



■ People making purchases at Mushin market in Lagos, yesterday

Photo: Benedict Uwaleke

Elections: 15 killed in Kano, Enugu, Ebonyi violence

From Clement A. Oloyede, Salim Umar Ibrahim (Kano), Idowu Isamotu (Abuja), Jude Onwuamanam (Owerri) & Nabob Ogbonna (Abakiliki)

- NNPP vehicles burnt in Kano
- LP senatorial candidate, 6 others killed in Enugu
- Military warns thugs

At least 15 persons have been killed in different attacks on campaign trains in Kano, Enugu and Ebonyi states.

In Kano, hoodlums attacked the convoy of supporters of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP).

The Head of Operations, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence (NSDC), Kano Command, DCC Faruk Nuhu, in a briefing said the reports its men gathered from the field showed that between five and seven corpses have so far been recovered.

But the NNPP said none of its members was confirmed dead while the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) said it had no report of any casualties other than vehicles.

The NSCDC spokesman, DSC Idris Ibrahim also paraded 65 suspects said to have been arrested following the fracas, adding that others have been handed over to the police.

He said a joint operation with the Nigerian Air Force, army and NSCDC led to the arrest of the suspects.

"Actually, a lot of vehicles were vandalised and the report I got from my personnel is that five to seven persons lost their lives and a lot of vehicles were vandalised which I cannot ascertain the number now," he said.

Similarly, Daily Trust gathered that two local government chairmen, Ramat Abdullahi of Ungogo LGA and Mounir Gwarzo of Gwarzo LGA have reportedly been arrested by the police for unlawful possession of firearms and for allegedly leading hoodlums that unleashed mayhem on the NNPP supporters.

Reacting, the spokesman of the NNPP campaign council in Kano, Sanusi Bature, told Daily Trust that the party was not surprised by the arrests and that it had already

informed the police earlier in the morning of the plans of the APC to attack supporters of the opposition party.

We are not involved in attack - APC

But the deputy spokesman of the APC Campaign Council, Garba Yusuf Abubakar, who is the state's Commissioner for Water Resources, denied the allegations of the party's complicity in the attack.

"We are not involved because we had withdrawn our campaign based on the advice by the police to all political parties. The APC, Kano government and campaign council are not aware not to talk of being involved in this incident."

"As of the time the incident was reportedly happening, leaders of the party were with the state governor at the Government House for the swearing in of new permanent secretaries," he said.

Meanwhile, one of the suspects, Sani Isah, 49 said that they were called from Kano LGA to come for a political rally in Kano.

Rabiu Ibrahim Karaye, 17, said, "I was playing football at home when I was called to come for a political rally of APC. I just arrived and alighted from a vehicle when I was arrested. I only have one stick."

LP senatorial candidate, 5 others killed in Enugu

Gunmen have killed the candidate of the Labour Party (LP) for Enugu East Senatorial District, Mr Oyiibo Chukwu.

Chukwu was said to have been killed Wednesday evening alongside five supporters at Amechi, Awkunanaw Local Government Area of Enugu State while returning from a campaign rally.

The assailants were also said to have burnt him and the five supporters who were with him inside his car.

The LP governorship candidate, Chijioke Edeoga, confirmed the unfortunate incident.

He said that the gunmen shot

him inside his vehicle with five other people with him and set the car ablaze.

He said that his party members were being targeted for assassination by political parties that felt threatened by the rise of the party in the state.

Enugu police command had yet to react to the incident as of press time.

PDP rep candidate attacked, driver killed

Also, gunmen have attacked the campaign convoy of Oforchukwu Egbo, the House of Representatives candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for Enugu North/South Federal Constituency.

The incident happened Wednesday evening at Eke-Out in Amechi Awkunanaw, a community in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State.

PREMIUM TIMES reports that the attack happened in the same area and at about the same time that gunmen killed the LP senatorial candidate.

It is not clear, for now, if the two attacks were carried out by the same gunmen.

During the attack on the PDP candidate's convoy, one of his drivers was killed by the attackers.

A video clip apparently shot after the attack has been circulating on various WhatsApp groups.

In the clip, seen by PREMIUM TIMES, a corpse, believed to be the slain driver, was lying inside a mini-bus vehicle, which was branded with the name of the PDP House of Representative candidate and his photographs.

The photographs of the party's governorship candidate and deputy governorship candidate in the state were also printed on the vehicle.

The clip showed that the driver was heavily burnt in the vehicle.

APGA ward chair killed in Ebonyi

Gunmen have also killed the chairman of the All Progressives

Grand Alliance (APGA) in Ohofia Agba Ward, Ishielu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

The deceased, Monday Idoko, was shot in the head in his Onueke Ohofia-Agba country home at about 11pm on Wednesday.

A relative who pleaded anonymity said in a telephone interview with journalists that the assailants entered the village and dragged out the victim when he was sleeping before they shot him.

"My brother the story is very traumatic. It was a family member that alerted me that some unknown armed persons came to their house just before midnight, broke in and dragged him out before shooting him in the head."

"We have been in the mourning mood since last night," he said.

Daily Trust reports that the APGA governorship candidate's convoy was attacked two weeks ago in the same metropolis.

The attackers killed the personal driver and a police inspector attached to the convoy of the APGA guber candidate.

Similarly, another APGA supporter in Ohaukwu Local Government Area, Oscar Elom, was also murdered in a similar fashion when he was dragged out of his shop at Ngbo and shot in the head.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Chris Anyanwu, failed to respond to a text message sent to him via WhatsApp by our correspondent.

Security agencies warn Amotekun, vigilantes, others

Meanwhile, the military authorities on Thursday said personnel of security agencies would not hesitate to use "strong force" against any element that plans to disrupt the election on Saturday.

Acting Director, Defence Information, Brig.-Gen. Tukur Gusau, stated this at Defence Headquarters, Abuja during a joint press briefing of critical

security agencies.

Those in attendance included the spokesman of the Department of State Services (DSS), Peter Afunanya; Force Public Relations Officers (FPRO), Olumuyiwa Adejobi; and NAF spokesman, Air Commodore Wap Maigida, among others.

Gusau also warned personnel of the armed forces and other agencies not to collect food or any gifts from politicians proper arrangements had been made for them.

VIPs' security details withdrawn

On his part, the FPRO, Olumuyiwa Adejobi, disclosed that all security details attached to important personalities and top politicians in the country had been withdrawn.

Adejobi, a Chief Superintendent of Police, said they won't take it easy with state security outfits insisting that they would participate during Saturday's exercise.

"Every security agent who would be at the polling units has been taken care of, so they (State security outfits) need to rest that day. We don't need them, they should stay with their bosses," Adejobi said.

DSS continues clampdown

Also speaking at the event, the DSS spokesman, Peter Afunanya, said the secret police would not back down in clamping down on the political thugs who are hell-bent on making election ground a battlefield rather than allowing the polls to hold peacefully.

He disclosed how the personnel of the service recovered dangerous weapons like guns, swords, jackknives and others from Kano State on Wednesday.

"Therefore, the accusation that the service intimidated a particular political party in that state is untrue; otherwise, how come those weapons were found there? Are those objects of violence campaign materials?"

"Whether in Kano or elsewhere, the DSS has provided equal opportunities for all political parties to engage in their lawful activities. We can say this without any form of contradictions or equivocations."