

**EXPOSITION OF ISLAMIC ETHICS OF POLITICAL
CAMPAIGN AND ITS APPLICABILITY IN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Political campaign is part and parcel of democratic process in modern times, but it has come to be characterised by destabilizing practices and irregularities, such as violence, especially in some developing countries including Nigeria. Political campaign is often associated with vilifications, use of thugs, extravagant spending, violence against opponents, and so on which portend big danger for governance and its purpose of human and societal development. This study examines the issue from the Islamic campaign ethical perspective, towards providing antidotes to the unhealthy practices that are retrogressing democracy and Nigeria as a nation. Islam is understood to be a comprehensive system that offers guidance in all aspects of life. The study is expository. It delves into the Qur'an and Sunnah, as well as literatures on Islamic political system and Nigerian laws to unearth relevant guidance to political campaigns and politico-economic development of Nigeria. It concludes that the inappropriate practices trailing democracy in Nigeria are rooted in illegalities that can be remedied if the Islamic ethical contents and relevant Nigerian laws are respected and followed, as exposed in this study.

Keywords: Exposition, Islamic Ethics, Political Campaign, Nigeria, Democracy.

Introduction

Administration and governance of human beings by some human beings has been in existence from the time of Adam, according to Islamic teaching. It is regarded as one of the basic methods of ordering and engendering peace and progress in society. Of course, all previous generations administered and governed themselves in one way or another. From the Islamic point of view, all Prophets led by good example, managed their societies, encouraged what was good and discouraged what was bad (Qur'an 21:73).

According to Omotosho, Islam attaches importance to the position of leadership to the extent that no matter how small the number of Muslims in any given situation may be, be it on a journey or a gathering, a leader must be appointed, who must be of the best of them in terms of spiritual disposition, character and leadership capacity¹. The leader is assured of absolute loyalty as long as he is within his limits, and discharges responsible leadership

To emphasize the obligation of leadership in Islam, the Prophet (pbuh) instructed that Muslims should ensure leadership among them whenever they are up to three in a given community. He is reported to have said: "If three people set out for a journey, they should appoint one of them to be their leader"². It is clear from the foregoing that leadership is not only important but also compulsory, as far as Islam is concerned, for the good of humanity.

Political Leadership in Nigerian Conception

Nigeria as a nation also recognizes the importance of leadership. Democracy has been identified by the political class as the best system of government and has since been adopted in the country, notwithstanding the violations of the rules that should guide its practice. Constitutionally, democratic government involves among other things, political campaign to showcase the quality of the prospective leaders and their ability to hold and deliver in the positions they vie for. Rallies are carried out throughout the country for this purpose. The laws of the land provide for some ethics to be adhered to during political campaigns. However, the political campaigns are more often than not marred with many violations that often lead to loss of lives and property.

Political Campaign in Nigeria

Nigeria is the largest nation in Africa. She has practised democracy consistently however imperfectly for the last twenty-one years,

from 1999 to 2020. She has also set for herself the laws and acts to enforce her democracy. Since the beginning of democracy in Nigeria, there had been five peaceful transitions of power from one government to another in 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019, respectively. Democratic elections have been the means for these transitions. This is a demonstration of entrenchment and consolidation of democracy in the country. However, the Nigerian general elections have always been a cause for concern. It has always been marred with series of anomalies. There are always complaints and obvious cases of violence, vote buying, rigging, and other electoral vices which are often perpetrated and sponsored by politicians who see themselves as above the laws of the land.

