

Two feared dead as pro-Akala, Ladoja supporters clash in Ogbomoso

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At least, two people were feared dead, while three others were critically injured yesterday when a Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) rally went bloody in Ogbomoso, Oyo State.

The rally was organised by Ogbomoso Solidarity Forum, a cross-party political group in the native town of Governor Adebayo Alao-Akala.

Leaders of a faction of the party in the state, including former governor, Rashidi Ladoja, Senator Lekan Balogun and Teslim Folarin, led the party machinery to address the rally in Akala's home town.

They were to sensitise the people of the large town on the need to reject Alao-Akala's second term bid through the ballot.

But hundreds of Ogbomoso youths, who were believed to be fronting for Akala, went on the rampage, making bonfires and shooting sporadically to scare residents for about five hours.

They were joined by hundreds of hoodlums suspected to be Akala's agents. The fierce-looking hoodlums, wearing various charms and amulets were also armed with guns, axes, machetes, swords and other dangerous weapons to dislodge people from the streets.

The streets quickly became deserted as shop owners and other residents ran for cover.

The PDP factional leaders had defied unfavourable security reports and several attempts by

Akala's loyalists to abort the rally for the second time in two weeks.

But they were greeted with an unprecedented large turn-out of party faithful and other supporters in the town.

At Taki area of the town, the armed hoodlums ambushed the guests in areas such as Idi Abebe, Oja'gbo, Isale-Ora, frontage of Soun's palace where the PDP bigwigs were billed to pay homage to the monarch, Oba Jimoh Oyewumi Ajagunghade.

Other members of the Ibadan contingent included the suspended members of the G8 (an anti-Akala lawmakers led by the suspended Majority Leader, Samuel Ademola Adejumo), the PDP Implementation Committee Chairman, Alhaji Yunus Akintunde and former Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Alhaji Sarafadeen Alli.

Loaded in 10 buses, the hoodlums later drove dangerously along the routes to be passed by the visitors to instill fear into members of the contingent.

But the advanced team of the people from Ibadan confronted them in a melee that left two people reportedly dead and three others wounded. They were shot in the legs and were later taken to an undisclosed hospital.

The free-for-all lasted till about 12:30pm before a detachment of anti-riot policemen arrived in trucks and two Ar-

moured Personnel Carrier (APC).

Two of the hoodlums were said to have lost their lives on the outskirts of the town where they clashed with an advanced team of the party from Ibadan who were equally heavily armed.

After the riot had been quelled, the PDP chieftains held the rally amid tumultuous applause by thousands of supporters at Ogunlola Hall located a few metres away from Soun's palace.

Earlier, they were ushered into the palace on arrival at about 1:45pm by the Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Appropriation, Hon. Ayo Adeseun, who held a five-minute meeting with them before they moved to the hall.

The contingent had earlier been barred from using Ogunlola Hall by the authority of the Ogbomoso North Local Government vide a letter dated November 4 and signed by Mrs. S. O. Giwa on behalf of the council chairman, but the politicians forced their way into the hall.

Though gunshots boomed repeatedly, the PDP supporters sang various anti-Akala's songs to the ecstasy of the people in the area adjoining Soun's palace.

Other Ogbomoso-born PDP chieftains who joined the contingent at the rally included former member, House of Representatives, Alhaji Fatai Buhari; Chief Ademola Alalade and Ambassador Yomi Akintola.