



INTERFAITH MEDIATION CENTRE IN MANAGING ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN BAUCHI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study analysis the role of Interfaith Mediation Centre in managing electoral violence following the post-2007 and 2015 election violence in Bauchi State. The Peace building theory was employed while a descriptive research design was adopted. Purposive sampling technique was used. Samples of 58 respondents were selected and the data was presented based on thematic content analysis. The key findings of this study revealed that government promote peace and stability in Bauchi state irrespective of political parties, tribe and religions believe most resist from any attitude of teaching that would generate violence. Interfaith Mediation Centre managing electoral violence in various communities through youth's sensitization in Mosque and Churches. Religious leaders sensitize youths not to engaged in post-election violence and allow the government to do their roles. The study recommends that both Interfaith Mediation Centre and government should continue sensitize the peoples in promoting the culture of peace.

Keywords: Election, Electoral Violence, Interfaith, Mediation, Peace Building

Introduction

Faith-based organizations and individuals have increasingly taken a proactive role in various facets of peace building on the African continent and beyond. FBOs and individuals are concerned with reconciling warring parties and engaging in post-conflict peace building efforts (Bouta, Abu Nimer, & Kadayifci-Orellana 2005). Numerous examples suffice to demonstrate this important role. The Quakers were involved in mediation efforts in Nigeria in the 1967-70 Biafran war; the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the All Africa.

Conference of Churches (AACC) in Sudan in mediation efforts between the south and the north that culminated in the signing of the 1972 Addis Ababa Peace agreements. In Mozambique in 1990 the community of Sant' Egidio was instrumental in mediation efforts that put to an end the Mozambican Civil War (Johnston 2005; Bouta, Abu Nimer, and Kadayifci-Orellana 2005). In South Africa, religion and most notably Christianity contributed a significant role in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). TRC was the outcome of a political negotiation between Nelson

Mandela of the African National Congress (ANC) and Frederic William de Klerk's National Party which ended over 40 years of apartheid.

Mandela's newly-elected government promulgated into law the promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, the legislation that set up the TRC. The TRC was tasked with investigating alleged atrocities committed in the apartheid era, granting amnesty where feasible as well as recommending compensations to victims (Shore 2008, 2-3).

In northern Uganda, religious leaders have been important players in the peace process there with the involvement of two international faith-based groups in mediation efforts. They include Pax Christi (Netherlands) and the community of Sant 'Egidio (a Catholic Lay organization) that have maintained contacts with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in working towards a settlement of the conflict and thus engaging in track two diplomacy (World Bank 2006, 271-273). In addition to these efforts, religious leaders in northern Uganda have been active through the Acholi Inter-Religious Peace Initiative (ARLPI), which was established between 1997 and 1998 and involved the

Catholics, Church of Uganda, Orthodox and Muslim leaders in the peace process. The goal of this partnership was to work for peace through advocacy, training and community-level reconciliation. The initiative has been instrumental in, among other areas, the passage of the Amnesty Bill in the Ugandan Parliament (World Bank 2006).

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Political Conflict

Nigeria politician engaged in using religion as a tool for achieving their political aims and also contributed seriously to the problem of conflict (Counted, 2009). Electoral conflict is one of the pressing issues in Nigeria where conflicts occur between political parties or within the party at large and it has a negative impact based on political instability, marginalisation, violence and corruption (Habu, 2012).

Since 1960s Nigeria witnessed various degree of political conflict that led to killing of peoples. Moreover, the Nigeria Red cross, involved in the relocation of over 3500 relatives and 30,000 people as a result of various degree of political violence within various states (Olukorede, 2002). Adeleke (2012) observed that in 1999 to 2012 more than 7,000 people lost their lives as a result of political clashes across the country. In Northern region political violence was witnessed when Muslims attacked Igbo during the Nigerian Civil War and even after the war (Egwu 2001; Babangida, 2002).

Nigeria experience differences in political conflicts due to manipulation of political elite as well as using human and material resources in rigging election. The incapability of the Nigerian government to address these issues based on their parties' interest has led to political conflicts every time there are political elections which has in turn hindered the socioeconomic and political development of the country (Jev, 2014). In the Western part of Nigeria, political conflict started since from 1963 to 1965 regional election between Awolowo and Akintola. In 1983, Nigeria witnessed post-election violence following the declared victory of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) in Oyo and Ondo

states resulting in many people losing their lives and large destruction of properties as result of opposition parties' retaliation by violence (Alemika, 2011).

Faith-based Organizations in Addressing Electoral Violence

Christian Association of Nigeria is one of the major faith-based organisations which encourage peace in terms of managing conflict and negotiating electoral conflict situation. They play the role of mediation between the opposing parties and also provide peace education scheme within the conflict zone (Sulaiman & Ojo, 2012, Ruby & Shah, 2007). Wuye (2014) argues the faith-based organizations has a role of serving as peace builders between the conflicting parties and also ensure peace by addressing political violence with initiatives of both parties within Northern part of Nigeria.

In relation to long-term Programs national council of churches of Kenya (NCKK) intervene in terms of Curing and Reconciliation following the post-election violence in 2007 (Githigaro, 2012). Peace and Development Network (NGOs) played a critical role during the political clashes among difference ethnic groups in Kenya by intervening with relief assistance (Barasa, 2016). It was also involved in negotiating between the conflicting parties to address many societal problems that required special strategies of resolving them rather than leaving them till their explosion (Barasa, 2016).

Christian Muslims Peace Movement are working with other faith-based organisations such as Youth Federation for World Peace, Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria (CEPAN), and Universal Peace Federation (UPF) in order to promote peace and religious tolerance (CMPM, 2011). The activities of inter-religious groups in resolving the disagreement and violent clashes (Princen 1992). The inter-religious dialogue facilitates peaceful coexistence and also serves as effective advocates for the prevention of political conflict locally and regionally. They play a central role in mediation and negotiation among religious fundamentalists, and lead their communities in the reconciliation and healing required to transform their

divergent views and disagreements into a true and lasting peace (Smock, 2007).