Political campaign in Nigeria is in many cases a season of fear for common Nigerians, because of the heinous crimes that are being perpetrated by the political actors in their efforts to win elections by all means. This is due largely to the non-adherence of the politicians to the ethics of the game and the political inanity and inertia, rascality and emptiness of many of the political actors, as well as the nature of the Nigerian democracy as a political system. Some of the unethical practices in the Nigerian political campaign include vilification of political opponents, physical violence and assault, use of thugs and extravagance in spending to canvass for the support of the electorates. These are briefly explained below:

Vilification is a slanderous defamation which is often expressed rudely to de-market political opponents in the eyes of the electorates. Nigerian politicians do engage in this, especially when the opponents are very strong and known for their proven integrity. Their opponents resort to vilifications because they do not possess the same record and do not even have a political agenda to present to the electorates during campaigns. As Amadi rightly notes, most Nigerian politicians settle for unintelligent campaigns, knowing that most of the electorates are not well-informed. Ill-informed electorates cannot distinguish polished communication campaign from a clumsy one.¹⁰

The foregoing is markedly clear during the last two elections in Nigeria; i.e. the 2015 and 2019 general elections, where Major General Muhammadu Buhari was perceived by many Nigerians as standing in sharp contrast to his opponents for the presidential race in terms of integrity. In 2015 he was in the main opposition party, the All Progressives Congress (APC), while the incumbent president, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan, was contesting on the platform of the

ruling party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). When Buhari was campaigning against the ruling party with the insecurity that engulfed the land and the economic recklessness that was about to cripple the nation, the PDP was busy abusing Buhari as a dictator, using the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Africa Independent Television (AIT) and many other government and private media outfits against him. Unfortunately, Buhari himself has only worsened the insecurity in Nigeria, as the economy has crumbled and armed bandits are mushrooming, with particular reference to the north.

Thuggery is the brutal act of violence by aggressive and violent young criminals who are normally recruited, trained and sponsored by do or die politicians to coerce their political opponents and harass the public during political campaigns. When two campaign teams of opposing political parties collude, the result is always disastrous. Thugs are equipped with prohibited ammunitions and drugs by their political lords. Even though the Electoral Act is categorical on the prohibition of use of offensive weapons or missiles¹¹ and engagement of thugs under any guise, and has sanctions against violators;¹² the practise is still in vogue in Nigeria's political arena and the perpetrators go scot free. Section 95 (nos. 5&6) reads as follows:

(5) A political party or member of a political party shall not retain, organize, train or equip any person or group of persons for the purpose of enabling them to be employed for the use or display of physical force or coercion in promoting any political objective or interest, or in such manner as to arouse reasonable apprehension that they are organized, trained or equipped for that purpose.

(6) A political party, person or candidate shall not keep or use private security organization, vanguard or any other group or individual by whatever name called for the purpose of providing security, assisting or aiding the political party or candidate in whatever manner during campaigns, rallies, processions or elections¹³.

Violence: There is no gainsaying that political campaign in Nigeria is mostly bedevilled with all manners of violence at all levels. The 2015 and 2019 general elections were no exception, as cases of violence were reported in some localities.

Extravagance in spending during campaign is another characteristic of the Nigerian politics and indeed democracy as a system of government. The Electoral Act has fixed maximum amount of money

expendable during campaign, but there are no mechanisms on ground to know who exceeds the limit. Violation of the expenditure limit of political campaign is indeed one of the cogs in the wheel of good governance in Nigeria, because it results eventually in unlimited corruption. It was widely reported during the 2015 and 2019 elections that some politicians spent outrageously to dwarf their opponents. Some politicians even use American dollars instead of Nigerian naira to induce delegates to vote for them at primary and general elections.

The explained negative practices and many other immoral and illegal acts permeate the Nigerian political campaign processes. Those are the anomalies that one hopes can be remedied through adherence to Islamic ethics.

Islamic Ethics of Political Campaign

Political campaign has been contemplated to have occurred in the *saqifa* of Banu Sa'idah when the *Muhajirun* and *Ansar* discussed who amongst them was the most worthy to lead the Muslim nation.¹⁴ This is a justification for permissibility of political campaign in Islam according to many Muslim scholars, if it is free from unethical and anti-Islamic practices.¹⁵ Permissibility of political campaign is predicated on the right to be nominated and contest for elective positions in the state. Many Islamic scholars have considered right to contest for election as a political right of Islamic faithfuls.¹⁶

The political campaign that is permissible in Islam is the one that is based on Islamic political ethics which include: truthfulness, reasonable promises, peaceful conduct, moderate spending, and issue-based manifestoes. These are briefly explained below.

