

Post-Colonial Political Campaigns and Violation of Human Rights in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper interrogates the linkage between the militarization of political campaigns and Human Rights violations in Rivers State. Also, the briefing underscores on how the use of Hate Speech during campaigns result in the harassment of persons by the Law Enforcement Agents? The paper utilized the Social Conflict Theory as a framework of analysis, while also adopting the documentary method and the qualitative-descriptive for data collection and data analysis respectively. The study found that the militarization of political campaigns and the use of Hate Speeches during campaigns variously undermined Human Rights by exacerbating abuses in Rivers State, Nigeria. It recommends appropriate punishment of officers of the law and politicians who sponsor election-related violence, and as well as speedy prosecution of Hate Speeches.

Keywords: *Political campaigns, Human Right Abuses, Hate Speech, Election, Violence*

Introduction

The unprecedented wave of violence and human rights abuses in Nigeria have brought about a state of insecurity, the loss of confidence on the government as it affects the essence of governance among others. Some states have been implicated in the unleashing of these abuses on the masses at a large scale, some of these states include those of the north east, southeast, among others. On different occasions, the Nigerian state have been implicated in the abuse of human rights, ranging from the abuses done in the course of counter-insurgent operations, abuses done in the course of arrest, during elections among others. These abuses have defiled all attempts by the government to minimize its effects and seriousness in the country.

Thus, in Rivers state since 1999, it has been implicated in elections that voters are systematically intimidated into acquiescence as it is generally observed in the Nigerian landscape since the inception of democracy in 1999, which accounted for the murder of over 100 thousand persons till the 2007 elections (Ebere & Chloe, 2009). The government of Rivers State at different points has not shown any reasonable sense of responsibility through necessary policy processes in the fight against human rights abuses. This very act of human rights abuses is one that has sunk even lower than the dismal norms in the state. These abuses according to reports were found to have been

done by public officials who in their quest to seize power adopt any means possible to realize their objectives (Human Rights Watch, 2008).

According to the publication made by the Human Rights Watch (2008), the fortification and supply of these instruments and personnel that propel human rights abuses could be traced to the excess supply of funds and the buoyancy of the economy of some states, which Rivers state is not an exception. Hence, the Rivers state's funds have not just been mismanaged but have been used to sponsor violence and insecurity which end up jeopardizing and inflicting injuries and abuses on the masses as ordered by the ruling political party and politicians. For instance, the then governor of Rivers State-Peter Odili, prior to the 2003 elections was found to have lavishly funded criminal gangs that aided the rigging of the election in favour of the People's Democratic Party (Human Rights Watch, 2008).

Human Rights Watch (2008), posited that to reduce human rights abuses in Rivers State, the government has deployed the military led Joint Task Force (JTF), a combined force of the police, the military, and the State Security Service (SSS) personnel in the fight against human rights abuses in the last decades. The JTF has to a large extent succeeded in the curtailing of human rights abuses in Port Harcourt and some communities around it that were gravely affected by abuses from gangs, political thugs among others. They have since managed to maintain a degree of relative and fragile peace, though they have not managed to stamp out gang violence altogether. Notwithstanding the prosecutorial activities by the government to quell human rights abuses, violations of human rights have defy against all odds, and on the increase. Reports from Human Rights Watch (2021), show that the activities of the JTF have been politicized and jacked by politicians who use these people to achieve their nefarious ends. The personnel of the JTF have been implicated in the violations of human rights abuses ranging from the shooting of unsuspecting civilian with no justification. There abound cases of the unlawful detention and beating as well as torture of innocent citizens, the looting of individual homes of citizens, raping of girls and women among others.

Sequel to the above indicators of human rights abuses, Newspaper documentaries had shown that periods of election and political campaigns in Rivers State, Nigeria always lend themselves to human rights abuses ranging from the beating of suspected opponents and praise singers, restriction of the rights of movement around the environs of the campaign, serial attempts in

destabilizing the campaigns by opponents among others. The above evidences are implicated in the activities which have resulted to the murder of innocent citizens, kidnappings, injuring of innocent citizens (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

- **Understanding the post-colonial political campaigns and violation of human rights through Social Conflict Theory**

In the field of political theory, there are plethora theoretical debates for explanation of political phenomenon. In the like manner, there are theoretical contestation explaining the character of political processes in Africa, and Nigeria in specific. Thus, understanding of political campaigns and human rights violation cannot be thoroughly appreciated without theoretical prisms. These theories include but, not limited to systems theory, power theory, Marxian political economy theory among others. Notwithstanding, the social conflict theory of post-colonial state is utilized to appreciate the dynamics of political campaigns and violation of human rights in respect to Rivers state, Nigeria.

