

**DEMOCRATIC RECESSION AND THE SECURITY-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS:
REBUILDING INSTITUTIONAL TRUST IN NIGERIA’S FOURTH REPUBLIC
A POSITION PAPER ON INSECURITY, ELECTORAL INTEGRITY, AND NATIONAL
COHESION**

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Abstract

A 2024 joint statement by Prof. Attahiru Jega, Prof. Ibrahim Agboola Gambari, Malam Kabiru Yusuf, and other statesmen warned that Nigeria faces “a deepening crisis marked by rising insecurity, electoral manipulation and weakening democratic institutions.” This position paper treats that warning as a strategic intelligence assessment. Using documentary analysis of works by Jega, Gambari, Yusuf, Gen. Tukur Yusuf Buratai, CFR, DFISN, and the author’s Legal And Forensic Issues in Electoral Security And Peace Education (2017), the paper argues that Nigeria’s crisis is a “legitimacy recession” driven by the failure to integrate forensic standards into electoral governance. The paper synthesizes electoral security and conflict dynamics, elections forensics and malpractices, e-voting and electoral integrity, party politics in volatile environments, deviant behaviour and conflicts, and public safety and order across the electoral cycle into the National Trust Restoration Framework, NTRF. The NTRF advances five pillars: intelligence-led electoral security, civil-military-community synergy, media accountability, elite codes of conduct, and forensic justice delivery.

Keywords: Democratic Recession; Electoral Security; Elections Forensics; E-Voting; Electoral Integrity; Electoral Cycle; Conflict Dynamics; Peace Education; Volatile Environment; Party Politics; Nigeria

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The 2024 joint statement followed observable decay: INEC reported 26.7% voter turnout in 2023; NBS recorded 4,545 kidnapping cases in 2023; Afrobarometer Round 9 showed 23% trust in police. This confirms Akinade (2017) that “peace, security and conflicts are questions of necessity and possibility: necessary because no state survives without them; possible only when electoral processes are forensically secured” (pp. 290–291).

1.2 Problem Statement

Akinade (2017) defines Electoral Security as “the forensic protection of the electoral cycle against threats that convert political competition to violent conflict” (p. 291). The statement that institutions are “weakening” reflects failure in three domains: 1) Public safety and order in a society; 2) Party politics in volatile environment; 3) Election campaign activities and security in democratic environments. The paper’s thesis: “Electoral malpractices are deviant behaviour institutionalized by impunity.”

1.3 Research Questions

1. How do peace and civil education in volatile environments mitigate electoral crises and malpractices?
2. What forensic standards apply to e-voting, party politics, and campaign activities to protect electoral integrity?
3. How can the electoral security framework be operationalized across the electoral cycle to address security threats and political security challenges?

1.4 Definition of Terms

Electoral Cycle: Continuous legal, political, and operational activities in pre-election, election day, and post-election phases (Akinade, 2017, p. 293).

Volatile Political Environment: A context where “deviant behaviour and conflicts” are normalized due to weak deterrence (Akinade, 2017, p. 299).

Elections Forensics: Application of criminal investigation to ballot papers, digital logs, and campaign financing (Akinade, 2017, p. 295).

Peace Education: Structured civic instruction that links “election, democracy and security” as interdependent (Akinade, 2017, p. 304).

2.0 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Democratic Recession

Jega (2018) defines recession as “procedural elections + substantive impunity.”

2.2 Security-Development Nexus

Gambari (2020): “Security threats and political security challenges” destroy development when elections are unsafe.

2.3 Akinade Electoral Security Framework (2017, pp. 290–304)

1. Peace, Security and Conflicts: Necessity and Possibility (p. 290): Security is not absence of conflict but “management of conflict through legitimate institutions.”
2. Public Safety and Order in a Society (p. 292): DPOs must treat “campaign rallies as public order events” requiring risk assessment, not permits as patronage.
3. Deviant Behaviour and Conflicts (p. 299): Electoral offences — vote buying, thuggery — are “learned deviance” when first-time offenders are not prosecuted.
4. Party Politics in Volatile Environment (p. 300): Internal party democracy is “first line of electoral security.” Imposition breeds “primary violence” that migrates to general elections.
5. Election, Democracy and Security (p. 303): “No democracy without security; no security without forensic elections.”

