

THE CHANGING NATURE OF VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF THE 2011 POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE IN KANO METROPOLIS

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Abstract

There have been a series of violent conflicts in the Kano metropolis which began in 1953 and continued until 2011 when the post-election violence erupted spreading to other states in northern Nigeria. These conflicts have been studied and well documented by scholars who interpreted the causes to be either ethnic or sectarian/religious. The sporadic outbreak of post-election violence in twelve Northern Nigerian States including Kano was different from the previous conflicts. This paper contends that the post-election violence in the Kano metropolis marked a significant paradigm shift from previous conflicts in its causes and nature of execution and targets on victims. The paper argues that the post-election violence in Kano uncharacteristically cut across ethnic and religious divides as the rioters/youth mob attacked their traditional targets, the migrant Christian and non-indigenous Muslim community and the revered Kano traditional institution and prominent Kano politicians and members of the ruling Peoples` Democratic Party (PDP) as well as the perceived supporters of former President Goodluck Jonathan. The residents` property and party offices of other political parties were equally affected except for the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). The uniqueness of the post-election violence is that the mobs that were previously mobilized by politicians against the Christian community and non-indigenous groups have now turned against them. It is this novel shift like the organized violent conflict in the riotous city of Kano that this paper seeks to investigate.

Keywords: Kano, Post-Election, Violent Conflict, Northern Nigeria, Sabon-Gari

Introduction

Violent conflicts have been recurring episodes in Nigerian history. Northern Nigeria, especially Kano had experienced endless cycles of violent conflicts for over six decades. Violent conflicts in the Kano metropolis have a long trajectory dating back to 1953 when the first politically inspired violence took place. During these conflicts, the *Kanawa* were perceived as the

aggressors, while the non-indigenous groups were the victims. Since 1953, there have been a series of ethno-religious and sectarian uprisings and they continued, though intermittently, up to the 2004 reprisal riot in Kano over the Shendam-Yelwa crisis in Plateau State. After the 2004 violence, there was a lull and relative peace reigned in Kano only to be disrupted by the eruption of the violence leading to many deaths and monumental loss of property.

The post-election violence in Kano in 2011 marked a clear departure from the previous violent conflicts as the rioters did not only direct their attacks (as previously the case) on the non-indigenous groups such as the Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, Southern, Middle belt Christians and non-indigenous Muslims, but also on the Kano traditional institution, prominent politicians and members of the ruling Peoples` Democratic Party (PDP) including those they perceived to be supporters of President Goodluck Jonathan. Previous violent conflicts in Kano have been studied by scholars whose works enrich our knowledge, but what remains to be studied is the post-election violence that took place in Kano in 2011 which marked a turning point in the history of violence in the city.

Kano Metropolis: The Site of Violent Conflicts

Located in the North-west region, Kano is the largest commercial and industrial centre in northern Nigeria. The residents are predominantly Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups. It hosts other ethnic groups from the North-Central region such as Nupe, Igala, Igbira, Tiv, and Idoma and non-Muslim migrant groups such as the Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, Ijaw, and Urhobo in southern Nigeria.¹ Population pressure and high rents in Sabon-Gari have made some persons of average incomes reside in areas like Brigade, Kurna Asabe Kwanar Jaba and even localities outside the city. Other wealthy Igbo who perceive Sabon-Gari as a slum, reside in low-density areas like Bompai, Nassarawa, Gyadi-Gyadi, and Zoo Road. About 95 per cent of Igbos and other non-indigenous populations reside in Sabon-Gari.² Kano metropolis covers an estimated area of 499 sq. km and has eight (8) local government areas namely: Kano Municipal, Fagge, Dala, Gwale, Nassarawa, Tarauni, Ungogo and Kumbotso. It has an estimated population of 2, 288,861 million.³ The present

¹ O. Albert, *Inter-Ethnic Relations in a Nigerian City. A Historical Perspective of the Hausa-Igbo Conflicts in Kano, 1953-1991*. (Ibadan: IFRA Occasional Publication), No.2, 1993, 34-35.

² Albert, *Inter-Ethnic Relations in a Nigerian City*, 42.

³ National Population Commission, 2006 as cited in A.I. Kabuga, *Contemporary Issues in Urban Kano*, Vol.1. (Kano: Hallmark Publishing Nigeria Ltd., 2013), 11.

population of Kano is put at 4.384,861 million people.⁴ A significant percentage of trade, commerce and industries in Kano State are concentrated within the Kano metropolis.

