

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE 2007 NIGERIAN GENERAL ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses public perceptions of the 2007 Nigerian general elections. It does this through a content analysis of the reports of domestic and international election monitoring groups and popular responses from civil society, opposition elements, mass media and notable individuals. The paper finds that public perceptions of the elections were highly negative. Opinions were canvassed widely, lending credibility to their validity and reliability, perceptions corroborated by the outcome of electoral petition tribunals which have nullified some elections. One inevitable conclusion was that the elections were the most flawed in the country's history. Some of the most notable irregularities were late commencement of voting, inadequate voting materials, lack of secrecy in the voting process, omission of names and/or pictures of some candidates from the ballot papers, prevalence of underage voting, ballot stuffing, rampant cases of ballot-box snatching at gun point, and falsification of results. Some actions of the new government, such as the call for a government of national unity and the institution of an electoral reform panel, suggest government's acceptance of the negative perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

For three consecutive weeks in April 2007 Nigerians participated in what should, ordinarily, have passed for a landmark achievement in the democratisation process

– the conduct of three rounds of elections. Nigerians went to the polls on 14 and 21 April to elect new political leaders at the state and federal levels. On 28 April they turned out for yet another round of elections in 27 states in which the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had, because of one irregularity or another, annulled the previous election and called for a rerun. Contrary to popular expectations, as this paper will demonstrate, the elections turned out to be a great disappointment, casting ominous shadows over the prospects for democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

The elections had attracted unprecedented local and international attention and interest for a number of reasons. The 1999 general election, which ushered in the civilian regime of President Obasanjo, was essentially aimed at disengaging the military from government. For this reason stakeholders had little time to attend to procedural details. The 2003 election, which attracted greater interest, being a second election and a further step towards consolidation of democracy, was largely a continuation of the first order (Omotola 2004).

Thus, it was the 2007 elections upon which the final hopes for the transfer of political power from one elected civilian administration to another rested. Peter Lewis, an American expert on Nigerian politics, expressed this mindset when he wrote that: 'This is really a watershed election for Nigeria. This is a third election, and third elections generally speaking turn out to be important. They signal an opportunity for change and power turnover' (Lewis 2007, quoted in Unger 2007, p 1). Given the colossal failure of previous electoral waves in Nigeria the 2007 general elections presented an opportunity 'to occasion a break with the past, and rekindle public confidence in the electoral and democratic process of the country (Adejumobi 2007, p 12).

Another important element, which probably motivated the unprecedented interest in the general elections, was the fact that prior to the elections the political atmosphere had been tendentious and tense in ways that raised fundamental questions about the independence, impartiality, and efficiency of INEC.

INEC had unconstitutionally disqualified some leading opposition candidates, most notably the Action Congress (AC) presidential candidate, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, from standing. It had also flouted court orders, with the active connivance of the presidency, which, itself, had declared that the election would be 'a do-or-die' affair.

As Omotola (2007, p 6) argues, 'the president's condescending attitude towards the elections and vulgarity of reckless campaign speeches such as his infamous and widely condemned statement that for him and his party, the PDP, the presidential election was going to be a do-or-die affair' contributed to overheating the polity and raised the level of interest in the elections among both local and external stakeholders in the democratisation process.

In this paper we set out to examine public perceptions of the general elections. This becomes imperative against the background of the suffocating political environment in which the elections were conducted. A critical dissection of such perceptions may be useful in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the elections. It may also help in designing appropriate reform measures to protect the competitiveness, openness, freedom and fairness of electoral politics in the country. If these are attained, a modest contribution will have been made towards the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria.

It is, however, important to note that this exercise is not as simple as it appears. How, for example, do we conceptualise and measure public perceptions of the elections in a way that is not only systematic but also exhaustive? How do we accommodate and account for possible changes in perceptions over time? Engaging these kinds of issues scientifically would require the availability of adequate longitudinal data. In the absence of such data this study is basically concerned with the response of the domestic and international community expressed through election monitors/observers' reports, civil society, mass media, political parties, interest groups and individuals. The paper starts with a critical discussion of how to measure public perceptions of elections. The next section problematises election monitoring as a measure of public perceptions. The third presents the responses of the public to the elections. The final section synthesises the responses

