



Foreword

Voting in Fear: Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa is essential reading. Scholars, civic leaders, and government officials seeking to understand the conditions leading to electoral violence, and master the tools to prevent its occurrence, will find great value in this volume. Unlike other books on electoral violence in Africa, *Voting in Fear* draws on both quantitative and qualitative research to systematically investigate this important yet understudied phenomenon. When I served as the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs from 2005–09, I faced the challenge of responding to electoral violence especially in Kenya and Zimbabwe and would have benefitted tremendously from the information contained in this book.

Dorina Bekoe, sets out a comprehensive framework for analyzing the timing, triggers, perpetrators, and victims of violence that is relevant for sub-Saharan Africa and other regions. The book also features leading scholars of African politics that offer empirically rich studies of some of the most prominent cases of electoral violence in Africa, including Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. The reader will better understand why some countries are more susceptible to electoral violence and how to distinguish when common underlying and structural conditions are more or less likely to lead to violence, and what steps can be taken to counter its outbreak and mitigate its effects.

The book is especially welcome at a time when U.S. policymakers have elevated democratic progress in Africa as a key foreign policy goal. The lessons offered in *Voting in Fear* to end electoral violence will contribute to greater voter turnout, candidate participation, and the overall legitimacy of the electoral process in African countries. During this third wave of Africa's democratic advancement, the quality of governance and trust of society are keys to sustainable progress that are undergirded by peaceful or at least non-violent elections.

Africa has made significant strides over the past two decades especially its economic growth. Continued progress will require deepening good governance and consolidating democracy. It is especially important to open political space for inclusion of Africa's large youth population. The case studies in *Voting in Fear* offer concrete analysis both of what to avoid





and to embrace to prevent electoral violence and build on Africa's more hopeful trends. The reader is exposed to the complexity of contemporary Africa, gaining insight into the political-economy and socio-economic and cultural diversity of several key countries across sub-Saharan Africa's four regions. This diversity when poorly managed, and accompanied by weak institutions, unable to accommodate difference, often is a recipe for electoral violence in Africa's relatively new democracies. Another key finding in the book, that postconflict states are more prone to electoral violence, should give pause to officials that elevate elections as the end state in peace agreements. Similarly, resorting to power-sharing arrangements to end electoral violence in the short-term is unlikely to end the cycle of violence without credible institutional reforms.

African practitioners and international institutions, diplomats, and nongovernmental organizations will find a treasure trove of useful policy recommendations to strengthen African institutions and guide policy interventions to avoid and mitigate electoral violence in Africa and beyond. Ultimately, by revealing the scope and variation of electoral violence in Africa, the book makes a major contribution to the literature on Africa's political development.

Ambassador Jendayi Frazer

