

## **Acrimonious Politics And Political Stability In Nigeria: A Study Of 2011-2019 General Election.**

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### **Abstract**

*The imperative of political stability for the consolation of democracy in Nigeria can never be over-emphasized. Unfortunately, the spates of politics of acrimony in the country over the years tend to increasingly undermine the attainment of these democratic ideals. This study examines the implications of acrimonious politics on political stability in Nigeria with particular attentions to the experiences of 2011-2019 general elections in the country. Content analytical approach was adopted, while the paper was anchored on Elite theory as theoretical framework of analysis. The study established amongst others; that greed amongst the contestants, party stalwarts, pervasive poverty in the land, unpopularity of most contestants, selfishness among godfathers to continue wield political and economic powers gave rise to resort to fake promises (in the political system) with the attendant rise in impunity, acrimony and violence of varying magnitude and intensities in the nation's democratic processes. The implication of these is that the emergence of credible leadership in Nigeria will continue to be elusive in the presence of the existing ills. The study therefore recommends amongst others; the electorates should only vote candidates with credibility; Nigeria electorates should de-emphasize money politics etc.*

**Keywords:** *Acrimony, politics, political stability, political violence, greed.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Society is paramount in everyday life, therefore, where there is hatred, bitterness and fake promises in the political and democratic settings, then security may not be guaranteed, and where there is no security, life is not assured. Security ensures peace of mind and the possibility to sleep relaxed. Security implies stability and continuity, but insecurity in our political system, due to hatred, bitterness and fake political promises have become a topical issue in today Nigeria's democratic exercise. Insecurity implies the inability to cope with shock or misfortune. Increase in insecurity and vulnerability results in pervasive anxiety and fear. The impact of fake campaign promises, hatred and bitterness have given a negative toll to the success and sustenance of democracy in Nigeria. The insecurity in Nigeria's political transition indicated that it has resulted to political violence, party impunity which are threatening participatory democracy, peace, political stability, security and the consolidation of democracy since the fourth republic (29th, May 1999) with its rising insurgency since the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010 bomb blast in Abuja and the current herdsmen attack in most parts of Nigeria. It is further observed that party and political interest among aspirants, party caucus, godfathers, ethnicism and ethnic loyalty, nature of politics on public governance and the characters of state gave rise to bicker, calumny, callousness among leaders and the state of insecurity in the economy, i.e. farming industry, transportation system, the educational system, the healthcare sectors, job creation and empowerment and in the supply and distribution of petroleum products. To substantiate these claims about insecurity in Nigeria politics, Odey (2015) asserted that: for a man who is sick and taken to the hospital for instantaneous medical attention, which the doctors and nurses will not be on strike but will be there on duty to attend to him. Similarly, people who cannot afford to go to hospital when they are

sick for fear of hospital bills are not secure. For a man who is hungry not because he refuse to work, but because he is not paid his wages as and when due, security means prompt payment of his wages. For those who watch their children waste away on the streets because they cannot afford the cost of sending them to school are not secure. For the farmer in the village, security means good road to enable him move his farm products to where he can sell them and get the reward for his labour or where he is sure not to be attacked by herdsman. For those who are suppressed and dehumanized in one way or the other, what translates to security for them is their being free from bondage. For Nigerians in general, security means protecting the sanctity of the electoral system to ensure that they freely and fairly choose those they would like to be their leaders.

Today, many lives are lost in our country through road crashes, healthcare insecurity (diseases which could have been prevented) if not for lack of commitment and care by our various governments, the rate of infant mortality, ignorance, illiteracy and poverty are on the increase. The most devastating aspect of bicker, hatred, acrimony, political violence and insecurity on the country's democracy and political transition is the failure of our leaders (godsons) to satisfactorily reward their political mentors (godfathers) especially in terms of appointments and sharing of state resources in exchange for various supports received from the godfathers during electioneering (The Anambra State experience, 2003 - 2006 and Oyo State, 2005 - 2007). Today, we fear for our lives from bandits, herdsman, kidnappers, political and economic related assassinations and extra judicial killings. These have rapidly become familiar features of our landscape and the impact of these massive senses of atrocities (Hatred, bitterness, violence and insecurity) on both the psychic and overall functioning of Nigerians cannot be over estimated.

The fear is that, if this political cankerworm continues in our political history, it can render elections and appointment of credible personalities into positions of trust ineffective and inconsequential.

