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Violence Mars Bayelsa Re-run

By Sam Oluwalana, Yenagoa on January 10, 2016 4:46 am

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INEC ballot box

• 4 Policemen, 2 Soldiers, 11 Others Feared Dead • Ballot Box Snatching, Heavy Shooting In Communities

THE rescheduled Bayelsa State governorship election held in seven of the eight Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the state, yesterday, was marred by widespread violence, which claimed the lives of 17 people.

On the eve of the election, five people were shot dead in Ogbolomabiri, Nembe LGA, while six others were gunned down in different parts of the state yesterday.

Voting did not hold in nine units in Ekeremor, while electoral materials had not arrive Akassa Town in Brass LGA as at the time of filing this report. Election did not hold in some polling units in Nembe Bassambiri, due to heavy shooting in the area. Voting materials did not arrive Constituency 24 of South Ijaw, while materials were hijacked in Peremabiri town.



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Informed sources said the dead bodies of those killed were deposited at the mortuary at Bomadi General Hospital, Delta State.

Hoodlums in Otuopoti Town snatched ballot boxes, while election did not hold in Units 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 in Ward 4, Southern Ijaw LGA.

The Minister of State for Agriculture and Rural Development, Heineken Lokpobiri, however, denied reports of death in his Ekeremor LGA.

Lokpobiri, who spoke to reporters through one of his aides, Comrade Preye Amba, debunked what he claimed was a report “by some PDP loyalists that there was heavy shooting in Ekeremor town that led to the alleged killing of two soldiers and two civilians.”

He described the reported killing of security personnel in Ekeremor as callous and wicked, saying: “Election in Ekeremor went peacefully and the resort to this by the PDP is just a way of laying the foundation to cancel the supplementary poll, so that whatever advantage it had before now would be sustained. There was no shooting whatsoever in Ekeremor.

“Rather, it was the PDP, in concert with one Major from 5 Battalion Warri that came to carry away electoral materials from Ekeremor to Egbema Angalabiri. We have it on record that the said Major is on the payroll of a known ex-militant leader who is bent on bringing down the APC in Bayelsa State. We call on the military authorities to investigate the role of the Major.”

The campaign organization of the APC flagbearer, Timipre Sylva, denied that the Presidency had been working behind the scene to manipulate the election results in the party’s favour.

In a statement issued by its Director of Media and Publicity, Chief Nathan Egba, the organization expressed shock at insinuation that President Muhammadu Buhari issued directives that results should be announced in APC’s favour.

“The Sylva-Igiri Campaign Organisation wishes to sound it clear, once again, that President Buhari is not influencing the result of the election in favour of our candidate, having remained neutral from the beginning of the process.”

Governor Dickson, meanwhile, condemned the electoral malpractice and violence that marked the elections in Brass, Nembe, Ekeremor town and parts of Southern Ijaw Local Government Area.

In a statement signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Daniel Iworiso-Markson, the governor accused APC chieftains of masterminding the killings of innocent Bayelsans in Brass, Ekeremor, Nembe and Southern Ijaw.

The governor said the violence has vindicated him on his earlier position that the security agencies particularly, the Nigeria military are partisan and not willing to protect the enabling environment for a free and fair election. He also accused the security agencies of providing cover for the APC to perpetrate violence and rig the elections.

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“To achieve their sinister plot, APC militants hijacked election materials and wrote results in many wards of Southern Ijaw, Brass, Ekeremor town, Brass, while elections were disrupted in parts of Yenagoa and in a polling unit in Otokpoti, Ogbia Local Government.”

The governor called on the Independent National Electoral Commission to “cancel the elections in polling units where the APC hijacked election and results were written.”

According to the statement: “Over 14 people were feared dead; four of them were policemen, two soldiers and eight civilians in Ekeremor alone. Many PDP members were attacked in Brass and Southern Ijaw and are in critical conditions at the Federal Medical Centre, Yenagoa.”

Also reacting to the conduct of the election, the PDP praised the people of the state for what it called resilience and gallantry in the face of intimidation.

In a statement, the Director of Media and Publicity, Barrister Jonathan Obuebite, said: “I want to appreciate the people of Southern Ijaw Local Government Areas and those in the other 101 polling units, as they listened to our call that they must not allow anybody to intimidate them, as they step out to exercise their civic responsibilities.

“It is very clear with this display of gallantry despite the mayhem unleashed by APC supporters, which has led to deaths that our people are ready for the restoration government of Hon. Seriake Dickson, to continue with its focused and people-oriented governance.”

An election observer group, Centre For Credible Leadership and Citizens, also petitioned the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Resident Electoral Commissioner over cases of ballot box snatching.

In the petition signed by the group’s President, Dr. Gabriel Nwamba, the body disclosed that electoral materials and INEC personnel never got to Lobia 1, 2 and 3 communities in the Bassan area of Southern Ijaw LGA, and that INEC ad-hoc staff reported that while security men looked on, some thugs allegedly working for one of the political parties snatched a bag containing electoral materials.

From a long catalogue of flaws, the group said: “In Ukubie and Azuzuama, no materials and INEC staff were sighted, meaning the entire people of these communities were disenfranchised. In Brass, thugs seized materials and INEC personnel meant for the Cape Formosa area (consisting Egweama, Beletiamia and Liama) and whisked them to an unknown destination.”



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Thugs seized materials despite the fact that the military despatched hundreds of their personnel to the state? If you want to live long, don't go into politics in Nigeria and in Africa in general. These apes are all out to loot the treasury and leave their folk poor and dependent on their alms.

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