

Four killed, houses razed, thugs disrupt polls in Rivers, Anambra, others

THE supplementary elections held in some states on Saturday were marred by violence, with four persons killed in Kano and Kebbi states, and pockets of violence and low turnout of voters recorded in other states.

Sunday PUNCH gathered that apart from the killings in the two states, the exercise in Edo, Ekiti, Adamawa, Rivers and Anambra states was characterised by voter apathy, vote-buying and late arrival of election materials.

This was just as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission announced the arrest of 12 persons in Kano and Katsina states for alleged involvement in vote-buying.

Three persons were feared killed when thugs invaded the Utai and Achika districts of the Wundi Local Government Area of Kano State to disrupt the election. The thugs allegedly insisted on voting, but the residents resisted them and that resulted in a clash that claimed the lives of the victims.

Sources said three houses, including that of the Chairman of the local government council, were also set ablaze.

It was gathered that the heavily armed thugs were brought to the area to disrupt the election.

When contacted over the incident, the police spokesman in the state, SP Haruna Kiyawa, told one of our correspondents, "I have commenced investigation into the incident and will get back to you for confirmation as soon as I find out more information."

He, however, had yet to get back as of the time of filing this report.

Sunday PUNCH reports that thugs also disrupted the polls in the Kwaciri, Kurna Gabas and Zangon Marikita areas of the Fagge and Ungogo local government areas of the state.

The Bolki Ward had the highest number of polling units with 13 in total.

The suspects, who are in the custody of the DSS, could not properly identify themselves and claimed that they had been asked to come to the ward as replacement for the ad hoc officials who were to conduct the poll in the ward.

But the residents, whose alarm led to the arrest, argued that the suspects had infiltrated the ward under the pretext of being INEC ad hoc staff members and accused them of having sinister intentions of compromising the BVAS machines.

The suspects, who were later handed over to security agents, denied being part of any sinister plot.

They said they were in the area as INEC ad hoc workers who had been detailed for possible replacement of any ad hoc worker in the event of a shortfall or vacancy.

As of the time of going to press, results of the supplementary poll had not been announced as Governor Ahmadu Fintiri of the PDP, and Aishatu Dahiru, popularly known as Binani, of the APC waited anxiously for the announcement of who the next governor is. The APC candidate aims to become the first elected female governor in the country.

Ekiti

There was fair turnout of voters in the supplementary poll held on Saturday to determine the winner of the state House of Assembly election in the Ido/Osi State Constituency 1 in Ekiti State.

Voting started around 8.30am in the three polling units where the election was held, while officers and men of the police, Nigerian Army and Nigeria

According to him, the hoodlums swooped on polling units when voting was about to begin and carted away the items.

Sani said, "Voters were already on the line and the voting process was about to begin when the hoodlums swooped on them and snatched sensitive and non-sensitive election materials. This happened in several wards in the council.

"As far as we are concerned, no election can take place without following appropriate electoral guidelines. So, as far as we are concerned in the PDP, no election took place in the council. We have already prepared a petition on the incident for INEC."

No INEC official in the state was ready to comment on the incident.

The spokesman for the Katsina State Police Command, CSP Gambo Isah, said he had not been informed of any arrest in connection with the supplementary election.

"I am not aware of any arrest so far in connection with the supplementary election," he stated.

Edo

Voter apathy and intimidation characterised the supplementary elections in Edo State.

There were supplementary elections for the House of Representatives in the Orhionmwon/Uhunmwonde Federal Constituency and state House of Assembly in Oredo East, Egor and Ovia South West constituencies.

Voters were allegedly threatened to leave some polling units in Benin if they were not going to vote for a particular political party, while only agents of the Peoples Democratic Party were visible in most of the polling

units. Ogbaru is the only constituency in the state where the February 25 general election was inconclusive.

At Okpoko Ward 14, Polling Unit 052, voters were seen sitting idly as of 1.05pm as they waited for officials of INEC to arrive with materials.

