

Youths, Electoral Violence and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: The Bayelsa State Experience

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ABSTRACT No human collectivity can experience any meaningful and sustainable level of progress if it fails to systematically, deliberately and constructively engage and harness the drive and energy of the youths. It is based on these premises that the paper decided to investigate the role of youths in the ugly phenomenon of electoral violence and its implication for democracy in Nigeria. The basic proposition of this write up is that how the political elites behave and the roles they assign to the youths will go a long way to demonstrate whether Nigeria is heading towards democratic consolidation or not. The paper which is an empirical study based its analysis on data derived from the sample population of 400 youths in Bayelsa State. The statistical analysis technique of Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed to arrive at the conclusion that there is a significant relationship between youths' involvement in electoral violence and the crisis of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The conclusion of the paper is that Nigeria will not experience democratic sustenance until its political class inculcate in the youths relevant democratic culture.

INTRODUCTION

The theme of the 2007 United Nations Youth Day "Be Seen, Be Heard: Youth Participation in Development" could not have come at a better time. It is the most appropriate wakeup call to a continent and more especially Nigeria, where youths are seen as expendable (that is, means to an end) section of the population. In the process of elective politics and governance, youths are either side-lined or excluded or when they are involved at all, they are mainly misused and abused to achieve the inordinate and perverse political ambition of the norm less, lawless and selfish section of the Nigerian political class.

It is a general acceptable fact that youths are the indispensable and dynamic portion of the population of any nation. They are the incubators and the driving force for innovation, change and progress in all human collectivities; and no society can experience positive change and advancement if its youths are not strategically and constructively invested upon, empowered and engaged. Their immense energy and drive must be tactfully packaged and directed towards playing a constructive role in the process of gover-

nance and development of the society. As a link between the present and future, how a society's adult, especially the governing elites behave as well as the roles they assign to this important segment of the population, will determine to a large extent whether that society is advancing or heading towards disaster.

It is in light of the above that the paper decided to empirically investigate youth's involvement in the ugly phenomenon of electoral violence and its implication for democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Nigerians have acquired a culture of electoral violence. Violence has become part of the political culture in Nigeria such that all elections since independence (Nigeria has conducted six general elections since independence in 1960, the elections were held in 1964, 1979, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2003 and 2007) are virtually violence ridden. All of these elections were substantially marred by various types of violence associated with party politics and conduct of elections. The most troubling aspect of this issue is that youths (the future leaders of the nations) are the main perpetrators and at the same time the victims of electoral violence. Thus, the main purpose of this study is: one, to unravel the relationship between youth's involvement in electoral violence and crisis of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Secondly, to identify reasons why youths are easy instruments

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of electoral violence. And lastly, to unravel the role youths play in the electoral process.

Again, three research questions were drawn out of the above stated objectives:

- § What role do youths play in the electoral process?
- § What makes youth's easy targets for recruitment into electoral violence?
- § What is the implication of youth's involvement in electoral violence on the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria?

To meaningfully address these questions, the paper is guided by the following null hypothesis: There are no significant relationship between youth's involvement in electoral violence and the crisis of democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

And to give the research proper scope, we focused our investigation and analysis of empirical data collected from Bayelsa state. A sample of 400 youths (50 from each of the 8 local government areas) was methodologically collected to examine the issues raised in this research.

Conceptual Issues

The basic concepts used in this study are: youth, electoral violence and democratic consolidation. Youth refers to a young person between childhood and adulthood. The Cambridge International Dictionary of English defines "youth" as "the period of your life when you are young, the state of being young, or a young person" (2002: 1213). In like manner, Collins English Dictionary for Advance Learners sees youth as transitional phase in an individual's life between childhood and age of full maturity as an adult (2000: 1822).

It is for this reason that several institutions, agencies and countries, in defining youth, puts it within a certain age bracket, meaning that youth is a matter of age. The UN General Assembly says youth are those "between the ages of 15 and 24 years inclusive". The World Bank pegs the age of youth between the ages of 15 and 25. The United States Government is more generous, it considers everyone under the age of 21 years to be a youth. (Agbese July 9, 2007: 14). However, the paper will adopt the position of the National Youth Development Policy which categorized youth as compromising all young persons of ages 18 to 30 years old and who are

Nigerian citizens. Defining youth by age has its pragmatic uses; it eliminates the unqualified and the over-qualified.

