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ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA: BUHARI'S VICTORY AND ITS CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

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ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA: BUHARI'S VICTORY AND ITS CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Abstract:

Following the presidential elections held on 28 and 29 March in Nigeria, the democratic victory of Muslim Muhammadu Buhari is encouraging news, and has meant the first peaceful alternation of power in the African largest economic and demographic power. At the moment, despite many detractors, there is a palpable optimism in the country. "Our nation faces many challenges: insecurity, corruption of elect president, economic decline", said the elect president on his first speech after the elections. "I promise to do my best to address these problems". After May 29, when the official relay takes place, Buhari will have to show that, besides his intention, he is capable to make his promises come true. So far, more than 12 million Nigerians trust Buhari, but it would be very detrimental that Nigeria had to wait too long to see such words put into practice.

Resumen:

Tras las elecciones presidenciales celebradas el 28 y 29 de marzo en Nigeria, el triunfo democrático del musulmán Muhammadu Buhari es una noticia esperanzadora, porque, ha supuesto la primera alternancia pacífica en el poder en la primera potencia económica y demográfica de África. Por el momento, y a pesar de que el presidente electo cuenta con millones de detractores, existe un palpable optimismo en el país. «Nuestra nación se enfrenta a muchos desafíos: la inseguridad, la corrupción, el deterioro económico –declaró el presidente electo en su primer discurso tras los comicios–. Me comprometo a dar mi mejor esfuerzo para hacer frente a estos problemas». A partir del 29 de mayo, cuando se produzca el relevo oficial, tendrá que demostrar que, además de esta intención, también tiene la capacidad para hacerla realidad. Por el momento, más de 12 millones de nigerianos han confiado en que podrá cambiar muchas cosas, pero sería muy perjudicial que toda Nigeria tuviese que esperar demasiado tiempo para comprobar que se trata de algo más que palabras.

Keywords:

Nigeria, Jonathan, Buhari, presidential elections, Boko Haram, social, economic and security crises, challenges.

Palabras clave:

Nigeria, Jonathan, Buhari, elecciones presidenciales, Boko Haram, crisis económica y de seguridad, desafíos.

«Africa is the continent with the most potential, the least development and the greatest underused human talent and neglected potential. Nigeria is the big one: The gateway to Africa's future».

Richard Dowden, Executive Director Royal African Society¹.

INTRODUCTION: HISTORICAL ELECTIONS

On March 28 and 29, Nigeria held democratic elections. Muslim Muhammadu Buhari, head of All Progressives Congress², was elected president of the first African power. Such event had a great impact both inside and outside the country, since it is taking place in one of the most tumultuous periods since the establishment of democracy in 1999. Fortunately, polling days proceeded without violence mostly in all 36 Nigerian states, except for the northwestern region, where Boko Haram killed at least 41 people and scared hundreds of voters from polling stations³. Nevertheless, and spite of its despicable effort, Boko Haram did not succeed in boycotting the electoral process, thanks to the strong presence of military forces, and the Nigerians' strong determination to be heard in such significant polls for their country.

However, almost 30 million Nigerians went to the polls during these two days —15.4 million voted for Buhari, while 12.9 million chose to reelect Christian President Goodluck Jonathan, leader of People's Democratic Party. As forecasts predicted, electoral results have been very narrow and have left many positive lessons for history, as well as a tangible optimism among Nigerians and a few reasons to believe that Buhari will work on the country's stability. Stability in Nigeria is necessary for the region and the whole African continent. In Buhari's words, "we have shown the world that we are people who have embraced democracy, who are seeking for a Government for the people, by the people and of the people." Such process could become an example for other African nations.

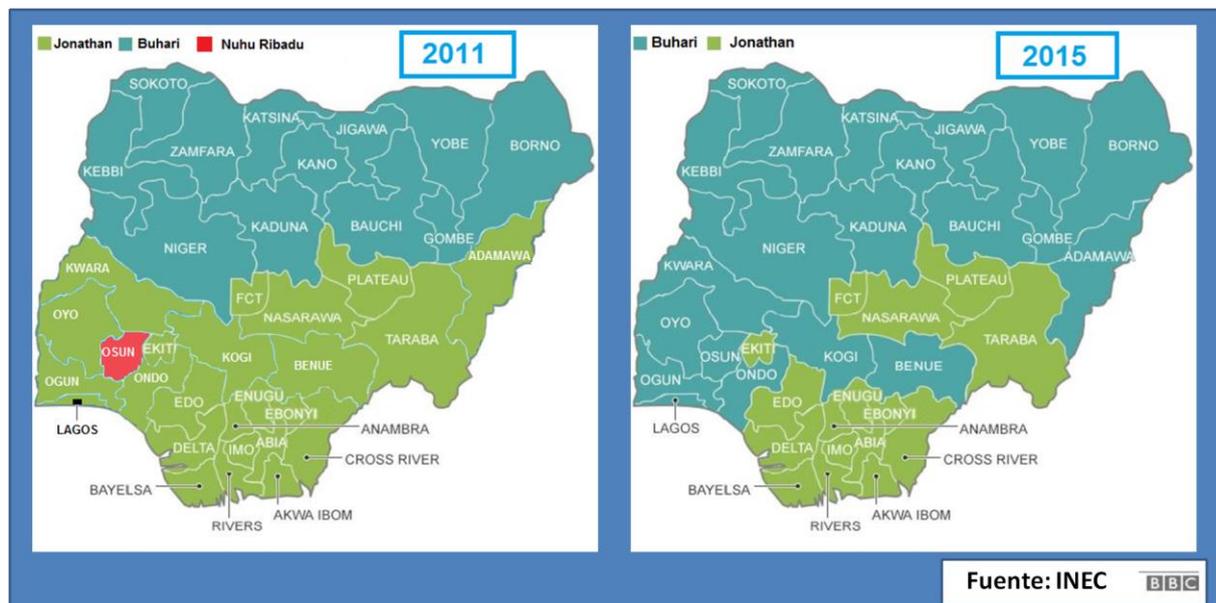
During the electoral campaign, and especially after the elections were postponed due to Boko Haram's attacks, insecurity has flown across such a relevant political process. Nevertheless, elections have been free, fair and pacific, as Jonathan risked promising, and results have democratically changed power in Nigeria for the first time. To a large extent, both candidates' attitude towards the results has been decisive for preventing violence among voters, unlike what happened in the 2011 elections. Back then, conflicts in several northern regions in Nigeria resulted in over 800 casualties. Jonathan's forcefulness after his

