

Five die, 39 injured in party clashes

**Akin Oyedele,
Francis Falola,
Femi Makinde and
Tunde Odesola**

NO fewer than five persons died and 39 others injured in party clashes that occurred in Niger, Ondo, Osun, Oyo and Adamawa states between Sunday and Monday.

Two persons lost their lives on Sunday during an outbreak of political violence in Gusoro village in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State.

The political violence between supporters of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party and that of the All Nigeria Peoples Party ensued during a political rally organised by the PDP in the area.

According to an eyewitness, Alhaji Garba Muhammed, violence erupted as a group of party supporters attempted to remove a billboard belonging to the candidate of the other political party.

He said that the two persons were killed in the political fracas between the sup-

porters of the two political parties.

The state's Chairman of ANPP, Alhaji Hussaini Garba, confirmed violence between supporters of the two political parties.

He, however, blamed the development on the supporters of the ruling PDP, whom he stated, harassed and intimidated political opponents.

But the Police Public Relations Officer, Niger State Command, Mr. Funsho Adeshina, when contacted by our correspondent, denied knowledge of the incident.

Also in Oyo State, three people were feared dead in Challenge, Ibadan, on Monday as supporters of the Action Congress and the PDP engaged in violent clash that lasted several hours.

A statement by Mr. Niyi Adebimpe, the Media Assistant to AC governorship candidate in the state, Prof. Taoheed Adedaja, claimed that his boss escaped from the hoodlums unhurt. But he said a car conveying Adedaja's running mate, Chief Caleb Oyaniji, was

among those allegedly vandalised.

Also, the Labour Party in Ondo State has again accused the Peoples Democratic Party of attacking its supporters following a heavy clash between supporters of the two parties in Akure on Sunday.

The Chairman, Publicity, Media and Strategy of LP, Mr. Remi Olatubora, made the allegation while briefing journalists in Akure on Monday.

But the Publicity Secretary of Agagu 2007 Campaign Organisation, Chief Yemi Adedipe, denied all the allegations.

He said that the LP introduced violence to the state politics immediately the party was inaugurated.

According to Adedipe, the LP was using all the allegations to steer public sympathy.

The Ondo State Police Command also denied the allegation of bias levelled against it.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Adeniran Aremu, said that neither the CP nor the entire police in the state were bias.

In another development,

no fewer than 10 persons sustained injuries during an outbreak of violence between students of the Osun State Polytechnic, Iree, and some supporters of the Peoples Democratic Party in Iree.

Investigations by our correspondent on Monday, revealed that the clash ensued in Iree when the party, led by Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola, held a rally in Boripe Local Government Area.

The Deputy Commissioner of Police, Osun State Command, Mr. David Omojola, on Monday said the Criminal Investigation Department of the command was investigating the clash that occurred last Friday.

Omojola urged members of the public to embrace peace in resolving conflicts, adding that the command was prepared to thwart the efforts of criminals in the state.

The latest crisis came on the heels of another clash, which occurred penultimate week, between the polytechnic's students and some supporters of a senatorial candidate of the PDP, in Iree.

The Secretary-General, National Association of Osun State Students, Adediwura Adesina, in a telephone interview with our correspondent on Monday, decried the crisis.

Calls to the mobile phone of the Secretary of PDP in Osun State, Mr. Yinka Adejo, did not connect just as he was unavailable when our correspondent visited the PDP secretariat in Dada Estate area of Osogbo.

Similarly 11 days to the general election, crisis broke out in Adamawa State between supporters of PDP and supporters of ANPP, leaving 12 persons critically ill at the Yola General Hospital.

Our correspondent gathered that trouble started in Shinco quarters in the state capital at the weekend when some supporters of PDP youths invaded the area and pasted the posters of Senator Jibril Aminu, a PDP senatorial candidate on top of that of the ANPP presidential candidate. Alhaj Muhammadu Buhari, an action which angered ANPP supporters.

Property worth over N10m were destroyed during the clash.

