Gaetano Mosca, in his work: *The Ruling Class* (1939) maintains that in all societies, two classes of people exist - a class that rules and a class that is being ruled. Similarly, Roberto Michels in his treatise; *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendency of Modern Democracy* (translated in 1949) acknowledges the existence of oligarchical tendencies in human societies.

Pareto (1935), Mosca (1939) and Michels (1949) share the view that the elites consist of a small minority who occupy the apex positions in the society, organizations, or any establishment - about the vast majority who involuntarily look up to them for leadership and direction. Pareto asserts that the elites are those successful persons who rise to the apex level in every occupation and stratum of society. According to him, there are elite of doctors, lawyers, businessmen, drivers, mechanics and even thieves and prostitutes. Pareto noted that the elites usually rise to the top because of some certain natural abilities including; intelligence, skills, wealth, intellectual decency.

Mosca developed the theory of political elite by arguing that the classification of government into aristocracy, democracy and monarchy was wrong. He, therefore, asserts that there is only one type of government, namely, oligarchy. He further notes that in all societies - from societies that are meagerly developed and have barely attained the drawings of civilization, down to the most advanced and powerful societies, two classes of people exist - a class that rules and a class that is being ruled.

The first class, always the less numerous and at the apex level, performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys every advantage that power brings along with it, whereas the second class, at the lowest level, more numerous class, is directed and controlled by the first. Robert Michel's theory of the elite is focused on organization, particularly political party organizations. He enunciated the "Iron Law of Oligarchy" which he described as "one of the iron law of history, from which the most democratic modern societies and within those societies, the most advanced parties, have been unable to escape". He asserts that "who speaks organization, speaks oligarchy" (Oligarchical Tendency of Modern Democracy, 1915 pp 136).

Michel pontificates that "immanent oligarchical tendencies exist in every kind of human organizations, which strives for the attainment of definite ends". Michel sees oligarchy as a preordained form of the common life of great social aggregates. He argues that the majority of human beings in a condition of external tutelage are predestined to submit to the dominion of a small minority. Michel argues that leaders or the elite usually takes advantage of the fact that the majority of human beings are apathetic, indolent, slavish, susceptible to flattery, servile to the face of strength and forces, and are permanently incapable of self-government.

Pareto, Mosca and Michel perceive the elite theory as a good tool for the political analysis of all political systems. The existence of political elites is held to be common to all political system regardless of location, time and culture. Thus, while the existence of the elite permits a common basis for cross-national comparison, the actual structure and activities which distinguish elites in different political systems are said to account for the differing character of political systems.

Reasons for the Deployment of the Military during the 2019 General Elections

The wide condemnation of the military in elections in Nigeria especially the 2019 general elections, writers and scholars argued that the military might in one way or the other, have electoral duties as stipulated by the constitution. One of this observers is a civil society organization; International society for civil liberties & the Rule of law (Intersociety, 2015) where their report conform; having undergone rigorous research which includes ransacking the sections and subsections of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended, that they could still not come across a section in the same constitution which directly places an embargo on the military,

involving themselves in Nigeria elections, whether primary elections, by-elections, run-off or general elections. The Armed forces attested that they are constitutionally empowered with the following duties: (S.217(2)(a); explains that the Armed Forces are to defend Nigeria from external aggression. (S.217(2)(b); shows that the Armed forces are constitutionally empowered to maintaining Nigeria's territorial integrity and securing all her borders from external aggression and violation on land, air or sea.

Suppressing any kind of unlawful insurrection and acting in line to rendering help to civil authorities to restore orders where necessary when called upon to do so by the president, subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly (S.217 (2) (c); And performing any other functions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly S.217 (2) (d). Section 218 of the same constitution provides: "The powers of the President as the commander-in-chief of the Armed forces of the federation shall include powers to determine the operational use of the Armed forces of the federation".

The 1999 constitution, under the Supplementary section 26, under part 1 of the Third Schedule to the constitution provides that "The National Security Council (which includes the chief of Defense staff as the head of the armed forces and the National security Adviser) shall have powers to advise the president on any matters relating to public security which may include matters relating to any organization or agency established by law for ensuring the security and safety of the federation" In supplementary section 17 of part 1 of the third schedule, the constitution provides that the National Defence Council (NDC) shall have the power to advise the president on any matters relating to the defence of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Nigeria".

And finally, for the course of this work, section 8(3), of the Army forces Act of the federation under its part 3, the operational use of the armed forces by the president is defined to include the use of the armed forces in Nigeria for the prior purpose of maintaining and securing public safety and public order.

One of Nigeria leading newspaper ("The News Express" on its editorial column of 2015, February 21st) reported that the armed forces of the country are legally and constitutionally conferred with the defence, safety and security role in Nigeria both internally and externally. It stated also that the Armed forces of Nigeria have never been involved in the conduct of elections in Nigeria's polling units or electoral wards and areas. The armed forces, the army, in particular, has never been in any polling unit except where public safety is under threat or breach. They have never been an instance where the armed forces become part of INEC's ad hoc staff and involve themselves in collection, collation, declaration and announcement of results of elections.

