

High Voter Apathy, Violence, Glitches Mar Governorship, Assembly Elections

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- **Federal lawmaker killed in Ibadan**
- **Abdulsalam shocked at poor turnout**
- **Atiku, Dogara, others blame situation on 'rigged presidential poll'**
- **Tension as Nigerians await results**
- **In Rivers, soldiers seize collation centres, bar PDP agents, INEC officials**

By Our Correspondents

After weeks of tension and apprehension, the governorship and state Houses of Assembly elections finally held yesterday in 29 states across the country amid high voter apathy, violence, snatching of ballot boxes and, in some instances, operational glitches. In Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State, a member of the House of Representatives was killed yesterday. Hon. Temitope Olatoye (a.k.a. Sugar) was shot by suspected political thugs.

Former Head of State and chairman of the presidential election peace committee, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, who expressed serious concern at the poor turnout of voters in yesterday's election, said he was "short of words" to explain the situation. The presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Alhaji Atiku Abubakar; Speaker, House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara; and the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room blamed the situation on the, allegedly, rigged February 23 presidential and National Assembly elections. They said the poor presidential poll might have discouraged voters from coming out to vote since they reckoned their votes might not count.

But there is palpable tension in the land as Nigerians await results of the elections held in 29 of the 36 states of the federation, which, according to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) sources, would start coming in today.

While governorship elections did not hold in Ondo, Ekiti, Osun, Anambra, Kogi, Bayelsa, and Edo states for reasons of their previously staggered polls, they partook in the state assembly

elections.

Some of the states were marked as flashpoints given the political dynamics in the run-up to Saturday's elections.

As at press time, there were no definite results in any of the 29 states where governorship elections took place to suggest the direction of voting and, perhaps, hint at who might likely emerge. But the process of collation and announcement of results was in top gear and the results were expected to be made public any moment, state by state.

However, in many parts of the country, the election was marred by high voter apathy, violence, reports of ballot box snatching, and operational glitches on the part of INEC. The commission's ad hoc staff, reportedly, protested unpaid allowances since the last election and refused to work. This development caused delay in the voting process in many parts of the country, while in other states there was genuine apathy, which was believed to have arisen from voters' concerns about their votes counting.

Reps Member Killed

Olatoye died Saturday at the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, shortly after some suspected political thug shot him in the head in the Lalupon area of the state. Also, a young man, who was said to be a supporter of PDP, was shot by a police officer, and he eventually died in a hospital.

The news of the attack on the lawmaker spread within minutes, with some insinuating that he died immediately from the gunshot wounds.

Speaking on the incident, the UCH Public Relations Officer, Mr. Toye Akinrinlola, said the lawmaker was moved to the intensive care unit where doctors battled in vain to save his life. THISDAY gathered that he eventually gave up the ghost around 7:45pm.

A close aide of the lawmaker spoke in confidence with THISDAY yesterday, accusing some suspected political thugs of a rival politician in the constituency of been responsible for the attack.

Olatoye, who won the 2015 election under the platform of APC, lost reelection two weeks ago under the platform of the Action Democratic Party and vowed never to return to the APC. Before his death, he represented Lagelu/Akinyele federal constituency. Olatoye had in 2011 won election into the state House of Assembly under the platform of the Accord Party before he later defected to the then Action Congress of Nigeria.

He was said to be coming from his village where he had gone to exercise his franchise, when the assailant ambushed him.

Two hours earlier, a supporter of the PDP, simply identified as Mudasiru, was shot dead by a police officer in Ile titun area of Ibadan South East Local Government Area.

THISDAY learnt that Mudasiru, in his late 20s, was jubilating over the victory of his party when a trigger happy officer fired gunshot, which hit him from the back and ruptured his intestine.

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Lawrence Fadeyi, confirmed both incidents, though said the police would make its comprehensive findings available.

Reacting to the lawmaker's murder, on his twitter account Speaker of the House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara, said "I received with shock, the sad and distressing news of the assassination of my brother and colleague, Hon. Olatoye Temitope Sugar, in Oyo State today (yesterday). The murder of Hon. Sugar in election violence is primitive, wicked, inhumane, barbaric and highly condemnable."

I'm Short of Words – Abdulsalami

The former Head of State, who was disappointed at the turn of events, said, "I am short of words to describe the low turnout of today's election, because the difference is clear when compared to the large turnout of the last presidential election."

Speaking after casting his ballot at the Uphill polling unit in Minna, Niger State, Abdulsalami partly attributed the voter apathy to the hangover of the presidential and national assembly elections.

