

Two killed, several injured as Bayelsa APC rumbles

By Julius Osahon, Yenagoa | 19 August 2017 | 4:15 am

Expelled Party Chair, Two Others Were Moles Of Dickson, PDP, Claim Sylva, Lokpobiri

Two persons were yesterday confirmed dead, while several others were injured as the two factions of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Bayelsa State engaged in a bloody fight at its state secretariat.

Trouble started as early as 10a.m. when placard-carrying members and some armed hired thugs stormed the secretariat to disrupt the inauguration of the new acting Chairman, Joseph Fafi.

While one of the persons killed was confirmed as an APC member from Sagbama Council, the other was a hawker. Both were caught in the exchange of gunfire between the security agencies and the armed thugs.

Some journalists at the event were injured while trying to scale the wired fence of the secretariat to safety as the shooting intensified.

The thugs, disguised as party protesters, beat the security barricade mounted by the men of the Nigerian Police and heading straight to the secretariat complex. While the security personnel kept vigilance on the perceived protesters, some faithful of the party raised alarm over alleged possession of dangerous arms by some among the protesters and joined the security forces to stop the invading attackers.

Attempts to stop the protesters and gun-wielding thugs resulted in fracas. Gunshots were heard from some of the protesters, while the policemen responded by shooting above the head of the crowd of protesters.

The sporadic gunshots from the various sides of the secretariat caused pandemonium among party faithful, resulting in a stampede and injuries to many, including reporters of various media houses present.

Speaking to journalists later, a member of the state House of Assembly, Israel Sunny-Igoli, expressed concern at the development and accused the expelled chairman, Chief Tiwei Orunimighe and ex-militant leader, General Africa Ukpaiasa, of being responsible for the failed attack.

According to him: "The APC members can not be intimidated in Bayelsa State. We know and we believe that the party is on the part of rebuilding and entronement of peace within its fold. The sponsors of the attack will be brought to book."

State leader of the party and a former governor, Chief Timipre Sylva, who arrived the venue about 12 noon, after normalcy had been restored, told the crowd of supporters that the attack was cowardly and wicked and apologised to them over the incident.

In the same vein, a former speaker of the state Assembly and Minister of State for Agriculture and Rural Development, Senator Heineken Lokpobiri, used the occasion to opened up on the reasons why the party expelled the three executives members.

According to Sylva and Lokpobiri, the trio- Tiwie Orunimighe, Eddy Julius and Malin Daniel, were expelled for alleged trading with the party and serving as mole to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Governor Seriake Dickson.

Sylva said: "Let me apologise to the APC members that for a long time, the party was stagnant in Bayelsa and nothing was happening. It was because of some wicked chairman who was trading with the APC.

This is a man you all know how we brought him up from nothing. From nothing, we made him a council chairman. From nothing, we made him a party chairman.

When the Acting President visited Bayelsa during the peace tour, Dickson said the APC and PDP were working together. The working he was talking about is in the minds of the expelled chairman and the governor.

We gave him time, so as to allow him change his ways, but he refused. He kept moving deeper into the mud. He is no longer an issue. No one should talk about him again, because he is no longer an issue.

This is our party and our state. We all want what is good for the people. The ship of APC is moving and we cannot take it backward.

Present at yesterday's inauguration were party leaders and faithful, including Lokpobiri, Wilberforce Igiri, and a former acting governor, Werinipre Seibarugu