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Man In News



Oshiomhole: A governor's homily on peace

Weather in Abuja, Nigeria

Current Conditions:



29°C

Partly Cloudy

Wind: E 3 mph

THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
4/28	4/29	4/30	5/1
H:36	H:36	H:36	H:35
L:26	L:26	L:26	L:26

Last Update: 6:15:51 AM

Abuja

Cartoon for the day



LAST UPDATED AT Mon Apr, 18 2011

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North burns over Presidential poll

•Scores feared killed, PDP leaders' homes, mosques, churches, torched
•Curfew in Kaduna, Niger, Kano, Bauchi, others
•Military, Mark warn protesters
•Buhari distances self from crisis

By Joe Omokaro, Seyi Oguntuase (Lagos), Adetutu Folasade-Koyi, Chesa Chesa, Rotimi Akinwumi (Abuja), Augustine Madu-West (Kano), Chinwendu Nnadozie (Minna), Baba Ngedu (Kaduna), Mohammed Abubakar (Damaturu), Tor Vande-Acka (Lafia) and Patience Ogbodo (Bauchi)



The burnt house of former House of Representatives Speaker, Umar Gali Na'aba, in Kano ... on Monday. Inset: youths with weapons.

Once again, the North is back on the boil. Young men on Monday went bananas and turned on the political elite in the region whom they suspected of complicity in the victory of Goodluck Jonathan over Muhammadu Buhari in the run for the Villa.

Scores were slain, the homes of leaders of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) were torched, as well as churches and mosques, in a senseless orgy that sacked Kaduna, Niger, Kano, Bauchi, Yobe, and Nasarawa, five states with a history of ethno-religious mayhem.

Buhari, the Presidential candidate of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), distanced himself from the madness, and Jonathan (PDP) appealed for calm and urged political leaders to caution their supporters.

Violence broke out in Kano, the stronghold of Buhari, as Muslim youths went on rampage as the results of the vote suggested Buhari lost.

Police imposed an indefinite curfew on the state, after five persons died in attacks that targeted PDP chieftains, particularly those loyal to Jonathan.

Christians and non-natives were also fair game for the rioters.

Churches were razed in areas like Badawa and Naibawa, and several lives were lost in Hotoro where the protesters embarked on house to house attack.

Some rioters were shot by the policemen.

Soldiers were deployed to patrol areas like Brigade, Kurna Asabe, Sabongari, among others.

Looting was reported in Fagge and on Ibrahim Taiwo Road where shops and other business ventures were vandalised by the protesters who made bonfires on major roads, including Zaria, Hadeija, Ibrahim Taiwo, and Audu Bako Way.

There was massive bloodshed in Kurna Asabe, where Monday's trouble started before spreading to other parts of the city.

Another three bodies were spotted in Yankaba Motor Park.

Politicians who were victims included two former House of Representatives Speakers, Salisu Buhari and Ghali Na'Abba.

Buhari's multi million Naira factory on Hadeija Road was vandalised.

He is the Director General of the Jonathan Campaign Organisation in Kano.

Na'Abba recently led some Kano leaders to meet with Jonathan in Aso Rock.

His home in Sharada was burnt, likewise that of Ibrahim Tofa and the

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Reflection on the campaign for accountability

office of Sule Lamido

Police, Army, Air Force barracks have been turned into refugee camps by non-natives and non-Muslims in search of safety.

In Bauchi, commercial activities were paralysed in the city, and in Azare, Jama'are, and Misau, even as Governor Isa Yuguda called for peace and caution among the people.

Youths set up burn fires on Kobi, Nassarawa, and Wunti Streets while security agents fired gunshots to prevent the mob from advancing towards the INEC office, which is heavily guarded.

A structure on the Bakaro Street belonging to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Minister, Bala Mohammed, was burnt, along with other buildings belonging to PDP stalwarts in the state.

Yuguda, however, announced on state television that, "Allah has destined who will win the election. Just as Muhammadu Buhari won in Bauchi State, it is the will of Allah and must be accepted as such.

"I urge everybody to be cautious with what he or she does, those celebrating should go back home and do that while those challenging should follow the most appropriate means to challenge."

One of the leaders of the protesters, who did not want his name in print, said their grouse against the Northern PDP leaders is that they betrayed Buhari by ensuring that Jonathan got 25 per cent of the votes cast in the state and elsewhere in the region.

The Bauchi Government has slammed a dusk to dawn curfew throughout the state.

