

Plateau on fire as police kill 2

The crisis in Plateau State worsened on Friday when two persons were shot dead in Jos by riot policemen attached to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission.

In reprisal, the mansion of the Deputy President of the Senate, Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu, was also burnt down.

The policemen were in Jos to provide security cover for the eight members of the Plateau State House of Assembly, who had served an impeachment notice on Governor Joshua Dariye.

The lawmakers had on October 5, 2006 served the notice after they revived

Jude Owuamanam, Jos

charges of misconduct, misappropriation of funds and money laundering pending against him.

The Assembly has 24 members in all.

But there had been a dispute over the legal implications of impeachment process initiated by the lawmakers.

Attempts by the eight legislators on Friday to continue the impeachment proceedings led to a clash between the riot policemen and some protesting

youths.

Overwhelmed by the barricade, the riot policemen started firing tear gas and live bullets indiscriminately into the air.

But the youths stuck to the blockade. When the riot policemen reached the gates of the Plateau State Specialist Hospital, some of them got down to remove the blockade on the road, while others were shooting on sight.

In the process, two people were gunned down instantly, while the third was

riddled with bullets.

Angered by the attitude of the policemen, the youths mobilised and went straight to the Jos country home of the Deputy Senate President, Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu, at 12, Mangu Road, and burnt down the whole edifice.

The house was being occupied by Mantu's elder sister, Ms. Abu Mantu. She escaped unhurt.

More than five cars in the residence were completely burnt, while three were smashed beyond repairs.

An eyewitness, Captain Bitrus Golen, told our correspondent that he and others had gone to visit Mantu's sister and as they sat to eat, a mob took over the house.

Golen said that immediately they saw the protesters coming, they closed the gate leading to the house, but the mob overpowered the four unarmed policemen who were guarding the house.

"They got in and started spraying the house with petrol. They then set the whole edifice on fire," he added.

When our correspondent visited the scene, men of the State Fire Service Department were battling to put out the fire.

The governor visited the House of Assembly and the hospital to commiserate with the wounded.

Dariye, who was visibly angry, told newsmen that the people of the state did not envisage the crisis in the state when they voted for democracy.

He said that he and members of the State Security Council had always protested against the use of live bullets on harmless youths.

While addressing the youths, Dariye asked them to remain quiet and resolute in the face of barefaced intimidation by operatives of the EFCC. Dariye was accompanied by his Deputy, Chief Michael Botmang, the Gbong Gwom Jos, Dr. Victor Pam and the Secretary to the State Government, Mr. John Gobak.

In a separate broadcast to the people of the state

on Friday, Dariye further called on the Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Sunday Ehindero, to remove the state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Ibiyinka Kayode.

The governor accused Kayode of acting out a script to plunge the state into another round of blood letting in order to declare another state of emergency.

The governor, who called on the President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, to intervene, described the actions of the EFCC as provocative.

He decried the use of live bullets on harmless youths.

Meanwhile, the situation in Jos still remained tense as the police had beefed up security in the state. The protesting youths continued to set up bonfires along major streets in the metropolis and entry points into the city.

As at noon, shop owners hurriedly closed their shops while parents rushed to schools to pick their children.

The Assistant Inspector General of Police in charge of Zone D, Mr. Declan Uzoma, had taken over the security from the State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Ibiyinka Kayode. Uzoma arrived in Jos last week.

The house of the Minister of Industry, Mr. Fidelis Tapgun, located along Naraguta Avenue, was under watch as youths try to set it ablaze. As at press time, the police were still battling to disperse the youths, who had vowed to deal with all those perceived to be behind the recent crises in the state.

Fayose diverted poultry funds –Witness

• Governor shuns new panel

**Tony Amokeodo,
Femi Makinde and
Deborah Oyawale**

was going on.

He said that about N855m had been released so far for the project and he still had a balance of about N20m to collect because 95 per cent of the project had already been completed.

He stated that the poultry project was well intended but the cut throat demands of Fayose stalled it.

"I had to borrow about N8m to prosecute the project."

He noted that he had not made any profit from the project despite the huge amount of money released.

He said that he had to complain to Fayose at a time that the money meant for the project had all been collected by himself and his "people."

Also, the Economic Fi-

International Airport.

The EFCC said it discovered during its investigation that one Mr. Abiodun Fario-Arole built two houses for Fayose in Ibadan and in Afao-Ekiti.

The witness insisted that Fayose was guilty of illegal diversion of N11.7bn local government fund.

He maintained that Fayose still operated his foreign accounts 50633925, 60642924 and 8080959 with the name, Ayodele Fayose at Barclay Bank Plc, 38, Hans Crescent, Knightsbridge, London, SW 1XOLZ.

Olatunji's confessional statements to the EFCC were also tendered as exhibits.

Although Fayose shunned the panel, his deputy, Olujimi, was represented by her counsel, Mr. Joseph Adewumi. The hearing was adjourned till Saturday. James was driven away in

The Managing Director of Biological Concept, Mr. Gbenga James, on Friday said that Governor Ayo Fayose of Ekiti State used the Integrated Poultry Project of the state to enrich himself and his mother.

James made the claim while testifying before the new investigative panel probing the allegations of misconduct brought against Fayose by the Ekiti State House of Assembly.

He said, Fayose's defence that he did not collect any illegal proceeds from the poultry project was a lie. James who spoke as one of the prosecutor witnesses confirmed that Fayose instructed him to build a house worth N44m for him at 10, Kobiowu Crescent, Iyaganku Ibadan from the amount awarded for the poultry project.

But James tactically exonerated the Deputy Governor, Mrs Biodun Olujimi, of the allegation of collect-

an Expedition Sport Utility Vehicle marked Lagos JB 797AAA amidst armed security provided by the EFCC.

He was applauded by those who had thronged the venue of the sitting for opening up the misconduct of the governor.

Earlier, the panel was inaugurated by the acting Chief Judge of the State, Justice Jide Aladejana, following the dissolution of the initial panel constituted by the Chief Judge of the State, Justice Kayode Bamisile. The new panel was inaugurated at about 8am inside the House of Assembly to forestall any clash at the venue.

Aladejana said, "I have tried to consult widely among my colleagues and the National Judicial Council before I took the appointment."

He urged the panel to be open and be fair to all the parties concerned.

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