

NEWS

Six killed, others injured, houses burnt



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At least six persons were killed as thuggery, low turnout and sundry disruptive activities yesterday characterised the rerun and supplementary elections in the 18 states, even as the Kano State Commissioner for Special Duties, Muktar Isaq, was allegedly arrested for disrupting the election.

While one person was killed in Taraba and Benue states respectively, four staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission, (INEC), was abducted along with voting materials by gun-wielding men in Jamare Local Government Area of Bauchi State.

This came as three journalists, a BBC Reporter, Yusuf Ibrahim Yakasai, Madu Jerry of Authority and Kola Oyelere of Tribune Newspaper escaped death by whiskers when armed thugs attacked them at Suntulma Primary School of Gama Ward, in Nassarawa Local Government of Kano State.

The Kano Police Commissioner, Wakili Muhammad, was said to have stormed the place and rescued Yakasai, who was whisked to a house in Gama Village when he was chased away while trying to record activities at a polling unit in the area.

Also in Kano, thugs wielding cutlasses and cudgels were sighted in fierce mob attack, just as the Commissioner for Information, Mohammed Garba was attacked and his vehicle's windshield smashed in Dala Local Government Area, but DIG Michael Obizi, who oversaw security duties in

the election said Muktar Isaq, like the Deputy Governor on March 9, was rescued and not arrested, a claim supported by the Commissioner for Information.

PDP also claimed that the violence in the ancient city claimed the lives of four of its supporters.

Reports, however, showed that Governor Umar Ganduje and Samuel Ortom were in the lead in the elections in Kano and Benue states respectively.

However, armed thugs allegedly attacked some Commissioners, lawmakers, Advisers of Governor Samuel Ortom, PDP agents and INEC staff, while they were performing their functions during the exercise.

Those affected included the member representing Logo/Ukum/Katsina-Ala state constituency in the Assembly, Hon. Paul Biam alongside the Commissioner for Industry, Trade and Investment, Merga Kachina, the Governor's Adviser on Revenue and Taxation, Zaye Jerome, the council's chairman, Mr. Ibellogo Tor Tyokaa, ex-Agric Commissioner, Hon. Donald Gbugho and Deacon Dan Abbagu who were all PDP agents.

In Sokoto State where the re-run is being conducted in 135 polling units across 22 local government areas of the state to determine who wins the governorship seat, the state Commissioner of Finance and his counterpart in Higher Education Alhaji Sa'idu Umar and Prof. A'isha Madawaki urged security agencies to remain vigilant in ensuring the success of the re-run.

INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in Bayelsa State, Pastor Monday Udoh Tom, had put on hold a supplementary election into the Brass constituency 1 due to an interlocutory order of the Federal High Court, sitting in Yenagoa stopping the exercise.

Meanwhile, PDP has condemned attacks on its agents and members by thugs during the supplementary governorship election in Kano State, describing the exercise as a charade. The party made the condemnation in a statement issued by its National Publicity Secretary, Kola Ologbondiyan, on Saturday in Abuja.

The four INEC staff in Bauchi State were reportedly kidnapped and whisked away with voting materials in Jamare Local Government Area Registration 02, with polling Unit Code 010, by heavily armed men who came in seven Hillux vans, spurring stakeholders in the election called for presence of security men in the area.

In Plateau State where governorship and state House of Assembly supplementary elections in nine of the 17 local government Areas the polls

were largely peaceful. The rerun and supplementary elections held in polling units in Jos North, Bassa, Barkin, Mangu, Shendam, Kanam, Langtang South, Pankshin and Bokkos Local Government Areas of the state with five to 10 security men each.

Party bigwigs clash at polling units

At least one person was confirmed dead and a number of houses burnt in Ussa Local Government Area of Taraba State ahead of the supplementary election in the Ussa State Constituency Assembly seat. The incident was said to have occurred on Friday evening.

Vice Chairman of Ussa Local Government Area, Hon. Rikupki Joshua, confirmed this development in a telephone interview Saturday.

“To the best of my knowledge, one person was killed, scores were injured and houses were burnt in Ussa yesterday (Friday).

“But the situation is now calm and the supplementary election scheduled to hold in some units in the constituency is going on as planned.

“We condemn this violence and hope that those behind the unfortunate development will see politics as service to the people and not a do or die affair,” he said.

However, when contacted, the Taraba State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Alkasim Sanusi, said he was not aware of any report on the development in Ussa.

The Ussa State Constituency Assembly election was declared inconclusive following the cancelation of results in some polling units.

