

Four Killed In Ladoja, Alao-Akala's Supporters Clash

FROM IYABO LAWAL,
IBADAN, NIYI BELLO AND
JULIUS ALABI, AKURE

THERE was confusion in Akure, yesterday as three people were shot dead while several others were injured from gunshots during the flag-off of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) South West campaign in the Ondo State capital.

Later in the evening, one person was feared dead while several others comprising mostly members of the National Union of Road Transport Worker (NURTW) were wounded when the supporters returned to Ibadan.

One of the victims, simply identified as Laniyan, and two others reportedly from Otunba Adebayo Alao-Akala's camp was reportedly hit by a bullet in the stomach when some hoodlums emerged from nowhere and shot sporadically into the air at the venue of the rally.

An unidentified 15-year old boy, who was standing by the roadside was also hit by stray bullet.

Another of the victims, believed to be a supporter of the Lagos State PDP candidate, Musiliu Obanikoro, said to have come from Ebute Ero, was also killed in the fracas.

Several vehicles belonging to politicians from Oyo State were vandalised by the hoodlums.

Trouble was said to have started when, contrary to expectations of some people, the PDP flag in Oyo State was presented to

Alao-Akala by the National Chairman of the party, Dr Ahmadu Ali.

Even as the proceedings were on inside the Akure Township Stadium, venue of the event, sporadic gunshots could be heard outside the premises as hoodlums belonging to the two contending factions in Oyo politics, took on each other.

Eye-witness accounts said the mayhem was started by supporters of Akala who went to attack the Ladoja group just outside the gate of the stadium, where an 18-seater bus with Reg Nos: XP 888 MNY was completely vandalised.

The Ladoja group was said to have retaliated by

destroying another 18-seater bus, marked OYO PDP A1, said to belong to the PDP secretariat in the state.

For about two hours, the whole stretch of Oye-mekun Road, the major transport artery of Akure, was completely taken over by gun-wielding and cutlass-brandishing hoodlums, forcing most of the traders along the route to close shop.

The situation got so tense that at the end of the programme, Ladoja, was smuggled out of the premises by his security details but his official Mercedes 500 SEL was dealt many matchet

blows by hoodlums suspected to belong to his rival.

The rally, which was part of the campaign for the governorship candidates of the state in the Southwest and that of its Presidential candidates, Alhaji Umar Musa Yar'Adua and Dr. Goodluck Jonathan.

The Guardian gathered that immediately the name of Akala was announced as the party's governorship candidate, the atmosphere of the rally changed and some hoodlums believed to be supporters of Ladoja went wild as they were not pleased with the situation.

Ondo State governor,

Olusegun Agagu; and his Ondo and Osun counterparts, Gbenga Daniel and Olagunsoye Oyinlola, as well as Musiliu Obanikoro (Lagos), Segun Oni (Ondo) and Akala were presented with PDP flags at the occasion.

There was exchange of fire between the two factions, which forced traders in the area to abandon their wares and run for their dear lives.

Before the police were eventually drafted in to maintain peace, the crisis has spread to Gate area, which resulted in the death of one of the supporters whose identity could not be ascertained as at press time.

Threat Of Attacks Rattles Abuja

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Abuja last Friday from lawmakers that explanations from the National Assembly bureaucracy showed that the cameras, though allegedly put in the Senate Chamber in error, were procured for the lobby and corridors of all offices of the Assembly complex late last year, as part of security measures for lawmakers.

"But when a security report, not connected with the measures being put in place by the bureaucracy, came in that MEND militants were planning to bring in explosives and arms and ammunition to create what they called maximum impact, an overzealous official brought up the issue of putting cameras in the Sen-

ate Chamber without consulting his superiors or we, the senators," a source said.

It was gathered that one of the security arms of government had put all security departments of government offices in Abuja on the alert as a result of information that MEND militants were allegedly plotting to attack Abuja from December 31, 2006.

The alert, which gained grounds during the public holiday early in the new year, reportedly heightened in the face of the rash of kidnappings and attacks in the Niger Delta region.

Specifically, the targets of the militants are said to be public offices, but the government, a source said at the weekend, is not taking chances and may be considering stepping up its plans to put a Closed Cir-

cuit Television (CCTV) ring around the Federal Capital City (FCC), especially around the Three-Arms Zone housing the Presidential Villa, the National Assembly, and the Supreme Court complex.

It would be recalled that a similar project, conceived last year, was test-run in the last quarter of the year and journalists were invited for the occasion at the Police Headquarters.

A source said at the weekend that the project was still on and its pace accelerated to help maintain security "in view of the latest threats."

Already, an instruction had been passed round to security operatives in government offices, to conduct a stop and search on persons and vehicles (whether authorised or not) within or coming into their premises.

Last Thursday, there was uproar in the Senate when the Deputy Senate Minority Leader, Prof. Daniel Saror, while seconding the motion for adjournment, raised eyebrows over the re-emergence of CCTV cameras in the Chamber.

Said Saror: "Distinguished colleagues, you will recall that last year, we discovered some secret cameras or monitors in this very Chamber and we directed that they should be removed and they were dismantled."

"Somehow, I now see another set of cameras (pointing to the corners of the Chamber) around us again. I don't know whether they are listening devices or whatever. I really can't say."