

One killed as poor turn out, violence mar Niger LG polls

LOW turn-out, short supply of ballot papers, malpractices and violence yesterday marred local government elections in Niger State. One person was killed in Kontagora local government leading to indefinite suspension of voting in the council. The incident followed a violent protest during distribution of electoral materials. Unknown gunmen shot into the air to scare away voters. One man was found dead and several others injured after the melee. Governor Babangida Aliyu and former head of state, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, expressed concerns over the poor turn out. While Aliyu blamed it on poor mobilisation of the electorate, Abubakar

From Jide Orintunsin, Minna

attributed it to voters' apathy. Some chairmanship candidates of Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) withdrew from the race at the last minute, citing absence of level playing ground. They alleged that electoral officers and ad hoc staff were sympathisers of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Voters stayed away from most polling stations visited by our correspondent. Some of them include Chanchaga, Paikoro and Bosso, Suleja, Bida, Mokwa and Gurara local governments. State Chairman of CPC, Mallam Shuaibu Umar, stated that elections were marred in all the 25 local government areas. He alleged that the state Independent Electoral Commission contravened the electoral act by deliberately shielding names of electoral officers engaged for the elections. He further complained that stakeholders were denied opportunity to raise objection on any suspected officer. Umar said "the electoral process did not provide a level playing ground, coupled with the fact that all the Electoral officers are PDP agents, some of our chairmanship candidates pulled out in protest." Commissioner in charge of Information in the State Independent Electoral Commission, Alhaji Mahmud Mohammed, said that all political parties were involved in the distribution of the materials, which he said were adequately provided for electoral officers.

Donations for Lagos schools

AGEGE Local Government Education Authority yesterday donated e-learning equipment and instructional materials to some schools in the council.

The agency also donated a mobility aid to Master Tobilola Ebofin, a physically challenged student of Amosun Primary School, Agege.

Education Secretary of the council, Hon. Olamilekan Majiyagbe, pleased that the agency will continue to contribute to the attainment of academic excellence.