¹ Dowden, R. Why Nigeria's election really matters. African Arguments, 27/03/15. Available in <http://africanarguments.org/2015/03/27/why-nigerias-election-really-matters-by-richard-dowden/>. Consulted in: 03/04/15.

² All Progressives Congress (APC) was founded in February 2013, as a result of the política alliance between the three largest opposition parties: Action Congress of Nigeria, Congress for Progressive Change and All Nigeria People's Party, as well as a faction of Progressive Peoples Alliance.

³ Boko Haram attempts to sow chaos amid Nigeria elections. CBS News, 29/03/15. Available in <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/boko-haram-attempts-to-sow-chaos-amid-nigeria-elections/>. Consulted in: 07/04/15

defeat —“nobody’s ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian”⁴, and Buhari’s peaceful spirit as the winner —“I extend a hand of friendship and conciliation to President Jonathan” — calmed the first confrontations among their supporters and sealed an electoral process that must remain in the collective memory of Nigerians.



Electoral results: controlling parties by state

At ground level, all international observers, such as the United Nations, the African Union or the European Union, among other countries and organizations, supported these presidential elections for their transparency. Internationally, world leaders congratulated Nigerian politicians, mainly because of their democratic spirit. The Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon emphasized that “the successful conduct of these polls is a testament to the maturity of Nigeria's democracy”⁵; President Obama extended his congratulations to “the people of Nigeria and to President-Elect Buhari and look forward to continuing to work with the newly-elected government on our many shared priorities”⁶; and, finally, High

⁴ President Jonathan official speech after 2015 elections «Jonathan thanks Nigerians, asks PDP members not to despair», Premium Times, 01/04/15. Available in <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/180417-jonathan-thanks-nigerians-asks-pdp-members-not-to-despair.html>. Consulted in: 04/04/15.

⁵ In phone call, UN chief congratulates Nigeria’s President-elect Buhari. UN News Center, 01/04/15. Available in <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50473#.VSR20JNGTLU> Consulted in: 03/04/15.

⁶ Jackson, D. Obama congratulates Nigeria on election. USA Today, 01/04/15. Available in <http://www.usatoday.com/story/theoval/2015/04/01/obama-nigeria-goodluck-jonathan-muhammadu-buhari/70761982/>. Consulted in: 03/04/15.

Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini paid tribute “to all those involved in making the election peaceful, transparent and credible (...). They have shown how a democracy can work⁷”.

ELECCIONES 2011. RESULTADOS				ELECCIONES 2015. RESULTADOS			
CANDIDATO	PARTIDO	VOTOS	%	CANDIDATO	PARTIDO	VOTOS	%
Goodluck Jonathan	People's Democratic Party	22.495.187	58,89	Muhammadu Buhari	All Progressives Congress	15,424,921	53.96
Muhammadu Buhari	Congress for Progressive Change	12.214.853	31,98	Goodluck Jonathan	People's Democratic Party	12,853,162	44.96
Nuhu Ribadu	Action Congress of Nigeria	2.079.151	5,41	Adebayo Ayeni	African Peoples Alliance	53,537	0.19
Ibrahim Shekarau	All Nigeria People's Party	917,012	2,39	Ganiyu Galadima	Allied Congress Party of Nigeria	40,311	0.14
TOTAL		38.209.978	100	TOTAL		29,432,083	100
VOTANTES REGISTRADOS / PARTICIPACIÓN		No facilitado		VOTANTES REGISTRADOS / PARTICIPACIÓN		68,833,476	42.76

Fuente: INEC

Beyond the possible interpretations of the data given above about Buhari and Jonathan, it is convenient to analyse other aspects that will surely have a further projection and influence on Nigeria's future. First, the reasons why Jonathan was not reelected when he was initially emerging as the winner will be taken into account. Second, Buhari's political past and ideology will be analyzed, as well as his proposals to solve the structural, social and security problems that Nigeria is facing. Finally, an analysis of the challenges that Buhari will be facing when he becomes President on May 29 will be considered. These are key questions to evaluate the great effort that Nigeria should make if it is to guarantee, in the long run, a more democratic, developed and safer future for its citizens. In addition to political capacity and will, regional and international cooperation will also have greater participation in the future.

⁷ Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini on the presidential elections in Nigeria. Servicio Exterior de la Unión Europea, 31/03/15. Available in http://www.eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/150331_03_en.htm. Consulted in: 02/04/15.