There is therefore, the need to check the rising threats to lives and property across Nigeria and the poor states of living conditions of Nigerians.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on the elite theory as a theoretical framework of analysis. The Classical elite theory was propounded by Vilfredo Pareto (1848 - 1923) and Gaetano Mosca (1858 - 1941). Elite theory developed in part as a reaction to Marxism as an ideology rather than an objective analysis of a social system. According to elite theory, men can never be liberated from the subjugation of an elite structure. Elite theory argues that all societies are divided into two main groups, "the ruling minority and the majority that are ruled. This situation according to theorists is inevitable. A dimension of the scholarly work on godfathers, party stalwarts and party caucus links the concept to the elitist and clientelist theories in political science. For example, the work of Suenu (2004) introduces an elitist correlation to the understanding of political interest and godfatherism. He sees godfatherism as being synonymous with the elites. According to him, elites in political spheres are known in Nigeria context as godfathers. They are usually the ones who govern. They are known as the kingmakers and often they are seen as strongmen who control politics in their different region (Suenu, 2004). The godfather operate from behind the scene and cause havoc and damage to the political system by way of party interest, individual interest, hence bitterness, hatred and insincere promises made to the electorates to have their way (Ibeogu, 2015). It is a system of disguised individual colonization whereby the godfathers either by force or conquest colonizes his political godson. In other words, godfathers and party stalwarts rule by proxies and influences governmental policies to their advantage through their godsons.

Therefore, godfathers are local imperialists with political interest of achieving self-ends through their protégé, referred to as godson. Once this occurs, it leads to different forms of violence, not merely petty crimes, armed robbery, but anarchy such as wanton destruction of lives and property, terrorism and bombing, armed insurgency and kidnapping.

## **II. Literature Review**

Duru, E (2008) in a study, "The Electoral Process and Democracy in Nigeria" set to establish the best form and method to adopt so as to eschew electoral violence in Nigeria's political system. The study adopted survey research method. The findings revealed that the best strategy for preventing conflict in our democratic system is by promoting democracy because democracy can ensure that Africans internal disputes are settled by voters casting ballots instead of soldiers wielding guns. To date (2021), elections provide the essential mechanism for the orderly transfer of political power in response to the will of the electorates, but indeed, the Nigerian electoral process since independence has gained an unenviable reputation for fraudulent practices.

Furthermore, the study reiterated that the soul of the electoral system is the ballot system. In an ideal situation, which hardly operates in Nigeria and most developing countries, because of the intervention of many factors including ignorance of the electorate's rights and responsibilities under a democratic system, what happens is that the politicians conscious of the value of the spoils of office, adopt various means to ensure that

they capture power. They buy votes, rig peoples will to choose leaders capable of leading the state towards development and sustainable democracy.

The study recommended that the will of the people should be the basis of the authority of government. This will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be made universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedure, it went further to recommend that the electoral process be situated within the context of democratic system since democracy gives freedom to individuals and groups of people to associate, express and carry out projects in response to their own individual or collective requirements and inclination.

In another study by Obasi, J.C (2009) "The Legacy of Election Fraud, Godfatherism and the Struggle for the Soul of Anambra State" The study which adopted descriptive research design, focused to establish the philosophy behind electoral fraud in Anambra State in particular and Nigeria at large. It found that too many evils and "debasement electoral practices have too long been tolerated in this country and that they have remained unchecked, threatened national unity, peace and stability. The study recommended for hard work, honesty, fairness, and just means to success. That without enthroning justice and fairness, and curbing the "end justifies the means" mentality in our electoral process, the stealing of the people's mandate's and the imposition of inept and corrupt candidates on the people would continue to be our night mare, hence the upsurge in political killings, wanton destructions of property and political insecurity in the entire land.

In a related study by Ibeogu, Nwele, Abah and Ede (2021) titled, Causes and Consequences of Electoral Criminality in Nigeria's Democracy: a study of South East States. The study sought to establish what breeds electoral criminality in South East States and its implications to our democracy. Relying on content analysis as the methodology for gathering information and group/frustration aggression theory as theoretical framework, it established the followings as some of the factors that breeds electoral criminality; bribing of INEC officials and the other security agencies to perpetrate rigging; recognition of non-existing polling units by INEC and allocation of voting materials to same; concealing and release of voters register filled with false names which is usually made available to political party and candidates of their interest in secret etc. The implications are that whereby elections are characterized by electoral criminality such as; rigging, stuffing of ballot boxes with thumb printed ballot papers; hence the emergence of fraudsters as leaders, then the future of the people and the state is bleak. Recommendations include; promotion of strong electoral body (INEC); appointment of personalities with sound moral values to handle election matters etc.