Many international and local faith-based organisations in Nigeria operate toward providing peace and mediation between the divergent religious groups. For example, in Kaduna and Plateau states the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), which comprising both Christian and Muslim clerics are involved in conflict resolution. The Interfaith Mediation Centre of Muslim Christian Dialogue Forum (IMCMCDF), Nigeria and the International Peace League (IPL) are other such groups working across religious and ethnic boundaries developed dialogue between the conflicting parties (Ahmed 2007; Berlin Declaration on Inter-religious Dialogue, 2008). Others include the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, the Christian Association of Nigeria and Jama'atu Nasril Islam. These groups are involved as conflict management actors by encouraging peace process and peace education aimed at promoting dialogue between religious groups (Paden 2008; Yusuf 2008). As a result the interfaith organisations have played a vital role in managing conflict and mobilising political elites and religious clerics to increase peace dialogues across the divergent ethno-religious groups (Omotosho, 2014).

Peace Building Theory

Lederach (1997) has suggested a top-down approach in the management of conflict. The approach play a vital role to local actors with strategies plans that sets in a motion of participatory leaderships where each actor have a role that he or she may agree to play. The peace building theory emphasises that, the top-down level of leaderships and peace-building method allows peacemakers to play the intermediate role in terms of peace-building within the conflict zones. Accordingly, the theory also anticipated that top level, middle-range level and grassroots level leaders play a vital role in the management of conflict. Peace building theory consist of reconciliation, mediation, peace process timing, workshops in terms of problems solving, management of conflict training workshops among others (Lederach, 1997).

John Lederach's (1997) Peace-building Theory is a contribution concerning a particular conflict. The

theory postulates that, it is deals with long term process of managing the conflict between the opposing parties. The main focus of this theory is to support peace-building process through middle-out strategies which sees local actors from level 1 the top leadership, level 2 the middle level leadership and level 3 the grassroots leadership (Lederach, 1997). In addition, the theory with important intervention strategies in better understanding in what local NGOs can do as third party. This is aiming to bring changes in terms of behaviour and attitude of people through effective management of conflict strategies such as facilitation, mediation, negotiation and reconciliation. The theory also handle with conflict positively toward ensuring control of violent conflict and revealed the fact that managing the conflict is not a total elimination of violent conflict but an effort to transform conflict into peaceful dialogue process of social, economic and political changes (Lederach's, 1997).

The theory also interprets how community leaders play a vital role in conflict management and how local actors (interfaith mediation centre) facilitate peace in conflict zones. As such, Lederach's theoretical framework is useful to explain the role of interfaith mediation centre in the management of conflict situation in Bauchi state, Nigeria. That is, in dealing with research question of what was the nature and activities of interfaith mediation centre in the management of ethno-religious conflicts in Bauchi state, Nigeria. Therefore, the theory interprets the case of interfaith mediation centre and their Track 2 strategies in conflict management activities peculiar to Bauchi state where there are protracted social conflicts between different ethnic groups divided along religious lines. The theory offers a better understanding of activities of NGOs (interfaith mediation centre) at the grassroots level, more significantly as practiced in dealing with conflict areas elsewhere.

Methodology

Research Design

This research adopted descriptive qualitative research design. Descriptive qualitative design was guided this research through interviews to understand values,

opinion, experiences and feelings of individuals and groups in the society.

Location of the Study

Bauchi state is ideal for this study due to the fact that it has witnessed ethno-religious crisis, post-election violence and insurgency. These crises had adverse effect on the life and property of the people and their livelihood. Based on this, the interfaith mediation centre was established for conflict management.

The present Bauchi state is made – up of 20 multi ethnic local governments councils, with two dominant religions of Christianity and Islam. The state has about 55 ethnic groups among which are; Hausa, Fulani, Gerawa, Sayawa, Jarawa, Bolawa, Kare-Kare, Zulawa, Bijim, Bankalawa, Barebari, Sangawa, Limirawa and Ngas among others. Bauchi state covers a total land area of 49,259.01 square kilometres representing about 5.3% of Nigeria's total land mass (Yalwa, 2016) (Appendix IX and X).

Population Size

In this study, the population of the study consisted of the interfaith mediation centre (IMC) officials, Muslim religious leaders, Christian religious leaders, local NGOs officials operating in Bauchi, government officials, elders and community leaders working in the

study area. The age bracket for the respondent was between 30-70 years those who have witnessed the crisis and the activities of interfaith mediation centre within the conflict zone.

Sample Procedure and Sample Size

Non-probability sample was employed in order to guide the study due to the descriptive nature of the research. In non-probability sample, there is no approach of categorising the probability of every element in selection of sample, and there is no assurances that each element has a few chances of being choose or included (Creswell; 2013). Purposive sampling technique guided the study in selecting the respondents. Purposive sample is a process of selecting the sample according to judgemental criterion of the respondent who would be suitable for the study (Kanupriya, 2016). According Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a 20-30% of the available population is adequate for a study. A sample of 10% of the sample size is acceptable and adequate for descriptive qualitative research design (ibid). This study settled on 10% of the targeted population (Table 1). A sample size of 30% from each targeted population was selected to represent the study respondents. The sample size for this study was comprised the fifty-eight (58) selected numbers of respondents.

Table 1: Sample element

Population	Target population	Sample Size
Interfaith mediation centre officials	34	10
Local NGOs officials CPM	10	3
Government officials	10	3
Religious leaders (Pastors and Imams)	40	12
Communities leaders (chiefs)	34	10
Elders	67	20
Total	195	58

Methods of Data Collection and Pilot Study

Semi-structured interview, focus group discussion and document analysis was used as methods of data collection. One Local Government Area was purposively selected for piloting. The piloted instruments were analysed and findings used to improve the research instruments (Appendices III and VIII).

