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POLITICS BY OTHER MEANS: NIGERIA CONFLICT ASSESSMENT

AUGUST 2010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Nigeria prepares to celebrate 50 years of independence, the nation can look back on a great deal of accomplishments. The iron frame of federalism, an ethnic rotation principle undergird by an elite bargaining culture, the glue of oil wealth, along with continuing moderating influences of traditional and religious structures and a vibrant civil society, have all managed to keep Nigeria united at the national level since the 1967-70 civil war. Yet it also remains a deeply conflicted country, with over 200 ethnic groups evenly split between Islam and Christianity, grinding poverty amid massive oil wealth, governments dominated by an oligarchy characterized by staggering corruption and questionable elections, some of the worst social indicators in the world, and over 20,000 deaths in communal violence since returning to civilian rule in 1999.

Several national conflict trends are of particular concern:

- The overwhelming source of vulnerability to conflict in Nigeria remains the poor performance of the Nigerian government itself at all levels, and its corrupt neopatrimonial overlords. Pro-violence groups from Boko Haram to militias in the Niger Delta all share a common narrative of anger over the nation's poor governance. Police and military brutality and impunity are common threads fostering violent groups.
- Politicians nationwide are turning to armed youths for political leverage – “politics by other means” – in the party primaries and elections. Many of these gangs and militias are gaining more permanent structures and bargaining capacities that could militarize politics in some states and localities, and exacerbate tensions in zones that are already heavily armed like the Niger Delta. The proliferation of small arms and high youth unemployment exacerbate this problem.
- President Goodluck Jonathan's possible run for election in 2011 would break the ethnic rotation principle and could usher in instability or opportunities for change, depending upon how the new political coalitions line up. The ruling Peoples Democratic Party itself remains an obstacle to reform and as a party has little interest in improved elections in 2011. Its internal divides are an opportunity for new political opposition, which is necessary for reform, yet may also increase political instability in the short run. Yet the nomination of a new, credible election chairman promises hope for change.
- Massive poverty, unemployment, and lack of public service infrastructure remain a constant source of public frustration and also undermine the ability of reformist actors, such as political opposition and civil society groups, from organizing.

In addition, this assessment highlights several regional trends in need of assistance:

- The absorptive capacity of the traditional Islamic establishment in the North is under great stress and fraying at the edges. The vast majority of the recent wave of itinerant preachers who have risen to take advantage of this situation in recent years are peaceful in orientation, but a handful of groups have rebelled against the Nigerian state and its corrupt status quo. The most violent group, Boko Haram, was crushed by the Nigerian military in 2009, but it is now regrouping.
- Plateau state remains locked in conflict and is ready for another round of violence, particularly as the election season approaches. In addition, violence in Plateau is often met with reprisal killings in other states of the northeast.
- The recent amnesty process in the Niger Delta has bought a general lull in the fighting, but has done nothing to address its root causes and, without any widespread demobilization, has created financial incentives for future militancy. The forthcoming election season will also test the tenuous peace, and will certainly break if key political factions in the region are unable to agree on consensus candidates for summit political offices such as the governors.

To address these conflict concerns, the assessment team makes the following recommendations:

- 1. Integrate Conflict Analysis into USAID's Nigeria Country Strategy and Portfolio:** Many of these conflict drivers originate at the very root of Nigerian politics and society, and require comprehensive, multi-sector strategies to address. Much of USAID's non-conflict programming already works in these sectors, and with a conflict audit could more consciously target these drivers. Health, education, and state and local government programming, for instance, could benefit from conflict resolution analysis, as could civil society assistance in such areas as budget monitoring, producing scorecards for state and local governments, and advocacy training. In addition, use of Participatory Development practices in USAID program development, utilizing a combination of large-scale dialogue techniques, could help target groups make collaborative decisions about their future in a fashion that addresses local conflicts. Support for multi-stakeholder initiatives, focused on key concerns such as indigeneity or religious rights, could also help to address key structural conflict issues nationwide.
- 2. Reinforce Nigeria's Conflict Management Architecture:** Nigeria's dense network of conflict resolution NGOs and other civil society groups engaged in peacemaking activities are in need of assistance, particularly religious actors and traditional rulers, as well as key federal agencies (particularly the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution) and universities tasked with conflict resolution responsibilities. Traditional rulers and religious actors in particular have played pivotal peacemaking roles in the cases examined below, particularly through more permanent local dialogue institutions in conflict zones, when available. Neighborhood associations have also played key roles in some communities and would benefit tremendously from technical assistance and alliance building with other peaceable neighborhoods and conflict resolution initiatives. Specific attention should also be paid to the media and how they can craft their work in a fashion that assists conflict resolution. The internet and "smart phone" technology also offer untapped resources for early warning and conflict resolution initiatives.
- 3. Prepare USAID Election Partners for Conflict-Wise Election Monitoring in 2011:** USAID and its development partners are already planning extensive support for INEC and for a host of election-monitoring organizations for the 2011 general elections. These actors are also critical players in containing the inevitable election-related conflicts that will arise in many localities across the country. As USAID partners develop their support strategies for election activities, they could also integrate a conflict resolution strategy that involves: establishing all-party committees, deploying conflict resolution activists from USAID partner networks alongside election monitors and Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) workers, and assisting INEC to deploy its own conflict resolution units to key election hotspots across the nation.
- 4. Build on the Islands of Peace in the Middle Belt and Far North:** Pockets of interfaith and cross-cultural initiatives and networks are active across Plateau state and other conflict-torn parts of the Middle Belt, northeast, and Far North, and could be assisted and better coordinated together. State government-based initiatives could also be constructed or assisted where available, and federal initiatives like the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) are also important vehicles that can assist in networking and strategy-building among the many pockets of civil society activity in religious conflict zones.
- 5. Preventing Renewed Violence in the Niger Delta:** Although oil production has temporarily increased from the lull in fighting produced by last year's amnesty program, the politicization of the amnesty process and the forthcoming elections in 2011 are both likely to aggravate matters. Consequently, USAID should use caution when considering direct support for the Federal Government's activities related to the proposed rehabilitation program for ex-militants, and activities channeled through the Federal Ministry for Niger Delta Affairs. USAID is already engaged in a variety of important economic, health, education, and governance activities in the Niger Delta that could indirectly contribute to peacebuilding, as could support for civil society actors working to bring militants out of the creeks and into gainful work. In addition, given the deep need for governance reform in the region, USAID could consider extending its local governance program to one of the core delta states, with appropriate

modifications to fit local realities. USAID could also approach fresh partners in the areas of governance reform and peacebuilding, particularly: 1) churches and 2) female youths. Interviewees particularly singled out some of the Niger Delta's Protestant mega-churches as potential change agents. Lastly, some international oil corporations' local development initiatives in the Niger Delta present a possible point of entry for conflict programming, under certain conditions (articulated in Section 6). Chevron in particular seems open to creative ideas and approaches, and the notions of participatory governance it is piloting through its GMOU program appear to be netting some gains for peace and security.

Lastly, the report makes several brief recommendations regarding USAID funding alternatives, including a short-term "bridge" program cycle followed by a more comprehensive five-year program cycle.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The team would like to express its deep thanks to the US Embassy and the USAID Mission in Nigeria for their support throughout the assessment.

We are also grateful to Jennifer Stewart and Lynn Carter at MSI for their organization, advice, and support for the assessment process.

Four of the maps in this report were produced with StarPlanet software: Frank van Cappelle (2009) StarPlanet: Interactive Data Visualization and Mapping Software, Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality, Paris:
http://www.sacmeq.org/statplanet/files/User_Manual_StatPlanet.pdf.

Lastly and most importantly, we are deeply indebted to the many Nigerian respondents who took time out their busy schedules, sometimes at personal risk, to meet with us and help us understand the nation's conflict dynamics. Consequently, in order to protect respondents from any possible repercussions from opinions presented in this report, we have used non-specific attribution for interview citations, unless the quote appears in a public source.



FIGURE I. MAP OF NIGERIA

I. INTRODUCTION

Violent conflict has been a persistent and demoralizing pattern in Nigeria since civilian rule returned in 1999, resulting in thousands of deaths, millions of dollars in destruction, dampened investment and economic growth, and increased dissatisfaction with democratic governance. Given the significant drag that the repeated violent outbreaks place on Nigeria’s development performance and prospects, the USAID Mission to Nigeria (USAID/Nigeria) has supported a series of programs to build Nigerian capacities to identify conflict hot spots and work with the contending parties to find non-violent solutions to their disputes.

The latest of those conflict programs, *Conflict Abatement through Local Mitigation (CALM)*, ended in June 2010. Prior to designing a new generation of conflict programs, USAID/Nigeria decided to conduct a conflict assessment “to accurately understand the nature of the current conflict dynamics in Nigeria and its likely trajectories.” In addition to diagnosing Nigeria’s conflict dynamics, the assessment was “expected to identify gaps in current support to Nigerian efforts to prevent conflicts and build peace” and to identify, among those gaps, where USAID would be best positioned to provide effective assistance.

In early 2010, USAID/Nigeria turned to the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) for support in organizing and conducting the assessment. CMM readily agreed, especially as the Mission was willing to serve as a pilot application of CMM’s revised conflict assessment methodology. The centerpiece of the updated approach is the second generation analytical tool, Conflict Assessment Framework 2.0 (CAF 2.0), but also includes specific guidance on how to apply the tool to diagnose the current conflict dynamics, specify various trajectories of the levels of future violence, and identify priority responses.

THE CONFLICT ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK, VERSION 2.0

The analytical power of CAF 2.0 comes from using its concepts and their specified interrelationships as tool for seeking out and sorting data, identifying connections, and distilling patterns. In the course of the assessment, the CAF 2.0 is applied to three analytical tasks. First, the CAF 2.0 is used to *diagnose the current conflict dynamics*. Specifically, that task is to identify those dynamics within a given society that (1) lead to instability and violent conflict (*the drivers of conflict*) and (2) seek to maintain stability and the status quo (*the mitigating factors*). In general, the stronger the drivers of conflict and the weaker the mitigating factors, the greater is the risk that violent conflict will occur.

Both drivers of conflict and mitigating factors arise when *key actors* in society—individuals, but also organizational actors of all sorts—actively mobilize important attributes in that society. For drivers of conflict, key actors mobilize *core grievances*, such as a group’s ingrained perception that it has been excluded from political and economic life. For mitigating factors, key actors mobilize *resiliencies* that may be embedded in the traditions, historical experience, or institutions that make up that society such as a society’s common religious heritage. The diagnostic task also includes examination of a set of interrelated concepts that help tease out these grievances and resiliencies (*identities, institutional performance and societal patterns*) and the overarching social and environmental *context*.

After diagnosing the current conflict dynamics, the same framework is used to as a guide to *trace various trajectories of the present into the future*. This analysis considers the relative strengths of the conflict dynamics and mitigating factors, as wells the influence of future *trends*, such as economic growth/stagnation or demographic shifts, and possible *trigger events*, such as flawed elections, that can raise the probability of one trajectory over another.

Finally, CAF 2.0 is used to *structure the identification of the changes* needed to lower the risk of violent conflict. This is set of necessary changes becomes the starting point for applying various filters to arrive at a *series of responses* that are best suited for USAID support.

CMM assembled a nine-person team to conduct the assessment: four USAID employees supported to two American and three Nigerian country experts.¹ The assessment began in April 2010 with the preparation of a background desk study supplemented with three weeks of fieldwork from May 9 – 28. During the field work, the team divided into three sub-teams to permit more intensive examination of conflict issues in the Niger Delta, Plateau State and the northeast, and Kaduna and the northwest respectively (see Figure 2 for states the team visited and Appendix B for more detailed itineraries). Altogether the team interviewed over 150 individuals, representing a wide range of positions and perspectives.



FIGURE 2: ASSESSMENT TEAM DESTINATIONS

Researching the current situation in the Niger Delta posed a particular challenge due to restrictions placed on the travel of American officials to that region. The solution was to rely on two Nigerian members of the team to conduct on-the-ground interviews, supplemented with 10 focus groups (5 each in Delta and Rivers States) and interviews in Abuja with key actors ranging from government officials to Delta politicians to leaders of the militant groups.

With this data, this assessment gauges the current state of violent conflict trends in Nigeria and highlights potential avenues for donor support to assist the efforts of Nigerian actors to moderate and resolve these trends.

¹ The team consisted of USAID staff Chom Bagu (Nigeria Mission), David Hunsicker (CMM), Marie Pace (OCR), and Tjip Walker (CMM) and country experts Bakut Bakut (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Nigeria); Darren Kew (University of Massachusetts, Boston), Oshita Oshita (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Nigeria), Aaron Sayne (Transnational Crisis Project) and Ukoha Ukiwo (University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria).

II. CONFLICT DRIVERS

Nigeria has always mystified external observers, and not a few internal ones, as to how it manages to persist as a single political entity. With over 200 ethnic groups evenly split between Islam and Christianity, grinding poverty amid massive oil wealth, governments dominated by an oligarchy characterized by staggering corruption and questionable elections, some of the worst social indicators in the world, a civil war shortly after independence, and over 20,000 deaths in communal violence since returning to civilian rule in 1999, Nigeria seems destined for massive violent conflicts. One account has already judged that “this house has fallen.”² The US National Intelligence Council in 2005 worried that the outright collapse of Nigeria by 2020 was a significant risk that needed to be considered in US policy planning.³

Yet somehow Nigeria survives, with its people still “suffering and smiling,” in the words of the nation’s great Afrobeat star, Fela Anikulapo Kuti. The iron frame of federalism, the glue of oil wealth commonly called the ‘national cake’, along with continuing moderating influences of traditional and religious structures, have managed to keep Nigeria united at the national level since the civil war ended in 1970, although localities continue to suffer occasional violent episodes. Important macroeconomic reforms during the Obasanjo administration (1999-2007) have also opened possibilities for growth outside the oil sector, and started the nation down the difficult path of attracting foreign investment. By the late 1990s, an informal ethno-regional rotation principle, occasionally called “power shift,” had spread across the political elite as a basic metric for power-sharing and providing some predictability and a modicum of stability to the political game. Ironically, skyrocketing corruption has also helped the oligarchs build a vast, multi-ethnic “big tent” through the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which has created strong bargaining relationships among the elite which has moderated potential national rifts for the past decade.

This rogues’ peace, however, has come at the price of blatant contempt for the public interest, forcing 9 out of 10 Nigerians to live on less than US\$2 per day with very few necessary services and meager employment prospects outside Abuja or Lagos. Public frustrations with the politicians’ feast at the government trough may reach a breaking point, with the insurgency in the Niger Delta serving as a harbinger of unrest in other parts of the federation, particularly as the oligarchs turn increasingly to threats of violence to support their claims to state offices. National conflagrations along the major fault lines are possible, but the slow unraveling of the nation in pockets of localized violence seems more likely in the short run, if government cannot produce tangible improvements in broad-based economic growth, public services, and political responsiveness.

I.1 Many Nations, One Roof: Identity and the Ethnic Security Dilemma

Nigeria is infamous for its tremendous ethnic and religious diversity, which is the starting place for any inquiry into conflict dynamics in the country. As the Giant of Africa and home to over 200 ethnic groups practicing Christianity, Islam, and local religions, it has both benefited and suffered from the basic fact of its sheer size. Its great population has ensured that international actors have seen Nigeria as an important strategic partner in the West African region. Moreover, its diversity has helped to create a natural pluralism to the nation’s politics that has served as a check on authoritarianism over the years and ensured vigorous debate. Occasionally, however, debate has degenerated into deadlock, which at times has slid into episodes of violence and – once – a civil war.⁴

² Karl Maier, *This House Has Fallen: Midnight in Nigeria* (Public Affairs, 2000).

³ National Intelligence Council, “Mapping Sub-Saharan Africa’s Future,” Conference Report March 2005, http://www.dni.gov/nic/confreports_africa_future.html.

⁴ See, among many: Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, (Cambridge UP, 2008).

Historically, ethnicity has been the primary social category upon which political mobilization has been built in Nigeria, and it remains so today. Broadly speaking, ethnicity typically becomes a conflict factor when the interests served by the ethnic group are perceived by its members as *threatened* by another group, or when one group (or groups) is (are) perceived to be socially ranked below another group (or groups) so that social mobility is *blocked*.⁵ The combination of these factors can foster fears of marginalization, exclusion, and even assault in members of one group toward members of other ethnicities.

Both of these characteristics of ethnicity played out with deadly effect in Nigeria in the years shortly before and after independence in 1960. Colonialism forced previously independent polities – each with their own deep cultural traditions and identities – under one political roof, and the British policy of indirect rule generally allowed those polities to persist by incorporating them into the colonial governance profile. Thus as independence approached, this structure made ethnicity the most obvious political category for political organization. Moreover, the prospect of over 200 ethnicities under one government raised the threat of domination by other groups, creating a common anxiety that one’s own group needed to control the government if its interests were to be protected.

Consequently, Nigeria at independence was politically divided along ethnic lines in a deeply insecure situation known as the *ethnic security dilemma*.⁶ Under such circumstances of ethnic polarization, groups generally perceive control of political office as a zero-sum game, such that one group’s gain in power is another group’s loss. In order to compensate for perceived losses and group insecurity, members of ethnic groups in general feel that they must build their own group’s power at all cost – if they do not, they fear they will be marginalized in their access to government, excluded, or even overwhelmed by others. A conflict spiral soon erupts, as each group takes increasingly threatening decisions in order to secure its position and respond to the perceived growing threats from others.

Precisely such a conflict spiral ignited shortly after independence among Nigeria’s “big three” – the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo, who constitute two-thirds of the population. The three-region federation left in Nigeria by the British facilitated this dynamic, since each of the big three controlled one of the federal units, which encouraged ethnic unity and allowed them to dominate the minorities within their own regions. As the big three moved to dominate the federal government, they escalated the conflict with increasingly threatening actions that ended in civil war from 1967-70, crushing an effort by the Igbo to secede.

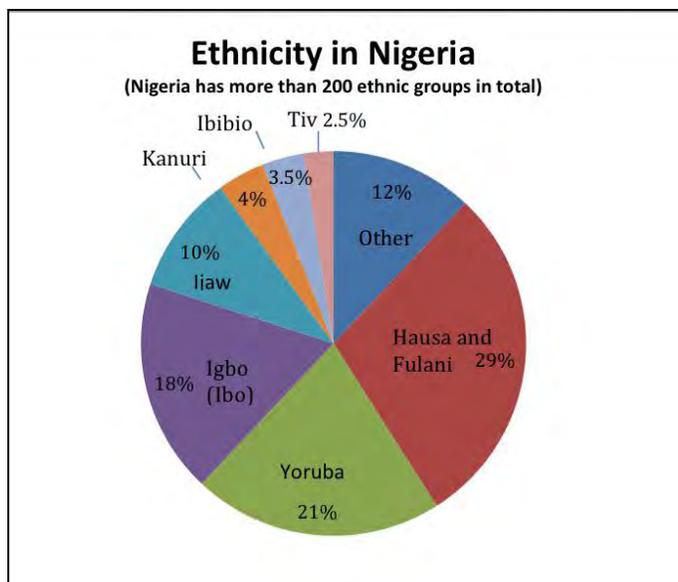


FIGURE 3. ETHNICITY AND RELIGION

⁵ See the literature discussions on ethnic identity in the social psychology schools of interdependence and social identity, such as: A.R. Flippen, H.A. Hornstein, W.E. Siegel, and E. Weitzman, “A Comparison of Similarity and Interdependence as Triggers for Ingroup Formation,” 22 *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* (1996): 882-893; H. Tajfel and J.C. Turner, “The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior,” in S. Worchel & W. G. Austin, eds. *Psychology of intergroup relations* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 2nd Ed., 1985).

⁶ Darren Kew, “Building Democracy in 21st Century Africa: Two Africas, One Solution,” *Seton Hall Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* (Winter/Spring 2005).

Recognizing this dynamic, post-civil war military regimes wisely divided the Nigerian federation into 12, 19, and ultimately 36 states by 1996. This broke the big three ethnic groups into multiple states, accenting important sub-ethnic divisions and creating avenues for multiple centers of leadership (governors and state assemblies) within each group. In addition, 18 of the current 36 states are dominated by Nigeria's many ethnic minorities, making them key stakeholders and giving them important voices in federal politics, which, among other benefits, diluted the powers of the big three, created buffers among them, and opened new opportunities for ethnic coalition building.

Federalism has been an indispensable factor

in keeping Nigeria united since 1970, but the ethnic security dilemma remains an

underlying source of tension that continues to color perspectives on politics. In some localities, the dilemma plays out on a smaller scale, occasionally bursting into violence among communities. Political elites in the 40 years since the civil war have managed to avoid another catastrophic conflict spiral at the national level, but crises in 1983, 1993, and 1998 went dangerously far down that path before pulling back, and several incidents under the Fourth Republic, such as the 2000 Shari'a crisis in Kaduna and the recent fighting in Jos (see below), threatened to spark national bouts of violence before they were contained.