Overview of Previous Violent Conflicts in Kano Metropolis, 1953-2004

Kano is known to be a site of violent conflicts in Northern Nigeria. Kano has witnessed periods of cycles of violence and relative peace. The trajectory of conflicts in Kano dates back to 1953 when the first politically motivated urban riot broke out in the Kano metropolis. Conflicts in urban Kano had assumed inter-ethnic, inter-religious and sectarian colourations. The 1953 inter-ethnic crisis was caused by local grievances against the migrant southern groups in the Sabon-Gari settlement in Kano. It started when a motion was moved on the floor of the Federal Parliament in Lagos by Chief Anthony Enahoro a member of the Yoruba-dominated Action Group (AG) calling for Nigeria's independence in 1956. The Hausa and Fulani-dominated Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) was opposed to the motion because, in their views, they considered Nigeria not yet fully prepared for the attainment of self-government. The Southern politicians openly denigrated and mocked the Northern politicians in Lagos and other cities in the Western region casting them as stooges and puppets of the British colonial authorities. In May 1953, Northern politicians organized a mass protest in Kano against Chief Ladoke Akintola and other Action Group party members during their tour of Kano the protest turned violent and many Igbo and Yorubas in Sabon-Gari were affected. It was reported that twenty-one persons lost their lives, while seventy-one people sustained injuries. In the crisis that took place after the 1966 coup, many Igbos lost their lives in Sabon-Gari.⁵

The January 15, 1966 coup d'état led by Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu led to the killing of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister and Sir Ahmadu Bello (Sarduna of Sokoto), the Premier of Northern Nigeria and other northern leaders. The new Head of State, General Ironsi

⁴ Kano, Nigeria Metro Area Population 1950-2023 | MacroTrends. Retrieved from www.macrotrends.net > cities > kano > population. Accessed on August 20, 2013.

⁵ Albert, "Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Kano" in O. Otite & I. Albert, (eds.), *Community Conflicts in Nigeria: Management, Resolution and Transformation*. (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2nd edition, 2004), 282. See also, Northern Regional Government, *Report on the Kano Disturbance 16th, 17th, 18th & 19th May 1953*, as cited in J. Nwaka, *Dynamism of Conflict in Kano: Response to a Threatened Identity*. A paper presented at the Berlin Roundtables on "Urban Planet: Collective Identities, Government and Empowerment in Megacities", Social Science Center, Berlin (WZB), (10-16 June, 2008).

non-trial of the coup plotters, of which the majority were mostly Igbos and later the promulgation of the Unification Decree, generated northern hostilities against the Igbo. The Northerners interpreted the Unification Decree as an attempt by the Igbo, to dominate the country and they protested in Kaduna, Zaria and Kano. This spectre of Igbo domination triggered the 1966 pogrom in the north leading to the killing of Igbos and the destruction of their property. On March 29th 1966, the rioters attacked Sabon-Gari killing between 100 and 200 Igbo. In the July 1966 counter-coup by some Northern army officers, many Igbos lost their lives in Kano, Kaduna, and Zaria.⁶

The 1980s witnessed eruptions of intra-religious and inter-religious crises in Kano. The Maitatsine uprising in Kano in 1980 spread to other parts of Northern Nigeria. It was directed against the state authorities and victims cutting across ethnic and religious divides. Although the uprising was put down by security forces, an estimated 4,177 lives were lost in Kano alone.⁷ The 1982 Fagge religious crisis was a Muslim reaction against the ascendancy of Christianity in Kano and prevented the rebuilding of a dilapidated church in the area. Four churches were burnt, and cars and property were vandalized.⁸ There was a Muslim protest over a planned crusade by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Kano State chapter to host a German preacher, Reverend Reinhard Bonke in 1991 in which many Christians in Sabon-Gari and neighbourhoods.¹⁰

The beheading of a Igbo man, Gideon Akaluka by some Shiite fundamentalists at Bompai prison where he was awaiting trial caused the 1994 conflict. The Shiites believed that he was desecrating the Koran.¹¹ The 1995 riot was caused by a scuffle between Mr Arthur Nwankwo, an Igbo and Mallam Abubakar Abdu, a Hausa. The quarrel later degenerated into an ethnic conflict in which many people were killed, others wounded and cars burnt. The 1996/1997 sectarian uprisings were carried out by the Shiite extremist sect led by Ibrahim El Zakzaky and orthodox

⁶ Albert, "Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Kano", 282.

⁷ T. Fagge, "Boko Haram: A militant Uprising of a Muslim Organisation" in B. Ahmad & I. Abdussalam (eds.), *Resurgent Nigeria: Issues in Nigerian Intellectual History*. A Festschrift in Honour of Dahiru Yahya. (Ibadan: University Press Plc, 2011,) 155.

⁸ A. Ekoko, & I. Amadi, "Religion and Stability in Nigeria" in J. Atanda, et al (eds.), *Nigeria Since Independence: The First Twenty-Five Years*. (Ibadan: Heinemann, 1989). See also Albert, 291.

¹⁰ I. Albert, *Inter-Ethnic Relations in a Nigerian City. A Historical Perspective of the Hausa-Igbo Conflicts in Kano, 1953-1991*. (Ibadan: IFRA Occasional Publication,) No.2, 1993, 15-16.

¹¹ *Newswatch*, February 6, 1995.