Social conflict theory presupposes that human behaviours, in a social context, result from the pursuit of common goal by the two or more competing groups, individuals, among others. The theory has its root in the works of Karl Marx(1883). Marx conceptualized the human society in terms of conflicts which may lead to full blown violence between social classes, perhaps from owners of potential means of productions, political candidates who are contesting for an important seat in government, and even among the proletariats (working class who may be fighting to gain recognition, promotions and higher wages). It is pertinent to posit that the competing individuals and gangs possess unequal power, though they are in pursuit of a common objective. This disparity in their capacity does not only account for their influence, but also proportionality of the terror they are capable of unleashing in the polity.

Social conflict is such a one that the contending parties are a conglomerate of individuals, groups, organizations, communities, crowds implicated in conflict situation. The social conflict perspective is a derivative of group conflict. However, a conflict situation can exist without any awareness. The social conflict theory according to Chris (2014, p.67), uses diverse human behavior, such as educational practices that either sustain or challenge the status quo and cultural customs regarding the elderly, and criminal behavior. It is a tool that adopts the social environment

as its laboratory to scientifically analyze the general conflict among human in the polity (Cosser, 1956, p. 23). In summary, some of the basic assumptions or tenets of the social conflict as contained Cosser (2006, p. 17), are:

- The probability of goal attainment for one party decreases as the probability of the other increases.
- Social conflict constitutes a struggle over values or claims to status, power, scarce resources, in which the aim of the conflict group are not only to gain the desired value, but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rivals.
- Social conflict involves a lot of social disorders and phenomenon: class, racial struggle, religious, communal conflict; riots, rebellions, harassments, demonstrations, attack at personality, protest gatherings, among others.
- Social Conflict theories involve competition in any way possible between and among the warring or contending groups.

The social conflict theory is fundamental to the inquiry into the nature of electoral campaigns and human rights violation in Rivers State. The nature of human rights violations meted out to innocent citizens during elections campaigns find expression on some of the central thesis of the theory of Social Conflict. For instance, ‘the probability of goal attainment for one party decreases as the probability of the other increases’ presents an overture suggesting that the election campaign period is one where there are more than one group, individual, or institutions fighting to gain or achieve a common objectives. Their pursuit of this common objective conditions them to take up whatever means possible to achieve their objectives. Hence, the probability, tendency, and propensity of the realization of the goal by one party decreases even as the propensity of the other party increases depending on the power, strength and capacity they possesses as well as the application of the right instrument for the realization of their objectives.

Furthermore, situation as we have it in literature about electioneering campaigns seasons and human rights violations could receive scholarly explanations via the instrumentality of the second central thesis of the theory, namely: that ‘social conflict constitute a struggle over values or claims to status, power, scarce resources, in which the aim of the conflict group is not only to gain the desired value, but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rivals’. This implies that the conflict situation that is mostly experienced during election campaigns are due to the inclination of the involved groups, individuals, among others for the value (say, a positions or seat in the polity).Outside these other values are incorporations of neutralization, injuring, and eliminations

of the contending parties. This, in reality, has been experienced in the Nigerian, especially during election campaigns in Rivers State *stricto sensus*

More so, the third proposition of the theory that ‘social conflict involves a lot of social disorders and phenomenon: class, racial struggle, religious, communal conflict; riots, rebellions, harassments, demonstrations, attack at personality, protest gatherings, among others’ explains another major dimension of the events obtainable during electioneering campaigns in Rivers State. The highlight avers that accompanying election campaign seasons are the likes of social disorders and phenomenon: class, racial struggle, religious, communal conflict; riots, rebellions, harassments, demonstrations, attack at personality, protest gatherings among others which could conditions or facilitate the abuses of human rights by the military, law enforcement agents, the JTF in Rivers State, among others. According to credible eyewitness accounts, the Nigerian military committed illegal killings during attempts to apprehend members of the extremist group Boko Haram in several states, including Borno, Kano, Kaduna, and Yobe states and surrounding areas Human Rights Practices (2012). These human rights violations are contradistinction to democratic election campaign seasons.