MEASURING PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

For this study our use of the term public perceptions, defined as an idea, a belief, or an image one has of reality as a result of how one sees or understands the reality, is coterminous with public opinion. Key (1989, p 151) defines public opinion as 'opinion held by private persons which governments find prudent to heed'. This definition is unnecessarily restrictive as it not only excludes institutional/official views; it creates tension about whether opinions expressed but not heeded by the government are prudent (Ojo 2004). Ripley & Slotnick (1989, p 151) rightly argue that 'government may be compelled toward action or inaction by such opinion, in other instances they may ignore it, perhaps to their peril; they may attempt to alter it, or they may divert or pacify it'. What this suggests is that the acceptance, rejection, alteration, diversion or pacification by a government of opinions expressed on a given public issue does not distract from their qualification as public opinion.

Public opinion does, however, require areas of commonality among people of different attitudes. This is so because, while attitudes help to shape opinions and each may be used as an indicator of the other people who hold similar attitudes

to a particular political issue, these people may, nevertheless, have contradictory opinions about a specific public policy dealing with the issue (Ojo 2004). Moreover, it has been argued that there is 'no opinion unless an area of common grounds lies underneath and supports the differences in opinion', defined as the expression of some public beliefs, attitudes or values (Ripley & Slotnick 1989, p 151; Aaron 1979, p 95). Public opinion/perceptions, therefore, represent opinions expressed by the public, which have considerable influences on governmental actions and/or inaction. How much influence it wields, however, depends largely on its intensity, which has to do with the number of people holding the opinion and their location in the social structure of society – upper, middle or lower class?

The task of measuring public opinion is, therefore, a difficult one and must take cognisance of the basic attributes of a good public opinion poll. These include, apart from intensity and the social status of the respondents, the saliency of the opinion, defined in terms of its prominence or weight. Others include fluidity, that is, its adaptability; volatility – how rapidly it changes; latency – visibility; and intensity – the strength of the opinion or the degree to which it is held (Ripley & Slotnick 1989, pp 149-50). The issues of the nature of an opinion, whether for or against, as well as its stability, which pertains to the consistency with which it is held over time, are also crucially important – opinions with a high degree of stability attract greater attention from the government, more so if the opinion is latent, salient, of high intensity and held by a large number of people. These criteria provide us with the benchmark against which to assess public perceptions of the 2007 general elections.

ELECTION MONITORING AS A MEASURE OF PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

The universality of election monitoring as a fundamental component of electoral politics is relatively new. The end of the Cold War and the subsequent resurgence of a third wave of democracy heralded a dramatic increase in the number of countries holding competitive elections and a commensurate increase in the number of organisations involved in monitoring.

The reason for monitoring is to identify universal standards of electoral practice and to assess the extent to which different states live up to these standards (Goodwill-Gill 1994). In Nigeria, for example, while there had been sporadic attempts to monitor elections in the past, such efforts, until recently, merely constituted a part of the state's electoral machine. The 'professionalisation' of election monitoring in Nigeria coincided with Babangida's transition programme and was instituted through the efforts of local and international observer groups, especially the Civil Liberty Organisation (CLO) (Obi & Abatudu 1999; Olukotun 2003).

As a concept, election monitoring has to do with the relationship between the government and the governed (Laakso 2002). It is a decisive step in the democratisation process, which involves a critical observation of the electoral process to promote and determine the extent of compliance with universally acceptable standards of electoral politics. Election 'observers are like intermediaries between the state and society' (Omotola 2006, p 157). They serve as representatives of independent domestic and international organisations and carry out their work at the invitation (voluntary or induced) of the host country. If properly instituted, election monitoring may serve to enhance the legitimacy of governments. The UN Electoral Assistance Division (Mair 1997, quoted in Baker 2002, p 1156) states the objective of election monitoring as:

To serve as a neutral witness expressing the international community's support for the democratic process, to detect and expose fraud and irregularities; to assess the relative legitimacy of an electoral process itself, to enhance the respect for political, civil and other fundamental human rights; to make an official public assessment of the election; and to encourage political contestants to accept the results of a legitimate electoral process.

The exercise is widely held to be the best method of awarding a seal of democratic legitimacy (Carother 1997; Angling 1998; Ayoade 1999). According to Baker (2002, p 1156), the certification by election monitoring groups that 'an election is free and fair is usually sufficient for the citizens of the nation and the international community to accept the elected government as legitimate'. The import of this is that the direction of the pronouncement/reports of election monitoring groups may be, to a very large extent, a reflection of the perceptions of the wider population.