"Probably because people are tired or because they were disenfranchised during the previous elections, but one thing that is glaring is that the turnout in today's election is low," he said. Though, he expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the election, which he adjudged peaceful and orderly.

Low Turnout is Protest against Injustice – Atiku, Dogara, CSOs

Atiku, who voted at 12:08pm at Ajiya 012 polling unit, attributed the low turnout of voters to election malpractices and injustice at the last presidential and National Assembly elections. He said Nigerians no longer had confidence in the electoral process.

The former vice president, however, pleaded with his supporters nationwide to remain calm and wait for the outcome of the case in court over the recent presidential election. He, nevertheless, said he was optimistic that PDP would win the governorship election and described the exercise as peaceful and orderly.

On his part, Dogara, who voted alongside his wife, also said the low turnout was as a result of fear by the electorate that their votes might not count, following the conduct of the presidential and National Assembly elections.

He said, "From the conduct of the election, I think, it is peaceful, but what I have seen here is that there is no mammoth crowd like the last election. I don't know what happened and some of you who were here during the election saw the crowd, but I can't see that kind of turnout here today. I don't know what is responsible for that, may be voter apathy.

"The fear that people's vote may not count is the reason why people did not turn up as such, because we saw that in the last election. The problem was not with the voting, people came out to vote, the problem started at the coalition level, especially at the ward level

"Collation at the polling units was almost done peacefully and conducted in a very transparent manner, but at the ward, local government and constituency level, things started changing. So, I guess part of the reason we have voter apathy is that people think their votes don't count and as such, what is the point voting? The problem started with the collation and we hope that things don't repeat itself in this election."

Giving its own views on the terrible apathy, the Nigeria Civil Society Situation attributed the low turnout to what it described as the excessive and heavy deployment of military and security personnel for the elections, which created fear in citizens. The group also talked about

concerns over the neutrality of the security personnel.

Addressing a press conference in Abuja yesterday, Convener of the Civil Society Situation Room, Mr. Clement Nwankwo, said there was evidence of low voter turnout in many parts of country.

Nwankwo stated, "At the time of writing this statement, there is evidence of low voter turnout. The low turnout of voters can only be attributed to two factors – voter apathy arising from the effect of the disappointment of citizens over poor conduct of the February 23 Presidential and National Assembly elections and the excessive and heavy deployment of military and security personnel for the elections, that has now created fear in the citizenry, including concerns over the neutrality of these security personnel and, indeed, the integrity of the electoral process."

Nwankwo, who was joined by the Alternate Chair of the Situation Room, Esther Uzoma, said there was also reported widespread incidence of vote-buying across the country by politicians. He said the Situation Room was concerned that the incidence could undermine the credibility of the outcome of the election.

The Situation Room listed states where vote-buying allegedly took place on a large scale to include Sokoto, Zamfara, Ekiti, Kebbi, Delta, Akwa Ibom, Lagos, Ondo, and Borno states.

Among the negative aspects of the 2019 general election, as recorded by the Situation Room, was the excessive deployment of the military that interfered with the electoral process.

The civil society coalition said its observers reported multiple cases of protest by INEC officials and ad hoc staff on issues around welfare in Anthony, Ejigbo, Ketu, Mile 2, Ojodu, in Lagos State, and Vom in Plateau State. But it commended INEC for ensuring that voting commenced on time in most areas.

According to the Situation Room, average starting time of voting at most polling units across the country was 8:30am, although there were a few cases of late arrival of materials and polling officials in some states.

Situation Report

Below are some of the situation reports in some of the states by our correspondents, who monitored the election.

Lagos

In Lagos State, some INEC ad hoc staff, reportedly, refused to work for a long time because, according to them, they were yet to be paid their allowances for the rescheduled presidential and National Assembly elections on February 23. This caused delay, which affected the conduct of the election in some parts of the state before intervention came and the ad hoc staff deployed to work.

Reacting, the Lagos State Public Relations Officer of the commission, Mr. Femi Akinbiyi, said the protesters had no reason to abandon the electoral duty. He said the corps members protested when they got information that an unnamed politician was sharing money to some of their colleagues.

But Akinbiyi denied knowledge of the politician and insisted the money was not from the commission. He reiterated that the commission only paid allowances of corps members through

bank transfer, adding that the only time the corporers were paid cash was after the training, when each participant was paid N4,500.

