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# Violence mars Bayelsa governorship election

By Chris Eze & Victor Dozie Yenagoo | Publish Date: Dec 5 2015 11:24PM | Updated Date: Dec 6 2015 4:29AM

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Former President Goodluck Jonathan (right) being accredited for the Bayelsa State governorship election at Unit 39 Otuabula Word 13 in Ogbia L.G.A of Bayelsa State yesterday. | PHOTO: NAN

**.INEC reschedules election in Southern Ijaw LGA to Sunday**

**.8 persons feared killed**

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The governorship election held yesterday in Bayelsa State was marred by widespread violence, with supporters of the two leading

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political parties, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC), accused of causing the mayhem. No fewer than eight persons were said to have died in the orgy of violence which characterized the election.

It was gathered that while three persons were feared killed in Southern Ijaw local government area, four were killed in Nembe and another one in Ekeremor.

Speaking after he was accredited to vote in his ward at Toru Orua Ward 2 Unit 5 in Sagbama local government area, Governor Seriake Dickson condemned the violence perpetrated in some parts of the state that resulted in the killing of some persons.

The governor, however, commended the people of the state for showing the determination to exercise their franchise despite the intimidation and harassment.

He expressed concern over reports of violence and killings in some parts of the state, adding that such development would not promote a free and fair election.

Commenting on the performance of card readers in some polling units, he expressed dismay over the malfunctioning of the device as it was unable to capture the biometrics of his family members.

Dickson said, "In spite of trials and assurances, you all saw that my fingerprints were not recognized, same for my wife and mother. So, we have a serious problem as far as the so-called smart card readers are concerned."

Our correspondent gathered that few minutes to the commencement of voters' accreditation exercise, suspected thugs attacked Oporoma, headquarters of Southern Ijaw local government area, where some persons were feared killed and several others injured.

Several shots were reportedly fired to scare the people and pave way for the carting away of election materials, but security operatives were said to have contained the situation.

As at the time of filing this report, security operatives were still searching the area for possible arrest of the invaders while normalcy has been restored.

It was also alleged that about three persons died in Nembe, which is one of the strong holds of the APC candidate, Chief Timipre Sylva.

Meanwhile, the Director of Media and Publicity of the Sylva-Igiri Campaign Organisation of the APC, Chief Nathan Egba, had raised alarm over the violent attacks on members and supporters of the party across the state.

In a statement issued yesterday, Egba said, "We have it on good authority that Governor Seriake Dickson imported over five thousand thugs from neighbouring states of Delta and Rivers states to cause



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violence in the election.

He said the unknown faces in most of the riverine communities of the state terrorized the people with gun shots to scare people away from the polling units.

“The wave of attack has confirmed our fears and the alarm earlier raised that Governor Dickson was the one planning to cause violence.

“The affected communities are Oporoma in Southern Ijaw local government area, where the APC state chairman, Tiwei Orunimighe, hails from.

“In Nembe-Ogbolomabiri, two APC members were shot and the Military Task Force ordered residents to go into their houses and remain in-doors.

“In Sagbama town, headquarters of Sagbama local government area, one APC supporter was attacked. Sagbama is the local government of Governor Dickson, who is the PDP candidate,” Egba added.

He claimed that in Oporoma, headquarters of Southern Ijaw Local Government, it took the military to repel the PDP thugs, who had planned to snatch the sensitive election materials. Four persons were reportedly killed in the gun battle.

“At Odioma community in Brass LGA, Chief Sylva was attacked by PDP supporters on Friday evening. It took the intervention of the Joint Task Force to repel the thugs and whisk the former governor and his entourage away.

“Four journalists on the train of Chief Sylva were missing in Odioma for several hours after the gun shots. It took the efforts of the JTF and local vigilante group to rescue the journalists from their hiding late night on Friday.

“In Opolo town, the APC Ward 5 Campaign Organisation, Utovie Egba, was injured by PDP thugs, when they prevented APC polling agents from gaining access to the centre,” he said.

It was also reported that the country home of the Minister of state for Agriculture and Director-General of the Sylva/Igiri campaign organization, Sen. Heineken Lokpobiri, come under attack by gunmen who reportedly destroyed the house with explosives.

According to eyewitness report, some thugs suspected to have been hired by the Peoples Democratic Party from Delta State stormed the residence of the minister at Ekeremor town in Ekeremor Local Government Area in the early hours of yesterday.

It was further revealed that the thugs overpowered security men deployed to Ekeremor and made their way into the minister’s compound causing mayhem with Senator Lokpobiri and others trapped inside the house.

Meanwhile, the Independent National Electoral Commission has

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suspended election in Southern Ijaw local government area where it is said that over three persons have been confirmed dead, while over 43 persons have been arrested.

However, the state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Nasir Oki, when contacted said there was no killing in the state, describing the election as free and fair.

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