

One killed as violence, parallel polls mar PDP primaries

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ONE person was killed in Bayelsa State as violence marred the conduct of the Peoples Democratic Party's primaries for the House Representatives and state Houses of Assembly elections in some parts of the country on Sunday.

There was a report of alleged abduction of delegates in Osun State, while in some other states, factions held parallel elections.

In Bayelsa, the exercise reportedly turned violent at Constituency One in the Ogbia Local Government Area as a man identified as Michael Isaiah, nicknamed 'Tompolo', was reportedly shot dead.

Details of the incident was

sketchy as of press time, but sources said that violence broke out following a heated argument over the validity of the delegates list to be used for voting in the constituency, which resulted in sporadic shootings.

Reacting to the incident, an aspirant for the Ogbia Federal Constituency ticket of the PDP, Daniel Iworiso-Markson, condemned the killing.

Iworiso-Markson, in a statement released in Yenagoa, said the killing of Isaiah was barbaric and sad, stating that nobody's life is worth taken for any political office.

He called on security agents to go after the killers and their sponsors, insisting that those responsible must not go unpunished.

When contacted, the spokesman for the state police command, Asinin Butswat, said he was away attending a course in Lagos and promised to get back to

our correspondent on the alleged killing but he had yet to do so as of the time of filing this report.

A similar scenario was said to have played out in the party primaries in Isoko constituency of Delta State.

The exercise was marred with crisis as unknown gunmen stormed the election venue, shooting sporadically shortly after the election results were announced.

The state legal adviser of the party, Bernard Odion, had won with 23 votes thus beating the incumbent, Jude Ogbimi, who polled one vote.

The invading gunmen were said to have stormed the venue in three Toyota Sienna vehicles shortly after the primary election results had been declared.

They subsequently began to shoot indiscriminately into the air thus forcing party members, supporters, and security personnel to scamper for dear lives.

In another development,

an aspirant contesting for PDP's ticket for the Boluwaduro/Ifedayo/Ila Federal Constituency in Osun State, Seyi Bamidele, alleged that some delegates were abducted during the primary.

Bamidele, who is the current PDP South West Zonal Youth Leader, also said the primary was fraught with anomalies and demanded an immediate response from the leadership of the party in the state.

According to him, those abducted are delegates in the Ifedayo State Assembly primary held in Oke Ila.

"The whole exercise has been marred with anomalies. Some delegates that were to vote in the House of Assembly primary for an aspirant for Ifedayo State Constituency PDP ticket held at Iya ni o se Hall, Oke Ila were abducted. They were later released after the exercise has been completed," he said.

Efforts to get the reaction of the PDP caretaker chairman

in the state, Mr. Adekunle Akindele, proved futile, as calls to his mobile line rang out, while he had yet to respond to a text message sent to him by one of our correspondents as of the time of filing this report.

Three aspirants contesting PDP's ticket for Ibadan North-East/Ibadan South-East Federal Constituency at the House of Representatives, including Deji Aboderin; Dr Kazeem Olasupo and Niji Aborisade, said hoodlums chased them away from the venue of the primary election at Orita Aperin area of Ibadan, Oyo State.

The Ibadan aspirants alleged that the Deputy National Chairman of the PDP, Mr Taofeek Arapaja; the serving lawmaker representing the constituency, Abass Adigun aka Agboworin, were present when armed hoodlums attacked them and chased them away from the venue.

Speaking with journalists in separate interviews outside the venue of the primary poll, the three aggrieved aspirants berated Governor Seyi Makinde; Arapaja and some of the governor's aides for allegedly being part of the alleged intimidation meted out on them.

They also said they would challenge the party in court if it announced any winner, adding that no election took place.

An effort by our correspondent to get Arapaja was unsuccessful.

Calls to his phone did not connect and he was yet to respond to the chats sent to him on WhatsApp.

The exercise suffered a setback for hours in Ogun State over crisis on delegates list.

The PUNCH gathered that the election could not hold in the four centres designated for the three constituencies in Abeokuta North and South Local Governments as well as for the only constituency in Odeda.

As of 7.30pm, when this report was being filed, there was still disagreement on the list of delegates and other allegations of manipulation.

In Edo State, The PUNCH discovered that two factions loyal to Governor Godwin Obaseki and the South-South Vice-Chairman, Dan Orbih, held parallel polls for the House of Assembly and House of Representatives in the state.

As such, all the aspirants supported by Obaseki won elections conducted by his faction, while results were still being expected in the election of those supported by Orbih as of the time of filing this report.

But the state Commissioner for Information, Adaze Ewanta, who described the exercise as free and fair, denied reports of parallel congress.



•Oba of Benin, Oba Ewuare II (second left); National Leader, All Progressives Congress/a presidential aspirant, Asiwaaju Bola Tinubu; and a former National Chairman, APC, Adams Oshionhole, when Tinubu visited the palace of Oba of Benin in Benin-City before addressing the party's delegates in Edo State... on Saturday. Photo: Tinubu Media Office

o prosecute developer of collapsed building

building but they refused to stop and started building at night and weekends.

"It is high time we took responsibility for our actions; and for people who waste other people's lives like this, the law is very clear, the state government will take over the building and the builder will be prosecuted.

"I can assure you that all of the people responsible for this will face the law. The long arm of the law will catch up with this guy (developer). He cannot commit a terrible crime and run away. The government will find him and he will face the consequences of his action."

Our correspondent learnt that labourers were working on the building when it suddenly collapsed and trapped them beneath the rubble.

Emergency responders including the National Emergency Management Agency; Lagos State Emergency Management

Agency; Lagos State Fire and Rescue Services; men of the Nigerian Police Force, officials of the Nigeria Red Cross, among others, stormed the scene to commence rescue operation.

In his reaction, the Coordinator, NEMA, Ibrahim Farinloye, said four persons were recovered dead.

He said, "Four (persons) recovered dead and five rescued alive. The collapsed building under construction was located within a compound and it was a frame structure as at the time of the unfortunate collapse.

"The third suspended slab concrete was already in place with an ongoing internal partition. The building crumbled during a downpour around 1.45pm."

Our correspondent learnt that the compound where the collapsed building was situated was owned by a yet-to-be-identified man in the state.

After the man died,

structures on the compound were reportedly divided among his wives.

A member of the family, who spoke to our correspondent on condition of anonymity, said after the structures were divided, the developer was contacted to develop the building.

The source said, "The developer is not among the victims; his workers were the ones working on the building when it collapsed. He was not there. I am also aware that the state government has issued a stop work order on the building."

The building was said to be a bungalow that the developer converted to a three-storey building.

"But LABSCA issued a stop work order and sealed the place. The seal was still there yesterday and instead of the developer abiding by the seal, he mobilised laborers to start moving equipment and other materials through

Freeman Street to continue the construction," another source said.

In a follow-up reaction, Farinloye said, "The building was bequeathed to the family members and some awarded it to a developer who was converting the bungalow building into a three-storey building before it collapsed. It was revealed by the family members that LABSCA had sealed the site earlier."

The Permanent Secretary, LASEMA, Olufemi Oke-Osanyintolu, also confirmed the incident, saying five people were rescued alive and three corpses recovered.

"However, you will discover that that disaster is a man-made disaster, it is a disaster that is avoidable because the government has done the needful. Undesirable developers decided to work against the good people of the state by doing construction at the time that it is not properly monitored."