And soldiers have taken over the Bauchi metropolis, combing all the nooks and crannies to fish out the miscreants.

Protesters took the streets in the cities in Yobe State, including Damaturu, Potiskum, and Ngelzarma and Damaturu.

Buhari's supporters set up burnfires in Socol Junction, Muhammad Idriss Way, and Texaco Junction in Potiskum.

Places of worship, shops, supermarkets, and other business ventures were burnt or vandalised.

Vehicle owners were allowed to drive on only if they were forced to say, "Nigeria sai Buhari."

A trader, Yakubu Gwari, died when a stray bullet hit him on the shoulder.

Commissioner of Police, David Omojola confirmed that arrests were made and that the matter is under investigation.

The homes of Vice President Namadi Sambo, the Emir of Zazau, and the INEC office in Kaduna were torched, all of which the Deputy Inspector General of Police (Operations), Audu Abubakar, described as unfortunate.

Abubakar told Governor Patrick Yakowa on a visit to Government House that the Inspector General of Police, Hafiz Ringim, mandated him to assess the situation in all the states where the riot has broken out.

Said he: "It is unfortunate; in fact it shouldn't have happened in the first place because there was no ground for it. The election was adjudged by all as free, fair, and transparent.

"But some misguided youths decided to embark on riot. In an attempt to make it look like a religious crisis, the youths decided to burn mosques and churches but basically it is political."

Abubakar appealed to the youths and their parents, saying, "Nigeria belongs to all of us. To destroy is very, very easy but to build takes time."

Regardless, youths overran some cities in Nasarawa State: Lafia, Mararaba, and Karu, which are in the suburbs of the FCT.

Business was brought to a standstill, the Lafia main market and the streets were deserted.

The protesters also vented their anger on the state correspondent of NEX, Umar Muhammed, when he brought out his camera to take their pictures.

Two persons – one a policeman who was entering his house after returning from duty – were killed and some worship places were burnt in Minna.

The hand of an employee of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) was chopped off and five cars and one motor cycle were razed. Burn fires were made on major streets.

A monument under construction by the Niger State Government at the Kpakungu Roundabout was burnt.

Markets and shops were closed in Minna, Suleja, Bida, and Kontagora.

Heavily armed soldiers were deployed in major streets and flash points when it became impossible for the police to contain the situation.

About eight persons who were throwing stones from buildings in the Kpakungu area were arrested and taken to the police headquarters.

Governor Mu'azu Aliyu pleaded with the people in a broadcast to give peace a chance and accept the election result as "the will of Allah."

There was tension in Sokoto, where the Sultan, Abubakar Sa'ad, has reportedly gone into hiding; as violence spread to the centre of Zaria, with burning and looting everywhere.

The gates of Ahmadu Bello University were shut.

However, Buhari declared on Aljazeera Television that he was not in support of the violence.

And CPC National Chairman, Tony Momoh, issued a statement in which he expressed concern over the violence.

"While appreciating the inalienable right of Nigerians in a democratic system to express their feelings in a protest against injustice, they

must nevertheless remain non-violent."

"The CPC abhors violence by all Nigerians in the course of expressing grievances," he stressed.

Momoh urged Abuja to investigate the role of the police and other security forces in the alleged shooting of about 100 persons in Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto, Port Harcourt, Owerri, and other places.

In his reaction, Jonathan asked his fellow presidential contestants to appeal to their supporters to stop the violence and carnage in the name of protesting against his victory.

"I appeal to those involved to stop this unnecessary and avoidable conduct, more so at this point in time when a lot of sacrifice has been made by all the citizens of this great country in ensuring the conduct of free and fair elections.

"All of us are further encouraged by the comments of the independent election monitors and observers both domestic and international on how transparent and credible the elections have been so far," Jonathan said in a statement.

"We must not allow for the loss of any life and as I have always said, no one's political ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian.

"Please remain calm, law abiding and patriotic at this very crucial moment of our history. Thank you and God Bless Nigeria!"

Senate President David Mark charged all security formations to mobilise for action and halt the mayhem immediately.

To him, Nigerians "have genuinely made decisions on who should lead them at all levels of government through the ballot and must not be stampeded to do otherwise."

The Director of Information at Defence Headquarters, Colonel Mohammed Yerima, assured that the military will not allow the riot to escalate and "will not allow unpatriotic people to take laws into their hands."

