

Plateau murder: Security agencies on red alert

From Agbo Isaac, Jos

CONTROVERSY is trailing the murder of a gubernatorial aspirant in Plateau State, Chief Jesse Aruku even as security agencies have been placed on red alert.

While the Aruku's Advanced Congress of Democrats (ACD) claimed that 12 persons arrested by policemen immediately after the killing were later released "on orders from above," but the police denied it.

Both parties also sharply differed on how Aruku died.

Political watchers say the killing and how law enforcement agents handled it are instructive for the country's immediate political

future as campaigns hot up for the 2007 general elections.

Aruku's body was found on Sunday following his abduction on Friday by unknown persons as he returned for a rally of the ACD in his native Bassa.

However, the ACD, in a statement, accused the police of fouling up investigations into the murder.

"It would be recalled that the Advanced Congress of Democrats launched the Bassa Local Government chapter of the party on Friday, June 30 while the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) held its own rally in the same local government

area on July 1.

"At the said rally, the PDP stalwarts unleashed mayhem on the entire community attacking anybody on sight. In the melee that ensued, the late Aruku, the ACD gubernatorial candidate in Plateau State, was abducted by the PDP thugs and subsequently found murdered. The same rampaging PDP thugs in the process attacked policemen, shooting one of them in the thigh.

"Impeccable sources confirmed that 12 persons were arrested over the attack but a new twist was introduced into the matter when all arrested persons were allegedly released on bail on orders from above," the ACD said.