FIGURE 4. NIGERIA'S THREE REGIONS IN 1955

1.2 Economic Drivers: Poverty and the Dominance of the Oil Economy

A second major source of conflict in Nigeria since its early days has been the perverse economic impacts of widespread poverty amid great wealth.

In the 1970s, the Nigerian economy became overwhelmingly oil-dependent, which impacted both the ethnic security dilemma and the federal system. The close of the civil war saw a steep rise in national oil wealth. In 1970, oil revenue was a mere \$250 million, yet by 1974 it had spiked to \$11.2 billion.⁷ Today oil and gas account for over 40 percent of the country's GDP, 80 percent of federal government revenues, and more than 90 percent of foreign exchange revenues.⁸

Altogether, Nigerian oil has generated close to \$700 billion in revenues since the 1960s, including nearly \$400 billion to the Federal Government. During the 2003-08 oil boom, annual receipts increased exponentially. A five-year audit of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) in 2006, for instance, logged government revenues of over \$96 billion.⁹ Yet this income has not proven of simple benefit to the political and economic stability of the nation. In the account of one leading expert: "The economic record since the oil boom is one of lackluster growth, increasing poverty, widening inequality and a spectacular decline in

⁷ U.S. Energy Information Administration Data.

⁸ World Bank, "Nigeria: Country Fact Sheet," 2008.

⁹ *The Guardian (Nigeria)*, "Crude oil prices rise to \$71.40 per barrel; government makes N12.4 trillion in five years", 18 April 2006.

performance. From 1980 to 2002, economic growth averaged just 2 per cent annually, and real income per capita stands today at about one third the level achieved in 1980....Nigeria's once-thriving agricultural and solid mineral exports are moribund; manufacturing today constitutes a smaller proportion of the economy (about 4 per cent) than at independence. The economy drifts on a sea of oil, blown by the capricious winds of international energy markets."¹⁰

Observers have introduced a number of explanations for this state of affairs. First, economic analysts frequently conclude that oil has infected the Nigerian economy with "Dutch disease" – that is, the phenomenon whereby an increase in revenues from a natural resource raises the exchange rate, making other export goods uncompetitive. Consider the case of Nigerian agriculture: prior to independence in 1960, agriculture accounted for almost two thirds of GDP. In the wake of the 1970s oil boom, however cultivation dropped off from 18.8 million hectares in 1975 to 11.05 million in 1978. Thus, the volume and value of agricultural output dropped by nearly 50 per cent in the space of three years. Meanwhile, in the period between 1970 and 1981, outputs of Nigeria's traditional export crops -- principally, cocoa, palm oil, and rubber – fell by 74 percent.¹¹ Today agriculture contributes only 27 percent to national GDP, even as it continues to employ 60 percent of the population.¹² And the country, once a major exporter of food to West Africa and beyond, has become a massive importer.

The price volatility of oil as a market commodity has also helped create wild cycles of boom and bust in government revenue receipts and spending. In particular, the oil bonanzas of the late 1970s and 2000s saw spectacular hikes in government intakes. These were generally absorbed as windfall, however, with little clear long-range planning and savings. Newfound oil wealth distorted budgets and lured officials from fiscal constraint.¹³ The aftermath has typically been distinguished by slews of white-elephant projects, recurrent bouts of unmanageable government debt, increasing popular mistrust and alienation from government, and chronic failure at the federal, state, and local levels to assume constitutionally mandated responsibilities as engines of development and economic growth.¹⁴

Nigeria's constitutions and federal laws placed all oil reserves and revenues under sole government custody, a condition that persists today.¹⁵ One effect of this was that the revenue dependence observed at the federal level replicated itself within the state and local governments, as the cash available from government contracts far exceeded what local economies (and thus local taxes) could produce. Perceptions soon spread that individual wealth could accumulate much more quickly through rent-seeking behavior rather than other forms of economic activity.

¹⁰ P. Lewis, "Getting the Politics Right: Governance and Economic Failure in Nigeria," in Rotberg (2006), 99

¹¹ N. Shaxson (2005), *op.cit.*, 314.

¹² CIA, World Factbook, Nigeria.

¹³ See e.g., Apter, *The Pan-African Nation*, 2006.

¹⁴ See e.g., International Crisis Group, "Want in the Midst of Plenty," 2006.

¹⁵ Both the 1969 Petroleum Act and Article 44(3) of the 1999 Federal Constitution cordon off all oil revenues and reserves as exclusive Federal government property. Article 1 of the Petroleum Industry Bill currently under debate reaffirms this disposition. Article 1 of the 1978 Land Use Act appoints state governors "trustees" over most lands "for the use and common benefit of all Nigerians."

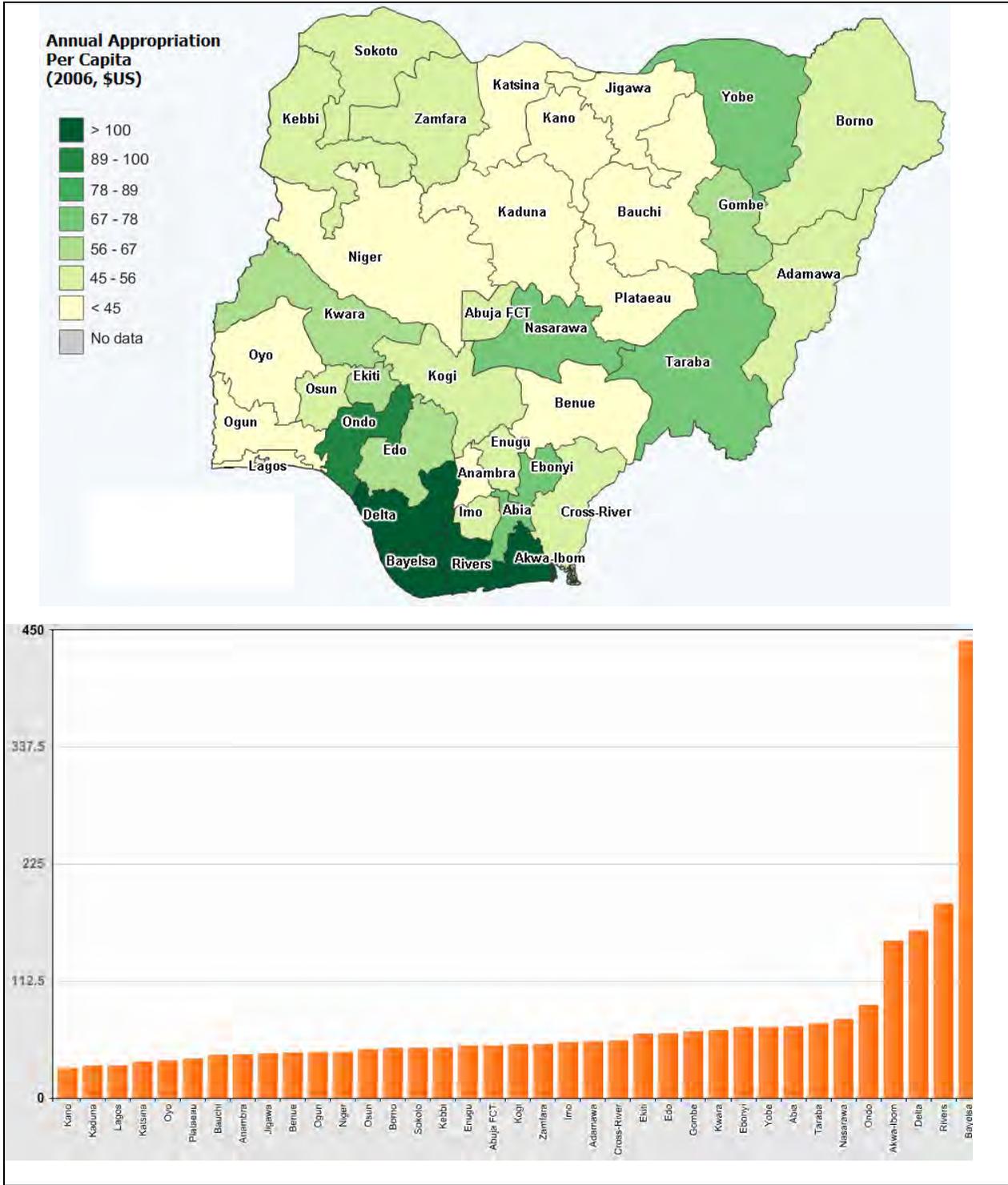


FIGURE 5. PER CAPITA FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS

Procedurally, revenues from national resources – chiefly, oil – are now collected monthly in a Federation Account and allocated to the federal government, states, and local government areas (LGAs) following a formula designed by the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), a federal-level

body.¹⁶ Today, with the arguable exception of Lagos State, all of Nigeria’s 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory depend overwhelmingly on these allocations from the center to meet budgetary requirements.

Figure 5 presents state-by-state per capital federal allocations for 2006 as both a bar graph and a map.

The oil-producing states of the Niger Delta receive “derivation” revenue, an additional 13% of all national oil revenues before they are sent to the Federation Account for division among the 36 states – where they then receive an additional 1/36th share. Consequently, the four states that produce the most oil are by far the richest states in the federation – and, as discussed in subsequent sections, they are also the most conflict-ridden.

The end result of this oil

dependence was an economy that saw many productive – and job-producing – sectors crumble as government attention focused almost exclusively on the oil industry. With local industries dying and agriculture neglected, the states soon found themselves almost completely dependent upon their shares of the federally distributed oil rents. Most perversely, despite nearly \$700 billion in oil wealth since the 1960s, 92% of Nigerians now live on less than two dollars per day.¹⁷ Anger and frustration have followed such widespread poverty amid plenty, providing ample fuel for conflicts.

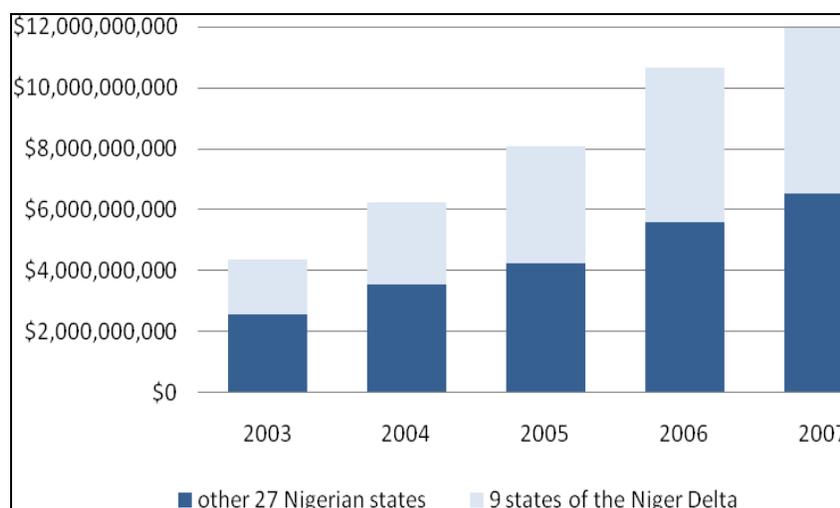


FIGURE 6. TOTAL ANNUAL FEDERAL ALLOCATIONS TO THE STATE GOVERNMENTS (FEDERAL MINISTRY OF FINANCE 2008)

1.3 Big Men and Little Progress: Neopatrimonialism

Because of the shift to oil dependence, socio-economic patterns in the country also changed. The oil boom of the 1970s was met with socialist-influenced notions that the government should control the “commanding heights” of the economy, in order to more equitably distribute the profits across the federation. Massive parastatals were created to manage the oil (and later gas) industries, flooding the federal government with oil earnings. Military leaders – in power all but four years from 1966 to 1999 – and their civilian allies soon saw irresistible levels of revenues flooding into the government, and corruption skyrocketed.

These political elites soon grew fabulously rich during a period when most Nigerians saw their standards of living drop by 75% (1980 to 1995), as the oil boom faded and the nation’s massive debts forced it to cut the modest social services available. The socio-economic distance between political elites and the vast majority of Nigerians soon jumped, such that these military leaders and their allies grew exponentially in power as

¹⁶ 1999 Constitution, Third Schedule, Part I, 32 (b). For more detail on Federal revenue allocation procedures, see A. Phillips, “Managing Fiscal Federalism: Revenue Allocation Issues,” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 21(4), 1991,103-111; R. Suberu, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*, 2001; E. Ahmad and R. Singh, “The Political Economy of Oil Revenue sharing in Nigeria,” IMF Working Paper, 2003; C and O. Uche, “Oil and the Politics of Revenue Allocation in Nigeria,” ASC Leiden Working Paper, 2004; International Crisis Group, *Nigeria’s Failing Federal Experiment*, 2006.

¹⁷ World Bank Development Indicators 2006, available at <http://web.worldbank.org>.

individuals. Their expanding fortunes allowed them to build vast networks of clients – initially within their immediate identity groups, but soon they extended across ethnic and religious lines, and ultimately for the most powerful of these “big men” or “godfathers,” across the federation. This development marks the rise of neopatrimonialism, in which individuals in power develop hierarchical loyalty networks fueled by patronage from government coffers:

“The essence of neopatrimonialism is the award by public officials of personal favors, both within the state (notably public sector jobs) and in society (for instance, licenses, contracts, and projects). In return for material rewards, clients mobilize political support and refer all decisions upward as a mark of deference to patrons.”¹⁸

Consequently, by the time the military exited power in 1999, Nigeria was dominated by an oligarchy of political mandarins, many of whom had served in the military or collaborated with them. Many of these key oligarchs formed the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in 1998, and utilized both the confidence of the military and their massive resource advantage to dominate the 1999 elections. Once in power, the PDP extended its control and welcomed leading opposition politicians into its ranks. The oligarchy thrived as the PDP utilized its lock on power to undermine election quality, such that by 2007, elections had become largely farcical (see Appendix A), with outcomes increasingly decided by bruising power battles within the PDP or within the ruling parties of the few opposition states.

Neopatrimonialism thus fuels conflicts in Nigeria in several ways. It entrenches a small oligarchy in power, who use this monopoly to hoard the oil wealth and channel it to their supporters. Government policy becomes private business, such that broad-based development that would benefit the public is of little concern to power-holders. Desperately needed government service delivery grinds to a halt, and accounting and anti-corruption institutions are undermined, as are institutions that would allow political opposition or public oversight. With legitimate means of opposition blocked, political challengers and frustrated members of the public writ large often perceive that they have little alternative to pursue their interests but to utilize the same neopatrimonial tactics, including, in some cases, violence.

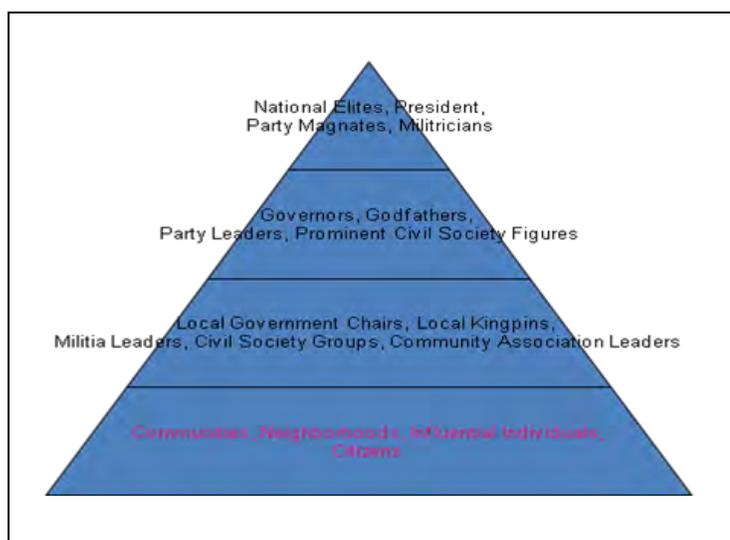


FIGURE 7. THE NEOPATRIMONIAL HIERARCHY

I.4 Institutional Weakness: Federalism, Rent-Seeking, and Indigeneity

This weakness in public institutions fostered by neopatrimonialism has proven particularly problematic for the management of conflicts. Since the 1970s, the “iron frame” of Nigeria’s federal system has been an essential ingredient in the nation’s ability to recover from the civil war and to create a greater sense of inclusivity that has helped somewhat to reduce the perceptions of threat and blocked social mobility that fuel

¹⁸ Michael Bratton and Nicolas Van de Walle, “Neopatrimonial regimes and political transitions in Africa,” 46 *World Politics* 4 (July 1994): 458.

the ethnic security dilemma. Yet as discussed above, the quest for “true federalism” (as often heard in Nigerian parlance) remains incomplete, as the political economy of oil has reduced most of the federal units to dependency on the Federation Account.

With 36 states, 774 local governments, and an electorate of over 60 million voters,¹⁹ as well as an enormous population and ethnic diversity, Nigeria could be forgiven some shortcomings in the practice of federalism. Still, much of the weakness of its federal structure can be traced to official mismanagement, particularly during the 29 of Nigeria’s 49 post-independence years under increasingly corrupt military rule. As one analyst has noted: “Military federalism is a contradiction in terms. All major state and local appointments came from above.”²⁰ Military rule reduced the states and localities to administrative units controlled from the presidency, which meant that during those years Nigeria was more of a federation in name than in practice, and that – after the brief 1979-83 experiment – the nation has only really been practicing presidential federalism since 1999. Moreover, military centralization created the over-dominant executive branches and the authoritarian-style political culture of neopatrimonialism that the nation struggles with today. The centralization of oil revenues at the federal level also provoked much disharmony over un-remediated poverty and the perceived absence of government as an agent of development and economic growth.

This lack of a clear, commonly-held state building enterprise has engendered both political processes and a concept of citizenship that revolve almost exclusively around access to entitlements. Since independence, Nigerian federalist politics has been distribution politics, overwhelmingly focused on dividing the spoils of

SECURITY FORCES

Since at least the military period, the Nigerian security forces have enjoyed an unenviable reputation for extortion, human rights abuses and general excesses. Arbitrary arrests, torture, extra-judicial killings, poor conditions of confinement, disappearances and use of excessive force are still widely and regularly reported.

The security forces also regularly play roles in exacerbating conflict situations, whether through partiality, corruption, or political manipulation – their involvement in election-related violence, for instance, has been singled out as particularly negative. Massive reprisal killings have also occurred, some with death tolls ranging into the thousands. Gaps in effective policing have also helped spawn some of the nation’s most difficult security threats, from the rise of ethnic militias to the trade in stolen Niger Delta oil. Interviewees recounted all of the above, and documentation by civil society lends it additional credence. Informants also believed the security forces would continue to play a violent and anti-democratic role in the upcoming elections.

By most accounts, the security forces are both poorly governed and partly ungovernable. Sheer size provides one explanation: with over 340,000 employees and a byzantine organizational structure, the police force alone is one of Nigeria’s largest employers. Although organized structurally as an exclusive arm of the Federal Government, the security forces are also seen as far from monolithic, with ever-shifting allegiances and influence in national, state and local affairs. One common perception is that factions within are essentially “for hire,” committing violence at the behest of political chieftains, business entities (esp. the multinational oil companies) or powerful state governors. Poor training and compensation of personnel, insufficient arms and equipment, and institutionalized corruption have all been cited as causes of police violence, together with a culture of official impunity. Government has regularly failed to name, discipline, arrest or prosecute uniformed perpetrators. Moreover, some gross violations have been openly condoned by government officials, up to and including the Presidency. And throughout Nigeria has shown a prickly unwillingness towards meaningful police reform or other outside assistance at a systemic level.

¹⁹ DFID. Independent Electoral Assessment Team Final Report Nigeria, January 2010.