Yesterday's supplementary election took place in Kwesati, Kpambo Puri, Kpambo and Fikyu.

Thugs beat INEC officials in Benue

Pockets of violence yesterday characterised the governorship supplementary election in Benue State as armed thugs that claimed loyalty to one of the major parties allegedly attacked and beat up some commissioners, lawmakers and advisers of Governor Samuel Ortom, while performing their functions during the exercise.

The thugs did not spare the INEC ad hoc staff, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) agents and local observers leading to the burning of election materials disrupting the exercise.

Our correspondent, who monitored the conduct of the exercise in parts of the state, learnt that the incident took place in Ukum Local Government Area particularly in the densely populated Azendeshi council ward which is a stronghold of the PDP.

Those affected included the member representing Logo/Ukum/Katsina-Ala state constituency in the Assembly, Hon. Paul Biam alongside the Commissioner for Industry, Trade and Investment, Merga Kachina, the Governor's Adviser on Revenue and Taxation, Zaye Jerome, the council's chairman, Mr. Ibellogo Tor Tyokaa, ex-Agric Commissioner, Hon. Donald Gbugho and Deacon Dan Abbagu who were all PDP agents.

Witnesses told Sunday Telegraph that "the thugs attacked them in Azendeshi council ward here in Ukum Local Government and destroyed election materials in the early hours of today (yesterday) after overpowering security officials and disrupting elections in Chito, the headquarters of Azendeshi ward.

"The rampaging APC thugs also attacked the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) officials, PDP agents, observers and burnt electoral materials disrupting the entire process.

The witness, who pleaded anonymity, disclosed that the thugs were targeting strongholds of the opposition where PDP is expected to bring out massive votes.

Also in Jato-Aka, Kwande Local Government Area, it was learnt that another group of miscreants were said to have invaded Tse-Akough Polling Unit 012 in Yaav council ward, made away with voters register and disrupted the exercise.

Armed security personnel were seen at the Okwungaga Polling Unit in Ugbokolo, in Okpokwu Local Government Area of the state. They tied white pieces of clothes on their hands.

However, speaking to Sunday Telegraph agents of some political parties, the PDP, Mr. Idoko Idache, APC, Mr. Yusuf Jibrin and that of the All Progressives Democratic Alliance (APDA), Mr. Gabriel Okewu said that accreditation and voting commenced at the polling unit by 8:00am. The trio said that the process was smooth and without hitches. According to them, the old people were allowed to vote first since they cannot stand for too long.

Also, former Minister of Interior and Senator-elect for Benue South Senatorial district, Comrade Abba Moro, corroborated that voting was smooth without hitches.

“The voters were voting without skirmishes because that is the right way to go. We believe in democracy and we also believe in the power of the ballot.

“Some boys attempted to disrupt the process but with the quick intervention and combined efforts of the community leaders and the security they were prevented from achieving their aim.”

Meanwhile, if results, Sunday Telegraph captured so far from the various polling units where supplementary elections took place yesterday in Benue State are anything to go by then, the incumbent Governor Samuel Ortom may be leading in the battle after all.

This is just as former Senate President Senator David Mark has advised INEC to void declaring elections inconclusive.

He noted that the concept of inconclusive election was strange and unknown as according to him it was not even in the constitution.

Our correspondent who monitored the election across the three senatorial axis of the state observed that the exercise which was generally peaceful except in areas where alleged APC thugs disrupted the exercise saw the governor still maintaining his lead in most polling units across the three senatorial districts.

In the aborted March 9 race, the governor beat his main challenger, Emmanuel Jime of the ruling APC polling 410, 576 votes, against Jime who polled a distant second with 329, 022 votes, giving him a margin of defeat of 81, 554.

Sunday Telegraph learnt that thugs in Yandev North polling unit in Gboko Local Government Area yesterday, allegedly butchered a PDP supervisory agent, Mr. Terver Shaluun. His remains had been deposited at a morgue in the area.

Meanwhile, Senator Mark who spoke to journalists in his country home, Otukpo, advised INEC to avoid declaring elections inconclusive, adding that such a development was not healthy for the society because the commission spend additional resources to conduct supplementary elections.

“If declaration of inconclusive elections is allowed to stay it will rather encourage some politicians not to sell themselves to the electorate but wait

to disrupt elections so that it will be declared inconclusive.”

Vote buying allegation in Sokoto

In Sokoto State there were allegations of vote buying by the two major contenders.