Validity and Reliability

Validity deals with accuracy of the data collection instruments by collecting the intended information (Creswell, 2013). Reliability on the other hand refers to data collection instruments to show consistency by yielding the same results when used collect data in different times on the same or different subjects

(Creswell, 2013). The content validity was achieved based on the observation and corrections made by the supervisors are treated carefully as well as the researcher was always kept in touch with other experts to ensure that important points omitted in the research process are reflected to achieve the desired result. The reliability of the instruments was guaranteed by subjecting them to a pilot study.

Data Collection Procedures

The main sources of data collection were primary and secondary sources. The primary sources data was collected through semi structured interviews and focus Group interviews. The secondary sources data as gathered through document analysis, IMC report, government report and newsletters. The first method was used on IMC officers and leaders of conflicting parties, while focus group interviews were applied in obtaining data from common people. The secondary data have supplemented the primary source.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the field was analysed based on thematic content analysis, themes and chronology. The interview was transcribed, categorized in line with the objectives of the research. This method was accomplished through transcribing, modifying, corrections and comparing proof to make validity of data accrued through semi-structured interviews and record data.

Data Management and Ethical Consideration

In this study, the researcher followed the research rule and regulation and moral standards. The researcher was sought the consent from the respondent before collecting the data. The researcher was collected the letter of introduction from the Graduate school of Kenyatta University which was used during data collection. It was clarified the purpose of the study thereby improved cooperation from the respondents.

Results and Discussions

The primary aim of this paper is to discuss the electoral violence causes among the people of Bauchi State in Nigeria. The research has identified three (3) major

causes of electoral violence within Bauchi state one of the major focused of this study was to interrogate the role of interfaith mediation centre in managing electoral violence. In this chapter we discuss the 2007 electoral violence, 2011 electoral violence, 2015 electoral violence in Bauchi state and conclusion.

2007 Electoral Violence

In 2007 general elections President Obasanjo told the citizen of Nigeria, Africans and the world at large that the 2007 elections would be a 'do-or-die affair' (Nwoli, 2007:165). 2007 general elections brought high fraudulent malpractices. Both federal and state elections lack essential transparency, irregularities in terms of elections procedures, election result were changed at the collation centre in favour of ruling party PDP which brought some many violence across the state and the country at large (Adebayo, 2007:207). During 2007 Governorship election in Bauchi state political thugs killed one school teacher between the supporters of Alhaji Nadada of PDP and Isah Yuguda of ANPP (TMG Report, 2015). One of the oral sources stated that;

We advise the government to give the security personnel's adequate support in dealing with the youth during and after election but you would see the security officers arrested the political thugs but the government itself for the selfish interest allow the security to release those thugs, that young thug would cause a lot of problems to our society (Tanko, O.I, 23/01/2024).

The major challenges facing the Nigeria are how to select leader at the different level of authority through free and credible fair elections. The authoritative of free and fair elections is better captured by former President of Nigeria Alhaji Musa Yar'Adua said;

"... electoral reform is based on the trust that elections are the very vital and heart in the process of liberal democracy henceforth the elections must be free and fair and should be transparent in the eyes of Nigeria citizens and the world in general" (Olasunkanmi, 2010).

In addition to above statement free and credible fair elections must be categorised based on right of information, assembly protection of any forms of

discrimination, absence of intimidation and the presence of wide range of fundamental human right (Laden, 2007). The oral source said:

We advise the government to promote peace and stability in Nigeria irrespective of political parties, tribe and religions believe most resist from any attitude of teaching that would generate violence (Chief Lawal, O.I, 21/01/2024).

Another key informant added that partisan attitude should be avoided by the electoral officials, monitoring groups, security operatives, observers as well as the media. More often than not, the youths are blamed for allowing themselves to be used by desperate politician to cause conflict during election, especially with not too young to run act against them the opportunity to actively participate during election. In this regard these should not allow selfish interest to use them in order to jeopardise the electoral process. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) guidance lines should be strictly follows to ensure sanity in the system. The media must educate the electoral and discourage the youth on hate speech that would generate tension in the country (Imam Muhammad, O.I, 20/01/ 2024).

However, Among other mind-boggling incidents, President Olusegun Obasanjo mockingly declared that, for him and his party PDP, the 2007 general elections was ‘a do or die affair’ (Marietu, 2010). Ezirim and Mbah supporting the above statement and argue:

The electoral and post-election violence that exploded in all level of elections later turned into religious ones, more two Governorship aspirant were murdered. The violence escalate up to April 2007 elections as campaigning of different parties across the country was interrupted with clashes between thugs of political parties, political killings, bombings and armed clashes (Ezirim, 2014).

The 2007 general elections was proof and characterise by election rigging and election malpractice which led to wide condemnation from both domestic and international observers (ibid). Another respondent revealed that;

We also advise the politicians to encourage the supporters to invite the spirit to support electoral

empire irrespective who is emerge the winner by doing these it will help the supporters to take the result in good faith without engaged in violence (Chief Abubakar, O.I, 1/02/2024).

Late Umar Musa Yar’dua the president of Nigeria condemned the election result that brought him into power (Abimbola, 2012). Consequently, He decided to form a committee known as the Electoral Reform Committee (ERC) and headed by Justice Mohammed Uwais to find out a transparent system that would ensure the conduct of free and credible fair elections that would develop the democracy in Nigeria. More so, the committee made far-reaching recommendations for Electoral Act and constitutional amendments to eliminate electoral fraud reduce violence and enhance credibility of Nigeria’s elections. President Yar’adua was ready to deliver his promises of the restoration of the rule of law and guarantee sanity in the electoral system before his death in 2009 (NEVR, 2011).

In addition, Bauchi has been witnessing politically related cases of attacks and kidnap and a resurgence of thug activities particularly in the state capital. Thugs overwhelmed the venue of the compilation of the results resulting in the clash of supporters of rival candidates. A number of cars were broken and the police had to be called in. The heavy presence of political thugs in the state puts it at high risk. The return of the former governor to the state recently rekindled the rivalry of 2007. A political tactic peculiar to the Northern part of the country is the composition of songs by usually unknown persons with heavy hate language and openly abusive. During the 2007 elections, so many of such songs were composed to denigrate the then governor and the PDP candidate. Now similar songs have been composed (according to some sources, by the same groups) to denigrate the present governor. Playing such songs had led to violent clashes (Chika, 2011). In an interview with one of the respondent in Tafawa Balewa, it was revealed that;

As a group of interfaith we decide to train the religious leaders as observers in Bauchi state. We apply to Independence Electoral Commission (INEC) and were given some observatory status where we came back trained men and women on

the checklists for electoral observation (Pastor Wuye, O.I, 20/01/2024).