The theory will help to ascertain in accordance with the last tenet of the theory as stated above (Social theories involve competition in any way possible between and among the warring or contending groups) whether the nature of election campaign as observed in literature and reality involves some level of competition. This process involves a lot of struggles that could be pursued in any way possible even at the expense of the other party. These groups involved can go any length to make sure that their objectives are realized. Just as it is seen in every competition, the only constant thing is interest. Hence, the competing parties are always in pursuit of their own objective without observing what the other is doing and to the detriment of anyone who wishes to obstruct their moves. The political attempt of the All Progressive Congress to take over power from the People’s Democratic Company after 16 years of leadership was a real case of group competition. The All Progressive Congress did everything possible to make sure they trap power not minding who is offended or appeased.

- **Indiscriminate Killings by Law Enforcement Agencies**

The election campaigns and campaign seasons in Rivers State within the period under study were accompanied by other crimes which have contributed to the tensed atmosphere of the state during election campaign. Some of these crimes were done by security operatives who were deployed around the area of activity as well as uniform gunmen who were given opportunity to also operate in the vicinity. These uniform gunmen operated at the expense of the reputation of the law enforcement agencies as crimes done by them may be connected and traceable to the law enforcement agencies on the campaign ground (Fund for Peace, 2018).

It is pertinent to posit that security forces reportedly killed and assassinated party supporters in Ogba/ Egbema/Ndoni LGA and particularly in election campaigns and rallies (*Fund for Peace*, 2018). It is recorded that security operatives have raided some hideouts supposed to be occupied by supporter of the opposition party who disrupted their campaign the last time it held. According to Fund for Peace (2018), the extent of assassination and murder during election campaigns and election season got to its heights in 2015 and before the election re-run. This season triggered a lot of inter-party clashes and political thuggery, abductions/ kidnappings, assassinations among others.

The failure of authorities to protect people from attacks and intimidation by violent gangs led to loss of lives and rising impunity that have continued to make life precarious in some communities across Rivers State. The government's failure to provide security for people in Rivers State, especially in Emohua, Khana and Gokana local government areas as well as its failure to investigate and prosecute those responsible for these killings created an atmosphere of fear and bloodshed in the region. The implication appears that government agencies have failed to perform their duties as it affects the protection of lives and properties, especially during political campaigns in Rivers State. **Tables 1** and **2** provide insight into the nature of murder and political assassination during election campaign in Rivers State. While **Table 1** shows comprises list of murders and assassinations done during election campaigns by the law enforcement agencies, **Table 2** catalogues the off-shore murders and assassinations done outside the campaign ground but related to clashes and attacks by party loyalist. All these became imminent because Amaechi had in his speech declared war on any party or group that would come in-between their election victory and dominance in Rivers State (*Fund for Peace*, 2018).

Table 1: List of Murder and Political Assassinations Done during Election Campaign by Law Enforcement Agencies and Uniform Gunmen

S/N	Name of political party	Location of the campaign	Security forces deployed	Number of death/casualty encountered	Source
1	People's Democratic Party	Yakubu Gowon stadium, port Harcourt	Nigerian police force, The Nigerian Army, private Security Operatives etc.	3 deaths	Fund for Peace
2	People's Democratic Party	Phalga in Rivers State	Nigerian police force, The Nigerian Army, private Security Operatives etc.	Not recorded	Fund for Peace
3	All progressive Congress	Bori Khana Local Government, Rivers State	Nigerian police force, The Nigerian Army, State Security Service, private Security Operatives etc.	3	Fund for Peace
4	All progressive Congress	Botached rally in Port Harcourt	Nigerian police force, The Nigerian Army, State Security Service, private Security Operatives etc.	Nil	Fund for Peace
5	All progressive Congress	Esimaka stadium, port Harcourt.	Nigerian police force, The Nigerian Army, State Security Service, private Security Operatives etc.	Nil	Fund for Peace
6	All progressive Congress	Okirika National School Field	Nigerian police force, The Nigerian Army, State Security Service, private Security Operatives etc.	Only stampede that led to the death of about 14 was recorded.	Fund for Peace
7	People's Democratic Party	Obio/Akpor LGA, Rivers State	Nigerian police force, The Nigerian Army, State Security Service, private Security Operatives etc.	4	Fund for Peace

