

**Security Forces, Electoral Conduct and the 2003
General Elections in Nigeria**

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ABSTRACT Leadership succession in Nigeria has before the 2003 elections, assumed a problematic status. This is so because earlier attempts, particularly transition from civilian to civilian ruler-ship, had often resulted in serious national political crisis. The 2003 elections seem to have destroyed the myth associated with such transitional projects. While the 2003 transition might have been seen as successful, opposition political parties, international poll observers, pro-democracy non-governmental organizations and critical analysts have adjudged the elections as lacking in electoral transparency and fairness, and therefore, not devoid of malpractice. Accusing fingers have been pointed to, and aspersions cast at, the security forces especially the police, and the military, which were allegedly ready-made state machinery for perpetuating electoral frauds. The paper intends to investigate the collaborative role of the security forces in allegedly rigging the 2003 elections in favour of the incumbent ruling party. In addition, the paper shall interrogate the expected role of security forces in sustaining and consolidating Nigeria's nascent democracy.