

Politics



Violence, upsets trail PDP Reps, state assembly primaries

• 3 killed in Abom, Bayelsa, exercise postponed in Imo
• Uduaghan's daughter loses, Ibori's son ties; Okowa, Utuama's children win

By Emma Amaize, Dayo Johnson, Clifford Nduljihe, Dapo Akinrefon, Jimitola, Onoyume, Chioma Onuegbu, Onozure Dania, Emem Idio, Steve Oko, Harris Emanuel & Chancel Sunday

VIOLENCE, glitches, complaints and postponement trailed the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, House of Representatives and state assembly primaries in some parts of the country, yesterday.

A supporter of the PDP, Mr. Michael Isaiah alias "Iompolo" was killed during the primary election of the party in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

A leading aspirant for the Ogbia Federal Constituency ticket of the PDP, and former Bayelsa State Commissioner for Information, Daniel Iworiso-Markson, condemned the killing of Michael Isaiah describing it as barbaric and sad.

He called on security agents to go after the killers and their desperate sponsors, insisting that those responsible must not go unpunished.

In Akwa Ibom, two persons were reportedly killed in Ini Local Government Area when supporters of aspirants for the House of Representatives slot clashed.

Although, the exercises were peaceful in some states, it was nevertheless postponed in Imo following unavailability of delegates list occasioned by the non-assent to the amendment to Section 84 (8) of the Electoral Act by President Muhammadu Buhari.

Mixed fortunes for Okowa, Uduaghan, Ibori's children in Delta

In Delta, it was mixed fortunes for the children of Governor Ifeanyi Okowa and his two immediate predecessors, Chief James Ibori and Dr Emmanuel Uduaghan.

Marylin Okowa-Daramola, daughter of Governor Ifeanyi Okowa, was returned as the party's Ika North East constituency standard-bearer.

For Warri federal constituency, Hon Thomas Ereyitomi won. While former governor James Ibori's daughter, Hon Erhiatake Ibori Suenu had a vote tie with Hon Ben Igbakpa for Etiope federal constituency ticket of the party. They had 34 votes each.

Chairman Warri South local Government Area, Dr Mike Tidi, and daughter of former Governor Emmanuel Uduaghan, Miss Roli Uduaghan, were among those who lost in the delegate primaries for the House of Assembly seats in Delta State.

In Warri South Constituency 2, the member representing the area in the state House of Assembly, Hon Mathew Poko Oporu won with 10 votes, beating the Chairman of the Warri South Local Government Area, Dr Tidi, who had six votes while a new entrant into the political race, Mrs Emuobome Bazunu Sokoh had four votes.

For the Warri North State constituency seat, Uduaghan's daughter came a distant second behind Hon Fred Martins.

In Ughelli North II, son of popular transporter, Hon Onoriode Agofure won.

Deputy Majority Leader and lawmaker representing Bomadi Constituency in the Delta State House of Assembly, Hon. Oboro Preyor, clinched the PDP's ticket, the fourth time he was doing so.

He declared the winner of the primaries at St. Brendan College, Bomadi, by Returning Officer, Mr Innocent Esewezie, after polling 20 of the 30 votes cast.

Izeze, Delta lawmaker loses as Utuama's brother wins

The incumbent member representing Ughelli South Constituency, Hon. Reuben Izeze, lost out as Mr. Festus Utuama, a brother of former Deputy Governor of the State, Prof Amos Utuama, was returned as the party's flag-bearer.

Some serving members, including Hon Guwor Emomotimi (Warri South-West); Hon Arthur Akpowowwo (Etiope East), Hon Ferguson Onwo (Isoko South 2); Hon Fred Martins (Warri North); Hon Charles Emetulu (Ndokwa West); Hon Opoko Oporu (Warri South Constituency 2); Hon Festus Okoh- Ika South; Hon Brown Jite (Udu) among others retained the tickets for their respective areas.

Governorship aspirant and former Commissioner for Works, Chief James Agugye, who stepped down for incumbent Speaker and leading governorship aspirant, Rt. Hon Sheriff Oborewori, both of whom are from the same Okpe constituency, effortlessly won the party's ticket at the primaries.