Muslims.¹² The United States' invasion of Afghanistan after the terrorists attacked the World Trade Centre and Pentagon in New York on September 11, 2001, led to reprisal attacks on Christians in Kano. In 2004, another ethno-religious reprisal attack erupted in Kano. The Yelwa-Shendam conflicts in Plateau State gave rise to reprisal attacks on Christians and migrant populations residing in the predominantly indigenous Muslim areas of Kano.¹³

Historical Perspective of Post-Election Violence in Nigeria

The eruption of violence after elections is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria and its outbreak is traceable to the colonial period in 1953 when the first riot broke out in Kano. Post-election violence denotes a form of electoral violence that erupted after polling (voting), usually during or after the collation and declaration of election results. It usually begins from the polling centres and may tend to spread thereafter.¹⁴ It normally begins from the collation and announcement of election results to litigation and settlement of election disputes. According to a report from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), it stated that post-election violence is usually caused by issues that emanate before and during elections. And it manifests in different forms which involve attacks on rival candidates, party officials and supporters; as well as violent street protests.¹⁵ Post-election violence could also manifest in the form of shootings, killings, arson, and wanton destruction of property, usually perpetrated by officials and/or supporters of political parties.¹⁶

Historically, the post-election violence in Nigeria began in 1953. It also took place in the 1964-1965 general elections through the 1983 elections which were annulled by General Ibrahim Babaginda to the 2011 elections. It was estimated that over 5000 persons lost their lives hundreds of thousands were displaced and property of immeasurable value was lost during the post-election violence.¹⁷ The remote and immediate causes of post-election violence vary, depending on the

¹² I. Albert, "Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Kano", 286.

¹³ The author witnessed the reprisal attacks against migrant Christians in Kano in 2004.

¹⁴ N. Orji & N. Uzodi, *Post Election Violence in Nigeria, Experiences with the 2011 Elections*, Abuja: Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre), 10-11.

¹⁵ *United Nations Development Programme*, (2009), 22.

¹⁶ *United Nations Development Programme*, (2009), 22.

¹⁷ M. Adoke, "Stemming Electoral Violence in Nigeria: A Focus on the Adequacy of the Law and its Enforcement", *Vanguard*, September 8, (2011).

magnitude of their occurrence, but all are characterised by common factors such as ethnic politics, inter-and intra-community conflicts, and distrust among communities. Others include the culture of impunity, poverty, poor electoral justice system, intra-political party rivalries, politics of bitterness and misguided inflammatory utterances and rhetoric by politicians among others.¹⁸ The media has played a major role in the eruption of post-election violence due to their unethical and unprofessional sensational reporting of violent conflicts. It has contributed to fanning the embers of violence and outbreaks of reprisal attacks in various parts of the country.

Prelude to 2011 Post-Election Violence

Before the 2007 elections, Nigeria's political landscape was pervaded by a tense atmosphere. This was exacerbated by misguided utterances from politicians including President Obasanjo's declaration during electioneering campaigns that the 2007 elections would be a do-or-die affair".²⁰ The degree of electoral malpractices and flaws that characterised the conduct of the 2007 elections greatly affected the image and integrity of the electoral umpire. Besides, the Professor Maurice Iwu-led Independent National Election Commission (INEC) instead of ensuring adequate preparations for the elections became involved in unnecessary litigations with candidates of the opposition political parties in its attempts to screen and disqualify candidates.²¹ This made the April 2007 elections grossly flawed with astonishing 6,180 cases of political violence after the elections.²² A total of 1,250 election petitions were recorded; with the presidential election having 8 cases, the governorship 105, the Senate 150, the House of Representatives 331, and the State House of Assembly 656.²³ Governorship election results were annulled in Kogi, Edo, Kebbi, Sokoto, Adamawa, Ekiti and Ondo states. The Election Tribunals ordered a re-run of elections in

¹⁸ B. Dudley, *Introduction to Nigeria Government and Politics*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 37; See also E.K. Enejo, "Elections in Nigeria, 1999-2009: Issues and Challenges", 86.

²⁰ Orji & Uzodi, *Post Election Violence in Nigeria*, 54.

²¹ V. Egwemi, "A Decade of Political Party Activities in Nigeria, 1999-2009: The Road to a One Party State (?)" in V. Egwemi (ed.) *A Decade of Democracy in Nigeria, 1999-2009. Issues, Challenges and Prospects of Consolidation*. (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers), 164; See J.S. Omotola, "Electoral Governance and the Democratization Process in Nigeria Under the Fourth Republic", in V. Egwemi (ed.) *A Decade of Democracy in Nigeria*, 71; S. Adejomobi, "When Votes Do Not Count: The 2007 General Elections in Nigeria" News from Nordic African Institute, No.2, May, 14-15, (2007) as cited in J.S. Omotola, "Electoral Governance", 71.

²² J. S. Omotola, "Electoral Governance and the Democratisation Process in Nigeria under the Fourth Republic" in V. Egwemi, (ed.) *A Decade of Democracy in Nigeria, 1999- 2009*. (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2010), 71.

²³ K. Lawal, "2007 Elections: Courts Receive 1,180 Cases" as cited in cited in Omotola, "Electoral Governance and the Democratisation, 73.

which the PDP won. However, in the re-run elections in Edo and Ondo states, the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) and the Labour Party won. Mr Rotimi Chubuike Amaechi won the PDP governorship primaries in Rivers State but was denied nomination based on President Obasanjo's declaration that his nomination had "K-leg", (Amaechi's nomination was done in error) and was later reinstated by the Supreme Court.²⁴

Umaru Musa Yar`adua won the 2007 presidential election under the platform of the ruling People's Democratic Party, (PDP). Despite the victory at the polls, President, Umaru Musa Yar`adua stated that the elections that brought him to power were grossly flawed. In his inaugural speech, President Yar`adua affirmed his administration's commitment to entrench the rule of law and carry out electoral reforms. The irregularities in the elections and the attendant violent conflicts that erupted afterwards intensified agitations for electoral reforms from Nigerians including the Nigeria Labour Congress, (NLC), the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Civil Society Groups and other non-state actors and stakeholders. These developments helped greatly in building and restoring public trust and confidence in the coming elections in April 2011.