WHY DID PRESIDENT JONATHAN LOSE REELECTION?

A few days before elections, Buhari's triumph was considered to be impossible due to President Jonathan's strength, since polls gave the latter a large edge over the former⁸. However, elections were postponed for six weeks, according to the decision made by the Independent National Electoral Commission and due to insecurity in the northeastern regions of Nigeria⁹, which seems to have favored Buhari. The strong military pressure on Boko Haram —and support from Chad, Niger and Cameroun— did not help on Jonathan's vote-winning among the most jihadist violence-affected Muslim population. Postponement was a criticized strategy by its political opponents, who considered it as 'a setback for democracy'¹⁰. Nevertheless, Buhari's victory can be interpreted as the key to a new political scenario, as well as to structural, social and security problems that Nigeria is facing. These problems explain, more than Buhari's victory, Jonathan's defeat, which has occurred for the first time since the establishment of democracy in 1999.

Collapse of PDP political project and lack of credibility on President Jonathan

PDP has won elections in Nigeria for 16 years, yet from all reports its political project has collapsed. Proof of such defeat is the loss of over 10 million votes in these past elections. PDP has failed in regaining the confidence of its voters in the 2011 elections. Strong coalition between northern and southern political elites, which succeeded in overcoming northern detachment, was on the background of PDP's continuous victories. Yet this union is now broken: several PDP leaders, especially former President Obajasanjo, have criticized Goodluck Jonathan openly since he announced to be running for reelection¹¹.

An even more important fact is that, in only four years, millions of Nigerians have been persuaded that President Jonathan was not the charismatic and strong leader that they country needed. None of his limited achievements —outstandingly maintaining economic growth and making the country the first African power— has overlooked his low sense of responsibility, his limited broadmindedness or his lack of courage. Jonathan's reputation was famous with the Nigerian population, political allies included¹². It also seems that his

⁸ *Presidential Election: Survey gives Jonathan 17% edge over Buhari*. Vanguard, 25/03/15. Available in <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/03/presidential-election-survey-gives-jonathan-17-edge-over-buhari/>. Consulted in: 28/03/15.

⁹ *Nigeria postpones elections due to Boko Haram's brutal violence*. El País, 08/02/15. Available in http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/02/08/actualidad/1423350556_256159.html. Consulted in: 15/03/15.

¹⁰ *Nigeria election: Vote delay 'a setback for democracy'*. BBC News, 08/02/15. Available in <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31238323>. Consulted in: 21/03/15.

¹¹ *Nigeria's Goodluck Jonathan, profile of a defeated president*. BBC News, 31/03/15. Available in <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12192152>. Consulted in: 01/04/15.

¹² *How to govern Nigeria*. Africa is a Country, 05/04/15. Available in <http://africasacountry.com/how-to-govern-nigeria/>. Consulted in: 06/04/15.

ambition to remain in power has taken its toll. Only a few understood that he was running for presidency again violating the PDP candidacy's 'unwritten norm' on alternation between a Christian from the south and a Muslim from the north. Jonathan has succeeded in prevailing Buhari's slogan of "change" over his own promises, which were no longer plausible to the majority of Nigerians.

Underdevelopment, frustration and social inequality

Nigeria is an overwhelmingly rich country, the largest oil producer in Africa. However, only a few enjoy the 5% annual economic growth or the continuous increase in per capita income (\$ 5,360). 62% of the Nigerian population still lives below the poverty line (\$ 1.25 per day). "Despite the fact that the Nigerian economy is growing, the proportion of Nigerians living in poverty is increasing every year, head of the National Bureau of Statistics bureau Yemi Kale said¹³. Moreover, unemployment rises above 7% and literacy among young people does not reach 60%. As reflected in World Bank's statistics¹⁴, alarming data shows no improvement during the last decade, as well as an increase in social upheaval, especially in the northern regions, where levels of poverty, education and health are even more tragic¹⁵.



¹³ *Nigerians living in poverty rise to nearly 61%*. BBC News, 13/02/12. Available in <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-17015873>. Consulted in: 26/03/15.

¹⁴ All data given has been taken from World Bank statistics. Available in <http://datos.bancomundial.org/pais/nigeria>. Consulted in: 28/03/15.

¹⁵ *Nigeria elections: Mapping a nation divided*. BBC, 09/02/15. Available in <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31101351> Consulted in; 26/03/15.

Corruption is another fact to take into account. Affecting the whole country, it has left an indelible trace in Nigeria's society. As analyst Ramón Moreno points out, "corruption has reached such a scale that, in February already, governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria accused Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation of pillaging oil income"¹⁶. This and many other cases had made clear to many that a few are stealing what everyone should own, while their lives are with a lack of expectations. In this context of despair, frustration and abandonment, not only Boko Haram is growing but also insurgencies in the Nile Delta or organized crime mafias who, from small villages like Beni City, develop a net of human trafficking to other countries, especially Europe.

Concealment and ineffectiveness to tackle Boko Haram's terrorism

Even though Boko Haram is not the only pole of insecurity and violence in Nigeria, it is the most cruel that the country has suffered since the end of the civil war that took place between 1967 and 1970. According to the United Nations, Boko Haram has killed over 15,000 Nigerians since 2009, and has forced almost three million people to move from the Muslim northeast. Boko Haram's violence has been constant during the electoral campaign, to the extent of becoming the main topic on the speeches of both Buhari and Jonathan, as well as the reason to postpone elections for six weeks. Nevertheless, Jonathan's tenancy during the electoral campaign seems not to have convinced northern Nigerians, who have always criticized his lack of determination on facing terrorism and threats, as well as for hiding terrorism outside and inside Nigeria. In fact, only the kidnapping of 273 girls from Chibok in April 2014, hidden from the public opinion, made Boko Haram a piece of international news, only after too many attacks, kidnappings and extorsions.