### **III. Methodology**

Content Analytical Approach was adopted for this study. In the content analytical techniques, relevant literatures were reviewed from available sources, namely; textbooks, journals, internet materials, write-ups from magazines and periodicals.

### **IV. Correlation between Acrimonious Politics and Political Instability in Nigeria Political Instability and the Dilemma of Nigeria Democracy.**

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) Chapter 12, Section 14 (Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principle of State Policy) as amended states that;

(13) It shall be the duty and responsibility of all organs of government, and of all authorities and persons exercising legislative, executive or judicial powers to conform to, observe and apply the provisions of the constitution.

14 (1) The Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a state based on the principles of democracy and social justice.

14 (2) It is hereby accordingly, declared that:

(a) Sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government through its constitution derives all its powers and authorities;

(b) The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government and

(c) The participation of the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this constitution. From the foregoing as stated in the constitution, it is expressly the duty of the government to be ultimately responsible for the security of lives, property etc, of the people of Nigeria, but unfortunately this internal security is absent, bitterness, acrimony and rancor is the order of the day in the country's democracy and political transition from one government to the other

### **Spate of Political Acrimony in Nigeria 1999 - 2019.**

Since the inception of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, political bitterness, hatred, and insecurity have militated against the peaceful co-existence of Nigerians as a state. Drawing inference on the spate of political killings of eminent Nigerians, it will be discovered that these few political icons met their untimely death as a result of insecurity in the land, they include; Engr. Funsho Williams, P.D.P gubernatorial aspirants for Lagos State gubernatorial race in 2003, Dr. Harry Marshal, a staunch P.D.P stalwart in River State between 1999 -

2003, but his fallout with the former governor of Rivers State, Dr. Peter Odili led to his defecting to A.N.P.P, however for the fear of his role (prominence) that led to P.D.P victory in River State in 1999 and his subsequent defection to opposition party (ANPP) prompted his assassination in his private residence in Abuja on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2003. Chief Bola Ige, the former minister of justice and attorney general of the federation during the Obasanjo regime was assassinated in his residence on 23 December 2001 because of political bicker between him and the then deputy governor of his home state (Osun) Chief Iyiola Omisore, Chief Uche Ogbonna, a former P.D.P stalwart who defected to ANPP to contest for Orlu Senatorial District position with the then incumbent, Senator Arthur Nzeribe, because of his popularity and the support he had gathered for the forthcoming primaries of the party and the general elections, was murdered in a broad day light. From Abakaliki, an Enugu based legal practitioner and an indigene of Igbeagu Unuhu Izzi, Abakaliki Local Government Area, Ebonyi State, Hon Barrister Alphonsus Ibeogu was murdered on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January 1999 at Ozoro, along Sapele road Delta State. He was fingered to meet his ancestors for daring to oppose the candidature of the then P.D.P flagbearer for the 1999 (9<sup>th</sup> January) governorship candidate of Ebonyi State and his stoutly asking an Anambra born money bag (businessman) resident in Abakaliki to allow the good people of Ebonyi State to decide who governs them by the year 29<sup>th</sup> May, 1999, (Ibeogu: 2015). In Ebonyi Local Government Area, Ebonyi State in 2005, a traditional ruler of Oguzoronweya autonomous community, His Royal Highness, Eze Innocent .N. Nwodom who was stabbed to death, met his untimely death when he declined his support for the candidature of an aspirant seeking elective position from his community into Ebonyi State House of Assembly (Nwite, 2005).