President Goodluck Jonathan who took the reins of power on the death of President Yar`adua in June 2010, initiated electoral reforms by setting up the Electoral Reform Committee chaired by the retired Chief Justice of the Federation, Justice Mohammed Uwais. The committee was tasked inter-alia to improve the conduct of elections, restore the electoral integrity and strengthen democratic governance in Nigeria". Some of the recommendations of the Electoral Reform Committee were reviewed and incorporated into the Electoral Act as Amended. The appointment of Prof Attahiru Jega, a former Vice-Chancellor of Bayero University, Kano as the chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) by President Goodluck Jonathan also lends credibility to the electoral body. The commitment of INEC leadership under Professor Attahiru Jega and the support it received from the Federal government under President Goodluck in terms of disbursing adequate funds to the electoral commission enhanced the success of the 2011 elections which was adjudged as credible, free and fair by the local and international elections

²⁴ Aiyede, "Electoral Laws and the 2007 Elections in Nigeria", as cited in Omotola, "Electoral Governance",73.

observers.²⁵ This is evident in the minimal cases of litigation after the polls as compared to the 2007 elections.

The 2011 Post-Election Violence in Kano Metropolis

The Presidential election of April 16, 2011, was the fourth presidential election since the return to democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999. Unlike the previous elections which were marred by massive electoral irregularities, the 2011 elections were considered to be the most organized and credible.²⁶ Despite these observations, on April 17, 2011, Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) supporters protested in some Northern cities. The protests escalated and turned violent in 12 northern states beginning from Bauchi, Gombe and spreading to Borno, Yobe, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, Adamawa and Niger where youth mobs burnt homes, vehicles and properties of the PDP stalwarts. Prominent politicians and traditional leaders who were believed to have supported President Goodluck Jonathan and the ruling party were attacked. The rioters also killed those they considered to be supporters of the PDP. Many churches were burnt across Northern Nigerian cities. As the riots spread, reprisal attacks took place in Kaduna as the youth mob in the predominately Christian part of Southern Kaduna attacked Muslims.²⁷

The identifiable causes of the post-election violence in Northern Nigeria in 2011 include poor election management and doubts about the credibility of the elections by opposition candidates/parties, mobilization of youth protesters, insecurity, unrestrained outbursts and remarks by some politicians and their supporters, ethnic and regional tensions and shifts in power relations among political parties.²⁸ The immediate cause of the post-election violence was a dispute over succession after the passing on of President Umaru Musa Yar`adua, the northern political leaders under the auspices of Northern Elders Forum pressurized Goodluck Jonathan not to contest for the presidency in the coming elections in 2011. Under the ruling PDP zoning arrangement, the major

²⁵ See Omotola, "Electoral Governance, 73.

²⁶ J. Paden, *Post-Election Conflict Management in Nigeria. The Challenges of National Unity*. Monograph Series, Vol. 1 School for Conflict Analysis & Resolution. (Washington: George Mason University, 2012), 22-23.

²⁷ *European Union EUOM 2011* as cited in Orji & Uzodi, *Post Election Violence in Nigeria*, p.

²⁸ M. Maduagwu, "Electoral Violence and the Challenges of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: Lessons From the April Post-Election Violence in Northern Nigeria", in Habu Mohammed (ed.), *Nigeria's Convulsive Federalism Perspectives on Flash Points of Conflict in Northern Nigeria*, (ed.) H. Mohammed. (Ibadan: Cypress Concepts & Solution Ltd., 2012), p. 249. See also Human Rights Watch, 2011. *Nigeria: Post-Election Violence Killed 800*, Washington, D.C. Available at www.hrw.org/news/2011/05/16/nigeria-post-election-violence-killed-800. Retrieved on August 25, 2013.

political offices including the presidency are supposed to rotate between the North and South, but President Goodluck Jonathan ignored the zoning principle and contested the presidential election. This angered the leaders of northern extraction and supporters of the north-dominated political party, the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) in the 12 northern states as they felt cheated out of office.²⁹ The summary of April 16, 2011, the presidential election results in the 36 states of the federation and Abuja, as released by the National Independent Electoral Commission (INEC), showed that President Goodluck Jonathan won a majority of votes with 22.5 million representing 59% and also met the constitutional requirement of securing 25% in at least one-third of all the states (that is he secured 31 states) while Buhari had 12.2 million representing 32% of the total votes and secured 25% of the votes from 16 states, mostly in the north. Mallam Nuhu Ribadu of ACN had 1.2 million votes.³⁰

Perpetrators

The identity of those who planned/organized, instigated and carried out the post-election violence is an issue that has attracted intense debate among scholars and pundits. This makes it difficult to get an accurate profile of the perpetrators of the post-election violence in 2011. However, over the years, "thugs" or "youth mob" have been identified as among the perpetrators of electoral violence, particularly Northern in Nigeria.³¹ Extremist and illicit groups have been identified to be among the participants of election violence.³² These violent groups pervade every part of the country including northern Nigeria, where there is an army of unemployed folks who constitute willing protesters and who are easily mobilized and manipulated by political and religious elites during civil uprisings.

