

## EDO

## Seven Killed

FROM MIKE OSUNDE, BENIN

**T**HE governorship and State Houses of Assembly was marred by violence in parts of Edo State yesterday. At least seven people were feared killed in an election-related violence in Benin, the state capital, while some people were reportedly arrested in other parts of the state with guns and ammunition.

The police confirmed two persons dead in the St Saviour area, along Upper Sakponba Road in Benin. Sources said the other victims were killed at Oba Akenzua primary school in the Erhunmwunse area of town.

In Edo North senatorial district soldiers said they arrested a Lagos based lawyer with council Chairman in possession of guns. The soldiers recovered the guns at a hotel at Ihievbe in Owan East council.

A member of the State House of Assembly and commissioner in the Niger Delta Development Company (NDDC) was arrested and brought to the State Command by men of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) at about 5 p.m.

Reasons for his arrest were not immediately known, but police sources said it is not unconnected with a fire incident at a polling station where about five ballot boxes were allegedly destroyed.

Spokesman of the state Police Command, Mr. Peter Ogboi told journalists that some persons were arrested for electoral offences. He did not give the number of those arrested.

Officials of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the Action Congress (AC) traded accusations on the violence.

After casting his vote, PDP chieftain Chief Anthony Anenih told journalists that AC hired some thugs from neighbouring states who invaded offices of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) at Abudu at about 4 am but were later dislodged by the police. He also claimed that 14 persons dressed in fake military uniforms were arrested at Ugbugun in Esan Central while a jeep loaded with weapons was impounded in Benin.

Also AC chieftain Chief Tom Ikimi alleged that PDP thugs beat up AC agents at Amahor and Ujogba in Esan council. He alleged that the PDP planned to overrun Igueben, but for the presence of police and soldiers.

Besides the violence, there were complaints of non-supply of voting materials, disappearance of voters' names on the register. In Benin, voting materials arrived in some polling stations as late as 2 p.m. At Urhokpota Hall for instance, INEC officials first received materials for the houses of assembly elections without that for the governorship.

At Garrick Memorial Grammar School, voting began at about 2 p.m. when the materials arrived. Voting continued in areas of Benin as at 6 p.m.

The state deputy governor, Chief Mike Oghiadomhe after voting with and his wife, Louisa at about 11.30 a.m. expressed satisfaction with the massive turnout of voters. He described the elections as critical as it would usher in a new set of leaders.