²⁰ J. Paden, “Unity with Diversity: Toward Democratic Federalism,” in R. Rotberg (ed.), *Crafting the New Nigeria: Confronting the Challenges*, 2004, 18.

national wealth, political power and other goods incidental to state administration. Revenues from oil -- or "the national cake," as Nigerians often call their resource riches -- number chief among these. Indeed "there is a sense," observers note, "in which the history of post-colonial Nigeria is synonymous with the grubby processes of revenue mobilization and allocation."²¹ Revenue allocation has frequently been the focal point of contention between both state and federal officials, and among the states. Often, issues of "fair" distribution so far dominate public debate on wealth-sharing that no shared, long-range vision of social investment is sought, with most splits decided through unregulated political contest as factions lock horns over a shrinking 'cake.' Every contest becomes zero-sum: without a shared idea of how rents can be leveraged for common good, each transfer has its winners and losers. Expectations around wealth are perennially unstable. Prominent Nigerian social scientist Claude Ake described the situation as follows: "The habit of consuming ... without producing ... underlies our fanatical zeal for political power, and our political fragmentation. For us the state is not so much the incarnation of a corporate political identity as a battlefield."²² General Ibrahim Babangida, who managed to misplace the US\$12.2 billion that Nigeria earned during the 1990-91 oil "boomlet," described the situation concisely: "cake-sharing psychosis."²³

For most Nigerians, who do not have access to oil rents, a similar zero-sum perspective plays out over control of land. With a majority of Nigeria's burgeoning population engaged in agriculture, control of land is often seen as a matter of life and death. Not only does land facilitate survival, but it also determines the most basic political baseline of the entire system: citizenship. Land ownership is determined by a patchwork of local customs and legislation across the country, but a common principle known as indigeneity is typically used to determine which groups are the original owners of land and where individuals originate for purposes of determining such basic rights as voting, access to state services (such as scholarships), and buying land. Typically, local governments, often in consultation with local traditional rulers, make the classification of who is an "indigene." Without a certificate of indigeneity, individuals often face additional hurdles to voting or running for public office in that locality, may be denied public services, and can often face barriers to land ownership. Consequently, groups that control particular local governments have sometimes applied

ARMS

Interviewees reaffirmed easy access to small arms as an aggravating factor in conflict across several parts of Nigeria, particularly the Niger Delta and the Middle Belt. Especially strong alarms were raised about increasing movement of arms into Plateau State. Past estimates of small arms in Nigeria range from 1 to 3 million. Major transit countries, markets and entry points shift over time, and craft weapons from the Southeast (esp. -Awka" guns from Anambra) continue to play an important role. Nigeria's Federal and State governments, by most accounts, have done little to curb arms-related activity. Regulation of sales, possession and trade has been poor, with many illegal sales reported to occur through military channels. Politicians themselves regularly arm youth-based groups to prosecute their interests in struggles over wealth and power, and Government has allowed the trading of guns for stolen oil in the Niger Delta to proceed without incident. Successive Nigerian administrations have rejected offers of outside assistance with weapons issues, whether for arms control or collection exercises. The two DDR exercises seen in the Niger Delta since the start of the Fourth Republic both fell short of international best practices, rejected international support and were quickly followed by rumors of fighters re-arming.

²¹ M. Watts, "Trusts, trust and trusting in the Niger Delta," *NEXT*, 31 October 2009.

²² C. Ake, "Our Problems Not in Others But Ourselves," address to the inaugural dialogue of the Obafemi Awolowo Foundation, December 1992.

²³ H.E. Ibrahim Babangida, Annual Budget Speech, 1992, ii.

indigeneity principles to sow convulsive rivalry and violence.²⁴ Local elections, therefore, become key flashpoints for determining citizenship rights.

Together these rent-seeking and land control characteristics along with the clientelistic, neopatrimonial style described above underpin much of the violent conflict across the country. Indeed, a common argument is that “many of Nigeria’s internal conflicts are manifestations of the structural and political flaws of its federalist framework.”²⁵ Federal-level politics has offered a number of sharing-based solutions, notably use of the “Federal Character” principle,²⁶ the principle of “derivation” in revenue allocation, and the creation of additional states and local councils, as already discussed. All three show the ruling class tinkering with the federal system, sometimes promoting national interests, but increasingly focused on their own personal interests.

In this context of weak institutions, ethnic insecurity, and neopatrimonial rent-seeking behavior, violence thus becomes a central tool of politics by other means. Political elites face rising pressures, in a prisoner’s dilemma-like scenario, to utilize increasing modes of violence and political manipulation in order to stay ahead of their competitors, in a race to the bottom to out-rig elections in their favor, to fleece the state of rents, and to expand their patronage networks in order to build larger and more potent power blocs.

This growing tendency to turn to violence in political disputes has also been fueled by the fact that the cost of using violence for political elites is relatively low. High unemployment ensures a ready supply of muscle for hire, and extensive ethnic, religious, and other grievances provide both the motive for such violent actors and potential cover stories for their activities. West African regional arms flows guarantee plentiful access to small arms. In addition, the fact that so few of these perpetrators are ever prosecuted ensures that both politicians and their “thugs” can orchestrate bloodshed with relative impunity.

WHICH WAY THE MEDIA?

Nigeria’s rough-and-tumble media has been famous since colonial days for its candid reporting and overall open character. Several House Speakers and Senate Presidents have been forced from office after the media blew the whistle on their corrupt practices. Yet the professional standards and training of some reporters remains low, such that inflammatory stories based on rumor and hearsay may appear. Many radio and television stations across the country are government-controlled, which ruling parties in the states use to slant public information. In addition, the corrupt influence of neopatrimonial networks has spread to the point that some media houses are associated with particular parties or leaders, and many reporters are vulnerable to bribery in exchange for favorable coverage.

Recent conflicts in Plateau state and elsewhere have been aggravated by biased reporting that has exaggerated or downplayed fatalities to favor one side, leveled blame without evidence, and blithely speculated on impending threats, which has fanned public fears and sparked unnecessarily preemptive strikes. Such stories have increasingly been accompanied by alarmist hate messages sent by text to cellular phones across conflict regions, which raise tensions within hours of an incident – or more frequently, a rumored incident – and spread quickly to other parts of the federation as recipients forward them to friends and relatives.

²⁴ For more on the topic, see Human Rights Watch, “‘They Do Not Own This Place’: Government Discrimination Against ‘Non-indigenes’ in Nigeria,” 2006; Our Niger Delta, “Oil and the Urban Question: Fuelling Politics and Violence in Warri,” 2005.

²⁵ International Crisis Group, *Nigeria’s Faltering Federal Experiment*, 2006.

²⁶ The “federal character principle,” formulated in 1975 by General Murtala Mohammed, requires that “there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in the Government [of the federation] or in any of its agencies.” 1999 Constitution, Chapter II, § 14 (3). It has been applied to elections, political appointments, employment, the composition of the armed forces, recruitment and allocations in the public sector. The Constitution also created a separate Federal Character Commission (FCC) charged with enforcing the principle.

1.5 International Linkages

This dysfunctional state of the Nigerian system clearly undermines peace, security, growth, and development. As part of the interdependent global system, however, the volatility of Nigeria's socio-economic and ethno-linguistic fault lines also depends on the dynamics of the international market and foreign political interests. The nation's porous borders allow a largely unhindered trade in arms from Africa's war zones to the west and east of Nigeria. Armed groups from Niger and Chad have also made excursions across the border, and fears have risen that terror networks could also circulate through Nigeria unnoticed.

Nowhere are the international dimensions of Nigeria's conflicts as evident as in the Niger Delta. The involvement of local and international rogue actors in the offshore illegal oil business has fuelled criminality and sustained militancy across the region. According to the International Crisis Group, "statistics compiled by the International Maritime Bureau for 2008 show 40 reported incidents of piracy in the Delta, including 27 vessels boarded, five hijackings and 49 crew members kidnapped. This places Nigerian waters second only to Somalia as the world's most dangerous. Ten more attacks were reported in the first three weeks of January, 2009."²⁷

This political economy of offshore illegal oil bunkering aggravates conflicts in the Niger Delta, and is starting to impact other parts of the nation as well. Many of the international arms dealers and resource smugglers are the same ones fingered in other African wars, particularly in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Angola.²⁸ These actors thrive in conflict economies, particularly offshore, where accountability and transparency are in deficit, thus serving as a veritable source of the Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) used in the creek wars and piracy. Trans-national drug cartels could also exploit the paucity of security to strengthen their offshore transit routes in the region. In addition to the loss of revenues from ongoing crude theft and illegal fishing in its territorial waters, Nigeria faces the threat that the Gulf of Guinea could degenerate into soft targets for piracy and even terrorism, similar to Somalia, a threat for the entire region.

1.6 Conflict Drivers Review

In sum, the primary overarching structural drivers of conflict in Nigeria include:

- Ethnic and religious identity concerns, manifest in the ethnic security dilemma;
- Grinding poverty amid massive oil rents in an oil-dependent economy, creating deep public frustrations and high incentives for corruption in officeholders;
- In this impoverished context, land also remains a primary source of contention, which is exacerbated by the arbitrary application of indigeneity principles nationwide, often with deadly effect in localities with high ethnic tensions;
- Neopatrimonial patterns of politics that focus primarily on the personal interests of magnates who sit atop vast patronage networks built from looted public funds. The next section will discuss how this neopatrimonial "rogue's peace" at the federal level combined with weak institutions has created additional pressures at the state and local level, increasing the propensity for violent conflicts here;

²⁷ International Crisis Group, Policy Briefing, Africa Briefing No. 60, Abuja/Dakar/Brussels, 30th April, 2009, p. 5.

²⁸ Jennifer M. Hazen with Jonas Horner, "Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective," Occasional Paper No. 20, *Small Arms Survey*, December 2007.

- Weak federal and state institutions unable to police these personal networks effectively, to provide broad-based growth, or to manage a range of public needs satisfactorily. The security forces are particularly notorious in this regard.
- In response to this escalating competition, an increasing number of politicians are turning to the threat or use of violence in their struggles for power.
- Demographic trends, especially the youth bulge, against the backdrop of disappearing employment opportunities, create a readily available pool of potentially violent actors to be mobilized by political manipulators.
- International pressures complicate deadly conflict in Nigeria through the flow of weapons and potential contacts with anti-state actors across the region.

III. MITIGATING FACTORS

Despite Nigeria's many divisions, the nation has managed to stay together since 1970 and has a number of sources of resilience that absorb the deep shocks that have shaken it over the years. In addition, within the three primary conflict zones visited by the assessment team – Niger Delta, Middle Belt, and Far North – several examples stood out where relative peace and progress have been achieved despite their proximity to conflicts. A review of these mitigating factors and bright spots offers a number of important lessons for conflict resolution efforts across Nigeria.

3.1 Negotiated Solutions: Federalism, Ethnic Rotation, and Downward Pressure

After the great catastrophe of the 1967-70 civil war, Nigeria's military regimes wisely divided the federation into 12, 19, and ultimately 36 states by 1996, breaking the big three ethnic groups into multiple states. This administrative split helped to accent important sub-ethnic divisions and to create avenues for multiple centers of leadership through the governors and state assemblies within each group. In addition, 18 of the current 36 states are dominated by Nigeria's many ethnic minorities, making them key stakeholders and giving them important voices in federal politics, which, among other benefits, diluted the powers of the big three, created buffers among them, and opened new opportunities for ethnic coalition building.

Consequently, the "iron frame" of Nigeria's federal system has been an essential ingredient in the nation's ability to recover from the civil war and to create a greater sense of inclusivity that has helped to reduce the perceptions of threat or blocked social mobility that fuel the ethnic security dilemma. More recently, some state governments have provided better development than others, suggesting that the interstate competition for better governance that federal theory promises may be beginning to take root.

Another benefit of the federal frame has also developed in recent years. As corruption has increased and elections grown worse, national-level conflicts have paradoxically declined dramatically when compared with Nigeria's previous republics. Nigerian elites are far more united and far more similar in their neopatrimonial political culture than they were 25 years ago, regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds. This shared culture of neopatrimonialism has moderated the ethnic security dilemma at the federal level. Ethnicity remains the primary political mobilization category, and politicians still play the ethnic card with devastating local effect, such that local communal conflicts have seen well over 20,000 deaths since 1999. The national elites, however, have developed a strong propensity for bargaining and compromise, primarily over the distribution of state largesse, which has brought them through a host of crises that might have broken the country in previous generations.

Perhaps the most fundamental and far-reaching compromise reached by the oligarchy has been the notion of 'zoning' or "power shift," an ethno-regional rotation and power-sharing principle not in the constitution, but enshrined in the charters of the PDP and many of the leading opposition parties. Although not in the constitution, the zoning principle has been influenced by the constitutional provisions since 1979 that discourages formation of ethnic parties and requires prospective political parties to have a national spread. This principle, which was first adopted by the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the dominant party in the Second Republic, currently ensures that the highest political offices are evenly shared across the six major regions of the country, three in the North and three in the South, each consisting of approximately six states. For instance, when the presidency changes hands from a Southern zone (Obasanjo 1999-2007, southwest) to a Northern one (Yar'Adua 2007-2010, northwest), then all the major offices rotate among the zones, as in 2007: vice president to the south-south (Niger Delta), Senate President to the North Central (Middle Belt), House Speaker to the southwest, and so on (see below). Such power-sharing has provided an element of predictability that has now moderated the ethnic security dilemma for over ten years.

Both this bargaining culture and ethnic and regional power-sharing, however, have developed in a context over the last decade of PDP hegemony. The PDP remains little more than a holding company among the nation's political mandarins, an alliance of convenience without ideology that nearly broke in 2006-07 and is again under stress over President Jonathan's gambit to stay in office in 2011 (see below). If new political parties were to form along ethnic or North-South (roughly religious) lines as in the First and Second Republics, or if a significant political opposition were to form, these principles of compromise would be severely tested. Moreover, this "rogues' peace" has been born on the backs of the Nigerian public, who have suffered the loss of public revenues for development and seen the deadliness of local conflict rise. As in other neopatrimonial polities across Africa, Nigeria could soon reach the point where the cost of elite corruption outstrips the economy's capacity to support it, and/or public frustrations with the lack of development fuel sufficient points of conflict or insurrection to provoke a major crisis, massive system failure, or even collapse.

In addition, the "rogues' peace" at the federal level has shifted the locus of volatile competition downward, which has intensified conflicts in states and localities with unstable political arenas. As federal elites and the governors need greater funds to compete with each other and accommodate the growing number of actors at the national level, less money flows to the states and localities, where growing numbers of new competitors are seeking to establish themselves and move up the ladder. This heats up state and local competition nationwide, but in states and localities where local versions of the ethnic security dilemma remain at risk, such as parts of the Middle Belt and Niger Delta, this competition can quickly take on ethnic and religious dimensions when the temptation for elites to play the "ethnic card" in their struggles proves hard to resist. Many states and localities have developed their own ethnic rotation principles to create greater elite inclusivity, but there is great variation in their application across the country.

Nationally, however, the iron frame of the federation has been reinforced by the "gentleman's agreement" of ethno-regional rotation and the greased palm of neopatrimonial bargaining culture, and together these elements have provided enough structure and predictability to keep national conflicts from collapsing into major bouts of violence or war. This arrangement assures that most national elites have their interests accommodated, with the understanding that they in turn will negotiate some measure of compromises with their state and local competitors. Such elite arrangements do not, however, tend to produce solid development policies for the nation, so that the public interest suffers as a result.

3.2 Traditional Institutions

Beyond federal institutions and the sharp politics of elite bargaining, other institutions have also played important roles in dampening or mediating conflicts. Across Nigeria, traditional institutions in particular have been pivotal players in the direction that conflict may take.

A dense array of traditional governance institutions exists in parallel with the local, state, and federal governments. The roles they play in community-level conflict vary as widely as local ideas about them: in some places emirs, kings, councils of chiefs and elders and paramount rulers are powerful decision-makers and identity symbols, with lines of succession stretching back generations. Elsewhere, locals deride them as cultural artifacts and tricksters, or oust them in violent struggles.

Sadly, in some locales partisan and ethnocentric rulers have shown themselves to be central orchestrators of hostilities against opposing ethnicities or religions. Interviewees confirmed the continuing practice of some traditional institutions acting as mobilizers of violence, whether for their own benefit or that of their political masters. Other leaders, informants explained, act as channels to contested state resources (e.g., indigeneity certificates, land rights), sometimes with great partiality.

A peace-oriented traditional ruler, however, may be the key figure who prevents violence or contains conflicts once they occur. Interviewees often pointed to traditional rulers as one of the nation's most overlooked

resources for conflict prevention and resolution. Some leaders are widely seen as bastions of progressive political engagement (such as the Sultan of Sokoto, Emir of Wase, or the Orodje of Okpe, discussed below); others, through long periods of rule and focused engagement on local differences, are viewed as creating islands of peace within some of the country's trouble spots (see Sapele, below). Elsewhere traditional elites serve as key sources of information and early warning on activities within their locales.²⁹

3.3 Peacebuilding Architecture

Nigeria also enjoys a dense array of nongovernmental organizations engaged in local peacebuilding activities. USAID-supported initiatives like the Conflict Management and Mitigation Regional Councils or the Interfaith Mediation Centre involve NGO networks in key conflict zones across the country. Other civil society groups, such as mosques, churches, community associations, and some professional associations are also engaged in conflict resolution efforts. Most of these efforts are particularly effective in their target communities, but some are also able to exercise influence at the state level as well.

Federal and state governments have also established conflict resolution architecture. President Obasanjo founded the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) in his first term, which has intervened in several conflicts across the country and provided conflict analysis on national and West African regional disputes. Several states have also set up peace commissions or councils, and appointed gubernatorial peace advisers as well.

Universities across Nigeria have also established peace studies programs or peace institutes that have developed conflict resolution intervention capacities. Starting with the University of Ibadan in the late 1990s, others have followed suit in recent years, including the University of Jos, Usman dan Fodio University in Sokoto, Bayero University in Kano, and the University of Ilorin.

3.4 Bright Spots

In addition to the above institutions and actors who work to mitigate conflicts across Nigeria, several communities have served as islands of peace within conflicted parts of the country and offer some insight into possible conflict management approaches.

3.4.1 Kaduna

The line dividing Nigeria's 50-50 split between Muslims and Christians runs directly through Kaduna state, whose capital Kaduna City is historically the administrative capital of the North.³⁰ Like Nigeria, Kaduna is nearly evenly divided between Christians in the south and Muslims in the northern half of the state. Tensions between ethnic, religious and associated political groups escalated to violence in 2000.

Over 1999-2000, when twelve Northern states imposed the Shari'a criminal code, Kaduna proposed to follow suit.³¹ Shari'a had previously been only a matter of civil law (particularly inheritance and divorce) and was only applicable to Muslims, but Christian anxieties that they too would be subject to the code soon boiled over.

²⁹ Interviews with civil society activists, May 2010.

³⁰ Human Rights Watch. The "Miss World Riots": Continued Impunity for Killings in Kaduna". Vol 15, No 13 (A) July 2003

³¹ Nick Tattersall and David Cutler. "TIMELINE: Ethnic and Religious Unrest In Nigeria." Reuters, Sun Mar 7, 2010.

On February 21 – 25, 2000, the first wave of Kaduna rioting began when the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) organized a protest against the proposed Shari'a law. A second phase of rioting and mass killings took place May 22 - 23. The aftermath resulted in the death of 2,000 Muslims and Christians, although some estimates place the number as high as 5,000.³² This event played a key role in increasing tension within the communities, which generated several outcomes that would fuel later conflict. The first was massive population displacement within Kaduna City as people began to find safety within their own specific ethnic/religious areas. By 2002, diverse neighborhoods had become completely homogeneous. This separation caused many groups from either side to suggest a possible division of Kaduna State.

Tensions also began to mount as Governor Makarfi tried to placate the situation by implementing a watered down version of the original proposed Shari'a law that allowed each local government to choose the full imposition of the criminal code, and where it was implemented, changed lifestyle laws so that they would not effect Christians, such as in regard to the consumption of alcohol.³³ This angered both Muslims and Christians, as Muslims called for the full enforcement of Shari'a and Christians still voiced discontent over differences in beliefs between the religious and political agenda.³⁴ Nonetheless, this "Kaduna Compromise" gained grudging acceptance from both sides and became a model for other states in the region.

In 2002, violent riots broke out again between Christian and Muslim factions after a November 16th article by *ThisDay* newspaper implied that the prophet Muhammad would have wanted a Miss World contestant as a wife, which angered large portions of the Muslims population. Although there were low levels of protest from Muslims throughout Nigeria, already tense relations between Muslims and Christians within Kaduna led to violence. On November 20th, a peaceful Muslim demonstration within Kaduna turned violent when several Muslim youths attacked and set fire to the regional *ThisDay* office.³⁵ By November 21st, organized Muslim youths attacked Christian homes and targeted Christians within the community, prompting Christian communities to retaliate. Within the next few days, 250 people were killed and between 20,000 to 30,000 people were displaced within Kaduna.³⁶

Since 2002, however, the Kaduna Compromise has largely held. As Christian-Muslim clashes have raged in nearby states, Kaduna has had tensions but remained largely peaceful. Nonetheless, extremists on both sides continue to try to incite violence, recently turning to alarmist (and false) text messages to spread fears of attack.³⁷

One neighborhood in southern Kaduna, Barnawa, is particularly remarkable for having remained peaceful throughout the 2000 and 2002 crises. In both instances, Christians and Muslims worked together to protect each other and prevent outsiders to their neighborhood who were intent on engaging in conflict.

Barnawa and other peaceful neighborhoods in Kaduna share several factors in common:

- Muslims rulers in predominantly Christian areas espoused a multicultural perspective, and did not impose Islam or the Shari'a on Christians, in part out of fear of the consequences.