In other areas in Okpoko, INEC officials who arrived late without result sheets were chased away by voters.

Also, many voting centres visited by one of our correspondents witnessed the presence of thugs despite the massive deployment of security agents, including the police, naval men and soldiers.

There was serious vote-buying by the leading political parties, who also unleashed thugs in various parts of the local government.

At Manus primary school, Okpoko Ward 6, suspected thugs, said to be working for a particular candidate, swooped on journalists who were commuting in a vehicle with government number plate, suspecting them to be agents of the ruling party, All Progressives Grand Alliance.

Also, at Okpoko Ward 3, polling unit 004, St Luke's Anglican Church, agents of the PDP and APGA were seen making payments to those who voted for their parties.

The main candidates in the election are Afam Ogene of the Labour Party, Chuchu Onyema of the PDP and Arinze Awogu of APGA.

Oyo

There was a large turnout of eligible voters in two federal constituencies of Oyo State.

Supplementary elections were conducted in two polling units in Oluyole Federal Constituency and three each in both Ibadan North East and Ibadan South East Local

the area, Dumnamene Dekor, expressed satisfaction, saying the election was peaceful, free and fair.

Sokoto

Voters in Sokoto State expressed anger over the late arrival of electoral materials for the National Assembly supplementary election.

At the JSS polling unit 017 in Shuni, the member representing the Dange/Shuni, Tureta, Bodinga Federal Constituency, Dr Balarabe Kakale, said he was disappointed with the action of INEC.

Kakale said despite the assurance the electoral body gave Nigerians, it had not shown commitment to conduct free, fair and credible supplementary election.

The President of the African Bar Association, Hannibal Uwaifo, knocked INEC over the conduct of the supplementary elections in Sokoto State.

He said INEC spent much time preparing for the polls only to produce nothing at the end of the day.

He said the institution needed to improve upon the conduct of subsequent elections in the state.

Uwaifo said his team saw a lot of ballot box snatching in the state, especially in the Kebbe Local Government Area, with some INEC officials beaten up by political thugs.

He stated, "We all thought that by now the election in the country would have been better than what we are witnessing."

"The BVAS in itself has not improved compared to what was witnessed during the last round of elections."

"It is unfortunate and if we are to rate this election, I will give INEC and security officials 40 per cent."

some polling units.

He said that the 10 suspects were apprehended with N1,357,500 in Doguwa LGA of Kano State, while the two suspects were arrested with N242,000 in Kankia LGA of Katsina State.

"We will also be physically present in all the collation centres to prevent change of results," he said.

Dogondaji said the presence of the personnel of the anti-graft agency in the electoral process would add credibility to the exercise.

The EFCC commander said the suspects would be charged to court after investigation.

APC wins in Ekiti

Meanwhile, INEC on Saturday declared the APC candidate, Abiodun Fawekun, the winner of the Ido/Osi State Constituency 1 supplementary election.

The REC, Prof Ayobami Salami, said Fawekun polled 4,764 votes to defeat other candidates, and as such returned elected.

Salami, in a statement by the Head of Voter Education and Publicity, INEC Ekiti State, Temitope Akanmu, said the SDP candidate, Muiywa Fadahunsi, polled 4,204 votes to emerge second, while Ayodele Awoniyi of the PDP secured 422 votes.

The REC lauded all stakeholders and people of Ekiti State for the peaceful conduct of this election.

...wins in Oyo

The Returning Officer for Oluyole Federal Constituency supplementary election in Oyo State, Olaniyi Babayemi, announced Tolulope Akande-Sadipe of the APC as the winner of the poll, having scored 14,891 to defeat his major challenger, Mogbonjubola Mojeed, of the PDP, who polled 13,073 votes.

Akande-Sadipe dedicated her victory to her late mother, Abiose Akande, and the entire people of her constituency.

"Today, I dedicate this victory to God Almighty, my late mother,