In a related development in Iziogo, Izzi local government area, Ebonyi State, hell was let lose in the area on April 2011, when a prominent son of the area who bided for the Senatorial position of Ebonyi North Senatorial District on the platform of ANPP sought the support of the Catholic faithful in the area to ensure his victory in the April 2011 senatorial seat of Ebonyi North District and following the support and promises by the catholic faithful, this did not go down well with the opposition party, P.D.P and so resorted to destruction of lives and property, pets and human, even important vestibules used in celebration of holy mass and Eucharist in St Stephen Catholic Parish Iziogo were destroyed. The consequence of this dastard and unholy act to the parishioners and religious faithful of St Stephens Iziogo led to the transfer of their revered parish priest, Rev Fr Maximus Obododike to St Michaels Parish Oshiri and Rev Fr Wilfred Nwofoke to St Stephen Iziogo because Rev Fr Maximus Obodike was fingered to be in support of ANPP candidate. Still in Agubata, Okwerike and Nwofe Agbaja in Izzi L.G.A. of Ebonyi State in 2019 general election, so many houses, properties and lives were burnt and lost due to the clash between the supporters of Rt. Hon Francis Nwifuru, PDP aspirant and Architect Godwin Nwogbaga APC aspirant for the House of Assembly Seat in Izzi East West Constituency.

In Ebonyi South geo-political zone in 2015 general elections, the story was the same. The incumbent governor of Ebonyi State, Engr. Dave Umahi, was the deputy governor in the 2011 - 2015 political dispensation under Chief Martin Elechi as the governor. After the P.D.P governorship primaries, Engr. Dave Umahi emerged, as the P.D.P flag bearer contrary to the interest of his boss (governor) who had Professor Onyebuchi Chukwu in mind to succeed him, hence there was political rift between the governor and deputy governor and the governor secretly sponsoring the candidature of Architect Edward Nkwegu under the platform of Labour Party to take over from him (Ibeogu, 2015). This estranged relationship between the former governor and former deputy governor led to killing of innocent victims, destruction of houses, cars, canopies and chairs, billboards in Ebonyi South geo-political zone. One of the victims of that dastard act was late Mr. Emegha in Afikpo South (Ibeogu, 2015).

The table below shows the incidences of electoral violence in Nigeria, June 2011 to May 2019 in order of numerates across the states.

RANKING	STATE	NUMBER OF FATALITIES
1	PLATEAU	850
2	KADUNA	653
3	NASARAWA	258
4	RIVERS	181
5	KANO	152
6	DELTA	142
7	OYO	110
8	BENUE	109
9	KOGI	107
10	BAYELSA	93
11	AKWA IBOM	91
12	NIGER	86
13	BORNO	84
14	ODO	83
15	LAGOS	80
16	BAUCHI	63
17	TARABA	61

18	FCT	59
19	OSUN	59
20	ONDO	55
21	CROSS RIVER	54
22	KWARA	53
23	OGUN	51
24	ADAMAWA	49
25	IMO	45
26	ANAMBRA	38
27	KASTINA	37
28	GOMBE	33
29	EKITI	31
30	YOBE	29
31	ZAMFARA	25
32	ENUGU	24
33	ABIA	23
34	EBONYI	22
35	SOKOTO	11
36	JIGAWA	10
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,934</b>

**Source: ShamsudeenKabir Bello (2015), Ibeogu (2021)**

Suffice it to know that each time there is assassination of political icon or party faithful in Nigeria, the usual government response has always been to call for investigation that never led to any substantive improvement on the security situation in the country.

#### **Political Promises versus Reality: The Fate of Elected Representatives.**

The transition from 2011 political dispensation witnessed an unprecedented political brouhaha, calumny, attacks, maim, and promises, not only in Ebonyi States, but also across the shores of Nigeria.

In Ebonyi State, the incumbent governor Engr. Dave Umahi who contested on the platform of P.D.P, made numerous promises to good people of Ebonyi State (electorates). This may have been done in good fate or for political reasons. Available information and records reveals that the fall out between the former governor (Chief Martin Elechi) and his deputy (Engr. Dave Umahi) now governor gave rise to the promises, especially when the former governor was not supporting his candidacy. Such of those promises include, but not limited to these;

- i. Improved living conditions of the people by way of providing social infrastructure especially quality projects;
- ii. Increase in pay rise of workers to one hundred percent, which his boss (governor) has refused to implement since 2011;
- iii. Payment of withheld September 2011 salary of workers who participated in industrial action;
- iv. Reduction in school fees paid by the students of Ebonyi State University and regular payment of state government part of the meal subsidy to the pilot boarding schools in the state; however the school fees of Ebonyi State university students was on Friday 2nd November 2016, reduced by (₦10,000) ten thousand naira and again by (N20,000) in 2020 by Governor David Umahi;
- v. Ensure fairness and equity in distribution of political appointments etc.

