

Taraba State Elections Scenarios and Recommendations

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Disclaimer: The following analysis is based on discussions with State-level actors and so reflects their perceptions, not the view of the Peace and Security Working Group. These scenarios were produced prior to the 2014 primary elections and are thus subject to change. Where relevant, updates have been made to reflect evolving dynamics.

Taraba At-a-Glance

Current Governor	Alhaji Garba Umar
Current Ruling Party	Peoples Democratic Party
Key February 2015 Elections	Presidential, Gubernatorial, National Assembly elections, and State House of Assembly
Prognosis	Taraba State is identified as a high level risk state (Red Category) in CLEEN's latest report.



Figure 1: CLEEN Map of Hot Spots for Election Violence

Taraba Violence Data

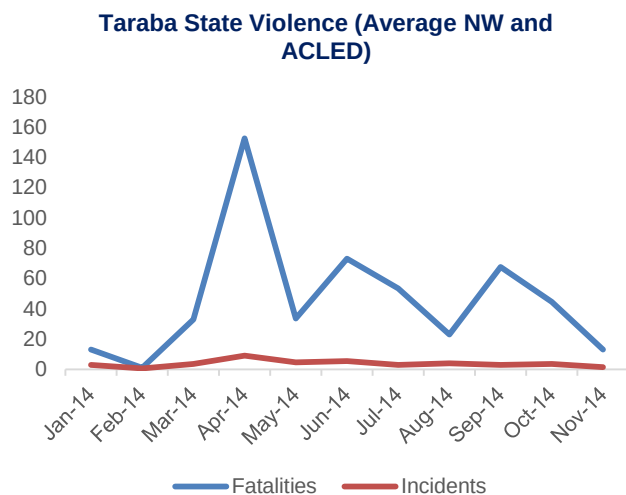


Figure 2: Peace Map (www.p4p-nigerdelta.org)

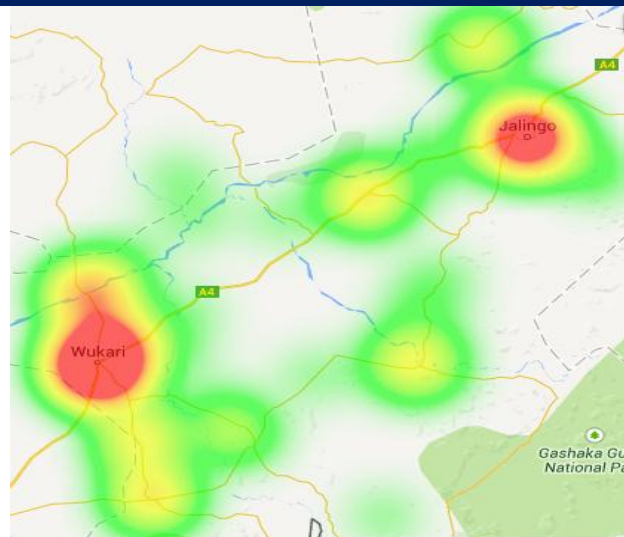


Figure 3: Violence Heat Map Jan 2009-Dec 2014



Taraba State has three (3) senatorial districts:

- Taraba North: (Jalingo, Yorro, Zing, Lau, Ardo- Kola, Krim- Lamido)
- Taraba Central: (Sardauna, Kurmi, Bali, Gashaka, Gassol)
- Taraba South: (Wukari, Ibi, Donga, Ussa, Takum)

Political Developments in Taraba

Taraba State was created on 27th August, 1991, along with eight other states by the Federal Military government of the Babangida administration. The state creation exercise was the result of a continuing process of spatio-political devolution, which started in 1963, to make Nigeria a politically stable and economically strong country.

Taraba State, with its numerous small ethnic groups and remote location, was a particularly neglected and grossly underdeveloped part of the former Gongola State. Because of its rugged topography, lack of access roads from other parts of the country, and indeed, the neglect it suffered from past administrations, the state still remains largely peripheral to the nation's economic and political life.

To achieve the objectives of spatio-political devolution, Taraba state was divided into twelve local governments at the time of creation. It currently has sixteen (16) local government areas. Taraba State is consists of numerous ethnic groups, predominantly Jukun, Tiv and Kutem.

Since its creation, Taraba State has been ruled by both the Military regime and Civilians. Adeyemi Afolahen ruled from August 1991 – January 1992, Jolly Nyame from January 1992 – November 1993, Yohanna Dickson December 1993- August 1996, Amen Edore Oyakhire August 1996 – August 1998, Aina Owoniyi August 1998 - May 1999, Jolly Nyame May 1999 – May 2007, Danbaba Danfulani Suntai May 2007. Religiously, Taraba State consists of both Christians and Muslims with Christians as the predominant group.