As much as youth is a time of life it is also a phase in human development. In youth we prepare for that period of life that matters most – adulthood. Youth is both the passage and the preparatory phase for the great things in life – fame, power, wealth and more serious responsibilities and roles in society. According to Agbese (July 9, 2007: 14).

...we are educated and trained for future – social, political and professional responsibilities and leadership in our youth; we have to choose careers in our youth. Youth is the phase of life when men and women gather the bricks with which they build the mansions of life later...

Youth invariably, is a delicate phase in human development. It is the time when future choices are made. It represents the most volatile, complex, unpredictable, dynamic as well as the most vulnerable segment of the population, socio-economically, emotional and otherwise.

Youths as our link with the future are the pillars of human continuity. And this is where the contradiction is: we sacrifice the future by not properly indoctrinating them and engaging them constructively. The youth fight wars. They are the foot soldiers in the dirty and violent politics of the Third World where Nigeria belongs to. So if the youth are the future, what future are the Nigerians political elites building for the country's democracy by recruiting and indoctrinating youths into electoral misdemeanor?

To understand the compound concept of electoral violence, however, it is necessary that we begin by conceptualizing "violence". For Roberts and Obioha (2005: 398) and Tamuno (1991: 3), violence is the unlawful use or threat of force. It could be perceived as the exercise of physical force to inflict injury or cause damage to a person's property. Implicit in these definitions of violence are two basic issues – the use of force and the abuse of another person's fundamental rights (Albert 1994).

Again, violence could take different forms of manifestation: it could be socio-economical, psychological, sectarian, and even political. Unlike most extant literature which views electoral violence as synonymous with political violence, this paper conceptualizes electoral violence as a limited aspect of political violence that is associated with the process of elections. This form

of political violence occurs before, during or after elections (Baba and Ogundiya 2005: 371). Electoral violence presents one of the gravest threats to many democratizing societies. And there are several manifestations of electoral violence. These include murder, arson, abduction, assault, violent seizure and destruction of electoral material, overwhelming presence of the gun and other weapon-brandishing soldiers, security operatives and youths. These acts of electoral misdemeanor are perpetuated by individuals and groups (comprising mainly of youths with the aim of influencing the results of elections. It is in light of the foregoing that Ogundiya (2003) defined electoral violence as:

...All sorts of riots, demonstrations, party clashes, political assassinations, looting, arson, thuggery, kidnapping, etc., spontaneous or not, which occur before, during and after elections. It could be regarded as elections motivated crisis employed to alter, change or influence by force or coercion, the electoral behaviour of voters or voting patterns or possibly reverse electoral decision in favour of particular individual, groups or political party.

Ultimately, from the above definition, electoral violence is a means to an end – geared specifically towards influencing the voting behavior of electorate as well as changing electoral results in favour of an individual, groups, or party with the use of force, which often results in violence, fatal injuries, death, and destruction of property. Thus, electoral violence as used in this paper, refers to all forms of the threat and/or use of physical force employed to disorganize the electoral process, destroy electoral materials as well as to intimidate the electorates with the ultimate aim of either retaining political power as long as possible or wresting political power from its incumbent holders. In Nigeria, like any other ailing democracy, the phenomenon of electoral violence is a device that is habitually employed by the political elites in their struggle for the distributive mechanism of the state apparatus.

Electoral violence coupled with other manifestations of political violence such as intra and inter-party conflicts and the devastating influence of god-fatherism have continued to pose serious challenges to the sustenance and consolidation of the country's democracy. This is so because the importance of fair and credible elections to the consolidation and survival of

democracy cannot be over emphasized. It is imperative to note that elections are not only meant to ensure, confirm or re-affirm the legitimacy of the political (elective) office holders through a regular consent, but also to provide a fertile ground for democracy to thrive. And it is even more worrisome to note that the main armies and victims of this ugly phenomenon of electoral warfare are our youths – the future leaders of the Nigerian nation. This puts a big question mark on the future of democracy in Nigeria.

So what is Democratic Consolidation? Democratic Consolidation according to Omotola (2002) means a status of democratic maturity such that it can no longer be threatened or truncated by reactionary forces whether internal or external. In the same vein, Schedler (1998) asserted that:

Democratic Consolidation is meant to describe the challenges of making new democracies secure, of extending their life expectancy beyond the short – term, of making them immune against the threat of authoritarian repression and of building dams against eventual reverse waves.