Five months into the life of the new administration, the electorates prayed that the election tribunal should install Architect Edward Nkwegu of the Labour Party as the duly elected candidate of April 11, 2015 governorship election in Ebonyi State, because of callousness, insincerity and non-commitment of the governor to the welfare of the people (Advocate 2015, National Issue, 2015, Nwite, 2019).

Odey (2015) lamented that hypocrisy, selfishness; greed and insensitivity to the plight of the people by our leaders have hampered the success of democracy in Nigeria. The leaders have lost their sense of judgment in leadership and decision-making. The various forms of corrupt practices have turned the nation into a sort of animal kingdom. In this kingdom, what counts is the speed at which one lives and thrives on the entire kingdom. Each person (Leaders) makes his own law the way it suits him and tries to compel other members of the kingdom to see everything from his own point of view and to bow to his own whims and caprices.

The same person who made beautiful promises to the electorates and the labour unions in the state during campaigns, few months of assumption to duty as governor renege on almost all his promises. The withheld 2011 September salary not paid, the university school fees reduced by N10, 000 in Nov 2016 and N20,000 in 2020 revoked, the meal subsidy payment of N10, 000.00 reduced to ₦5, 000.00, the pay rise approved by Chief Martin Elechi's government slashed, and the members of labour (N.L.C) who tried to protest received punitive transfers to non-busy government institutions, all civil and public servants who identified with the opposition party (Labour Party) are facing one form of tribulations or the other and worst still, no promotion

or payment of promotional increment and other allowances denied civil and public servants in Ebonyi State by the current administration of David Umahi, since 2015-2021.

### **Ethno - Religious Crisis (The Izzi Speaking Tribes of Abakaliki, Ebonyi State Nigeria)**

Communal and societal conflicts according to Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002) cited in Eme al (2011) emerged as a result of new and particularistic forms of political consciousness and identity often structured around ethno - religious identities. In almost all the parts of Nigeria, ethno - religious conflicts assumed an alarming rate. A case in point is what happened or reoccurring in Izzi land of Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, where there exists two kindreds; "**Igbojima** and **Unwuerra**" (brothers) who are decedents from one parent and have lived peaceful for decades and centuries without any form of acrimony, bitterness, hatred and rancor.

Kindredship is a "form of family, it is a family units with relatives". The fact of being related to another person by tribe is seen and known as kindredship.

The kindredship in Izzi land existed as instituted by nature. These decedents from a parent who later procreated merely serve some communal purposes in Izzi land;

- ❖ On the first note, they serve during the farming and harvesting seasons. A prominent farmer from any of the kindred who needed assistance during the farming season can request members of his or her kindred to assist him during the farming exercise;
- ❖ During burials, as the saying goes in Igbo land, "Onyenweozu, n' ano n' isiya" (the rightful owners of a corpse plays leading role during the internment). Going by the above maxim, when deaths are recorded in Izzi land, up-to date (2021), especially the deceased that will be interned in a traditional burial rites, the kindred of the deceased person play major roles during the internment, while other guests during the burial are seen as sympathizers;
- ❖ Again, in communal work like clearing the village paths, clearing the village square, or the village and communal markets, responsibilities are shared based on kindredship and leadership of each of the kindred are to ensure accomplishment.

Unfortunately, on return to democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999, some decedent of the "**Unwuerra**" kindred who are educated, were privileged to be appointed by Dr. Sam Egwu's administration in Ebonyi State, few months into the administration, the political appointees from the "**Unwuerra**" kindred informed the governor (Dr. Sam Egwu) that in Izzi, the speculation is that the governor is a decedent of "**Eru**" that is, he hails from Arochukwu, Abia State and that the "**Unwuerra**" from Izzi who are minority are now decision makers in Ebonyi polity. Since then, the "**Unwuerra**" kindred were empowered such that all juicy appointment meant for the Izzi speaking people of Abakaliki were usually given to the "**Unwuerra**" kindred. This development has not only polarized the people of Izzi, but has disintegrated and denigrated them to the level that if an "Igbojima" kindred person is in a position of authority and another position or job vacancy is made to the people of Izzi and there is no one from that kindred (Igbojima) who is qualified but from the other kindred (**Unwuerra**), he would prefer the position be given to someone from another tribe instead of giving it to an indigene from Izzi who is not from his kindred and vice versa (Ibeogu, 2015).

