



## AFRICA

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6 June 2011 Last updated at 10:23 ET

# Africa viewpoint: Nigerians at war with each other

[COMMENTS \(29\)](#)

**In our series of viewpoints from African journalists, Sola Odunfa laments the blood-letting in Nigeria.**

The statistics of fatalities are grim enough but few Nigerians are conscious of the reality that their nation is in the throes of a fierce war which is neither officially acknowledged nor likely to end soon.

The blood-letting is so common that it no longer commands front-page presentation in national newspapers, except when politicians or the Central Bank governor take a rest.

Last Wednesday, the police gave, for the first time, official casualty figures for the violence that hit northern Nigeria after the presidential election in April. The figures were for only two of the five states affected by the conflict.

The police said that 520 people, including six policemen, were killed in Kaduna and Niger, 81 others were wounded and at least 22,000 were displaced from their homes or communities.

In better days in this country, that information would dominate the front pages but last week one national newspaper put it on page two, another on page six and a third downgraded it to page seven.

One should not blame the editors. They have probably become weary of blood-dripping reports coming to their desks daily and now they assume the proverbial posture of the ostrich.

The presidential inauguration banquets turned sour on 29 May when [bombs exploded near the nation's capital, Abuja, and in Bauchi and Zaria](#) - both in northern Nigeria.

No fewer than 14 lives were taken away by the bombers.

### **Jittery police**

Two days later in the south-east, [police officers reportedly ambushed a convoy of vehicles taking a large number of Biafran loyalists to the city of Owerri to celebrate the 44th anniversary of the declaration of the short-lived secessionist state.](#)

In my opinion these Biafran loyalists are on the fringes of society and entitled to have their fun as long as they do not disturb anybody else.

The secessionist war ended more than 40 years ago, so why are the police still jittery at the mere mention of the word Biafra?

They denied killing three of those Biafra loyalists but admitted arresting 300 of them.

It is instructive that the courts have released on bail more than 200 of those charged.

In Lagos state, the police are smarting from the murder of four of their officers by soldiers, pardon me, "unknown soldiers" who were avenging the killing of one of their ranks by a policeman.

In Ibadan, 120km (74 miles) away, the smoke is just settling on the latest round of [deadly battles between rival groups in the transport union.](#)

Everywhere in southern Nigeria, armed bandits continue to brazenly rob, rape and kidnap people.

In the north-central and north-eastern states, arson, malicious killings and the rain of bombs show no sign of abating.

Highways nationwide are not safe either, during the day or night, as robbers rule.

Nigerians are killing Nigerians daily but there is no-one to cry to.

In fact, we must not cry aloud for fear of scaring off potential investors. So, hush.

### [Your comments \(29\)](#)

## Comments

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**10.gyawu**

7TH JUNE 2011 - 15:39

The violence in Nigeria starts with the elite Every day we read with horror how this tiny group pillages their country with abandon.The vast majority fight ferociously for what is left And therein lies the endemic cause that will burn the country in the end



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**4.Tony Wright**

7TH JUNE 2011 - 9:51

Whilst I agree with the author on the matter of the coverage of the violence being very much ignored by the Nigerian and international press. I would like to add that in the two years that I lived in Nigeria I experienced nothing but friendly, law abiding citizens who wanted nothing to do with the violence and troubles in limited parts of the country. I hope for peace across this beautiful land.



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**1.Tayo Olayiwola**

6TH JUNE 2011 - 18:53

Nigeria citizens value life and they celebrate life. Consider the amount they spend on naming a new child. But things turned sour when government failed to appreciate the challenges confronting it. Schools continue to graduate students without corresponding job. Through employment people become a stakeholder in the affair of the nation.



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