It is of great importance to note that Nigeria is in state of intrastate war and crisis, with security threats, and this, in turn, accounts for the military to be on the lookout. The roles performed by the military in Nigeria during

elections are seen as purely in defence and security of Nigeria both internally and externally in terms of protection. From the military perspective, Oghenahegie (2019) posits that the chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Abayomi Gabriel Olonisakin, on Thursday 4th, April 2019 justified the deployment of military personnel for the conduct of the 2019 general elections which the defence chief referred to as a legal and constitutional duty which was as a result of the prevailing situation in the country.

According to Oghenahegie (2019), the defence chief in a programme to orient and brief the newly elected National Assembly members said that the deployment of the military in elections, especially in Rivers state and other parts of the federation is legal. According to him i.e. the (CDS); "If military personnel were not deployed for the elections, the security and safety of the country would have been jeopardized, adding that the crisis would have been worse. He also noted that the deployment of military officers in elections is constitutional and that the military personnel's role could be described as a "Secondary responsibility".

In likewise manner (B. Sole, M. Sani, M. Azizoddin & B. Mat, 2017) reported that the Acting Director of Defense intelligence Colonel Onyenna Nwachukwu stated that the military, most especially the Nigerian Army, performs meticulously during elections which are in line with the roles of engagement which defined their conduct as contained in section 271 of the 1999 constitution which stipulates that the military can be called upon to assist the police in the maintenance of law and order. Director of Army Relations Col Sagir Musa faulted the allegation that the Army was engaged in the election matters whereas the reverse is the case in respect to engaging in any partisan politics.

The Director of Army Relations (DAR) further explains the non-interference of the Army during the elections, therefore accusing politicians of confusing members of the public by giving military uniforms to hoodlums to perpetuate evil and violence during the elections. Col Sagir; also slated that it is on record that the Nigerian Army has been given tremendous accolade globally by many individuals foreign and local observers for its sacrifice/roles in creating a stable environment for a secure, transparent and peaceful conduct of the elections in Nigeria polity (B. Sole, M. Sani, M. Azizoddin & B. Mat, 2017).

Use of the Military in the 2019 General Elections and Nigeria's Image in the International Community

The implication of militarization in elections may result in violence, impediment on Nigeria's democracy and the non-interests of the citizens about election matters called 'voter's apathy'. There was widespread of non-interest paraded by the citizen during the general elections of 2019 and as Olukosi (2019) puts it, involving the military in Nigerian elections contributes indirectly to low voter turnout.

Due to the aggressive mode employed by the Nigerian military men, most electorates fear them to a verifiable extent that they do everything possible to avoid them. Out of the 72 million citizens who registered for the general elections of 2019, only 35.6% of them voted. The turnout was extremely low compared to the 44% that was recorded in 2015. Also, the involvement of the military in elections in Nigeria may lead to loss of lives. In the just-concluded general elections, presidential to be particular, soldiers allegedly killed six people who attacked them in Abonnema town in Rivers state, when soldiers are given much room to participate in politics. For instance, in the Presidential/National Assembly elections, 35 deaths were recorded (Civil liberty Organization.), party agents were killed at INEC office in Bori, Rivers state (Ebuzor 2019), 20 people including an INEC staff, were abducted by unknown gunmen at Shendem local government of Plateau state (Ebuzor 2019).

Another implication of military involvement in Nigeria elections is that it heats the polity, and puts fear on voters which may eventually lead to the disruption of activities days before elections.

IV. Findings

We can begin an analysis of the scenario described in the foregoing from the motive of the Nigerian government in the massive troop deployment saga. This can be analyzed from two angles of motivations. The apparent reason offered by the presidency is to secure lives and property; and in the process, ensure transparent elections.

Scholars have agreed that the essence of the state is securing lives and property of the citizens and one of the means in achieving this is the usage of security forces acting on behalf of the central government to prevent the breakdown of law and order. This paper discovers that the military went against the rules of engaging themselves and allowing selfish politicians to use them for their selfish interest, thereby constituting nuisance and mayhem to the ordinary citizens who have come in their numerous numbers, to perform the civic duties they own to their government.

V. Conclusion

This paper argues that elections are civil affairs where the citizens are constitutionally empowered to exercise their franchise. However, in a country that has witnessed series of breaches of security from the political class during elections since independence, and also the current spate of insecurity in the country, it is incontrovertible that considering the lack of capacity of Nigeria police in providing security in the country, the military must assist in ensuring the safety of lives and properties during elections. That in this era of security

challenges facing the country, the Nigerian military is legally and constitutionally empowered to provide security in civil activities such as elections when they are called upon to do so but should be in line with their rules of engagement and not to allow overzealous politicians to use them for any illegal activity. The paper concludes that; elections are civil responsibilities performed by the citizens of the country. The Police force should be equipped to do the job. The military, in contrast, should rather concentrate on the areas where insurgency (Northeast), Bandits (Northwest), anywhere Fulani herdsmen have taken over and then strategizes, to recover them for Nigerians.

VI. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this paper, it was recorded that wherever the military is called upon to oversee the security or elections in Nigeria, they should do it in civil form. Secondly, they should be neutral in the performance of their assigned duties during elections and not be used by politicians to create problems. Thirdly, they should not allow politicians to use them to harass and intimidate the electorate during elections.

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