³² Human Rights Watch. The "Miss World Riots": Continued Impunity for Killings in Kaduna," Vol 15, No 13 (A) July 2003.

³³ Human Rights Watch. The "Miss World Riots": Continued Impunity for Killings in Kaduna," Vol 15, No 13 (A) July 2003.

³⁴ Bilkiyu Yusuf, Hajiya. Managing Muslim-Christian Conflicts in Northern Nigeria: A Case Study of Kaduna State. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 237-256, April 2007.

³⁵ Human Rights Watch. The "Miss World Riots": Continued Impunity for Killings in Kaduna," Vol 15, No 13 (A) July 2003.

³⁶ Human Rights Watch. The "Miss World Riots": Continued Impunity for Killings in Kaduna," Vol 15, No 13 (A) July 2003.

³⁷ Daily Champion (Lagos). "Nigeria: Tension in Kaduna," January 25, 2010.

- Kaduna state has long had a strong state security presence. Both the Government of Ahmed Makarfi and Namadi Sambo made well-equipped security a priority, which has served as deterrent against violence.
- Both the Makarfi and Sambo governments created chiefdoms across both religions and minorities, and created separate Bureaus for Christian and Muslim Affairs with Permanent Secretaries appointed to each to help manage the affairs of the different religious groups. These Bureaus also meet jointly to discuss issues affecting both religions. Every local government in the state also has a Peace and Security Committee that meets regularly and includes traditional rulers and security officers.
- After the 2000 and 2002 crises, Muslim and Christian property owners and businesses have recognized that they both suffer mutual loss during conflicts and have become proactive in containing incitements that often trigger violent outbreaks.
- Civil society groups like the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the Jama’ul Nasril Islam (JNI), and the Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC) have played important roles in encouraging the different religions to live together peacefully. This form of dialogue can be found all over the state, to different degrees of cooperation.
- Barnawa neighborhood itself (in the Kaduna South Local Government Area) instituted a policy of issuing certificates of indigeneity to all children born within the Local Government Council Area. This move has ensured that the community remains one, where everyone has a sense of belonging and ownership.

3.4.2 Wase, Plateau State

Wase, like much of Plateau state where the town is located, has a history of violence over control of land. In 2002, a dispute over land and traditional leadership flared between the Muslim and Christian communities in the town. Politicians sensed an opportunity for political gain and hired youths to perpetuate the violence.

In response, the Emir of Wase and the Christian leaders set up permanent peace committees in each of the component villages of Wase, which include religious leaders, traditional groups, and youth organizations among their members. They meet at least once a month to discuss the local situation, assess threats to peace, and to build relationships across the divide. These committees liaise with both the traditional district head and the local governments. As a result, Wase has remained calm since 2002, despite the violence that has racked the rest of the state.

In addition, the Emir of Wase himself is a pivotal figure keeping the peace in Wase. He engages in regular “shuttle diplomacy” to listen to the concerns of Muslim and Christian groups, to offer aid and advice, and to encourage the peaceful resolution of disputes. The Emir and the Archdiocese of Jos are working together to maintain peace in the state. They have also organized peace teams in the area, composed of both Muslims and Christians, to report any violence breakouts or threats of violence to the police and other local authorities.

3.4.3 Sapele, Delta State

Despite its proximity to the violence-torn town of Warri in Delta state, Sapele has managed to be an island of peace in this volatile region. Efforts began after a 1952 incident of violence between the Urhobo and Itsekiri broke out in Warri and spread to Sapele, which is also divided between these ethnicities. Since then, the Okpe people (an Urhobo subgroup) under the leadership of three successive traditional rulers (the Orodje of Okpe), have worked assiduously to prevent violent conflict in Sapele. Their success is evidenced by the fact that the internecine violence between the Ijaw, Urhobo and Itsekiri that undermined peace and security in Warri between 1997 and 2004 did not spread to Sapele. On the contrary, many Itsekiri persons displaced from their communities during the Warri conflicts took refuge in Sapele.

Sapele has benefitted from the leadership stability arising from two long reigning monarchs, whose many years in office enabled them to consolidate power, authority, and influence. In particular, His Royal Majesty Orhoro I (1972 to 2004), a former police officer, became one of the most respected traditional rulers in the state. As chair of the state council of traditional rulers, he mediated conflicts between different ethnic groups. Over several Warri crises, Orhoro I worked with Ijaw, Urhobo and Itsekiri leaderships as well as his own Okpe people to ensure that violence did not spread to Sapele. Bloody communal conflicts in the nearby fishing villages of Ugbukurusu (Okpe) and Obotie (Itsekiri) in 2001 and 2004 were also contained and did not spread to Sapele.

These traditional rulers build a conflict management system that consists of early warning, dialogue processes, and mediation. These endeavors of the Okpe leaders have largely been successful because of the support and cooperation of the Itsekiri leadership. For instance, a joint Okpe-Itsekiri Peace Committee was formed to intervene in the Ugbukurusu-Obotie communal violence. The Itsekiri leadership reprimanded the youths in Obotie responsible for reprisal attacks on Ugbukurusu.

This conflict management system was also instrumental in preventing violence between Okpe and Itsekiri in Sapele in November 2008 over a controversial plan of the Itsekiri to organize an Itsekiri Day in Sapele. Itsekiri leaders agreed to shelve the ceremony following the position of the new Orodje of Okpe, His Royal Majesty Orhue I, that the ceremony could lead to a breach of the peace in the town.

Okpe and Itsekiri leaders have been sensitive to issues that are likely to trigger violence against the backdrop of longstanding historical conflicts and the large Itsekiri population in Sapele, and have taken pre-emptive steps to manage tensions in order to prevent violence. In June 2010, the Okpe Leaders of Thought called on the National Population Committee to withdraw a publication, which distorts the history and identity of the Okpe people and might be used to reignite the controversy over ownership of Sapele.

Despite these efforts, Sapele still faces threats from several quarters. These include rising youth unemployment and restiveness; declining economic opportunities in Sapele, which has been aggravated by the closure of the large Plywood Factory and conversion of the Sapele Port to a Naval base; and tussles for control of the local government area and chieftaincy institutions.

3.5 Common Themes of Resilience

The above discussion highlights several important points to consider for conflict resolution work in Nigeria. Several key sources of resilience could be strengthened, and several important lessons are evident from the communities that have resisted or addressed the patterns of violence in their regions:

- For all its flaws, the federal system remains the bedrock structure of Nigerian politics, with widespread acceptance and legitimacy, providing the basic lens through which both elites and the public view all political concerns. The federation has helped to differentiate and decentralize conflicts at the national level, opening more opportunities for negotiation, and creating more channels for resources to flow to the states and localities (although elites regularly siphon these away);
- Paradoxically, the over-centralized, oil rent-addicted political economy that fostered the rise of the neopatrimonial oligarchy has also facilitated the development of a bargaining culture among the elite, which has brokered a remarkable “rogues’ peace” at the federal level, under which most major oligarchs are eventually “settled” with a slice of the “national cake;”
- A key product of the rogues’ peace was the widespread, informal agreement of ethnic power rotation that has underpinned negotiations within the PDP and nationwide, with imperfect imitations in most of the states and localities;

- At the end of the day, Nigeria still makes an enormous amount of revenue, which the nation has shown on occasion that it can utilize if key leaders show an interest, suggesting that few or none of Nigeria's problems are insurmountable at this point if a sufficient level of political will can be generated. Several states, such as Lagos, have demonstrated this ability locally when leadership commits to reform.³⁸
- Just as the competition over political power among the oligarchs has heated up in recent years, they also show some signs of conflict fatigue as well, suggesting that opportunities for dialogue in the key conflict zones may be possible. Memories of the civil war also remain an important check on the behavior of the older generation.
- Traditional rulers and religious figures played pivotal roles in organizing communities for peace (by establishing dialogue committees, engaging state agencies, etc.), in brokering peace deals, and in fostering channels of communication across ethnic and religious divides. These leaders utilized both their traditional and spiritual authority to bring disputants to the table and to appeal to community values to call for principled compromise and to legitimize notions of mutual respect and forgiveness. Particularly powerful combinations for peace featured partnerships and coalitions of traditional rulers and religious figures from both/all sides of the cultural divides at odds.
- Permanent dialogue institutions were established, particularly at the neighborhood and community levels, which included leaders and key stakeholders from all the communities in conflict.
- Kaduna state, as a much larger entity (Wase and Sapele are towns), also offers the promise of what state government can accomplish if it undertakes a comprehensive peace and security policy – even if it provoked the conflict in the first place. The nation's over-dominant executive branch means that the governors play pivotal roles in this regard and their commitment to lead peace initiatives can have tremendous impact.
- Barnawa neighborhood in Kaduna demonstrates the important impact that dropping politicized interpretations of the indigeneity principle can have in ensuring long-term stability and peace. Barnawa utilizes a simple *jus soli* approach common to many other nations, which grants certificates of indigeneity to anyone born in that locality.

³⁸ For a listing of some of these, see <http://www.lagosstate.gov.ng/>.

IV. CURRENT MANIFESTATIONS OF CONFLICT

The conflict drivers and mitigating factors described in the previous sections indicate a general context prone toward violent conflicts under certain conditions. Several regions of the country are particularly conflict ridden, reflecting these conditions and demonstrating the potential for escalation: the Niger Delta, Plateau State, and parts of the northeast and far North.

4.1 The Niger Delta: How Long Will the Holding Pattern Last?

Of all the country's restive areas, the Niger Delta is arguably the one most deeply mired in violence. It is also, again, far the wealthiest area in terms of government revenues. Yet the seat of Nigerian oil production also remains economically backward and neglected. Grassroots opposition to this has blossomed, first as peaceful protest but increasingly as organized violent struggle. Today the delta hosts a bewildering array of armed groups, most notably the many factions of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). The area is awash in small arms.³⁹ Multiple drivers of conflict interact to prolong unrest, including instrumentalized use of violence by politicians, neglect of local economies and ecosystems, corruption and patronage-based politics.

In addition to being the country's most entrenched conflict zone, the Niger Delta is also strategically the most important. This is because:

- Increasingly since the early 2000s, insecurity in the region has threatened Nigerian oil supply. Angry locals have directly threatened the security of persons and property, or otherwise created on-ground conditions too hostile for extraction. The impacts on Nigerian revenue receipts and global oil prices have been dramatic.
- The delta is also a growing exporter of conflict. Interviewees reported rising stories of arms, combatants and combat training traveling north to other parts of the country (e.g., Plateau State).⁴⁰ Delta armed groups have also been named in attacks elsewhere in the Gulf of Guinea.
- Organized crime on a scale far exceeding anything in the rest of the country is another driver of delta conflict.⁴¹ The centerpiece of this is massive crude oil theft, often carried out by cartels with transnational reach and impacts.⁴² Profits from criminal enterprise, interviewees said, also curb the effectiveness of conflict programming. Speaking for instance on the Federal Government plan to offer skills acquisition training as part of the post amnesty process, one MEND field commander scoffed, "Do

³⁹ Good estimates for total small arms in the Delta are lacking, but studies have posited between 1 and 3 million for Nigeria as a whole. See Hazen and Horner, *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective*, Small Arms Survey, 2007.

⁴⁰ Interviews, Abuja, May 2010.

⁴¹ 2008, for instance, saw reports of 140 cases of sea piracy, and 128 kidnappings in the first three months alone. International Maritime Bureau, "IMB reports unprecedented rise in maritime hijackings," 16 January 2009. An estimated \$100 million in kidnapping ransoms were paid between 2006 and 2008. Schmidle, "The Hostage Business," NY Times Magazine, 6 December 2009 (citing former Nigerian IG Mike Okiro).

⁴² Estimates on the extent of bunkering are staggering: perhaps 30,000 to 300,000 barrels a day and a loss of \$100 billion to Nigerian economy over five years. See e.g., Davis and Kemedi, "Illegal Oil Bunkering in the Niger Delta," 2006. Bunkering also factors into violent turf battles between armed groups, bruising military offensives, and perhaps even the overthrow of the Buhari military government. It requires active involvement by high-ups in the military, private industry and government. On its transnational reaches, see e.g., UNODC, "Transnational Trafficking in West Africa: A Threat Assessment," 2009.

they see the money I can make in the creeks? What rich man goes to make shoes for a poor man? What do they think this is, the Bible?”⁴³

The Niger Delta is also where conflict discourses and tactics *most explicitly target the state*. Conflict actors draw freely on a core menu of articulated grievances related to governance: poverty, youth unemployment, ethnic marginalization and the negative environmental impacts of oil production.⁴⁴ Likewise, in recent years armed groups like MEND, with their pan-Niger Delta rhetoric and dramatic assaults on oil installations, have “edged violence closer to the center of the Nigerian federation.”⁴⁵ Nearly all interviewees drew causal linkages between conflict and failures of governance in the delta, noting for instance that:

- Politicians have arguably been the most common mobilizers of violence in the region (whether through armed groups, youth, or the security services);
- The influx of oil money to the delta has greatly heightened the value of political office, and the stakes of political contest;
- Government performance on development and delivery of social services has historically been poor at all levels, with much corruption, mismanagement and conspicuous waste;
- What development that does occur is often treated as patronage or short-term conflict management, rather than as social investment.⁴⁶

Facing such a dismal record, interviewees said, it should hardly surprise that locals choose violence to push their goals of economic prosperity and development. Community members themselves echoed the prediction that “when there is development there will be peace.”⁴⁷

As a hypothesis, this last is beguiling, and the grassroots Niger Delta narrative of poor leadership and deprivation is justified and compelling. Yet it also obscures a wellspring of relationships and agendas that entrench violence, just as it promotes conflict analyses that conflate local, national and transnational matters. A common thumbnail of conflict in the area reads something like: *there is a long-running dispute between government and locals over benefits from oil*. Yet however wide-ranging in *rhetoric* or *impact* violence in the delta can be, it is often mobilized to serve interests more localized in *origin* and *endeavor*. “Greed” and “grievance” commingle freely as motives to fight.

Another complexity is that the delta is experiencing not a single conflict, but a complex system of conflicts. Indeed, one 2007 UN estimate alone counted as many as “120 to 150 high risk and active violent conflicts in the key oil-producing states of Rivers, Delta, and Bayelsa.”⁴⁸ Most are sparked by issues of *sharing*, be it of resources, political power or turf. Once kindled, they eat away at social institutions and kinship ties; restrict outside investment, private enterprise and local trade; cost lives and property; and sow seeds of later violence.⁴⁹ They also heighten participation in the robust *economy of conflict* that fuels the Niger Delta crisis.⁵⁰ This economy is essentially a network of networks, an engine circulating goods incident to oil and politics

⁴³ Interview, Abuja, May 2010.

⁴⁴ Certainly a half-century of oil certainly has not been kind to the Niger Delta: merely on the issue of environmental damage, a 2006 UNDP study found that between 1979 to 2005 there had been 1,100,000 barrel of crude spilt. UNDP (2006), op. cit. Other studies put the figures much higher.

⁴⁵ Interview, Niger Delta academic, Abuja, May 2010.

⁴⁶ Interviews, Warri, Efferun, Port Harcourt, Okrika and Abuja, May 2010.

⁴⁷ Focus groups held in Warri, Sapele Okrika and Eleme, May 2010.

⁴⁸ UNDP, “Niger Delta Situation Assessment and Opportunities for Engagement,” unpublished, 2007.

⁴⁹ E.g., comments of focus group participant in Okrika and Eleme, Rivers State, May 2010.

⁵⁰ See e.g., Transnational Crisis Project, “Antidote to Violence?” 2010.

(e.g., ransoms, votes, contracts, jobs) throughout the body politic. It straddles the “formal” and “informal” sectors, and encompasses both licit and illicit enterprise. “There is no black and white in the delta,” one former government contractor warned. “It’s all shades of grey.”⁵¹ The resulting skein of for-profit relationships is mind-bending, as seen here:

As of June 2010 the Niger Delta rests in a holding pattern, benefitting from a tenuous peace. Government is promising a revived post-amnesty program for militants amid murmurs of corruption, design deficiencies, uncertain political will and delays in implementation. A 2009 disarmament exercise fell short of international best practices and recovered only a fraction of militant arms.⁵² Power sector reform and a plan to provide locals with oil “equity” are being touted, yet fundamental grievances remain unaddressed. Meanwhile, conflict levels in Niger Delta, both with the state and among communities, have dropped off.⁵³ An ethnic Ijaw occupies the Presidential Villa, with elections less than a year away. Oil production has risen dramatically.⁵⁴

All of which begs the question: *What is next, conflict-wise, for the Niger Delta?* Is this a window of opportunity, a door onto fresh violence, or neither? A number of factors complicate prediction, not least:

- Right now violent actors in the region are reevaluating their tactics, goals and patronage networks;
- The extent to which Niger Delta armed groups will participate in rigging the 2011 elections remains an open question;
- Such rigging could be funded in part by resources siphoned from finances intended for the amnesty program;
- One or more militant leaders may retire from the creeks, prompting succession issues;⁵⁵
- Global oil prices are forecasted to rise, possibly topping \$100/barrel in the next 1-2 years.

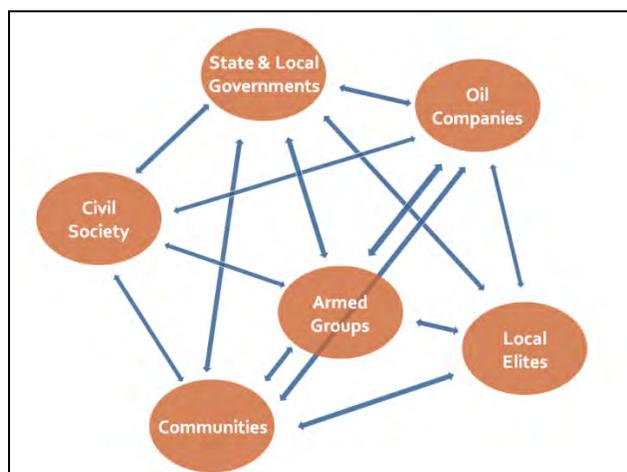


FIGURE 8. THE NIGER DELTA CONFLICT ECONOMY – A PARTIAL SKETCH

Moreover, both violent and non-violent stakeholders in the delta have adopted a “wait and see” stance since the ascension of President Jonathan in April. “The next phase of the struggle,” one Ijaw youth activist explained, “is to consolidate on our man in government and see what we can get.”⁵⁶

⁵¹ Interview, Abuja, May 2010.

⁵² Interviews with state government official and donor personnel, Abuja, May 2010.

⁵³ Interviews with Federal and state government officials, oil company staff and civil society personnel, Abuja, May 2010.

⁵⁴ Nigeria produced an average 2.25 million barrels of crude and condensate per day in the first quarter of 2010, up roughly half a million barrels over 2009 averages. The oil sector of the economy grew by 7.23 percent in the same period, kicking in an extra n994.9 billion in revenues. National Bureau of Statistics, June 2010 figures.

⁵⁵ Interviews with Niger Delta academics, activists, civil society personnel, armed group members and counsel to major militant leader, Port Harcourt and Abuja, May 2010.

⁵⁶ Interview, Abuja, May 2010.

After the high-profile attacks and kidnappings, economic shockwaves, and rising paranoia of 2006-2009, the current lull in conflict is a welcome respite for the oil-producing delta. Nonetheless, interviewees warned against assuming that the calm is likely to persist. Most agreed the coming 12 to 18 months should tell observers much about the Niger Delta's direction, and most believed that the area will lapse back into violence in this period.⁵⁷ Many believed, for instance, that the kind of upswings in violence that followed the 2003 and 2007 polls would repeat themselves.

Other interviewees underscored the fact that the amnesty process has increasingly been absorbed into the patronage systems of powerful state and national actors. They singled out the system of formal and informal government payments to militants lubricating the post-amnesty process as a veiled source of potential influence and conflict. Though likely to continue for some time, informants said, these payments ultimately will not be sustained – and what comes after is unclear. Moreover, one Port Harcourt-based civil society worker cautioned, “there is not enough money to pay every generation of leaders. The boys to look out for are those in the next generation, the ones next in line.”⁵⁸ Others criticized Government's planned rehabilitation process for militants as weak in response to systemic problems that help drive conflict such as decaying local industry or youth unemployment. Indeed, would-be participants themselves showed little faith in the process. One intelligence officer for MEND said wearily: “If the President wants peace, let him give us some small thing, or else just hire our leaders to rig the elections. If not, we go back in the creeks soon enough.”⁵⁹

4.2 Jos and Plateau State: Waiting for the Next Round of Violence

Plateau State stands at the crossroads of several major fault lines in Nigeria's political demographics, and has been racked by numerous bouts of violence in recent years as these lines have been aggravated. Plateau is a majority Christian state with significant Hausa Muslim populations, has a history of violence between opposing ethnic and religious backgrounds, particularly since the early 1990s.