Elections in 2011

- Governor Danbaba Suntai (PDP) had Senator Danlami Ikenya (ACN) to contend with. There were other nine candidates in the race, but going by the results of the National Assembly and Presidential elections in the State, the incumbent was sure of retaining his seat, which he eventually did.
- In Taraba State, many people were shot dead by the police during a protest at Mutum-Biyu, headquarters of Gassol Local Government Council.



- Also in Ardo-kola Local Government Area of Taraba State, four cars were burnt following the alleged attempt by one of the political parties to tamper with the results of the presidential elections. Those who lost their lives were the youth that took to the streets in the town over the alleged manipulation of the presidential election results.
- The Secretariat of the PDP in Gassol Local Government area was not left out as the entire building was burnt down by protesters. Following the protest, tension escalated in the State Capital paralysing both economic and financial activities.
- Women and girls: They were particularly vulnerable to sexual violence during elections including some cases of security agents deployed to keep the peace raping women.
- Some traditional rulers left their areas for fear of attack when violence happened.
- Security needs of people with disabilities not addressed at all and no special provision for them to fit into the electoral process.

Factors causing election violence:

- Christian-Muslim religious differences
- Inter-ethnic differences (Tiv -Jukun Crises)
- Intra and inter-political party differences between PDP and APC

Response:

- Deployment of security agents to restore peace
 - Mass arrest of people around area of violence and suspected perpetrators
 - Relief materials by NEMA
 - Civil society provided relief materials and have been doing peace building work, including on inter-religious harmony and co-existence
- To some extent, response mitigated elongation and escalation of violence in affected communities

Developments 2011-2014

- Following the 2011 polls, the Governor of the State, Danbaba Suntai was re-elected and resumed office with Garba Umar (Acting Governor) as his deputy.
- Both in PDP, though from different religious backgrounds Danbaba (Christian) and Umar (Muslim) they experienced a good working relationship with each other.



- Unfortunately, in 2012 Danbaba was involved in a plane crash which has left him medically incapacitated. Following the incidence, his deputy was made the Acting Governor of the State.
- Danbaba' health issue has been taken to court, in the quest to investigate his present condition, if he is fit to continue as Governor or be impeached. The court seating in Jalingo had its first ruling in favour of Suntai, the court stopped the medical panel from probing his health Status.
- In October 2014, Fulani herdsmen attacked Sondi Village in Wukari, killing about twenty (25) persons.
- Four legislators of the State House of Assembly defected from APC to PDP (Ibrahim Imam, Mohammed Abdulkarim, Yahaya Abdulhaman and Aminu Jalingo).
- On November 21, 2014 the Supreme Court sacked the acting Governor, Garba Umar and ordered the immediate reinstatement of the former deputy Governor, Alhaji Sani Danladi, who was impeached by the State House of Assembly in October, 2012.
- Senator representing the North Senatorial District, Senator Aisha Alhassan is the APC Gubernatorial candidate. On the other hand, recent reports indicate that top PDP leaders in the state are lobbied for the party gubernatorial candidate to come from the South zone. The North have held power for 10 years. The choice of a candidate from the South is to support PDP's aspiration to continue to govern the state. However, this could also mean its downfall because compared to Aisha Alhassan, APC gubernatorial candidate for the state, Ishaku is not popular in the state.
- Darius Ishiaku (former Minister of State for Niger Delta) might emerge as PDP candidate because Umar did not have the support of many PDP powerbrokers in the state. Also, Taraba has been governed by a Christian government since its creation. Ishaku, being a Christian, may also benefit from this precedence.
- There are also reports that the move by Danladi (who led the delegate to the party head office in Abuja) to lobby for zoning is a calculated plan to sabotage PDP in Taraba and deliver the state to APC. Danladi, Aisha and Atiku have been seen in close relations especially prior to him being re-instated as the Governor. It is believed that Aisha who was the State Attorney General and Commissioner of Justice, pulled some strings to see that Danladi won his impeachment case in the Supreme Court.



