

# The Intrigues That Returned Oyinlola To Govt House

Barring any unforeseen circumstances, Olagunsoye Oyinlola will remain the chief executive of the state of the "Living Spring" for the next four years.

That is a fact the opposition in the state might not want to hear, though.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), after the April 14 governorship and house of assembly elections, confirmed the "Okuku" prince's second term mandate.

Specifically, INEC said Oyinlola of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) polled 426,669 votes to beat Rauf Aregbesola of Action Congress (AC) to second place.

The state INEC boss, John Dansu, said Aregbesola scored a paltry 240,722 votes. Aregbesola, however, rejected the result, saying it was not a reflection of the voting of the people.

He vowed to challenge the result at the election tribunal.

Oyinlola is having the second bite at the Osun victory pie, having secured a similar feat in 2003 against Adebisi Akande, then of Alliance for Democracy (AD).

His victory over Akande then was as a result of several factors.

Though PDP was desirous of making inroads into Yorubaland, the truth is Akande self-destruct.

He decided to take on the civil service in a kamikaze battle that later turned his albatross at the polls.

However, in the April 14 elections, Oyin, as he governor is fondly called by his followers, had to sweat for his re-election.

Unlike the prevailing circumstances that ensured his victory in 2003, the fast-growing AC had made threatening inroads into the territory of the retired army officer that he became too scared.

Though he was credited with over 100,000 vote cushion, the number of seats won by AC in the Osun State House of Assembly is a pure indication that the PDP territory came under serious political bombardment.

AC had 11 seats, while PDP secured 15.

Political analysts say the implication of this is that, unlike the 2003 experience, PDP will not have absolute control of the house in the next dispensation.

Months before the election, the retired army officer had realised that the race would be very close.

He had to dig deep into his military armoury to conquer Aregbesola.

There was widespread violence in several parts of the state. Allegations were rife that PDP was out to manipulate the polls with the connivance of the police and INEC.

It was, therefore, very curious when the Inspector General of Police, Sunday Ehindero, was redeploying police bosses, Osun State Police Commissioner, Suleiman Fakai, was not moved.

Oyinlola and Aregbesola were also involved in a billboard war.

Billboards announcing the intent of the Ijesha-born former Lagos State Commissioner for Works was almost everywhere in the state.

His imposing billboards were simply intimidating and ubiquitous that a first-time visitor to the state might be tempted to think Aregbesola was the sitting governor.

To add to Oyinlola's headache, seven opposition parties in the state had massed behind the AC candidate.

They endorsed him as the arrowhead of their quest for the Oke-fia Government House.

They directed their followers to vote for him on election day.

Undeterred, three days to the election, the governor played his final card.

It was an old notorious card used in the politics of the First and Second republics to get the opposition off the scene ahead of elections.

He got the State Security Service (SSS) to invite Aregbesola to Abuja for an interrogation over a fathom petition.

The initial news was that Aregbesola was arrested and flown to Abuja.

But unknown to many, the Ijesha-born politician saw through the plot.

He escaped the SSS and went underground.

He was later to resurface on the eve of the election when it was very late for anyone to arrest him.



•Oyinlola



•Aregbesola

He later disclosed that he got wind of plans by PDP to "take me out of circulation ahead of the election, and I choose not to go for the invitation, because I see no reason for it in the first instance".

However, if wishes were horses, beggars would ride.

The election day turned a different kettle of fish, as Oyinlola made his incumbency count. He retained his seat in a military fashion, many claim.

The day was marred by widespread violence and malpractices leading to the death of five persons.

Three lost their lives in a fracas that broke out in Ila-Orangun, the country home of AC National Chairman, Akande, while two others were killed in Ode-Omu as a result of a free-for-all between supporters of PDP and AC. However, the state Police Commissioner, Alhaji Fakai, denied knowledge of the death of the five people killed.

Besides, there were reports of ballot boxes snatching, while in some polling booths, agents of the opposition parties were abducted.

Yet others were chased away to pave the way for the rigging of the polls.

The election started on a very peaceful note, with Oyinlola and his wife, Omolola, casting their votes at Oyekunle Primary School, Okuku at about 8.40 a.m.

Oyin rode in a metallic Mercedes Benz

convertible marked GN 576 AAA.

Everything was smooth-sailing until midway into voting when desperation set in.

Politicians suddenly resorted to underhand tactics to gain the upper hand. Ballot boxes started vanishing at gunpoint. This was rampant in wards 5 and 6 in Ode-Omu, Ile-Ife, Ire, Ede, Ejigbo, Ifewara and Ifetedo.

At Osu in Atakumosa-West local government area and Ijebu-Jesa in Oriade local government, two members of the state House of Assembly were accused of intimidating voters to vote for PDP.

In Ward 8 at Ada, some machete-wielding thugs abducted the two AC agents at the polling booth.