This is especially so when such groups are highly regarded by the domestic and international community and wield considerable influence. For these and related reasons the reports of election monitors, despite their apparent lack of force of law, occupy an important position in the calculations of the emergent government, no matter how much it might strive to feign indifference to such reports.

The positive reading of election monitoring as a measure of domestic and international public opinion, however, falls into the trap of the liberal conception of civil society, which believes that voluntary social and political associations such as monitoring groups are best able to limit state powers and hold governments accountable (Ikelegbe 2001; Omotola 2005). Such assumptions gloss over the limitations and inherent contradictions of civil society, which may hinder

their effectiveness. It is over this point that the definition of election monitoring as a measure of public opinion about or perceptions of an election stumbles. In Nigeria, for example, there are many limits to election monitoring.

First, reports emanating from different monitoring groups frequently conflict, even when the groups monitor the same electoral process. Second, frequently too few fieldworkers are deployed to undertake comprehensive coverage and what is reported is often a reflection of 'eye-catching incidents' in the few urban centres observed. Third, the political economy of the transitional state is an important factor. In the event of mass poverty conflict monitors, especially local ones, are susceptible to bribes, while conflict-ridden areas become no-go zones.

Moreover, if the state has a vested interest in the elections it may deliberately impose restrictions on monitoring groups, including denying them accreditation, reducing the number of fieldworkers granted accreditation, or manipulating the security environment in ways that frustrate rather than motivate effective monitoring. What is more, the reports have no force in law. These possibilities raise the crucial question of the exact role of monitors in such circumstances. All these issues played out in the monitoring of the 2003 Nigerian general elections (see Omotola 2006, pp160-4; Okwechime 2003, pp 543-52).

The monitoring of the 2007 general elections would appear to have taken place in different circumstances. Despite the attempt by the state to place monumental restrictions in the path of monitoring groups through security operatives and INEC, the monitoring groups seemed determined to discharge their duties without fear or favour. The most notable example was the unsuccessful attempt by Professor Maurice Iwu, the INEC chairman, to impose a distinction between election observation and election monitoring as a basis for admission and the extent of the powers to be afforded to monitoring groups. The reports of the monitoring groups, both domestic and international, suggest a high degree of stability/consistency, intensity and saliency. What is more, the reports are coterminous with newspaper editorials and the opinions of notable Nigerians in academic, civil society, and professional associations. Even Nigerians on the lower rungs of the social ladder seem largely to have agreed with the reports of the monitoring groups. However, it seems that the greatest test of the validity of public perceptions of the 2007 elections will be the outcome of ongoing hearings of election petitions by the electoral tribunals and courts. Though these are ongoing the few cases already decided seem to lend credibility to public perceptions.

AN OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE 2007 ELECTIONS

The form and character of the 2007 general elections, both in preparation and conduct, seem to have constituted the basis of most of the public's objections.

The available evidence indicates that the elections were the most flawed in the country's electoral history, with the balance disproportionately weighted against the opposition parties.

The ruling PDP exploited and took advantage of state apparatus such as the government-owned media houses, security outfits, and INEC, whose independence and impartiality was completely compromised. Party primaries were mere jamborees from which internal party democracy was completely absent. The vast majority of voters were disenfranchised as a result of the involvement of the main stakeholders in the electoral process, including the parties, the godfathers, security operatives, and INEC in electoral violence and deliberately disorganised voters' registers. In short, the maladministration and manipulation of the elections was unprecedented (Suberu 2007; Omotola 2007). The reports of domestic and international election observers attest to this.

It may be apposite to start with the reports of the international monitors. The European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM), which consisted of 11 core team experts and 60 short-term observers drawn from 21 EU member states, submitted that:

The 2007 state and federal elections have fallen short of basic international and regional standards for democratic elections. They were marred by poor organisation, lack of essential transparency, widespread procedural irregularities, significant evidence of fraud, particularly during result collation process, voter disenfranchisement at different stages of the process, lack of equal conditions for contestants and numerous incidents of violence. As a result, the elections have not lived up to the hopes and expectations of the Nigerian people and the process cannot be considered to have been credible

EUEOM 2007; also quoted in Adejumo 2007, p12

The EU expressed disappointment that the conduct of the 2007 elections had shown no improvement over that of the 2003 elections. Speaking at a press conference, Max van den Berg, leader of the EUEOM, noted:

I can compare it, of course, with 2003 when I was the chief observer and I had expected really after a disappointing election that we would see something better now. But we have not seen that and the credibility is not there. The whole thing was not at all living up to the hopes of the Nigerian people and I would say it left them demoralized. EU observers witnessed examples of ballot box stuffing,

alteration of official result forms, stealing of sensitive polling materials, vote buying and underage voting. In many places and in a number of ways, the electoral process failed the Nigerian people.

