

Two die as Oyo moves to demolish NURTW secretariat

Obasanjo campaigns for Alao-Akala

From **Iyabo Lawal, Ibadan**

It was another sad day in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital yesterday, as officials of the state government led by the Commissioner for Environment and Water Resources, Mukaila Aborode and accompanied by armed riot policemen clashed with members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) in a bid to demolish the secretariat of the proscribed transport union at Olomi area of the state.

In the crossfire that ensued, two NURTW members identified as Nurudeen Azeez and Ismaila Agbojo, who belong to the Alhaji Lateef Akinsola (alias Tokyo) faction were killed while an unconfirmed report said one mobile policeman also lost his life.

Irate mob also descended on the bulldozer brought to the secretariat to demolish the building as they set it ablaze while tyres of the truck that accompanied it were deflated.

The sporadic gunshots caused pandemonium in the area as residents scamper for safety.

The angry union members who kept daily vigil at the secretariat also made bonfires at the Academy end of the Ibadan-Lagos expressway while some vehicles were also strategically parked along the road to block the government officials and the police team from gaining access to the controversial premises.

A source in the demolition team who pleaded anonymity confirmed that the stiff resistance put up by the union members forced them to beat a retreat.

Meanwhile, former President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday led the campaign train of Governor Adebayo Alao-Akala to the ancient town of Oyo where he urged the South-West to remain in the mainstream of the nation's political system.

Having been in the opposition for a long time, Obasanjo told the gathering at the rally, which was boycotted by the Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Lamidi Adeyemi, that the South-West should not be allowed to slip back into the opposition.

The former president said: "We have stayed too long in the opposition; outside the mainstream. Are we cursed? If we are there, we will definitely know how they share it so that they don't short-change us."

Describing Governor Adebayo Alao-Akala as a performer, Obasanjo said: "There has been steady progress in Oyo State since Alao-Akala came on board. He has also told me that we have not seen anything yet and that more are coming. You must support him because I know he is a man of his words."

In his address at the rally, Alao-Akala said: "I have got enough experience to rule this state. No past governor has done what I have done in office. You cannot get the kind of experience I have in any textbook; you must acquire it. I was a local government chairman; I was a deputy governor and now I am a governor. I challenge any of my opponents who have the kind of experience I have to come out. Everywhere we go, there are projects to commission. From Ibadan to Oyo, Ibarapa, Oke-Ogun and Ogbomoso, people are feeling our impact."