

20 killed as violence, apathy, glitches mar guber, assembly polls

- In Lagos, 5 Vanguard reporters attacked
- Sanwo-Olu, Rhodes-Vivour trade words over violence
- 5 feared dead, 1 injured, house razed in Delta
- Five killed; as Amaechi, Abe discredit process in Rivers
- Six feared dead in Benue
- 19 electoral officials abducted in Imo
- One killed by security operatives in Niger
- Policeman, one other shot in Ondo amid voting-buying in dollars
- Thugs in military uniform hijack materials in Ebonyi
- One shot, as hoodlums raid polling units in Osun
- Alleged vote-buyers injure EFCC staff in Kaduna, El-Rufai claims voter suppression

By Our Reporters

NO fewer than 20 persons were feared killed, yesterday, as violence, suppression of voters and apathy took the upper hand in many locations across the country in the governorship and state assembly elections.

There were also non-arrival/late arrival of Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, officials in some polling units, malfunctioning of the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System, BVAS, machines, and refusal of electoral officers to upload results to the INEC Results Viewing Portal, IRev, from the polling booths as was witnessed during the February 25 presidential poll.

Incidents of BVAS and ballot papers snatching and destruction, vote-buying and selling were also reported.

These happened on a day that no fewer than five Vanguard reporters were attacked or harassed during the coverage of the elections in Lagos.

Meanwhile, 16 INEC ad-hoc staff were attacked and electoral materials, including ballot boxes, were destroyed at Odoakpu Ward 7, Onitsha South Local Government Area of Anambra State as 19 electoral officers were abducted and later rescued in Imo State. The 20 lives were lost in Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Delta, Benue, Niger, Osun, just as many people sustained gunshot wounds.

5 feared dead, 1 injured, house razed in Delta

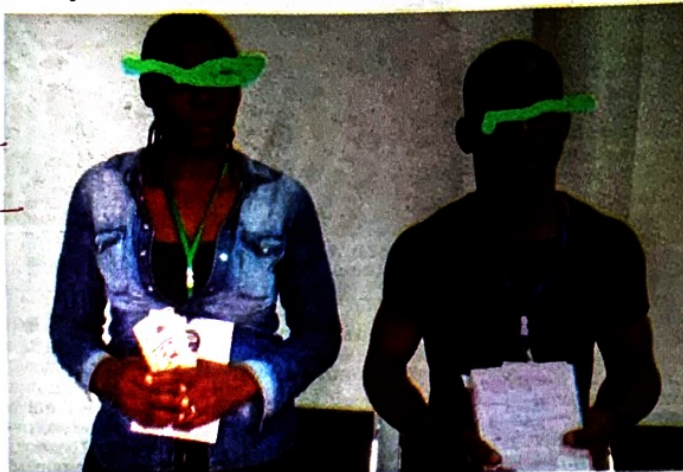
In Delta, five persons reportedly lost their lives at Mosogor and Oghara, in Ethiope West Local Government Area during the polls.

Reports said four persons were shot dead at Mosogor and one at Oghara. Suspected political thugs torched the residence of former Chairman of Ethiope West LGA, Dr. Wilson Omene, an All Progressives Congress, APC, leader in the state.

At Ewreni, Ughelli North LGA, thugs went on the rampage, attacked INEC officials, and destroyed about three BVAS machines and electoral materials.

Some electoral officers sustained injuries, and the incident disrupted voting in polling units in the area.

The rampaging thugs prevented a team of journalists monitoring the elections from entering the



• Suspects arrested by EFCC for vote-buying

community.

Sources said some security personnel, who were deployed to the community, compromised, and they supervised the disruption process.

In the Mosogor mayhem, sources said the deceased persons died after an exchange of gunfire between security operatives and fringe youths.

Some youths also threatened to revenge the death of one Oburuche, just as Omene accused a member of the opposition party of being behind the attack on his house and car.