Postponement in Imo

In the Imo, the PDP suspended its primaries for the House of Assembly and House of Representatives indefinitely over non-reconciliation of delegates list.

A statement by the PDP legal advisor in the state, Kessinger Ikeokwu, attributed the non-conduct of the primaries to "confusion caused by the National Assembly."

"Please note that the reason for the suspension of the PDP House of Assembly and House of Representatives primaries in Imo as a result of the confusion that arose from the error of the National Assembly in the country."

"This is hinged on Section 84 (8) of the Electoral Act, which inadvertently led to the exclusion of over 80 per cent of delegates ordinarily meant to vote at the primaries."

"The Imo PDP case became compounded because it hadn't tidied up its three-man ad hoc delegates, who ought to vote at the primaries due to pending litigations."

"Every preparation was made for us to use our statutory delegates to vote, before the National Assembly saw the error in Section 84 of the Amended Electoral Act, 2022, which excluded the statutory delegates. What it means is that it created a situation of chaos for Imo because we have not concluded our elected delegates," he explained.

2 killed as materials late arrival delay primaries in Akwa Ibom

Apart from the death of two party faithful during a violent clash of supporters of aspirants for the House of Representatives in Ini local government area, materials arrived late in many locations in the state leading to the exercise five hours behind the scheduled 8 am at Onna Local Government Area.

The use of ad-hoc delegates for the polls has been a subject of litigation. Thereafter, the party elected 26 House of Assembly and 10 House of Representatives candidates.

At Ibiono Ibom, the incumbent lawmaker, Monday Ekpo was given the mandate to fly the party's flag.

At the designated centres monitored, including Uyo, Ibesikpo Asutan, Nsit Ubiom and Onna local government areas, the exercise was conducted under peaceful and orderly manner.

At QIC Primary School Awa Iman in Onna LGA delegates started voting by 1: 53pm and the results announced immediately at about

2:30pm.

Those who emerged winners include Sampson Idiong (Oruk Anam) Iboro Columba (Ikono) Eric Akpan (Nsit Ibom) Emem Udom (Ukanafun) - Aniefiok Attah (Nsit Atai) Ubong Attah (Ibesikpo Asutan), Mfon Idung (Etim Ekpo/Ika), Mrs Iboro Etim (Uruan) Nsidihe Akara, (Eket) and Sunday Johnny (Onna).

Others are Kufre Abasi Edidem (Itu), Prince Akpabio (Essien Udim),

Lawrence Udoide (Ini), Godwin Ekpo (Ibiono Ibom), Uwemedimo Asuquo (Uyo),

Kenim Onofio (Oron/Uduung Uko), Otonobong Bob (Nsit Ubiom), Uwem Imo-Ita (Mkpat Enin), Selina Ukpato (Eastern Obolo/Ikot Abasi), and Uduak Ekpo-Ufot (Etinan).

Meanwhile, aspirants aggrieved over the outcome of the April 30th Ad-hoc delegate nomination boycotted the exercise in their respective constituencies.

Some national delegates of the party who were conspicuously absent at the primaries when contacted said they want to wait for the court to rule on the contentious issue of Ad-hoc delegate before knowing the next line of action to take.

While fielding questions from newsmen after the primaries the Akwa State Governor and presidential aspirant, Mr. Udom Emmanuel, assured that the party would immediately set up a reconciliation committee to bring aggrieved members back.

His words: "Today I decided to obey the rules of the Electoral Act that disqualifies me from being a delegate. That is why I couldn't go near the venue of the event. That is number one."

Number two, I am made to understand in this life that anything that comes our way we see it as an Act of God.

"What is happening today that the party has to use only Ad-hoc delegates, nobody can explain. Right from the day the Act was signed up till today nobody detected it, it was detected so late. We can't blame anybody."

"We can only see it as an act of God that is how it is meant to be. I keep telling people no two elections are the same. So this is how God wants it this year. So let's leave it that way."

