

Residents Abstain From Voting At Agidingbi, Lagos

By Yinka Shokunbi and Aramide Oikelome

Saturday's voting exercise took different dimensions in some parts of Lagos where some residents abstained from voting because of alleged "lack of patronage" by the candidates for the governorship and state House of Assembly posts.

Our correspondents who visited Akeem Balogun Street of Agidingbi area in Ikeja noticed that the people completely refused to vote.

They simply did not come out for the exercise.

It was found out that as at 2.30pm, no vote had been cast at the voting unit.

A check at the voters' register showed that no fewer than 259 names were listed there.

It was gathered that following the strange development, some officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had to go from house to house to persuade the residents to come out and vote.

DPA House Of Assembly Candidate Arrested With Ballot Boxes

By Fabian Ozor
SENIOR CORRESPONDENT, Lagos

A House of Assembly candidate on the platform of the Democratic Party Alliance (DPA) in Lagos State, (names withheld), was on Saturday arrested by security operatives with ballot boxes allegedly stuffed with votes.

The candidate, according to security sources, was accosted by military men along the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) road in Ejigbo area of Lagos with a van and the ballot boxes.

The Special Adviser/Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information, Lagos, Segun Ayobodu, confirmed knowledge of the incident, claiming that the suspect has been taken away by security personnel.

Also at Ipaja area of Lagos in Alimosho Local Government, a ballot box was stolen by unidentified persons, while in Ikoyi, some people were allegedly prevented from voting.

No reason was given for this action by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) official at the affected centre when confronted.

Meanwhile, voting was peaceful in Ikeja area and it started early.

Absence Of My Picture On Ballot Paper Deliberate, Says Agbaje

By Grace Omoshaba
REPORTER, Lagos

Democratic Peoples Alliance (DPA) governorship candidate for Lagos State, Jimi Agbaje, whose picture was absent from the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC's) ballot paper at the polling booth on Saturday has described the omission as "a high level of negligence" on the part of the electoral umpire.

Agbaje, voting at his Apapa residence, described the omission as unfair and a disappointment.

"When I got to the polling station this morning at 10.30am to cast my vote, I found out that my picture was not on the ballot box. This is very unfair and insensitive of INEC. When INEC asked for photographs, they were sent; and if INEC discovered that they did not have the picture, they should have made a request for another," Agbaje said.

He added that INEC did not create a level playing ground in the electoral contest.



• Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission, Prof. Maurice Iwu, with German Ambassador to Nigeria, Joachim Christopher, and his Spanish counterpart, Angel Losada, during the monitoring of the election in Nasarawa State.
Photo: Jide Oyekunle

Osun: Five Allegedly Killed By Thugs

By Olusola Balogun and Gbenga Faturoti, Osogbo

The governorship and House of Assembly elections in Osun State was on Saturday reportedly marred by widespread violence and malpractices.

Five persons feared killed during the polling.

Action Congress (AC) governorship candidate for the state, Rauf Aregbesola, consequently threatened to reject the results of the polls if both the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and security agents failed to apprehend those suspected to be behind the

mayhem and bring them to justice.

The five victims were allegedly killed in Ila-Orangun, the country home of AC National Chairman, Adebisi Akande, during a fracas which ensued between members of the party and the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

However, the state Commissioner of Police, Suliaman Fakai, denied knowledge of anybody being killed.

Besides, there were reported cases of ballot boxes being

snatched while in some polling booths, agents of opposition parties were abducted.

The polls started on a peaceful note with Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola and his wife, Omolola, casting their votes at Oyekunle Primary School, Okuku, at about 8.40 am.

They arrived the voting centre in a metallic coloured Mercedes Benz convertible marked GN 576 AAA.

However, as the polls progressed, desperations set in as

...Two Killed In Ekiti

By Gbenga Sodeinde,
Ado Ekiti

No fewer than two persons were reported killed in Ikere Ekiti and Ise Ekiti while soldiers were seen in some volatile towns and villages believed to be the strongholds of

opposition parties during the Saturday's governorship and the House of Assembly elections in Ekiti State.

Sources close to opposition parties alleged that at about 1.30pm on Saturday two white pick up vans marked FG 246V01 and

FG3414V01, plus a Mazda vehicle marked AJ113 AJK, came in company of some electoral officers and eight policemen into the Government House to exchange already thumb printed boxes.

Despite that the elections went well in some areas, no fewer than

Thugs Hijack Voting Materials In Abeokuta, Oshodi/Isolo

By Femi Ogbornikan
REPORTER, Lagos

Governorship and House of Assembly elections in Ogun State on Saturday were accompanied by violence, as suspected hired thugs hijacked voting in some parts of the state.

This is coming just as the Lagos State Action Congress (AC) raised an alarm over alleged attempts to hijack electoral materials by hoodlums during polls at the Oshodi/Isolo Local Government area of Lagos State.

Areas engulfed by fracas in Ogun State include Abeokuta South Local Government area, Ijebu-Igbo, Ijebu-Ode, Ifo, Sango-Ota and Shagamu.

Asearly as 7.00am at Ijemo, Ago-Oko and Ake areas of Abeokuta South Local Government, suspected thugs led by a chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) took over the entire vicinity and unleashed mayhem on people believed to be their political opponents.

The thugs reportedly wielded

dangerous weapons such as axes, machetes and charms, among others.