On the other hand, Nigerian military forces have shown to be inoperative against jihadist violence, to a large extent due to the lack of resources and their limited presence in the most affected areas of the country. Only in the last few weeks —and thanks to the support of Chad, Niger and Cameroun—, Boko Haram has been partially decimated in many regions that it used to control. However, it seems that news about it are late or are simply not enough to convince Nigerians: "Jonathan has lost because of his inability to stop Boko Haram insurgents, who've terrorized northern Nigeria since 2009 in their quest to establish an Islamic state"¹⁷, said Chidi Lucas, one in 200,000 Nigerian refugees in Cameroun who could not exercise their right to vote.

¹⁶ Moreno, R. Nigeria, la otra maldición del petróleo. Atalayar, 14/03/15. Available in <http://www.atalayar.com/blog/nigeria-la-otra-maldici%C3%B3n-del-petr%C3%B3leo>. Consulted in: 22/03/15.

¹⁷ Kindzeka, M. *Nigerian Refugees Pin Hopes on Buhari*. Voice of America, 03/04/15. Available in <http://www.voanews.com/content/some-nigerian-refugees-pin-hopes-on-buhari/2705337.html> Consulted in: 05/04/15.

Coalition of progressive parties and Buhari's tenacity

Buhari has been candidate of two different progressive political groups until the current elections: All Nigeria People's Party (2003 and 2007) and Congress for Progressive Change (2011). In spite of having always been the second-placed candidate, having many progressive small parties made it impossible for Buhari to win the democrat candidate. For this reason, Buhari's greatest triumph has been his capacity to pull the opposition together in All Progressives Congress (APC). Since the party was founded, this progressive platform has been raised around Buhari's honest figure. APC has been able to present itself as a unified and disciplined party but, mostly, as the key to change and fight against corruption.

Even though Buhari's possibilities at the beginning of the electoral campaign were very little, his work on convincing Nigerians with his political program has reversed polls that predicted Jonathan to be the winner. All Buhari's speeches have focused on what, on his opinion, are two main threats to Nigeria's future: insecurity and corruption. He has also shown his view on other important issues for the country. In the last APC congress before the elections, held in Abuja on March 17, Buhari announced his famous pact with the Nigerians, based on 11 points that touch areas such as corruption and governance, access to justice and respect for human rights, insurgence and security, the problem at the Nile Delta, diversity, health or education, among others.

In his speech, he said: "No matter how vast our resources, if they are not efficiently utilized, they will only benefit a privileged few, leaving the majority in poverty. I believe if Nigeria does not kill corruption; corruption will kill Nigeria." (...) I promise to "deliver a Marshal Plan on insurgency, terrorism, ethnic and religious violence, kidnapping, rural banditry and ensure that never again will Nigerian children be killed or kidnapped at will"¹⁸. Buhari's declaration of intent has convinced over 12 million Nigerians, giving him an absolute majority with what he now has to manage the country's future.

WHO IS PRESIDENT-ELECT BUHARI?

In the political field, Buhari is characterized for his patience and perseverance to become the next democratic president of Nigeria, at the head of a strong alliance, All Progressive Congress (APC), which has been essential to overthrow the 'invincible' People's Democratic Party (PDP). Buhari is a 72-year-old former general, Muslim, of Fulani ethnicity, born in Daura, in the northern state of Katsina. From the end of the military rule in 1999, Buhari had run for presidency three times (2003, 2007 and 2011). Buhari was defeated by far by three different PDP candidates in all three attempts, in spite of having been reported for electoral fraud by international observers. In 2011 it was Goodluck Jonathan who took office with a large difference of 10 million votes, which did not prevent postelection conflicts and critiques to opposition, which ended with strong fights in the northern regions and over 800 casualties.

¹⁸ Aziken, E y Umoru, H. *My contract with Nigeria – Buhari*. Vanguard, 17/03/15. Available in <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/03/my-contract-with-nigeria-buhari/> Consulted in: 21/03/15

However, Buhari's strong character, along with the clarity and forcefulness of his speech, seems to have had a positive effect on the Nigerian society, who is going through a strong economic, social and security crisis. Moreover, Buhari's past as a military dictator has taken the backstage. For a period of 20 months, between January 1984 and July 1985, Buhari was a military governor in Nigeria, as he was part of the political dynamic that run the country between 1966 and 1999, being "was no less an autocrat than Nigeria's other military rulers during this period"¹⁹. He gained power through a coup d'état, and so was overthrown, to end up in jail for 40 months.

During his rule, his greatest obsession and slogan was "War against Indiscipline", and he carried it to an extreme that made him receive several critiques from many Nigerians for violating human rights²⁰. Back then, harassment to journalists, activists and artists, or punishments for "civic misbehavior", or even sanctions of prison, were common, but also questioned outside and inside Nigeria. However, Buhari became more famous for his campaign against drug trafficking and corruption, that resulted in the arrest of over 500 entrepreneurs and public servants and made him win a strong social support.

