

Bloody poll: 11 killed in Akwa Ibom election violence

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ABOUT 11 persons including a returning officer were feared dead while several others sustained serious injuries at the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) primaries held in Akwa Ibom State last Tuesday.

The exercise was to select councillorship candidates for the local government poll billed for June this year.

Although the identities of the victims have not been ascertained but *Daily Champion* gathered that

the returning officer was beheaded in Abak by suspected thugs who seized result from him. The exercise which kicked off amidst crisis last Monday could not hold in many parts of the state following alleged intrigues by some PDP chieftains to install their candidates.

It was speculated that the state governor, Chief Godswill Akpabio had reached consensus with PDP stakeholders in the state to ensure that his cohorts took over all wards and councils to make way for his return to

power in 2011.

Also the speaker of the state House of Assembly, Obong Ignatius Kevin Edet representing Ibiono Ibom constituency is also holding sway in the area to actualize his senate aspiration in the same year.

The purported stakeholders meeting held at closed doors yesterday at the Government House and presided over by the governor was aimed at attaining a possibility of reducing tension in the exercise as well as

NDLEA: \$105,000 reward for suspect

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chairmanship nomination scheduled for this weekend.

Only yesterday, a coalition of PDP women across the state protested in Uyo, the capital city blocking the main entrance to the governor's residence at Ewet housing estate demanding a level playing field for all the contestants in the state.

The protest was contrary to the earlier promise by state

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PDP chairman, Chief Otu Ita Toyo during a meeting with aspirants last weekend that the party had adopted option A4 to minimize violence as well as provide equal opportunity for aspiring members. The women leader in Ikono local government who claimed anonymity told our correspondent that five

persons were killed in Ini, a neighboring local government while other victims have been hospitalized.

The protest by hoodlums said to be party supporters led to the burning of Hon. Paul Owo's residence, a lawmaker representing Ini state constituency in the state House of Assembly. The lawmaker was accused of hoarding election material in his house.