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Three feared killed in PDP factional clash

From Charles Coffie Gyamfie, Abeokuta

THE crisis rocking the Ogun State chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), took a worrisome dimension yesterday as two factions within the party took up arms against one another.

At the end of the fracas, which took place at the Oke-Mosan, Abeokuta party secretariat complex, three people were feared dead. Among the dead was a young man, Mr. Ahmed Wahab.

The Ijebu North Local Council Chairman, Alhaji Tele Ogunjobi, was however lucky as he escaped death by the whiskers.

The Guardian gathered that there has been a running battle between Ogunjobi and the party chairman in the council area, Alhaji Al-Bashir Adebajo, over the control of the party in the area.

While the quarrel was going on, Bashir was said to have ordered the probe of the council chairman, a decision the chairman and his supporters saw as means to remove the chairman from office.

To prevent the crisis from getting out of hand, the state party leadership summoned a peace meeting in Abeokuta yesterday.

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Ogunjobi led his faction, while the Commissioner for Works, Mr. Adesegun Adekoya (alias Attacker), led the other faction.

Though supporters of both factions started arriving the venue of the meeting from 8:30a.m, the meeting did not start till 11a.m.

Trouble was said to have started few minutes after the meeting began when some hoodlums, wielding guns, cutlasses and other dangerous objects, invaded the place and started shooting indiscriminately. The hoodlums, believed to be hired political thugs, arrived the venue in an 18-seater passenger bus marked XC 112 JGB.

There was total confusion as people ran helter- skelter for their dear life. Even the council chairman went into hiding in one of the offices at the secretariat.

The incident disrupted traffic on the Ibrahim Babangida Boulevard, as commuters coming from either the Sagamu end of the road or from Abeokuta city had to turn back to avoid being caught up in the fracas.

The bus in which the suspected thugs drove to the venue had an inscription "Ako Matole Line 02" which is said to belong to a top government functionary.

Workers at the NNPC Fuel Mega station as well as Fatgbems fuel station, which are directly opposite the party secretariat went into hiding while the melee lasted.

The timely arrival of the state party Chairman, Chief Joju Fadairo and the Commissioner for Youth and Sports, Mr. Bukola Olopade, saved the situation. But three people were said to have lost their lives before their arrival.

Director of Organisation of the party, Mr. Deji Kalejaiye, described the incident as "skirmishes," insisting that he was not aware of any gunshot "within the party secretariat." The problem can be traced to the disciplinary committee of Ijebu-North that was set up over the indiscipline prevalent in the area and it was to sit in Ijebu-Igbo," Kalejaiye explained.

"But because of the tension there, they sought the permission to hold the sitting in the secretariat and we obliged. The council chairman got here with his people with heavy mobilisation and the secretariat was well secured. We were inside the secretariat and we did not hear any shot, but there were some skirmishes here," he added.

The state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Oladipo Ayeni, in his comment said, "I know something like that happened. But I am not in town now and cannot give you the details. I suggest you see me later tomorrow and I will be able to talk to you."

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