Major Political Players in Taraba State

Name	Position	Elected / Appointed	Party	Additional Information
Danbaba Suntai	State Governor	2011	PDP	-
Garba Umar	Deputy Governor	2012	PDP	Umar joined the gubernatorial race on the platform of the PDP for the 2015 general election. Umar has fulfilled the position of acting Governor of Taraba since Nov 2012 when he took over for Governor Suntai following a plane crash. Umar has since been in charge of the affairs of the state, even as the governor recuperates.
Emmanuel Bwacha	Senator	2011	PDP	-
Abubakar Umar Tutare	Senator	2011	PDP	-
Aisha Jummai Alhassan	Senator	2011	APC	-

Key Issues

- Where should Governor come from?
- Huge contest between major political parties.
- Internal tensions within political parties
- History of inter-communal (religious, ethnic,) tension and violence
- Failure of government and security agencies to curb communal violence and attacks.
- Inter-ethnic clashes (Tiv-Jukun)
- Inter- religious Crises (Christian - Muslim)

Drivers of Conflict

- Desperation to win at all cost so actions to rig elections in area where cannot win
- Conflation of religion, ethnic and geographical (zones) identities; political contentions combined with identity based historical grievances
- Abuse of power by key government officials and some affluent politicians in the conduct of election.



- Imposition of candidates by parties
- Zoning issues

Possible Types of Violence

Pre-Elections

- Logistical challenges in distribution of electoral materials to polling units on time. Often, sensitive and non-sensitive material not delivered on time or at all in some polling units, triggering protest.
- Disruption of registration efforts
- Hijacking of materials
- Disruption/clashes at campaign rallies
- Political thuggery
- Sexual violence
- Sectarian violence
- Intimidation
- Assassinations or abductions of women and/or men candidates and family members

During elections

- Ballot box snatching and voter intimidation
- Police used in intimidating opposition
- Sexual violence

Post-elections

- Triggered by inflation of figures and related rigging of election activities or declaration of results in areas where elections were not held.
- Political violence degenerating to sectarian violence is of a high probability if it happens.
- Religious variables may take lead in determining pattern of attack across three geo-political zones.

To consider



- Security forces should increase their monitoring and surveillance of all interested parties in the State;
- The activities of the State House of Assembly should be closely monitored too because of the trend of impeachment processes;
- Security forces should take due care to ensure that they do not provoke local population through overzealous acts of some of its officers.
- Inter- ethnic and Inter-religious crises should be addressed

Elections in 2015: Scenario 1

Before Elections

- The PDP top politicians are likely to do their best to ensure that Ishaku wins the election as there are speculations that the governor is supposed to come from the south Senatorial district
- If the PDP candidate (Ishaku) emerges winner there will be inter-religious clashes between Christians and Muslims. It will also bring to the forefront sensitive issues such as religion and ethnicity. For example, many people strongly feel the next governor should be a Christian from the minority
- If Ishaku emerges as winner, the PDP are likely to have an upper hand in the State House of Assembly

During Elections

- Reluctance in the voting process by the voters due to choice of candidate
- Snatching of ballot boxes
- Hoarding of electoral materials
- Voter intimidation
- Vote rigging
- Accreditation issues
- Fear of going out to vote due to security challenges

After Elections

- If the PDP candidate emerges as winner, they are likely to be the majority in the State House of Assembly
- The APC is likely to lose relevance in the state as most political appointments will be given to PDP supporters



- There is likely to be serious post- election crises especially due to intra and inter-party differences, intra and inter-ethnic differences and religious crises
- Increased tension and heightened security presence in the state
- APC candidates that will lose elections will go to court.

Elections in 2015: Scenario 2

Before Elections

- The APC candidate (Senator Aisha) stands a better chance to emerge as the winner compared to her opponent because of her popularity in the state
- The top APC politicians in the state will do their best to support Senator Aisha so that the APC will become the ruling party
- If APC candidate (Senator Aisha) emerges as the winner, there is likely to be inter-party clashes between the APC and the PDP
- If APC candidate emerges as the winner, APC members are more likely to be the majority in the State House of Assembly

During Elections

- Reluctance in the voting process by the voters due to the choice of candidate
- Snatching of ballot boxes
- Hoarding of electoral materials
- Voter intimidation
- Vote rigging
- Accreditation issues
- Fear of going out to vote due to security challenges

After Elections

- Most political appointments will be given to APC supporters and the party will gain popularity in the state
- There is likely to be serious post-election clashes especially due to inter-party differences, inter-ethnic differences, and religious clashes as it is strongly believed that the governor is supposed to be a Christian from the minority.

TARABA STATE
ELECTION VIOLENCE SCENARIO



- Increased tension and heightened security presence in the state
- PDP candidates will go to court.