

## APC chieftain killed by unknown gunmen

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

distort the outcome of the governorship election in the state.

INEC's Public Relations Officer in the state, Timidi Wariowei, told *The Guardian* that the body was incompetent to intercept or prevent persons who succeeded in the updated registration recently undertaken in the state from casting their votes. He, however, stressed that it was the duty of security agents and residents to fish out manipulators and ensure they were prevented from circumventing the electoral process.

"There is nothing we can do if someone comes to the polling booth with a valid PVC, even if we have reservations. If they have successfully registered for the exercise before, we cannot prevent them from voting.

"However, the onus falls on the people of the community and the security agents to fish them out and do the needful. It is the residents who can identify themselves and they are the ones who would be able to point fingers at infiltrators because they know themselves," he stated.

Wariowei also disclosed that the distribution of card readers, result sheets and ballot papers was ongoing in all 105 wards of the state, just as he hinted that the commission was awaiting the delivery of collation result sheets today or early tomorrow morning.

To prevent the substitution of genuine voting materials with cloned copies, the INEC image-maker said that the movement of materials would be heavily policed while party agents would be involved in the ex-

ercise.

He added that: "The inspector general of police during the stakeholders' meeting we had on Tuesday said that he was deploying about 14,000 police officers in the state. So, all the stages of the process are heavily-policed and secured. We are also involving all the party agents in the movement of sensitive materials to prevent cloning and hijacking."

Meanwhile, the spate of violent acts that had pervaded the pre-election period continued yesterday as the Vice Chairman of All Progressives Congress (APC) Ward 1 in Odi community of Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Council of the state, Diseye Dickson, was murdered by unknown gunmen. This was contained

in a statement by the state chapter of the APC. The statement was signed by the Director of Media and Publicity of the governorship campaign body, Chief Nathan Egba.

On Wednesday, the party's flag-bearer, Chief Timipre Sylva was conspicuously absent from the governorship debate which held at the state capital. Egba said the absence from the debate organised by the Nigerian Election Debate Group (NEDG), in Yenagoa was unavoidably due to some political commitments in other parts of the state.

He explained that Sylva was held back while on a campaign tour to some communities in Sagbama Local Council, including Odoni and Agbere communities in line with the party's campaign sched-

ule approved weeks ago. Egba said his principal's absence was not deliberate and that the campaign organisation offered its apologies to the organisers and entire people of the state.

In a related development, the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), a non-governmental organisation (NGO) involved in the monitoring of elections in the country, has announced that it will deploy about 325 election observers for the poll.

A pre-election statement by the body yesterday in Yenagoa said 300 stationary observers and 25 roving members would monitor the election, in what it said would be a representative random sample of 300 polling units of the 1,804 polling units in the eight local councils of the state.

"TMG's quick count for the December 5, 2015 Bayelsa

State governorship election will involve deploying 300 carefully selected, trained and accredited stationary citizen observers to a representative random sample of 300 polling units out of 1,804 in all the eight local government areas (LGAs)," it said.

The Head of TMG secretariat, Dr. Aaron Ogundwin, also added that the monitors would all report at their assigned polling units at 7:00 a.m. observing all the processes thereof, from accreditation, voting, counting to announcement of results.

"On election day, TMG's citizen observers will report to their assigned polling units at 7:00 a.m. and will remain there throughout the setup. That is, accreditation, voting, counting and finally announcement of the official results," he said.