

# Four killed as gunmen set ablaze Anambra, Enugu, Imo INEC offices

Leke Baiyewu, Tony Okafor and Raphael Ede

FOUR hoodlums were reportedly killed by the police during a gun duel at the Anambra State headquarters of the Independent National Electoral Commission on Sunday.

A senior police officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told our correspondent that four of the hoodlums were felled during a gun battle with security operatives that lasted for about two hours while two were captured alive.

He said, "We felled four of them and captured two alive when we demobilised three of their vans. Others escaped with bullet wounds. If you look at that van, you will see the two persons captured alive and bodies of those who were killed."

The Commissioner of Police in the state, Chris Owolabi, who confirmed the casualties on the side of the hoodlums, said it would be premature to give out figures.

Owolabi said the hoodlums had initially attacked a nearby B Division of the command where they were fiercely repelled by his men on duty.

He said, "They only managed to set our charge room on fire with improvised explosive device."

The CP said the command was checking hospitals around town for injured gunmen, insisting that some of them

escaped with gunshot injuries.

He said, "An IED was thrown into the charge room and set the place on fire; we all know it was a decoy to attack INEC office. So, we proceeded to INEC where we engaged the hoodlums.

"The three vehicles they came with was demobilised and recovered, that made them scamper for safety; we recovered about six pump actions, one G2 rifle and one AK47."

INEC laments fresh attacks, insists on Anambra gov poll

Reacting, INEC has lamented the fresh attacks on its offices in Anambra, Imo and Enugu states, saying the serial destruction of its offices and facilities has become a national emergency.

The electoral umpire, however, said preparations for the governorship election in Anambra scheduled for November would continue.

The National Commissioner and Chairman, Information and Voter Education Committee, Festus Okoye, in a statement issued on Monday and titled 'INEC offices attacked in Anambra, Enugu and Imo States', noted that INEC held an emergency meeting on Monday "as attacks on its facilities in some states of the federation continue unabated."

He said, "All three incidents in Anambra, Imo and Enugu have been reported to the Police for investigation. Although no lives were lost, these are clearly

orchestrated and targeted attacks aimed at incapacitating the commission in conducting electoral activities, especially in Anambra State.

"Anambra State: the state headquarters office in Awka, was set ablaze in the most devastating onslaught on the commission's facilities so far.

"The attackers were systematic and selective in their targets. The pavilion, which serves as a collation centre during major elections, was burnt down. In what is a major blow to our preparations for the governorship election scheduled for 6th November, 2021, two stores housing electoral materials were burnt down."

**Hoodlums again raze INEC offices in Enugu**

Meanwhile, hoodlums have again razed the Igboeze South Local Government Area office of the Independent National Electoral Commission, Enugu State.

This came barely a week the INEC state headquarters was attacked as vehicles and other valuables were torched.

The PUNCH gathered the hoodlums arrived at the INEC office located in Ibeagwa Aka at about 10:45 pm on Sunday and set the office on fire.

The Enugu State Chief Fire Officer, Okwudili Ohaa, who confirmed the attack, said the situation had been brought under control.