They threatened fire and brimstone to scare away the voters from the polling booths.

"Kill them, don't maim them", the thugs chorused as they moved around.

While elections began at about 10.30am in most of the 510 polling booths of the Oshodi/Isolo council area in a generally peaceful atmosphere, there were pockets of clashes among members of the AC and those of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) at places such as Mafoluku, Shogunle and Brown Street.

Our reporter witnessed, at Oshodi Motor Park, a team of mobile policemen in mufti and a convoy of three vehicles allegedly from the SCID, Panty Street, and led by a PDP House of Representatives candidate, and his wife (names withheld).

The team reportedly arrested some men believed to be AC loyalists and were taken to an unknown destination.

INEC Didn't Create Level Playing Field - Ohimai

By George Akpayen and Chioma Obinagwam

Lagos State governorship candidate of the Fresh Democratic Party (FDP), Uche Ibukun Ohimai, has alleged that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has made nonsense of the whole voting process in the Saturday's governorship election in the state.

Ohimai told our reporters while casting her vote at about 1.30 pm at Ward E30B near Ligali Ayorinde Street on Victoria Island, Lagos that the INEC made mockery of the voting process through the omission of the pictures of some candidates from ballot papers in the polls.

"I have been here (at the polling booth) several times and the voting process didn't start early. I started getting complaints as early as 9.00 am from people that they could not find my picture on the ballot paper.

"I think for me, that is one problem we already have because INEC is not providing a level playing field for all the candidates in Lagos State," she said.

One killed, As Robbers Attack INEC

By Rafiu Ajakaye
REPORTER

A vehicle marked FG 499-V01 conveying sensitive voting materials was on Saturday morning attacked by three unknown gunmen, according to a driver, Samson Okone.

Okone, a senior driver with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) said the attack took place at Shagamu, Ogun State. The vehicle was enroute Lagos from Abuja.

"We ran in to the ambush at about 1.00am", Okone explained, saying the three armed men, suspected to be armed robbers, "opened fire at us but I was able to dodge the bullet alongside the police escort and another INEC officials".

He said the escort then gunned down one of the assailants, while the others fled, leaving the windscreen of the vehicle shattered.

I'm Sure Of Victory - Obanikoro

By Maxwell Oditta, George Akpayen & Chioma Obinagwam

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) governorship candidate for Lagos State, Musiliu Obanikoro, has said he is sure of clinching the governorship seat when the results of the Saturday's polls are made public.

Making the remark after casting his vote at Ward C1 behind Oja-Oba Market in Lagos Island, Obanikoro told journalists that he was happy

with the conduct of the elections.

He expressed happiness that the polling has been free of violence as against earlier apprehension that there would be violence around some polling booths, especially in Lagos Island.

However, the senator alleged that a rival party, the Action Congress (AC), was busy rigging the elections.

He further alleged that areas hitherto classified as non-residential are being used by AC to manipulate voting.

"From what I have seen today, I am happy about the whole voting process. The atmosphere has been very peaceful and I believe that it will disappoint some of our rivals because they had gone to town claiming that the PDP was planning to unleash violence on the electorate.

"I have information that the AC is busy rigging to win. For example, non-residential areas such as Alausa, where there is virtually little or no concentration of people is one of such areas being used to

manipulate votes," he claimed. Voting began around 8.45am at the centre with verification of voters amidst fears of possible attack or disruption of the exercise by hoodlums.

Around Adeniji Adele and Apogbon there were different contingents of armed soldiers and the streets were littered with broken bottles.

But voters at the various polling booths in Lagos Island, just after Obanikoro cast his vote around mid-day, said that the voting has been entirely free of violence.

Tinubu Votes, Happy With Polls

By Fabian Ozor and Kayode Olapade, Lagos

Lagos State governor, Ahmed Bola Tinubu, on Saturday cast his vote at noon at the Alausa voting centre in Ikeja, Lagos, where he described the conduct of the election so far as peaceful and orderly.

The governor, who arrived the voting centre at 12.20p.m. with his wife, Oluremi, and other security aids, had asked the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) official at the centre to search out for his name as he was not with his card because the card

is with his police Aid-De-Camp (ADC) who has been whisked away to Abuja on the orders of the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Sunday Ehindero.

The INEC official accordingly checked out and found Tinubu's name and thereafter gave him the voting cards.

After casting their votes Tinubu and his wife proceeded to see his mother, Alhaja Habibat Mogaji, who had earlier voted in the morning.

Speaking with newsmen at his mother's residence, the governor said that information reaching him indicated that there were

some hiccups in the conduct of the polls.

Tinubu blamed the hiccups on inadequate preparations by the INEC.

He said voting did not start early at the river-rine arrears of the state as INEC officials were not available on time to enable people cast their vote there.

In FESTAC town, the logo of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) was missing in the voting papers.

"INEC is aware of this election, they have three and half years to prepare, but this is what we get. If the election was designed

to fail we will know later tonight, but things are not what we expect", Tinubu said.

On the heavy presence of the military, especially in Lagos, Tinubu said he did not mind as long as the military went about their duty peacefully, adding though that this is unusual in a democratic setting.

"It is part of the unpreparedness of the INEC. Election is a civil matter and police is best suitable for that but we have to take it, military men are not our enemy, if we do not have enough police they can come in," he said.