

INEC office burnt, two killed in Kano, Ondo

Tukur Muntari and
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THE office of the Independent National Electoral Commission in the Takai Local Government Area of Kano State has reportedly been burnt down.

It was gathered that the incident happened around 9.30am on Saturday when some suspected political thugs invaded the INEC office and unleashed violence.

INEC officials, elections observers, journalists and others were said to have run in different directions while some people sought cover in the ceiling of the building.

It was said that the hoodlums set the building on fire in a bid to harm those who hid inside the ceiling.

A journalist, Sale Nasko, who was injured in the attack and is currently hospitalised, said the attack happened while the collation officer of the local government was waiting for the arrival of results from the last two wards (Takai and Kachako) before announcing the official results of the presidential and National Assembly elections.

He said military intervention brought the situation under control.

"We learnt the attack didn't affect the election results," the victim said.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer in Kano, SP Abdullahi Haruna, confirmed the incident.

"It was from the generator house that they started the fire. It was hurriedly brought under control and security operatives have been intensified in the area," he said.

Meanwhile, one person was reportedly shot dead in Idanre, Idanre Local Government Area of Ondo State on Sunday at the collation centre of the Independent National Electoral Commission in the local council area.

It was gathered that the deceased, Akinlabi Akinlaso, popularly known as *Oluomo*, was allegedly killed by the security agents guarding the electoral commission's office.

An eyewitness said the deceased, who was said to be a businessman in Akure and a supporter of the Peoples Democratic Party in Idanre, was shot by the security agents during a scuffle on the premises of the centre.

The eyewitness said, "The man (deceased) was not a political thug but he is a supporter of the PDP. He went to the collation centre when the officials of the INEC did not announce the results of the election in the local government on time on Sunday morning.

"When he got there he had an argument with the security men on duty at the centre. They asked him to

leave the premises but he refused, so it was during the scuffle that one of the security men shot him in the stomach and he died."

The source said the remains of the deceased had been deposited at the mortuary of the Ondo State General Hospital, Idanre.

When contacted, the state's Police Public Relations Officer, Mrs Funmilayo Odunlami, said she would call the divisional police station in Idanre to confirm.

She said, "I heard about it but I can't confirm the incident for now. I will call the DPO of Idanre to confirm and get the details."

In a related development, the Kano South senatorial candidate of the New Nigeria Peoples Party, Kawu Sumaila, **alleged on Sunday, that at least one person was killed and another injured when**

hoodlums attacked and burnt the INEC collation centre at Takai Local Government Area of Kano State.

Sumaila said this during an emergency press conference in Kano after the collated votes of the Kano South Senatorial Zone placed him in the lead.

According to him, no fewer than 10 suspected hoodlums were arrested by the police after the alleged attack.

"We are waiting to see what will happen if the arrested attackers will be prosecuted," Sumaila said.

Sumaila blamed the All Progressives Congress for the attack and the burning of the collation centre.

He said intelligence reports available to him indicated that similar attacks were being planned for Kano Local Government Area, which is the collation centre for

the Kano South Senatorial District.

He said he had already alerted the Department of State Services and the Commissioner of Police Commissioner in the state.

Ismaila called on the international observers, the media and civil society organisations to be proactive and take measures to prevent the alleged plans.

The Kano State Police Command said it arrested three suspects in connection with the burning of INEC office.

The command's Public Relations Officer, SP, Haruna Abdullahi, who confirmed the arrest, said the suspect set ablaze the generator room and destroyed some INEC properties before they were arrested.

He said normalcy had since returned to the area.

Ballot snatching: Gombe youth leader shot, Kwara PU results cancelled

Deborah Tohu-Kolawole,
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Chima Azubuike

THE Resident Electoral Commissioner in Kwara State, Mallam Attahiru Madami, has said the result of election in Polling Unit 10, Tsaragi Ward in the Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State in the Saturday presidential and National Assembly elections would be cancelled following a case of ballot box snatching by hoodlums.

Madami also told reporters on Sunday that the cancellation was in line with the rules guiding the conduct of the elections.

He attributed the late arrival of Independent National Electoral Commission's personnel and materials in some parts of Ilorin West to some logistical glitches.

He stated that the subsequent late commencement of voting in some of the polling units

resulted in the extension of voting time in the affected areas.

The REC said, "It took us up to 11am before we finished the distribution of logistics and immediately I knew we were starting late, I extended the time of voting until the last person in the queue voted."

Madami said out of 2,887 polling units in Kwara State, ballot boxes snatching was experienced in only one, which was in Tsaragi in Edu Local Government Area.

On the allegation that INEC used a vehicle belonging to a political party to distribute election materials, the REC said, "It is not true that the commission used vehicles belonging to one of the political parties involved in the election to distribute materials."

Similarly, the REC in Kogi State, Hale Longpet, hinted on Sunday that election results in parts of the state where violence was recorded would likely be cancelled.

Longpet gave the hint in an interview with the *News Agency of Nigeria*.

The *PUNCH* reports that there were reports of interference by political thugs in some polling units in Anyigba and Dekina in the Kogi East and Mopa in the Kogi West as well as parts of Kogi Central, where voting materials were allegedly carted away by the thugs.

Reacting to the issues, the REC said, "You know the electoral law says that where there are disruptions to the process, the result will be cancelled, the very particular units' results will be cancelled. The issues initially were only in the Kogi East and Central but I can't tell exactly where and where in the state have been affected until the results are brought by the electoral officers."

Meanwhile, the Gombe State Youth Leader of the All Progressives Congress, Kawu Mohammed-Masu, was on Saturday shot in the leg for

trying to snatch a ballot box at the Yahaya Umaru 010 polling unit in the Gombe metropolis.

Our correspondent had exclusively reported that Mohammed-Masu, who is popularly known as Top-lero, masterminded the snatching of four boxes before soldiers retrieved two from him.

Investigation by our correspondent on Sunday revealed that the attempted ballot box theft followed the announcement of results at the polling unit where the state Governor, Muhammadu Yahaya, voted.

"He (Mohammed-Masu) was quickly evacuated to the Federal Teaching Hospital in Gombe for treatment," a source said.

At the hospital security personnel mostly soldiers were seen everywhere around the Accident and Emergency department of the hospital, while doctors tried to save the youth leader's leg from being damaged permanently.