Governor Akinwunmi Ambode, who voted at his polling unit in Epe, said there was no better time to enhance democracy and promote the culture of one man one vote than now. Ambode arrived at his polling unit at ward A5, unit 033, Ogunmodede College, Ajaganabe Area, Papa Epe, with his wife around 9:55am. He voted at 10:11am and enjoined eligible voters to come out en mass and be part of history.

According to the governor, who eventually delivered his local government to the APC, "I believe strongly that in doing this we would continue to enhance the tenets of democracy."

APC national leaders, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, said the party was sure of victory, because there were no other parties outside the APC in the state. Tinubu said those calling for the "O to'ge Lagos" should instead be saying "Oja so pe" as the state has witnessed tremendous growth and progress in the last 20 years.

Tinubu said Lagos was the only state in the federation that did not rely on federal allocation, stressing that the state has grown to become the sixth largest economy in the continent.

Governorship candidate of the APC in Lagos, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, voted at his Polling Unit, 019, Lateef Jakande Road, Ikoyi, Lagos. Sanwo-Olu said he was sure of victory in the election, which he also described as peaceful.

His PDP counterpart, Mr. Jimi Agbaje, appealed to voters in the state not to be discouraged from participating in the voting exercise despite what happened during the presidential election in the state.

In a similar vein, a PDP chieftain, Chief Bode George, lamented the voter apathy in the state, which he said was a telling sign of despondency among the people. He said the people seemed to have lost confidence in the system, which he said has failed them.

Anambra

The House of Assembly election in Anambra State witnessed low turnout of voters. As at 9am, most polling centres were devoid of human presence, even though INEC officials had resumed as early as 7:45am.

At Aroma Ward 1 in Awka, Awka South Local Government Area, only few voters had turned out as at 9am.

An observer, Mr. Okey Ajuka, said the low turnout was foreseen, especially as there was no governorship election in the state.

"Last two weeks' Saturday was different because the influence of the vice presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party, Mr. Peter Obi, made people to put their interest in the election. I think the only places where high turnout will be registered are in places where they have candidates."

Most traders in the rural parts of the state shunned the election in the state and opened their shops for business.

In Awkuzu, Oyi local government, where our correspondent monitored the election, the community's market held a normal session, and many traders opened their shops.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Labour and Employment, Senator Chris Ngige and his party, the APC, raised the alarm over alleged theft of some electoral materials meant for the Assembly election for two constituencies in the state. Ngige, who raised the alarm while speaking with journalists shortly after voting, said the party had petitioned the Resident Electoral Commissioner, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Anambra State, Prof. Nkwachukwu Orji, over the development.

But he decried what he called "persistent lack of preparedness" on the part of INEC. He said this after he could not vote at 9am at his Umumasiaku polling unit, Amatutu, Agulu. But he later cast his vote about noon.

"It is a shame that the same problem repeated itself on grander scale today, with news of faulty card readers all over the state. This has raised the issue of whether the problems are genuine or contrived for other purposes," Obi said.

Edo

In Edo State, where turnout was equally low, the chairman of the PDP, Chief Dan Orbih, blamed the development on what he termed derailing of due process in the February 23 presidential and National Assembly elections. Orbih said the people were unhappy that their votes did not count in the last elections. "People no longer have faith that their votes will count after what happened in that presidential elections."

Similarly, member representing Etsako federal constituency, who was just reelected during the presidential and National Assembly elections, Hon. Johnson Oghuma of the APC, observed that the turnout was not impressive. Oghuma, who voted in his ward 2, unit 1, Etsako Central Local Government Area, said though the process was peaceful, the turnout of voters was not impressive.

But Governor Godwin Obaseki expressed satisfaction with the turnout in the state. The governor, who arrived at his Emokpae Primary School Ward 9 unit in Oredo local government at 10.05 am, voted at 10.09.

Obaseki said, "I do not believe that there is a low turnout, because as you can see, the ballot boxes are already filled up. It is a local election and the people that are concerned live in the neighbourhood and in the same community."

Kogi

There was a development in Kogi State, which INEC said compelled it to postpone the Assembly election in Mopamuro Local Government Area. The Electoral Officer, Mopamuro LGA, Mr. Opanachi Ojodale, told newsmen at the INEC office in Mopa that the election was postponed to Sunday, March 10, due to wrong ballot papers that were taken to the area.

According to Ojodale, the ballot papers belonging to Akpa Local Government Area in Kogi East were taken to Mopamuro Local Government Area. This development was discovered in the early hours of Saturday.

