



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE  
1200 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036

Academy for International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding  
Course on

**PREVENTING ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN AFRICA: TOOLS FOR POLICYMAKERS**  
Washington, D.C.

Political transitions – ranging from elections to peace agreements after civil war – have often served as triggers of violence. Elections, a hallmark of democracy and in many cases the culmination of a peace agreement, have been shown to be violent about 25 percent of the time right after conflict. Moreover, electoral violence often recurs in the same regions of a country, indicating not just that underlying causes of that violence remain unresolved, but that there are opportunities to anticipate, and subsequently, prevent violence.

Electoral violence arguably slows the consolidation of democratic norms and reduces the prospects for long-term, durable peace and stability. Thus, managing the conflict that accompanies political transitions is a critical factor in building strong governing institutions and creating the mechanisms for durable peace. But countries with strong authoritarian legacies or deep ethnic cleavages—common in many African countries—find it difficult to manage political opposition. How can social, political, and economic tensions be managed in the short-, medium-, and long-term such that electoral processes can develop effectively, helping to lay the foundation for sustained good governance?

With important elections in Africa on the horizon in 2011, this course will examine specific cases, including Nigeria, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Kenya. Not only do these countries have a history of tense and violent elections, but their stability is important to their respective regions, the international community at large, and for specific U.S. foreign policy goals. The course will identify means by which electoral violence may be prevented or mitigated through effective strategic planning and policymaking.

This course aims to increase the capacity of policymakers to identify triggers of electoral violence during political transitions, and importantly to help policymakers develop strategies to help stem this violence. Making linkages between actual implementation on the ground and the policies that help to thwart a peaceful and legitimate transfer of power is important in helping to achieve a solid foundation for peace. As part of this strategy, this course will help identify how policymakers can build positive relationships among civil society, local and national governmental agencies, and regional and international organizations.

## **Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Understand the factors that threaten a peaceful electoral process.
- Understand the factors related to ameliorating tensions in transition environments, and use them to create a framework for analysis.
- Identify multidimensional contexts within conflict management and electoral processes, and how issues and actors within those contexts relate to each other.
- Assess pre-existing factors on-the-ground that will inform how best to move forward in re-establishing and building institutions that manage and/or prevent electoral violence.
- Develop an “action plan” or strategy for ameliorating and/or preventing electoral violence.
- Discern lessons learned from case studies and discussions in applying conflict management (mitigation and/or prevention) strategies to electoral processes.

## **Teaching Methodology and Structure**

This course takes a problem-based approach to electoral violence, and will be punctuated by illustrative and timely case studies that are designed to underscore the challenges and lessons of establishing a peaceful, viable, and democratic political system. Instructors, some of whom have had direct experience in the field with conflict, post-conflict, and transition scenarios, and with elections as they relate to monitoring and stemming violence, will conduct intensive and interactive lectures and round-table seminars.

Case studies, interactive exercises, and simulations will be used to provide in-depth application of thematic issues, and will allow each participant to solve problems from the vantage point of relevant institutions (from UN agencies to humanitarian groups to those in interim governments). These case studies will allow for serious discussion and analysis of cross-sector issues and perspectives.

In addition to defining “success” and measured achievements, the primary challenge will be to first understand the core conditions for success of the identified conflict-mitigation efforts, and to identify factors that are specific to those particular cases. It is expected that participants in this course will be able to take away lessons learned from these exercises and apply them to their work.