²⁹ For details on the causes of 2011 post-election violence in Nigeria see J. Paden, *Postelection Conflict Management in Nigeria, The Challenges of National Unity*. Monograph Series. Vol.1. School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. (Washington: George Mason University, 2012), 13-40.

³⁰ J. Paden, *Post-Election Conflict Management in Nigeria*. See also Michel Maduagwu, "Electoral Violence", 244-245.

³¹ 2011 Presidential Election Result Released by the National Independent Electoral Commission (INEC), Abuja. Retrieved from [Nigeria Presidential Election Results - Jonathan Leads in S-West](#). Accessed on June 5, 2015.

³² *Human Rights Watch, 2011*. See Orji & Uzodi, *Post Election Violence in Nigeria*, 11 & 39.

Among the violent groups were *Yandaba*, *Yanjagaliya*, *Yanbanga*, and *Yantauri*.³³ *Yandaba* comprises the unemployed urban youth gang that engaged in criminality and other nefarious activities. They direct their attacks on individuals who they perceive as being part of the hostile society that has made life difficult for them.³⁴ They are believed to be the most notorious organized violent group in Kano, a mainly political vanguard whose emergence is traceable to the First Republic and even became more visible in the Second Republic. They are groups of miscreants and subalterns who use dangerous weapons to terrorize their opponents or any other people in their communities.³⁵ *Yanbanga* are professional political party thugs/bodyguards recruited by political party leaders to terrorize and intimidate their opponents.³⁶ They were used by the political parties during campaign tours of all the local government areas of Kano State in previous elections including the 2007 and 2011 elections.³⁷ *Yanjagaliya* is made up of miscreants who engage in gangsterism and other deviant behaviours. They are easily mobilized by politicians and used to unleash mayhem and intimidate their opponents during elections. *Yautauri* is a group of hooligans who are said to be immune to harm or injury to iron or any metallic objects such as knives.³⁸ They are believed to have participated in the 2011 post-election conflict in Kano.³⁹ *Almajirai* is the peripatetic urban poor who migrate from the rural areas to Kano city in search of knowledge. The fact that they were separated from their parents at a very tender age in the

³³ B. Umar, "Urban Gangs (*Yandaba*) and Security in Kano State: A Review of Trends and Challenges" in A. U. Adamu (ed.), *Chieftaincy and Security in Nigeria: Past, Present and Future*. (Kano: Research and Documentation Directorate, Kano State, 2003), 378.

³⁴ For details of youth involvement in violent conflicts in Northern Nigeria see Y.Z. Ya`u, "The Youth, Economic Crisis and Identity Transformation: The Case of *Yandaba* in Kano" in Jega (ed.), *Identity Transformation and Identity Politics Under Structural Adjustment Programme in Nigeria*. (Kano: Centre for Research and Documentation, Kano, 2000); B. Umar, "Urban Gangs (*Yandaba*) and Security in Kano State; Albert, "Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Kano" in O. Otitte & I. Albert, (eds.), *Community Conflicts in Nigeria*, M. Lawan, "The Implications of Youth and Urban Violence on Nigeria's Corporate Existence" in *Kano Journal of History*, Volume 1, No.2 (December 2014), Department of History, Bayero University, Kano.

³⁵ B. Umar. "Urban Gangs (*Yandaba*) and Security in Kano State, 379.

³⁶ Y.Z. Ya`u, "The Youth, Economic Crisis and Identity Transformation: The Case of *Yandaba* in Kano" in Jega (ed.), *Identity Transformation and Identity Politics Under Structural Adjustment Programme in Nigeria*, Nordic African Institute, (Uppsala, Sweden/Centre for Research and Documentation, Kano, 2000), 162.

³⁷ S. Koki, "Intimidation in Kano Society: The Impact of *Yanjagaliya* and *Yandaba/Yanbanga* in Politics from 2003-2011". A Masters` Seminar Paper presented in the Department of History, Bayero University, Kano, 2013, 21.

³⁸ Koki, "Intimidation in Kano Society", 4-6.