Meanwhile, some youths of Orokere community earlier on Saturday conducted a peaceful demonstration to the palace of their traditional ruler to protest alleged importation of thugs to the community by suspected opposition party members.

Governor Yahaya Bello alongside his two wives, Hajia Amina and Rashida, voted at Agasa polling unit.

Addressing newsmen after casting his vote, Bello commended INEC for a good job, saying he was impressed with the electoral body for correcting the mistakes in the last election.

Delta

Delta State recorded pockets of violence in the riverine areas of the state Saturday. Although there was low turnout in the early hours, the situation later improved as the exercise progressed. The election was largely peaceful in the upland areas. But there was violence's in some riverine communities in Bomadi, Burutu and Warri South West Local government areas of the state.

The violence, THISDAY gathered, erupted between supporters of the two major parties in the state in their attempt to have superior advantage.

The APC governorship candidate in the state, Chief Great Ogboru, cast his vote at Unit 8, Ward One at Abraka Grammar School, Abraka at about 12.05 p.m. He confirmed to journalists that he also got reports of violence in some places and particularly the riverine communities in Warri North and South West local government areas.

On his part, Governor Ifeanyi Okowa, who cast his vote at his native town of Owa-Alero, expressed confidence he would win the governorship election by a large margin, saying "God Almighty has sealed my victory".

Okowa said he had never been worried that his reelection might be threatened, noting that his only worry is about the election being peaceful throughout the state, because of threatened violence due to alleged importation of thugs into the state from neighbouring Edo State.

Bauchi

Bauchi State Governor Mohammed Abdullahi Abubakar commended the smooth conduct of the elections in the state. Abubakar, who gave the commendation at Jahun Makama Sarkin Baki 2 Polling Unit immediately after he cast his vote around 9:53am, said "There is improvement. Everything is going on smoothly after we arrived. I and my wives within few minutes cast our votes. I want to commend INEC for that."

Bayelsa

Apart from a relaxed security atmosphere, there was also voter apathy in many of the polling units as Governor Seriake Dickson of Bayelsa State, in company with his Commissioner for Information, Mr. Daniel Iworiso-Markson, and former President Goodluck Jonathan cast their votes in Toru-Orua in Sagbama, Opume in Ogbia and Otueke, respectively.

As opposed to the other elections, the few military men on the major roads looked friendlier and civil in their interactions.

But the APC in the state, Saturday, alleged that its members had gone into hiding in several parts of the state, insisting that thugs were unleashed on party loyalists.

APC State Publicity Secretary, Mr. Doifie Buokoribo, said in a statement that armed thugs loyal to the ruling party were on the loose in a number of communities throughout the polls, rigging for the party and intimidating APC members.

Kwara

Low turnout also characterised the governorship and state House of Assembly elections in Kwara State as voters did not turn up like they did during the presidential and National Assembly elections.

The development, according to THISDAY checks, might not be unconnected with the mass deployment of security to the state capital. The military and other security operatives had since Thursday engaged in a show of force around strategic locations in the Ilorin metropolis.

Reports from other parts of the state also showed that the presence of soldiers in some parts of the state had forced voters to stay away from voting.

But speaking with journalists after casting his votes, Senate President Abubakar Bukola Saraki, condemned the militarisation of the governorship and state Houses of Assembly Elections. Saraki, who was accompanied by his wife, Toyin, to his polling unit at Ode-Opobiyi 005 in Ajikobi ward in Ilorin West local government council, blamed the low turnout on the heavy deployment of military and other security operatives for the exercise.

A former Minister of National Planning, Professor Abubakar Suleiman Olanrewaju, also joined Saraki in condemning the militarisation of the exercise in the state.

Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, who voted at his polling unit in Oro town in Irepodun local government council, lauded the conduct of the poll.

But the governorship candidate of the PDP in the state, Hon. Razak Atunwa, Saturday, pledged to accept the outcome of Saturday's governorship election if it was devoid of irregularities. Atunwa, who is currently representing Ilorin West/Asa Federal constituency in the House of Representatives, made the pledge while speaking with journalists in Ilorin. The PDP standard bearer, who is a former Speaker of the state House Of Assembly, said nothing was wrong in accepting the result of a free, fair and accurate poll that could stand the test of time.

Niger

Niger State also recorded low turnout of voters during yesterday's elections. In Chanchaga, Paiko and Gurara Tafa and Suleja local governments, less than half of the population of voters that turned out during the presidential election was available for yesterday's elections.

It was observed that even those that came out were mostly induced to exercise their franchise. Security was also not tight at the polling stations with some of the units not having any policeman.

