

# Polls: U.S. calls for an end to Rivers killings



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- **Soldiers raid Abonnema**

The United States (U.S.) through its Consul-General to Nigeria, John Bray, has called for an end to violence in Rivers State, which claimed some lives during last Saturday's Presidential and National Assembly elections. The Consul-General who spoke to journalists yesterday in Government House, Port Harcourt where he visited Governor Nyesom Wike, noted that as an international election observer, the violence in Rivers should end.

He said: "I am here as an international observer. We have been watching elections in Rivers State. "I am not here to grade elections or anything like that. I am just here to say that there has been enough violence. "Enough people have died. I am here today to speak with all the different candidates and party leaders." Meanwhile, soldiers of the 6 Division of the Nigerian Army, yesterday, raided Abonnema

Community in Akoku-Toru Local Government Area of Rivers State, moving from house to house in search of suspected hoodlums.

Abonnema is the Rivers community where soldiers and suspected thugs clashed during the elections where six youths and a soldier were killed. While voting took place across the state, voters and other residents of Abonnema were running for safety, dodging bullets as soldiers and suspected thugs clashed. Although the Rivers State government claimed that 15 members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) were killed in Abonnema on Saturday, the Nigerian Army said that six civilians were killed and a soldier during a gunfight. The Acting Director, Army Public Relations, Col. Musa Sagir had, in a statement, noted that the army was attacked in Abonnema.

The Deputy Director, Army Public Relations, who equally spoke in Port Harcourt yesterday, said that soldiers went into Abonnema to recover some arms used by the suspected thugs in attacking soldiers on Saturday. The Army had declared wanted Hon. Rowland Sekibo, the chairman of Akoku Toru Local Government Area, his Chief Security Officer and one Kenneth from Kula as the masterminds of the attack against the army. But some residents of Abonnema have faulted the claims by the army that there are arms stockpiled in the community, just as they decried the house-to-house raid by the army in the community. The residents also complained that doors were being broken in the community by soldiers, who they accused of indiscriminate arrest of residents and indigenes of the community who travelled from other places to cast their votes.

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