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THIS DAY

Nigeria: Voter Registration - Three Killed

Seriki Adinoyi

18 January 2011

Recommander

2 personnes recommandent ça.

Another crisis ensued in Jos, Plateau State yesterday, as three people were allegedly killed and several others injured following a row between some youths and soldiers protecting some Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) ad hoc staff believed to be Hausa/Fulani.

And as the ongoing voter registration enters its third day yesterday, no registration had taken place in six local government areas in Borno State as no INEC official was around to register residents of the councils.

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An eyewitness told THISDAY that the INEC staff were being escorted by the soldiers to INEC's collection centre at Saint Philip's Secondary School, Tina Junction, Jos North Local Government area of Plateau State to collect registration materials when a group of youths in the area accosted them.

He said the youths wanted to know why the soldiers were escorting the INEC staff, as the soldiers in the past had allegedly aided the Hausas to launch attack on them. They therefore resisted the attempt by the soldiers to lead the INEC staff to the collection centre.

THISDAY gathered that tempers rose and the subsequent noise attracted other soldiers within the area who made spirited efforts to rescue the INEC staff from being maltreated by the youths, a situation that degenerated into open confrontation between the youths and the soldiers.

While the youths were said to have hauled stones at the soldiers, the angry soldiers allegedly shot at the youths, killing two of them on the spot, while several others were injured.

The youths also killed one of the seven INEC staff, while the soldiers were able to rescue the remaining six. But normalcy has since returned to the area.

The state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Abdulrahman Akao, who confirmed the incident, said three people were killed in the fracas. He said the soldiers mistakenly shot two of the rampaging youths in self defence, while the youths killed one of the seven INEC staff.

In the 21 other local government areas of Borno State, faulty registration equipment continue to make nonsense of the exercise as those who went to the registration centres were turned back with excuses that the electric generators or batteries were not working.

THISDAY investigations revealed that the Direct Data Capture (DDC) machines for six local governments - Kukawa, Abadam, Mobbar, Nganzai, Magumeri and Guzamala - have not been configured.

In most of the areas visited by the newspaper yesterday morning, there were no officials to register the people as most of those interviewed expressed displeasure that they were yet to locate any registration centre.

In Masandari ward within the Maiduguri metropolis, which has 100 polling units, no single registration centre was seen during the visit.

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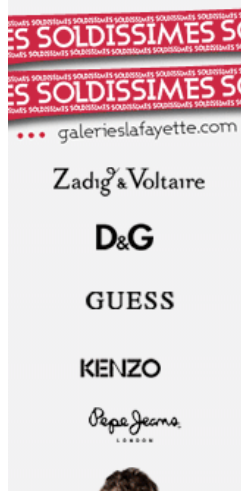
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In some areas, where INEC officials were seen, registration was ongoing with few persons turning up to get registered.

Speaking on the exercise so far, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chairman in the state, Alhaji Baba Basharu, said it was unfortunate that INEC was not rising to the occasion in the state, adding that its dismal performance might cast shadow on the forthcoming elections.

He said: "We in the PDP are not happy with the exercise and are made to believe it is not going to be successful. Three days have been lost and INEC must do something urgent to make the exercise successful."

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"We are calling for an extension to compensate for the lost time and INEC must brace up to make the machine work and get our people registered."

Bishop of Anglican Communion, Maiduguri Diocese, Archbishop Emmanuel Kana Mana, however, advised Nigerians to be patient with INEC in order to overcome the challenges faced in the ongoing exercise.

While calling on the people to come out and get registered, the Bishop said with the track record of INEC Chairman, Prof. Attahiru Jega, the commission

would never compromise on standard, noting that Nigerians should be assured of credible election come April.

Attempts to get the state Resident Electoral Commissioner, Alhaji Tukur Sa'ad, to respond proved abortive as he was said to be away from the office to supervise the exercise.

But an officer of the commission, who pleaded anonymity, told THISDAY that the computers for six of the 27 local governments were yet to be configured and that efforts were on to get them configured, adding that they would be sent to the area today with the hope that the exercise would pick up tomorrow.

Meanwhile, INEC has described as false the rumour making the rounds that the fingerprinting requirement for the ongoing voter registration has been suspended by the commission, because it was encumbering the registration procedure.

According to a statement by the Chief Press Secretary to the INEC chairman, Mr. Kayode Idowu, it said: "The commission has not suspended fingerprinting."

"The problem which accounted hitherto for the slow capture of fingerprints at some polling units has been addressed by the commission and the impact of remedial measures taken is already showing in the speedier process being recorded across the country. Hence, there is neither basis nor cause for suspension of fingerprinting."

It also said there were a few centres where the requirement of fingerprinting was waived in error by the INEC officials on ground, adding that the commission had directed that the error be immediately corrected, otherwise such registrations would be invalid.

A member of the Cross River State House of Assembly from Akpabuyo State Constituency, an Inspector of Police and three others have been arrested by the police for allegedly snatching the Direct Data Capturing (DDC) Machines meant for the registration of voters in the area.

THISDAY gathered that the men were arrested by a team of security agents last Sunday and detained at the Crime Investigation Bureau (CIB) of the State Police Headquarters at Diamond Hill, Calabar.

State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Etim Dickson, yesterday confirmed the arrest but would not give details.

Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Mr. Mike Igini, also confirmed the incident and arrest, disclosing that they were arrested because they moved the registration machine from the designated centre to an unknown venue.

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He said the police would take the lawmaker and others to court for prosecution as "nobody will be spared" as far as this exercise is concerned.

"Even myself if I do anything wrong get me out. Imagine the Governor humbled himself and went to register at the designated point but in Akpabuyo some people moved the machine out of the designated centre", he said.

Commenting on the on-going voters registration exercise, Igini said, "There is a plan by some people to create the impression that INEC officials have not been able to create the machines well. What is happening now is a national problem that the machine does not capture easily."

It takes time and it has nothing to do with the competence of those operating it".

[Recommander](#)

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