The Week 14 May 2007, p 17

Other notable international observer groups also perceived the elections in a negative light. The National Democratic Institute (NDI), led by former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, remarked that though INEC had given itself an 80 per cent grade she would have failed the organisation. Another American observer group, the International Republican Institute, noting cases of underage voting, errors on voters' registration lists, stuffed ballot boxes, a lack of privacy for voting, falsified results, and several other irregularities, reported that the election had fallen below the standard the country had set in previous elections as well as below international standards (*The Week* 14 May 2007, p 18).

The 17 members of the Commonwealth Observer Mission also reported major delays in the commencement of voting, noting: 'The differed polling hours posed a challenge in so far as the count was concerned. Darkness fell while counting was still in progress and no provision was made to provide artificial lightening for such a contingency' (*The Week* 14 May 2007, p 18). In a related vein, the International Crisis Group (ICG) expressed serious misgivings, reporting that:

The elections in the view of Nigerians and the many international observers alike were the most poorly organized and massively rigged in the country's history. In a bitterly contentious environment, outgoing President Olusegun Obasanjo and his People's Democratic Party (PDP) acted with the unbridled desperation to ensure sweeping, winner-take-all victories, not only in the presidency and federal legislature, but also in state governorships and assemblies. Characterized as a 'do or die' battle by Obasanjo, the campaigns and elections also witnessed violence, including over 20 people killed.

ICG 30 May 2007

The report continues:

Widespread electoral malpractices and the staggering scale of falsified results were possible because of serious shortcomings with the regulatory agencies most notably the (INEC). Vigorously manipulated by the Presidency, INEC virtually abdicated its responsibility as an impartial umpire. Inefficient and non-transparent in its operations, it became an accessory to active rigging. Similarly,

the massively deployed police and other security services helped curb violence but largely turned blind eyes to, and in some cases helped in, the brazen falsification of results

ICG 30 May 2007

If the reports of international monitoring groups can be said to have political undertones, as the Nigerian government would have us believe, those of local observer groups were no different, all of them expressing dissatisfaction with the conduct of the elections. The Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), the most credible of the local monitors, for example, which deployed about 50 000 observers across the country, said in its report that the irregularities were so numerous and far reaching that the elections could not be said to have met any standards.

Our monitors throughout the country documented numerous lapses, irregularities and electoral malpractices that characterized the election in many states. We therefore reject it and call for its cancellation. INEC has failed woefully in its responsibility to conduct free and fair elections. We call on the international community not to recognize these discredited elections and not to confer legitimacy on any government that emerges therefrom.

The Week 14 May 2007, p 19

The problems were so serious that the coalition of local monitoring groups under the aegis of the Domestic Election Observation Groups (DEOG) called for the outright cancellation of the 14 April elections in 10 states, based on what they called 'irregularities and intimidation of voters and opponents'. They contended that 'the level of violence, intimidation and ballot box snatching that took place in these states is so grievous that the results announced in them cannot be said to reflect the will of the people of the states' (Ekpe 2007, p 9). In a follow up to the call, the coalition threatened to persuade Nigerians of the need 'to embark on mass action including strikes' if INEC failed to nullify the elections in those states and call for a rerun (*The Nation* 4 May 2007, p 6).

The International Federation of Election Studies (IFES), which conducted pre- and post-election surveys in Nigeria, came to the conclusion that the elections were deeply flawed. The surveys, which included 2 410 and 2 416 adults respectively, revealed that Nigerians felt the elections had been massively rigged and chaotic (IFES 2007a, pp 1-5). IFES also organised a post-election conference in Abuja on 22 and 23 August, attracting more than 140 Nigerians, including government officials, academics, community leaders, religious figures and civil society organisations. After intense debates the general consensus was that the

elections had failed because of 'poor quality of voter lists, polling places that opened late or not at all and a lack of voting material' (IFES 2007b, p 1). The condemnation of the elections was shared by some civil society organisations.