According to a voter, who pleaded anonymity for obvious reasons, while one party offered to pay him N10,000 the other offered him N15, 000. He, however, did not say if he was eventually swayed by the financial inducement on the day party chieftains tried to outdo each other.

Notable party chieftains engaged in popularity supremacy at Magajin Gari ward 'B' Shiyar Danfarijo polling unit 005 and 009, where supplementary polls took place yesterday.

This led to chaos in the supplementary poll for the Sokoto North Local Government Area of the state.

Security, stakeholders laud peaceful process in Plateau

The governorship and state House of Assembly supplementary elections in Plateau State were peaceful.

The rerun election as monitored by Sunday Telegraph started at 8am in all the Polling Units in Jos North, Bassa, Barkin, Mangu, Shendam, Kanam, Langtang South, Pankshin and Bokkos Local Government Areas of the state with 5 to 10 security men present.

Also security operatives were seeing on all major streets within Jos, the Plateau State capital and other areas as part of measures to enforce the restriction of movement order within the period of the supplementary elections in the state.

An elder statesman in Plateau State Ambassador Yahaya Kwande speaking immediately after he cast his vote at Plateau Hotel Junction Polling Unit, commended the peaceful conduct of the election saying: “Everything is calm, if elections continue like this, then, there will be no problem, the rerun atmosphere is much better than the Presidential and National Assembly elections as well as the inconclusive 9th March election.”

Apathy as INEC conducts supplementary elections in Imo

Voter apathy trailed the March 23 supplementary House of Assembly election conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Imo.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that there was low turnout of voters in the five affected Local Government Areas of the state on Saturday.

The March 9 elections in the affected LGAs which included Ngor-Okpala, Isu, Orlu, Oguta and Ikeduru were declared inconclusive by INEC as a result of irregularities.

The exercise was largely peaceful in the 179 affected polling units with materials arriving on time and accreditation beginning at 8.30 a.m.

Some eligible voters who spoke to NAN correspondent however, cited indifference among other things as reason for their lack of interest in the process.

Mr Paulinus Ndubuisi, a tailor said: "I lost interest after the last election because I cannot continue devoting all my weekends to elections."

Another voter, Mrs Ihuoma Opara, a mother of three, blamed her indifference on INEC, saying that the election had been postponed severally and she had three children to cater for.

An INEC official who pleaded anonymity however, called on the electorate to eschew all forms of apathy, noting that "this is one avenue by which we demonstrate our patriotism, as Nigeria is the only country we can call our own."

APC wins state assembly election in Lagos

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) yesterday declared the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate for Ibeju-Lekki State Constituency I, Mr Fatai Mojeed, winner of the supplementary election in the area. INEC conducted supplementary election in nine polling units of the state constituency on Saturday.

The commission had declared the March 9 election in the constituency inconclusive, because of over-voting in the nine polling units, covering two Registration Areas (Ward).

Prof. Rasheed Ojikutu the Returning Officer for the election, announced the result for the election at the Collation Centre located in INEC office in Ibeju-Lekki council at about 6:30 p.m.

Ojikutu, of the Department of Actuarial Science and Insurance, Faculty of Business Administration, University of Lagos, first read out scores of each political party on March 9 election, before announcing the total votes in the supplementary poll.

According to him, on March 9 election, APC polled 8,525 votes and PDP scored 1, 786, SDP got 63, ADP scored 54 votes, Accord got 50 votes, AD polled 59 votes while other political parties scored less than 40 votes each. He said that Mojeed polled a total of votes 9,484 to defeat his closest rival

from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Mrs Tare Oliver who got 1,901 votes.

"I, Prof. Rasheed Kola Ojikutu, hereby certify that I am the returning officer for the constituency I of Ibeju-Lekki in the election held on the 23rd Day of March 2019.

"I declare that Mojeed Fatai Adebola of APC, haven satisfied the requirements of the law and scored the highest number of votes is hereby declared the winner and he is returned elected," Ojikutu said.

He added that Accord Party scored 51 votes, AD polled 60 votes, ADC polled 26 votes, SDP got 64 votes, AAC polled 27 votes, ADP got only 55 votes while others got less than 10 votes each.

Ojikutu said that the total registered voters were 122, 442, while the total accredited voters for the election were 12,245, reports the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

The party agents took turns to sign the results.

Earlier, Dr Adeola Afonja, the Collation Officer for Ibeju Ward I, reeled out the scores obtained by each of the parties in the six polling units where supplementary election was held in the ward.

According to Afonja, APC polled 520, PDP scored 43 votes, ADC got 2 votes, Accord and ADP got one vote each while other parties got no vote.