Niger State Governor, Alhaji Abubakar Sani Bello, sued for peace while the party in the state expressed optimism that the governor would emerge victorious in the election.

Chairman of the party in the state, Alhaji Jibrin Imam, said the electorate had absolute confidence in the candidate of the party. "We are optimistic of victory. I don't expect that we will lose this election," he said.

Borno, Yobe

In both Borno and Yobe states, low turnout of voters was recorded during Saturday's elections. In Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, the election started in time and was peaceful, but there was low turnout of voters. A massive presence of security and military personnel was witnessed at strategic points on major highways to prevent breach in security. The turnout was

however appreciable at some voting points for persons from Gujba Local Government in Damaturu.

Resident Electoral Commissioner for Yobe State, Ahmad Makama, told journalists that it was too early to determine or conclude on the turnout at the time.

Governorship candidate of the APC in Borno, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum, voted at about 12:07pm at Ajari (1) polling unit in Mafa ward of Mafa local government. He was however given protective cover by the security details of Governor Kashim Shettima as parts of Mafa was attacked on Friday night by Boko Haram.

Zulum expressed confidence in the process and said though turnout was low in the morning, people were sent out to mobilise voters.

Candidate of the PDP in Borno, Alhaji Mohammed Imam, expressed concern that the election had been manipulated already by the INEC.

Adamawa

Adamawa State, too, witnessed voter apathy across its 21 local government areas. But Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Gida Mustapha, who voted at 10:30 at his Gwadabawa polling unit 009, said he was happy that there was no incidence of violence in the state. He noted that INEC had improved on its technology, which made the process easy and less cumbersome, even as he commended the people for coming out to vote for candidates of their choice.

The incumbent governor, Mohammed Jibrila Bindow of APC, and his PDP counterpart, Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri, also cast their votes in Mubi North and Gulak respectively.

Kaduna

Amid high voter apathy, the Kaduna State Governor, Malam Nasir el-Rufai, on Saturday, commended INEC for addressing the lapses witnessed during the presidential election. El-Rufai also said he was not jittery over the outcome of the governorship results,

"I am not under any tension since President Muhammadu Buhari has won. Even if I lose, I already have a job. It is my staff that are jittery. I always share this joke," he said.

However, many polling units in Kaduna North, Kaduna South and Chikun local government areas visited by our correspondent had scant voters, although voting started in most polling units by 8am.

Kano

Governorship candidate of the PDP in Kano State, Mr. Abba Kabir Yusif, called on voters in Kano to ensure their votes count. He gave the charge shortly after casting his vote by 12:00pm at Chiranci quarters in Gwale local government area, noting that such a step remains the only way to grow the nation's democracy.

"I'm very optimistic of winning and want to call on all supporters to protect their votes at collation centres, and designated INEC offices," he stated.

Plateau

Plateau State Governor Simon Bako Lalong of the APC said he was confident that he would emerge victorious in the governorship polls, adding that he was only waiting to be announced and celebrated as the new governor-elect in the state.

"From the reports we got, elections are going on smoothly in all the local government areas of the state. People of the state came out early to vote," he said.

His rival in the PDP, Senator Jeremiah Useni, has also expressed confidence he would emerge victorious in the election.

Useni, who voted at his Pajat polling unit of Langtang North Local Government Area said, "I think the election has been generally peaceful judging from the report we have got. I commend Plateau people for voting for the PDP. Despite the poor turnout in some areas, I believe we will win the election when results are announced."

A former governor of the state and Senator Representing Plateau North, Jonah David Jang, described the widespread voter apathy as a protest against the stolen mandate of the people.

Rivers

Not less than seven people were feared killed in Rivers State yesterday even as low voter turnout marred elections in the state. This is as Governor Nyesom Wike said he was sure of victory at the polls despite attempts to manipulate the elections.

One Micheal Abedinigo, who hails from Upatabo Community, was killed in Akinima, Ahoada West Local Government Area of the State. He was said to have been shot by thugs while resisting attempts to snatch electoral materials.

In Luawii, Khana Local Government Area, four persons were killed in the early hours of Saturday. However, sources said the victims lost their lives in an inter-cult rivalry.

Special Adviser to Governor Nyesom Wike on Gender Matters and former Chairman of Andoni local government council, Mrs. Emilia Nte, was feared dead, when she was shot at and abducted from her home town, Unyeada, on Friday night.