The ownership of Jos, the capital of the state, has been a particular source of tension between the Hausas, a small percentage of whom migrated in large numbers to Jos at the start of British colonial rule, and the largely Christian indigenous ethnic groups of the Berom, Afizere, Anaguta, and others. Although the Hausas are a minority in Plateau state, they are the largest ethnic group in Nigeria overall, such that a common theme among the Berom and other Christian groups is that they, too, are minorities and are at risk of Hausa domination at the national level. Some Christians also fear the Hausa will use this national influence to “capture” Jos and push them out.⁶⁰ The Christian groups are not, however, monolithic, and have numerous disputes among themselves as well. Some of these conflicts involve the Berom, which is the largest ethnic group in Plateau but not numerous enough to constitute a majority in the state.

The Hausa minority harbor fears of being swept out of Jos that mirror those of the Christian minorities. Christian ethnicities have used government citizenship policies to differentiate between “indigenes” and “settlers” (the Hausa) under the indigeneity principle discussed in Section I; so that the latter can be denied the right to compete for state and government jobs, academic scholarships, and have higher fees for

⁵⁷ Interviews, activists, civil society personnel, armed group members, Abuja, May 2010.

⁵⁸ Interview, Abuja, May 2010.

⁵⁹ Interview, Abuja, May 2010.

⁶⁰ Chris Kwaja and Darren Kew, “Nigeria's Smoldering Crisis in Jos,” *Globalpost*, April 14, 2010. <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/africa/100407/nigerias-jos-violence>.

education.⁶¹ Local elections thus become key flashpoints for determining citizenship rights, and Plateau state has erupted over such contests on several occasions.

The most recent round of violence in Jos resulted in hundreds of deaths over the November 2008 local government elections and more recently, the January and March massacres of 2010. These occurred between Christian “indigenes” from the Berom, Afizere, and Anaguta ethnic groups who supported the PDP and Muslims from the Hausa-Fulani group who supported the opposition ANPP over allegations that the PDP rigged the final outcome. Mobs formed and specific neighborhoods were targeted for political and religious affiliation.⁶² The January 2010 riots killed some 235 people, primarily Muslim Hausas,⁶³ and at least 17,000 people were displaced, most likely in retaliation for the November 2008 killings.⁶⁴ Although the police and military were able to quell the violence, their involvement resulted in many cases of excessive force in which there were at least 130 police-implicated killings.⁶⁵ The cycle of violence continued months later in March 2010 when around 700 people, many of whom were Christians were killed.⁶⁶ The government did not prosecute anyone for earlier cases of violence, but in April 2010, 20 people were charged with terrorist attacks and 160 people arrested.⁶⁷

These tepid government measures, however, have done little to address the underlying anger across Plateau State and in Jos in particular. Assessment team interviews across Plateau in May 2010 found widespread narratives of grievance among Hausas and Christian minority groups against each other, and to a lesser degree, secondary grievances among the Christian groups against each other, particularly against the Berom. Hausa-Christian tensions, however, are by far more explosive at the moment, as memories of the January and March 2010 bloodlettings remain fresh and expectations of reciprocal killings remain high. Our team heard numerous allegations from both sides of “silent killings” perpetrated against individuals caught in the “wrong” community day or night. Moreover, neighborhoods in Jos and several Local Government Areas (LGAs) across the state are now largely segregated, having been ethnically “cleansed,” and many communities have organized vigilante groups in anticipation of the next round and/or in preparation for revenge killings. Mutual allegations of the importation of arms abound. Tensions are so high that any minor incident between two individuals across the religious divide could escalate rapidly, facilitated by the barrage of hate messages and other alarmist texts sent across the extensive cellular networks.

Exacerbating matters greatly are strong allegations that the governor, Jonah Jang, backed by the paramount Berom traditional ruler, is stoking the conflict in order to unite the Christian minorities to support his reelection in 2011, utilizing the vast resources of state government at his disposal. Jang is accused by other Christian minorities of having used the governorship to channel a disproportionate amount of government funds toward his own Berom region, which has fueled the PDP candidacy of a rival candidate from another Christian ethnicity. The temptation to maneuver the Hausa into circumstances that he and other politicians can use to appear as the defender(s) of Christian interests in order to outflank opponents may prove difficult to resist.

Consequently, the disputes in Plateau state have clearly escalated into a structural conflict, with local institutions being adapted and developed that will propagate the conflict and escalate violent episodes rapidly. These institutions are increasingly backed by pervasive grievance narratives, negative stereotypes, and

⁶¹ Human Rights Watch. “Arbitrary Killings by Security Forces.” Submission to the Investigative Bodies on the November 28-29, 2008 Violence in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria

⁶² Human Rights Watch. “Arbitrary Killings by Security Forces.” Submission to the Investigative Bodies on the November 28-29, 2008 Violence in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria

⁶³ BBC. “Nigeria army takes control of riot-hit Jos.” 22 January 2010.

⁶⁴ Reuters. “Bodies pulled from wells after Nigeria clashes.” Jan 23, 2010

⁶⁵ Reuters. “Bodies pulled from wells after Nigeria clashes.” Jan 23, 2010

⁶⁶ The Guardian. “Nigeria told to take action as 200 die in sectarian violence.” 9 March 2010

⁶⁷ Mohammed, Shuaibu and Tume Ahemba. “Nigeria charges 20 with terrorism in Jos attacks” *Reuters*. April 1, 2010.

widespread trauma on both sides that reinforce these conflict trends, deter cross-cultural communication, and restrict the political space for moderate leaders and civil society peace-building initiatives.

Despite the deteriorating situation, however, the conflict in Plateau state is not yet as entrenched as the Niger Delta, and our team learned of numerous local initiatives to break the cycle of escalation. Several neighborhoods in Jos have managed to preserve their interethnic and interfaith distribution through mixed religious community councils and bridging activities. Several Plateau communities outside of Jos have undertaken similar initiatives, notably Wase (see below). In addition, several NGO peace and early warning networks are active and working to build larger peace coalitions, including USAID grantees like the Interfaith Mediation Centre and the Plateau State Conflict Management and Mitigation Regional Council. With the 2011 elections looming, however, these organizations may face not only the might of the state government and other institutional actors interested in fomenting violence, but also external actors who may also support one side of the conflict or the other.

4.3 Religion and its Challenges: the Fragmentation of Islam and Christianity in the North

The conflict in Plateau State has a host of its own peculiar dynamics, but it also reflects the influence of two major global trends that are impacting other states in the federation. One is a rising tide of Christian movements – some radical, some establishment – seeking to spread their religion northward across traditionalist and Muslim communities, and the other is a Nigerian expression of the Islamic renewal and radicalism trends sweeping the Muslim world. Not only are these trends clashing across Nigeria’s mixed-religion regions, but they are also producing intra-religious conflicts, particularly within the Nigerian Islamic community that have escalated into violence in several parts of the nation. While manifested along religious lines, these conflicts are deeply rooted in Nigeria’s pre-colonial and colonial history and heavily influence communal identities and political structures to this day.

One of the most significant historical events in Nigerian history was the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate in Northern Nigeria in the early nineteenth century. The Caliphate was the largest state in Africa at that time and was founded upon the desire to establish an ideal Islamic polity. The caliphate system established semi-autonomous emirates in cities under its control that helped to cement Muslim Hausa and Fulani hegemony over a large segment of modern Nigeria. British colonial administration chose to preserve the emirate system in areas that previously were part of the caliphate as well as in other established Muslim kingdoms in the north, such as Borno, and granted the emirs a great deal of autonomy. One Christian concern voiced in areas where Muslims and Christians are cohabiting is that they fear that Hausas and Fulanis still seek to expand or reassert the hegemony of the Sokoto Caliphate.

This is exacerbated by the fact that the emirs, the traditional rulers of the North, continue to exert a great deal of political influence as the titular rulers of the local religious communities, but also with strong ties to the state, which pays many of their expenses. In recent years, state governments have recognized an increased number of traditional rulers, particularly in non-Muslim communities, which has resulted in a temporary easing of tensions in some areas. This has also, however, aggravated long-standing questions of their legality and constitutional roles in a democracy.

In some cases, these traditional rulers serve as a key social resilience by representing their community interests in traditional leader councils and as intermediaries with government officials. They are also able to exert their personal authority when violence breaks out within their communities. Some, like the Sultan of Sokoto, are viewed as being important interfaith peacemakers. The Sultan in particular often works in partnership with the Archbishop of Abuja, who is also currently the president of the Christian Association of Nigeria, and together they have sent a powerful message of reconciliation across the country.

A mental map of the former Sokoto Caliphate is also active in the minds of Muslim “*hijrah*” groups who seek to eschew contemporary institutions and structures. These utopian groups have a long history in Nigeria. Some groups migrated to the Sudan in the immediate collapse of the caliphate and maintained links to their coreligionists at home. Others chose internal exile, establishing isolated communities aloof from the wider world who sought to maintain pure Islamic societies. In a handful of extreme cases, such as Maitetsine in the 1980s and more recently by the Boko Haram movement (see below), when mobilized by charismatic preachers, some hijrah groups are capable of violence to resist or overturn the existing national system in favor of an idealized vision of an Islamic state. But such sentiments are not only confined to groups that operate on the fringe, but rather have salience for a great many northern Nigerian Muslims, which manifest in the efforts to reestablish the Shari’a criminal codes in 1999-2000. Shari’a, in the broadest sense, remains a key identity marker for many Muslims in northern Nigeria, who view it as being their right to order society on the basis of it and tied to their historical memory of the caliphate. For them, maintaining *Shari’a* is as much an issue of religious freedom as it is viewed by Christian Nigerians as an attack on theirs.⁶⁸

Yet this legacy of the caliphate and other pre-colonial Islamic states has been an important reason why political Islamism has so far failed to take root in Nigeria. The Islamic religious establishment has also demonstrated a strong absorptive capacity that has been able to accommodate traditional Sufi groups (Tijaniyyah and Qadiriyyah) and reformists (Izala), despite significant doctrinal differences between them. Others operating on the fringes of these groups however, like the Shi’a followers of Sheik Zakzaky, or Boko Haram and the Kalakato (see below), have at one time or another come into violent conflict with the religious establishment and/or the state. But there nonetheless is an active charismatic revivalist movement that operates in the space in between the religious establishment and the violent extremes, and it is growing in popularity.

This revivalist wave is overwhelmingly reformist and peaceful, although its rhetoric may often be fiery. As many respondents familiar with these movements indicated, fiery sermons play well among a deeply impoverished public frustrated with abysmal governance.⁶⁹ Much of the wave is also highly local, embodied in the growing number of itinerant preachers, many of whom were not educated in the traditional institutions of Islamic higher learning, and who have started their own congregations, some attracting very large followings. Recognizing the political importance of this trend, governors in 12 Northern states in 1999-2000 implemented the Sharia criminal code to gain legitimacy and supporters.

Both the reformist and the few radical Islamist movements in Northern Nigeria commonly identify poor governance as a primary factor in propelling them to seek Islamic solutions. Some call for the installation of an Islamic state. For those that do, such a state would not simply be a means to provide good governance, but it is also a desirable end in itself – a higher calling to establish God’s truth among humanity. This utopian urge is not only a spiritual quest but an outgrowth of social identity, in that the promotion of one’s religious group enhances one’s psychological sense of self – a tremendously important need under the grinding conditions of poverty in the North.⁷⁰

Islamist critiques in Nigeria also offer an economic vision. A proper Islamist government backed by full implementation of the Shari’a promises a communal welfare system in which everyone’s basic human needs

⁶⁸ Mukhtar Bunza, *Islamism Vs Secularism: A Religious- Political Struggle in Modern Nigeria*. JSRI • No. 2/Summer 2002, pp. 49-65, http://www.jsri.ro/old/html%20version/index/no_2/mukhatarumarbunza-articol2.htm

⁶⁹ Interviews in Bauchi, Gombe, and Borno states, May 17-22, 2010.

⁷⁰ For further explanation of the concept of social identity, see: H. Tajfel and J.C. Turner (1986), “The social identity theory of inter-group behavior,” In S. Worchel and L. W. Austin (eds.), *Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1986).

will be addressed, with special protections for the poor.⁷¹ Consequently, these movements are clearly flourishing in a context of growing economic desperation. In Kano, for instance, roughly 75% of manufacturers went out of business in the 1990s,⁷² and many of the rest seem to have faded in the early part of this decade.⁷³ Less than a fifth of Nigeria's industrial capacity is in Northern Nigeria overall, and 70% of that is in Kano and Kaduna. Youth unemployment is particularly high.

It would, however, be a mistake to suggest that these movements consist exclusively of the poor. In fact, we see strong representation of economic elites and financial support from wealthy Nigerians. Movements like Boko Haram and the Taliban featured strong representation of economic elites, as do some of the Hijrah (utopian) communities, the Shi'ites, and others. Some of the nation's most powerful politicians turn to popular itinerant preachers and radical leaders for special blessings designed to assist political plans, for good luck, and to gain some of their popularity by association.⁷⁴

An important subtext to these factors promoting Islamist movements is the damaged legitimacy of the Nigerian Islamic establishment – the emirates and the Sufi brotherhoods. Their long-term association with corrupt and oppressive governments over the past 30 years has whittled away their centrality as religious figures and trustees of social identity. Consequently, their ability to integrate new Islamic movements into the socio-political mainstream has waned along with their influence with the populace. The Emirs and the Sufis remain very influential, but they now compete in a marketplace of Islamic religious alternatives and political visions that has grown more complex and volatile. In trying to maintain their control over the religious establishment, however, they also exacerbate religious tensions within the Muslim community by their support for the suppression of new movements, like the Shi'ites or others, which can ultimately fuel violence.

The 12 state governments that implemented the Shari'a criminal code sought to follow some Islamist economic goals primarily through welfare programs funded from the *zakat*, under which Muslims are obliged to use a portion of their earnings for charitable giving. Shari'a governing councils created in the same legislation that implemented the criminal code gained authority to collect these taxes and disburse them to the poor, typically through direct cash transfers, food subsidies, agricultural or small business equipment, or small loans. Overall, however, the budgets for these programs have been meager and their scope of impact modest.⁷⁵

These trends within the Islamic community have also taken place in the context of a tremendous Christian proselytizing wave in recent years, spearheaded by the Pentecostal churches but soon matched by the establishment denominations (Anglican, Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian). These churches scored massive conversions among traditional religion practitioners, particularly in the Middle Belt and northeastern states, but also in the urban centers of the Far North. As the numbers of Christians in Nigeria approached (or perhaps surpassed, as some Christian sources argue) parity with the numbers of Muslims in Nigeria, individuals living in the regions of new conversions faced a host of problems associated with rapid social change. The Muslim-Christian fault line was further aggravated by global events, particularly as relations between the West and the Islamic world strained after September 11, 2001.

⁷¹ Chika Umar Aliyu, "The Economy and Shari'a in Northwest Zone with Particular References to Sokoto and Zamfara States," Paper presented to the Fifth In-House Forum of the Shari'ah Information and Documentation Project, Kano, May 29, 2004. Available at www.boellnigeria.org.

⁷² Darren Kew, *Classrooms of Democracy: Civil Society, Conflict Resolution, and Building Democracy in Nigeria* (forthcoming, 2011).

⁷³ U. Bugaje, L. Hamalai, and S. Indabawa, "On Industrial Development of the Northern States of Nigeria," National Development Project, 2002.

⁷⁴ Interviews in Bauchi, Gombe, and Borno, May 17-22, 2010.

⁷⁵ Mustapha Adam Kolo, "Economic Dimensions of Shari'a in Northern Nigeria," Paper presented to the Fifth In-House Forum of the Shari'ah Information and Documentation Project, Kano, May 29, 2004. Available at: www.boellnigeria.org.

The states of the Middle Belt and northeast have been particularly prone to inter-religious unrest in recent years as the numbers of Christian converts skyrocketed, and the number of Muslim converts from the traditional religions also increased. Local sources now estimate that the percentage of Christians in

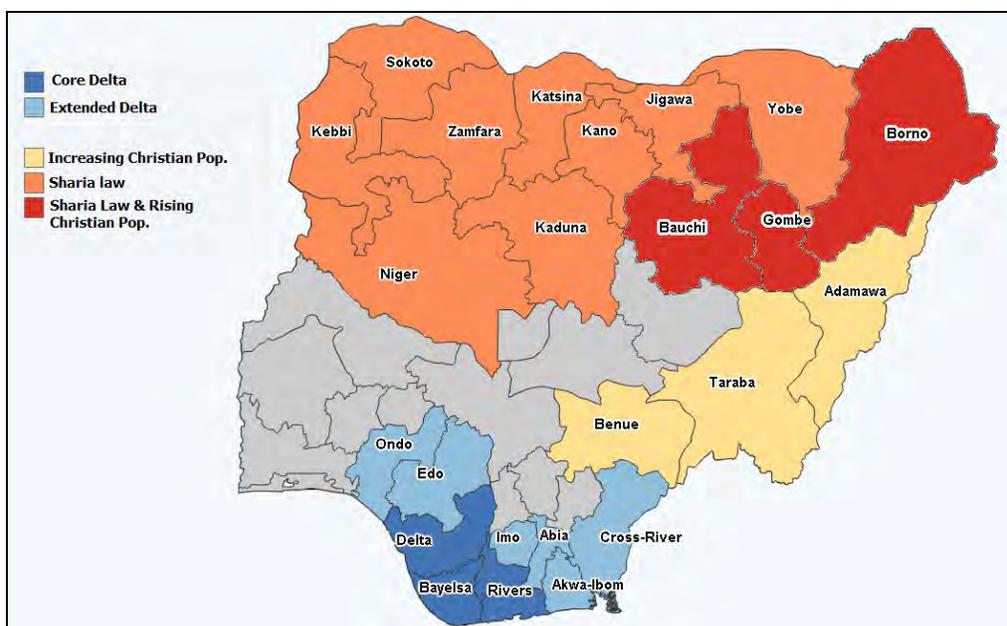


FIGURE 9. SHARI'A LAW AND GROWING CHRISTIAN POPULATIONS

Kaduna State is approximately 50%, Bauchi State is 35-40%, Gombe State roughly 50%, and Borno State as high as 35%, and that states south of these such as Adamawa, Taraba, and Benue are now majority Christian as well. These figures are contested, given the deliberate omission of religious and ethnic questions in successive post civil war censuses, but assessment team interviews in May 2010 found a remarkable consistency among both Muslim and Christian estimates.⁷⁶

In response, the propensity for identity-based conflicts across this entire region has grown dramatically in recent years. At times, the religious divide has been ignited by Muslim groups outraged over global events such as the 2003 US invasion of Iraq or the 2006 Danish cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed – in fact, more Nigerians died in the cartoon riots than in similar riots elsewhere in the world. In addition, conflicts elsewhere in Nigeria can also provoke violence in the fault line region. The assessment team heard multiple allegations from Christian leaders, for instance, that violent episodes against Muslims in Jos led to revenge killings in Bauchi and Gombe states, sometimes with state government acquiescence that went largely unreported in the media.⁷⁷ Although many of these episodes were initiated by groups of Muslim vigilantes on Christian minorities, in recent years many Christian communities have been organizing their own vigilantes or militias that have initiated violent attacks as well.

More often, however, local political and resource disputes ignite religious anger that boils over in specific localities. As Christian numbers have perceptibly grown in recent years, their complaints of political marginalization have risen, particularly in Bauchi and Gombe state, where only two state commissioners (out of over 20) with minor portfolios in both states are Christians. Christian leaders also complained to the team of discrimination in the distribution of state resources and development funds as well, and that Muslim communities enjoyed more local governments and traditional rulers and chiefdoms, who are also channels of state funds.

⁷⁶ The figures quoted roughly split the difference between the Muslim (typically lower) and Christian estimates (typically higher) given in response when asked the percentage of Christians in each state. Interviews May 10-22, 2010.

⁷⁷ Interviews in Bauchi city and Gombe city, May 17-20, 2010.

The indigene-settler split also serves as the basis for routine religious discrimination against Christians in northern Nigeria, much as it has been used against Muslims and others in Jos. Since 1999, Christian groups have resisted the Shari'a criminal codes being applied to them through both legal means as well as through violence. Consequently, the Shari'a criminal code generally has not been applied to non-Muslims, but subtle discrimination exists that translates into Christians and followers of traditional beliefs being treated as second-class citizens. Particularly as Christian groups continue to proliferate and gain adherents in Northern, traditionally Muslim states, both through internal migration and conversion, their demands to build churches or conduct other religious activities are often rebuffed by local authorities. While instances of this sort are sometimes managed through legal channels, in most cases grievances remain unaddressed, in part because they are built upon the indigene-settler dichotomy that allows for Christian groups to be discriminated against on the basis of their settler status rather than directly on a religious basis. Nonetheless, discrimination solely on the basis of religion also takes place, as converts from Islam to Christianity who are indigenes of northern states often point out.

