

Soldier shot, many injured at APGA rally

•Obiano's convoy trapped

GUNMEN yesterday attacked security officials in the Ihiala area of Anambra State where the ruling All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) were holding a campaign rally ahead of the November governorship election.

Policemen and soldiers returned fire in an encounter said to have lasted about two hours.

Six persons were reported killed and more injured in the crossfire but the claim could not be confirmed before press time.

The incident happened in the Odata area of the community.

From Nwanosike Onu, Awka

A source said Governor Willie Obiano was among those whose vehicles were trapped in the melee.

"The governor's convoy was held for about one hour, while gunshots boomed everywhere in the area but they did not attack the convoy, only security men. During the gun duel, some security operatives were felled and some gunmen were equally killed. We know those who were killed would be more than six," a source

said.

Police spokesman Ikenga Tochukwu confirmed the incident but said there were no police casualties, adding that one AK47 rifle, 30 rounds of ammunition, two magazines and four vehicles were recovered from the scene.

Tochukwu said the attack was "successfully repelled".

Commissioner for Information and Public Enlightenment C. Don Adinuba said the gunmen came in three vehicles

including motorcycles.

"The gunmen, unable to withstand the superior firepower of the soldiers and police officers, quickly ran into the large premises of Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital which is directly opposite the campaign ground. They suffered serious injuries, even though they managed to shoot a gallant soldier.

"If the gunmen had not run into the hospital which is a very delicate place to shoot any person, the security men would have gunned all of them down," Adinuba said.