Truthfulness is a basic character required of a Muslim which is expected to be displayed in his thought, utterances, and actions. It is a virtue that the Qur'an and Sunnah emphasize at all times that it is necessary for the leaders and political actors in their relationship to their subjects and citizens. The campaign directors and coordinators as well as the applicants are expected to be truthful in their campaigns. They are not expected to lie about themselves or against their political opponents who vie for the same positions. It is forbidden to praise themselves unduly, or defame their opponents unjustly.¹⁷

Reasonable Promises are those that are feasible, viable and achievable. Politicians are expected to know their limits regarding the offices they are campaigning for. They are forbidden to promise what they

would not be able to fulfil. The Prophet lists breaking promises as one of the portraits of hypocrites¹⁸.

Peaceful Conduct is that the campaign team should go to all their gathering places and conduct their meetings in peaceful manner without violence, harming or injuring anybody. Of course Islam prides itself in spirit of peace, as well as political stability and development. Politicians are forbidden to have thugs or misuse the agents of state security to disrupt peace or strip anybody from his or her personal peace for whatever political interest. The Prophet describes a Muslim as a peace maker, peace builder, peace keeper and peace loving individual. He is quoted as saying that a Muslim is one in whose tongue and hand others are safe¹⁹. Of course, nothing can be implemented of the pillars of Islam in absence of peace and constituted authority. Hence leaders are expected to be the most peaceful in society, as they are entrusted with the responsibility of enforcing peace through all lawful means.

Moderate Spending implies spending for a noble cause, without being mean or extravagant. Moderation in everything is specified as a feature of the Muslim *Ummah* (Qur'an 2:143, 3: 110) and an outstanding personal character of all pious Muslims. In the quoted words of Allah:

والذين إذا انفقوا لم يسرفوا ولم يقتروا وكان بين ذلك قواما

Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just (balance) between (those) extremes (Qur'an 25:67).

The Qur'an considers extravagance as an act of the devil and his cohorts. It states that:

ولا تبذر تبذيرا إن المبذرين كانوا إخوان الشياطين، وكان الشيطان لربه كفورا

Do not squander (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily spendthrifts are brothers of the Satan. And Satan is to His Lord (Himself) ungrateful (Qur'an 17: 27).

Prospective leaders of Muslims are therefore expected to be pious and responsible enough in spending their personal wealth so that they are prudent and accountable when entrusted with public funds.

Issue-Based Manifestoes: Political campaigns are expected to be restricted to issues and plans of one's leadership if given the opportunity to lead by the citizens.²⁰ Islam prescribes criteria for prospective leaders; the chief of which is knowledge of the responsibilities of the position one is contesting for.

Application of Islamic Ethics of Political Campaign in Nigeria

The aforementioned Islamic principles of campaign ethics should be applicable in Nigeria, since many Nigerians are Muslim and many of the political leaders in power at all levels are also Muslim, with particular reference to those who hail from the Muslim dominated north. Besides, many of the Islamic ethical principles are contained expressly or impliedly in the Nigerian Constitution, the Electoral Act, and other laws of the country. The problem is that these laws are not implemented and there seems to be no proper enlightenment about the laws even among the politicians. The Islamic political ethics may be applied when the following measures are taken and diligently adhered to: redefinition of the criteria for selecting leaders, reformation of the political parties, reformation of screening exercise and enforcement of provisions of the Electoral Act. These are explained in the succeeding pages.