³⁹ "Presidential Election Fallout: North Boils", *Nigerian Tribune*, April 19, (2011), 2.

villages made them willing tools in the hands of the political and religious elites who mobilized them during violent conflicts in Kano.⁴⁰

The groups mentioned above also participated actively during the 2011 post-election violence. But Kano State authorities, media and residents have been reluctant to divulge the identity of the perpetrators of the violent conflicts and their sponsors who used them to perpetrate violence for their parochial interests. They often blame the perpetrators of the violence on foreigners or *Yandaba*. Prominent Kano politicians have blamed the perpetrators of a series of mayhem in Kano on the *Almajirai*, casting them as mainly illegal youth aliens who came to obtain Quranic education and missionary work.⁴¹ The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) boss, Mohammed Sidi stated that not less than 100 people were arrested in connection with the crisis but did not give/disclose the identity of arrested persons to the public. Most Kano indigenes did not take part in the conflict as they protected some of their migrant non-Muslim friends, neighbours and business partners from the rioters. They condemned the incessant eruption of conflicts in Kano and attacks on non-indigenes by the perpetrators.⁴²

Although no individual or group of persons or violent groups was indicted for causing the mayhem by Federal and Kano State authorities, it was widely reported in the media that the post-election violence was begun by the defunct Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) stalwarts and their supporters who mobilized large pool of willing protesters, mostly unemployed youths, hooligans and other violent irate groups to attack PDP secretariats and offices of other parties at the ward and local government areas in Kano metropolis.⁴³ Despite wide speculation in some quarters and media reports, the Sheik Ahmed Lemu-led Presidential Panel constituted by the Federal government after the violence to investigate among other things, the causes of the

⁴⁰ *Kano State Government, 1995*, as cited in Yau, "The Youth, Economic Crisis, 174.

⁴¹ K. Oyelere, July 5, 2011 "Kano CAN Lost 4 Members, N3bn Property in Post-Election Violence". Retrieved from <http://www.gbooza.com/group/crime/forum/topic/listForTag?tag=violence>. Accessed on May 25, 2012.

⁴² T. Agbaje, "Post-Election Violence Displaces 10,000 in Kano", April 22, (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.nigerianpro.com/content/post-election-violence-displaces-10000-kano> Accessed on September 3, 2013.

⁴³ Most national dailies reported that the 2011 post-election violence was caused by inflammatory statements/remarks by General Muhammadu Buhari and the mayhem was carried out by CPC supporters and sympathizers.

violence absolved the CPC and General Buhari from causing the violence. The panel did not indict anybody.⁴⁴

Scale and Target of Attacks

The sporadic outbreak of the post-presidential election violence in Kano and other Northern cities in 2011 was unique in terms of the nature of the targets of attacks which affected politicians, their supporters and other civilians irrespective of their ethnic and religious persuasions and regional divisions. The youth mob in a spontaneous reaction attacked non-indigenous groups such as the Igbo, Yoruba and other Northern and Middle-Belt Christians as well as the revered Kano traditional institutions: Emir's palace and residence of *Galadiman* Kano, Alhaji Tijjani Hashim. Others were the prominent and middle-level members of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and ANPP and perceived supporters of President Goodluck Jonathan. The residences of the former Kano State Governor, Dr Rabiu Musa Kwakwanso (while he was in PDP before decamping to APC in 2014), former Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria, (later the Emir of Kano before his deposition) Mallam Sanusi Lamido, former Minister of National Planning, Dr Shamsudeen Usman, former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Ghali Na` abba, including the elder statesman, Alhaji Tanko Yakassai, and Alhaji Salisu Buhari, (the presidential campaign coordinator of the Goodluck/Sambo in Kano State) were attacked by the rioters.⁴⁵ The residences of other PDP stalwarts such as Alhaji Bako Saria Alhaji Abba Dabo and Bamaina Aluminium Factory owned by Sule Lamido, Jigawa State governor were also attacked.⁴⁶ A vehicle and residential houses of Alhaji Bashir Tofa, a member of the defunct All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) were vandalized.⁴⁷ Kano State PDP and ANPP secretariats were burnt, but that of Congress of Progressive Change, (CPC) was spared.⁴⁸

In various sections of the Kano metropolis like Dala, Gwale, Fagge, Taurani, and Kumbotso roadblocks were mounted and the rioters requested the commuters to identify their

⁴⁴ *Daily Trust*, April 19, 2012, 2, *Guardian*, April 6, 2012, *Sun* April 19, (2012), 6.

⁴⁵ B. Oladeji, "We Never Indicted Buhari-Lemu", *Leadership* Newspaper as cited in Maduagu, 250-251. For full details see Sheik Ahmed Lemu Presidential Panel Report.

⁴⁶ *Nigerian Tribune* April 19, (2012), 2. See also *Thisday*, April 19, 2012, 19.

⁴⁷ *Daily Trust*, April 19, (2011), 2, See also *Guardian* April 19, (2011), 6 and *Sun* April 19, (2011), 9.

⁴⁸ Observation by the researcher during the violence in Kano.

faiths. While the indigenous Muslims were allowed to continue their journey, those they suspected to be non-indigenes of Kano or southerners, mostly Christians from Southern and Middle Belt regions they perceived to be PDP supporters were killed.⁴⁹ In Muslim-dominated locations like Dakata, Badawa, Naibawa, Gingiyu, Hotoro, Ungwar-Uku, Kurna-Asabe, Brigade, Panshekara, Dorayi, Kabuga and Rijar Zaki rioters set up bonfires burning their residential houses and movable properties of migrant groups.