He also dispelled any rumour of a coup d'état, saying the military is "solidly and fully committed" to the protection of Nigeria's democratic credentials and national security.

Yerima blamed the violence on "the regrettable actions of some individuals who felt dissatisfied with the outcome of the ongoing electioneering process (and) have resorted to conscripting uninformed youths to cause public disturbance and unleash mayhem in some states."

Ringim also warned that the police will deal with all perpetrators and their sponsors, saying he has directed the Commissioners of Police (CPs) in the North to arrest and prosecute them.

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar equally condemned riots, insisting that the burning of houses and setting prisoners free is not acceptable in any democracy where people have the freedom of choice.

"Our peaceful co-existence as a people is not negotiable and anything that may infringe on the promotion of our collective good, unity and stability must not only be frowned on but avoided at all cost," Atiku said.

Atiku advised political leaders whose supporters are involved in violence to instantly dissociate themselves from the criminal conduct, "which threatens the unity, stability and public peace of the nation."

Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) National Publicity Secretary, Anthony Sani, posited that "such violent reactions during elections are unacceptable and therefore, condemnable precisely because there are due processes of law through which perceived injustice is expected to be addressed."

Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) National Publicity Secretary, Lai Mohammed, denied that the party played any role to aid Jonathan's victory.

"Before the election, we had the option of working with the PDP but we did not take it, because we know this will not go down well with our supporters, and will negate everything that we stand for.

"Yes, they (PDP) approached us, but we rebuffed their approach, because there is no way darkness and light can work together," he said.

Oodua's Peoples Congress (OPC) founder, Fredrick Fasehun, maintained that the arson and killings in the North show that only a few Nigerians are qualified to be national leaders, which justifies the demand over the years for the convening of the Sovereign National Conference (SNC).



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Article Comments

(29 comments)

On Wed Apr, 20 2011 09:03 by bashir.

the PDP rigging machine once again demonstrated to Nigerians that "even if it is Jesus the head of an electoral Umpire" it will rig the elections. they did it once again but this time systematic (Smartly and intelligently) with tacit support of JEGA. The CIA report on Nigeria has started to manifest. the mistake of 1914 is appeared to be inevitable. Every Northerner was separated or division according to sample opinion. Oh Nigeria, we will never get in Right. O GOD we need your intervention

On Tue Apr, 19 2011 03:56 by Ernest

Looking at the election map, what is needed now is for the region to mobilized for a new yes or no vote: referendum, the result of which will resolved the long perceived injustice of 1914 of the amalgamation of North and South Nigeria.

On Tue Apr, 19 2011 03:20 by Sam Idiama

It is this type of behaviour that brought about the Nigerian Civil war. The Nothern politicians have not deemed it wise to call thier youths to order. If care is not taken, Nigeria may see another civil war and the theatre will be in the North. No one group was divinely ordained to rule Nigeria. I don't care who wins but if observers say the elections were the freest ever in Nigeria why must people riot? This type of behavior keeps us where we are - backward and never really achieving anything. What a shame!!!

On Tue Apr, 19 2011 03:20 by mcdanny

you see when we talk about Nigeria they will say north and south and forget the entity call Nigeria will soppose to be reverend among all things, if they can not think Nigeria they better file for secession instead of disturbing the peace of this great country, common sense should tell them that in every election there is always a winner and a lossse..i personally support buhari bcos am tired of this PDP thing, that does not mean that i will take to the street when he lose.they should simply accept their fate and plan for the next one....and they the northerners should have it in mind that when they kill the our peple over there they have there peple living in the southern part of the country....The old favour G.E.JONATHAN he is the will of God for nigeria....

On Tue Apr, 19 2011 02:34 by nellyking

i m afraid....its time we sit on the table and share our father inheritance...Life expectancy is 48 yrs...Nigeria died 2 years ago...lets sit as children and call our mother (Britain) IN assisting us share our father's inheritance and we go our ways. We can all make it on our own..if we work hard.

On Tue Apr, 19 2011 01:12 by Patrick Agbobu

Buhari you lost the election woefully, be man enough and accept it. Please put an end to all these destructions especially in the areas you won, by accepting defeat hounourably and with dignity. This will pour very cool water on these uncalled for opportunistic paid protests. Buhari stand up very tall, pick up the telephone now, invite the world press and congratulate Goodluck Jonathan. Save your self and your supporters these unesssesary pains NOW!!!

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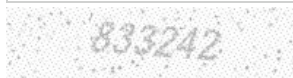
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