

Two Feared Dead, Scores Injured As Violence Mars Enugu LG Polls

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Two persons were feared dead while scores sustained injuries in the widespread violence that marred the local government elections, held in Enugu State on Saturday.

The elections organised by the Enugu State Independent Electoral Commission (ENSIEC) were also marred by poor logistics, especially the distribution of electoral materials.

The election was mainly a two horse race between the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the ruling party in the State and the All Progressives Congress (APC), the leading opposition party in the State.

At Oji River, there were reports that the police killed two persons in skirmishes recorded at Oji River LGA at about noon while scores of others were injured.

Earlier in the morning two explosions were recorded at Coal Camp Enugu and Amechi Awkunanaw, both in Enugu South LGA.

According to eyewitnesses, trouble started in Oji River when the electoral materials were brought to the local government secretariat without the result sheets.

Following the non inclusion of the result sheets, members of APC who saw it as a ploy by PDP and ENSIEC to rig the election, insisted that the materials would not leave the secretariat for the polling centres unless the result sheets were brought.

It was gathered that there was a stalemate at the Oji River secretariat until the Commissioner of Police, Danmallam Mohammed arrived at the scene with his men and ordered that the

secretariat by force.

The policemen reportedly fired tear gas canisters at the protesters and in the ensuing milieu, two fatalities were recorded.

Speaking in a telephone interview, Gba zuagu Nweke Gbazuagu, a top APC chieftain from the area where the skirmishes occurred, said two persons were shot, although he did not give the names of the victims.

Apart from insecurity, the election was further marred by poor logistics preparation by ENSIEC, the effects of which was visible in most areas where officials and materials arrived late and without the result sheets.

At Ekeh ward in Udi LGA, home of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Geoffrey Onyeama and Director General of Voice of Nigeria (VON), Osita Okechukwu, the materials were yet to arrive as at 12pm when journalists visited the area.

It was gathered that the delay was caused by a disagreement at the distribution centre in Udi council, sparked by the non inclusion of result sheets in the materials brought to the centre.

The same problem occurred in most other parts of Udi LGA, home of former Governor Sullivan Chime, an APC chieftain.

Chime told journalists that though the exercise started late, he voted to encourage others to vote, but described the entire exercise as charade.

Meanwhile, following the late arrival of materials, ENSIEC extended voting till 5pm

In a statement signed by Mr. Mike Ajogwu, SAN, the Chairman of the Commission, the extension was to enable willing voters who have not voted the opportunity to exercise their civic responsibility.

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