

Gov'ship Elections: Massive Vote-Buying As Candidates Battled To Win

Massive vote-buying was recorded in yesterday's governorship and state assembly elections across the country, Daily Trust on Sunday reports. There were reports of politicians trying...



Massive Vote-Buying As Candidates Battled To Win

By Our Reporters

Sun, 19 Mar 2023 4:01:47 WAT



Massive vote-buying was recorded in yesterday's governorship and state assembly elections across the country, *Daily Trust on Sunday* reports.

There were reports of politicians trying to induce voters with cash and other gifts in Niger, Gombe, Kwara, Kano, Bauchi, Kebbi and many other states.

Although voter turnout was impressive in some places, only a few were seen exercising their franchise in most of the polling stations visited even as cases of ballot snatching and other forms of violence were recorded.

Multiple election observers have knocked desperate politicians saying "they weaponised poverty" by giving prospective voters peanuts or food items in exchange for votes.

[JUST IN: Gov Abdulrazaq of Kwara wins first LGA](#)

[Elderly persons: Why we voted in gov'ship, state assembly polls](#)

Some of the observers called for a review of the exercise in some places saying that was the only way to give credibility to the election.

Angered by the development, President Muhammadu Buhari, who cast his vote in Daura, Katsina State, told the electorate to collect money given to them by politicians but vote for candidates of their choice.

Situation in states

In Kano State, 10 ballot boxes were reportedly destroyed across several polling units in Rimin Gado LGA.

Although voting was said to be progressing peacefully, unidentified thugs later disrupted the process and destroyed ballot boxes.

Officials of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), who arrived at the INEC office at Rimingado with some ballot boxes, said they escaped by whiskers.

The polling units attacked included Dugurawa, Jujin Kosau, Jili ward, and Yelwa, Kongi 009.

In Kaduna State, there was low voter turnout despite the early arrival of INEC officials at the various polling units.

Our correspondents report that instead of going to cast their votes, many residents were seen at their business premises attending to customers; while others sat in front of their houses to observe the voting process.

It was observed that due to the early arrival of election materials in many places, residents went back to their houses after voting.



Minister of Works and Housing Babatunde Fashola casting his vote on Saturday

There were, however, reports of some Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) machines not reconfigured at polling unit 036 Kurmin Mashi and still carrying information on the presidential elections.

Governor Nasir El-Rufai alleged voters intimidation in the southern part of the state after casting his vote at his polling unit, 024 Marnona wards, Unguwar Sarki Kaduna.

He described the conduct of the election as peaceful and smooth “except in a few places in Southern Kaduna where we got a report of voter intimidation; people are being asked to vote for one party or go back home.”

In Nasarawa, a former Minister of Information and Director-General of the Nasarawa State Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) campaign council, Labaran Maku, alleged that voters were intimidated across the state.

The PDP chieftain had alleged during a press conference on Thursday that the APC was planning to rig the March 18, 2023 governorship and state assembly elections.

When our correspondent visited some polling units at Nasarawa Eggon LGA, voters were seen lined up to cast their votes.

However, an agent of the Labour Party at Primary Health Care Akunyanba polling unit 14, Livinus Moses, said many voters were chased away from polling units in the area by unknown people.

In Kwara, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) paraded 20 people arrested for alleged vote-buying.

The commission said the suspects were arrested in parts of Irepodun, Ilorin West and Ilorin South LGAs.

Parading the suspects, the acting commander, Ilorin Zonal office of the commission, Michael Nzekwe, said the EFCC acted on credible intelligence to effect the operation.

He said, “Majority of the people arrested were directly involved in vote-buying. We got credible intelligence and we acted on it. Some of the arrests were made in Omu-Aran, Ilorin South and Ilorin West. We were all over the 16 local government areas.

“We recovered huge amounts of cash and point of sale (POS) machines. We are still investigating the matter. After the investigation, we will strictly follow the provisions of the law,” he said.

Our correspondent also reports that despite the early arrival of INEC officials and materials, there was low turnout at some of the polling units visited during the elections.

Ballot box snatcher killed in Benue

In Benue, an alleged ballot box snatcher was gunned down at a polling unit in Gboko LGA.

Witnesses said the man was shot dead while another sustained gunshot injury on his leg when they tried to snatch the ballot box at a polling unit in Gboko South.

The chairman of Gboko LGA, Isaac Mtom, said: “What I was told is that one person was shot by security operatives. I wasn’t there but that’s what I heard,” he said.

The spokeswoman of the state police command, Catherine Anene, said she was yet to receive the report.

In Taraba, voters at four polling units in Chinkai town of Wukari LGA trooped to the polling units early in the morning, but did not meet INEC staff for the election.

Some people were arrested by security agents at Akate ward in Donga LGA for destroying election materials.

Daily Trust on Sunday also learnt that soldiers averted violence in parts of Kashimbila and Takum wards in southern Taraba following disagreement between youths at some polling units in the area.

In Plateau, elections were put on hold at Qua'an Pan, Mangu, Bassa and Jos North LGAs respectively as INEC ad hoc staff protested non-payment of their allowances for the February 25th presidential and National Assembly elections.