The 2007 general elections if credible and peaceful—would reverse the degeneration of the franchise since Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1999, yield more representative and legitimate institutions and restore faith in a democratic trajectory. However, could deepen the vulnerability of West Africa's largest country to conflict, further alienate citizens from the political elite and reinforce violent groups' narratives of bad governance and exclusion. Flawed polls, especially if politicians stoke ethnic or religious divides, may ignite already straining fault lines, as losers protest results. Despite encouraging electoral preparations, serious obstacles remain. Many politicians still seem determined to use violence, bribery or rigging to win the spoils of office. In the remaining weeks, national institutions, led by the Independent National Election Commission (INEC), should redouble efforts to secure the poll's integrity, tackle impunity for electoral crimes, increase transparency and bolster safeguards, including by publicising results polling station by polling station and rejecting bogus return (crisis group, 2011). Another IMC official stated that;

We have support from the National Democratic Institution to give them some basic skills on how to observe the election (Imam Ashafa, O.I, 20/01/2024).

From 2007 to 2015, IMC has conducted more than 80 media dialogue sessions on television and radio stations across the intervention states. Some of the sessions were broadcast live, and have averaged 15 callers and numerous text messages per session IMC, however, has worked diligently to change the negative perceptions against the political opponent toward one another. These perceptions are reported to be gradually changing. The CMMRC and CPOs now raise awareness and advocate for peaceful co-existence (USAID Report, 2015).

IMC also organized interfaith conflict transformation and trust-building workshops where flashpoint and peace model communities were invited to interact with one another. In Bauchi state, for instance, about 15 flashpoint communities and about 10 peace model

communities were invited, with 40 participants in attendance. They were engaged in intra- and inter-sessions during the training conflict situations were analysed and their triggers, sustaining factors, and the stakeholders were identified. The peace model communities were given opportunity to share their experiences with the flashpoints. The workshop further strengthened the role of the peace model communities, networked peace ambassadors, and made the flashpoint communities appreciate peaceful coexistence (USAID Report, 2015).

IMC organized a Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop for Interfaith Women Core Mediators in Bauchi. A total of 53 women across the six intervention states were selected and trained on mediation and trauma counselling skills, who were expected to serve as resource persons for future trainings on mediation and trauma for women in the target states. Participants were drawn from various faith-based women's organizations including Federation of Muslims Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN), Women Wing of Christian Association of Nigeria (WOWICAN), Christian Muslim Peace Forum, and Women for Peace (USAID Report, 2015).

2011 Electoral Violence

The release of 2011 Presidential election result by the Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC) which produced President Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP as the winner led to sectarian violence in some Northern parts of Nigeria. Some of the affected State were Bauchi, Yobe, Maiduguri, Kaduna among others (Ezirim, 2014). The post-election violence frequently including destruction of property, shooting, killings, arson, wanton destruction of property, and committed by officials and support of different political parties (Adoke, 2011). It is of great important to note that the Nigerian general elections of 2011 can be regarded as the most deadly with all form of actions that constitute electoral violence. The violence that came after the 2011 election was clearly organized in some area, suggesting the influence and involvement of other organization like Boko Haram and Kala Kato (Lewis, 2011). The 2011 post-election violence start in Bauchi and Gombe states, and quickly spread to other parts of

Northern Nigeria such as kano, Adamawa, Niger, and Kaduna states (Orji & Ugodi, 2012). The gravity of the violence was clearly captured by Umeagbalasi (2011) thus

“ On the April 9, 2011 rescheduled NASS poll, 39 lives were lost. On April 16, 2011 presidential poll proper; at least 10 lives were lost. And in the earth shaking post prudential poll violence that engulfed over half of the 19 Northern Nigerian states including Kano, Kaduna, Sokoto, Bauchi, Adamawa, Nigeria, Taraba, etc which started in the evening of the presidential poll’s day at least 250 to 300 lives was lost, with public and private properties including churches, palaces, mosques, residences and vehicular valued at over 7 Billion Naira (about 50 Million Dollar) destroyed, according to eyewitnesses, disaster management, and visual, audio-visual and written media sources...”

Among the victims of the targeted violence in the North are members of the National Youth Service Corps who acted as election workers and Volunteers (Nwakanwa, 2011). Public and Private properties worth over 2.3 billion Naira (15 million Dollar) including over 500 vehicles and tricycles burnt in Bauchi state were lost to vandalism and arson in connection with the election violence (Umeagbalasi, 2011). Violence has become part of the political culture in Nigeria such that all elections are virtually violence-ridden (Laden, 2007). One of the major causes of 2011 electoral violence in Nigeria was corruption. Alemika (2011), explain further

“ The perception of politics and political office as investment and as an Avenue for the acquisition of extraordinary wealth through corruption, which is otherwise not possible through any form of legitimate vocation and enterprise. As a result of this perception and reality, Nigerian politicians turn electioneering and elections into warfare in which violence and ethnic, religious and other forms of primordial sentiments and prejudices are employed”

An electoral abuse was another leading cause of violence in Nigeria’s election. The possibilities of electoral abuse are endless, ranging from the dissemination of scurrilous rumours about candidates, and deliberately false campaign propaganda, stuffing the ballot box with fraudulent returns, dishonest

counting or report of the vote (Laden, 2007), and the attitude of Ad-hoc staff to elections (Olasunkanmi, 2010). The Ad-hoc staff are not non-permanent of the electoral commission, and because they are not permanent staff, they are easily influenced into electoral malpractices and in most cases not even available during proceeding at electoral at electoral tribunal (Olasunkani, 2010), all these negative attitudes of the ad-hoc stuff appear at the 2011 general election. The high rate of unemployment, poverty and illiteracy among youth play a vital role of in causing violence conflict in the state (Orji & Ugodi, 2012). Many of these youths who are jobless enter politics with the intents and purposes of causing confusion and violence (Adele, 2012). Another pastor added that:

As a cleric within Tafawa Balewa when election period comes a lot of people cause confusion so as Christian and the men of God, we now intervene and interfere through our various community leaders we join hand together with them because some of the community leaders are not born again but notwithstanding, we now call them and create awareness and insert some biblical verses that thought about peace and reconciliation that’s why we have seeing progress (Pastor Bukar, O.I, 20/02/2024). In addition to us as Christian, what we use to manage electoral violence, we call both the two parties together and discuss peaceful election process in our communities.