8	All progressive Congress	Adokiye Amasiemaka stadium, port Harcourt	Nigerian police force, The Nigerian Army, State Security Service, private Security Operatives etc.	No death was recorded.	Fund for Peace
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Source: www.Fundforpeace.org

Furthermore, other incidences of murder and political assassination that were encountered in the campaign seasons that are connected to clashes of party loyalists of PDP and APC were also recorded and reflected in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Off-Campaign Ground Murders and Assassinations by the Law Enforcement Agents/Uniform Gunmen

S/ N	Location and Nature of the Occurrence	Party Assumed to have Masterminded the Attack	Date/year of occurrence
1.	A man killed by abductors assumed to be police officers	APC	2014
2.	Uniform gunmen assumed to be police officers open fire on pro-Amaechi rally.	PDP	2014
3.	3 killed in a party loyalist clash involving some members of the Nigerian Police Force.	Nil	2014
4.	Suspected police officer shot a senator of South-East Rivers constituency in a rally at Abikpo, which led to a protest in the area.	PDP	2014
5.	APC chairman assassinated in Etche LGA Rivers State.	PDP	2018
6.	Police kills 4 suspects in Oyigbo LGA	Nil	2018
7.	Former House member shot dead in Obio/Akpor LGA. The name of the victim remains undisclosed.	PDP	February 11, 2016
8.	2 political supporters burnt in Asari Toru LGA	Nil	February 2016

9.	Uniform gunmen attack Okirika rally. Number of death recorded was not stated. A police man was also killed in the same rally.	APC	2018
10.	Emma Okah who was suspected to be an APC supporter on police uniform fired PDP members, injured 6 and killed 1.	APC	2018

Source: www.Fundforpeace.org/up-content/updates/2018/08/conflict_bulletin-rivers-1805-pdf

- **Hate Speech, Campaign of calumny and Harassment by the Law enforcements Agents**

Irrespective of the fact that research has considered how poor governance, exclusionary politics and electoral malpractice affect election violence, the effect of hate speech on election violence is one that its effect has not been really studied in a bid to discovering the underlying effect on not just the economy but also its impact on the populace . Hate speech in politics is one that is inevitable and unavoidable as opponents who jostle for the acquisition and consolidation of state power exploit such means to outwit the other through the impressionistic building in the hearts of the citizens why the opponent is not fit for the position he claims to be competent to handle. History has always been the judge of the result of hate speech in every political system. Just like a typical market place environment where vendors use any means possible including the ill-presentation of the products of another to that end that his products are purchased, used, and loved by all.

Mainstream media reporting of politics entails narratives of the communicative activities of political actors, an essential component of which is speech. Speech is an innate mode of expression, the free exercise of which is constitutionally guaranteed in a democracy. An extension of the right to free speech is press freedom. Given that there is no absolute freedom in any society, there are legal boundaries set for the exercise of the right to free speech and press freedom. One of such boundaries is hate speech, which infringes on individual or group rights and is inimical to political stability. Reporting of hate speech in politics by mainstream news media is a publication of such expressions, the harmful implications of which could be far-reaching on the victims and the society

Hate Speech in Rivers State has been between the two giant political parties in Rivers State, the People's Democratic Party and the All Progressive Congress. These two parties have for long contested and competed for relevance and also to control the seat of power of the state. The faceoff between governor Nyesom Wike and Minister Rotimi Amaechi is one that some adjudged to be of

questionable stance seeing that Amaechi handed over to Wike and before now, the two have been friends. Hate speech making between the two got to its heights, to the extent that the both openly challenged and used venomous and derogatory names on each other. Rotimi Amaechi, the Minister of Transportation, was reported to have stated that he and the State's chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) were ready for the battle in the coming presidential and gubernatorial election in Rivers State and are willing to give it to him (Wike) whichever way he wants it. Irrespective of the campaigns against hate speech, the inciting statements by the two big shots continued to jeopardize the political sanctity and atmosphere of the state and beyond.

The use of Hate Speech by the two to tarnish and demean their reputation has not just been taking place in hidden places and meetings, but has overtaken the news headlines. Incidences of accusation of money laundering, poor maintenance of government structures and facilities, the inappropriate disposition of the governor on urgent matters of the State, the formation, use and control of unknown uniform gunmen has been the obvious in the news headlines. The question at the heart of Nigerians today is what could really be the underlying bases for the faceoff. **Table 3** below succinctly delineates the occasions of hate speech between the two big shots in Rivers State.

