

Gunmen kill Ekiti PDP guber aspirant, Daramola

• Rioters torch party chief's home

THE gale of assassinations within the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) spread to Ekiti State yesterday as a leading governorship aspirant for the party, Dr. Ayodeji Daramola, was murdered in his bedroom.

A source said the suspected assassins arrived at Daramola's Otunba Atuluse Crescent, Ijan-Ekiti home, about half a kilometre to the centre of the town, at exactly 1.00 a.m. They scaled the fence of the building before finding their way into the deceased bedroom.

After breaking the door, they shot at the PDP chieftain twice. He was said to have pleaded with the killers to spare his life.

The suspected assassins, about 12 in number, were reported to have hit him

The nutritionist Ekiti would miss

By Ayoyinka Olagoke, Lagos

NIGERIA once again lost one of its shining lights in politics with the murder yesterday of Dr. Ayodeji Adaramola, a governorship aspirant in Ekiti State.

He was a member of the ruling People Democratic Party (PDP).

In a nation seeking urgent solutions to its dire food crisis, the death even by natural causes of a doctorate degree holder in food science ought to give cause for concern. The pain is more felt when the life is taken in such gruesome manner as that of yesterday.

Daramola, was born on June 18, 1951. He obtained his first, second and doctoral degrees in food science from the Howard University, Washington D.C, USA.

Continued on Page 4

in the head before stabbing him in the stomach. They waited for some minutes to ascertain that their victim died before leaving him in a pool of his blood.

A friend of the deceased who was staying in the same building raised an alarm and the deceased was rushed to Ado-Ekiti for medical treatment. He was confirmed dead on arrival at the Ado-Ekiti Specialist Hospital where they later deposited his remains.

"In Lagos, the widow was disconsolate. "I didn't know that my husband was the next. I am finished," she lamented when accosted by journal-



• The late Daramola

From Ifedayo Sayo (Ado-Ekiti), Mustapha Ogunwale and Ayoyinka Olagoke (Lagos) and Julius Alabi (Akure)

ists at her Ojoagada home.

Recalling the equally

grievous recent murder of a prominent Lagos

State governorship aspirant, Mr. Funso Williams, she said: "They've killed my husband. If this is the sacrifice to pay for Ekiti, it is too great for me to bear."

The Guardian learnt at Ijan-Ekiti that the suspected assassins had arrived at the town at about 10 p.m. on Sunday and made their way to a house at the centre of the town where they drank liquor heavily.

An elderly man whose house was next to the beer parlour where they were exchanging banter said he overheard them mentioning the name of the deceased. He was challenged by the hoodlums and forced to retreat inside his house.

The assassins waited till 1.00 a.m. before finding

Continued on Page 2

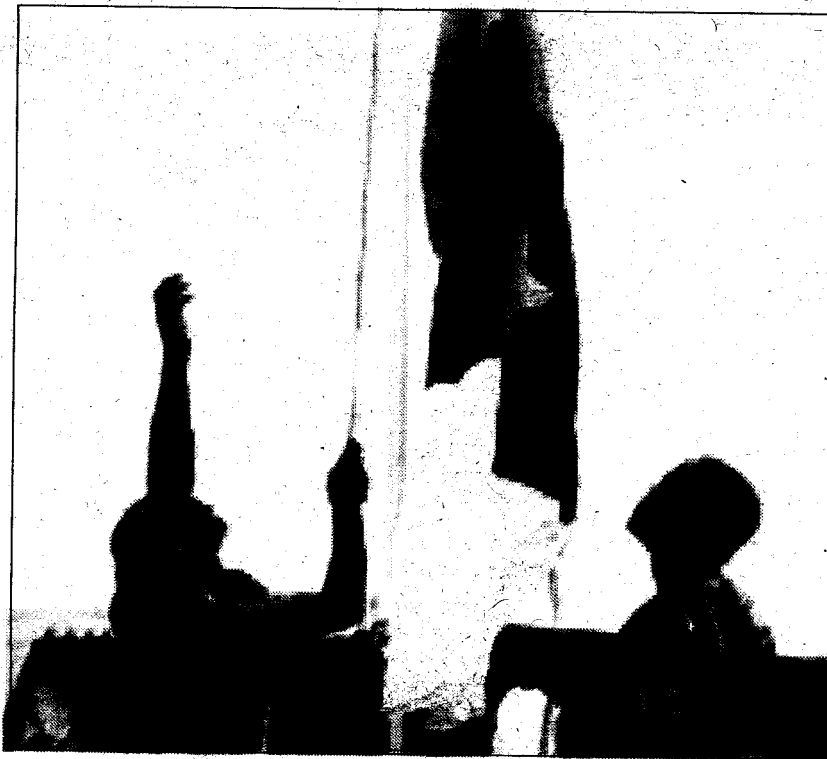
Lebanese return home as Israel, Hezbollah end conflict

