

3 INEC officials killed

•Curfew in Edo, Kogi, Osun, Kano, Ondo

Zenith Bank
declares
₦17.64bn
profit

-P.3

Odili
congratulates
Omehia

-P.6

COUNTRYMAN

FALANA TASKS OBT TO EXPLAIN
EXPENDITURE ON ENERGY



CELEBRATION... President Olusegun Obasanjo flanked by Chief of Air Staff, Paul Dike (l) and Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Martin Luther Agwai during a parade to mark Nigeria Airforce Day at the Eagle Square in Abuja... yesterday.

VINCENT ADEKOYE, Benin, ABIODUN FELIX, Osogbo, TIMOTHY AJIBOYE, Lokoja and MUHAMMED KABIR, Kano.

THREE officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) who conducted last Saturday's governorship and House of Assembly elections in Edo State, were yesterday killed by irate protesters in the state following the declaration of Professor Oserhiemen Osunbor as the governor-elect.

Similarly, violent mass protests continued to trail the results of the elections in some states forcing their governors to impose curfew.

The states are Kano, Edo, Osun, Ondo and Kogi while tension mounted in Nasarawa states. The palace of a first class monarch in Nasarawa, the Aren Eggon, Bala Angbazo, was razed down by angry youths.

Reacting to the election result in Edo, the Action Congress (AC) gubernatorial candidate, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole said he was ready to die than to allow Prof. Osunbor assume power on May 29.

Oshiomhole who was arrested and detained at the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) Benin for 45 minutes said the protest would continue today.

"This mass action will continue. Nobody will be sworn in as governor on May 29 in Edo State. I am ready to lay down my life for this cause," he told newsmen yesterday.

Continues on P.6

Continued from P.1

But *Daily Champion* learnt that one of the those killed in Edo whose name was not given at press time was roasted alive at the INEC office at Igarra, Akoko Edo local government area of the state by irate youths for allegedly manipulating the election results. The other two were said to have been shot dead at the Ikpoba Hill area of Benin City by some armed men in the early hours of yesterday.

The state Resident Electoral Commissioner, Mallam Mohammed Abubakar Ahmadu, had at about 10.25 am yesterday announced Professor Osunbor of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as the winner of the governorship election.

According to him, Professor Osunbor scored a total of 329,740 votes to emerge winner while Comrade Oshiomhole who came second scored a total of 197,472 votes out of the total 539,061 votes cast at the election.

Few minutes after the announcement of the results, irate protesters took over the city alleging that the result was manipulated.

As at the time of filing this report, the state secretariat of the PDP located at the Ikpoba Slope, Benin City had been torched by thousands of protesters who were opposed to the election result. The Akoko Edo office of the commission had also been burnt down while staff of the commission who were lucky to have escaped death, were chased out of the town.

Besides, all business outfits in the state capital which included filling stations, banks and other corporate premises had been put under lock and key while large number of combined military and anti riot policemen have been drafted to major streets in the city amidst sporadic gunshots from the protesting youths.

However, in a swift reaction to the tensed situation, Edo State governor, Chief Lucky Igbinedion who congratulated Osunbor over his victory at the poll called on the people of the state to maintain calm and rally support for the incoming governor. He imposed a dusk to dawn curfew in the state.

In the same vein, Osunbor, in a statement made available to newsmen in Benin yesterday by his spokesman, Dr. Ejele Benson, thanked the people of the state for trusting him with their votes and urged them to ignore any attempt to use them to create crisis in the state.

Osunbor said his vision for the state in the area of rapid economic development and provision of the basic infrastructure remained in focus, adding that this is the beginning of a new hope and future for the entire state.

"I want to thank the good people of the Edo State for reposing their confidence in me and this is the reason why I am calling on them to stand by me in my desire to build a new and economically rated state for the interest of the incoming generations," he said.

Action Congress (AC) governorship candidate, Comrade Oshiomhole who spoke to *Daily Champion* after the announcement of the result rejected the result and called for the cancellation of the election in the state.

Meanwhile, the political crisis rocking Osun State escalated yesterday with the stoning of the convoy of the state governor, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola and that of the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 2nd Mechanized Division, Gen. Mohammad Sani Saleh by some irate youths in Ilesa. Both Oyinlola and Saleh were in the town for an on-the-spot assessment of the troubled zone in the state.

No life was lost as the security details attached to the governor dispersed the rampaging hoodlums who were bent on attacking the convoy.

Gen. Saleh had earlier paid a courtesy visit on Oyinlola where he assured him that the Army is ready to protect the lives and property of the people of the state.

The state government has also declared a dusk to dawn curfew

(7pm to 7am) in Ilesha town just as no fewer than 65 hoodlums were yesterday arrested in the town in connection with the torching of over 16 houses in the town.

Some communities in the state were on Sunday engulfed in wild demonstration over the declaration of incumbent Governor Oyinlola as the winner of Saturday's gubernatorial poll.

Also the 'Oranmiyan House' campaign office of the Action Congress (AC) gubernatorial candidate Engr Rauf Aregbesola have been sealed off by a combined team of the Army and the Police.

Aregbesola is believed to have fled the state.