The Igbo Youth Congress (IYC), for example, strongly condemned the election in the Southeast because, according to its findings, electoral materials never reached their destinations or did so very late (in some cases just before the polls were due to close). The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) also lent its voice to the outcry, considering it 'tragic' that, thanks to Obasanjo's declaration of the election as a 'do-or-die affair' 200 lives had been lost, hundreds had been injured and property had been destroyed on a massive scale, all of this leading to the loss of several billion naira. It also stated that INEC was an unmitigated disaster and was assisted by the armed forces, the police and other security agencies in executing the do-or-die plans. In a similar vein, the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADL) expressed its dissatisfaction. In a statement signed by its vice-president, Titi Akosa, the NADL noted:

We are shocked at the outcome of the general elections as the exercise did not reflect the literal choice of majority of the Nigerian people. Evidence abounds from state to state of widespread but varying degree of irregularities that marred the entire process. We hereby call for the outright cancellation of the entire exercise as it does not represent the aspirations of the Nigerian people.

The Week 14 May 2007, p 19

Prominent Nigerians, including notable opposition figures, also condemned the elections, with AC presidential candidate Alhaji Atiku Abubakar dismissing them as a national tragedy and a sham in their absence of transparency and INEC's complicity. His All Nigerian People's Party's (ANPP) counterpart, Gen Muhammed Buhari, also rejected the results on the grounds that the elections had failed to meet any national or international standard. 'I completely and wholeheartedly reject these results,' he said. 'It is a disgrace to Nigeria, a shame to INEC and a great dishonour to the PDP government.' For Professor Patrick Utomi, the African Democratic Congress (ADC) presidential candidate, the electoral exercise was a 'coup against the Nigerian people' (quoted in *The Week* 14 May 2007, p 19).

Since it has become the rule rather than the exception for opposition candidates to reject election results whenever they are on the losing side, these perceptions would normally not carry much weight, but in this case they count because they are in tune with other perceptions. Chief Gani Fawehinmi, a renowned constitutional lawyer and human rights activist, linked the un-

precedentedly fraudulent nature of the elections with the inability of Nigerians to celebrate the results. According to Fawehinmi Nigerians regard Yar'Adua, the new president, as a perfect puppet of Obasanjo, offering limited possibilities for positive change in the country.

For Bamidele Aturu, a legal analyst, 'there were no jubilations because the election result does not represent the will of the people'. Femi Falana, also a constitutional lawyer and human rights activist, condemned the election. According to him, Obasanjo ignited the electoral crisis with his 'do-or-die' declaration and his utterances during the campaign period, which were laced with violent language (*The Week* 14 May 2007, p 22).

Erstwhile Senate President Senator Ken Nanamni complained bitterly that he had been disenfranchised by the non-availability of voting materials in his state. This generated a serious attack from the federal government, which accused him of masterminding a plan to head an interim national government he envisaged would be set up when the elections were discredited and rejected. The government, therefore, threatened him with charges of treasonable felony.

Many alleged that no election had actually taken place in some states in the South-east, especially Anambra. Reflecting on the anomalies inherent in the presidential election, an analyst remarked that 'Yar'Adua's soup is cooked inside a dirty pot. He can never be clean. He will run a severely compromised presidency throughout his tenure' (Oseme 2007, p 15).

The above evidence, drawn from various sections of the public, suggests that the 2007 general elections did not reflect the popular will of Nigerians. The massive resort to violence in the immediate post-election period, following the announcement of the results, may be an eloquent testimony to the general disappointment. In states such as Edo, Osun, Ondo, Kano, Ekiti and Oyo, to mention only a few, aggrieved voters took to the streets to protest the manipulation of their votes. The government responded violently, imposing curfews, arresting opposition leaders, and deploying the military to suppress the protests. Adams Oshiomhole, the AC's gubernatorial candidate in Edo State, was arrested (*The Punch* 17 April 2007, p 8; Fabiyi & Soniyi 2007, p 9).

Despite the government's resort to violence, it may have tacitly conceded the fact that the elections were seriously flawed. Three or four factors give this impression. First, President Obasanjo said in his response to the allegations of electoral malpractice and violence that there was no perfect election anywhere in the world. He therefore urged the aggrieved parties and candidates to exploit due process in seeking redress.