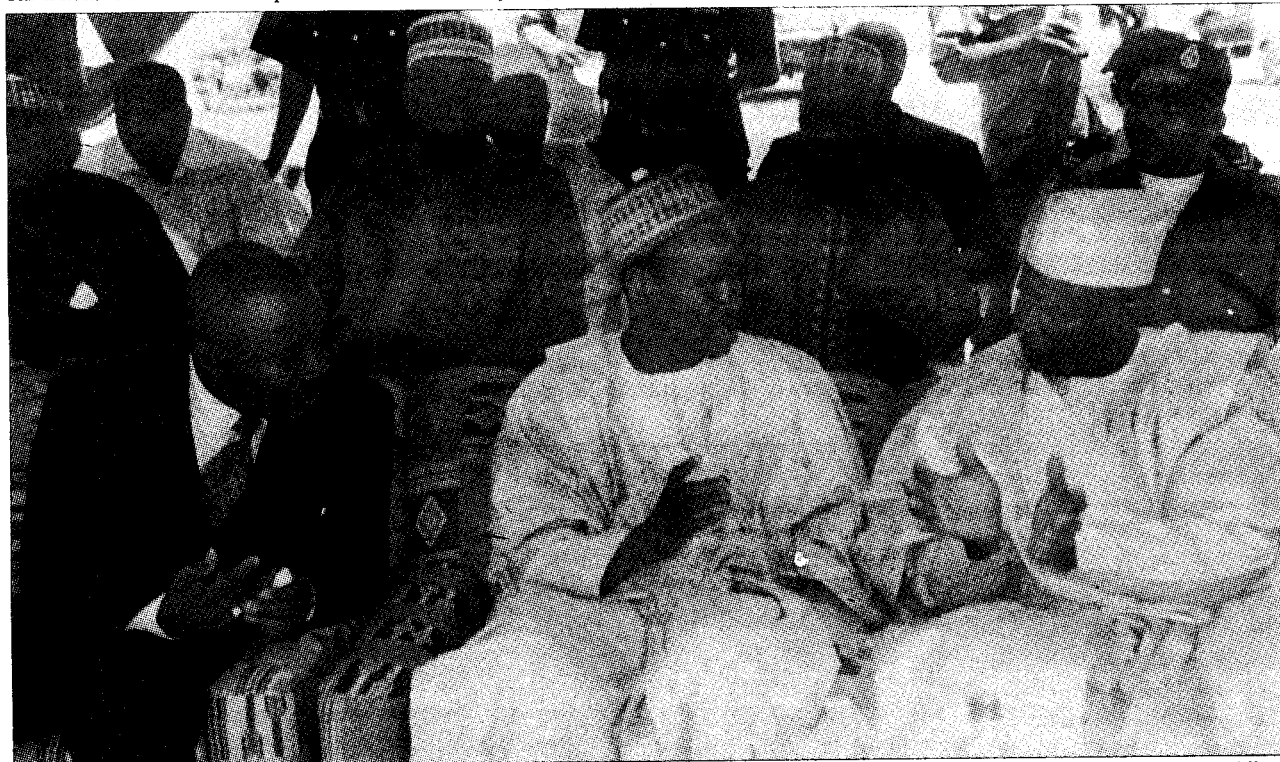
According to Alhaj Ibrahim Jimeta, one of the victims, whose car was damaged beyond repairs, disagreement arose when PDP supporters insisted on pasting the poster of their senatorial candidate on the Buhari.

The PDP rally scheduled for the area by Aminu was hurriedly put off because of the violence, while policemen were on patrol in the area.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Alhaj B Aminu, in Adamawa Police Command, said that the police command had reinforced its patrol squads within the metropolis, to forestall further breach of peace by political hoodlums.

It will be recalled that the Action Congress governorship candidate, Alhaj Ibrahim Bapetel, recently in a rally in Jimeta Metropolis, called on his supporters to avoid the provocations of his political opponents as they were out to cause instability in the state to forestall the forthcoming general election.

He also appealed to his supporters to be of exemplary conduct and be peaceful, adding that any leader, who wanted to perpetuate violence in order to win election should be rejected by the people.



•L-R: Federal High Court Judge, Adamawa State, Justice Garba Umar; Secretary to the State Government, Alhaji Adamu Aliyu; and the Chairman/Chief Executive, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, Alhaji Ahmadu Giade, at the public destruction of hard drugs by the NDLEA in Yola...on Thursday.

New case of human influenza suspected in Lagos

Adejuwon Soyinka

A new suspected human case of the avian influenza virus is currently being investigated in Lagos State.

Disclosing this on Monday, the Permanent Secretary and Acting Commissioner, Lagos State Ministry of Health, Dr. Jide Idris, said, "Only yesterday, we got another suspected human case of human influenza and we are currently investigating."

He said, "What we have is a suspected case because of

the type of symptoms which the patient presented. We have sent samples taken from him to Abuja for confirmatory tests and we expect to get the result within a day or two."

Idris, who insisted that he would not disclose the identity of the patient said, "All I can say for now is that the patient is a male Lagos resident and he is currently being taken care of at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital."

When contacted, the Chief Medical Director of LUTH,

Prof. Akin Osibogun, confirmed that the patient was in the hospital but cautioned that there was nothing to panic about.

He told our correspondent that "there is nothing really special about the patient's case since we now operate on a very high level of suspicion and precaution."

Osibogun said the patient was brought to LUTH on Saturday with a very high fever associated with respiratory tract problems both of which were not responding

to treatments by regular antibiotics.

"With these kinds of symptoms, the first thing we suspect is avian influenza but it is still mere suspicion until confirmatory tests are carried out and the result is positive."

"We have sent fluid samples taken from the patient to the World Health Organisation and the national Avian Influenza Crisis Management Centre in Abuja for necessary test and until the result is released we should not speculate," he said.