At Amukpe, near Sapele, a youth allegedly lost his hand during a clash in one of the polling units in the area.

Unlike the February 25 presidential and National Assembly polls, there was a low turnout of voters, yesterday, but electoral materials arrived early at various polling units across Delta.

Reports said the polling materials arrived at the various RAC Centres on Friday, and as of 7.00 am, officials of the INEC had begun the distribution of the items to the various units.

As early as 10 am voting and accreditation had taken place in several polling units in Warri, Uvwie, and other parts of the state. Some voters stayed out of the exercise, saying they doubted the sincerity of the electoral umpire.

There was a noticeably high presence of security operatives in Asaba, the state capital, Ogwashi-Uku, Kwale, Olofin, Ozoro, Agbor, Ughelli, Obiaruku, and Aboh, as voting commenced between 8 am and 8.30 am in the areas.

Governor Ifeanyi Okowa, who voted at his Unit 17, Ward 02 (Eghoma

Primary School), Owa-Alero in Ika North-East LGA at 9.50 am, said: "Everything is working perfectly here. However, there are a few issues of persons unable to get to their units because of restrictions, but we hope they are able to meet up before the close of the election."

The governor's daughter and House of Assembly candidate of the PDP for Ika North-East constituency, Marilyn Daramola, who also voted at the same centre with his father, expressed optimism that the party would triumph in both the governorship and House of Assembly elections.

The Delta State governorship candidate of the PDP, Sheriff Oborewori, who voted at Oha Ward One, Unit 33, Osubi, Okpe LGA at exactly 9:30 am, expressed optimism that he would win, adding that his party had worked so hard for it.

Oborewori said he expected that the INEC would conduct the exercise correctly and peacefully across the state, stressing that every critical stakeholder must strive to strengthen the democratic process in Nigeria.

His APC challenger, Senator Ovie Omo-Agege, who cast his vote at his Orogun Ward 2 Unit 19, Ughelli North LGA at 11:11 am, expressed optimism that his party would win the polls.

Also the APGA Governorship Candidate, Chief Great Ogboru said: "Until this time, it has been peaceful. So let us see the situation later in the day. Let us hear the results if the uploading of the results of the units will take place before we can start to judge."

"But the verification in the voting process was

okay because the BVAS worked. It captured my thumbprint."

In addition, the governorship candidates of the SDP and LP, Olorogun Kenneth Gbagi, and Mr. Ken Pela, respectively, expressed optimism that they would win the election.

The governorship candidate of the New Nigeria Peoples Party, NNPP, Sir Goodnews Agbi, said the INEC systematically schemed him out through the placement of a faded logo of his party in the ballot paper.

Agbi, who spoke after voting at Ikruvhu quarters, Oyede Ward 12, Unit 3, said he had briefed his legal team to study the circumstances and file a case against INEC over the development.

Five killed; Amaechi, Abe discredit process in Rivers

In Rivers, five persons were feared killed during the polls.

Two deaths were reported in Bori, Khana LG Area, while three persons were claimed in Ogbakiri Community, Emohua LGA.

This happened as empty polling units, ballot boxes snatching, fake result sheets, non-availability of BVAS password, harassment of voters and other irregularities were recorded in parts of the state.

Three persons were feared killed in Ogbakiri Community, Emohua LGA while unidentified gunmen invaded Ejibrada Community in the same LGA shooting sporadically.

The Chairman of the APC, Chief Emeka Beke, who spoke after casting his vote at Ward Three Ejibrada Community, Emohua LGA, said the development was worrisome.

Beke noted that the three

victims were with a sitting lawmaker in the state and had hijacked ballot boxes before the military came in. He said the three were killed as they were attempting to make away with the sensitive materials.

Beke said: "Today three people were killed in Ogbakiri. They were hijacking and snatching ballot boxes and they were killed."