Everything suggest that the majority of Nigerians no longer consider Buhari's former government or, at least, have preferred trusting on the new "converted democrat", as he describes himself. Such 'transformation' rise negative feelings. On his attempt to dispel any controversies, Buhari has never avoided talking about the past and acknowledging his mistakes: "I take responsibility for whatever happened under my watch", said in February, "I can't change the past, but I can change the present and the future."²¹

On the one hand, many think that Buhari's military condition, his discipline and intransigence with corruption will be essential to adjust the country's course, especially to put an end to Boko Haram. On the other hand, some see these characteristics as Buhari's main defects and fear he will go back to an unwavering government. Also, as African analyst Ayo Johnson points out, "Many Nigerians will not forget (Buhari) was a military leader during a dictatorship" (...) or maybe they will feel that they need a military leader to address fundamental problems such as terrorism."²².

¹⁹ Alfred, C. *Who Is Nigeria's Next President Muhammadu Buhari?*, The Huffington Post, 31/03/15. Available in http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/31/muhammadu-buhari-nigeria-profile_n_6976734.html Consulted in: 03/04/15.

²⁰ *Nigeria's Muhammadu Buhari in profile*. BBC News Africa, 31/03/15. Available in <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12890807>. Consulted in: 02/04/15.

²¹ *I am a converted democrat, not a dictator – Buhari*. International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR, 26/02/15). Available in <http://icirigeria.org/i-am-a-converted-democrat-not-a-dictator-buhari/>. Consulted in: 28/03/15.

²² Purefoy, C y Yan, H. *Nigeria's president-elect Muhammadu Buhari says he will fight corruption*. CNN, 01/04/15. Available in <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/01/africa/nigeria-presidential-election/>. Consulted in: 02/04/15.

In any case, it is a fact that this issue will characterize the immediate future on Buhari's rule, and only his action will justify his opposition's views. Furthermore, Nigeria has already had a military ruler becoming president democratically elected. Christian General Olusegun Obasanjo, military ruler during the 1970s, took office from 1999 to 2007. During Obasanjo's term, Buhari was Minister of Petroleum Resources and the first director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation. This made Buhari manager of the greatest wealth in Nigeria, although he was accused of stealing. As a president, Buhari will now have to drastically control and transform this essential organism for the future of Nigeria. Today, the relationship between Buhari and Obasanjo goes well, in spite of being political opponents. Obasanjo's views on Buhari on his bibliography have meant an unexpected support for the President-elect.

The electoral campaign has also being characterised by two personal marks that have become Buhari's political central axe: his fight for social equality (regardless of any ethnic, religious or regional condition) and moderate interpretation of Islam, which is opposite to Boko Haram's violence and extremism. The latter has made people from the northeastern regions consider him a real *talakawa* (in Hausa, *defendant of the poor*) and will be the key to Nigeria's social reform. Better distribution of wealth, eradication of poverty and improvement in north-south relations; where the south is mainly Christian and rich and the north is Muslim and forgotten.

Regarding his religion, and in spite of accusations on his attempt to "Islamize" the country, Buhari says to be a Muslim, Sunni, moderated and tolerant, whose only purpose is succeeding in the reconciliation of the country and preventing religion to be a reason to confrontation. Moreover, Buhari wants to remove any doubt as to its rule affecting non Muslims. In fact, Buhari counts on the support of Christian organizations, such as Northern Christian Forum, as well as the endorsement of Catholic bishops in Nigeria. According to secretary of the Maiduguri Roman Catholic Diocese John Bakeni, Buhari is seen as "a man of integrity and decency who can fight corruption and Boko Haram"²³.

Having survived a jihadist attack in 2014, Buhari has not lost any opportunity to show his repudiation towards jihadists attacks and kidnappings, as well as towards the "devilish and nonsense"²⁴ interpretation of Islam that is argued to justify Boko Haram's violence. The eradication of the group will be the main objective of Buhari's presidency: "they will soon know the strength of our collective will and commitment to rid this nation of terror and bring back peace", said Buhari a few days after his election victory²⁵.

²³ Nzwili, F. *Nigerian Christians may back a Muslim candidate in upcoming presidential elections*. Religion News Service, 24/03/15. Available in <http://www.religionnews.com/2015/03/24/nigerian-christians-may-back-muslim-candidate-upcoming-presidential-elections/> Consulted in: 05/04/15.

²⁴ *Boko Haram ideology is devilish — Buhari*. Nigerian Eye, 18/02/15. Available in <http://www.nigerianeye.com/2014/02/boko-haram-ideology-is-devilish-buhari.html>. Consulted in: 21/03/15.

²⁵ Hazlewood, P y Joris Fiorit, J. *Nigeria's Buhari told to 'win peace' against Boko Haram*. AFP, 03/04/15. Available in <http://news.yahoo.com/nigerias-buhari-told-win-peace-against-boko-haram-104851519.html>. Consulted in: 06/04/15.

BUHARI'S APPROACH TO THE GREAT CHALLENGES FACING NIGERIA

"Democracy and the rule of law will be established in the land. Let's put the past behind us, especially the recent past. We must forget our old battles and past grievances and forge ahead²⁶", said Buhari after being officially proclaimed winner of the elections. However, and despite his determination, achieving the proposed objectives will not be easy. Strong threats and structural problems that erode Nigeria's stability, security and progress are so great that it will take years, maybe decades, to eradicate them definitively. One can only hope that these coming four years will lay the foundations of Nigeria's transformation on tackling war on terrorism, that it is destroying the northeastern region of the country and killing hundreds of Nigerians, as well as corruption, which feeds many other ripping problems in Nigeria.

