

March 9: PDP decries killings, militarization of polls

From **Ndubuisi Orji**, Abuja

THE Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has condemned the militarization and killings that characterised the governorship and state Houses of Assembly elections in different parts of the country yesterday.

The party in a statement signed by its National Publicity Secretary, Kola Ologbondiyan, accused soldiers of arresting and terrorising opposition leaders during the polls.

The PDP also accused the military of allegedly providing cover for All Progressives Congress (APC) "thugs" to unleash violence on opposition politicians, as well as cart away electoral materials and disrupt polls in its strongholds across the country.

It noted that "this resort to bloodletting, violence and official high handedness by the APC in our electoral process has further confirmed that this administration has no regard for the lives of Nigerians and lawful processes, but only interested in seizing power by all means.

"The PDP notes that never in the history of our nation had a general election recorded such bloodletting, violence and manipulations as triggered in the 2019 elections by the Buhari Presidency and the APC.

"In Rivers, Akwa-Ibom, Cross River, Delta, Bayelsa, Kogi, Benue, Imo, Abia, Ebonyi, among others, soldiers brazenly aided APC thugs to unbridle violence, hijack electoral processes and write fictitious results for APC candidates.

"In Rivers state, soldiers invaded INEC office in Bori, beat up and chased away PDP agents and assisted the APC in ballot stuffing and writing of results. The scenario was the same in Akwa-Ibom where security agents provided cover for APC thugs in their bid to hijack the electoral process.

"In Imo State, APC thugs, accompanied by security agents disrupted polls in PDP strongholds and reportedly killed PDP agents in Umudo/Umuwala area of Owerri.

"In Ebonyi State, APC thugs aided by security agents, burnt down INEC facility in the state, seeing that their party do not have any foothold in the state.

"In Ajaokuta, Kabba/Bunu, Olamaboro, Ijumu and several other local governments of Kogi State, APC thugs, assisted by soldiers invaded polling units and carted away ballot materials, a development which sparked off restiveness in some areas and resulted in mass destruction of property in the area.

"In many other states, the APC, in connivance with INEC orchestrated the deliberate diversion of electoral materials meant for certain areas to unknown destinations, resulting in the frustration of electoral processes in the affected area.

"We know that the APC plot to derail our hard-earned democracy and impose a fascist regime on our nation, but we are resolute in standing with Nigerians and all lovers of democracy to ensure that nobody, no matter how vicious, is allowed to vanquish our democracy.

"In all, our party stands with Nigerians in their resilience at this defining moment in our political history. The PDP commends the courage of Nigerians in standing firm in defence of democracy, despite the machinations of the APC."