

Bloodshed in Osun

•Six killed, scores injured in LG takeover bid
•Stay away from LG secretariats, Adeleke tells Osun residents
•Sacked Osun LG chairmen can't return to office —PDP
•Our 30 chairmen will resume whether anybody wants it or not —APC

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NO fewer than six persons reportedly lost their lives on Monday as the dispute over the status of former local government chairmen of Osun State turned bloody.

At least two persons were feared killed in Iragbiji of Boripe Local Government Areas of Osun State, while several others wounded in other LGs in the state following the resumption of officials elected on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the October 15, 2022 LG elections in the state at the council secretariats.

Also, in Ikire of Irewole LGA, the APC council chairman, Remi Abass was shot dead by suspected political thugs.

In Ilesa, a former Commissioner for Works under Governor Gboyega Oyetola, Engineer Remi Omowaye narrowly escaped being killed as his vehicle was riddled with bullets while his office was set ablaze.

At Isokan local government, an APC councilor was killed and another party members also lost his life in Olooluwa.

The deceased said to be the only casualty in the local government secretariat following the invasion by APC members to take possession of the council.

Investigations revealed that before his death, the councillor led some of his members to the secretariat, who shot sporadically into the air to scare people away from the area.

However, another set of

thugs reportedly engaged them in the secretariat, killing the councillor in the process.

Seeing that their leader was in the pool of his blood, his followers were said to have retreated, while their attackers gave them a hot chase.

Meanwhile, in Ikire, APC members reportedly launched an attack on a cross section of PDP members, leading to the death of one.

Also, scores were injured during the free-for-all between the APC and PDP supporters while some managed to escape.

Several people were further injured across local government areas as the crisis rocking the state over controversy surrounding the Appeal Court judgment on the sacked local government chairmen snowballed into violence.

Anxiety and apprehension enveloped the length and breadth of the state following the invasion of some local government councils by yet-to-be-identified hoodlums attempting to take over the control of the councils.

Our reporter gathered that the hoodlums, who were armed with cutlasses, guns, machetes, axes, broken bottles and other dangerous items, displayed the weapons to register their presence in the invaded council areas and to get people scared.

Some of the councils, where the presence of the thugs was felt include: Aye-daade, Boripe, Osogbo, Olorunda, Ila, Isokan, Irewole, Obokun, and Atakumosa.

In Osogbo, heavy gunshots rent the air when PDP

supporters and APC supporters clashed, while in Irewole local government in Ikire, there was a heavy clash between the PDP and APC supporters.

Speaking with newsmen on those that lost their lives in Iragbiji, the state commissioner for Protocol and government House, Honourable Soji Ajeigbe, gave the names of the casualties as Damilare Oloyede, and one other person simply identified as Taye, said to be thugs working for the APC.

He gave the names of the injured persons receiving treatment in the hospital to include: Taofek Opal-eye, Tunde Oladejo, Yinka Opaleye, Yinka Babatunde, Ogunwole Abiodun, Babalola Muda and Opaniyi Adeniyi.

At the Olorunda local government secretariat, in Igbona, Osogbo, APC members that wanted to take over the council were resisted by the PDP members.

At the entrance of the secretariat, some hoodlums were seen dressed in traditional attires with charms, while efforts to record the scene with mobile phones were blocked.

Addressing PDP members near the secretariat, Osun State Commissioner for Rural Development, Mr. Gani Olooluwa said: "We won't allow any illegal takeover here. No court judgment restored them here".

At Ifedayo local government area of the state, APC members who allegedly tried to take over the council but PDP supporters fired shots indiscriminately before the APC members were overpowered and given a hot chase out of the council.

At Ede North and Ede South, the APC supporters were resisted.

While confirming the killings in Isokan, Irewole and Olooluwa Local Government Area, the immediate senior adviser to Oyetola on Education matter, Mr. Jamiu Olawumi described the incidents as barbaric.

He, however, said the APC has taken over 15 local councils out of 30 in the state.

Meanwhile, the commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Adebayo Adeleke, debunked the accusation that he had a hand in the killing in Iragbiji.

He vowed: "By tomorrow, 30 of our chairmen will resume, whether anybody wants it or not. If you want to kill us, kill us. If you want to swallow our blood, swallow it."

When contacted, Osun State Police Command spokesperson, Yemisi Opalola said, investigations are on going on the matter.

Gov Adeleke to Osun residents: Stay away from LG secretariats

•Condoles with victims of illegal takeover bid
Governor Ademola Adeleke has directed Osun residents, including politicians across political divides to stay away from the local government secretariats to protect public properties and avoid further bloodshed.

In a reaction to the APC takeover bid of local governments in Osun, the governor affirmed that since the local government workers are on strike, only security agencies should be allowed to man the secretariats.

"I, therefore, direct all law abiding Osun residents to stay away from the council secretariats especially as they are expected to be under lock and key.

"I equally condole families of victims of the APC illegal takeover bid and chaos unleashed across the state by the APC and their hired thugs. PDP lost five members with several others wounded.

"Two of those members are from Iragbiji, Boripe local government. Another two were killed at Ola Oluwa Local government. Another life was lost at Ikire. We must stop the bloodshed", the governor lamented.

He assured residents of their safety and protection of lives and properties, affirming that he has directed security agencies to take charge of all local government secretariats.

Sacked Osun LG chairmen can't return to office —PDP
•Tasks IGP to hold APC responsible for violence, killings

The national leadership of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has cautioned the sacked Osun State Local Government chairmen and councillors to perish the thought of forcing themselves back into office.

The main opposition party is of the view that such will amount to a futile venture with dire consequences.

A statement issued by Debo Ologunagba, National Publicity Secretary on Monday also charged the All Progressives Congress (APC) to accept the reality and end "its resort to self-help, misrepresentations, vituperations, violence and

killing with the aim to trigger crisis and destabilise the State, having realised that it has irredeemably lost."