Criteria for Selecting Leaders

A leader is supposed to be a mirror of the society and so a good reflection of that society. It is also a popular maxim that "people live according to the life style of their leaders" (الشعوب على دين ملوكها). As such, if the leader is upright and concerned, the subject would equally be upright on the average. Hence Islam has prescribed some criteria for selecting leaders and warned that if anybody clings to a position of leadership without fulfilling the set criteria, such a leader shall face doom and agony in the hereafter. The Prophet (Muhammad) is quoted as saying that leadership is a trust:

وَإِنَّهَا أمانةٌ، وَإِنَّهَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حَزِيٌّ وَنَدَامَةٌ، إِلَّا مَنْ أَخَذَهَا بِحَقِّهَا، وَأَدَّى الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ فِيهَا

It is a trust and on the Day of Resurrection it will be a source of humiliation and regret, except for the one who takes it and fulfils all obligations and does all duties required.²¹

The criteria as stipulated by Islam are summed up in ability or strength and trust. These are taken from the Qur'anic verse:

إِنَّ خَيْرَ مَنْ اسْتَأْجَرْتَ الْقَوِيُّ الْأَمِينُ

(The best that you can employ is the strong and reliable person - Qur'an 28:26).

Ibn Taimiyyah explains strength in leadership as a quality encompassing "knowledge of justice based on the Qur'an and Sunnah and the ability to implement decisions", and trust as a criterion involving "fear of Allah

(piety), avoidance of bribery (integrity) and avoidance of fear of people (courage in making and execution of decisions).²² This brings the qualities comprehensively to five, namely: Knowledge, Ability (physical and psychological), Justice, Piety and Trust. These criteria are briefly explained below:

a. Knowledge:

This refers to the knowledge of the responsibility of the leadership a person is shouldering and this is relative to the nature of the leadership. The person should know the rights to make lawful demand of the people and should know the duties towards discharging them diligently. This is not to demand that a leader knows everything which may amount to impossibility. However, the person is expected to continue learning as in the mantle through reading, seminars and workshops as well as from the experience of predecessors, colleagues and personal experience. All of that in addition to the general compulsory knowledge of Islam and governance,²³ or what is contemporarily referred to as the knowledge of Islamic Law²⁴ which is usually measured by the nature and level of the certificate of education the person holds.

The Qur'an makes it clear that the most knowledgeable among contestants should be chosen for leadership. That happened when the Israelites opposed the selection of Talut as their king. Allah replied them that it was His choice based on consideration of the wider and more in-depth knowledge which Talut was endowed with. In the quoted words of Allah:

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا قَالُوا أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِنَ الْمَالِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مُلْكَهُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Their Prophet said to them: Allah has appointed Talut as king over you. They said: How can he exercise authority over us when we are better fitted than he to exercise authority and he not even gifted with wealth in abundance? He said: Allah has chosen him above you and has gifted him abundantly with knowledge and bodily prowess: Allah grants His authority to whom He pleases. Allah is All-Embracing and He knows all things (Qur'an 2:247).

Knowledge of the responsibility was one of the reasons that made Prophet Yusuf (pbuh) to consider himself worthy of the assignment and to

seek for appointment as narrated in the Qur'an, with Allah quoted as saying:

قَالَ اجْعَلْنِي عَلَى خَزَائِنِ الْأَرْضِ إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلِيمٌ

(Joseph) said: set me over the store-houses of the land: I am a good-keeper, knowledgeable (Qur'an 12:55).

According to Ali, Yusuf (pbuh) deliberately asked to be put in charge of granaries and store-houses, and the drudgery of establishing them and guarding them, for the simple reason that he understood the need better than anyone else, and he was prepared to take upon himself rather than throw on to another the obloquy of restricting supplies in times of plenty²⁵.