The latest violence conflict in Tafawa Balewa and Bogoro local governments were motivated based on politics with the political elites escalate the situation to their advantage (NEVR, 2011). The electoral violence across the city of Bauchi and other part in the state on Monday April 18, 2011 following the declaration of the presidential election results of Saturday April 16, 2011. Most of the supporters of Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) whom were below the 18 years of age protesting by said the electoral officers and the PDP manipulate and deny their party victory across the country (NEVR, 2011). Another youth leader from Bauchi city added that;

We also call the parent of our youth to shows their children or address them not to engage in any

political malice during and after election period (youth leader Madaki, O.I, 14/01/2024).

More so, during election period we write our Friday prayers summons in Hausa and sometime in English in order to address our Muslim youths about the danger of conflict, the Muslim should live in peace that's what we always call our youth in order to embrace the culture of peace (Imam Ibrahim, O.I, 11/01/2024). Absolutely we experience such post-election violence and there is a time when one candidate of the political party lost his seat from the state House of Assembly and our youths went directly to his poultry farm and took all his fowls and destroy everything. So, our union the Elder Forum went ahead and stop all these crises (Pastor Moses, O.I, 15/01/2024).

Across Bauchi State, over 50 people including ten corps members who served as electoral adhoc staff were killed, more than 70 churches were burnt down and several houses and property worth millions of naira destroyed. More than four (4) police stations located in Itas, Jama'are, Giade, Dambam and Misau were also burnt down and a police woman lost their lives by the protesting supporters during the 2011 general election. Over 4,500 people were displaced following the mayhem unleashed on the residents of Bauchi of supporters of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) (Sabiou et al, 2011:53). An oral source stated that;

Our Elder Forum used different strategies in bringing lasting peaceful coexistence in our communities of Tafawa Balewa, Boggoro and Bonunu. Any person who is very stubborn we took him to the police station for the security officers to take a draconian measure against him (Chief Daniel, O.I, 20/01/2024).

More so, four Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) offices were burnt in Bauchi, Dambam, Misau and Jama'are LGAs while over 450 laptops used for the voters registration exercise were looted by the protesting youths (NEVR, 2011). One key informant interviewee noted that;

The only way we can manage violence is through advising the Government to conduct free and fair election but if the electoral official refused to

announce the good result the reverse is a case (Youth Leader Madaki, O.I, 14/01/2024).

In Bauchi State, rioters targeted members of the National Youth Corps Service who served as ad-hoc election staff. According to media reports and journalists interviewed by Human Rights watch, on the afternoon of April 17 in Giade, a rural town in Northern Bauchi State, rioters attacked the youth corps members who were from southern Nigeria. On the fateful day, the corps members ran to the local police station to seek refuge but the rioters stormed the police station, killed the police officer on duty, burned down the police station, raped two of the female youth corps members, and then hacked them to death with machetes along with five male youth corps members. In total, rioters killed ten youth corps members in the state. President Goodluck Jonathan on May 11th 2011 appointed a 22 member panel to investigate the causes and extent of the election violence. According to Human Rights watch 2011, more than 500 people were arrested and charged. But police and state prosecutors in the past have rarely followed through with criminal investigations and effective prosecutions (Onwe, 2015). Another oral source said;

Government should call the Muslims and Christian leaders as well as the leaders of the political parties to sit-down and discuss the major ways of addressing the issue of electoral violence (Aminu, O.I, 22/01/2024).

Human Right Watch report (2014) revealed that 2011 post -election violence is one of the deadly election-related and communal violence in northern Nigeria following the April 2011 presidential voting that left over 900 people dead, who were killed in three days of rioting in 12 northern states. The report also pointed out that, the police and soldiers in Bauchi state systematically beat people rounded up during or after the riots. In Azare one of the cities in northern Bauchi State, witnesses told Human Rights Watch that detainees were severely beaten by soldiers and police. And one the detainee's hand was reportedly broken, while another detainee was hospitalized as a result of the beatings. One of the respondents added that;

Another way of managing the conflict in Buchi state is that each of every political party must bring an elder person within every polling unit when the need arises in order to control the people of their party toward avoiding tension and conflict (Women Leader Rifkatu, O.I, 12/01/2024).

Bauchi State ranks high in terms of political violence in the North-East Zone. According to Transitional Monitoring Group report (2015) indicates violence conflict occurred in Katagum, Bauchi, Misau, Danbani, and Alkaleri were the LGAs most heavily affected by the 2011 post-election violence. In Giade local government the convey of the Gubernatorial candidate of the ACN, senator Baba Tela was attacked while Seven persons were injured by some thugs sponsored by PDP supporters. One student from federal polytechnic Bauchi was killed by hired political thugs. In Katagum local government more than 32 Christians were killed by Hausa thugs including 10 corps members, more than 72 churches were burnt in the state over presidential election result. Participant to this study noted that;

You would see Pastors and Imam standing side by side in a polling unit created an atmosphere of the present of representative of dignities so people were careful otherwise other places are sure there were some challenges but where ever our people observe or monitor there was peace. So that's what we did in Bauchi state within the period that you requested for (Pastor Wuye, O.I, 20/01/2024).

