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Many feared dead in Bayelsa pre-election violence

•PDP, APC trade blames

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Femi Folaranmi, Yenagoa

Simon Onu, a driver of Outside Broadcasting Van (OB Van) from Bayelsa owned radio station, Glory FM, has been killed in a pre-election violence that rocked Nembe during the campaign rally of the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Several others were also feared dead and many missing as people scampered for safety when gunmen stormed the rally.

There have been accusations and counter accusations regarding the fracas.

Fidelis Soriwei, the Chief Press Secretary (CPS) to Governor Seriake Dickson, who confirmed the death of Onu, blamed the incident on the activities of APC thugs.

Several stalwarts of the party also accused the APC of instigating crisis in Nembe to prevent PDP from campaigning when PDP had provided a conducive atmosphere for APC to campaign even in Dickson's Sagbama Local Government Area without any hitches.

A witness said the incident was like a war movie as the shooting by armed men rocked the King Koko Square, venue of the PDP governorship campaign.



Some journalists covering the rally were also caught in the crossfire while many others sustained injuries. Dickson was billed to attend the rally in company with the candidate of the PDP, Senator Douye Diri.

He said: “The attackers also opened fire at the protocol bus of the Bayelsa State Government House at a junction between Bassambiri and Ogbolomabiri.

“One of the PDP members died of gunshot injuries while several others sustained serious injuries and have been rushed to the hospital.”

But the Director-General, Timire Sylva Support Organisation, Wilfred Ogbotobo, said that the PDP members were the aggressors, adding that the party leaders invaded the community with thugs to chase away members of the APC.

Ogbotobo said some APC members were injured in the attack, wondering the reason for the campaign in Nembe when the party rounded off their rallies with a grand finale held in Yenagoa.

The spokesperson of the Nembe Chiefs Council, Chief Nengi James, said there was a clash between rival supporters of the PDP and APC in Nembe, resulting in injuries.

He said: “I can confirmed that supporters of the PDP and APC clashed in Nembe with some persons sustaining various degree of injuries, but no death has been recorded.”

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