The Caliphs of Islam –especially Abubakar and Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) -in recognition of these verses and the practice of the noble Prophet used to select the most knowledgeable to appoint to positions of leadership.²⁶

b. Ability

Ability refers to the bodily prowess and psychological fitness. A leader must be physically fit, mentally sound and temperamentally balanced. The person should be psychologically prepared to withstand the hurdles and rigours of leadership. This is why physical health is highly required. The person should not suffer at the time of election or appointment from any ailment that may hinder and tamper with ability to discharge meritoriously official responsibilities. This demand is of course relative to the demands of the office in question, but "a leader must be physically fit to be able to bear the hassles and bustles of leadership".²⁷ This can be seen also in the story of Musa (pbuh) in Madyan when the lady praised him for his bodily and psychological strength (Qur'an 28:26).

The Prophet (pbuh) had also demonstrated the necessity of strength and ability for leadership and that it also involves charisma and psychological prowess when he denied Abu Dharr the appointment he sought from him citing his weakness as the justification for the denial. Dharr is quoted as saying:

قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَلَا تَسْتَعْمَلُنِي؟ قَالَ: فَضْرَبَ بِيَدِهِ عَلَى مَنْكِبِي، ثُمَّ قَالَ: «يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ، إِنَّكَ ضَعِيفٌ، وَإِنَّهَا أَمَانَةٌ، وَإِنَّهَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حَزْبِي وَنَدَامَةٌ، إِلَّا مَنْ أَخَذَهَا بِحَقِّهَا، وَأَدَّى الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ فِيهَا

I said: O Messenger of Allah. Will you not appoint me (to a position of authority)? He struck me on the shoulder with his hand and said: you are weak, and it is a trust and on the Day of Resurrection it will be a source of humiliation and regret, except for the one who takes it and fulfils all obligations and does all duties required²⁸.

Some scholars have it that Dharr was never weak in faith or trust neither was he so in bodily strength but he was weak in charisma and psychological strength to withstand the hassles of leadership.²⁹ Ability therefore implies competence which encompasses good health in their faculties of hearing, sight and speech so that they may arrive at a sound assessment of whatever they perceive; sound in limb, free of any deficiency which might prevent them from normal movement, courage and bravery enabling them to defend the territory of Islam and to mount jihad against the enemy.³⁰

c. Justice

Justice is fair treatment of people based on the provisions and prescriptions of the law without fear or favour. Justice as such is said to be the foundation of governance in Islam³¹ and the foremost duty of a leader. According to Salisu, the major duty of a leader is to dispense justice to all the subjects without discrimination.³²

Establishing the above fact, Allah is quoted as instructing Prophet Dawud thus:

يَا دَاوُودُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ
الْهَوَىٰ فَيُضِلَّكَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَضِلُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
شَدِيدٌ بِمَا نَسُوا يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ

O David! We have made you a vicegerent on earth: so judge between people with truth and do not follow selfish desire, lest it should lead you astray from Allah's path. Surely those who go astray from Allah's path will have severe punishment, because they had forgotten the day of reckoning (Qur'an 38: 26)

He commands every leader to judge with justice (Qur'an 4:58, 49:9) and every individual who is a potential leader in the Muslim community to imbibe justice as personal character (Qur'an 4: 135, 5: 8, 16: 19). Allah also warns against injustice and informs

believers that injustice was the cause of destruction of many of the ruined nations and states in the history of humankind (Qur'an 2:59, 3:117, 6:45, 7:162, 165, 10:13, 11: 37, 67, 94, 101-102, 18:59,22:45)

The Qur'an is indeed replete with verses which establish the fact that injustice precipitates destruction of nations. Hence Muslim scholars adopt the wise saying that "Allah gives succour to the just nation even if it is an infidels' nation and does not deliver the unjust nation even if it is a believers' nation."³⁶ A leader must therefore be just to worth the name and to be able to discharge expected duties appropriately.

d. Piety

Piety is expected to be an intrinsic character of a Muslim and an integral condition of leadership in Islam. According to Ibn Taimiyyah, piety is one of the components of trust which is the second pillar of leadership after ability or competence in Islam.³⁷ Looking at piety in a wider perspective, Ansari views piety as encompassing three dimensions in Qur'anic philosophy. These are: Faith in Allah, Fear of Allah, and Love for Allah.³⁸ These combined, result in perfect obedience to Allah's commandments and avoidance of Allah's prohibitions to the best of one's ability. Piety is the peak of righteousness upon which Muslims are promised the dominion of earth. Allah says in the Qur'an:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا
اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم
مِّن بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