The post-election violence in Kano, Kaduna and Bauchi in 2011 has left many people in state of fear, especially, people from the Southern parts of Nigeria. For example, in Bauchi there was a brutal killing of Southern youth corps member which gravelled great challenge to national unity. There are numerous challenges as a result of violence on individuals, groups, society and the state. The worst is the growing tension among people which might have an increasing possibility for loss of lives and property, social dislocations and displacement, serious distrust, political instability and deepening lack of development in the society.¹⁴ Reports from government agencies on internally displaced people between 2009 and 2011 from Plateau,

Bauchi and Kaduna have been estimated at about 550,000 (Muhammed, 2012). One of the key informants revealed that;

We decided to give sensitization, voters' education, method of reconciliation and media involvement such as Radio and television in order to manage the conflicts in our various communities (Pastor Charles, O.I, 23/01/2024).

The 2011 post presidential election violence divergence along religious and ethnic lines which surrounded into Nigerian political system. The electoral violence in 2011 was the worst violence and bloodiest since Nigeria return to democratic rule in 1999 (Maduagwu, 2012). The electoral violence started with serious rioting and protests when the result of general election was announced in favour of President Ebele Goodluck Jonathan who is a Christian and southerner against Muhammadu Buhari who is a Muslim and Northern. The conflict started in Bauchi and spread to all the Northern and eastern parts of the country which led to more than 700 people death and thousands of people are displaced (ibid). One respondent said:

We call the leaders of the political parties and sit with them discuss some issues that they should allow peaceful election to be conducted in our area because most of our youths collect money from politicians and engaged in violence (Imam Haruna, O.I, 30/01/2024).

The major problems of conflict most of the Properties were destroyed and people were killed. Muslims, politicians and traditional rulers who were suspected to have supported the PDP candidate suffered a lot with severe damages. In Bauchi state a youth corps member from southern part of the country was killed along with some INEC officials. In Bauchi state places of worship like churches and mosques were burnt, along with properties belonging to members of ruling parties and vehicles belonging to CPC candidate Muhammadu Buhari (Machiel, 2011). Another Pastor remarked that;

As Pastors we questioning the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) that they should be just in pronouncing who win the election and ask the voters to accept any result in good faith that's the only way we can manage the

violence from occurrence (Pastor Samson, O.I, 14/01/2024). The only way we educate voters is through teaching and creating awareness as well as through meetings.

Bauchi State witnessed one of the worst histories of political violence in March 22, 2011. An eye witness report on the matter indicates that many properties which included: 200 brand new Peugeot 307 cars; 500 brand new tricycles; the Goodluck/Sambo Campaign office which was burnt down by the rampaging mob (Ezirim, 2014). Consequently, the Presidency set up a Presidential Committee of Inquiry to investigate the remote and immediate causes of the violence and recommend ways of averting future political violence in the State. This was aimed at seeking peaceful means of resolving the conflict (ibid). An oral source added that:

We did participated and to the best of our ability polling units where we have religious leaders observing the voting process and there was peaceful election and they serve there as the representative of God almighty because there was no rigging and no violence (Pastor Wuye, O.I, 20/02/2024).

While the cause of the crisis is political, it soon assumed a religious character. The riots made Nigerians to call on the Federal Government to look into the killings and bring the perpetrators to book. President Jonathan in the process commissioned a 22-man panel of inquiry headed by Sheikh Ahmed Lemu to probe the post-election violence. Other members of the panel were Rev. Father Idowu Feron, Alhaji Muhammadu Danmadami, Chief Ajibola Ogunshola, Mrs. Lateefat Okunnu, M.B. Wali, Dr. (Mrs) Timiebi Koripamo-Agary, President of the Trade Union Congress (TUC), Comrade Peter Esele, Alhaji Muhammed Ibrahim, Prof. Femi Odekunle, Ambassador Ralph Uwuechue, Alhaji Bukar Usman, Sheik Adam Idoko, Retired Maj General Muhammed Said, Barrister P.C. Okorie, Arc. Shamsunna Ahmed, Maj General L.P. Ngubane, Alhaji Sani Maikudi, Rear Admiral Hotou and a serving member of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) (ibid).

Responding to recurrent violence in T/Balewa, the Bauchi State government finally in 2012 approved the relocation of the headquarters of Tafawa Balewa LGA

from Tafawa Balewa town to Bununu another town in the LGA to reduce the tension. The action has direct link to unending violence in Tafawa Balewa LGA in the Bauchi state of Northern Nigeria (IRIN, 2014). One of the key informants revealed that:

One of the major reasons why government relocate the local government headquarter of Tafawa Balewa to Bonunu was to manage the existing conflict in the area. The former Governor of Bauchi state lamented over the serious killing and loss of worth properties in the affected communities (Government official Sadiq, O.I, 10/03/2024).

However, Tafawa Balewa was a mixed community housing both the Hausas (Muslims) and Sayawas (Christians) antic the crisis of January 2011 which resulted in the Muslims fleeing to Bonunu, some to Dass and some to Burgel. The local Government headquarter was also moved from Tafawa Balewa to Bonunu which irked the Christian of Tafawa Balewa with majority of the civil servants from Tafawa Balewa refusing to report to Bonunu for work. Efforts were made to reconcile the two communities by IMC TOLERANCE in 2013 but venue became a challenge as Tafawa Balewa and Bonunu were all rejected by the Muslims and Christian. After several consultations behind the scene, Dass was suggested and both the Christian and Muslims of Tafawa Balewa and Bonunu respectively agreed to attend. In the meeting participants from Bonunu and Tafawa Balewa were trained on peaceful coexistence and a peace committee with membership from the two communities established (IMC report, 2013).