Niger voters forced to swear for gifts

Some voters in Niger State alleged that they were asked by politicians to show their PVCs and swear that they would vote for them before they were given gifts such as buckets, spaghetti, clothes and seasoning.

Daily Trust on Sunday gathered that some politicians followed voters to their homes on Friday evening and early in the morning to canvass for votes, distributing the items especially in Minna, the state capital and other towns.

In Tunga area of Minna, one of the beneficiaries, Mrs Jamila Mohammed, said she only got spaghetti, adding that they were asked to choose between buckets or plastic containers and that a yard of cloth was given to each voter but that some people refused to collect.

In Sokoto, voters spent night at polling units

Voters were said to have spent the night at their polling centres in some parts of Sokoto State, *Daily Trust on Sunday* gathered.

Our reporter gathered that voting started in some of the polling units as early as 8am with large turnout of voters, especially women.

A voter at Magajin Rafi Primary School polling centre, Ahmad Abubakar, said he was at the unit since 2am.

Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal commended INEC for conducting a hitch-free election in the state.

Shortly after casting his vote at the Government Girls Secondary School, Tambuwal said the election was an improvement from the presidential and National Assembly elections.

Opposition alleges vote-buying in Gombe

In Gombe State, there was large voter turnout in most polling units amidst vote-buying allegations by the opposition parties.

A witness said EFCC officials later came after the vote buyers.

Our correspondent reports that voters came out in large numbers. Many of them expressed satisfaction with the voting process which was conducted in a peaceful atmosphere.

Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya commended voters in the state for the large turnout and peaceful conduct in the elections.

The gubernatorial candidate of the NNPP, Khamisu Ahmed Mailantarki, said he was confident of winning the election.

Violence, low voter turnout recorded in South

Low voter turnout and violence were recorded in some states in the South during the governorship and state assembly elections held yesterday.

Opposition parties' candidates alleged that their supporters were chased away from polling units.

Thugs hijack ballot boxes, BVAS in Edo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo

Hoodlums invaded the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camp at Uhogua community in Ovia South West Local Government of Edo State, firing shoots and chasing voters away about 30 minutes after the election started.

It was learnt that the hoodlums, after chasing voters away, destroyed some election materials and made away with the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) device.

When contacted, the coordinator of the camp, Pastor Folorusho Solomon, confirmed the incident, saying election did not hold in the area as a result of the attack.

He however said he didn't know who actually carried out the attack.

Thugs also snatched ballot boxes and destroyed ballot papers at Unit 4, ward 1, Okesa Street in Ilesa and Unit 18, ward 3, Ojatuntun Irewo in Ife, both in Osun State.

A former chairman of PDP in the state, Sunday Bisi, accused APC leaders of sponsoring the violence but the spokesman of the Tinubu/Shetima Presidential Campaign Council, Remi Omowaye, said the disruption was caused by PDP.

Hoodlums also invaded polling units and hijacked ballot boxes in Sagamu, Iperu and Abeokuta, among other parts of Ogun State.

A voter, Tajudeen Adeoye, however, said police and other security operatives at the polling unit recovered the boxes.

At Iperu-Remo, the home town of Governor Dapo Abiodun, there was shooting when hoodlums snatched two ballot boxes at Polling Unit 05, Ward 03 in the Ayegbami area of the town.

They, however, succeeded in escaping with one before security operatives on election duty at a nearby road intersection could respond but the assistant polling officer for the unit, Alalade Babatunde, had been beaten up.

The Commissioner of Police, Frank Mba, said there was violence in some parts of the state.

"I actually admitted to the fact that we have a few isolated cases of violence; most of those incidents were nipped in the bud. We were able to actually take care of them before they become issues that can actually cause major concern for law and order.

"That's how criminals behave anywhere. No matter how tight the security is, people will try to breach the law but our job is to constantly reinforce," Mba said while speaking with newsmen.



INEC officials counting ballot papers after election in Ogun State

Lagos police shoot ballot box snatcher

A man, who allegedly attempted to snatch a ballot box at Jemtok polling unit in Okota area of Lagos, was feared killed by the police.

The deceased was said to have been trying to escape with the ballot box when he was shot by a policeman deployed in the area.

Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Idowu Owohunwa, who confirmed the fracas, however, said the victim did not die as he was taken to a hospital.

Owohunwa said normalcy was restored while voting continued.

Meanwhile, the Labour Party governorship candidate in the state, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, alleged that one of his party agents was shot dead by thugs in Apapa.

Gbadebo, in a video that went viral described it as voter intimidation, saying it happened in the presence of policemen and officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

"The police seem to be complicit in the whole thing. No one should hold anyone responsible if Lagos is burnt down in the night," he added.

But the ruling APC dismissed the allegations by Rhodes-Vivour, saying it is scaremongering "typical of bad losers who lack the spirit of sportsmanship" and a ploy to attract sympathy.

APC spokesman, Seye Oladejo, in a statement said, "The security agencies should note Mr Rhodes-Vivour's threat to set Lagos on fire as his predilection for violence and warmongering is well known to Nigerians.

