

# One killed, several injured in Osun by-election violence

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**T**RAGEDY struck during the House of Representatives by-election conducted in Osun State, on Saturday, when a polling agent, Abdullahi Taofeek, was killed in an orgy of political violence.

Taofeek was killed at the Isale-Ase polling booth in ward 09, in Iree during a free-for-all. Three voters' registers and 15 ballot boxes were carted away by hoodlums.

Two female staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission were stripped naked and beaten to coma during a fracas that ensued in ward 10.

Both the Peoples Democratic Party and the All Nigeria Peoples Party traded words over the killing with each side accusing the other of killing the victim.

However, there was a general belief among the two

parties that the victim was struck with a native charm. There was no visible sign of injury on the corpse of the victim, which was deposited at Rainbow Hospital, Iree.

The House of Representatives seat became vacant when the member representing Ifelodun/Boripe/Odo-Otin federal constituency of the state, Chief Ranti Alabi, died a few weeks ago.

Our correspondent gathered that trouble erupted in wards 09; 10 and 11 of Iree community as soon as the election began at 10.00am with youths brandishing weapons such as guns; knives and charms storming polling booths and carting ballot boxes away.

Secretary, PDP in Osun State, Mr. Yinka Adejojo, accused the supporters of the ANPP of precipitating violence by unleashing terror in the three wards in Iree.

Adejojo alleged that he was attacked by thugs sent by a candidate, adding that his Peugeot 504 official car and bus were smashed by the thugs.

Reacting, the Osun State Chairman, ANPP, Chief Sule Alao, called for the cancellation of the election just as he alleged that the PDP acted in collusion with the police to rig the election.

He said, "The PDP killed our agent. You can see that there is violence everywhere in Iree. They have hounded notable ANPP members out of the town.

"The PDP is saying that Taofeek killed himself with a charm he bore to the polling centre; is that possible?

How can a person kill himself with his own charm? The young man resisted the attempt by the PDP to stuff the ballot box with voter cards.

"It was during the ensuing fight that he was struck with a charm and he died. As some INEC registers have been stolen, how does INEC want to collate the figures?"

The Public Relations Officer, INEC, Osun State, Mr Nike Tadese, confirmed the development.

She said the two female staff of the commission that were severely beaten had been resuscitated at the commission's headquarters in Osogbo.

The Resident Electoral Commissioner, INEC, Osun State, Reverend John Dansu, decried the situation, calling on politicians to eschew violence.

Commissioner of Police, Osun Command, Mr Sulaimon Fakai, said police had commenced investigations into the case, assuring that persons found culpable would be brought to justice.