## **Course Requirements**

Participants are expected to attend every session of the seminar, and engage in discussions. Participants will be asked to summarize and comment on particular readings. In addition, participants will be asked to:

- Actively participate in all group discussions, exercises, and case studies
- Draft and present country and policy analyses based on given exercise
- Develop guidelines for best practices based on lessons learned

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**PREVENTING ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN AFRICA: TOOLS FOR POLICYMAKERS**

**AGENDA**

**DAY 1**

*Causes and Drivers of Electoral Violence*

9:00 am – 9:30 am

**Introduction**

- Brief introduction to USIP and instructors
- Course objectives and outline
- Introduction of participants

9:30 am – 10:00 am

**Road Map to Democracy**

- Class exercise

10:00 am – 11:00 am

**Discussion Period**

- What is governance? What is democracy? And how are they achieved in fragile environments?
- What is the role of elections? What about the role of elections in consensus-building societies?
- What is the role of the international community in supporting these ideas?
- Discussion of aspects of governance that are important to elections

11:00 am – 11:15 am

**Break**

11:15 am – 12:30 pm

**Root Causes of Electoral Violence**

- Exploration of root causes of conflict
- Violence can occur in perceived “non-conflict” contexts, as well as exacerbate existing conflicts
- Discussion of the scope and features of electoral violence in Africa

12:30 pm – 1:00 pm

**Lunch**

- 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm      **Analytical Frameworks of Electoral Violence**
- Examining different pathways to electoral violence
- 2:00 pm – 2:15 pm      **Break**
- 2:15 pm – 3:30 pm      **Case Study Exercise**  
**Nigeria: The General Elections in 2007**
- Does a country's historical experience have a bearing on the type of democratic regime that develops?
  - What tools are available to assist third parties to reduce violence?
- 3:30 pm – 4:00 pm      **Recap main themes of the day**

**DAY 2**

*Election Implementation*

- 9:00 am – 9:15 am      Recap main themes from previous day
- 9:15 am – 10:45 am      **International Engagement: Who, What, When, Where, How, and for How Long?**
- Issues of coordination, budgeting, prioritization
  - What is and is not being done? Where are the gaps that could lead to violence?
- 10:45 am – 11:00 am      **Break**
- 11:00 am – 12:15 pm      **State and Non-state Actors: The Good, the Bad, and Everything in Between**
- The role of the State, civil society, the media, political parties and their candidates, and religious groups in electoral processes
  - How does one identify, and then either marginalize or coordinate with spoilers, reformers, and preservers?
  - What are the unintended consequences of choosing certain actions over others?
  - Issues related to electoral security and keeping the peace – what is the role of the State?
  - What is the relationship between international peacekeeping and domestic processes of democratization?
  - How should voter and candidate intimidation be addressed leading up to and during an election?
- 12:15 pm – 1:30 pm      **Lunch**

- 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm      **Case Study Exercise**  
**Kenya and Ghana in Comparison**
- How can the periods between problematic elections be managed?
  - What are pros and cons to powersharing following a problematic election?
- 3:00 pm – 3:15 pm      **Break**
- 3:15 pm – 3:45 pm      **Case Study Exercise**  
**Review Findings**
- 3:45 pm – 4:15 pm      **Recap main themes of the day**

**DAY 3**

*Best Practices? Local and International Perspectives on What Works*

- 9:00 am – 9:15 am      Recap main themes from previous day
- 9:15 am – 10:15 am      **After an Election: Considerations for Democratic Transformation**
- After an election, what are the key factors that can lead to greater stability, and to greater conflict?
  - Issues of addressing the judiciary and justice processes and outcomes, consolidating political party development, improving capacity building, reassessing contexts post-election
  - Post-election political agreements (power sharing, unity governments, and other political arrangements)
- 10:15 am – 10:30 am      **Break**
- 10:30 am – 12:30 am      **Case Study Exercise**  
**The DRC and Liberia**
- How can the participation of former warlords be managed?
  - What is an appropriate role for a transitional government?
- 12:30 am – 1:30 pm      **Lunch**  
**“A View from the Ground: The 2010 Sudan Elections”**  
**Presentation and Photos**

1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

**Panel Discussion**

**Preventing Electoral Violence: Frameworks and Assessments**

- A look at different frameworks
- What has worked, and what hasn't? What can we learn from various approaches about how best to prevent electoral violence?

3:30 pm – 3:45 pm

**Break**

3:45 pm – 4:30 pm

**Recap main themes of the day**

**Debrief of overall course**

**Course Conclusion**

**Distribution of Certificates**

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