

INEC yesterday declared that elections will continue in parts of the state where elections were marked by violence or destruction of materials.

INEC national commissioner representing South South, Mr Mustapha Leckey, who disclosed this in Yenagoa during a press briefing declared that election in Southern Ijaw local government area ran into hitches due to clashes between rival parties.

Lecky, who was flanked by the Bayelsa resident electoral commissioner, Baritor Kpagih, commended the election process in most of the areas except Southern Ijaw, but however, pointed out that the election in Southern Ijaw had not been cancelled or postponed but will continue tomorrow (today).

4 killed, scores injured as Bayelsa poll turns bloody

The governorship election in Bayelsa state yesterday turned bloody as four persons suspected to be ex-militants were shot dead and confirmed killed, with scores of people injured in an early morning violence that erupted during the exercise in Ekeremor, Southern Ijaw, Nembe, Sagbama and Brass local government areas of the state

LEADERSHIP Sunday gathered that four persons were killed during a test of wits and gun power between the ex-militant youths loyal to the PDP and those of the APC in the areas.

It was gathered that the gun battle between the two ex-militant groups which lasted for hours followed attempt to hijack the accreditation and voting materials from the INEC headquarters in the area.

Three of the ex-militants were reportedly killed as security forces battled to restore normalcy while another was said to have been killed by a stray bullet.

Both the PDP and the APC have engaged themselves in a verbal war that saw the two major political parties in the electoral contest blaming each other for the killings.

Our correspondents report that most of the ad-hoc staff and officials were locked inside the INEC office by armed soldiers who repelled the attempt by armed men to hijack the electoral materials.

It was gathered that while the sporadic shootings forced many of the residents to stay indoor for fear of being hit in the cross fire, the hoodlums were unable to move the election materials from the highly tensed area.

“Several shots were fired to scare the people and pave way for the carting away of the election materials but the security operatives attached to the area were up to the task,” a source at the scene told LEADERSHIP Sunday.

Serious violence erupted in Southern Ijaw local government area of Bayelsa state, leading to non-accreditation of voters for yesterday's governorship election in the state.

Heavily armed thugs had in the morning hours of today hijacked electoral materials sent to various electoral wards, and polling units in the council area by the Independent National Electoral Commission INEC.

The battle ground according to sources, was in Ekeremor local government area of the state where there were attempts by armed groups to invade the home of Senator Heineken Lokpobiri, the Minister of State for Agriculture.

PDP, APC trade blames over violent attacks

Meanwhile, the PDP and the APC have engaged themselves in a verbal war, with the two major political parties in the electoral contest blaming each other for the killings.

The PDP claimed that the violent attacks were being carried out by the APC and some hired hands from outside the state.

The ruling party in the state said, “security operatives have arrested the former secretary to the state government and a chieftain of the APC Chief Gideon Ekeowei and former member of the House of Representatives, Hon. Donald Egberibein and 49 others in connection with election violence in Oporoma Southern Ijaw local government headquarters that left in its trail the death of no fewer than four persons and several others injured.

“Members of the APC reportedly unleashed terror on the people of the community in the early hours of the day. It was gathered that the affected persons were picked up at various locations within the community.”

But a report released from the situation room of the campaign organisation of the APC governorship candidate, Sylva, noted that it was some armed thugs suspected to have been hired by the PDP from Delta State who stormed the residence of the minister at Ekeremor town in Ekeremor local government area in the early hours of yesterday.

According to the report made available to LEADERSHIP Sunday, the said thugs overpowered security men deployed to Ekeremor and made their way into the minister's compound causing mayhem with Senator Lokpobiri and others trapped inside the house.

The report noted that while the security personnel attached to the minster were making attempts to rescue the situation, the attack intensified as the PDP thugs said to be led by one Tolu Amatolo, took over the entire community.

The campaign team reported that the military were fighting as they were expected to restore normalcy in the community.

The APC through its director of media and publicity, Chief Nathan Egba claimed that the wave of attacks affected communities including Oporoma in Southern Ijaw local government where the state APC chairman, Tiwei Orunimighe, hails from.

Other local governments said to be involved include Nembe, Brass, home of the APC governorship candidate, Sylva and Ekeremor, home of Senator Lokpobiri.

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