In a broader perspective, Osaghae (Azeez 2005: 24) argued that democratic consolidation does not simply mean the defeat of supposedly undemocratic forces and rulers like Kamuzu Banda of Malawi or Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe or the putting in place of democratic institutions and paraphernalia. The survival of democracy has a lot to do with how it is able to better the material conditions of the people in terms of provision of effective and affordable education, shelter, security of life and property, better health care, employment, food, portable water and as well as to ensure political stability and thereby save the people from the scourge of war and other violent conflicts.

Apart from ensuring socio-economic well-being of the people, democratic consolidation also entails the legitimization of the political institutions and processes, viewing it from this perspective. Diamond (1999: 62) defined democratic consolidation as:

...the process of achieving broad (and) deep legitimization such that all significant political actors, at both the elite and mass level believe that the democratic system is better for the society than any other realistic alternative they can imagine.

Extending the legitimization thesis, Luiz and

Stepan (1996: 33) stressed that democratic consolidation must be more than a commitment to democracy in the abstract; it must also involve a shared normative or behavioural commitment to the specific rules, values, attitudes and practices of a country's constitutional system. This argument is very relevant to the purpose of the study. If democracy is to thrive and develop roots in the Nigerian polity, there is the urgent need to imbibe and practice requisite democratic norms and values. As such, the widespread practice of undemocratic traditions and norms such as electoral violence and indoctrination of Nigerian youths into this decadent political behaviour will only spell doom for the country's ailing democracy.

METHODOLOGY

Design

The research design used in this study was the survey design. Survey design is that research that is aimed at determining the nature of a situation, as it exists at the time of investigation. It is preferred because it concerns itself with ascertaining and establishing the status quo, facts or pieces of information at the time of the research, presenting such pieces of information as they are and going further to analyze the data and draw inferences.

Area of Study

The study was carried out in Bayelsa State, located within the south-south zone of Nigeria. The state which was carved out of old Rivers State in October 1st 1996, is made up of eight local government areas – namely, Brass, Ekeremor, Kolokuma/Opokuma, Nembe, Ogbia, Southern Ijaw, Sagbama and Yenagoa local government areas. The four major cultural groups and languages in Bayelsa State are Izon, Nembe, Ogbia and Epie Atissa. Geographically, the state is bounded on the west and north by Delta State, east by Rivers State and on the south by the Atlantic Ocean (Alagoa 1999: 1-4).

Bayelsa State was chosen as the setting of this study because it is centrally located in the heart of the turbulent Niger Delta region characterized by perennial crisis of youth restiveness, militancy and insurgency. The crisis of insecurity is a product of several years of monu-

mental neglect and deprivation suffered by the people of the region. And this has resulted in wide spread poverty, excruciating hardship, complete lack of basic socio-economic infrastructure, dislocated societal values and cohesion, plundered environment and high rate of unemployment especially among the youths.

The situation in Bayelsa is even more pathetic. Though it is potentially the richest state in Nigeria in terms of the abundance of natural resources such as crude oil, gas, bitumen, bauxite, gold, gypsum, ceramic, clay, sand, timber and several others, it is the least developed state in the country. The rate of youth unemployment in Bayelsa State is one of the highest in the country as a result of the near absence of the private sector. The only functional and employing sector is the public bureaucracy. And no thanks to the refusal of multinational oil firms and even the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation and other Federal oil and gas parastatals to locate their administrative offices in Bayelsa State. Invariably, youths in Bayelsa State unlike their counterparts in other Niger Delta States are deliberately and unjustly denied juicy employment and contracts associated with the oil and gas business.

This environment of anger, frustration and abject want has also precipitated terrible cases of electoral violence and warfare in Bayelsa State. Previous elections conducted since the enthronement of the Fourth Republic were all marred by violent disrespect for democratic electoral procedures manifest in organized activities such as:

- § Open thuggery and intimidation, including serious assault of INEC staff and electorate by youthful things brandishing weapons.
- § Violent inter-party clashes.
- § Hijacking of election materials by heavily armed groups, most of the time led by politicians.
- § Perpetration of all forms of arson including destruction and burning of public and private property.
- § Confirmed and unconfirmed cases of deaths and serious bodily injuries as a result of the above incidents.