Due to the severity of the situation in Nigeria and the whole region, Boko Haram will be the first of many challenges to be faced in the security field: "I assure you that Boko Haram will soon know the strength of our collective will and commitment to rid this nation of terror and bring back peace", said Buhari a few days after winning elections²⁷. During the electoral campaign, Buhari announced the two main axes of his war on jihadism: strengthening military pressure and never negotiating with terrorist, within the framework of a necessarily long and forceful strategy. The strategy is relevant not only on the military field, but also to eradicate the social situation that the northeastern region in the country is going through - characterized by poverty, inequality and social frustration-, from which Boko Haram is taking advantage.

In spite of the determination and effort that these actions require, there are good reasons to believe that, in this battle, Buhari will be more efficient than Jonathan, as stated by German analyst Robert Kappel: "it will be a clearer fight, since Buhari will only take military actions; he will also converse to get to a final solution of the conflict (...). Exterminating Boko Haram is possible with an alliance of political and social groups (...), and Buhari has good connections with the Muslim elites in the region and counts on their support and on the approval of the poorest sections of such regions". In spite of the prosecution, Boko Haram "is reorganizing forces. They will surely come back and make great attacks"²⁸, as unfortunately proven since Buhari's victory. Last April 6, in the last attack in the Borno state, Boko Haram killed 50 people who thought the group of jihadists were going to preach when they arrived in the village²⁹.

²⁶ Boko Haram 'will soon know the strength of our collective will': Buhari. Vanguard, 01/04/15. Available in <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/04/boko-haram-will-soon-know-the-strength-of-our-collective-will-buhari/>. Consulted in: 03/04/15.

²⁷ Ibidem

²⁸ Meier, M. "Buhari podría neutralizar a Boko Haram". **Deutsche Welle**, 01/04/15. Available in <http://www.dw.de/buhari-podr%C3%ADa-neutralizar-a-boko-haram/a-18354912>. Consulted in: 03/04/15.

²⁹ Frank, J. Boko Haram Kills Scores In Open Fire in Borno State. Daily Times Nigeria, 06/04/15. Available in <http://dailytimes.com.ng/boko-haram-kills-scores-open-fire-borno-state/>. Consulted in: 07/04/15.

Regarding the military reaction to the jihadist group, President-Elect Buhari has already stated that Nigeria's army will be reformed. Some of the measures Buhari will initiate are empowering the army, greater operability and preventing the "misappropriation of resources provided by the government for weapons (...)" means the Nigerian military is unable to beat Boko Haram."³⁰, as said at CNN channel in February. He has also tried to dispel the doubts regarding other nations' cooperation on Nigeria's war on jihadism. In many interventions before elections Buhari assured that "no inch of Nigerian land will ever be taken by any external nor internal force"³¹. Yet now, as president, Buhari has nuanced his message in order to support international help against jihadism: cooperation and support from Cameroun, Chad and Niger, as well as the international community, will make it easier to fight against Boko Haram. Due to his political responsibility and his military status, Buhari will set his own conditions for the deployment of international military forces and will never hand over Nigeria's leadership in war against jihadism within national borders.

In order to regain Nigerian people's confidence on their country, the first political measures will focus on tackling corruption that has destroyed Nigeria's pillars and has killed expectations in society, given that "it creates unjustly enriched people... and undermines democracy. Corruption will not be tolerated by this government"³².

Regarding the anticorruption strategy, the work of the new Nigerian administration will be essential, especially for "common people, the weak and vulnerable" to become the "principal priority"³³, since these people would never understand how, while the country grows economically, they still live under poverty. On the other hand, it must be remembered that corruption also leads to other great problems in Nigeria's society, such as ethnic clashes, religious polarization, Islamic radicalization or increase of the organized crime (drug smuggling, oil illegal trade or human trafficking). Only with a complete policy which takes into consideration all these problems and goes along with reforms on the economic, industrial and productive sectors, Buhari will be able to see a way out to this harmful scenario.

"Our nation faces many challenges - insecurity, corruption, economic decline. I pledge to give you my best in tackling these problems", said Buhari on his maiden speech as President³⁴. When Buhari takes office in May 29 he will have to show, besides his intention, his capability to make his promises come true. At the moment, the majority of Nigerians rely

³⁰ Nigeria: *President-Elect Muhammadu Buhari - a Profile*. The Guardian, 01/04/15. Available in <http://allafrica.com/stories/201504011267.html>. Consulted in: 03/04/15

³¹ *My contract with Nigeria – Buhari*. Op. cit.

³² Nigeria elections: Winner Buhari issues Boko Haram vow. Op.cit

³³ APC Will End Corruption In Nigeria – Buhari. Op.cit.