A mobile police officer attached to ward 6 Unyeada in Andoni Local Government Area was also shot on Friday night. He was said to have been rushed to an undisclosed clinic in Bori where he later died. The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Nnamdi Omoni, only confirmed the death of Micheal Abedinigo in Akinima.

"I can only confirm the death at Akanima this morning, even though I am yet to get the details of the death," he said.

Despite the casualties, elections in the state were relatively peaceful compared to the violence that characterised the state during the presidential and National Assembly elections.

Meanwhile, fears that the army may be working against some political parties in the governorship and state assembly elections in Rivers State were highlighted yesterday as the PDP complained that the military prevented its accredited agents from accessing the collation centres.

Army personnel took over the collation centres in Asari-Toru, Akuku-Toru, Eleme, Opobo-Nkoro and Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government areas, among others, denying access to PDP INEC-accredited agents.

Media aide to state chairman of the PDP, Jerry Needam, said soldiers had forcefully invaded the Khana local government council lodge and held all those inside hostage. He alleged that the soldiers were trying to plant incriminating materials in order to arrest PDP chieftains, especially the Local Government Council Chairman, Lahteh Loolo.

The spokesman of PDP Campaign Organisation and state Commissioner for Information and Communications, Emma Okah, said it was obvious the army was on a mission to disrupt the electoral process and install somebody.

In Degema LGA, information received had it that strange looking men of Nigerian Army were keeping guard at the collation center.

A source who doesn't want to be named told THISDAY "we have been asked by the electoral officer to leave this place for our good or stay and risk our lives."

When contacted for his reactions, the Deputy Director, Army Public Relations, 6 Division, Nigerian Army, Col. Aminu Iliyasu, said the army would investigate alleged infractions of soldiers in the elections. He however refused to comment on allegations of soldiers barring PDP agents from collation centres.

FCT

Poor turnout also characterised the chairmanship and councillorship elections into the six FCT Area Councils. Contrary to the long queues that defined the Presidential and National Assembly election on February 23, many prospective voters ignored Saturday's exercise. Some party agents attributed the voter apathy to the outcome of the last election, which they said did not reflect the wish of the vast majority of them.

Akwa Ibom

There were pockets of violence yesterday during the governorship and House of Assembly elections in Akwa Ibom State. Crisis started when a young man who hijacked a ballot box and attempted to run away with it at a polling unit in Ikot Udo Ossiom village Ukanafun Local Government Council was shot dead by a soldier.

Nine persons were injured in Nsit Atai local government when members of PDP and APC clashed over disagreement on election issues.

Despite the skirmishes recorded in some polling units across the state, the election was peaceful with impressive turnout of voters.

Governor Udom Emmanuel and wife, Martha, voted at 9.23 am, at Town Hall, Awa ward1, Unit 001) , Onna Local Government Area. He lauded INEC for improvement in the accreditation process and expressed optimism that the experience would be replicated in other units across the state.

Meanwhile, governorship candidate, Mr. Nsima Ekere, called for the cancellation of the result of any polling units where there was reported violence and hijacking of materials. Ekere who voted at Edemeya ward 1, unit 004, Ikot Abasi Local Government Area at about 10:49am, lamented late arrival of election materials in his unit.

Katsina

In the state of the president, no fewer than 10 ad hoc members of staff of INEC were kidnapped in Danmusa Local Government Area of Katsina State.

THISDAY also reliably gathered that a Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) officer and a police officer were killed during the attack.

Although Commissioner of Police Sanusi Buba was yet to respond to the development, the INEC Commissioner Jibril Ibrahim Zarewa said he would address journalists on the matter.

A reliable source at the state INEC office who confirmed the development to THISDAY said, "Twenty of our staff have been kidnapped in Danmusa during election but 10 have regained freedom. We also lost an NSCDC officer in Kankara."

Similarly, reports from Danmusa indicated that gunmen numbering about 50 stormed polling units in the area and carted away many residents, forcing INEC staff to scamper to safety.

Gombe

Governor Ibrahim Hassan Dankwambo again suffered defeat in the hands of the main opposition APC at his polling unit, Hassan Manzo 005, as his party, PDP, polled 201 votes against APC's 263 votes. Dankwambo had earlier lost the Gombe North Senate seat to APC's Saidu Alkali two weeks ago during the presidential and National Assembly elections.

Hassan Manzo 005 is in Harwagana ward of Gombe Local Government Area.

APC also won in House of Assembly election in the unit, scoring 230 votes to defeat the PDP candidate who scored 196 for the Gombe North House of Assembly poll.