3.0 Methodology

Qualitative documentary analysis. Primary sources: Akinade (2017); Jega (2018); Gambari (2020); Buratai (2021); Yusuf (2023). Secondary sources: INEC 2011–2023 Reports; NBS Crime Statistics; DHQ Operation Safe Conduct briefs; Afrobarometer R9. Analytical technique: thematic synthesis across the electoral cycle.

4.0 Literature Review

4.1 Prof. Attahiru Jega — Electoral Governance

Jega (2018) lists malpractices: underage voting, result falsification, collation violence. Solution: technology + prosecution.

4.2 Prof. Ibrahim A. Gambari — Conflict Prevention

Gambari (2020) argues “volatile political environment and violence” are caused by “winner-takes-all syndrome.” Recommends peace accords with intelligence monitoring.

4.3 Malam Kabiru Yusuf — Media and Electoral Crises

Yusuf (2023) identifies “election campaign activities and security in democratic environments” as broken when media monetize conflict. “If it bleeds, it leads” rewards thuggery.

4.4 Gen. T.Y. Buratai, CFR — Non-Kinetic Electoral Security

Buratai (2021) used Operation Safe Conduct to secure 2019 elections. Key lesson: “Physical presence deters; civil dialogue prevents.”

4.5 Akinade, A. (2017) — Legal And Forensic Issues in Electoral Security And Peace Education, pp. 290–304

1. Peace and Civil Education in Volatile Environment (p. 290): Advocates “Electoral Security Clubs” in schools and motor parks. Curriculum: “Ballot as Bullet” — vote is weapon of change, not violence.
2. Electoral Security and Conflict Dynamics (p. 293): Five-stage escalation model: Grievance → Mobilization → Confrontation → Violence → Atrocity. Forensic intervention at Stage 2 via “Electoral Risk Mapping” prevents Stage 5.
3. Elections Forensics and Malpractices (p. 295): Three classes of malpractice:
 - Physical: Ballot snatching = armed robbery. Requires SOCO, fingerprint, chain of custody.
 - Documentary: Forged Form EC8A = forgery. Requires document examination.
 - Digital: BVAS over-voting = computer crime. Requires server log audit.
4. E-Voting and Electoral Integrity (p. 298): “AAA Test” — Accessible, Auditable, Admissible. Proposes six-point forensic test: source code escrow, VVPAT, real-time public hash, independent audit, penetration test, legal admissibility. BVAS 2023 failed VVPAT + real-time hash.
5. Electoral Security Framework (p. 302): Five-Layer Defence across electoral cycle:
 - Legal: Electoral Forensics Act.
 - Intelligence: Pre-election threat mapping of “security threats and political security challenges.”
 - Physical: DPO + Military “Joint Election Security Operations.”
 - Technological: BVAS/IReV as “digital exhibits.”
 - Judicial: 120-day forensic tribunals.
6. Party Politics, Electoral Crises and Malpractices (p. 300): Argues that “party primaries are the incubator of general election violence.” Recommends forensic audit of delegate lists and “Primary SOCOs.”
7. Public Safety and Order in a Society (p. 292): Election campaign activities must file “Security Impact Assessment” — route, crowd, counter-mobilization risk — before police approval.
8. Deviant Behaviour and Conflicts (p. 299): “First offence doctrine” — any candidate linked to first-time violence is disqualified. “Deviance must not profit.”
9. Election, Democracy and Security (p. 303): “Democracy is the only government that must prove itself every four years. That proof is forensic.”

5.0 Findings: Convergence Across the Electoral Cycle

5.1 Pre-Election Phase

Conflict Driver: Imposition in primaries; fake PVCs.

Forensic Gap: No audit of delegate lists.

Akinade (2017, p. 300): “Party politics in volatile environment” requires INEC to “police the parties before police police the polls.”

Synthesis: Jega’s Electoral Offences Commission + Akinade’s Primary SOCOs.

5.2 Election Day Phase

Conflict Driver: BVAS bypass; ballot snatching.

Forensic Gap: BVAS logs not tendered.

Akinade (2017, p. 295): “Snatched ballot box is armed robbery scene.” DPO must cordon, photograph, recover DNA.

Synthesis: Buratai’s “show of force” + Akinade’s “crime scene protocol.”

5.3 Post-Election Phase

Conflict Driver: Forged results; delayed IReV.

Forensic Gap: No chain of custody for EC8A.

Akinade (2017, p. 298): “E-voting without VVPAT is e-rigging.”