These undemocratic activities and events, though they are orchestrated by political elites of the key political parties, are mainly carried by vulnerable and able bodied youths who ought to have been constructively engaged and in-

doctrinated into fine democratic norms, values and attitudes. And we all know that the country's democratic structures and processes cannot be sustained by an unwholesome practice of electoral misdemeanor and violence.

Population of the Study: The population of the study consisted of 974, 726 based on 2007 census figures youths in all the 8 local government areas of Bayelsa State.

Sampling Procedure and Sampling Size: The stratified random sampling technique was used in this study. To achieve this, 50 males and females were randomly selected from each of the 8 local government areas that make up Bayelsa State. A total of 400 youths within the age range of 18 to 30 years were selected as the sample for this study.

Instrumentation

The research instrument used in this study was titled, "Youths and Electoral Violence". The questionnaire was constructed by the researchers. The instrument had four sections made up of 30 items spanning through sections A, B, C, and D.

Section A of the instrument sought information on subjects' demographic data. Section B was designed to obtain data on the role youths play in electoral process. Section C of the instrument measured "youths as easy target for electoral violence". Section D measured the nexus between electoral violence and democratic consolidation.

Validation of the Instrument: To validate, the instrument copies of the instrument were presented to two Professors of Test and Measurement and two senior lecturers of Political Science. These experts' judgment ensured that

each of the items in the instrument actually measured what it was intended to measure. They certified that the instrument was valid, unambiguous and could then be used for the study.

Reliability of the Instrument: To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot testing was carried out using 50 youths from Obiakpo Local Government Area of Rivers State. The instrument was first administered and after eight days it was re-administered to the same youths. The data collected from these two administrations were subjected to analysis using the Pearson's Product Moment Co-relational Analysis. The test-re-test Co-relation Coefficient was computed to indicate the instrument stability in measuring consistently what it purports to measure. The co-relation co-efficient indices were 0.71, 0.82, 0.93 and 0.95 respectively.

Data Collection Procedure: The researchers visited all the eight Local Government Areas of Bayelsa State and with the help of co-operative local government workers, and were able to personally administer copies of the questionnaire to the randomly selected youths. Completed copies of the questionnaire were retrieved the same day they were administered in each of the local government area.

Procedure for Data Analysis: Frequency, simple percentages and Pearson's Product Moment Co-relational Analysis were adopted in this study.

RESULTS

A critical look at Table 1 reveals that youths are the major perpetrators of electoral violence and other malpractices. 85.5 percent of the respondents are of the opinion that youths carry dangerous weapons during elections; 94.5 per-

Table 1: The roles youths play in electoral process

S. No.	Youths roles	Yes	No
1	Youths are made to be body guards to politicians during elections	324 (81)	76 (19)
2	Youths are made to carry guns and other dangerous weapons during elections	346 (86.5)	54 (15.5)
3	Youths are made to hijack ballot boxes during elections	386 (94.5)	14(3.5)
4	Youths are made to manipulate figures during elections	296 (74)	114 (36)
5	Youths are made to beat up political opponents and people sympathetic to them	394 (98.5)	06 (15)
6	Youths are made to threaten people from voting for candidates of their choice	396 (99)	4 (1)
7	Youths are made to stop people from voting for candidates of their choice	376 (94)	24(6)
8	Youths are made to maim and kill candidates of opposing parties	382 (95.5)	18 (4.5)
9	Youths are made to destroy properties of candidates of opposing parties	348 (87)	52 (13)
10	Youths are made to disrupt election rallies of opposing parties	368 (92)	32 (8)

*Percentage in parenthesis

cent and 74 percent of respondents are in agreement that youths are made to hijack electoral materials and are involved in manipulation of figures respectively during elections. Furthermore, to buttress our assumption that youths play violent roles during election, the following statistics was revealed by our research: 98.5 percent, 95.5 percent and 87 percent of the respondents were in agreement that youths physically assault political opponents; maim and kill candidates of opposing parties and destroy properties of their opponents respectively during elections.