After the training the committee went to work by visiting religions and traditional leaders in Bonunu and Tafawa Balewa who organised meetings where the committee shared IMC Tolerance training and the need for the restoration of the peaceful coexistence between the two communities. This was well received by both communities and social interactions have greatly improved with the two communities visiting each other freely which was unthinkable before the IMC Tolerance intervention. The community members of Tafawa Balewa as narrated by Alhaji Ahmed are also asking the Hausa community to return to Tafawa Balewa. In addition, the civil servants residing in Tafawa Balewa

with the intervention have also returned to work in the local government secretariat which was move to Bonunu as resulted the crisis (IMC report, 2013).

Commissions to investigate electoral violence in Nigeria have been organized in the past, but their recommendations and findings have either remained unimplemented or essentially kept secret, resulting in a culture of impunity. Thus, residents have little faith that the two commissions currently investigating the roots of the violence in northern Nigeria will have any effect. Should these beliefs materialize, the two commissions will not succeed in helping to break the cycle of electoral violence in Nigeria. Instead, the commissions must not only identify the perpetrators of violence, but they must be brought to book and compensation must be obtained for the victims (Ezirim, 2014). The panel has long concluded its assignment and submitted its report but the question remains as to whether the recommendations made will be implemented. Successive governments since 1994 had set up one panel of inquiry or the other to look into various crises ravaging some parts of the North but the recommendations have not been implemented up till to date. Oftentimes, it amounts to waste of funds, energy and time as such reports or recommendations are not always made public or implemented (ibid).

Traditionally, in Bauchi state for instance, communities celebrated together, irrespective of their political differences or religious belief. This practice stopped about five years ago with the appearance of some much electoral violence in the state, which led to killings of civilians and burning of places of worship. The situation worsened after the 2011 presidential election, which led to loss of lives among community members that were once united. People were polarized along religious lines. Fighting, mistrust, and hatred developed, particularly among Christians in the communities of Yelwa and Lushi, and Muslims in Tsakani (USAID Report, 2015).

In 2013, IMC organized a workshop for youth groups in Bauchi. Members were drawn from Kagadama, Tsakani, and Lushi communities in Bauchi town. More than 40 youths attended the workshops on inter- and

intra- community negotiation and peacebuilding coupled with training on peaceful coexistence, peace education, conflict mitigation, and community mobilization. The youth learned to draw on their new skills, and mobilized themselves and formed a group called Interfaith Youth for Peace in Bauchi. Members were made up of both Muslim and Christian youths drawn from the conflict neighbourhoods. The members organized a football match for peace with over 500 youths in attendance. The Governor of Bauchi was also present and he encouraged them on their initiative (USAID Report, 2015).

2015 Electoral Violence

In 2014, one of the crisis groups projected that Nigeria's survival has direct bearing on the successful conduct of its general election scheduled for February 2015 and tackling insecurity. The report further stresses that the election will be more contentious than usual due to certain irregularities, sensitive political rivalry and high level of human insecurity in the country (International Crisis Group, 2014). Three factors are instrumental in the report signalling the possibilities of more outbreak of violence. First, similar to what had happened in 2011 which resulted in violent conflict after general election that ushered in the incumbent government. That is tension within and between the two major political parties, APC (the strong opposition party) and PDP (the ruling party). While the competing claim to the presidency is between northern candidate Muhammadu Buhari and the incumbent President of Nigeria Goodluck Jonathan from the Niger Delta, it is also a political competition along religious lines. Another oral source indicates that;

We call our youths and tell them most of the political elites used your energy during election and after election for their own political interest, we address the youths do not sells themselves because of money and also address them that most of the politician do not used their biological sons to engage in any violence rather than taking them into expensive universities abroad (Imam Muhammad Yusuf, O.I, 20/01/2024).

A former Minister of External Affairs, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, warned of a possible post-election crisis and the need to do everything possible to avert or minimize

it. He states as follows: ‘the certainty of violence after the 2015 elections is higher than it was in 2011. If President Jonathan wins, the North would erupt into violence as it did in 2011. If General Buhari wins, the Niger Delta will erupt into violence. I don’t believe that we need rocket science to make this prediction. The violence of 2015 is going to be horrendous and worse than the one of 2011 for the simple reason that the illegal massive importation of weapons into the country has reached such alarming proportions that 1 really wonder which is better armed, the militias on one hand or the official Armed Forces on the other hand (Akiyemi, 2015). In all, the journey to 2015 general election was rough, many politicians were assassinated and others kidnapped. Campaign offices and cars of perceived opponents were burnt, while some campaign convoy were stoned including that of President Goodluck Jonathan in Bauchi, Katsina, among others state (ibid). One local Pastor noted that;

We play a vital role in managing electoral violence in our community through youth’s sensitization in our Churches. We sensitize our youths not to engaged in post-election violence and allow the government to do their roles (Pastor Moses, O.I, 13/01/2024).

In order to prevent the mayhem and catastrophe that may be expected as post-election violence, all the Presidential aspirants signed a peace accord for none violence pool in Abuja. The US Ambassador to Nigeria held similar meetings and signed Memorandum of Understanding for a peaceful pool with frontline Governorship Candidates in some States of the Federation (Ezea, 2015). Another respondent stated that;

The major cause of post-election violence is lack of free and credible fair election. For instance, during election the Independence Electoral Commission sent their staff to various units before they start conducting the election process, they consult the traditional leaders and we emphasis telling them to be free and fair in order to have peaceful coexistence in our communities. We tried our possible best in avoiding the occurrence of conflict (Chief Abubakar, 1/02/2024).

To stem the tide of hostility which already had brewed, on January 14 2015, the Office of the National Security

Adviser and the Special Adviser to the president on Inter-Party Affairs through a generous financial grant and support of donor agencies including United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), European Union (EU) and others organized a workshop on the 2015 general elections (Ezea, 2015). The workshop with the theme: “2015 General Elections Sensitization Workshop on Non-Violence” had most of the political parties’ chairmen and presidential candidates invited and in attendance. The workshop was an attempt to deescalate the raging conflict that was looming in the political space through reorientation of the political actors- political parties’ leadership, candidates and other stakeholders. The 14 presidential candidates and their Chairmen as well as Chief Emeka Anyaoku signed the below declaration while Mr. Kofi Anna observed the proceedings (Ezea, 2015). An oral source stated that;

Am calling the government that in anything they should do justice and respect the traditional leaders in any course. The major cause of conflict in Bauchi city was politics. Most of the political elites for their own personal interest cause tension in the state (Chief Waziri, O.I, 22/01/2024).