The contestation over political and economic control of states in which religious populations are nearly balanced has broader symbolic importance, which manifests through discrimination and or violence against minorities in other areas. These pressures, however, are generally felt more severely by Christian minorities in traditionally Muslim states where insecurities about maintaining the Islamic character of northern states are acute, due to internal migration and shifting religious loyalties. The lack of a shared sense of Nigerian citizenship that locates the identity of place within a broader national context will continue to exacerbate these tensions, which ultimately rest in the politics of indigeneity.

4.4 Fraying Edges: Boko Haram and other Radical Fringe Groups

As many of the "Shari'a governors" proved to be just as corrupt and non-performing as their predecessors or Southern counterparts, Muslim public frustration with the poor quality of governance overall, continued economic desperation, and disillusionment with mainstream Islamic leaders like the Emirs have created an environment where the radical movements are the only groups left with some credibility in the eyes of many in the public. Radical arguments that the "true Shari'a" has not been implemented could gain greater public sympathy as the only untested, appealing political policy alternative and a powerful critique of the status quo.

So far, however, the two most recent radical Islamist movements that turned violent did not gain widespread public approval. In fact, both Boko Haram in Borno state and Kalakato in Bauchi state (both Shari'a states) lost popularity quickly when they espoused violence.⁷⁸

Boko Haram appears to have been a collection of radical-minded imams and others who espoused an increasingly shrill critique of the corruption in Nigerian society, politics, and education in particular, which they saw as un-Islamic and the root of the nation's decline. Boko is a colloquial word for Western education, so declaring it *haram* (forbidden or sinful) was essentially not just a rejection of the secular education system, but also the Western world that installed the current corrupt system of government in Nigeria and that continues to support it. By around 2006, the movement appears to have gathered in Maiduguri around the leadership of a charismatic young imam, Mohammed Yusuf, but he was not alone in the leadership of the organization, which also had a base in Bauchi and links in Kano. He and some of his followers came to Maiduguri from Yobe, but others came from across Northern Nigeria and perhaps even Niger. Former members of the Nigerian Taliban, a small, violent movement active in Yobe and Borno in 2002-04, also appear to have joined Boko Haram's ranks.

Yusuf's fiery sermons won him some powerful friends initially, including the governor of Borno state and high-placed members of the Yar'Adua government. His relationship with the Borno governor is alleged to

⁷⁸ Interviews in Bauchi and Borno, May 17-19, 20-22, 2010.

have been particularly close, which is why many in the state believe he was shot in the end, in order to prevent the details from coming to light.⁷⁹ By 2008, Boko Haram was calling for violent overthrow of the government and storing arms in its headquarters in Maiduguri and Bauchi. What precipitated the violence in July 2009, however, was when police shot several Boko Haram members, prompting the movement to launch a takeover of central Maiduguri, which was successful for several days before the Nigerian military crushed the revolt, killing at least several hundred civilians in the process. A similar insurgency was also planned for Bauchi, but the Bauchi government learned of the plot and subdued it quickly. In Borno, Yusuf was shot before he could be transferred to Abuja for questioning, but much of the leadership of the movement disappeared, reportedly to Bauchi, other parts of Nigeria, and abroad.

Civil society activists and others in Borno report that Boko Haram appears to be regrouping, perhaps under another name, and returning to Maiduguri; it may still have some representation in Bauchi as well.⁸⁰ The Borno State government has instituted screening of Friday sermons at mosques in the state and also plans to set up an institute through which all imams must be certified, as measures to exert some control over either a renewed Boko Haram or other radical movements that could arise. Although such controls may be effective in the short term, over the longer term they are likely to exacerbate tensions with such fringe groups, further politicize religious expression, and perhaps even legitimize such groups in the eyes of a broader section of society. Boko Haram, for instance, was deeply unpopular at first for its militarism, but gained a measure of public sympathy after being targeted by the state.

The Kalakato in Bauchi were a separate radical group on the extreme fringe, almost more of a cult that was increasingly feared by residents of the town. The movement insisted that the Qur'an was the only true religious authority and that even the Sunnah (the Sayings of the Prophet) was wrong, yet they themselves believed in power charms and other rituals that attracted the favors of powerful politicians in exchange for their spiritual assistance in political struggles. They soon segregated themselves from society, however, and began to threaten other Muslims that disagreed with their views. A leadership struggle within the group appears to have turned violent in December 2009, but the armed factions then started attacking other Muslims in the area in a general riot. Police contained the riots after 30 people were killed, reportedly by Kalakato children ages 10-15 who spearheaded the rampage.⁸¹ The Bauchi State government has disbanded the movement, but some of its members remain active in Bauchi and elsewhere. Nonetheless, its cultish nature and peculiar religious interpretations make it extremely unlikely that it or a similar movement will gain a broad-based following.

Although radical groups like Boko Haram and Kalakato may employ violence, we must emphasize that the assessment team did not find evidence that would suggest that any of these groups have connections to international Islamist terror groups. Multiple respondents alleged such connections exist, and some Boko Haram leaders have expressed rhetorical solidarity with Al Qaeda and others in public statements, but there is so far no hard evidence of direct financial, organizational, or operational links.

Boko Haram does, however, appear likely to have connections in nearby Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Sudan, as would be expected of a mobile Hijrah group of this sort. Due to the porous borders and the availability of weapons in neighboring countries, it is also no surprise that Boko Haram is highly likely to have purchased weapons in Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. Some of the movement's leaders also studied in Saudi Arabia and clearly seek to build personal relationships with like-minded extremists beyond Nigeria's borders. Moreover, the fact that some of its leaders fled abroad after the 2009 insurrection is a source of concern and should be monitored. By and large, however, the radicalism of Boko Haram and other such Nigerian groups is a product of the local context and conditions, and are isolated phenomena that are extreme manifestations of local identity politics.

⁷⁹ Interviews in Bauchi and Borno, May 17-19, 20-22, 2010.

⁸⁰ Interviews in Maiduguri, May 20-22.

⁸¹ *Daily Independent*, December 30, 2009.

V. TRAJECTORIES

As historic elections loom in 2011, Nigeria wavers yet again at the crossroads. With dedicated leadership willing to implement deep reforms, the nation could join the ranks of Ghana and other African states that have turned the corner toward better governance and economic development. If the past is precedent, however, Nigeria may be more likely to muddle ahead with the neopatrimonial status quo, suffering many more years of corrupt oligarchy for the elite and widespread poverty for the majority of the public. Aspects of the neopatrimonial status quo may be unsustainable, however, and indicate that a third, darker cluster of scenarios is also possible, under which Nigeria stumbles down the bloody road toward the failed state. A number of possible trigger events or developments may well decide which direction the nation takes.

5.1 Trends

The preceding sections discussed at length a number of current trends driving conflicts across Nigeria: the centrality of ethno-religious and economic insecurity, aggravated by the dominant neopatrimonial pattern structuring politics in the country, weakening institutions and turning increasingly toward violence in elite power struggles.

These factors suggest that the dominant trend is the continuation of the current path of muddling along as a hobbled giant with a “rogues peace” at the top and episodes of localized violence in the most at-risk communities. The Niger Delta, Plateau state, and several other pockets of the North also promise to face additional bouts of violence in the future if current conditions remain unchanged. This could degenerate into a resumption of the insurgency in the Niger Delta and an escalation to low-intensity sectarian warfare in parts of the Middle Belt and northeast. Under such circumstances, a coup and a return to military rule is not inconceivable, which would be disastrous for the nation, erasing the political development progress that has been made in the last decade and raising the specter of civil war if the coup were only partially successful.

Much will be decided by the current negotiations over President Jonathan’s presumed gambit to retain the presidency (see below) and the resultant configurations of alliances among the nation’s powerful political networks. If a viable opposition party or coalition emerges from this debate, engaging civil society and returning public policy to the center of national discourse, then Nigeria may move quickly toward the path of healthy development. If, however, the elite bargaining deteriorates and breaks upon the nation’s identity fault lines, reigniting the ethnic security dilemma in the process, Nigeria’s neopatrimonial leaders will have a far more difficult time reconstituting the corrupt status quo and staving off decline.

5.2 Triggers

A number of specific events or developments could spark deadly conflicts and lead to these darker scenarios if unaddressed. Each of these triggers, however, also offers opportunities for moving the nation toward more positive trajectories, particularly if key government actors are substantively involved.

5.2.1 President Jonathan’s Challenge to the Ethnic Rotation Principle

As discussed above, much of the stability at the federal level since the inauguration of the Fourth Republic in 1999 has depended upon the “rogues’ peace” among the oligarchs and their baseline agreement to rotate political offices among the geo-political zones of Nigeria. Since the 1990s, Nigerian politicians have generally accepted the idea, which does not appear in the constitution, that the country’s 36 states can be grouped into six geopolitical zones of approximately six states each and clustered around a major ethnic configuration: the

northwest (predominantly Hausa), southwest (predominantly Yoruba), southeast (predominantly Igbo), south-south (the Niger Delta minority region), north-central (the religiously divided Middle Belt minorities), and the northeast (also a religiously divided minority region).⁸²

The expectation under the rotation principle is that the nation's political offices will be shared fairly equally across these six zones and then within them among the 36 states (which is in the constitution under the Federal Character principle), and that when the president steps down, that office will rotate to another zone, causing the other offices to shift across zones accordingly. Moreover, that office and the five other most powerful elected offices – Vice President, Senate President, House Speaker, Deputy Senate President, and Deputy Speaker, as well as the unelected National Party Chairman – will not only shift to another zone, but must shift to a zone that is across the North-South divide. Consequently because the president is constitutionally limited to two terms in office, politicians can expect that offices will rotate every eight years at the latest, with some measure of predictability.

This rotation principle earned widespread acceptance in 1998 in the aftermath of the cancellation of the 1993 elections and the death of its presidential victor, M.K.O. Abiola, a Yoruba Muslim from the southwest. Abiola would have been Nigeria's first Yoruba elected leader in its history – all but one of its military rulers since 1967 and both previous democratic heads of government were northerners. Southwestern leaders threatened secession in 1998 if the next president was not one of their own,⁸³ calling for a “power shift” and prompting the PDP to nominate Olusegun Obasanjo as its presidential candidate and to distribute the other elected offices across the zones: vice presidency to the northeast, Senate President to the southeast, Speaker to the northwest, Deputy Senate President to the north central, and Deputy Speaker to the south-south. When President Obasanjo left office in 2007, the PDP rotated the presidency to the northwest under Yar'Adua, the vice presidency to Jonathan from the south-south, the Senate Presidency to the north central, Speaker to the southwest, Deputy Senate President to the southeast, and Deputy Speaker to the northeast.

President Obasanjo's 2006 failed attempt to extend his stay in office not only demonstrated the deep democratic demands of the Nigerian public and civil society, but it also underscored the strength of the rotation principle, particularly among the elites, who saw Obasanjo's plan as a threat to their turn in office.⁸⁴ Obasanjo's two terms, however, raised an additional expectation, particularly in the North and the northwest especially, that a zone deserves the top office for eight years before it rotates. Clearly, the notion of an eight year limit gained widespread acceptance, but the contingencies for less than that time were much more vague, with less contemplation or consensus.

President Yar'Adua's death in May 2010 only three years into his first term has put this rotation principle under severe stress and has brought its many gray areas to light. Does the northwest deserve another four years in 2011 to fulfill Yar'Adua's interrupted term, or must the PDP candidate in the least come from one of the three Northern zones? Many Northern leaders have made exactly these arguments in recent months.⁸⁵ The obvious problem, however, is that ethnic rotation is extra-constitutional in that it suggests that the votes of the public are not the final decision in the matter of who takes office. The underlying presumption is that the PDP will be the automatic winner, such that the decision of the party's oligarchs is what matters. Leading opposition parties, however, have occasionally nominated presidential candidates from the “wrong” zone for the particular year, such as the ANPP's nomination of retired General Muhammadu Buhari in 2003.

Shortly after Yar'Adua's extended sickness prompted the National Assembly to declare Jonathan as Acting President in February 2010, PDP chairman Ogbulafor announced that Jonathan could not be the PDP's

⁸² See Rotimi Suberu, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*, (USIP, 2001).

⁸³ “INEC okays PDP, APP, AD as parties,” *The Guardian*, December 15, 1998.

⁸⁴ Interviews, Abuja, Jos, Maiduguri, May 12, 13, 17, and 20, 2010. See also Richard Sklar, Ebere Onwudiwe, and Darren Kew, “Nigeria: Completing Obasanjo's Legacy,” 17 *Journal of Democracy* 3 (July 2006): 100-115.

⁸⁵ See, for instance, “Nigerian President May Not Contest 2011 Polls: Source,” *Reuters*, 17 August 2010.

flagbearer in 2011 in accordance with the rotation principle.⁸⁶ One of Jonathan's first actions upon being sworn in as full president in May 2010 was to fire Ogbulafor to replace him with Okwesilieze Nwodo, another southeasterner. At writing, President Jonathan and the PDP party leaders have yet to agree on the fate of rotation for the Presidency in 2011. Having come to office with little control over his own party, however, President Jonathan took advantage of the schism within the PDP from the long months of President Yar'Adua's sickness to consolidate his influence within the party, and he also now has the tremendous leverage of the presidency with which to propel his candidacy if he chooses to run.

President Jonathan's intentions of being the PDP candidate for president in 2011 are now largely presumed,⁸⁷ especially after he ducked the question in a June 2010 CNN interview televised worldwide and his warm reception by the Obama administration in Washington that month. In order to be successful, the president will have to gain control of the PDP or at least gain the support of the oligarchs who control it, many of whom have interests in the presidency themselves or who expect the job to stay in the North. Key among these powerbrokers are the governors, who generally have the preponderant political machines in their states and with whom the president might be able to outflank any opposing kingpins in the PDP.

If President Jonathan runs for office in 2011, it will be the first major breach of the current rotation principle since its inception in 1998. Although it has always skirted the edges of constitutionality and was based upon PDP hegemony and electoral malfeasance, the ethnic rotation formula provided a key measure of predictability in elite power struggles, which in turn helped to buttress national stability during the fragile transition from military rule. Its abrogation could be replaced by a new, renegotiated elite pact now that the politicians have had a decade to build a bargaining culture among themselves, but depending upon how the new power configurations work out, the specter of the ethnic security dilemma at the national level could again be raised.

5.2.2 The 2011 Elections: Watershed or Flashpoint?

In addition to controlling the PDP, President Jonathan will have to win the 2011 election if he wishes to stay in office. In the past, PDP leaders would typically move to place a sympathetic ally into the chairmanship of the Independent National Electoral Commission, (INEC), to complete the neopatrimonial game. Yet in June 2010 President Jonathan shocked the Abuja establishment with a largely unforeseen move: he nominated a deeply credible and widely respected INEC chair, Professor Attahiru Jega. This suddenly changed the national political calculus and raised the prospect that the 2011 might actually be credible, or at least better than 2007.

The barriers to a clean election remain high. Jega's discredited predecessor appears to have bankrupted INEC before he left, and many of the key contracts for the 2011 appear to have already been distributed to key oligarch networks across the country.⁸⁸ In addition, many of the other INEC commissioners and Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs – the top INEC officers in the states) are alleged PDP members, have strong ties to the ruling party, or served under the questionable 2007 elections.⁸⁹ The INEC chair retains great influence within the commission, but many observers fear that Professor Jega will be a good man surrounded by individuals compromised by the PDP machine and other parties in their state

⁸⁶ "Ogbulafor Resigns as PDP Chairman," *Next*, 14 May 2010.

⁸⁷ Interviews with political analysts and politicians, Abuja, May 10-12, 2010.

⁸⁸ Interviews with election monitoring NGOs, Abuja, May 10, 11, 2010.

⁸⁹ See, among many: "Jonathan's INEC of Controversy," *Daily Sun*, 20 June 2010.

strongholds.⁹⁰ In the least, Jega's tenure will force the political machines to shift their efforts to ensure their control of the state-level INEC offices and local staff.

Much depends upon the outcome of President Jonathan's bruising negotiations with PDP mandarins and the governors. The governors share a common interest in either re-election or the chance to pick their successors, and will also have a pivotal role in control of state-level party machines. Most were initially antipathetic toward Jonathan when he was Acting President, but since his full inauguration many of the governors have moved to negotiate.⁹¹ Part of the understanding between the governors and the Presidency can be seen in the nomination and confirmation of Namadi Sambo, the governor of Kaduna state, as the new vice president to President Jonathan. The final outcome of the ongoing horse-trading will largely determine the national political configuration, some of which could be highly conflict-prone.

If the president convinces a critical mass of PDP leaders and governors to support his presumed bid to remain in office, he will control a vast majority of the states and likely enjoy a fairly smooth path to election in 2011. The vast resources of the presidency – as well as the coercive powers to utilize anti-corruption machinery to investigate opponents – figure strongly in this outcome. Under such circumstances, the national conflict fault lines are unlikely to ignite, and what election-related conflicts do erupt are likely to result from state-level issues and from states where the PDP is seeking to dislodge the opposition, such as Kano.

If, however, a critical mass of Northern leaders is able to organize a significant number of governors and Northern traditional elites to insist on the completion of Yar'Adua's presumed eight years under the ethnic rotation principle, this could be highly destabilizing. On the one hand, it raises the prospects for significant defections from the PDP, thus opening the door for the rise of a much-needed viable opposition party or coalition, but such a turn of events could also aggravate the North-South divide, which could quickly be seen by the public as a Muslim versus Christian contest. If this happens, the religiously divided regions of the Middle Belt and northeast may be particularly volatile.

A variant of this North-South scenario, however, may be more political than religious, in that President Jonathan may be successful in wooing a number of Northern governors and powerbrokers into his camp, thereby gaining a few states there, while some of his Northern opponents gain allies in the South, which is far from united behind the president's bid. The Igbo-dominated southeast in particular is viewing Jonathan's gambit with some hostility, because under the ethnic rotation principle as it stood under President Yar'Adua, the presidency was set to rotate back to South in 2015, at which point the southeast and south-south would both be eligible to claim their turn.⁹² If President Jonathan wins election in 2011, however, he can still contest a second term in 2015, and thereafter the North will be certain to demand eight years for one of its candidates under a resumed ethnic rotation. Thus the southeast may face another 18 years out of the presidency if Jonathan is successful – a prospect that has Igbo leaders privately alarmed.⁹³ Consequently, a significant number of Northern leaders allied with the southeast could either block Jonathan within the PDP or, if unsuccessful, could move to an opposition party to try to defeat him in the election. The latter outcome would be very important from a democratic perspective, creating a viable opposition, but it will also raise the danger of violence in states where both the PDP and the new opposition are strong.

If a sufficient number of Northern and/or other political leaders block President Jonathan's ambition to gain the PDP nomination, he would be forced to turn to an opposition party if he wishes to contest (perhaps creating a similar scenario as the one immediately above), or to wait until 2015 to try again. Such an outcome could open the field wide to a host of old and new contenders, ushering in a period of considerable confusion

⁹⁰ Interviews, Abuja, Jos, Bauchi, Kaduna, Port Harcourt, 12-22 May 2010.

⁹¹ Interviews, Abuja, May 11-13, 2010.

⁹² Interviews, Abuja, Jos, May 11-13, 16-17, 2010.

⁹³ Interviews, Abuja, May 11, 12, 2010.

and potential conflict until new alignments take shape. If President Jonathan were to give up his presumed candidacy under these circumstances, it would likely place him in somewhat of a kingmaker role for 2011 within the PDP and in terms of how supportive his administration would be for Professor Jega's reform efforts at INEC. If the president put the full weight of the Nigerian state behind clean elections, more credible candidates could perhaps emerge, as could more viable opposition parties. Conversely, if the president chooses to continue in the neopatrimonial pattern that has been the PDP norm, Jega's INEC will face even greater difficulties in 2011, and much will depend upon the outcomes of negotiations among party leaders and the president over control of local party machines and other efforts to circumvent the ballot.

One certainty in all these scenarios is the heightened possibility of violence during the party primaries – particularly the PDP – and elections in districts where powerful candidates are contesting against one another. Most states now feature differing degrees of organized, armed youth militias available for hire by local political machines (see examples below). Districts where powerful politicians are at odds may see these individuals bid competitively for the services of the armed groups, which may split their loyalties and fuel local firefights. At present, these firefights appear likely to be locally contained if they occur, except in the states already facing deep conflicts, such as Plateau, discussed at length below. If some of the more destabilizing scenarios suggested above aggravate national fault lines, such as the North-South, Muslim-Christian divide, then these firefights could take on a broader, more organized, and more dangerous dimension.

