

**A**GAIN, one person was feared dead in Oyo State on Saturday when the House of Representatives primaries turned violent.

Also a serving member of the House of Representatives, Mr. Tayo Sarumi, alleged that the election in his constituency was rigged.

At Igboho-More Grammar School, Igboho, in Irepodun, Orelope/Olorunsogo constituency, venue of one of the primaries, Waheed Okere was allegedly shot dead by supporters of one of the contending parties.

A few others were allegedly dealt machete cuts in the same venues as party supporters engaged in a free-for-all.

A former Minister of Special Duties, Chief Wole Oyelese, who confirmed the Igboho incident in a telephone interview with newsmen, said he was briefed by party leaders that monitored the exercise.

The embattled state chairman of the party, Alhaji Hafiz Tijani, also corroborated the claim in a separate telephone interview with newsmen.

He said violence broke out in Igboho during an attempt by one of the parties to rig the primaries, which was resisted by supporters of the other party.

A member of the House of Representatives, Sarumi, also told newsmen during a news briefing in Ibadan that he was a victim of rigging in his constituency rigged out of the primaries.

Despite gaining the upper hand at the primaries, he said he was allocated a vote less than what was allocated to his opponent, Mr. Waheed Gbede, who allegedly had the backing of the deputy governor, Alhaji Hazeem Gbolarami.

The lawmaker said the exercise, which took place at Ibadan North local government secretariat was "noth-

#### AKIN OYEDELE

ing, but a sham and daylight robbery."

He said the deputy governor allegedly interfered with the electoral process, when it became clear that he was the aspirant to beat.

Instead of adopting the open secret ballot system prescribed by the party's constitution for primaries, he alleged that Gbolarami directed the officers to use Option A4.

After several minutes of futile protest, as well as oppositions by the delegates, he said the parties reluctantly agreed to use the Option A4.

He claimed that he had overwhelming majority of the delegates queuing behind him as the voting got underway.

He said he had no fewer than 400 delegates behind him as opposed to his opponent's 100.

Sarumi said, "In the end, 126 votes were allocated to me, while 352 were allocated to my opponent. I'm surprised that somebody can flagrantly change the rule of the game to impose a candidate on the people."

"My resource has been stolen and I want to reclaim it. This was done to please a particular godfather."

"They want to destroy the PDP in Oyo State. The future of the PDP under such leadership is very precarious. I'm sure President Olusegun Obasanjo will not allow that."

The schedule of returning officers for the exercise as published in the Tribune Newspaper of Saturday, November 18, indicated that Messrs Fatai Muraina and A. Murisiku would preside over the primaries at Ibadan North I.

However, the names of the returning officers that conducted Saturday's primaries were given as Alhaji Suleiman

Akande and Mr. Gbolahan Alade. Sarumi said that he had to prevail on his supporters to avoid violence to resist the rigging.

In a telephone interview with our correspondent, the Special Assistant, Media, to the deputy governor, Mr.

Demola Solalu, however, denied the alleged involvement of his boss in the conduct of the primaries.

As a party leader, he said Gbolarami only went to the venue of the primaries to observe the proceedings and not in his capacity as the

deputy governor.

Although, he did not deny that his boss supported Gbede, he added that in every election, a loser would always cry foul.

Solalu said, "He (Sarumi) need not drag the name of the deputy governor into his

failure. The deputy governor did not conduct the election. I can only advise him to seek proper channel of showing grievances."

When contacted on the telephone, the Commissioner of Police Oyo State Command, Mr. Jonathan Johnson told newsmen that he was awaiting the full report of the violence that broke out at Igboho.

## Protest in Obasanjo's constituency, delegates insist on N10,000 gratification before voting

#### NIYI ODEBODE

**V**OTING at the Peoples Democratic Party's primaries for House of Representatives was delayed for two hours in Abeokuta on Saturday at President Olusegun Obasanjo's constituency as each delegate insisted on collecting N10,000 before voting.

The school, Gateway Secondary, Abeokuta, venue of the primaries for Abeokuta North/Obafemi Owode/Odeda Federal Constituency, was rowdy as delegates said they would not vote unless their demand was met.

The delegates, who started arriving at the venue around 10 am, protested and said they would not collect N1,000, which the sole aspirant in the constituency, Mr. Kayode Amusan, offered each of them.

At noon, when voting was supposed to start, the venue became chaotic. The delegates sang protest songs and accused the aspirant of being stingy.

They accused Amusan of treating them with levity because he was the only aspirant contesting for the seat.

Attempts by party elders, including the Secretary to the Ogun State Government, Alhaji Sarafa Ishola and the state Chairman of the PDP, Chief Joju Fadairo, to pacify

the aggrieved members did not succeed.

The delegates marched round the school shouting "No N10,000 no vote. Where have been since you were elected in 2003? And Don't be stingy."

The aspirant, who was visibly angry and embarrassed, later appealed to the delegates, but they refused to change their minds.

In an interview with journalists, he said those who were protesting were in the minority, adding that he had fulfilled his promises to the electorate.

He stated that he donated his salaries in his first six months in office to his con-

stituents.

Amusan, however, got a reprieve, when the President arrived at the centre at 1.45 pm when the delegates stopped their protest.

Five minutes later when Obasanjo was going round the centre to greet the delegates, the protest started again as shouts of "no voting" came from the crowd.

The President, who was intimated of what was going on by the SSG and the PDP chairman invited one of the delegates for a discussion.

Obasanjo later addressed the delegates and appealed to them to vote. He directed the aspirant to beg the delegates.

The President said with his intervention, the aspirant would not disappoint the delegates and other members of the party.

There was a mild drama as Amusan stooped to apologise to the delegates.

The delegates were not satisfied until the Ogun State Governor, Otunba Gbenga Daniel, who also appealed on his behalf, insisted that he must prostrate.

Voting started at 2 pm when the aspirant had prostrated and the delegates were promised N5,000 each.

The President, accompanied by the governor, left the centre at 2:30 pm before the end of the primary.

## Shoot-out in Imo State

#### FIDELIS SORIWEI

**T**HERE was a shoot-out at the Imo State secretariat of the Peoples Democratic Party as thousands of thugs battled to hijack materials meant for primaries.

Traffic at the busy Egbu Road, which links Owerri and Umuahia, was held up for hours with motorists trapped in the pandemonium caused by gunshots and the activities of the thugs.

Some of the thugs were arrested and beaten up at the secretariat for attempting to run away with the materials for the primaries.

About 70 aspirants were

It also took the party a lot of time to resolve the serious disagreement generated by the materials for Okigwe North Federal Constituency, as two prominent politicians from the area and their supporters disagreed over who should have the materials for one of the local government areas making up the constituency, Onuimo.

It was learnt that the materials for the Njaaba/Isu/Nwagele and Nkwere Federal Constituency were destroyed in the presence of the Chairman of the PDP Electoral Committee in Imo State, Mr. Basorun Olufemi.

Further investigation revealed that the materials for

dent on Saturday, Basorun denied the allegation that the election materials for Njaaba/Isu/Nwagele and Nkwere were destroyed before him.

He admitted, however, that the primaries could not be held there because some of the materials were stolen by some thugs.

Basorun, who also confirmed the postponement of the primaries at Aboh/Mbaise/Ngor/Okpalla Constituency, stated that the exercise was, to an extent, commendable.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the party in the state, Chief Marcelinus Nlemigbo, has said that the party had received most results of the pri-