

# One dead, others hospitalised as stray bullets hit INEC ad hoc staff in Rivers

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THE governorship and House of Assembly election in Rivers State witnessed low turnout of voters across various polling units across the state.

This is just as two ad hoc staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) were hit by stray bullets at Abua Central Ward 7 in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of the state.

They were hit by bullets suspected to have been fired by political thugs who were shooting sporadically to scare voters before snatching voting materials.

One of the victims was said to have died on his way to the hospital while the other had been hospitalised.

Though the election commenced early in most of the polling units in Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor local government areas as scheduled by INEC, voters were just trickling in at the various units without any form of pressure on election officials.

The Rumuwoji community playground housing

wards 12, 13 and 14 with about 29 polling units were devoid of the crowd of voters that thronged the place at the presidential election even as party agents were overheard calling voters to their various polling units.

However, party officials and agents praised the process, saying it has been smooth and seamless devoid of any hitches.

Wilson Osinachi Awosike, SDP agent at Ward 12, Unit 9 told Sunday Tribune that INEC officials arrived at the place ahead of many of them.

He added that all the materials required for the election were intact and that the BVAS machines functioned optimally.

Rivers State governor, Nyesom Wike, commended INEC for marked improvement on the exercise from the February 25 presidential polls.

He voted at about 11:10 a.m without any hitch from the BVAS.

Speaking to journalists after voting, Wike commended INEC for a marked improvement on the irregularities that affected the presidential election of February 25.

He blamed the high rate of voter apathy on the handling of the presidential election which he said discouraged many voters.

Former Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi, on Saturday, lashed out at the Chairman of INEC, Professor Mahmood Yakubu, over the conduct of the 2023 general election.

Amaechi, a former governor of Rivers State, said one of the loyalists of the president-elect, Bola Tinubu, nominated Yakubu as INEC chairman.

The former minister stated this in an online video that trended on social media platforms yesterday, saying INEC boss also worked under Rivers State governor, Nyesom Wike, as the Executive Secretary of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund).

He decried the conduct of Saturday's governorship and House of Assembly elections in Rivers State, saying the All Progressives Congress (APC) did not contest the elections against the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) but against INEC and the police in the state.

Also speaking, the Accord governorship candidate, Dumo Lulu-Briggs described the voting process in this election as seamless.

There were several reports of materials snatching and intimidation of voters across local government areas, wards and polling units in the state.

Political thugs were said to have snatched BVAS machines and other materials at Umudioga ward 10 in Emohua local government area while in Port Harcourt City local government suspected cultists were moving about with canes to flog anyone who refused to vote for their preferred party in ward 6 units, 41,42,51 and 52 in Okrika Waterside, Cemetery and Marine base.

Sunday Tribune gathered that the governorship and state legislative elections could not be held in some three local government areas of Rivers State.

The local government areas are Asari-Toru, Gokana and Khana local government areas and they are strongholds of major candidates in the governorship election.