

Edo: Gunmen kill 87-year-old female politician

AKEEM OGUNTAYO, Benin

EIGHTY-seven-year-old woman leader of the defunct Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) in the old Bendel State, Madam Grace Obaretin Osakwe has been shot dead by suspected assassins at her Uwasota residence, Benin City Edo State capital.

Reacting to the killing yesterday, chairman of the state chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chief Dan Orbih urged

Governor Adams Oshiomhole to immediately convene a security summit to address insecurity across the state.

Orbih made the call at a rally at Ekpoma headquarters of Esan West Local Government Area where he received about 2000 members of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) to the PDP.

Meanwhile some gunmen were said to have stormed the late politician residence at about

8 pm on Tuesday and asked if she is the mother of Martins Osakwe, a chieftain of the PDP before they rained bullets on her immediately she answered in the affirmative.

The bullets shattered her left arm which severed it from the rest of her body and also shattered her right cheek before the gunmen reportedly walked away without taking anything from the house.

Martins Osakwe, who narrated the incident to newsmen however said: "I remain committed to the

PDP family, I remain undaunted but it is painful that people are paying taxes but government is not protecting them". He added that his mother was shot dead after the suspected assassins inquired whether she was the mother of Martins and she agreed.

Similarly, Orbih has described the security situation in the state as unacceptable and called for concerted efforts to "check the ugly situation".

Addressing the defectors led by the former Deputy Chief of Staff to former Governor Lucky Igbinedion and a member of the state Task Force on Demolition and Environment Mr. John Ehigiator who was recently sacked by Governor Oshiomhole, Orbih condemned the incessant killings and kidnappings in the state and called for government response immediately.

"Since the coming of this ACN-led government in the state, we have not slept well in this state. While we urge the security agencies to fish out the killers of Mama UPN, we call on the state government to call a security summit where all party leaders and security agencies in the state will come and brainstorm on how to stop this problem.

"We are tired of insecurity in this state and it is unfortunate that the state government is not doing anything to address the situation. We need a change in this state and PDP is ready to lead again. This government is a failure," Orbih said.

2011: Jonathan'll run — Ohakim

TONY AILEMEN, Abuja

GOVERNOR Ikedi Ohakim of Imo State yesterday said President Goodluck Jonathan would contest the 2011 presidential election.

Governor Ohakim stated this shortly after a meeting with President Jonathan at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

"The President said he is going to contest, that is why I am here with my Speaker and other members of the State House of Assembly and we have agreed to support him but we must negotiate."

The Governor, however, said President Jonathan must address the issues of marginalisation of the South-East region for him to secure the support of the region for the 2011 election.

The revelation is coming ahead of the official declaration of President Jonathan which is expected any time from now.

Governor Ohakim however assured that only those who are ready to protect the interest of Ndigbo will get the region's support as the presidential race runs gradually to a climax.

The Governor also said President Jonathan must step up the current programmes already earmarked for the region by the Federal Government and ensure that they are completed very soon.

He told State House reporters that the region's place in Nigeria's political landscape must also be respected.

"We want him to continue the good work he is doing especially in the South East. This is the only way we will continue to attract our support," he said.

Although details of the discussions at the meeting were not revealed, *Daily Champion* however gathered that the people of the South-East are of the opinion that their right to produce the next president by the year 2015 formed part of the discussions at the meeting.

It would be recalled that both former military President Gen. Ibrahim Babangida and former Vice President Atiku Abubakar who are also eyeing the presidential seat, have promised to hand over to a South-East president in 2015.