HOURS after a United Nations (UN) ceasefire to end the hostilities between Israel and Lebanon came into force, thousands of displaced Lebanese have begun returning home.

According to a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) report, some 1000 Lebanese, mostly civilians, and 157 Israelis, 114 of them soldiers have died in the 34-day conflict. Fighting ceased yesterday at 0500MT.

Meanwhile, Israel has said its troops will remain in Lebanon until an international peacekeeping force can take control. In one incident, Israeli soldiers fired on a group who they said were militants.

As the ceasefire came into
Continued on Page 2



• Two Camerounian soldiers hoist their country's flag, following the lowering of Nigeria's Green-White-Green, signifying the transfer of authority of the Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroun in Archibong Town ... yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Gunmen kill governorship aspirant

Continued from Page 1

their way to the house of their victim where they carried out their operations unhindered.

Before retiring into his bedroom, Daramola who arrived at his country home on Sunday from a trip to Lagos where his immediate family are residing, was reported to have held a series of meetings till about 12.30 a.m on Monday morning.

He had on Sunday afternoon held another round of meetings with his supporters at Imesi-Ekiti on his open declaration of his governorship ambition.

Daramola, a former chairman of the state Community-Based Poverty Reduction Agency (EKPPRA) joined the governorship race less than two months ago.

He enjoyed wide acceptance in the state because of his performance at EKPPRA and people had started looking up to him as reliable hands that could successfully rule the state.

His death generated violent reaction from the people of Ijan as they protested and made bonfires on the major roads leading to the town.

Some houses belonging to some people believed to be the political foes of the deceased were set ablaze by the youths in the town.

Among the houses torched by the youths were those of the state chairman of PDP, Mr. Ropo Adesanya and an aide of the deputy governor.

The Assistant Inspector-General of Police in charge of zone 8, Mr. John Amodu, visited the house of the

deceased at Ijan at about 11.30 a.m. He was conducted round the scene by the state police spokesman, ASP Umar Babangida.

The Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Sunday Ehindero, was still being expected at the scene of the incident yesterday afternoon.

Already, the state government has announced a cash reward of N5 million to anybody who can give reliable information that would lead to the arrest of the assassins.

The state Governor, Mr. Ayodele Fayose who addressed a press briefing described the assassination of Daramola as sad, saying: "My heart bleeds this day as I receive the shocking news of the gruesome murder of Dr. Daramola, an emerging light in the present generation of Ekiti indigenes."

He assured that no stone would be left unturned in saving the state from such a mindless killing and called on the people of the state to eschew violence in the face of the dastardly act.

"The question is who killed Dr. Ayo Daramola? This is a mystery that must be unravelled instantly. The President and Inspector General of Police are aware of this unfortunate incident. I shall spare no effort in ensuring the protection of lives and property in this state," the governor added.

AIG Amodu described the assassination as very sad, saying the police would commence investigation immediately. He called on politicians to play the game of politics according to the

rule of the game.

Meanwhile, both the state government and the opposition have started pointing accusing fingers at each other. While the state governor linked the assassination to the desperation of some people at pulling down his administration and that of the ruling party, members of the opposition said the state government is not tolerant of the opposition should be investigated.

According to Fayose who rained curses on the killers, "some characters, who do not see anything good in this government and the ruling party, have adopted desperation as a tool for capturing power. They have mounted mindless and ferocious battles, of violent dimensions, in the state."