"If God is doing a new thing in Nigeria I pray that new thing will dovetail to a new order, new system for 2023, when we will have a new set of a president who will not be up to 60 years, and who will have the energy to take care of Nigeria, and that person will be Udom Emmanuel."

Abia PDP heading for avoidable disaster — Chieftains

A chieftain of the PDP in Abia State, Chief Chuku Wachuku, warned the party against self destruct following the controversies surrounding its primaries, yesterday.

This was as the Chairman of Obingwa Local Government Area, and an aspirant for Obingwa/Osisioma/Ugwunagbo federal constituency, Mr Michael Nwoke, boycotted the primaries, alleging inconsistencies.

Former Chairman of PDP and one of its governorship aspirants, Senator Emma Nwaka, also warned PDP against self destruct and toiling in vain.

"We must avoid a situation where we will become by our own deliberate fault bystanders as strangers reap the benefits of our hard work over the years", Nwaka warned.

Elder statesman and the immediate past Secretary to the State Government, SSG Dr Erne Okoro, said the impending avoidable disaster would consume every member of the party.

He described the refusal of the party leadership to heed wise counsel, and expressed

disappointment over the entire development.

"The unheeded wise counsel of honest Elders will come to haunt and harass all in the poverty-stricken state of Abia. May He help all who will survive the impending debacle", the former SSG said.

Similarly, Chuku Wachuku who is one of the senatorial aspirants for Abia Central said that the party leadership could have saved the party from avoidable crisis by following due process in organising the exercise.

He warned that PDP candidates might lose their seats in court if the legal issues being raised against the way the party was going about its delegate congress and primaries were not resolved."

Lagos PDP, gov aspirants reject delegates' list, call for cancellation

In Lagos, five of the six governorship aspirants, yesterday, rejected the ad-hoc delegate list brought by the party's Electoral Committee for the conduct of the State House of Assembly and House of Representative elections, calling for its outright cancellation.

Addressing journalists in Lagos, state chairman of PDP, Mr Philip Aioje flanked by five of the six governorship aspirants in the state and other party stakeholders, said they were shocked to see that the list brought to the state by the electoral committee did not reflect the authentic elected ad-hoc delegates as conducted by the organs of the party at ward levels and supervised by officers of the Department of State Service, DSS, and the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC.

Aioje said: "It is imperative to state that copies of the ad-hoc list that emanated from the state and submitted to INEC are completely different from the one brought by the committee for the purpose of the exercise."

"Also the committee chairman and the secretary of the election committee meant to conduct the State House of Assembly primary election did not report to the state chairman or state organ of the party. We could not reach out to the committee chairman and secretary; their telephones have either been switched off or unreachable."

While alleging that the process has been skewed to favour a particular candidate, he urged the National Chairman of the party, Dr Iyorchia Ayu, to cancel the election exercise.

He also warned that doing otherwise would not only jeopardize the chances of the party at the polls, but also lead to a plethora of endless litigation afterwards.

Asked what the party executive has done since it realized that the authentic delegate list had been tampered with, Aioje said he was informed that an anonymous national officer told the party's National Working Committee not to deal with the state executive under his leadership because they were still in court over the authentic leadership of the party in the state.

Meanwhile, in one of the primaries conducted in Shomolu, Mr Ayodeji Johnson Ajayi won the ticket for Shomolu 2 constituency in Lagos State House of Assembly.

Ondo minority leader, only female lawmaker lose return tickets

In Ondo, the House of Assembly Minority leader, Rasheed Elgiebeleye lost Akoko North East Constituency return ticket to Akintola Olanrewaju.

He polled 18 votes as against Olanrewaju's 22 votes.

But his deputy, Tomide Akinribido, a candidate of the former state governor, Olusegun Mimiko, who represents Ondo West Constituency 1, won a return ticket.

Akinribido polled 12 votes to defeat Taye Olagundoye who scored 7 votes.

Also, the party's only female member representing Ilaje Constituency 2, Favour Tomomewo lost a return ticket to Ayenuro Adesoji.