The PDP asserted that the fate of the ousted Local Government chairmen and councillors was sealed by the judgment of the Court to Appeal, which nullified the "unconstitutional attempt" by the then Governor Gboyega Oyetola to "illegally plant them as Local Government officers in the guise of an election."

The PDP statement added: "Having been roundly rejected by the people of Osun State in the Saturday, July 16, 2022, governorship election, the then Governor Oyetola and the APC ought to have known that attempting to side-step the laws and manipulate the process to illegally foist APC members and apologists as Local Government Chairmen and Counsellors was an exercise in futility which was bound to fail ultimately.

"The APC is the architect of its misfortune. It should have known that disregarding and refusing to comply with the provisions of the Constitution and the Osun State Local Government Election Laws with respect to the requirement on notices, processes and procedures of conducting local government election is destined to be fatal and irreparable."

The PDP counselled the Osun APC to stop playing to the gallery by trying to bring in the exalted office of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria into disrepute by hopelessly dropping the President's name at public spaces in their desperate but pathetic and unrealizable attempt to garner undeserved sympathy.

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APC council boss, six others killed, scores injured in takeover bid of Osun LG secretariats

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"The APC should note that our nation operates a federal system of government with clearly entrenched devolution of powers among the federating units as well as the various sub-national tiers of government.

"It should therefore desist from the fruitless attempt to drag President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the Federal Government into the issue of local government election which, under the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), is within the purview of the State and has no connection whatsoever with the Federal Government.

"If the APC believes that it is truly popular in Osun State as it claims, it should rather get ready for election as already scheduled by the Osun State Independent Electoral Commission (OSSIEC) instead of holding unto an imaginary strand of straw and instigating violence and killings in the State," it added.

The PDP strongly condemned the violence and killing of some youths today

by APC thugs and calls on the Inspector General of Police to hold APC leaders in Osun State responsible and bring them to book for this heinous crime.

The party called on the people of Osun State to remain calm, law-abiding and get ready for the Local Government Election as they continue to support Governor Adeleke in his "outstanding delivery of monumental life-enhancing projects and programs in the state."

NASS Caucus backs Gov Adeleke against illegal LGA takeover

•Seeks Tinubu's intervention to caution ex-Gov Oyetola

Members of the Osun State caucus in the National Assembly, on Monday, called for the intervention of President Bola Tinubu to halt the illegal plot to take over the local government councils by the APC leadership in the state.

Leader of the caucus in the House of Representatives, Honourable Bamidele Salam, who spoke during the press briefing themed: 'In defence of democracy and the rule of law,' held in

Abuja, frowned on the high level of impunity on display.

"Today, the people of Osun woke up to a criminal takeover of the Local Government secretariats across Osun State by these sacked officials who forcefully broke into the premises of the councils, aided by thugs and hooligans who have been shooting sporadically, wreaking havoc on the people of the state thereby breaking law and order.

"Having observed the breaking of law and order in Osun State in the last few hours, this address becomes imminent and indispensable for us as representatives of the people who have sworn to uphold the rule of law and defend democratic principles at all times.

"We use this medium to condemn the brazen effrontery of the sacked Local Government Council officials to return to office notwithstanding the yet-to-be-set-aside decision of the Court of Appeal, Akure, against their return to the office.

"Sadly, this is being perpetrated with the support of some security personnel, relying on a different court

judgment, despite a subsisting court judgment which upheld the nullification of their purported election," he lamented.

While expressing the caucus' displeasure over the breakdown of law and order in the state, Salam alleged: "This is an invitation to anarchy and it has broken law and order in the state thereby causing chaos and mayhem which has threatened the relative peace being enjoyed by the good people of Osun State under the stewardship of the Peoples' Governor, HE, Senator Ademola Nurudeen Jackson Adeleke.

"These desperate acts contradict common sense in view of the fact that there is a local government election scheduled for Saturday, 22nd of February to which the APC has purchased forms, conducted primaries and actively engaged in campaigns in the last couple of months.

"It, therefore, baffles any right-thinking mind on how the same party and its leaders will turn around to insist that officials who were sacked over two years ago should forcefully take over office in a manner that dis-

rupts the peace of the state.

"Sadly, this desperate act in connivance with security agents is taking its toll as scores of PDP members, local government workers, and other innocent persons have been shot, brutalised, and harassed by APC thugs and security men in the last few hours. There are several reports of attacks in various parts of the state.

"At Isokan Local Government, it was reported that three PDP members were shot dead by APC thugs in their bid to take over the local government secretariats. At Bori Local Government, PDP members who were holding peaceful meetings were reportedly attacked by MOPOL and thugs.

"At Boluwaduro Local Government, a notorious APC thug reportedly led the assaults on PDP members, shooting sporadically across major towns in the area. At Ayedaade Local Government, APC thugs shot a member of the PDP to death with several wounded. At Ilesa East, APC thugs swooped on the local government secretariat, macheting PDP members

on sight.

"We condemn these unfolding acts of state capture through violence, usurpation of constituted authority, abuse of federal power and gross rascality by the APC in Osun.

"We hereby alert the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, HE Senator Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the international community of this unfortunate occurrence. Accordingly, we call on Mr. President to direct the Inspector General of Police to immediately restore law and order in the State.

"Furthermore, we call on Mr. President to instruct the National Security Adviser, and the Attorney General of the Federation, to properly advise the All Progressives Congress in Osun on the futility of their barbaric actions and guide them appropriately on the true position of the law on this matter.

"Finally, we want to state it categorically that as representatives of the people, we stand by the Osun State Government on this matter in defence of democracy and the rule of law," Honourable Salam noted.