³⁴ Nigeria elections: Winner Buhari issues Boko Haram vow. Op.cit

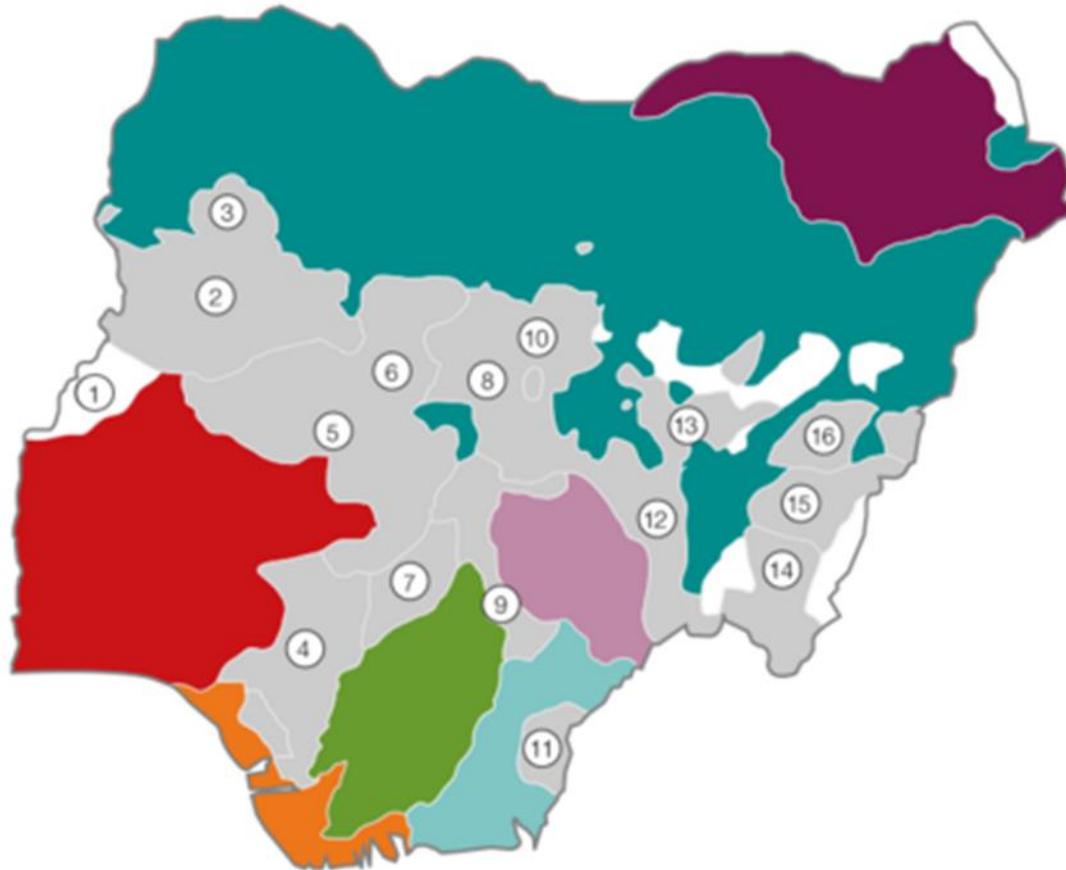
on him, but it would be harmful if Buhari was to delay putting into practice his measures. Nigeria must successfully tackle the great challenges it is facing as soon as possible.

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ANNEX: RELEVANT MAPS ON NIGERIA'S REALITY

Ethnic diversity

Major ethnic groups (% of population)

