

Plateau: Crisis in Mangu over senatorial polls

• Policeman, two party agents shot as AC leads

By Andrew Agbese, Jos

Two party agents and one policeman were shot last Saturday in Mangu, one of the five local governments in the Plateau central senatorial zone, over a disagreement on the conduct of the elections in some of the polling units in the local government.

The Action Congress (AC) senatorial candidate in Plateau central zone. Major sati Gogwim (Rtd) confirmed the development saying that two of his agents were shot while trying to stop some men from snatching ballot boxes around Gindiri.

The state police commissioner, Mr. Ibiyinka Kayode however denied any report of ballot snatching or shooting in Mangu during the elections.

Gogwim however told our correspondent that the youths had snatched about 27 ballot boxes and were attempting to snatch two more at a polling unit when his agents tried to prevent them and some armed youths opened fire on them.

Our correspondent confirmed that the atmosphere in the Plateau central senatorial zone was still charged up to yesterday as a result of the senatorial and presidential elections from the five local governments in the zone being collated at the Pankshin office of the INEC.

The atmosphere in the zone, our correspondent

learnt, was tense due to the keen contest between deputy senate president, Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), who has represented the zone at the upper chamber of the National Assembly two previous times and wants the seat for the third time, and Major Sati Gogwim of the AC, who is believed to be enjoying the support of former Governor Joshua Dariye.

The build up to the tension started on Saturday, when senator Mantu, who voted at his Chanso ward at about 12:15 pm was said to have expressed anger at the total absence of his party agents at some of the polling units within his immediate constituency and quickly put a call across to his party men to arrange to ensure agents at all the wards.

The arrival of the agents who came in groups and almost at the same time in most of the wards, was said to have attracted protest from supporters of the other candidates mainly those of AC candidate who expressed reservations that the coming of the agents in groups and in the company of security agents was to manipulate the process in favour of the PDP candidate.

Sources however said that when the PDP agents insisted on having their way, the agents of the other candidates withdrew from some of the units to register their protest at the INEC office in Mangu, alleging that some of the agents were snatching ballot boxes.

The youths in their protest said INEC cannot receive results from the affected polling booths- mainly in the Pyem chiefdom- where Mantu hails from, because their

agents were not present at the polling units.

While agents of other candidates withdrew from other polling booths, our correspondent learnt that agents in one of the wards shot at one of the securitymen that accompanying the PDP agents who were accused of snatching ballot boxes and the PDP supporters fired back.

Our correspondent learnt that they have been rushed to the hospital for treatment.

17 people have been arrested in connection with the incident.

But the state police commissioner, Mr Ibiyinka Kayode, when contacted, denied knowledge of the incident saying he did not receive any report of ballot snatching or shooting from the area. He however confirmed that 11 people have been arrested but unlawful movements between Mangu and Gindiri during the elections.

Kano PDP Reps candidate shot

From Yusha,u Adamu Ibrahim, Kano

mary school polling centre.

His Son, Mallam Basheer Abdu Muzakkari who witnessed the incident told Daily Trust that they were on their way to the Primary School when suddenly his farther Alhaji Muzakkar felt on him with his jaw bleeding.

"I was driving him to the venue of the election to douse tension that intensified at the polling unit, the only thing I heard was his voice calling on me to assist him, shouting that he was shot on his jaw. He fell on my right side with his hands holding his jaw which was bleeding. " Basheer explained.

He recalled that "Earlier before the incident I heard some gunshots while we were approaching the fagge guest-inn roundabout but I don't know from which side the bullet came from and if not because of the seat adjustment I would have hit my head."

Basheer told Daily Trust that to the best of his knowledge the attack was politically motivated, adding that God's willing, the perpetrators of the devilish act would be fished out to face the wrath of the law.

Alhaji Abdu Muzakkari was later rushed to the Mallam Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital where he was admitted and is currently receiving medical treatment.