Similarly, violence erupted in some parts of Kogi State, Monday following the declaration of Governor Ibrahim Idris of the PDP as the winner of last Saturday's election in the state.

This development has forced the state government to declared a curfew from 6pm to 7am in Okene in the Central Senatorial District. Governor Ibrahim Idris, has directed security agents to deal with anybody caught violating the curfew order.

Daily Champion gathered that before the announcement of the results, there was palpable tension in Lokoja, the state capital and Okene, the stronghold of the Action Congress (AC) where its candidate Senator Mohammed Ohiare hails from.

The situation turned violent in Lokoja and Okene, immediately after the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) declared the incumbent governor as the winner.

This development forced banks and Igbo traders along the major streets of Lokoja to close down their shops as the thugs are battle ready to destroy and loot the shops.

The situation led to quick deployment of riot policemen (MOPOL) and Army who have to fire tears gas and chased away the thugs into the bushes, the security agents are now stationed at every part of the state.

However, as at the time of filing this report, tension was still very high in the state capital, as banks and shops remained closed.

Speaking with *Daily Champion*, Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) Mr Ambrose Igbokwe (DSP) warned politicians to conduct themselves according to the rules of the game, stressing that any politician caught involving in the riot will be dealt with no matter how highly placed.

Meanwhile, the Action Congress (AC) has urged INEC to conduct a fresh election in Kogi State.

Chairman of the party, Hon Mike Adeleye alleged that there were massive rigging by the ruling PDP during the governorship election, adding that for fair play and justice to be achieved INEC should cancel the last Saturday's election and conduct a fresh one.

In Kano State governor, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau yesterday imposed a dusk to dawn curfew on the state to forestall possible outbreak of violence.

He announced the measure ahead of the formal declaration of the governorship election result which he won.

Kano State Resident Electoral Commissioner, Alhaji Ahmad Raji while announcing the result said Shekarau polled 671,184 votes to defeat the PDP governorship candidate Alhaji Ahmed Garba Bichi who scored 629,471 votes.

Ondo State governorship candidate of PDP, Dr. Olusegun Agagu was yesterday declared winner polling 349,259 to defeat the Labour Party candidate, Dr. Olusegun Mimiko with 226,026. However the Labour Party has rejected the result just as the police imposed a curfew in the State.

Resident Electoral Commissioner in the State Josiah Uwazuronye who declared the result said the election was characterised by hijacking and stuffing of ballot boxes in some local government areas.

Uwazuronye announced the cancellation of results in some

INEC officials

polling booths at Akoko North East, Akoko South East, Akure North and the entire result in Ifedora local government areas.

Going by the result, the PDP won 10 local governments and the Labour Party seven local councils while one council area was cancelled.

According to him, the PDP won by 53.29 per cent in 10 local government while the Labour Party scored 34.49 per cent in 7 local government areas.

Meanwhile, the State police commissioner has imposed a curfew from 11.00p.m to 6.00 a.m. to forestall any break down of law and order.

Earlier, palpable fear had enveloped the state capital, Akure over the announcement on the Federal Radio in Abuja that the PDP had won the Saturday election in the state.

Following the announcement, the police deployed more men and soldiers into the state capital to disperse irate youths who carrying fresh leave, and demonstrating across the state.

There were protests also in major cities of the State in Ikare, Owo, Akure, Ondo Ore, and Okitipupa local government areas.

However, Chairman of Agagu campaign 2007 Prof. Olu Agbi at a press conference expressed happiness that Agagu won the election.

He said: "Our victory is well deserved, in spite of the machination of our political opponent. The people of the state have spoken loud and clear that Agagu should continue for second term. The votes represent the endorsement of Agagu as leader but not only as governor."

The State have made wise choice again. It is only the PDP that can assure continuity in the Nigeria mainstream politics. We are going to be magnanimous in our victory, Agagu is the governor of Ondo State not the PDP governor."

But in swift reaction to the election result, the Labour Party governorship candidate Dr. Olusegun Mimiko in a statement rejected the result as announced by INEC.

According to him, "The announcement today of the result of the gubernatorial election held in Ondo State on April 14, 2007, by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has come to my knowledge. The result did not reflect the wishes of the voters of Ondo State as expressed on April 14, 2007. I, therefore, have no hesitation in rejecting it outrightly."

What INEC has presented is a carefully orchestrated design to take away a mandate that was enthusiastically given to me by the people of this state. The confusion arising from having the so-called result announced first in Abuja by INEC headquarters even before the final collation by the Resident Electoral Commissioner here in Ondo State has clearly exposed the nature of this monumental vote theft.

Odili congratulates Omehia

TONY ITA ETIM, Port Harcourt

GOVERNOR Peter Odili of Rivers State has congratulated the State's governor-elect, Sir Celestine Omehia, describing his victory at the poll as victory for the new Rivers State where all tribes speak with one voice.

Odili stated this when he received the gubernatorial election result from former Minister of Transport and the state's Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Returning Officer for the election, Dr. Abiye Sekibo.

He said although many people did not know that such a day would come, God who has already ordained it, knew it, and thanked the People of Rivers State for their support.

In his remarks, Omehia said he was short of words to express his gratitude to God for what he has done for the People of the state.