Second, when President Yar'Adua was confronted with the same question at his first press conference he made a tacit admission when he said 'I did not conduct the election, INEC did.' He also urged the aggrieved to seek redress

through due process. Two other important indicators are Yar'Adua's call for a government of national unity, which would accommodate all leading opposition parties, and his promise to reform the electoral system and subsequent institution of a committee to that effect. Certainly, issues like these are bound to be controversial, with some seeing them as a positive attempt on the part of the president to move the nation forward. These responses, however, though an attempt to buy legitimacy for the new government, are also an admission of the problematic nature of the electoral process. As Umeh (2007, p 12) remarked: 'It is only in this country that somebody can come out and so brazenly do a wrong thing and tell the aggrieved to go to court.'

Not unexpectedly, the aggrieved candidates/parties have been exploiting due process by filing petitions and protests with the election petition tribunals and courts. The preliminary reports emanating from the tribunals lend credibility to the damning public perceptions of the general elections. Already several results at different levels across the country have been nullified, among them the senatorial election for the Federal Capital Territory and a senatorial seat in Ondo State. In Kogi State the election tribunal has nullified the gubernatorial elections.

These successes have generated a pervasive palpable fear throughout the country, particularly in those states in which observers called for the outright cancellation of the elections. Apart from corroborating the reports of domestic and international monitoring groups, the decisions are a welcome development because they reassure Nigerians that the judiciary is increasingly becoming the hope for the future of Nigerian democracy. In the past year the judiciary appears to have risen above its limitations, particularly its use as a political instrument and its corruption (Davies 1989). It is becoming increasingly assertive, autonomous, and courageous, given the number and magnitude of landmark judgements it has handed down at critical junctures in the country's democratisation.

It is interesting to note that INEC has tried to alter the public perception of the elections. One notable step in this regard was the commission's outright rejection and condemnation of the EUEOM reports. It took vigorous exception to the allegation that it was informed by a hidden agenda and warned Nigerians to disregard the reports because they did not adhere strictly to internationally laid down and accepted principles of election observation (INEC 2007, p 50). The attempt to pacify and/or alter public opinion has been largely unsuccessful for reasons that probably relate to the stability, widespread distribution, latency and salience of these public perceptions, factors which may have constrained the government to heed the opinions and respond positively by setting up an electoral reform panel charged with the responsibility for charting an alternative electoral future for sustainable democracy in the country.

CONCLUSION

This paper has given an overview of public perceptions of the 2007 Nigerian general elections, underscoring the importance of distribution, direction, stability, intensity and latency to the effective measurement of perceptions and opinions and supporting election monitoring as an effective measurement.

The study finds that perceptions of the general election were largely negative, showing beyond reasonable doubt that the conduct of the elections did not meet acceptable standards. Evidence for this conclusion was contained in the reports of domestic and international election monitoring groups, civil society organisations, notable individuals, and, implicitly, the government – a range which lends credibility to the validity and reliability of the opinions.

One inevitable conclusion was that the elections were the most flawed in the country's history. Some of the notable irregularities that cut across all the reports include the late start of voting in many parts of the country, inadequate voting materials, a lack of secrecy in the voting process, the omission of names and/or pictures of some candidates from ballot papers, the prevalence of underage voting and rampant cases of ballot box snatching at gun point by party thugs and militias. Others include the stuffing of ballot boxes with pre-thumbprinted papers, reported cases of collaboration between security officials and party agents to rig elections, violence and intimidation of opposition party members and agents; lack of transparency in the collation, counting and tabulation of voters and outright falsification of results (Adejumobi 2007, pp 14-15).

Ideally, these malign features should be enough to deny the emergent government any form of legitimacy at home and abroad and ensure the outright cancellation of the result. While some of the reports made such calls openly, others implied them. Despite this, the new government was inaugurated with great pomp and ceremony. After initial resentment from major Western countries, they eventually succumbed to the pressure of domestic reality, accepting the result and congratulating the declared winner. This suggests that succession is, in reality, overwhelmingly a domestic affair and no international observer or combination of observers has the monopoly on legitimation. It now seems that only the outcomes of the election petition tribunal will make any meaningful impact on the current state of the elections.