Then, two other stern-looking guys swept in to engage in frenzied thumb printing of booklets of ballot papers.

They did with more than absolute impunity.

At Inisa, the country home of former Deputy National Chairman of PDP, Shuaibu Oyedokun, there were reports of clashes between members of AC and PDP.

They left several people seriously injured in their wake.

A similar situation was recorded in Ede, the country home of the Speaker Osun State House of Assembly, Adejare Bello.

An electoral officer was abducted at Ede.

But voters resisted attempts to manipulate the ballot in favour of PDP.

Ede Town, the home of former Governor Isiaka Adeleke, was a classical case in poll manipulation. Elections were said to have taken place in Ede North council on Friday afternoon, some 12 hours before official election.

Hence, there was no voting in the council area on the appointed day.

While polling was on, Oyinlola told newsmen that the exercise was peaceful.

But his AC and AD counterparts, Aregbesola and Tunde Odanye respectively, spoke to the contrary.

PDP was manipulating the exercise everywhere and anyhow in the state, they claimed.

Aregbesola pointedly accused INEC and security agents of conniving with PDP to undermine the wishes of the people. Odanye, condemning the alleged rigging, said the turn of events in the state showed the country was yet unripe for democratic rule.

As dusk rolled in, residents of Osogbo and Olurunda local councils took to the streets in celebration.

They did because initial results from the two councils filtered in that AC was ahead.

However, as results from other towns

strolled in, the picture suddenly changed.

By the following morning, the story had changed and Oyinlola was in a comfortable lead.

The people would hear none of that—they went mad.

The results were falsified, they protested.

For two days, Osogbo and Ilesha were on fire.

Youths in their hundreds defiled the horde of police and soldiers sent to their towns to keep the peace.

In the process, houses and other property of those suspected to have assisted in falsifying the results were torched.

The youths took over the streets to protest the announcement of Oyinlola as winner of the election.

Tension soared, as a combined team of armed policemen and soldiers were overworked trying to halt the protests. Apparently acting under the instruction of the state government, the security officers started a clampdown on members of AC, whom the state government believed were behind the protests.

Over 100 members and supporters of AC were arrested. Members of AC were forced into hiding to evade arrest.

Those who refused to flee lived under fear of arrest.

Oyinlola also imposed a 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. curfew in Ilesha area. He ordered security operatives to flush out "miscreants" allegedly imported into the state.

Soldiers also ransacked the campaign office of Aregbesola, dislodging all the occupants, including the security guards.

Vital documents were allegedly carted away from the five-storey building.

Simultaneously, security operatives were seen patrolling the streets of Iwo, Ede, Ejigbo, Ila-Orangun, Ile-Ife and other towns.

They fired warning shots into the air to deter anyone planning any protest in the towns.

Contacted on the arrest, the state Deputy Commissioner of Police, D. O. Omojola, confirmed the arrest of some people.

He, however, declined to give details.

He said the exercise was still on, thus halting him from getting down to releasing figures immediately.

It was a palpably shocked Oyinlola who inspected some burnt property belonging to PDP chiefs.

Rather than engaging in wanton destruction of lives and property, he said, aggrieved politicians should take their case to the election tribunal for redress.

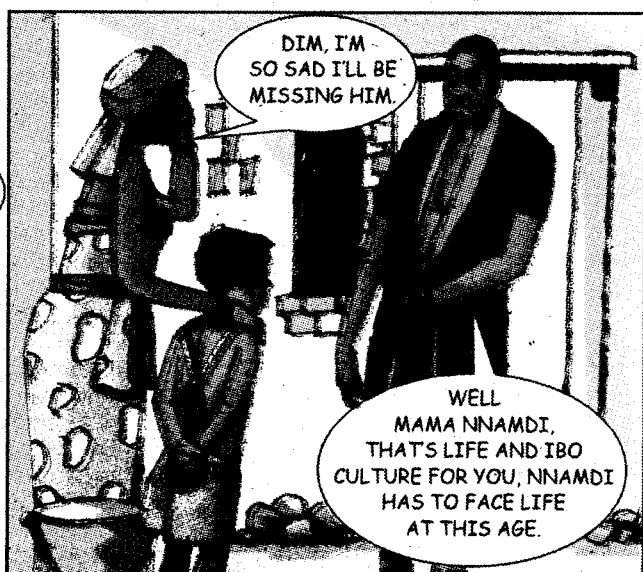
Oyinlola warned that his administration would not fold its arms while such destruction continued in the state.

For now, the Osun voters have decided to put their faith in the hand of the election tribunal.

## Once Upon a time...

Featuring  
Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe

Created and produced by Cliff Ogiugo



Research Assistant: Segun Durowaibe, Production Assistant: Mba Kalu

Written and drawn by Cliff Ogiugo (0802-317-0603) e-mail: onceuponatime4naija@yahoo.com