But opposition parties under the aegis of Ekiti Agenda said in a statement issued at the weekend by the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Mr. Idowu Adelusi, that members of the opposition had mapped out plans to attack some of their members and blame it on the government.

The Co-ordinator of Ekiti Agenda, Chief Idowu Odeyemi, who called on the Federal Government to declare a state of emergency in the state, said it was clear to everyone in the state the source of violence in the last three years.

He explained that on several occasions, his group had written to the President on the existence of a hit squad in the state but expressed regret that nothing was done.

He added that if the President had taken seriously the letters, the dastardly act would have been avoided.

He described the burning of his house at Ijan by the irate youths as unfortunate, saying he would never support any shedding of blood for any reason.

The National Publicity Secretary of the Alliance for Democracy (AD), Dayo Adeyeye said: "While we do not know the killers, we hasten to say that an atmosphere of insecurity, terror and violence has been created by the current administration of Governor Fayose not only to frighten political opponents but to bring the entire citizenry into submission."

"Only yesterday (Sunday), the government raised the false alarm that the opposition were planning to kill the perceived opponents of the governor. The chief press secretary to the governor should be arrested immediately to explain the source of the information, in view of this assassination."

Since 2004, there had been a spate of violence which had engulfed the 10-year-old state. On March 16, 2004, eight students of the state College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti, were killed when security man, allegedly led by one of the bigwigs in the state PDP opened fire on them while protesting the removal of their provost, Dr. Adewunmi Adelodun.

In September of the same year, an attempt was made on the life of Mr. Taiye Fasuba, who was then the chairman of the Ado-Ekiti Local Government Area before he was eventually removed by the governor.

Other assassination attempts were also made on the lives of Chief Afe Babalola and Mr. Femi Falana, two prominent lawyers from the town, also an Alliance for Democracy (AD) gubernatorial candidate, Navy Capt. Caleb Olubolade (rtd) was matched during the last bye-election in the state in April 2006.

All this spate of violence moved President Olusegun Obasanjo to set up a four-man committee to investigate political killings and violence in the state.

Dr. Daramola was at different times a World Bank consultant, general manager of the state Community-Based Poverty Reduction Agency (EKPPRA) and lately ST Consultant, Human Development Unit, at the Abuja office of the World Bank.

Married with two boys, Daramola who bagged many chieftaincy titles in the state achieved a lot in the development of the grassroots of the state.

And because of the success he recorded as the general manager of EKPPRA, he was seen in political circles; as the candidate to beat in the 2007 governorship election.

Meanwhile, the ACD, in Ondo State has pleaded with Ehindero to find an urgent solution to the incessant assassination of innocent citizens in the country.

The State Secretary, Public-
Continued on Page 4

Gunmen kill governorship aspirant

Continued from Page 2

ity Committee of the party, Otunba Sola Kolawole made the call in Akure, the state capital yesterday while reacting to the assassination of Daramola. He said nobody was safe in the country if this could be happening within the PDP.

Kolawole explained that the news of Daramola's assassination was very shocking and described the act as an extremely dangerous dimension to security of lives in the country.

Besides, the Ekiti Justice and Equity Movement (EJEM) has condemned the murder.

The group in a statement signed by its Secretary, Mr. Lere Olayinka in Akure the Ondo State capital described those behind the gruesome murder as cowards and enemies of Ekitiland and called on security agencies in the country to find a solution to the new trend of political killings that appeared to have now taken over the nation's political scene.

"Dr. Daramola only made his intention to contest for Ekiti State governorship known few weeks ago and for him to have been murdered now speaks volume on our readiness to allow democracy to survive in this country. He was never known to be a violent person and those that are involved in his death must not be allowed to go unpunished," it said.

While calling on well-meaning Ekiti sons and daughters to be vigilant, the group said: "Those that have been holding the state hostage are not willing to set it free and if we must free our land from these locusts, we must not allow this incident to deter us. Our prayer is that God in His infinite mercy will give the family of the deceased and the entire people of Ekiti the fortitude to bear this irreparable loss."