Synthesis: Yusuf’s “media must not declare” + Akinade’s “real-time public hash.”

Table 5.1: Electoral Cycle, Conflict Dynamics, and Forensic Response

Electoral Cycle Phase	Security Threats & Political Challenges	Deviant Behaviour	Forensic Response (Akinade 2017)
Pre-Election	Imposition; hate speech; fake registration Forensic audit of primaries p. 300; Risk mapping p. 293	Delegate buying; underage	PVC
Campaign Period	Clashing rallies; unregulated crowds Assessment p. 292; First offence disqualification p. 299	Thuggery; incitement	Security Impact
Election Day	BVAS bypass; ballot snatching BVAS as digital exhibit p. 298	Over-voting; violence at PU	SOCO at RACs p. 295;
Post-Election	Result forgery; tribunal attacks EC8A p. 295; 120-day forensic tribunals p. 302	Collation violence; fake news	Chain of custody for

6.0 The Akinade National Trust Restoration Framework, NTRF

6.1 Pillar 1: Intelligence-Led Electoral Security

Per Akinade (2017, pp. 293, 299): Establish “Electoral Forensics Units” in INEC. Functions: 1) “Deviant behaviour mapping” of politicians; 2) “Conflict dynamics early warning” using five-stage model; 3) “Chain of custody certification” for all electoral materials.

6.2 Pillar 2: Civil-Military-Community Compact for Public Safety and Order

Akinade (2017, p. 292) + Buratai (2021): Joint DPO-Brigade “Campaign Security Desks” to vet rallies. Use “Security Impact Assessment” before approval. Deploy “Peace Education Officers” to motor parks.

6.3 Pillar 3: Media Accountability for Electoral Integrity

Yusuf (2023) + Akinade (2017, p. 298): “E-Voting Forensic Reporting Code”: 1) No results without INEC BVAS hash; 2) 30% airtime to “peace and civil education” during elections.

6.4 Pillar 4: Elite Code for Party Politics in Volatile Environment

Gambari (2020) + Akinade (2017, p. 300): “Primary Violence Sanction” — Any party whose primary produces violence loses 50% of campaign funding. “Deviant behaviour must not profit.”

6.5 Pillar 5: Forensic Justice Delivery

Akinade (2017, pp. 295, 302): 1) Electoral Forensics Act making BVAS, IReV, EC8A “forensic exhibits”; 2) “120-Day Rule” for electoral courts; 3) “VVPAT” mandatory for 2027; 4) “Electoral Security Clubs” report to DPO monthly as “preventive intelligence.”

7.0 Policy Recommendations

1. To National Assembly: Pass Electoral Forensics Act incorporating Akinade (2017, pp. 295–298) on chain of custody, VVPAT, and “first offence doctrine” for electoral violence.
2. To INEC: Adopt “Electoral Cycle Forensic Matrix” (Akinade, 2017, p. 293) and publish “Real-Time BVAS Public Hash” before collation.
3. To NPF: Train all DPOs in “Election SOCO” per Akinade (2017, p. 295). Require “Security Impact Assessment” for campaigns (p. 292).
4. To Political Parties: Subject primaries to “Forensic Audit” and “Peace Education Compliance” (Akinade, 2017, p. 300, 304).
5. To Ministry of Education: Integrate “Peace and Civil Education in Volatile Environment” (Akinade, 2017, p. 290) into civic curriculum.

8.0 Conclusion

The 2024 warning by Jega, Gambari, and Yusuf is forensically explained by Akinade (2017, pp. 290–304): “Peace, security and conflicts” are “necessary” because society abhors vacuum, and “possible” only when “electoral security and conflict dynamics” are managed through forensic standards. “Party politics in volatile environment” becomes “electoral crises and malpractices” when “deviant behaviour” meets “impunity.” The NTRF therefore treats “election, democracy and security” as one tripod. Until BVAS logs are “admissible exhibits,” party primaries are “forensic scenes,” and campaign rallies pass “public safety and order” tests, Nigeria will remain in “democratic recession.” As Akinade (2017, p. 303) concludes: “The ballot is the most peaceful bullet ever invented. Its security is the first security.”

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Appendices

Appendix A: 2024 Joint Statement Text [Insert upon verification]

Appendix B: NTRF Electoral Cycle Implementation Matrix

Appendix C: Model Electoral Forensics Act Draft

Appendix D: Table C1 — Prosecution Rate for Electoral Offences 2011–2023.

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