Result in Table 2 shows that 80.5 percent of youths who are involved in electoral violence are unemployed; 71.5 percent of them are uneducated; 77 percent are unskilled and 86.5 percent are children of poor parents. Again, the table also revealed that 87 percent of the respondents are in agreement that the Bayelsa State's poverty eradication and skill acquisition policy is not effective enough to tackle the problem of youth's unemployment. Finally, Table 2 also shows that 85.5% of youths are of the opinion that the non-existence of a private sector economy in Bayelsa State is a major contribution to the problem of youth's unemployment in the state.

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between youth involvement in electoral violence and the crisis of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The statistical analysis technique used to test this hypothesis is Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r and t).

The result in Table 3 indicates that the calculated t -value of 5.864 is greater than the critical t -value of 1.96, at 0.05 alpha level of significance with degrees of freedom of 388. With this result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between youth's involvement in electoral violence and the crisis of democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

This section of the study discusses the findings of the research whose main objective is to establish a relationship between youth's involvement in electoral violence and the crisis of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Through the analysis of data presented in Table 1, the study was able to reveal that youths form bulk of the perpetrators of election related violence. This is in congruence with the view point of Akinboye (1987), McAllister (2004), Nweke (2005), Bazza

Table 2: Youths as easy target for electoral violence

S. No.	Why youths are easy targets	Yes	No
1	Most youths that get involved in electoral violence are unemployed	322(80.5)	78(19.5)
2	Most youths that are perpetrators of electoral malpractices are uneducated	286(71.5)	114(28.5)
3	Most youths that are perpetrators of electoral malpractices are unskilled	308(77)	92(13)
4	Most youths that get involved in electoral violence are children of poor parents	346(86.5)	54(12.5)
5	Bayelsa State Poverty and Skill Acquisition Policy is effective enough to tackle youths problems of unemployment in the state	12(3)	388(87)
6	The non existence of private sector economy is a major contributor to youths unemployment Bayelsa state	382(88.5)	18(4.5)

*Percentage in parenthesis

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of relationship between youths in electoral violence and crisis of democratic consolidation (N = 400)

Variable	$\Sigma X \Sigma Y$	$\Sigma X^2 \Sigma Y^2$	ΣXY	Df	r-Value	t-Value
Youths electoral violence (X)	36235	636463				
Crisis of democratic consolidation (Y)	79034	306067	1367680	388	0.127*	5.864*

*Significant at 0.05, df = 388, Critical t -value = 1.96

(2008), that youths have been repeatedly used as instruments of violence: they have participated actively in destructive anti-social behaviours such as violent demonstrations, intra and inter political party fighting and other politically motivated violence, ritual killings, kidnapping and hostage taking, arson and cult related violence.

The study also provided answers to the reason why youths are ever available and vulnerable instruments in the hands of unscrupulous politicians to perpetrate electoral violence. A closer look at the analysis of the responses of the respondents in Table 2, reveals that bulk of the youths who are perpetrators of election related violence are unskilled, uneducated or ill-educated, unemployed and children of parents of poor socio-economic status. This view point is in line with Nweke's (2005: 392) postulations. He posited that factors that are responsible for youth-led electoral violence include the following: a good number of youths who participate in acts of electoral violence come from embattled and economically poor homesteads; they are either uneducated or school drop-outs. High rate of unemployment and underemployment especially among graduates of tertiary institutions is yet another factor that accounts for the high incidence of youths participation in electoral violence; moral decadence in youths and as well as the political manipulation of the psycho-cultural dispositions of youths towards elections by political elites has equally generated violent competition at elections. The political elites have always convinced the youths that violent struggle at elections to ensure the victory of their ethnic-nationality or religions man or party member is a struggle in their favour and against marginalisation or other forms of socio-economic discrimination. This position is confirmed by Akinboye (1987) who observed that most youths especially those who are desperately needy have problems in making and taking decisions. This largely explains why some politicians could capitalize on the weakness of youths about decision-making and taking and involving them in destructive anti-social behaviours the youths could not have loved to engage themselves in.

Our field study also reveals that government intervention policies and structures towards tackling the problems of unemployment and poverty among youths are ill-motivated, poorly-packaged and are more of palliatives. In the case of Bayelsa

State, 87 percent of our respondents are of the opinion that the government's interventionist instrument of confronting the problems of youths joblessness and restiveness as being implemented by the Ministry of Youths, Conflict Resolution and Employment Generations, is not effective enough. Moreover, the states' government poverty eradication programmes are too elitist and too far away from the needy youths. For instance, the taxi cab empowerment scheme meant for youths eventually ended up in the garages of the ruling party stalwarts and other senior government officials.