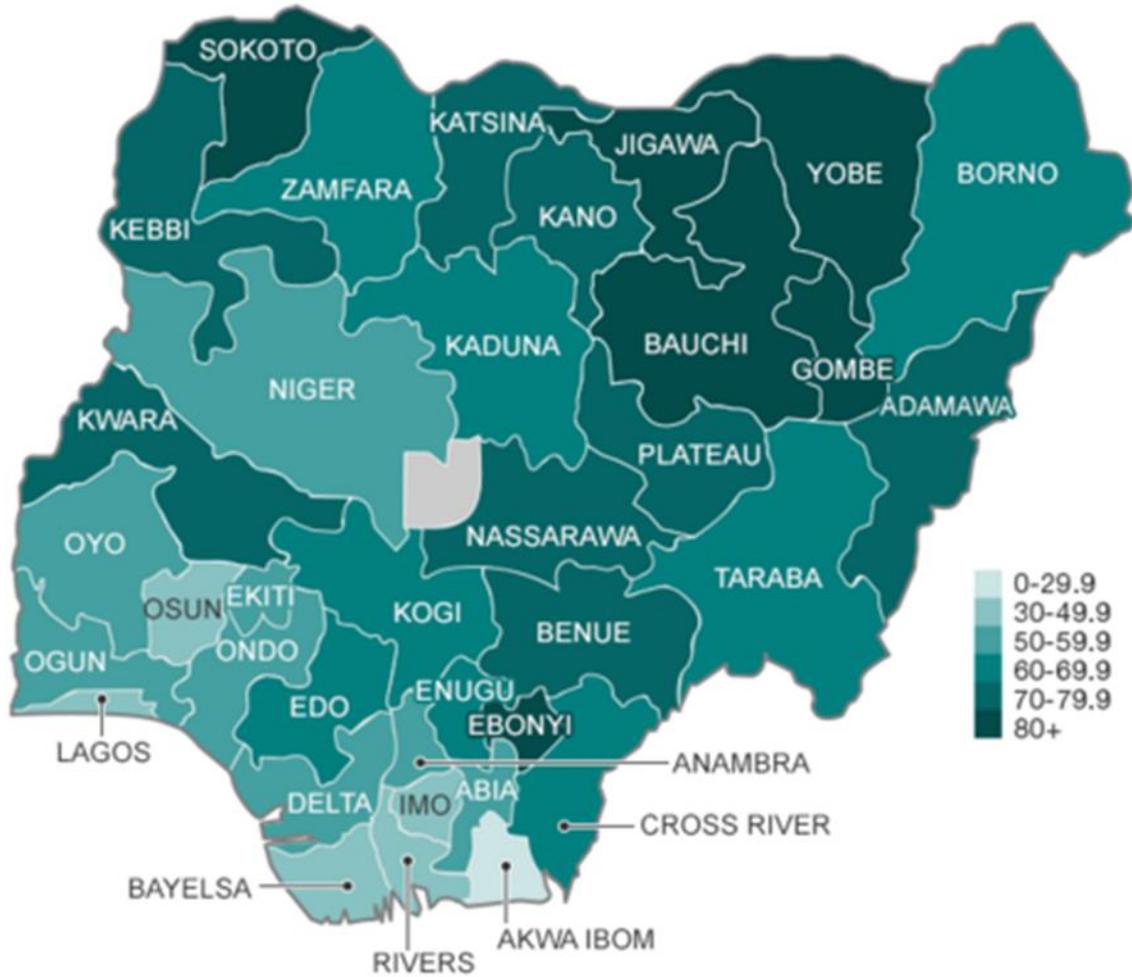


- | | | | |
|------------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| 1 Bokobaru | 5 Nupe | 9 Idoma | 13 Tarok |
| 2 Kanbari | 6 Gbagyi | 10 Berom | 14 Jibu |
| 3 Zuru | 7 Igala | 11 Efik | 15 Somyev |
| 4 Edo | 8 Kaje | 12 Jukunoid | 16 Mumuye |

Source: Ulrich Lamm

Poverty

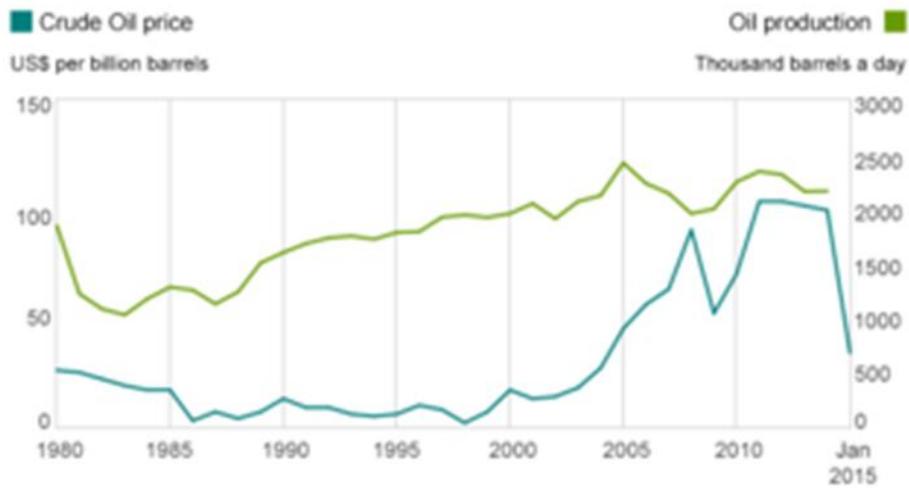
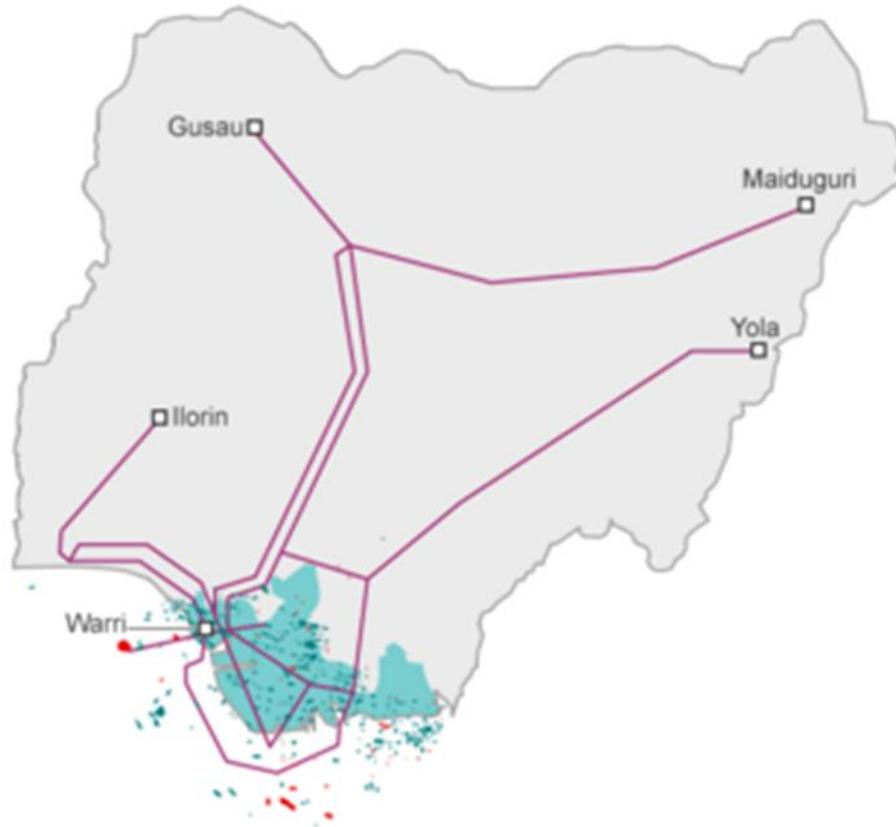
States showing % living in absolute poverty



Source: Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics

Oil

Oil-producing areas Gas Oil Pipeline



Source: Drilling Info International