It was alleged that the APC candidate for Ahoada East State Constituency 2 seat in the polls, Ukalikpe Napoleon, had been kidnapped.

Amaechi expresses regrets over polls

Former Governor and Minister of Transportation, Chief Rotimi Amaechi, who is the leader of the APC in Rivers State, after voting at his Ward 8, Unit 14, Ubioma Community, Ikwerre LGA, expressed displeasure with the process.

Amaechi stated that even though the elections were peaceful in his community there were reports of arrest of candidates of the APC. He alleged that the materials brought for the elections at his unit were fake but that they decided to vote in order to allow peace to reign.

Abe describes poll as worst in history

Rivers SDP governorship candidate, Senator Magnus Abe, described the polls as the worst of all elections conducted in the state.

Abe regretted that over 40 persons, who are mainly his supporters, had been arrested and detained at the State Criminal Investigation Department in Port Harcourt, adding that their offence was that they refused to take bribe.

While voters didn't turn up

Wosu Chikanka Prince, an agent of one of the political parties, said electoral officers were ready since 8:00 am but that there were no voters.

He said the reason could be as a result of fear and the incident of the February 25 polls where peoples' will was thwarted.

EOs refuse to leave for polling units over BVAS password

Meanwhile, Electoral Officers in Rivers State refused to leave the Registration Area Centres, RAC, for their polling units over non-availability of passwords for the BVAS.

The EOs, particularly in RAC 12, Ward 12, Rumuigbo in Obio/Akpor LGA, said the RAC Technicians refused to release the BVAS password insisting that the access code for uploading results must be given to them before they would leave for their units.

The Assistant Presiding Officer (1) in one of the units in ward 12, Nsikak Okon, said there was disagreement between top officials of the RAC and the EOs.

Okon said the RAC-Techs refused to give out the password ward for uploading of the results and is asking them to go to the units first. "We have been having altercation since morning

because they refused to give out the passwords for the BVAS, exactly what they did the last time that landed a lot of us into trouble."

Election suspended in Asari-Toru

However, election was suspended at Asari-Toru LGA following non movement of INEC personnel and materials from the LGA RAC Centres in Buguma to the various voting areas.

One of the INEC Supervising Presiding Officer in charge of Asalga Ward 3, Dr Big Alabo Adokiye, who confirmed the development, said they await the decision of INEC in the state on information about rescheduling the elections in the area.

Six feared dead in Gboko, Benue

In Benue, no fewer than six persons were killed at different locations within Gboko LGA during the elections although the Local Government Council Chairman, Mr. Isaac Mtom, said he received report of an incident that claimed the life of an individual in Gboko South.

It was gathered that security personnel allegedly shot dead a suspected ballot box snatcher while several others sustained injuries when they attempted to snatch ballot boxes during voting in Gboko South.

The source disclosed that one of the ballot box snatchers was killed in Abagu, a community in Gboko and another two were shot at different polling units at NKST Primary School Gboko South while the others were killed in Hausa quarters area of the town.

He said: "The information we got is that the six persons were killed when they disrupted voting and attempted to snatch ballot boxes at the different locations in Gboko."

Contacted, the Gboko LGA Chairman, Mr. Mtom said: "I have report of one incident in Gboko South and I am yet to confirm that the person is dead."

Reacting, the State Police Public Relations Officer, Superintendent, SP Catherine Anene, said she was yet to receive details of the incidents.

One feared killed in Lagos, Vanguard reporters attacked

One person was feared dead in the clashes between thugs and voters in Ago Okota area of Lagos.

In some polling units visited in Jakande Estate, Oke-Afa Isolo area of Lagos, there were complaints of harassment and intimidation of voters by some political thugs.

These units included: Low Cost Primary and Secondary Schools, Water Corporation, NEPA Junction and those in the Bungalow Section of the estate.

Voters were chased away. Some of them alleged that thugs beat them up and deprived them of voting for candidates of their choice.

While these were going

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