Allah has promised to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land, inheritance (of power), as he granted it to those before them; that He will establish in authority their religion-the one which He has chosen for them, and that He will change (their state), after the fear in which they (lived), to one of security and peace. They will worship me (alone) and not associate aught with Me. If any do reject faith after this, they are the rebellious and wicked (Qur'an 24:55).

Piety is therefore a necessary condition for leadership because it involves implementing the laws of Allah to people in the Islamic state which is an ideological state, religion-wise.

e. Trust

According to Ibn Taimiyyah, there are two pillars of leadership namely: ability and trust³⁹. He holds that delivering trust to those who worth it and judging with justice are the foundations of just politics and righteous government.⁴⁰ He enunciates further that trust in leadership revolves around three values namely: fear of Allah, incorruptibility, and courage which are the three virtues that Allah has bestowed on everybody who leads the affairs of humankind, where He is quoted as saying:

فَلَا تَخْشَوُا النَّاسَ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

So do not fear people. Fear Me, and not take a paltry price for My verses. Those who do not judge according to what Allah had sent down are the disbelievers (Qur'an 5:44).⁴¹

It has also been mentioned in the verses quoted above that trust and strength are the pillars of leadership. In the story of Yusuf (pbuh) the King commanded that Yusuf be brought to him so that he can employ him exclusively for himself and explained the justification for this decision saying to Yusuf (pbuh):

إِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا مَكِينٌ أَمِينٌ

(Today you are with us well placed fully trusted - Qur'an 12:54).

The criteria for leadership in Islam, in addition to other necessary characteristics that some scholars felt that they are implied and not necessary to be mentioned while others considered them and merged them as one independent criterion, uniformly called *al-wilayah al-kamilah*. This comprises of being a Muslim, male, adult, free and sane. Anybody who fulfils these criteria is eligible to full leadership in all spheres of life.⁴²

Reformation of the Political Parties

The political parties are the platforms on which politicians contest for positions in elections. They also have constitutions which guide their operations. Towards reformation, the political parties should have the

aforementioned Islamic criteria for selection of leaders and ethics of political participation in campaign and other political processes, short of necessarily being Muslims.

Reformation of Screening Exercise

The screening exercise of the contestants by the political parties and finally by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should be reformed to accommodate the criteria for selecting leaders mentioned above and be adhered-to strictly. That will ensure that competent and reliable persons are put up for elective positions, without necessarily making Nigeria an Islamic state.

Enforcement of Provisions of the Electoral Act

The Nigerian Electoral Act has provided punishment for violators of the Act who may be found guilty of perpetrating electoral crimes, which are either in fines, imprisonment or both. These punishments are rarely applied despite the proliferation of the offences and crimes during elections. Lack of impunity is thus the cause of lack of deterrence, and neutralization of the ethics of campaign enshrined in the Electoral Act.

Conclusion

This study has elucidated the Islamic ethics of political campaign. It discusses some unethical practices in the Nigerian political campaign which includes vilification of political opponents, violence, use of thugs, and extravagance in spending to woo the electorates.

The paper explains that political campaign is permissible in Islam only if it is based on Islamic political ethics which includes truthfulness, reasonable promises, peaceful conduct, moderate spending and issue-based manifestoes. The paper posits that the Islamic political campaign ethical principles are applicable to the Nigerian democratic system through a number of measures which include redefinition of the criteria for selecting leaders, reformation of the political parties, review of the screening exercise and enforcement of provisions of the Electoral Act. If these measures are diligently implemented, political campaign in Nigeria will be sanitized from its present state of anomy resulting in the retrogression of Nigeria.

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