“Should there be any breakdown of law and order in any part of our state, law enforcement agencies should know who to grab – Mr Rhodes-Vivour.

“We are compiling reports of how APC supporters were harassed and attacked today. Some of the reports are really scary. Now the LP candidate is playing the victim. This old trick won't work; discerning Lagosians know they are all lies deployed to attract sympathy.”

There was also tension in parts of Ojo, also in Lagos, when hoodlums disrupted voting exercises in some polling units.

Residents of the area who spoke with our correspondent said voting went on peacefully after some hoodlums came around and started shooting.

Cop shot in Ondo

There were also records of violence and low turnout in some parts of Ondo State during the House of Assembly election exercise.

Aside from the violence, the election witnessed low turnout as most registered voters shunned the exercise.

The hoodlums attacked no fewer than seven polling units in Ward 12 in Ute, Ose LGA of the state and disrupted voting.

A policeman was also shot in Idanre LGA alongside a resident, during the fracas.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mrs Funmilayo Odunlami-Omisanya, who confirmed the incident said the policeman and “a young man was hit by stray bullet” during the fracas.

She added that the police had arrested a suspect involved in the shooting and also recovered a gun from him.

Meanwhile, the acting Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Mr Oyekola Oyelami, said three trucks were seized for violating the vehicular movement order of the Inspector General of Police, Usman Baba.

“The trucks covered were said to be coming from the northern part of the country.

“But the vehicles have now been parked at the premises of the Police Special Anti-Cultist Squad along Oda road in Akure,” Mr Oyelami added.

A/Ibom YPP gov'ship candidate alleges killing of 2

The Young Progressives Party (YPP) governorship candidate in Akwa Ibom State, Senator Bassey Akpan, alleged the killing of two persons in his community by policemen from the government house.

It was gathered that the two persons were shot at the INEC office in Ibiono Ibom under circumstances that have not been clarified.

Speaking after casting his vote at Ididep Usuk ward 1, Senator Akpan representing Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District, called for investigation into the alleged killing, adding that another person was missing.

But reacting, the Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Mr Ini Ememobong, wondered what the victims were doing at the INEC office when they were not staff of the electoral body.

“What were YPP supporters doing at the INEC office? That admission by them that their supporters were those killed is simply an admission that they were trying to break into the INEC office to cart materials,” he said.

INEC staff abducted in Imo

The state assembly election in Imo State was characterized by violence and the abduction of INEC staff.

Although there was improvement in the deployment of electoral materials and staff by INEC, voters stayed away from most polling units.

Although the abducted staff were later released, the electoral materials could not be recovered.

The INEC Public Relations Officer in the state, Dr Chinenye Osuji, said as the electoral materials were not recovered, election could not be held in Ugbelle where the ad hoc staff were deployed.

Elder Statesman and Chairman of Imo Council of Elders, Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, who spoke to our correspondent after voting at Polling Unit 004, Umuohii Attah in Ikeduru LGA, observed that the turnout was low compared to the February 25 presidential and National Assembly elections.

Voters resist thugs carting away election materials in Auchi

There was pandemonium at the Ekhie Primary School polling unit, Auchi, Etsako West Local Government of Edo State when voters resisted thugs from carting away ballot boxes and other election materials.

It was gathered that the thugs stormed ward 3 unit 12 and attempted to snatch ballot boxes but were resisted by one Audu Ebig Braimoh, a member of the APC in the area.

It was learnt that voters who had scampered for safety returned to continue voting after the arrival of security men.

PDP, APGA kick in Ebonyi

The PDP governorship candidate in Ebonyi, Mr Ifeanyichukwuma Odili and his All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) counterpart, Prof. Bernard Odo, yesterday raised the alarm over electoral violence in some parts of the state.

The duo, who spoke to journalists, said violence was recorded in five out of the 13 local government areas.

Odili said, “Yes, reports of violence have been coming in from Ohanzara, Afikpo North and South that they are burning ballot papers.”

The Resident Electoral Commissioner of INEC in the state, Mrs Onyika Oguchi, confirmed the development when contacted via phone.

Oguchi mentioned Ezza North and South as the most affected local government areas.

Elections peaceful – Wike

Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike has said the conduct of the governorship election, in comparative terms, is quite better than what was experienced during the February 25 elections.

The governor spoke shortly after he cast his ballot at his polling Unit 7 in ward 9 of Rumuepirikom community in Obio-Akpor LGA of the state.

“It is much better today unlike what we experienced on the 25th of February. When the first election was held and people didn’t get what they wanted, they were discouraged.

“But for whatever it is, the number is still okay. You can’t force people to go and vote. I am happy with the peaceful nature and the way the election is going. It means the security agencies are doing what they are supposed to do.”

INEC has not improved on its performance – Atiku

The PDP presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar, alleged that INEC failed to rectify the problems encountered during the presidential election.

After voting at Polling Unit 012 in Ajiya Ward, Yola North Local Area, Atiku said he did not see any measures taken by the commission to improve on its performance.

“Honestly INEC is already a discredited organisation; let’s hope they will improve on their past performances,” Atiku stated.