In 2011 general elections, an "**Unwuerra**" born politician contested for the ANPP Senatorial position in Ebonyi North Zone, Ebonyi State and a better qualified for the position, though the P.D.P candidate for the same position had the governors (Martin Elechi) support, but instead of the ANPP candidate from the "**Unwuerra**" with a better track record winning the election, it was marred with irregularities, so the P.D.P aspirant and the politicians from Igbojima went to the point of maiming, stuffing of peoples life, burning of houses and beating up a Catholic Priest whom they felt was supporting the ANPP candidate from "**Unwuerra**" Kindred.

In 2015 general elections in Ebonyi State gubernatorial race, the politics of "Igbojima" vs **Unwuerra**" still repeated itself. An "Igbojima" born business mogul from Izzi, and a loyalist to the former governor, Chief Martin Elechi contested for the governorship position in the state on the platform of Labour Party (LP), but unfortunately almost all the Izzi born politicians, party stalwarts, stakeholders, and electorates from the "**Unwuerra**" choose to throw their weight behind the Ohazara born politician contesting on the platform of P.D.P for the governorship of Ebonyi State, instead of supporting their son and brother (Arch Edward Nkwegu) from the other kindred (Igbojima) becoming the governor. With what politics of bitterness and acrimony is known for, it led to the destruction of lives and property in most parts of Izzi Land (Oginyi 2011, Odey 2014, Ibeogu, 2015).

It is therefore worrisome that almost in all parts of Nigeria, ethno - religious conflict have assumed a magnificent level, it occurred in places and towns like, Kano, Jos, Taraba, Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Rivers, Ebonyi (Ezza - Ezzillo and Igbeagu-Ukelle crisis) Groups and communities who had over the years lived together in peace and harmony now take up arms against each other in gruesome war, and this portend a great danger to our economy and polity.

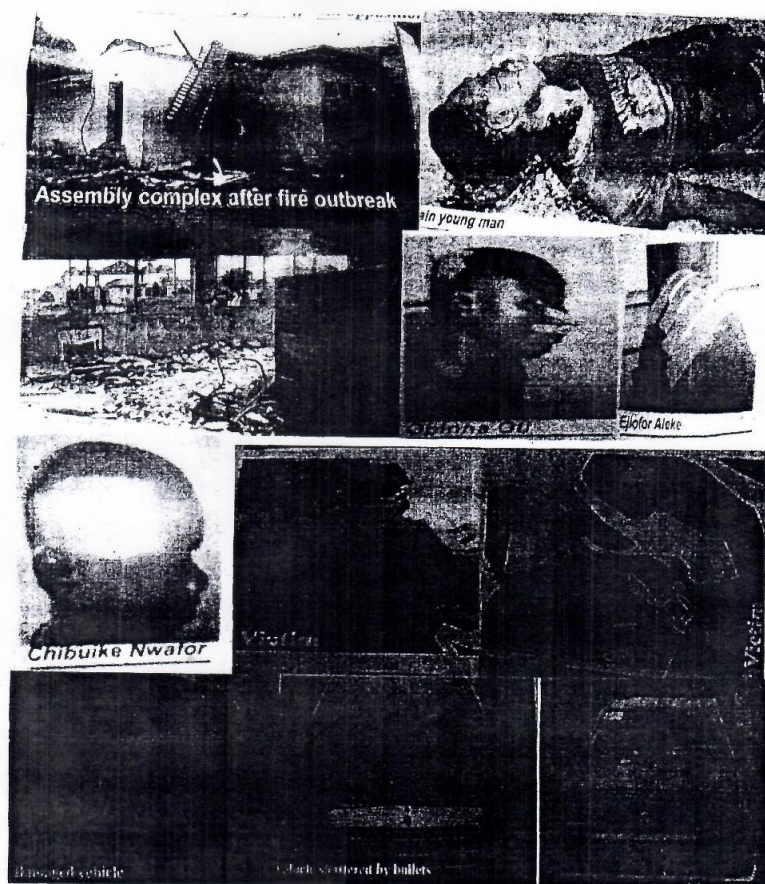
**Politics of Unguarded Utterances, Upheavals, Violence and Assassination: Ebonyi State and Nigeria Experience in 2015 Elections.**