In Badawa and Naibawa areas, many non-indigenous groups lost their lives, and their churches and residential houses were burnt. The United Methodist Church at Badawa was burnt down and four of its worshippers were killed. Most of them were physically assaulted and they suffered different degrees of injuries from cuts from cutlasses, daggers and other dangerous weapons. Many shops and businesses owned by migrant groups or those perceived as Christians were vandalized and looted.⁵⁰ A foam manufacturing factory owned by a Igbo businessman at Ring Road, Yankaba was burnt down.⁵¹ Protesters' attempts to enter Sabon-Gari were dispelled by the military and police who took positions at strategic entering points into Sabon-Gari. A few Sabon-Gari residents who were affected were those who were caught up either on their way to work or businesses outside Sabon-Gari.

Some members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), who were recruited by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as ad hoc staff in their areas of primary assignment were attacked. Being non-indigenes, it was believed that the corps members' non-partisanship would enhance the credibility of elections. The fact that most of the youth corps deployed to northern states were non-indigenous Christians from southern states made them vulnerable to attacks. Eyewitnesses confirmed that two female NYSC members were said to have been beheaded at Hotoro and Badawa parts of the Kano metropolis.⁵² However, the Kano State NYSC secretariat could not provide the identity of the corps members who lost their lives during the conflict.⁵³ It could be that the affected corps members were those who left the neighbouring

⁴⁹ See also Desmond Mgboh and Ebije, "Week of Blood", *Sunday Sun*, April 19, 2004 p.3.

⁵⁰ Oral information from Mrs Uche Okonkwo (not her real name). Her husband's factory is located close to the Igbo owned factory burnt by the rioters at Maiduguri road.

⁵¹ *Daily Sun*, April, 22, 7 & 24, 7, 2011. See also *Vanguard*, April 23, 2011, *Daily Trust*, April 22, 2011, 9. See also *Guardian*, 20, 12. 2011.

⁵² Interview with Mrs Uche Okonkwo.

⁵³ Oral information from residents at Badawa and Hadieja Road, Kano on July 15, (2013).

Northeastern states for their safety in Kano. This is unlike in Bauchi and Niger States, where it was reported that over sixty youth corps members lost their lives.⁵⁴ The rioters also invaded the female students' hostels at the Federal College of Education, Kabuga, Kano, though there were no cases of sexual abuse and rape.⁵⁵ An informant, a resident in the area, confirmed the invasion of the Federal College of Education by protesters but they were dispersed by the anti-riot policemen.⁵⁶

The police and military made efforts to quell and contain the rioters, many lives were lost. Human Rights Watch estimated that 800 people died during the violence in Northern Nigeria.⁵⁷ Testifying at the Sheikh Ahmed Lemu Post-Election Violence Presidential Panel in Kano, the President of the Christian Association Nigeria (CAN) Kano State chapter, Bishop Ransom Bello stated that it lost four of its members, while property worth over N3 billion was set ablaze. Identities of the four persons who lost their lives were given as Emmanuel Kure, Musa Kure and Nehemiah Danjuma Kano of the United Methodist Church and Samson Ogbakadje of Christ Chosen Church in Badawa.⁵⁸ Bishop Bello's testimony debunked the statement made by Dan'Azumi Doma, the Kano State Commissioner of Police. He was reported to have informed Mohammed Sidi-led Special Presidential Committee on the Plight of Displaced People in Kano State that although properties were destroyed and many people were injured, no life was lost in the state.⁵⁹ Dan'Azumi Doma's claim that no death was recorded during the violence was debunked by Bishop Bello including a report issued by the Human Rights Watch. The exact number of people killed during the violence is not certain. It is believed that a considerable number of persons lost their lives.

The uncharacteristic pattern of execution of the 2011 violence in Kano and other northern Nigeria was different from the previous conflicts in the region. Though the violence affected the Kano traditional institution, prominent ruling party stalwarts, eminent politicians and elder

⁵⁴ Information from Mallam Tukur, a staff of National Youth Service Corps, (NYSC) Kano State on 5th May, (2015).

⁵⁵ I. Michael, "Tears as Corpses of Slain 'Corpers' Leave Bauchi", *Sunday Tribune*, May 1, 2011, as cited in Orji & Uzodi, *Post Election Violence in Nigeria*, (2012), 42.

⁵⁶ D. Mgboh and N. Ebije, "Week of Blood" in *Sunday Sun*, April 24, (2011), 7.

⁵⁷ Interview with Adamu Ahmed, 45 years (not real name) on June 10, (2013).

⁵⁸ *Human Rights Watch*, (2011).