In line with the above outcomes from our data analysis, the result of the Pearson Products Moment Correlation Analysis of the study guiding hypothesis is that there is a significant relationship between youth's involvement in electoral violence and the crisis of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. This conforms with the position of Baba and Ogundiya (2005), Nweke (2005), Ajayi (2007) who asserted that electoral violence is the bane of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. It was also observed by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA 2001) that the lack of a clear adherence and respect for the rules guiding the democratic process is an obstacle to democratic consolidation and sustenance. The IDEA further posited that the ease by which politicians are able to manipulate, influence, mobilize and arm disgruntled, jobless and needy youths to commit all sorts of election related violence is a major challenge to good governance and sustainability of democracy in Nigeria. This position is understandable because a credible, peaceful and fair election engenders a peaceful and legitimate means of political succession. Moreover, electoral violence as the ultimate form of electoral fraud is an aberration as well as anathema to the fundamental tenets of democracy: it deprives the people voice in governance; it stalls communication between the politicians (government) and citizens; it has encouraged political apathy and indifference of the citizenry; it makes government unrepresentative, unaccountable, unresponsive and irresponsible; it creates a conducive atmosphere for unscrupulous individuals to hijack the instrument of the state; and more importantly, it puts a big question mark on the legitimacy of the government. Even more worrisome is the fact that electoral violence, especially with youth's involvement in it, has beco-

me an established and “legitimate” mode of political behaviour in Nigeria. It is, therefore, less surprising that the former president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, could declare 2007 general elections as a “do-or-die” affair. And from the proceedings of the election, it really lived up to this declaration.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the role most youths perform in the political and electoral process is violent in nature. And in most instances these violent roles are assigned to them by political classes that have deliberately refused to imbibe and practice requisite democratic norms, values and tradition. Secondly, the paper was also able to establish that youths are vulnerable instruments of electoral violence as a result of dislocated and poor parental background, poor education, unemployment and under employment, moral decadence and as well as political manipulations by an irresponsible political class. Finally, the study also revealed that there is a strong relationship between election violence especially youth’s involvement in it and the crisis of democratic sustenance and consolidation in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings from this study, the following recommendations are made towards ensuring democratic consolidation through constructive socialization and involvement of the youths in the democratic structures especially the electoral process.

- I. In recognition of the role desperate socio-economic conditions play in youths involvement in electoral violence, adequate and effective all-embracing empowerment programmes must be put in place. Youths should be economically empowered through sincere, participatory and youth oriented skill acquisition and employment generation scheme. Socially, the youths could be empowered through civil orientation and educations to enable them understand their roles (rights and duties) in society. And they could be empowered politically through meaningful political socialization and constructive participation in politics. For a sustained participation of youths in the po-

litical processes and structures, the strategy of educational counseling should be emphasized. The years of ignorance are over, especially in light of the Millennium Development Goal of 2015 “education for all”. Opportunity for formal and non-formal education for the youths will ensure political consciousness, knowing and defending their fundamental human rights. Counselors can teach the virtues of “give-and-take” (tolerance) in politics and human rights in the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. The youths should be made to be aware that they are potential leaders of tomorrow. And that no politician ambition is worth their blood and future.

- II. Youths as the doorways to a peace continuum must be exposed to peace education. It is expected that peace education will help to redress the culture of violence and aggression and also inculcate the value of peaceful coexistence and non-violence among young persons and adults alike. The youths have to know what peace is and guard themselves against embracing or being used to foment violence.
- III. The current electoral reform efforts should be pursued with more vigour in order to draft enforceable and effective electoral laws that could confront the menace of electoral malpractices including electoral violence. The civil society represented by several civil liberty non-governmental organizations and labour unions must pressurize the government to put in place stiff electoral laws that will make electoral fraud, a heinous crime against the citizen and state. If there is going to be any hope for democratic consolidation in Nigeria, politicians found guilty of electoral fraud and all those that benefited from it one way or the other should no longer treated with kid gloves and palliatives. They must be made to face stringent and long lasting legal penalties and sanctions. It is hoped that this measure will serve as deterrence against any form of political lawlessness and violence.

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