Politics in the 2015 general elections like previous elections displayed politics of anxiety, which played down on dialogue, negotiation, and consensus especially with what happened in Ebonyi State and Nigeria in general. In Nigeria, during the 2015 campaign rallies by political parties, the wife of the former president, Dame Patience Jonathan and Chief Femi FaniKayode were seen making callous and unguarded utterances against the persons of General Muhammadu Buhari, the A.P.C presidential candidate for 2015 general elections and other aspirants on the platform of A.P.C (Patience 2015, Kayode 2015, Ibeogu 2015). In Ebonyi State, the story was not different as the deputy governor; Engr. Dave Umahi hijacked the P.D.P primaries contrary to the interest and expectations of the governor, Chief Martin Elechi, the anxiety was as results of perceived or real loss of power by the super elites (The former Governor Dr. Sam Egwu, former P.D.P Chairman Ebonyi State, Chief ObinnaOgba) and a host of other P.D.P stalwarts in Ebonyi State, so the quest for political power was for among those elites who won it before, those that lost it and those who want it back. A case at hand was the situation where the former Governor, Dr. Sam Egwu and the former P.D.P Chairman, Chief ObinnaOgba, desired to represent their constituents since 2007 at the Red Chambers (Senate) but could not because they were not having the backings of the immediate past Governor, Chief Martin Elechi. Thus, they had to align with the former deputy governor Engr. Dave Umahi to pick the P.D.P ticket for Ebonyi gubernatorial position 2015, while Dr. Sam Egwu picked the P.D.P Senatorial position for Ebonyi North Zone and Chief ObinnaOgba picked that of Ebonyi Central Zone. This play down on the intelligence of the governor (Chief Martin Elechi) made him less important in the affairs of P.D.P in Ebonyi State, as he was not informed of the P.D.P presidential rally that took place at the Abakaliki township stadium on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015. Worst still, despite his position as a leader of the party and governor; he was not given the opportunity to speak at the rally, in spite of the request by the former governor, Dr. Sam Egwu. He was equally booed when the supporters of Engr. Dave Umahi (Ibeogu, 2015) mentioned his name (Martin Elechi) at the rally.

In Nassarawa State, the former Minister of Information, LabaranMaku contested for the P.D.P ticket for governorship on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2014, lost and defected to APGA, similarly, in Abia State, Chief EmekaWogu lost the P.D.P ticket for Abia State governorship to Dr.Okey Ikpeazi, Dr. BukolaSaraki, lost his P.D.P ticket in his senatorial zone in Kwara State in 2019 and AtikuAbubakar lost the PDP Presidential ticket in 2019 and a host of others.

The winners of the respective primaries of their party strategized adequately about the control and retention of political power in 2015 and 2019 elections. To this end, inter and intra party conflict became very unpleasant that politicians deployed large resources to outdo each other. Party meetings, campaign rallies and conventions became war threats where arms and weapons like guns, axes, and cutlasses were freely displayed and used to rig elections, harass and intimidate electorates and contestants. Therefore, the inability to redeem election promises by politicians to those who constitute thugs after elections gave rise to the spate of political violence, assassinations and kidnappings (Ibeogu, 2015, Odey 2015, Nwobashi, 2015). To this effect, many believe that most top kidnappings and assassinations are masterminded by government officials, opposition groups, unrewarded or uncompensated members of election rigging, militant groups, among others (Odey, 2014). It becomes obvious therefore, that most of the operations are targeted at serving politicians or government functionaries for reneging on their promises during and after elections. The picture below, show the manifestation of political acrimony in communities of Ebonyi State in 2015 and 2019 general elections.

## Manifestation of Political Acrimony in Communities of Ebonyi State, 2015-2019



### V. Conclusion/Recommendation

Any political or democratic system, environment or economy threatened with hatred, bitterness and fake promises is bound to witness or experience political upheavals, violence and insecurity such as intimidation, armed robbery and kidnapping and this will usually give rise to tensions and anxiety. To eliminate these enemies of man, our democracy should eschew the imposition of candidates, avoid fake promises during electioneer campaign; the representative should create opportunity for human capital development and habitable environment.

### VI. Recommendations

- i. The electorates should only vote candidates with credibility;
- ii. Nigerian electorates should de-emphasise money politics;
- iii. Contestants and party stalwarts should eschew greed, but on the ability of candidates to deliver;
- iv. Unpopular candidates from party stalwarts and godfathers should be voted out in elections;
- v. Aspirants should avoid fake promises, but their manifestos should be based on what they can accomplish;
- vi. The elected representatives should strengthen the economy of the state so as to promote the living conditions of the people;
- vii. Bitterness, acrimony, calumny, hatred and callousness should be avoided to promote a healthy democracy.

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