⁵⁹ K. Oyelere, "Kano CAN Lost 4 Members, N3bn Property in Post-election Violence" July 5, (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.gbooz.com/group/crime/forum/topics/kano-can-lost-4-members-n3bn#ixzz2KPPUzczf> . Accessed on September 8, 2013.

statesmen in Kano State and other northern states, it had some elements of political, ethnic and religious dimensions. The killing and destruction of property belonging to the non-indigenous communities during the conflict in Kano has been attributed to the failure of security agents to effectively intervene and contain the rioters. In its memorandum to the Post-Election Violence Panel of Inquiry, the *Ohaneze Ndigbo* Kano State chapter stated that some of the non-indigenes residing in indigenous areas were subjected to harrowing experiences during the crisis and decried the open display of solidarity for the rioters by the police. The memorandum added that non-indigenes, particularly Igbos lost an estimated sum of N1.7 billion. The President of *Ohaneze Ndigbo* Kano chapter, Chief Tobias Idika, while giving details of the killings and wanton destruction of property by the rioters maintained that the mayhem was pre-meditated as evident from the utterances of politicians and rioters. He stated that the police were sympathetic to the rioters, who (the police) believed were fighting for a common "cause" and therefore, collaborated with the rioters to perpetrate their heinous crime.⁶⁰ Chief Idika's narrative goes thus:

Sometimes some victims would run to the police for protection and they would chase them back to their predators. Sometimes you see the police themselves chanting "Sai Buhari" and you are confused, as you cannot know which is which again.⁶¹

Commenting on police complicity in violent conflicts in Nigeria, a source noted that reports from observers deployed during elections showed that security agents (especially police) did not live up to expectations in the discharge of their functions of guaranteeing the safety and security of the electorate in many states.⁶²

Implications of the 2011 Post-Election Conflict on Kano Metropolis

The 2011 post-election violence had a social and economic impact on the people. It caused a lot of internal displacement in Kano and other cities in northern Nigeria. Human Rights Watch reported that 65,000 persons were forced to flee their homes during the post-election violence in

⁶⁰ T.Agbaje, "Post-Election Violence Displaces 10,000 in Kano", April 22, 2011. Retrieved from nairaland.com/652352/post-elect. Accessed on August 5, (2013).

⁶¹ Eric Ikhilae, "Post-Election Violence: Ndigbo in Kano Accuse Police of Bias", *Nation* Newspaper, July 8, 2011.

⁶² Agbaje, "Post-election Violence Displaces 10,000 in Kano."

Northern Nigeria.⁶³ On his part, the Director-General of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Mohammed Sidi maintained that 10,000 persons were displaced in Kano State.⁶⁴ Another source reported that about 4,000 displaced persons were camped at different security locations in Kano such as Janguza and Bukavu Army Barracks, Bompai Police Barrack, Nigerian Air Force Base and Mobile Police Barracks.⁶⁵ The number of displaced persons should be higher as a significant number of non-indigenous Muslims and Christians residing in vulnerable locations sought refuge with friends and relations in Sabon-Gari where their security was relatively assured. Others were camped in churches in Sabon-Gari and Nomansland.

The violence disrupted various economic activities in the Kano metropolis and state. Various markets in the metropolis such as Sabon-Gari, Kwari, and Kofa-Ruwa were shut down. This made foodstuffs and other essential commodities such as bread, meat and water to become scarce and their prices astronomically went up. Similarly, banks, industries, trading firms and other economic activities were closed. A dawn-to-dusk curfew imposed by the Kano State government for a few days restricted people's movement. Virtually every Kano resident bore the brunt of the violence. Some of the indigenous population lost their lives, property and means of livelihood, while others constituted the displaced persons. The violence not only caused losses but also traumatized the people. With the return of normalcy, a few migrant groups that had left Kano for their home states later returned to resume their businesses.

Conclusion

The 2011 post-election violence in the Kano metropolis marked a significant shift from the waves of violent conflicts in the city. Kano is home to many immigrants from Southern and Central Nigeria like the Igbo, Yoruba, Ibibio, Ijaw, Edo, Nupe, Igala, Tiv and so on who reside mainly in Sabon-Gari (strangers quarters) in Kano. These groups have been the main targets of attacks in the previous uprisings in the city for decades right from 1953 to 1966 killing mainly the

⁶³ L.Y. Akor, "The Police and the Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria, 1999-2009" in V. Egwemi, (ed.) *A Decade of Democracy in Nigeria, 1999-2009*. 125.

⁶⁴ Omenazu & Pascal, "Nigerian Displaced Polls Violence-Red Cross", *Daily Independent* April 21, (2011), p.6 as cited in Orji & Uzodi, *Post Election Violence*, 46.

⁶⁵ T. Agbaje, "Post-Election Violence Displaces 10,000 in Kano" April 22, (2011).

Igbo and Yoruba groups. The 1980s and mid-1990s witnessed sporadic eruptions of inter-religious and intra-religious violence as evidenced in fundamentalist sects mainly the Maitatsine riot of 1980 and El-Zakzaky-led Shiites attacks on orthodox Muslims in 1996/1997. There was also a series of inter-religious violence targeted at migrant Christians leading to internal displacement and forced relocation to their homeland in southern Nigeria. During the violence, rioters attacked the revered Kano traditional authority and non-APC stalwarts by burning their residences and property. Although politically motivated, the violence is largely a reflection of rioters` disillusion and dissatisfaction with Kano`s traditional and political establishments which had been controlling and manipulating the electoral process. Although the violence was caused by complex issues rooted in national politics, the pattern of its execution in Kano was highly localized. The sporadic spread of the violence in Kano and other Northern Nigerian cities took both regional and ethnic dimensions and re-echoed the north and south dichotomy and tensions of the past. This is so because the majority of non-indigenous migrant groups and Christians were part of the main targets based on their faith, region and ethnicity.