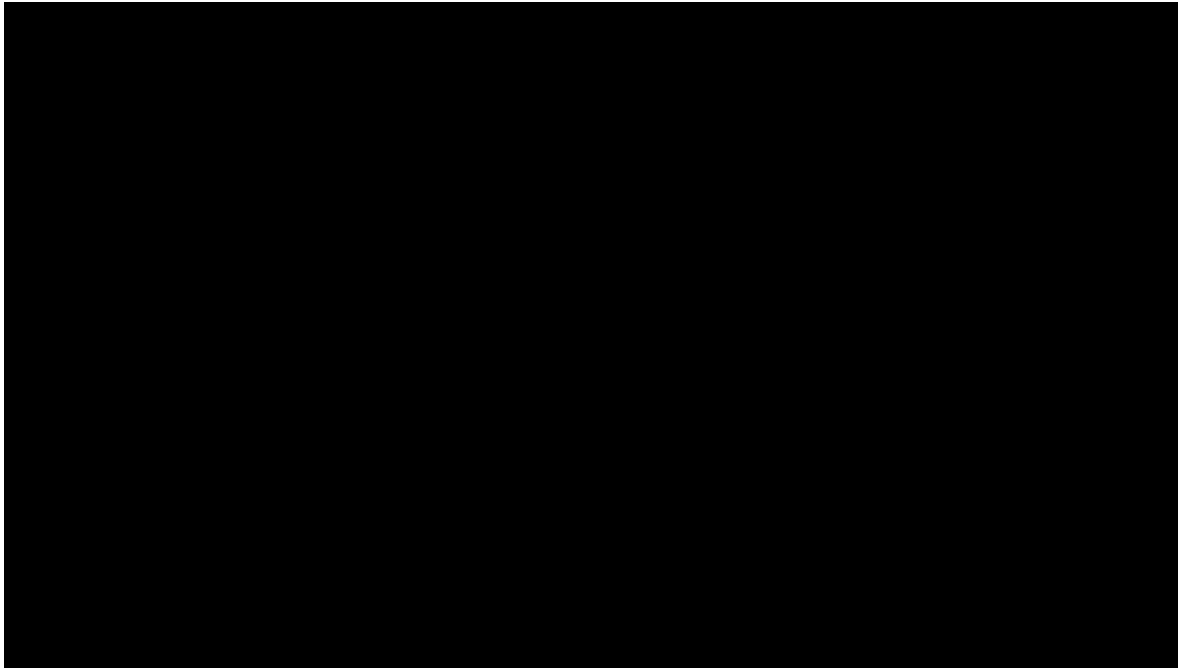


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Tension as Ondo goes to poll today

By Muiyiwa Adeyemi (Head South West Bureau Ado Ekiti) | 26 November 2016 | 4:16 am



.... One Allegedly Killed, Properties Destroyed In Owo

There was palpable tension in Ondo State yesterday as residents prepare to exercise their franchise to elect the next governor of the state. All public institutions were closed while the state government declared public holiday for the students and civil servants to prepare for the election.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had promised a level playing field for the 28 registered political parties and their candidates that will be in today's election. Serial protests by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Governor Olusegun Mimiko to postpone the election were rebuffed by INEC, an umpire expressed its readiness to conduct elections in all the 3,010 polling units in the state.

And the refusal of the INEC to postpone the election yesterday, as demanded by the state Government, reportedly caused crisis in some parts of the state. In Owo, a chieftain, Mr Afolabi Olaposi, was reportedly shot dead by yet-to-be-identified gunmen while some properties were also allegedly destroyed.

The state Police PPRO, Mr Femi Joseph, said he did not have details of the incident now, but assured that the Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) in charge of the election would speak on the matter.

The state with over 3.6 million population, according to INEC Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, had 1,660,055 as registered voters but only 1,281,552 who have their Permanent Voters Card (PVC) would be allowed to cast their votes. "I wish to reiterate that INEC has no plans to postpone the election this weekend. We are prepared. We see no reason to activate the provision of Section 26 or Section 36 of the Electoral Act and there is no other ground in Law to postpone an election."

"I wish to assure you of INEC's preparedness and neutrality. We are not unaware of the partisan insinuation of bias in the nomination of candidates by one of the parties," Yakubu said.

As at Thursday evening sensitive and non-sensitive materials had been deployed to all the 18 local councils by the electoral body, which assured that the 16,700 polling stations to be used for the election were well trained for the job.

Highlighting the voting procedure, INEC stated that accreditation of eligible voters shall commence by 8:00 am in all the polling units, they would be given their voter's card and allowed to proceed to vote without any delay.