All of these scenarios, however, presume that the party machines will be fairly successful in compromising INEC locally, such that party leaders focus their energies on the standard rigging and intimidation tactics used in past elections. If Professor Jega is able to make significant progress in reforming INEC down to the state level, however, then the parties will be forced to shift their tactics, perhaps exerting more pressure on INEC staff and local communities. In addition, although Jega has little time to prepare for the 2011 general elections, it is highly likely that the courts will overturn many of the egregious election outcomes as they did after 2007 – ten gubernatorial contests alone were rerun or handed to challengers. Consequently, Professor Jega will be able to conduct election reruns with an increasingly reformed INEC and focus the commission's attention on each one individually over 2012 and 2013.

5.2.3 The Youth Question

In 2010 the intersection of youth and violence – particularly political violence – remains a core conflict issue for Nigeria. Since 1999, inter-communal clashes killed 20,000 and displaced three million nation-wide, with bands of errant young men handling much of the destruction.⁹⁴ Idle youths act as hired muscle in all manner of contests over wealth and power, and political elites continue to make use of their availability. Interviewees in all parts of the country surveyed reported ongoing rumors of politicians mobilizing youths for violence, predicting that such activities would only increase with the coming elections. Organized youth militias, long thought primarily a Niger Delta phenomenon, are also increasingly making their way northward. Interviewees told of various groups, such as the Sarasuka in Bauchi, Kalarei in Gombe, Ecomog in Borno and Yobe, and others who are currently amassing arms, victims, and political backing well above standard “area boy” levels.⁹⁵ Northern states like Borno report a growing number of Al Majiris, street children under the loose supervision of a local mosque in order to receive a Qur'anic education. At the same time Nigeria is experiencing a “youth bulge,” with over half of its estimated 150,000,000 population under the age of thirty.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Reuters, “Violence left 3 million bereft in past 7 Years, Nigeria reports,” 13 March 2006.

⁹⁵ Interviews, Abuja, Bauchi, Gombe, and Borno, 17-22 May 2010.

⁹⁶ 2006 Nigerian census figures.

Against this backdrop, youth unemployment is broadly understood as a major structural cause of conflict across Nigeria.⁹⁷ Despite its historical reputation as a basket case, the Nigerian economy is seeing impressive pockets of growth, particularly in areas like agriculture and service industries.⁹⁸ The bulk of this growth, however, has been essentially jobless. Between 2002 and 2008 the country's labor force grew at an estimated 2.8 percent annually, yet job production did not keep pace in absorbing new entrants.⁹⁹ With Nigeria's overall population projected to hit 205,000,000 by 2025 and the youth explosion showing no signs of decline,¹⁰⁰ this is not an encouraging trend.

A coordinated Government strategy for producing jobs is sorely needed. Too often interviewees said that economic policy and development spending are treated as engines of patronage rather than job growth. In the Niger Delta, the Federal Government has said its post-amnesty programming for militants will feature skills acquisition training. Scant effort is being made to see how many ex-fighters the economy can actually absorb, however, and no provisions have been made for the millions of unemployed delta youths who did not take up guns.¹⁰¹ Some see President Jonathan's promise of accelerated electrical power reform as a potential game-changer, though timetables and political will remain unclear. Interviewees also argued that while donor-funded job programs can work as conflict response strategies, they are no solution to deeper issues and seldom provide sustainable livelihoods.¹⁰² It appears that nothing less than entire new productive sectors of the economy are needed, and for that government must lead.

5.2.4 Economic Threats

Historically, the impact of macro-level economic shocks on conflict trends in Nigeria has been disputed. For millions of Nigerians living hand to mouth, variable economic performance by the national economy does not necessarily translate into heavy impacts on existing livelihoods or quality of life. That said, the heavy oil revenue dependence of most states could precipitate future state budgetary crises of the kind seen in 2008 and 2009, which in turn could hamper the government's ability to deliver already contested public goods and services. Here the Niger Delta is perhaps the biggest variable. Armed resistance in the delta, as noted earlier, has become increasingly adept at disrupting Nigerian oil production. By mid-2009 nearly half of the country's oil fields were shut, with a loss of \$24 billion in government revenues in the first 8 months of 2008 alone.¹⁰³

Thus far, the delta is the region that has had the best success using targeted economic threats to extract benefits from the center. The 2009 amnesty, post-amnesty programming and large-scale patronage politics now playing out in Abuja can all be interpreted partly as a response to the economic hurt the region caused in 2007-09.¹⁰⁴ Without a coordinated, sustainable strategy for handling unrest around oil installations, government at all levels could again find itself held hostage by the delta, watching as coffers drain down. Fluctuating oil prices and production, ongoing depletion of the Federal Excess Crude Account, possible

⁹⁷ Interviews, Abuja, Port Harcourt, Warri, May 2010. Good data on Nigerian unemployment or underemployment is lacking, with national and regional figures ranging from 3 to over 50 percent.

⁹⁸ On a macro level, the non-oil economy grew at a rate of 8.15 percent in the first quarter of 2010, a figure well above averages in Sub-Saharan Africa. Nigerian Federal Bureau of Statistics, figures published June 2010.

⁹⁹ World Bank Group, "Economic and Growth Report: Nigeria," 2009.

¹⁰⁰ Population Reference Bureau, "Nigeria: Statistics," 2009.

¹⁰¹ Interviews, former militants, Ijaw activists, donor personnel, Federal and State government officials, Abuja, May 2010.

¹⁰² Interviews and telephone interviews, Abuja (Lagos, Benin City and Port Harcourt), May 2010.

¹⁰³ Report of the Technical Committee for the Niger Delta, December 2008.

¹⁰⁴ Interviews, Abuja, May 2010.

passage of the Petroleum Industry Bill, and the effects of Central Bank reforms could also factor into government's responses to and ability to withstand conflict in the delta.

In addition, the decline of the economy in the southeast, which was based on imports and local informal manufacturing in key cities such as Onitsha, Aba, and Nnewi, has contributed to the emergence of criminal networks of kidnapping that have undermined security and economic activities. Although the combined deployment of police and state or community-funded vigilantes is helping to contain the such threats in cities like Aba, this may unravel if economic revival does not proceed in this densely populated area. Economic decline is also affecting traditional migration patterns, which historically enabled the southeast to export its youthful population to find work. These patterns have been undermined by religious riots in the North and indigeneity politics and policies across the country, which have forced Igbo migrants to return home.

5.2.5 Constitutional Reform

Nigeria has had four separate constitutions since gaining independence, the latest in force since 1999. President Obasanjo attempted to amend the constitution, primarily to allow himself a third term, but was rebuffed by the National Assembly.

In June 2010, the National Assembly passed a series of constitutional amendments that have gone to the state assemblies for review, because 24 of the 36 states must ratify them if they are to become law. Central among these amendments are several designed to improve the quality of elections by making INEC a first-line charge on the federal budget, which will make it more difficult for the presidency to withhold funds for the commission. Another amendment would require several additional months between elections and inauguration, in order to allow more time to manage election petitions. This amendment passed in July 2010, indicating that the upcoming general elections will hold in January 2011.

Future amendments that may impact conflict trends include:

- Increasing the required percentage of Federal oil revenues directed to oil producing states (popularly called "derivation") from 13 percent to some higher number;
- Creation of new states and/or local governments, most likely as a conflict management strategy.

5.2.6 The Environment

In addition to being a source of new challenges for development and poverty reduction, shifts in Nigeria's climate patterns are already becoming increasing sources of violence. In some Middle Belt and northeastern states such as Borno and Yobe, desertification now sees the Sahara advancing by several hundred miles per year, with impacts on the migration patterns, livelihoods and food security of tens of millions of Nigerians.¹⁰⁵ Interviewees told of rising farmer-pastoralist conflicts over land and water rights, sometimes with violent, partisan intervention by local authorities.¹⁰⁶ Meanwhile in the coastal areas of the Niger Delta, rising sea levels threaten to submerge whole communities, fostering resource shortages and boundary disputes.¹⁰⁷ Once awakened, such conflicts can drag on for decades: losses of life and property can be heavy, and political solutions hard to broker. The Federal and State governments in recent years have awarded millions of dollars

¹⁰⁵ For an overview, see IRIN, "The desert is fast encroaching, but why?," 28 March 2008.

¹⁰⁶ Interviews in Bauchi and Borno, May 17-18 and 20-22, 2010.

¹⁰⁷ E.g., focus group conducted in Eleme, Rivers State, May 2010.

in land reclamation contracts for the delta, though many arguably were given as patronage rather than as a coordinated response to the problem.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Interview and telephone interview, journalist and oil company official, Abuja (Lagos), May 2010.

VI. RESPONSES

Given the complexity of conflicts in Nigeria as explained above, any donor faces an enormous task in seeking to assist Nigerian conflict resolution actors in mitigating the nation's conflict drivers. Moreover, given the massive amounts of state rents flowing to neopatrimonial networks and other actors with interests in fomenting conflicts, Nigerian peacemakers and donors alike are far outgunned in budgetary terms. Fortunately, the long-term interests of Nigeria's impoverished public – which is to say, more than 9 out of 10 Nigerians – coincide with the aims of the peacemakers, and many Nigerian elites recognize the importance of peace and reform. USAID and its partners will have to make some difficult strategic choices, but targeted aid at key points in the Nigerian conflict spectrum could be pivotal in helping Nigerian peacemakers tip the balance in the right direction.

This can be achieved by a strategy guided by four basic principles: strengthen the mitigating factors discussed above, raise the cost of political violence, change the basis of political accountability, and address the underlying grievances explained above. Several of the most basic drivers of conflict in Nigeria, however, lie at the very root of the nation's socioeconomic and political systems, and cannot be addressed through traditional conflict resolution programming. Instead, USAID should consider a holistic approach, which integrates conflict analysis into the entire cache of donor assistance.

In addition, before launching conflict programming, USAID should consider:

- Tailoring all proposed programming to targeted communities, rather than transplanting program models from one part of the country to another;
- Increasing local knowledge and contact, visiting communities involved in programming regularly and, if at all possible in high risk states as in the Niger Delta, without an aggressive security detail;
- Building in a strong regimen of independent monitoring and evaluation to any program design;
- Committing to longer-term program periods of at least 3-5 years.

6.1 Reversing Neopatrimonialism, Ethno-Religious Insecurity, and the Rentier State

Some of the fundamental drivers of conflict in Nigeria cited by this report pervade nearly every aspect of Nigerian life. Consequently, none of them can be addressed by a single program or initiative. These include the central problems of neopatrimonialism, the ethnic security dilemma, poverty, and the rentier state, manifest in some of the following ways:

- The overwhelming source of vulnerability to conflict in Nigeria remains the poor performance of the Nigerian government itself at all levels, and its corrupt neopatrimonial overlords. Pro-violence groups from Boko Haram to militias in the Niger Delta all share a common narrative of anger over the nation's poor governance.

THE WAY FORWARD

1. Strengthen mitigating factors
2. Raise the cost of political violence
3. Change the basis of political accountability
4. Address the underlying grievances

CROSS-CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS

1. Focus on states
2. Seamlessly integrate governance and conflict management programming
3. Harness competition
4. Leverage resources
5. Consider the *—how* as well as the *—what*
 - Consistent engagement
 - Conflict sensitive

- Politicians nationwide are turning to armed youths for political leverage in the party primaries and elections. Many of these gangs and militias are gaining more permanent structures and bargaining capacities that could militarize politics in some states and localities, and exacerbate tensions in zones that are already heavily armed like the Niger Delta. The proliferation of small arms and high youth unemployment exacerbate this problem.
- Police and military brutality and impunity are common threads fostering violent groups in both the North and the South.
- Massive poverty, unemployment, and lack of public service infrastructure remain a constant source of public frustration and also undermine the ability of reformist actors, such as political opposition and civil society groups, from organizing.

6.1.1 Response: Infusing Conflict Programming into the USAID Country Strategy and Portfolio

Many of these key contextual drivers for conflict in Nigeria, such as poor governance, poverty, and corruption are already being addressed by USAID programming in other sectors, such as Education, Democracy and Governance, and Health. Conflict resolution strategy or components could be integrated into these sectors without distracting from their original goals, and could in fact enhance their impact. Coordination with DFID and other donors will also be essential in this regard, as will public-private partnerships that advance core USAID objectives.

Integrating Conflict Analysis Components into Existing USAID Programming. To achieve this end, USAID should consider the “how” as well as the “what.” Successful conflict programming in Nigeria requires (1) fine-grained sensitivity to the particular conflict issues and dynamics in communities where USAID works; (2) multi-layered understanding of root conflict issues cutting across communities; (3) consistent, long-term engagement on the ground. An integrated, in-house process for building and maintaining USAID Nigeria’s institutional knowledge and capacity on all these topics is essential.

Consequently, perhaps the most basic cross-sector peace-building effort that USAID could implement is to conduct conflict

HOW VS. WHY

At the same time that communities may hinge prospects for peace on development achievements, poorly planned and implemented development projects can equally serve to aggravate existing tensions and sometimes create new ones. Informants repeatedly cited failed or badly executed efforts to emphasize the importance of considering *how* development goals are pursued. The ruins of botched development efforts are dispersed throughout the Niger Delta landscape. They serve as an infuriating, superfluous reminder to its residents of the causes for their discontent. In calling attention to this, interviewees offered both guidance and warnings on the ways that development can impact conflict dynamics positively and negatively. Several informants cited the NGO Pro Natura International (PNI) and their management of the Akassa Community Resources Management and Development Program as a positive case in point. Based on a careful needs assessment that was conducted in Akassa in the year 2000, the community has been the leading partner in this enduring development program.

In contrast, interviewees noted urban renewal projects that displaced and angered local residents; infrastructure projects left crumbling without provisions for staffing or maintenance; and environmental cleanup efforts characterized by hast and careless disregard. One informant complained regarding a school development program that the entire emphasis has been on building physical infrastructure, while neglecting to ask what is needed to improve the quality of education. These examples serve to demonstrate that community consultation, thorough planning, and a lasting commitment are the keys to successful initiatives that can reduce conflict and contribute to peace.

audits of its programming in other sectors. In-house and/or external conflict experts (preferably Nigerian, perhaps from the university programs) could analyze existing or proposed USAID programs in other sectors to assess their conflict resolution impacts and to make recommendations to improve their peace-building potential. Examples of these include:

- Health networks: USAID has built an extensive network of NGOs and other civil society groups across Nigeria addressing an array of health concerns such as HIV and malaria. The universal interest in better health offers an important bridge across the nation's cultural divides, such that USAID health partners could be made more conscious of how their activities could be tailored to enhance peaceful relationships and, in some instances, perhaps foster more ambitious peace efforts.
- Basic education: USAID is assisting the Nigerian basic education system, particularly in the North. Mediation techniques for children and teenagers (known as Social Competency and Peer Mediation in the US) could be offered, and conflict-resolving perspectives could be fostered through integration of peace education portfolios into the broader national curriculum.
- Continue and expand the USAID state-focused strategy: A central component of the lead state strategy was to improve state service capacities, many of which could be considered in terms of their ability to influence local conflicts. Plateau state in particular is in need of attention from a conflict perspective, but the partisan role of its governor makes collaboration with the state government difficult. In addition, the Nigeria Governor's Forum (NGF) is conducting a peer review among the governors and opening the results to each other for review based on their performance in multiple sectors. USAID could perhaps work to have peacemaking added as a category.
- Local government reform: USAID is working to enhance the service delivery capacity of local governments in its lead states. Such local governments could also be assisted to develop their peacemaking capacity and conflict resolution efforts. One Federal Government official summed up the idea succinctly: "If you want conflict to drop off, let the people see real deliverables and hold politicians accountable for the money they steal."¹⁰⁹ Many respondents supported the hypothesis that fostering sound leadership at the traditional or LGA levels is capable of creating bottom-up pressure for improvements higher up. In particular, program design may increase effectiveness of such efforts by:
 - Focusing on capacity-building for both the "supply" and "demand" sides of local governance;
 - Building into programs a triangular approach that combines efforts and competencies of external actors like USAID, local media and civil society, and communities themselves.
- Civil society assistance: USAID provides assistance for civil society capacity building in regard to advocacy and other concerns. Each of the following activities could benefit from integrating conflict resolution analysis and strategy:
 - *Monitoring state and local government budgets:* Programming with a strong field-based monitoring component (e.g., civil society providing locals with cameras to document government performance away from the cities) drew especially high marks from respondents.
 - *Producing scorecards for state and local governments:* I.e., ranking government performance on delivery of development and public services, with broad distribution to the media and various stakeholders.

¹⁰⁹ Interview, May 2010.

- *Advocacy training*: Education-based programming that provides community-based organizations with the technical knowledge, tools, and access they need to press government for better performance.

Participatory Development. In its development work in Nigeria in all sectors, USAID could consider utilizing some of the deliberative dialogue processes being developed elsewhere in the world to engage communities in the development decisions that affect their lives. Such processes are much more than the typical stakeholder consultations (which usually involve seeking input from civil society partners) or the average New England town meeting. Deliberative dialogue utilizes a combination of large-scale dialogue techniques to help large groups, even entire communities, make collaborative decisions about their future. Use of such processes in USAID development work could not only produce more participatory development programs, but it could also facilitate the bridging of conflict divides in communities and set a model for deepening local democracy.

Support For Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives Exploring Structural Conflict Issues. Many structural conflict issues across Nigeria (e.g., indigeneity, religious rights, failures of the power sector and local industry) require high levels of technocratic expertise and cross-cultural engagement for reform to be possible. USAID could consider organizing and supporting national initiatives to facilitate such action. Successful programs would need to include research, dialogue and public advocacy-based components, along with provision of outside research and technocratic support, coordination of cross-stakeholder dialogue and consultative processes, and potential diplomatic pressures for implementation.

Such an approach could be particularly helpful in working with local governments to adopt the Barnawa model for managing the question of indigeneity.¹¹⁰

6.2 Reinforce Nigeria’s Conflict Management Architecture

Nigeria enjoys a dense network of conflict resolution NGOs and other civil society groups engaged in peacemaking activities, particularly religious actors. Many, however, face chronic funding problems, and the disparate nature of their work across the federation has proven difficult to coordinate for sustained periods. Key federal agencies and universities have also been tasked with conflict resolution responsibilities, but are in need of assistance.

¹¹⁰ President Jonathan has signaled interest in a similar perspective as that employed by Barnawa. For instance, his 17 August 2010 *Facebook* (www.facebook.com) posting said the following: “I read your complaints about the Settler/Indigene dichotomy and many of you are calling for a constitutional amendment to solve this issue, however, the truth is that the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has already abrogated that dichotomy for the simple reason that it does not recognise any difference between the two sets of people. If there is a difference as some insist, it is only in their minds and we must as Nigerians begin the peaceful processes of rebuilding the foundations of our citizenship. As far as our present Constitution is concerned, ALL Nigerian citizens are indigenes of any part of Nigeria... Under the Nigerian Constitution, there is absolutely nothing stopping any Nigerian citizen who has taken residency in a state, town or ward from participating in the governance processes of that State, Town or Ward including contesting elections if the individual fulfils the constitutional requirements of residency and tax payment. If Nigerian immigrants can win City Council elections in the U.S, mayoral elections in Ireland and most recently Parliamentary seats in the British House of Commons, it should certainly be possible for a Nigerian with ancestral origins from Sokoto to win an election in Port Harcourt and vice versa. As I said, the Nigerian Constitution permits it, there are precedents for it and the only thing we have to do is to give effect to our constitutional rights which speak to our unity and our collective aspirations for peaceful co-existence and greatness. GEJ”

6.2.1 Response: Assist Pre-Existing Local Capacity

A number of overarching avenues for supporting Nigeria's peace architecture are evident from this report:

- **Nurture and expand on bright spots:** Traditional rulers and religious actors in particular have played pivotal peacemaking roles in the cases examined above, particularly when more permanent dialogue institutions are developed in conflict zones. Few of these actors have received formal conflict resolution training and would likely welcome this and other forms of assistance and encouragement in their work. Neighborhood associations have also played key roles in some communities and would benefit tremendously from technical assistance and alliance building with other peaceable neighborhoods and conflict resolution initiatives.
- **Move beyond easy spends like once-off dialogue or peace education programs:** There is nothing undesirable about dialogue or peace education *per se*. But unless integrated into more cross-cutting, long-term efforts, potential gains are hard to measure and likely ephemeral.
- **The Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR)**, the overarching government agency responsible for conflict research and peacebuilding, could be assisted in its plans for internal reorganization, so that it could become an important coordinating body for conflict resolution activities nationwide and a resource for state level and civil society initiatives.
- Several **universities** across the country, such as Usman Dan Fodio in Sokoto, Bayero University in Kano, University of Ilorin, University of Jos, and University of Ibadan, have set up peace and conflict resolution programs that are important long-term institutions for conflict analysis, peace training, and actual interventions. With matching funds, these programs could expand their impact, develop collaboration relationships, and provide sustainable peace architecture for the nation in such matters as early warning.
- **The media** is a key actor that can both incite and ameliorate conflicts nationally and locally. Nigeria's media faces certain basic structural problems, such as skewed ownership, poor capacity, chronic underpayment of staff, and susceptibility to corrupt influences, but specific attention can still be paid to raising the awareness of journalists as to how they can craft their work in a fashion that assists conflict resolution. In addition, with Nigerians flocking to social media – President Jonathan himself started a Facebook page in June 2010 – the internet and “smart phone” technology offer untapped resources for early warning and conflict resolution initiatives.