Table 3: Instances of Use of Hate Speech between Amaechi and Wike

SN	Personality involved	Personality attacked	Occasion of attack	Hate Speech Description	Source
1.	Rotimi Amaechi	Wike and supporters	It was the seventh anniversary of Governor Rotimi Amaechi's extraordinary inauguration as governor of Rivers State	Accused Wike and supporters on their attempt to bribe their way into government of Rivers state.	Premium Times, October 28, 2014
2.	Nyesom Wike	Amaechi and supporters	Addressing the protesters, deputy national secretary of the All Progressives Congress, APC, Oji Ngofa.	Accused Wike of bringing guns to Ogoni.	Vanguard. March 3, 2016.
3.	Nyesom Wike	Amaechi and his convoy	In a news report when the governor was on transit to an official assignment.	Accused Wike of attempting to kill him by sending	Premium Times.

				members of the SARs after him.	November 11, 2017.
4.	Nyesom Wike	APC	In a press conference.	Accused APC of preventing the prosecution of Amaechi on account of the misappropriation of funds from the sale of the state assets.	Punch. 11 March 2021
5.	Nyesom Wike	APC led government	In his address to the Laity of Anglican communion	Accused the FG of not aligning in the agreed punishment to people implicated in hate speeches in Rivers state.	Today news. September 21, 2017
6.	Nyesom Wike	APC leaders who defected to PDP	During the inauguration of the reconstructed Rumuigbo	Accused those defectors of lack of credibility and trust.	Premium Times. 11th March, 2021
7.	Amaechi	Goodluck and his government	At the mega rally at Adokie Amiesimaka Stadium in Ikwerre Local Government Area of the state	Accused Jonathan of failure to execute any project in the state.	Punch Oct 26, 2014
8.	Amaechi	Nyesom Wike	During the funeral for eminent jurist, Adolphus Karibi-Whyte at Abonnema	Accused Wike of bad performance and politicization of developmental projects while he was the Governor.	Vanguard. 2019.
9.	Amaechi	Wike	In a meeting with British diplomats at his residence in Port Harcourt	Called him a killer and all others sort of names.	Premium Times. March 8, 2019

10.	Wike	Amaechi	During the commissioning of the Kpopie-Bodo Road in Gokana Local Government Area	Wike accused Amaechi of creating gang groups in the state	Premium times. May 22, 2017.
11.	Wike	Amaechi	While addressing the press on Don Waney's killing.	He responded to the people of Rivers about the former accusation for the death of Don Waney.	Premium Times. January 9, 2018
12.	Amaechi	Wike	While earring his views on the Omoku killings	Accused Wike of the Omoku killings	Naija News. January 9, 2018.

Source: Compiled by the researchers(2022)

Sequel to the above, there have are instances where politicians were targeted by their former benefactors, their political rivals and armed groups operating within their constituencies. The diversity of threats that politicians in Rivers State in particular and Nigeria in general face reflects the coalescence of business interests, the influence of secret societies, god-fatherism and criminality in the country's politics. Indeed, targeted killings in Rivers State directed against politicians, political representatives of party affiliates have been interesting as it points to the longevity of one of the dominant political parties in Rivers State. The People's Democratic Party has been the lead in Rivers State, only to face another competitor in the name of All Progressive Congress. This alone has been a major issue resulting to political assassination in Rivers State. There also have been instances of Party switching in Rivers State, which accounts for also high level of political assassination in the state. Political affiliations in the state are very fluid and have also resulted in occasional rancor that subsequently threw up rivalry and all of its attendant consequences, including political assassinations.

Political assassinations in Rivers State shades light on the dynamics of the electoral violence between the two parties and targeted at the elites as well as their henchmen. Since the transition to a democratic government in Nigeria, politics in Rivers State has been bedeviled by election

violence, irregularities, gang attacks, political intimidation and a stay in voting. Consequent upon the political assassination that has occurred in the state, Human Rights Watch recommended an independent inquiry to look into the matters resulting from political assassination as well as the linkages that connect to politicians like the funding and financing of criminal gangs, the relationship between uniform armed men that are used to carry out this nefarious crimes in the state and the politicians in the state as well. However, the implementation of this recommendation has over the years failed due to corruption, gross misconduct and incompetence of the administration.

