

Turkey's violence in the Kurdish region

The Turkish state recently declared curfew in Kurdish regions which are Cizre, Silopi and in Nusaybin. 52 curfews have been imposed since mid-August across this region. Even though Tens of Kurdish citizens have been killed, the Turkish media chooses to remain silent about the government terror. Why are the Turkish people closing their eyes when it comes to Kurdish people's basic human rights that are being abused, while Kurdish civilians are being killed by the Turkish state?

Is Nigeria Tearing Itself Apart

After years of Military rule, Nigeria clawed back her path to democratic governance in 1999 and for the first time in her history, there have been three successive democratic transitions without Military intervention. Though marred by electoral irregularities, political assassination and post election violence, the Nigerian democratic model is seen as that which is growing from the nascent stage of teething pains to the part of maturity.

Based on the American Presidential system of government, the Nigerian government is tailored to the Federal System of government with a two term limit of four years each for the executive arm, and an unlimited four year term for the legislative arm. With a skewed Federal system concentrating central power on the executive, the elections for executive posts (Presidential and gubernatorial) are seen as a 'do or die' affair. The matter is not helped with the juicy pecuniary emolument attached to political posts coupled with the power to issue contracts which is usually a drain pipe to loot public funds; politics is seen as a worthy full time career/business venture.

Another divisive factor used as a political tool is religion and ethnicity.

To the North of the Niger/Benue Rivers, the population is predominantly Muslim and unified by the Hausa language; though still ethnically diverse, the influence of the defunct Sokoto Caliphate which ruled the area during pre-colonial times is still felt and that accounts for the unifying language and religion. Nevertheless, there are pockets of highland areas untouched by the Jihad thus having different ethno-religious mix up. Such areas like Jos, Southern Kaduna being religious/cultural islands (mostly Christianity) differing from their predominantly Muslim Hausa/Fulani neighbours.

South of the Niger-Benue trough to the West, the population is predominantly Yoruba and their religious leaning is a near equal balance of Christianity and Islam albeit mixed with a deep affinity for cultural and indigenous belief/bond. To the East of the Niger River, the population is predominantly of the Igbo ethnic stock and the Niger Delta is awash with an agglomeration of several ethnic leanings, though the Ijaw ethnic group is dominant. Christianity is the dominant religion in this part of the country.

Such is the diverse polarity of Nigeria's ethno-religious mix, making the ethnic/religious leaning of any political aspirant a first point of question. As such, major political parties in Nigeria are cognizant of this so if for example a political aspirant is Christian, his/her running mate must be Muslim. If He/she is from the South, the running mate must be from the North. This principle is referred to as zoning and though it is the constitutional agreement of the ruling PDP (People's Democratic Party), such norm is widely accepted in the national political consciousness as politically correct.

This has enhanced the deep mistrust along tribal and religious lines especially betwixt the North and South. The North is seen to be politically dominant having produced 8 of Nigeria's 12 rulers since independence who have spent a combined 30yrs of 54yrs of independence in power.

Agglomerated by British colonial rule, the fault lines in Nigeria's political make up was evident during the pogrom of the Igbo's in the North after the first coup d'etat in 1966 which led to a 30month civil war. Ever since, there has been no stop to bloodletting in pockets of sporadic ethnoreligious

violence in Northern cities of Kano, Kaduna, Bauchi etc each time targeting Christians and Southerners (either Christian or Muslim). It is however sad to note that after such riots, no master minder/perpetrator is brought to book. This has fuelled suspicion and mistrust conjuring insinuations that the government (at those times controlled by Northerners) were behind the violence.

With the advent of democracy in 1999, power shifted to the south as Ex-Military ruler, Gen. Obasanjo won the presidential elections. His advent to power was seen as power balance after 20 contiguous years of Military rule albeit by Northerners. He went on to rule for two terms and made attempts to push for a third term which was thwarted. The North/South ethno religious mistrust continued to fester during his rule as some governors of Northern states sued for sharia law in their domain. With the Presidency powerless to stop the trend, the entrenched mistrust cascaded into riots in Northern Christian enclaves of Jos and its environs.

Aside, ethno-religious violence, Nigeria's peace has been taunted by the rise of militancy. This is a resultant of politicians arming thugs to intimidate their opponents and then abandoning or refusing to mop up arms given to these thugs after elections. These actions fuelled the ferocity and menace of the Niger Delta militants in the Niger Delta and Boko Haram in the North East.

The Niger Delta after a long agitation for resource control has produced the Country's current president in Dr. Goodluck Jonathan and, this has helped to quell the activities of the Militants. However, with elections around the corner and the president intending to run for a second term, there have been associated exacerbated fears in the National polity viz:

1. A prominent Niger Delta militant leader, Asari Dokubo have issued a threat that the President either wins the election or not return home as the President must exhaust all available term limit.
2. There are fears that elections may not hold in some parts of the North East where Boko Haram's activities are ferocious thus granting illegitimacy to any planned elections.

3. Security fears have made elections to be postponed from February 14th to March 28 with the intention that the army would have recaptured territories occupied by Boko Haram.
4. There are innate fears that the elections might not even hold at all with the premise that: If the army could not contain Boko Haram in the last 6 years, how would they in 6 weeks? This might cause a constitutional crisis if the transition programme is thwarted.
5. The outburst of Militants and opposition leaders threatening war or forming a parallel government casts a shadow of impending violence on the Nation.

Ultimately, the fear is this: If President Jonathan loses at the polls, the Niger Delta militants might begin violence which entails bursting oil pipelines, kidnapping of oil workers all of which will shut down oil production which is the main stay of the economy.

A win for President Jonathan might ignite post election violence in the North and with a delicate security balance unlike 2011; the security forces might have their hands full in that regard.

Every Nigerian knows what the permutations are and in the end the resilient spirit will wear on, but some lives will be lost and life will go on till another political transition period when the same cycle will be repeated.