6.3 Defusing Election Conflicts

As discussed above, President Goodluck Jonathan's possible run for election in 2011 would break the ethnic rotation principle and could usher in tremendous instability or real opportunities for change, depending upon how the new political coalitions line up. The PDP itself remains an obstacle to reform and as a party has little interest in improved elections in 2011. Its internal divides are an opportunity for new political opposition, which is necessary for reform, yet may also increase political instability in the short run.

6.3.1 Response: Conflict-Wise Election Monitoring

USAID and its development partners are already planning extensive support for INEC and for a host of election-monitoring organizations in order to ensure that the 2011 general elections are better than the 2007 disaster. In addition, USAID partners International Republican Institute (IRI) and National Democratic Institute (NDI) are working with Nigerian political parties and civil society actors to assist their election related activities.

USAID is likely to assist the political parties in monitoring each other's activities, and civil society groups in policing the entire process. Both of these sets of actors are also critical players in containing the inevitable conflicts that will arise in many localities across the country. As USAID partners develop their support strategies for election activities, they could also integrate a conflict resolution strategy that involves the following components:

- **All-Party Committees:** INEC organized these in some states in previous elections, but its biased leadership in the past meant that the parties generally did not take them seriously. Professor Jega's credibility suggests that these committees, which also typically include representation from the police, could be a useful vehicle for local conflict management, particularly if they invite key civil society actors to join. USAID conflict resolution partners could provide early warning and conflict management training to these committees, and link them with the CMMRCs where available.
- **Team Up Conflict Resolution Activists with Election Monitors:** USAID grantees will likely be deploying election monitors across Nigeria – the Transition Monitoring Group alone has over 200 NGO members across the federation. In addition, USAID is also considering the deployment of Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) staff in a number of key states. Although both these activities should be kept separate from conflict resolution activities, USAID could consider deploying conflict resolution activists from partner networks like the CMMRCs alongside the election monitors and PVT workers. This will improve information sharing and allow the conflict resolution activists to respond to violence flare-ups quickly.
- **INEC Conflict Resolution Officers:** In line with the previous recommendation, INEC could be assisted to deploy its own conflict resolution units to key election hotspots across the nation.

6.4 Preventing Further Conflict in the Middle Belt and Far North

This report has argued that portions of the Middle Belt and the Far North are particularly at risk for violent conflicts in the coming years, potentially escalating beyond the episodes of violence witnessed recently. Of specific concern are:

- The absorptive capacity of the traditional Islamic establishment in the North is under great stress and fraying at the edges. The vast majority of the wave of itinerant preachers who have risen to take advantage of this situation in recent years are peaceful in orientation, but a handful of groups have rebelled against the Nigerian state and its corrupt status quo.
- Plateau state remains locked in conflict and is ready for another round of violence, particularly as the election season approaches. In addition, violence in Plateau is often met with reprisal killings in other states of the northeast.

6.4.1 Response: Build on the Islands of Peace

- Pockets of **interfaith and cross-cultural initiatives and networks** are active across Plateau state and other conflict-torn parts of the Middle Belt, northeast, and Far North, such as the CMMRC's, the Interfaith Mediation Centre and its early warning networks, or the new initiative set up by the Sultan of Sokoto and the Archbishop of Abuja. These initiatives could be assisted individually and to improve their coordination collectively. In addition, many **neighborhoods and communities** in conflict zones have organized their own institutions and processes to keep their locales peaceful and culturally diverse. These efforts could be encouraged, assisted in capacity development, and better linked together.

- State government-based initiatives could also be constructed or assisted where available, building on the Kaduna model. Specifically, the development of **Bureaus of Religious Affairs, Special Advisors for Peace and Conflict Resolution, and Security Councils and Peace Committees** (which bring together security agencies, executive advisors, and civil society groups) all can have great impact if government leaders, particularly the governors, are willing to give them some attention.
- Federal initiatives like the **Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC)** are also important vehicles that can assist in networking and strategy-building among the many pockets of civil society activity in conflict zones. NIREC is a particularly important actor in the Middle Belt and northeast, but its top-heavy organizational structure has slowed its reaction time and impact – external assistance could perhaps help to reorganize NIREC more efficiently. This could include helping NIREC to develop state-level branches in the major conflict zones.
- Christians, Muslims, and followers of traditional belief systems in Nigeria perceive their religious freedoms threatened, although in very different ways. Efforts need to be supported that will **seek to develop interfaith cooperation around the protection of religious freedoms**. For Christians, the right to build churches and worship freely in Muslim majority areas is sometimes circumscribed. For Muslims, the ability to maintain key socio-religious norms with a basis in Shari’a in areas where they predominate is sometimes challenged by federal scrutiny and the secular constitution. Traditional believers often feel marginalized by both Muslims and Christians. USAID could assist efforts that create space for interfaith collaboration on rights issues in a manner that 1) promotes the mutual recognition that all communities have religious freedom interests that might at times be at odds with one another, 2) encourages working through state-level ministries of religious affairs and in partnership with civil society groups, and 3) develops common understandings of protections guaranteed by federal and international law so that rights maintained by one group are not perceived as being a loss for the other. Throughout these efforts, groups that operate outside the traditional Islamic establishment should be engaged and protections maintained in order to help prevent either them or the establishment from resorting to violence against each other. Similar attention should also be paid to the rights of smaller Christian groups vis-à-vis larger established denominations and to the rights of traditional believers.

6.5 Preparing for Possible Resumed Violence in the Niger Delta

The recent amnesty process in the Niger Delta has bought a general lull in the fighting, but has done nothing to address its root causes and, without any widespread demobilization, has created financial incentives for future militancy. The forthcoming election season will also test the tenuous peace, and will certainly break if key political factions in the region are unable to agree on consensus candidates for summit political offices such as the governors.

6.5.1 Response: Stem the Tide

Donor-funded conflict programming can only do so much to address many of the problems of the Niger Delta, and the difficulty of sketching short-term conflict trajectories for the delta does not help matters. Yet bright spots in the region do exist (see “Sapele,” above) and again potential “peace dividends” are arguably larger than anywhere else in Nigeria. Any successful programming for the Niger Delta must be properly scaled, and interact with what is likely to remain constant amid many moving pieces. At a deep level, after all, the Niger Delta conflict system has proven stable over the years, with a relatively fixed cast of actors, incentives, grievances, and dynamics. The key is to *know the environment* well enough to find ways to engage with root issues which (1) have lasting results; (2) do not unwittingly feed into local conflict dynamics; and (3) can weather the crises of the moment.

With the above points in mind, we recommend:

- **Post-Amnesty Programming:** The fragile amnesty program has become increasingly partisan and compromised, with close ties to patronage activities and the political ambitions of key actors in government. Consequently, USAID should use caution when considering direct support for the Federal Government's activities related to the proposed rehabilitation program for ex-militants, and activities channeled through the Federal Ministry for Niger Delta Affairs. USAID is already engaged in a variety of important economic, health, education, and governance activities in the Niger Delta that could indirectly contribute to peacebuilding, as could support for civil society actors working to bring militants out of the creeks and into gainful work.
- **Governance Reform.** Given successful piloting in Sokoto and Bauchi States, USAID should consider extending its local governance program to one of the core delta states, with appropriate modifications to fit local realities.¹¹¹
- **Exploring support for fresh institutions and populations:** USAID should consider supporting research in search of new inroads of engagement in the Niger Delta. Fresh partners in the areas of governance reform and peacebuilding would be welcome, particularly those that cut across social, ethnic and geographic lines. Two that came up repeatedly in interviews were:
 - *Churches:* Interviewees particularly singled out some of the delta's protestant mega-churches as having potential to be: (1) sandboxes for new grass-roots governance models; (2) pressure organizations and social mobilizers on issues of high-level governance; (3) huge social networks for the dissemination of ground-level information; and (4) functioning social welfare organization in the absence of government. Though all cautioned on the need to dig deeper before offering any formal support, the possibilities were arresting.
 - *Female Youth:* Informants also recommended re-evaluating (1) the presumptive outsider's narrative of young Niger Delta women as passive victims of conflict; and (2) the focus of much women's-based conflict programming in the delta on engaging with older women. Younger women, one interviewee noted, are both more actively involved in mobilizing violence than is commonly understood, and more privy to the details of violence committed by young men through their roles as sisters, girlfriends, etc. As such, the potential for engaging them as agents of peacebuilding, for instance through dialogue-based programs, may be overlooked.
 - **Collaboration with international oil companies:** Assistance provided by the oil majors for development in the oil producing communities may represent another opportunity. For example, Chevron's newly incorporated Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta presents one possible point of entry for conflict programming in the Niger Delta. Pending matching commitments from donors, Chevron is looking to spend \$50 million over 6 years in the areas of: (1) economic development; (2) local capacity building; (3) peacebuilding and peace education; and (4) analysis and advocacy.¹¹² The Foundation seems relatively open to creative ideas and approaches, and the notions of participatory governance Chevron is piloting through its GMOU program appear to netting some gains for peace and security. The long-term effects of these GMOUs on conflict dynamics in communities are, however, still unknown and largely unevaluated.

Before entering into any formal partnership with oil companies, USAID should consider the

¹¹¹ Rivers state could be a desirable choice: multiple interviews identified Governor Amaechi as the Niger Delta governor currently delivering the most on state-level development. Interviews with activists, former government contractor, federal and state government officials, Abuja, May 2010. Endorsements were not without caveats, however. "Yes, he is delivering," one civil society worker commented, "but at what cost?" Interview, Abuja, May 2010.

¹¹² Interview, Project Director and Deputy Project Director, PIND, Abuja, May 2010.

potential reputational impacts of working with them in the delta and the historic variability of oil company commitment to development initiatives in the region.

6.6 Funding Programming Alternatives for USAID

Funding limitations will certainly force some difficult choices among the suggestions above and among other alternatives that USAID may develop. Use of the lead state framework may offer one way to choose among alternatives.

In addition, all future programming could then be segregated into two distinct but complementary phases:

- **A short-term “bridge” program cycle:** Programming here would focus on (1) quick-response efforts in especially high-risk areas (e.g., Plateau state); and (2) flexible experimentation for future programming (e.g., developing a long-term strategy for engaging on Nigerian religious tensions, or on structural conflict issues). Funding could perhaps be partly through TOLERANCE or a new initiative, and both could potentially be conducted with CMM support.
- **A more comprehensive five-year cycle:** Programming here would run for longer periods, with the goal of systematically engaging the main conflict issues outlined above. Conflict features would be fully integrated into existing portfolios, and chosen priority states would be linked to national programming and conflict transformation strategies.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Legitimacy Deficit in the 2007 Elections

Legitimacy Deficit						
Difference between opinion poll and vote						
ZONE*		PDP	ANPP	AC	APGA	PPA
NC	Benue	16	7	-4	0	
NC	FCT					
NC	Kogi	24	22	-23	0	
NC	Kwara	45	-8	-2	0	
NC	Nasarawa	0	8	-8	0	
NC	Niger	14	0	8	0	
NC	Plateau	-20	0	23	0	
NE	Adamawa	42	-19	3	0	
NE	Bauchi	25	-16	-8	0	Now PDP
NE	Borno	-8	20	2	0	
NE	Gombe	61	-30	3	0	
NE	Taraba	29	-23	-2	-2	
NE	Yobe	16	-27	5	0	
NW	Jigawa	36	-46	8	0	
NW	Kaduna	41	-23	-3	-1	
NW	Kano	25	-10	-3	0	
NW	Katsina	17	-10	2	0	
NW	Kebbi	57	-45	0	0	
NW	Sokoto	44	-36	0	0	
NW	Zamfara	0	25	0	0	Now PDP
SE	Abia	2	-7	0	-3	PPA
SE	Anambra	50	2	-31	-1	Now APGA
SE	Ebonyi	55	-15	0	-20	
SE	Enugu	59	-4	-6	-27	
SE	Imo					Now PDP
SS	Akwa-Ibom	37	-6	-3	-2	
SS	Bayelsa	81	-20	-12	-10	
SS	Cross-River	43	-12	-7	-2	
SS	Delta	47	-1	-11	-1	
SS	Edo	30	0	27	0	Now AC
SS	Rivers	54	-25	-12	-1	
SW	Ekiti	31	8	20	0	
SW	Lagos	13	-4	41	-1	
SW	Ogun	24	1	-11	0	
SW	Ondo	30	0	-40	-2	Now LP
SW	Osun	43	-4	17	0	
SW	Oyo	34	29	-8	0	
TOTAL		36	-6	-3	-2	
28 States over 20 points difference between poll and INEC						

* Geopolitical Zones
 NC = north-central SE = southeast
 NE = northeast SS = south-south
 NW = northwest SW = southwest

Appendix B: Team Interviews

Abuja Team:

DATE	LOCATION	PERSON INTERVIEWED
Pre-field work phase	Abuja	Militant leader Lieutenant to major militant leader Security adviser, multinational oil company Security adviser, multinational oil company Nigeria correspondents, 3 major international periodicals State Commissioner for Information Chairman, state oil commission Former Presidential Adviser on the Niger Delta Senior assistant to President Goodluck Jonathan Ijaw Youth Council leader Development consultant to World Bank, DFID, oil companies
13 May 2010	Abuja	Spokeswoman, Presidential Committee on Amnesty
14 May 2010	Abuja	Peace and Development Advisor, UNDP Director, Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (Chevron) Deputy Director, Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (Chevron) Human Rights Officer, US Embassy Counselor for Political Affairs, US Embassy Senior civil society analyst on Nigeria
15 May 2010	Abuja	Director, Niger Delta-based conflict resolution NGO
16 May 2010	Abuja	Country Director, Revenue Watch Institute
17 May 2010	Abuja	Rivers State Government official Niger Delta activist and academic
18 May 2010	Abuja	Intelligence officer, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta Field commander, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta Director, Africa Center for Corporate Responsibility (Warri)
19 May 2010	Abuja	Bayelsa State government official Project Manager, Development contractor to the Rivers State Government
20 May 2010	Abuja	Former National Assembly member and counsel to major militant leaders Director, Niger Delta Professionals for Development Ijaw Youth Council leader
21 May 2010	Abuja	Senator, Rivers State East Director, Sustainable Peace Initiatives in the Niger Delta, Port Harcourt
22 May 2010	Abuja	Presidential Adviser on International Affairs Consultant to DFID on conflict programming
25 May 2010	Abuja	Presidential Adviser on the Niger Delta

Northwest Team:

DATE	LOCATION	PERSON INTERVIEWED
13 May 2010	Kafanchan (Kaduna State)	Provost of Teacher's College NGO Leader
14 May 2010	Kafanchan (Kaduna State)	A former local government head Emir of Jema'a Chief of Kagoro Street interview in market Representatives of Muslim umbrella organization Telephone interview with representative of a Christian umbrella organization
15 May 2010	Kaduna	District Head of a peaceful mixed community NGO leader and local political activist in CALM project activities Youth activist and participant in CALM project activities Muslim faith-based organization leader and participant in CALM project activities Secretary, Christian Association of Nigeria
16 May 2010	Kaduna	Local Government official Chairman of Christian umbrella organization Women's organization representative
17 May 2010	Kaduna	Former Special Advisor to Governor Interfaith Mediation Center Secretary of the Council of Chiefs
18 May 2010	Zaria	Anglican Bishop Emir of Zaria and his counselor
19 May 2010	Zaria	Ahmadu Bello University professor
20 May 2010	Sokoto	Catholic Bishop USAID Implementing Partner Social sector state ministry Permanent Secretary State Ministry for Religious Affairs Commissioner
21 May 2010	Sokoto	Professors (x3) from the Peace Center at Usman dan Fodio University Professor from Usman dan Fodio University/Imam/ intellectual Leader of an Islamic civil society organization
22 May 2010	Sokoto	Representatives from Christian churches (x4) Professor from Usman dan Fodio University/intellectual Member of the Sultan's Council/Fulani traditional leader

Northeast Team:

DATE	LOCATION	PERSON INTERVIEWED
13 May 2010	Jos	IFESH National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies Interfaith Mediation Centre
14 May 2010	Jos to Wase, to Langtang, to Jos	Emir of Wase Church of Christ in Nigeria (3 people) Open meeting in Langtang market (12 people) National Council of Women's Societies Federation Of Muslim Women Associations of Nigeria
15 May 2010	Jos	JNI IFESH (3) Conflict Mitigation and Mediation Regional Council Youth leaders (8 people) University of Jos (UNIJOS) conflict resolution professor Interfaith Mediation Centre
16 May 2010	Bauchi IDP camp to Jos	CLO President Jos resident UNIJOS lecturers (2 people)
17 May 2010	Jos to Bauchi	Biom Women's Association Deputy Governor of Plateau State CAN Women's Secretary Catholic JDPC (5 people) Bauchi Peace Forum (5 member organizations)
18 May 2010	Bauchi	Chief Imam, Bauchi mosque CAN State Chairman Permanent Secretary, Bauchi State SEMA, Ltd.
19 May 2010	Gombe	Bauchi State University professor Senior Political Advisor, Bauchi Governor Gombe Nigerian Union of Journalists
20 May 2010	Gombe, Maiduguri	Gombe CAN members (8 people) EU-NGO Pentecostal Faith Network Chair Church pastor JNI team (5 people) University of Maiduguri professor
21 May 2010	Maiduguri	Peace and Reconciliation Initiative BRTV CAN/PFN CLO Two University of Maiduguri professors
22 May 2010	Maiduguri	Commission for Religious Affairs University of Maiduguri Peace Studies Advisor to the Shehu of Borno

Delta State Team:

DATE	LOCATION	PERSON INTERVIEWED
14 May 2010	Enerhen	Businessman and Part time Student
14 May 2010	Enerhen	Civil Society organization
15 May 2010	Ekurede	Youth Leader
15 May 2010	Okere	Community Leader
15 May 2010	Uvwie	Youth Leader
16 May 2010	Enerhen	Clergy
17 May 2010	Warri	Personal Asst. to Olu of Warri's Palace
17 May 2010	Efurun	Private Sector
17 May 2010	Warri	Civil Society organization
17 May 2010	Warri	Youth leader/Civil Society
17 May 2010	Efurun	Egbema/Gbaramatu CDC (Chevron)
17 May 2010	Hausa Quarters, Warri	Leader, Hausa Community in Warri
17 May 2010	Hausa Quarters, Warri	Deputy Leader, Hausa Community in Warri
18 May 2010	Enerhen	Company Worker
18 May 2010	Agbarho, Ugheli North LGA	Community Leader
18 May 2010	Agbarho, Ugheli North	Self-employed Engineer
18 May 2010	Agbarho, Ugheli North	Retired Judge/Chairman of FEDECO
18 May 2010	Ekpan, Warri	Clergy/CSO
19 May 2010	Warri	Student Leader/Staff, Itsekiri RDC
19 May 2010	Warri	Admin. Secretary, Itsekiri RDC
19 May 2010	Abraka	WIPNET, CSO
19 May 2010	Warri	GGCPSR, CSO
20 May 2010	Warri	Urhobo Voice, Journalist
20 May 2010	Warri	Vanguard, Photo Journalist
20 May 2010	Warri	Ex-Militant
20 May 2010	Warri	Mangrove Women Dev. Foundation, CSO

21 May 2010	Warri	FNDIC
21 May 2010	Warri	Journalist, NUJ
22 May 2010	Agbarra, Warri	Traditional Ruler
22 May 2010	Ndokwa West LGA	Civil Servant

Rivers State Team:

DATE	LOCATION	PERSON INTERVIEWED
13 May 2010	Port Harcourt	Traditional ruler
		Senior Government official
17 May 2010	Port Harcourt	Professor
	Ogbogoro	Lecturer/community leader
	Port Harcourt	Coordinator, CALM
18 May 2010	Ogbogoro	Community leader
	Port Harcourt	NGO worker
19 May 2010	Ogbogoro	Woman leader
	Port Harcourt	Community peace activist
21 May 2010	Ogbogoro	Woman leader
	Port Harcourt	University professor/minority rights activist
		Vigilante member
22 May 2010	Port Harcourt	Ethnic leader
		Senior government official/community leader
23 May 2010	Okrika	Compound head/elder
		Local party official
		Ex-militant
	Port Harcourt	NGO leader
		Vigilante member
		Security expert

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