

Seven days to guber, assembly polls: Gunmen on rampage in Rivers

POLITICAL violence erupted afresh in Rivers State last night ahead of next weekend's governorship/state assembly election.

Seven members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) including the party's leader in Obrikom, Onelga Ogbu Egbema Ndoni local government area and two of his sons were shot dead by thugs suspected to be working for the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Felled were the traditional ruler of the town, a former caretaker chairman of the local government area, his two sons and three others.

Other party supporters in the area immediately went into hiding.

The police spokesman, Mr. Muhammad Kidaya, a deputy superintendent of police (DSP) said last night that they were yet to be formally informed.

However, the APC chairman in the area, Mr. Felix Ejechi, speaking by phone from hiding, said the gunmen struck at about 6pm yesterday, killing the ex-caretaker chairman of the council and his two sons before proceeding to set his house on fire.

Ejechi could not confirm the death of the traditional ruler and three others.

Another APC chieftain in the area, Jude Chinia, said by

• Ex-council boss, monarch, six others feared dead • APC leaders go into hiding

■ Precious ■
DIKEHOWA

phone: "Gunmen on the rampage in my area this evening. A traditional ruler and seven other APC members were killed."

"We have called the police commissioner, but he has failed to pick our calls. As I am talking to you, the police have not visited the area."

"We said it before now that

PDP thugs in Ogbu/Egbema/Ndoni LGA want to kill all APC leaders in the area before the next election."

In the run-up to last weekend's presidential/national assembly elections, suspected PDP thugs violently disrupted several APC rallies in the state.

Some APC supporters were killed while others were maimed in the process.

The APC protested to the Independent National Electoral

Commission (INEC) that no elections took place in the state last week as the PDP had a field day manipulating the polls.

However, INEC said the provisions of the electoral laws were sufficiently complied with in the conduct of the elections.

Earlier yesterday, Governor Rotimi Amaechi in a state wide broadcast called for peace in next week's governorship elec-

tion, saying: "Elections in Rivers State should be about equity and our peaceful co-existence as a people. It should be about encouraging those who aspire to office to work in the interest of the people. I am optimistic that these elections will be historic for us now that the whole world is watching and waiting to see the outcome."

"The presidential elections have come and gone and we are still united as a nation. Re-

grettably, we lost a number of our citizens to death as a result of unprovoked attacks. Some of our citizens have also been harassed, kidnapped and thrown into detention on trumped up charges. My sympathy goes out to the families of all those who have lost their lives. I also want to reassure all those who are still in detention that the night may be long, but dawn must come. Indeed, dawn is here."

Amaechi urges peaceful governorship, assembly elections in Rivers

• Hails Jonathan, Buhari

■ Bisi OLANIYI, ■
Port Harcourt

not deliberate.

The governor spoke yesterday in a broadcast to the people of the state on the need for peaceful conduct during the governorship and state assembly elections on April 11, lauding the people for standing by him and his administration in the past eight years through many trying moments.

He said: "It is with great pleasure therefore that I address you today as we set our eyes on the governorship election, scheduled for Saturday, April 11 2015, to elect the administration to complete the job we started."

"Elections in Rivers State

should be about equity and our peaceful co-existence as a people. It should be about encouraging those who aspire to office to work in the interest of the people. I am optimistic that these elections will be historic for us now that the whole world is watching and waiting to see the outcome."

"As a nation, we have already set a good example for the whole of Africa in showing that we can decide our affairs devoid of rancour and violence. I am therefore confident that as a state, we can follow this trend as we head to the polls on Saturday for the governorship and House of Assembly elections."

"As a government, we have worked with you to make history in our state. We believe firmly in the resilient power of

"Despite the marginalisation of millions of our people at the Saturday's presidential and National Assembly elections, we cannot lose faith in our country or in democracy. The frontline contenders for Presidency in the March 28 elections have taught us this much. Our President Goodluck Jonathan who conceded the elections and congratulated the President-elect, Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, and the President-elect, who commended the statesmanship of President Jonathan. Indeed, as good leaders, they have left us a great example and their conduct should define ours in the coming days."

The Rivers governor also reiterated that his administration was finally winding down to the finish line, stressing that but for the great company of the people of the state and their incredible

on our side and victory will always be His. You will recall that a few months ago, we embarked on a journey to seek a new direction, not just for our state, but also for our country. That journey culminated in general elections. The first part took place on March 28. The second part will take place on April 11.

"I was indeed pained when on a visit to Igwuruta town (Rivers State), I met a woman who complained that her children could not go to school, because they could not pay the examination fees introduced by head teachers to address some of their funding issues."

"May I, in the spirit of the Easter, appeal to all those who may have been offended by my actions or inactions to forgive me. As your governor, elected to serve you, we have always meant well, and will always mean well."

PDP lost to APC's brilliance - Agbakoba