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## WAR IN IBADAN

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BY OUR REPORTER ON NOVEMBER 24, 2014

COVER

### Political thugs kill 3, burn 10 houses, over 200 shops in 4 communities

STORY AND PICTURES BY OLUSEYE OJO, IBADAN

Three days after thugs shot dead a Police Inspector at a political rally in Oke-Ado, Ibadan, another tragedy hit the Oyo State capital yesterday, as three persons were feared dead in another politically motivated fracas that engulfed Born Photo, Isale Osi, Popo and Idi-Arere communities, in Ibadan South-West Local Government.

When *Daily Sun* visited the scene yesterday, the four communities resembled a war zone. Broken bottles littered the roads in the four communities. No fewer than 10 houses, 200 shops, several cars, comprising two articulated vehicles, one tricycle and eight motorcycles were burnt during the fracas. Also, the transformer at the Born Photo Junction was set ablaze.

Apart from the 10 houses that were burnt, many other houses were vandalised. The invaders reportedly used guns, cutlasses, broken bottles and other dangerous weapons freely. It was gathered that many residents of the four communities had relocated to other areas of the city for safety.

*Daily Sun* gathered that peace had eluded the communities since Friday, November 21, 2014 after a police inspector was shot dead at a rally organised by the All Progressives Congress (APC) at Oke Ado, Ibadan. A combined team of Operation Burst, Special Anti-Robbery Squad and mobile policemen were seeing combing the communities by yesterday evening.

Mr. Raimi Azeez told *Daily Sun* that he lost his tricycle, which he bought for N750, 000 on hire purchase in the fracas. He said he had just paid N300, 000 for the tricycle, wondering where he would get money to pay the remaining debt.

Another victim of the attack is Mr. Adepoju Owolabi, who owns a viewing centre at Isale Osi. He lamented

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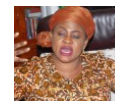
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that his two giant generators and one small generator were burnt by the hoodlums. The attackers, he said, also destroyed his two television sets as well as a computer and a printer. His words: "The thugs came and started shouting at me. They scared people away. They carried my three generators and the two television sets to the main road in front of the viewing centre, where they set them on fire. I was looking at my means of livelihood as they were being burnt and there was nobody to help me. Where do I start from again?" A trader, Mrs. Folake Oladipo, also narrated how the hoodlums broke into her shop and destroyed everything there with cutlasses. She said that the shop, which is in front of a house, was also set ablaze.

According to her, she lost items worth N1.5million in the shop, adding that the hoodlums had been terrorising the community since Friday.

A middle-aged man, Mr. Okunola Ashimiyu, a motor spare part merchant, also recounted his ordeals. He told our reporter: "Since Friday, we have not known peace in this area. Throughout yesterday (Saturday) night, I heard sound of gunshots. At about 9:30am today (yesterday), the supporters of a politician came out and started causing problem in this area. They said they molested their boss on Friday. That was how they started burning houses and destroying other property at Born Photo, Isale Osi, Popo and Idi Arere.

"They burnt our house and the shops in front of it. I know the boys that set this house ablaze. I tried to put out the fire, but I could not. When policemen came, they drove the hoodlums away. The policemen told me to call my neighbour to help in putting out the fire. But the fire fighters did not come to this area."

The chairman, Ibadan South- West Local Government, Mr. Taoreed Adeleke, told newsmen at the Born Photo Junction yesterday that the pandemonium was caused by miscreants that were bent on disrupting the peaceful atmosphere in the state, adding: "This problem started about three days ago during APC rally in Oke-Ado. The hoodlums came there and disrupted everything. They shot at policemen.

"On the recent fracas, I received a call around 7am today (yesterday) that the hoodlums had arrived again at Born Photo area. Then, I called the Operation Burst, SARS, and MOPOL. The hoodlums had destroyed many things and set some houses ablaze before the law enforcement agents arrived. "I think the security agencies should stay in this area till next two weeks until those miscreants are apprehended. This will give assurance to people who have run away from the communities to return. I think the violence is the vocal point of the opposition parties in the state to make people fear during election so that people would be selling their votes."

But a chieftain of the Accord Party (AP) in Oyo State, Mr. Lanre Ogundipe, has warned APC to stop pointing fingers at the opposition parties in the state as the mastermind of the fracas. He contended that the melee was caused by an alleged internal wrangling within APC, saying APC should look inward.

The Mogaji of Ile Laboo, Idi-Arere, Chief Bisi Shittu, an engineer, was alarmed over the incident. He almost betrayed emotion while fielding questions from newsmen on the mayhem. He stated: "The state in which I saw things in the area, honestly, is shameful and wanton destruction of life and property for no just cause. Innocent people's houses and property were destroyed. They set some of them on fire. There is no justification for it. How many hours after the flag off of the campaign? "I understand that this thing began on Friday, as a result of the fallout from the APC campaign, which was supposed to have taken place around Oke Ado. Based on what happened over there, people ran towards Popo Yemoja and Isale Osi. The whole of yesterday (Saturday) was the same thing.

"People in the neighbourhood said some persons providing security for some of the aspirants. Also, we heard that one of the boys came this morning and was just brandishing guns and destroyed life and property. People claimed they saw one of them with three rifles. It is madness. There is no better way to describe this thing.

"I feel really ashamed that while we are talking about peace and security in Oyo State, things like this could happen. There has to be a concerted effort to ensure that people are secured in their houses. This is an area where we have many police stations and nothing happened. "Being a traditional chief in this area, we just need to find a way to pacify people because they felt that some persons were just trying to use their political might. From the comments people are making now, the storm is gathering. We don't want to see a situation like we have in the North here.

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"I am appealing to my people to be calm. Two wrongs don't make a right. They should take it easy and let us see, for once, what the government will do to bring justice."

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Superintendent of Police, Olabisi Okuwobi-Ilobanafor, said no arrest had been made in connection with yesterday's incident. She disclosed that the state's Commissioner of Police, Mr. Kola Sodipo, would address a press conference this morning, in connection with the recent happenings in the state.

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