According to the report by the Human Rights Watch (2021), there was a drastic increase on the number of political assassination in Rivers State in 2015, especially before the election of that year. Compared to the last elections held in the state, the All Progressives Congress employed all strategy to emerge the prominent and winner, changing the political landscape in Rivers State but was met with stiff resistance by the people. Overtime, the opposition party has exploited any available means possible to make sure that the position of dominance is acquired but to no avail. Thus, the epicenter of political assassinations in Rivers State is traceable to the quest for acquisition of dominance by the opposition party. The Rivers case suggests that the introduction of uncertainty or political competition may lead to an increase in targeted killings. All these are not unconnected to the prevalence of hate speech in Rivers State between the two big shots, among others. **Table 4** below highlights some of the instances of political assassinations by suspected Law Enforcement Agents loyal to political parties/politicians in Rivers State.

Table 4: Political Assassinations in Rivers State arising from Harassment by suspected Uniform Men (Law Enforcement Agents)

S/ N	Victim (s)	Occasion of Assassination	Security Operative involved	Political Party suspected	Source
	Chief Mowan Etete, soldier and 5 others	In the violence that trailed the Presidential and National Assembly elections in Rivers State	Uniform gunmen	PDP	This Day News. 2019/02/23

	Mr. Ignatius	Shot dead at Ajakaja, also in Andoni by suspected thugs	Uniform gunmen	PDP	This Day News. 2019/02/23
	Not recorded	Before the commencement of accreditation and voting in Asari-Toru, Akuku-Toru and Degema Local Government Areas of the state	Uniform gunmen	PDP	This Day News. 2019/02/23
	Mr. Christopher	At the commission's inaugural sitting on May 4	Uniform gunmen	Unknown	Premium Times May 22, 2015.
	Mr. Adube and his three sons were shot to death.	At his residence	Uniform gunmen	PDP	Premium Times May 22, 2015.
	A PDP chieftain	Gokana	Uniform gunmen	APC	Fund for Peace, 2014.
	APC chieftain	Abua/Odual	unidentified gunmen	PDP	Fund for Peace, 2015.
	Former State House of Assembly member	Obio/Akpor. February 11, 2016,	Uniform gunmen	Nil	Fund for Peace, 2014.
	Party ward chairman with the family.	Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni	Unknown gunmen	Nil	Fund for peace, 2018.
	a political party supporter	Asari Toru LGA	Unknown gunmen	Nil	Fund for Peace, 2018.

	PDP party members	Akuku-Toru LGA	Uniform gunmen	APC	Fund for Peace, 2015.
	PDP party members	Two chieftains of the PDP Were killed outside their homes.	Uniform gunmen	APC	Fund for peace, 2015.
	Former PDP chairman	Chief Godspower Ake.	Uniform gunmen	APC	Fund for peace, 2013.

Source: Compiled by the Researchers(2022)

Conclusion and Recommendations

The nature and character of post-colonial political campaigns on human rights has been implicated in the myriads abuses of the fundamental rights of innocent and unsuspecting masses of the society. The quest to ascertain and also proffer solutions to the problem of Human Rights Abuses in Rivers States as it is witnessed during election campaigns and election periods motivated this scholarly venture. The curiosity for embarking on the study was further evoked and sustained by the nature of politics played during election and campaign seasons, especially the use and deployment of the Law Enforcement Agents as well as the military to campaign grounds and gatherings. These forces deployed at strategic places around election campaign grounds are highly guarded and armed, which makes them highly susceptible and exposed to use those arms against stubborn and innocent citizens of the state. As a matter of fact, the Law Enforcement Agents have been implicated in the perpetration of Human Rights Abuses ranging from extrajudicial killings, unlawful arrest and detentions, torture and murder. Arising from the study, the paper therefore recommends as follows:

- An institutional and corporate check on the excesses of Law Enforcement Agencies in Rivers State in a bid to minimize the rate at which Human Rights Violations are committed in Rivers State. Officers who are implicated in such act as well as politicians whose political interest they serve should be severely and adequately punished according to the extant laws of the State.
- A corporate action by the state government to form a taskforce saddled with the responsibility to monitor, check and prevent issues of political assassination, kidnapping,

and disappearance resulting from Hate Speeches during Electoral Campaigns. Again, actions on the passage of an improved version of the Hate Speeches Prohibition Bill should be expedited. Its passage will go a long way in deterring people from resorting to hate speeches and by so doing discourage reprisal violence that it tends to attract.

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