

Nine Persons Killed in Bayelsa , Kogi, Ondo Elections' Violence

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- ***Boat mishap claims six lives in Ondo, Delta***

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Nine persons, including a naval rating were killed in the violence that erupted in Ondo, Kogi, and Bayelsa States during the Saturday's governorship and House of Assembly elections.

This is coming as a youth corps member, another adhoc staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and four other persons died in a boat mishap in Ondo and Delta States

The boat mishap involving the corps member and INEC adhoc staff occurred at Agadagba Obon in Ede Ondo Local Government Area (LGA) of Ondo State, while the four other persons were killed on Saturday when the boat conveying them from an offshore polling centre to Koko in Warri North LGA of Delta State capsized.

However, the Police have clarified that no corps member or INEC adhoc staff was involved in the Delta incident.

In Ondo State, four persons were feared killed at Ore, headquarters of Odigbo Local Government Area late last Saturday during a protest by some youths in the community.

The four were aside the two persons who were killed at Oba Akoko in Akoko South West Local Government Area when some thugs were said to have attacked constituency collation centre last Saturday.

While the police confirmed the killings of the two persons at Oba Akoko, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Femi Joseph, said only one person was killed in Ore.

A source said the Ore killing was caused by the protest embarked upon by youths in the area against alleged rigging of election at the collation centre to favour a particular candidate.

According to the source, a notable politician was said to have called security men, who engaged the youths during which the victims were shot.

In another development, a youth corps member and another adhoc staff of INEC, died in a boat mishap that occurred at Agadagba Obon in Ede Ondo Local Government area of the state.

Seven other persons were said to have sustained various degrees of injuries and are currently receiving treatment at the Trauma Centre, Ondo State.

The corps member Ibrahim Okanlawon served along with the others at the riverine Arogbo Community but got drowned when the speed boat conveying him and others capsized.

The Deputy Governor of the state, Agboola Ajayi, had condoled with the family of the victims and the National Youths Service Corps (NYSC) over the accident.

Ajayi was also said to have visited the injured in the hospital and had directed the hospital management to treat the injured.

In Kogi State, the state Commissioner of Police, Hakeem Busari, has said four persons lost their lives during the election in the state.

He made the confirmation over the weekend while speaking on the situation of elections in the state.

According to him, his men were able to put things in control during and after the elections.

Meanwhile, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Mopamuro Local Government Area of Kogi State boycotted yesterday's rescheduled House of Assembly election.

The State Houses of Assembly elections were held across the country last Saturday, but that of Mopamuro constituency was slated for yesterday because the ballot papers of Ankpa LGA were wrongly sent to the constituency.

Confirming the boycott, the former Deputy Governor of Kogi State, Yomi Awoniyi, said the leadership of Mopamuro LGA PDP, having consulted with the zonal, and state leadership of the party hierarchy, has withdrawn from House of Assembly election.

The withdrawal, according to Awoniyi, was to essentially save lives and property.

According to him, " With the brazen ballot box snatching that was experienced in the adjoining local government areas in the Saturday's elections, the shooting of party agents in a very senseless manner, harassment of PDP candidates in adjoining local government areas, particularly that of Yagba West to be specific, the influx of hoodlums from outside Mopamuro and the incessant gunshots for the last three days as well as the thuggery unleashed on the people, the party feels our victory is not worth the blood of any citizen of this local government area.

"The party is therefore inviting their party agents to steer clear of the election as we're boycotting the election."

In Bayelsa State, a yet-to-be named naval rating has reportedly been attacked and killed by rampaging youths in Brass Island, Brass LGA while on election duty in the state.

It was learnt that the naval officer attached to NNS FORMOSO was escorting electoral materials from Egwuama to Brass when he and his colleagues came under attack from some thugs loyal to a politician in the area.

Naval authorities in the state did not immediately react to the incident, however, during the shootout, the military officer was said to have died instantly.

Condemning the murder, the state chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) said the death of the naval personnel followed in the same line of violence against the security agencies in the area by opposition party.

The state Secretary of the PDP, Chief Godspower Keku, said in a statement yesterday that the situation was unfortunate, noting that the navy in the state had exhibited a high level of professionalism in the election so far. He maintained that the navy may have come under the unprovoked attack for resisting attempts by the opposition thugs to hijack the materials in the area to non-designated location for thumb-printing in Brass.

The PDP said it was worried that a group of desperate politicians had been allowed to take the laws of the land into their hands and emboldened to commit acts of criminality for the purpose of undeserved electoral victory.

He called on the authorities of the Nigerian Navy to go after the hoodlums and their leaders behind the unfortunate death of the naval rating with a view to bringing them to book.

The party recalled that a Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of Federal SARS, Kola Okunola, was abducted and stripped by the same set of people during the presidential and National Assembly polls.

He said it was cheering to note that a state lawmaker who allegedly led the widely condemned assault on the DCP was arrested and would soon face prosecution alongside his cohorts.

Keku called on the Commander of NNS FORMOSO to take a cue from the leadership of the police by going public with the murder of the innocent security operative in the line of duty.

Meanwhile, four persons were killed on Saturday when the boat conveying them from an offshore polling centre to Koko in Warri North LGA of Delta State capsized.

The boat was said to have been carrying 22 persons, including three policemen and 19 locals, when the mishap occurred at about 1.20 p.m during the governorship and state legislative election. The Acting Delta State Police Command spokesman, Mr. Chuks Orisewezie, who confirmed the report to journalists yesterday, said that two of the 18 persons subsequently rescued were receiving treatment at the Delta State University Teaching Hospital (DELSU), Oghara near Sapele.

THISDAY gathered that efforts were still on to locate and rescue four of the passengers in the ill-fated boat, who were yet to be found by yesterday afternoon, more than 27 hours after the unfortunate incident, the police explained.

Orisewezie however said that the victims of the boat accident did not include any NYSC members or INEC ad-hoc staff.

The statement by the Delta State police spokesman confirmed that, "a boat conveying 22 passengers, three Policemen and 19 members of the community returning from ward 3 Ebrohimi to Koko Jetty after the elections, at about 0120 hours capsized along the waterway at Ureju community.

"Eighteen passengers, including three Policemen and 15 natives have been successfully rescued, while four passengers are still missing. Two of the rescued passengers have been rushed to the Oghara General Hospital.

"However, no INEC official or NYSC member was involved in the boat mishap as earlier rumoured. The search for the missing passengers is still in progress."

The Commissioner of Police, Delta State Command, Mr. Adeyinka Adeleke, has expressed sympathy with the victims of the boat mishap, the spokesman said, adding that the police commissioner "has reiterated his commitment to ensure the safety and security of all Deltans at all times."
