

Electoral violence: 4 killed in Uyo

DENNIS UDOMA, Uyo

NO fewer than four persons were reportedly killed in Ini local government area of Akwa Ibom state as opposition trailed last Saturday's council elections in the state.

Another school of thought was that crisis erupted following disagreement by supporters of some candidates and electoral officers in the area over sharing of materials for the exercise and during the actual voting.

Although identifies of the deceased persons were not disclosed at press time, an eye witness who pleaded anonymity told *Daily Champion* that the victims died as a result of the mayhem that erupted over distribution of election materials by the adhoc personnel.

Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Gabriel Ngban said the command was not aware of any killing in Ini Local Government Area during the election as the exercise was adjudged to be peaceful in virtually all the local governments of the state.

He further said that the press would be brief at appropriate time once the report is made by the divisional police officer in charge of the area.

Meanwhile, the result of councilor and chairmanship elections from sixteen out of the 31 local government areas of the state have been released with the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) winning in all the local governments already announced.

The local governments are Eastern Obolo, Mbo, Ibeno, Essien Udim, Ukanafun, Etim-Ekpo, Nsit Atai, Nsit Ubium Ibesikpo, Obot Akara and Urue-Offong Oruko.

Others are Onna, Okobo, Ikot Ekpene and Etinan while the result of fifteen local governments were still awaited.

Announcing the results at the commission headquarters along Udo Umana street in Uyo, the state capital chairman, Akwa Ibom State Independent Electoral Commission (AKISIEC), Mrs. Gloria Ukpog said the Peoples Democracy Party (PDP) has led in the sixteen local government areas with clear defeat while the remaining results would be released subsequently.

She lamented the delay in the release of

the remaining results saying that, it was owing to some unforeseen circumstances associated with the computation of reports from centre across the state.

The polls monitored by our correspondent in the state was partially peaceful and lack the enthusiasm by majority of the people of the state.

Most centre visited were either observed to have voters waiting patiently for the materials or empty for lack of interest by the people.

This was attributed to the fact that the exercise was alleged to have been hijacked by the state government which teleguided activities of the electoral commission.

United Nigeria Peoples Party (UNPP) councillorship condidate from Northern Uruan ward two, Prince Linus Udofia bemoaned the exercise, noting that candidates from opposition parties were hitherto threatened to withdraw from the poll.

Prince Udofia described the attempt as a calculated effort to disenfranchise others including party agents from being accredited for participation in the poll.

In Ikono and Ini local governments where there were skirmishes of crises arising from opposition in some wards, the exercise was contentious as majority support was for the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) candidate, Mr. Boniface Essien against the opponent, Mr. Etetim Awatim of the (PDP).

The exercise across the state started behind schedule as majority of the centre did not have materials as at 11am.

But most of the stakeholders who spoke to *Daily Champion* acknowledged the delay as unavoidable element in any election.

Former military administrator in the state, Otu-ekong Idongesit Nkanga attributed the partial peaceful atmosphere in majority of the local governments to simple understanding by the people that election is no longer a do-or-die affair.

Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Obong Umana Okon Umana also corroborated Nkanga's position as well as thanked the state governor, Chief Godswill Akpabio for providing the enabling atmosphere for peace and unity in the state.