We, the undersigned presidential candidates of the under listed political parties contesting the general election of 2015, desirous of taking proactive measures to prevent electoral violence before, during and after the elections, anxious about the maintenance of a peaceful environment for the 2015 general election, reaffirming our commitment to the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, desirous of promoting the unity and corporate existence of Nigeria as an indivisible entity, determined to avoid any conduct or behaviour that will endanger the political stability and national security of Nigeria, determined to place national interest above personal and partisan concern, reaffirming our commitment to fully abide by all rules and regulations as laid down in the legal framework for elections in Nigeria hereby submit ourselves and our parties to the following: To run issue based campaigns at national states and local government levels (Ezea, 2015).

An old woman along Tafawa Balewa gave a narrative on how to manage the political violence. She noted that; when the election period comes we engage in fasting and prayers for the almighty God to bring peaceful election. We pray for the best leader that would bring peace to our societies not a leader who would cause faction among us. We need a leader who would protect the lives and properties of the masses and we would not elect who would not protect our lives (Women Leader Rifkatu, O.I, 12/01/2024).

From the above remarks it was noted that peace accord was created as mediation tent. Consequently, the National Peace Committee (NPC) with General Abdusalami Abubakar as Chairman and other eminent Nigerians as Members was created. Despite this accord, there were still conflicts in different parts of the Country. President Jonathan had called Muhammadu Buhari to congratulate him on his victory at exactly 5:15 p.m. local time on Monday, March 30. The phone call took place almost ten hours before the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) officially declared Buhari the winner with a total of 15,424,921 votes against 12,853,162 for Jonathan (NEN, 2015). This historic call, couple with the conceding of victory speech by President Jonathan after the announcement of election results, to a large extent stemmed the violence that would have arisen. These actions deepened political stability (ibid). Another oral source revealed that;

Another role we play during election, we went to our various polling unit and stayed until the casting of vote end toward avoiding any violence. If youth try to cause tension within polling unit the chief would call them and address them, if they refused to comply, the leader of that community would immediately address their parents (Imam Kamalu, O.I, 16/01/2024).

The issues of political violence are also epidemic in our dear state but we try to sensitize people to live in peace during and after election. We mobilise our youth through organising some symposium lectures when the election period come. One of the major problems in our communities in Bauchi is our youth who are political thugs that's the reason why we fight against drug addiction. When youth are not drug addicted we think

they will not go into violence (Musa, 10/03/2024). One local chief revealed that;

If the youths attempted to burn the houses of the politician in opposition during or after election, our local traditional leader stayed overnight in order not to allowed the occurrence of such act. We also advice the presiding officers to announced the result in good faiths within their polling units these would reduce the tension (Chief Turaki, O.I, 13/01/2024).

This indicates that one of the fundamental teachings of Islam is the spread of peace and one of the main objectives of Islam is to establish the peaceful coexistence, and to establish stability in the system. Recent days we had some security challenges here in Yelwan which is not new to us as well as Nigeria at large. It is a very serious issue that a lot of effort are put in place from different perspectives and from different dimension in order to see the menace is tackle but up to now we are still underdeveloped in terms of getting a sustainable solution toward the substance of peace and stability in our societies. The main themes or message of Islam is to establish peace without peace even the religion cannot be practice and without which any development, political as well as religion cannot be ascertain (Imam Ibrahim, O.I, 11/01/2024). One of the government officials also revealed that;

At this juncture I want to comment the effort of the government of Bauchi state particularly the Governor who visited the conflicting areas and send security personnel to punish the perpetrators. Later the government of Bauchi state decided to established a policy of 'Mediation tent' means calling the people toward in calculating the culture of peace. (Government official Bulus, O.I, 11/03/2024).

This is an indication that both Imam and Pastor, community leaders, traditional leaders, youth leaders and women leaders as well as stakeholders we must work together in order to see how we can faced these challenges and bring more sanity into the system (FGD, 10/03/2024).

IMC has engaged senior religious and traditional leaders in television and radio to address prevailing

core conflict issues towards peacebuilding and coexistence within the state. The media activity started in 2013 in Bauchi. TOLERANCE through the media dialogue has been able to strengthen understanding and better relationship across faith. Through the media dialogue program, using the Radio and Television stations in Bauchi and Plateau States, IMC was able to reach about 3.1 million listeners/viewers. The hate speech phenomenon during election period which was the order of the day in Bauchi amongst Christian and Muslim religious leaders is declining as a result of the media dialogue. This was achieved through the use of local religious resource persons to appeal to religious and other adherents of faith to shun hate speech and embrace peaceful coexistence (USAID Report, 2015).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this paper, the role of interfaith mediation centre in managing electoral violence was discussed. It was established that interfaith mediation centre officials gave sensitization voters education and method of mediation as well as media involvement toward managing electoral conflict. IMC also had supported from the National Democratic Institution to give them some basic skills on how to observed election. Most of

the interfaith mediation centre groups participate the voting process as representative of God and avoid election rigging. It is also reveals that the religious leaders sensitize their fellows not to engaged in post-election violence and allow their government to do their role. Both IMC and traditional leaders also play a vital role during election; they went to various polling units and stayed until the casting of votes ends to avoid any possible violence.

Based on the findings, this study makes an importance recommendation; peaceful measures are the best strategy to strengthen peaceful relationship while involving both community and religious leaders with the aim of dealing with misunderstanding. The government should be responsible in building peace through good governance and administration. IMC create awareness through radio, television and other social media toward inculcating the culture of peace.

Independence National Electoral Commission guidelines should be strictly follows to ensure sanity in the system. Government and religious leaders must educate the electoral and discourage the youth on hate speech that would generate tension in the state.

The Research is Sponsored by Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) Nigeria

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