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520 persons killed in post-election violence – IGP

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ABUJA —THE Inspector General of Police, Alhaji Hafiz Ringim disclosed, Wednesday, that a total of 520 persons were killed in the violence that followed the outcome of the last presidential election where President Goodluck Jonathan was declared the winner.

He gave the figure in Abuja at an event organised by the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre, Abuja to review the lessons learnt during the conduct of the 2011 General elections.

In his paper entitled “2011 General Elections’ Review: Experience-Sharing, Lessons Learnt and the Way Forward – The Nigeria Police Perspective,” the

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police boss said 520 persons were killed in the post election violence that erupted in Kaduna and Niger States.

According to him, five hundred and eighteen (518), including six policemen were killed in Kaduna State while two persons were killed in Niger state.

Ringim said in the paper presented on his behalf by the Assistant Inspector General of Police, Zone 7 Headquarters, Felix Ogbaudu that “157 churches, 46 mosques and 1435 houses were burnt. Four hundred and thirty-seven vehicles, 219 motor-cycles were also burnt. Forty five property belonging to the police were also burnt.”

He also stated that 22, 141 persons became internally-displaced in Kaduna State alone while 77 persons were injured and that 157 churches with 46 mosques were burnt in the state.

Also, 987 shops and 1, 435 houses were burnt as well as 437 vehicles and 219 motorcycles.

He explained that in Niger State, two persons were killed, four others were injured while eight churches, seven mosques, seven houses and seven vehicles were burnt, damaged or completely destroyed. He added that the police was forced to contend with immense challenges during the election period.

“The Police had to contend with a number of challenges ranging from

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inadequate logistic support and manpower among others.

“Some of these problems were created due to non-compliance with section 129 (2) occasioned by the agitation by some politicians who insisted and urged their supporters to stay back after casting their votes to “defend their votes” whatever that meant.”

The police boss also blamed the high level of illiteracy, unemployment and the culture of impunity for the violence, adding that late arrival of election materials, use of vehicle headlights to illuminate vote collation processes along with the activities of political thugs all created additional challenges for the police.

He therefore urged INEC and political parties to step up voter education to stem the misconception associated with the electoral process. He also called for strict legislations, including at least six years’ imprisonment for crimes such as illegal possession of fire arms.

Chairman of the occasion, Justice Mohammed Uwais had earlier said although the 2011 elections was not perfect, it was a remarkable departure from the failures of the past.

“Nowhere in the World do we have a perfect election; what we strive to do is to have a near perfect election. The last election has come and gone but they have left behind their foot prints which we can use to improve on future

elections,” he said.

Chairman of INEC, Prof. Attahiru Jega in his contributions pointed out that INEC learnt a lot of lessons from the elections, noting the introduction of inter-agency networking among security agencies significantly helped to curb incidents of violence and electoral offences.

According to him, “The election was not perfect; we are however glad that like we promised the election was a remarkable improvement over what happened in 2007.

“We learnt lessons in the area of operation, logistics, planning and preparations. We know that in the past there were a lot of issues with both the reality and perception about the activities of staff and ad-hoc staff of INEC.”

“ For some people, once their party or candidate fails to win, elections are no longer perfect. Issues of poverty, ignorance and so on are real challenges,” said Jega who also urged recourse to the judiciary instead of violent protests”.

Jega added that the commission undertook the training and re-training of its staff within the short time available.

The National Security Adviser, Gen. Andrew Azazi in a paper delivered on his behalf of by a director in his office, Ambassador Lai Olaseinde,

commended President Goodluck Jonathan for demonstrating the political will to ensure the credibility of the polls.




He argued that in the past there was a general feeling within the populace that security forces were under instructions to rig for the person in power, adding that security agencies' new inter-agency arrangements enhanced effectiveness in addition to reducing incidents of unhealthy rivalries between the services.

In his speech, the acting Country Director of OSIWA in Nigeria, Oladayo Oliade praised Nigerians for their resilience and commended development partners and civil society groups for playing active roles in ensuring the transparency of the election.

On his part, the Chief Observer of the European Union Election Observation Mission, Alojz Peterle commended INEC for successfully conducting the April polls, noting that while international goodwill for INEC and Nigeria would be sustained, the EU EOM hopes that attention will be given to its fifty recommendations aimed at helping Nigeria improve its electoral processes.

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