In the light of the above it is suggested that the ongoing process of electoral reform should be genuinely pursued and sustained. All stakeholders in the democratisation process – political parties, civil society, bureaucracy, mass media, donor agencies – should be allowed to make input into the process in an open and transparent environment. Some major areas reform should target include the electoral laws, the exact role of the security forces, particularly the military, in

the electoral process; party finances; godfatherism; the independence of the electoral management body; and election monitoring and post-election issues such as election petitions and tribunals. It is our considered view that all election petitions should be heard and resolved before power is handed over, a move which may serve to reduce the struggle for power at all costs, including electoral fraud and violence.

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APPENDIX I
*Registered Political Parties**

A	Accord
AA	Action Alliance
AC	Action Congress
ACD	Advanced Congress of Democrats
ACPN	Allied Congress Party of Nigeria
AD	Alliance for Democracy
ADC	African Democratic Congress
ANPP	All Nigeria Peoples Party
APGA	All Progressives Grand Alliance
APLP	All Peoples Liberation Party
APN	Action Party of Nigeria
APS	African Political System
ARP	African Renaissance Party
BNPP	Better Nigeria Progressive Party
CDC	Congress for Democratic Change
CPN	Community Party of Nigeria
CPP	Citizens Popular Party
DA	Democratic Alternative
DPA	Democratic Peoples Alliance
DPP	Democratic Peoples Party
FRESH	Fresh Democratic Party
HDP	Hope Democratic Party
JP	Justice Party
LDPN	Liberal Democratic Party
LP	Labour Party
MDJ	Movement for Democracy and Justice
MMN	Masses Movement of Nigeria
MRDD	Movement for the Restoration and Defence of Democracy
NAC	National Action Council

NAP	Nigeria Advance Party
NCP	National Conscience Party
ND	New Democrats
NDP	National Democratic Party
NEP	Nigeria Elements Progressive Party
NMDP	National Majority Democratic Party
NNPP	New Nigeria Peoples Party
NPC	Nigeria Peoples Congress
NRP	National Reformation Party
NSDP	National Solidarity Democratic Party
NUP	National Unity Party
PAC	Progressive Action Congress
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
PMP	Peoples Mandate Party
PPA	Progressive Peoples Alliance
PPP	Peoples Progressive Party
PRP	Peoples Redemption Party
PSP	Peoples Salvation Party
RPN	Republican Party of Nigeria
UDP	United Democratic Party
UNPP	United Nigeria Peoples Party

* As contained in a list of 'National Executives of Registered Political Parties and National Headquarters' Addresses', INEC, Abuja, 8 November 2006

APPENDIX II
*Presidential Candidates*¹

- 1 Alhaji Umar Yar'Adua (PDP) 24 638 062
- 2 Muhammadu Buhari (Major-General) (ANPP) 6 605 279
- 3 Alhaji Atiku Abubakar (AC) 2 637 848
- 4 Dr Oriji Kalu (PPA) 608 803
- 5 Attahiru Dalhatu Bafarawa (DPP) 289 224
- 6 Dim Odumegwu Ojukwu (APGA) 155 947
- 7 Chief Pere Ajuwa (AD) 89 241
- 8 Chris Okotie (FRESH) 74 049
- 9 Prof Pat Utomi (ADC) 50 849
- 10 Dr Brimmy Olaghere (NPC) 33 771
- 11 Chief Ambrose Owuru (DPH) 28 519
- 12 Dr Arthur Nwankwo (PMP) 24 134
- 13 Chief Emmanuel Okereke (ALP) 22 677
- 14 Sir Lawrence Adedoyin (APS) 22 409
- 15 Alhaji Habu Fari (NDP) 21 974
- 16 Galtima Baboyi Lima (NNPP) 21 265
- 17 Mazi Maxi Okwu (CPP) 14 027
- 18 Chief Sunny Joseph Okogwu (RPN) 13 566
- 19 Dr Goodwill Nanji (BNPP) 1 705
- 20 Dr Obajuawana Osagie (NC) 8 229
- 21 Dr Olapade Agoro (NAC) 5 752
- 22 Dr Solomon Akpone (AMDP) 5 664
- 23 Prof Tisa Odidi (ND) 5 408
- 24 Major Moji Adegunle Obasanjo (rtd) (MMN) 4 309
- 25 Mallam Aminu Abubakar (NUP) 4 255

¹ For winners of the gubernatorial elections see *Nigeria Tribune*, Ibadan, 16 April 2007, p 1. The caveat is that the victory of the ruling party is being challenged in election petition tribunals all over the country.