

Calabar Bikers' Carnival: Cross River APC, CNPP commiserate with victims' families as PDP blast Ayade over poor organisation

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From Judex Okoro, *Calabar*

As Cross River continues to mourn the carnival carnage, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), its governorship candidate and the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) have commiserated with the families of victims of those who lost their lives in the tragic incident.

At the Bikers' Carnival yesterday, a Toyota Camry car lost control and rammed into o lookers killing seven persons with over 20 injured and receiving medical attention at Navy, University of Calabar Teaching Hospital (UCTH) and General Hospital all in Calabar.

Condoling the victims, the APC governorship candidate, Sen Bassey Otu, described the tragic death of some Cross Riverians, who left their homes to watch the bikers, as unfortunate and stocking at this critical time.

"I totally condemn this unfortunate and avoidable death of innocent citizens of our dear state and join the government and other well-meaning Cross Riverians in calling for a thorough investigation into the matter with the aim of ensuring that those found culpable are made to face the full wrath of the law.

"To honour the dead, I have decided to suspend all my political activities till further notice to mourn with the family of the injured and those who lost their lives. May this evil never again befall our dear State."

Commisserating with the parents and family members of the deceased as well as the Cross River State Government over the sad incident, the Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP) commend the Nigerian Police for the prompt apprehension of the killer driver, demanding a thorough investigation to ascertain the root cause of this ugly incident.

State Chairman of CNPP, Paddy Ali, in a statement, said: "It is our considered opinion that the organisers of the carnival Calabar should be more circumspect and deploy all the necessary safety measures to forestall similar occurrences in future events.

Commiserating with the families of those whose lives were brutally cut short and particularly by the Government of Cross River State, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) described it as unfortunate, especially the death of young people including a pregnant woman whose only crime was coming out to seek fun and enjoy the festivity of the season.

In a statement signed by the publicity secretary, Prince Mike Ojisi, the party said: "We deeply commiserate with the families of those whose lives were brutally cut short and particularly to the Government of Cross River State.

"Admittedly, this is indeed a very difficult time for us as a state, but while we mourn the dead, it's very pertinent to ask salient questions and carry out a thorough investigation, in pursuance of deserving justice for the deceased.

"It is indeed worrisome that Governor Ben Ayade announced the cancellation of the Bikers' carnival, nevertheless, this did not stop him and his luxurious train from parading the rest of the carnival route in glee and celebration despite the carnage.

"The PDP views this act from the Governor as a demonstration of lack of empathy, concern, assurance and commitment expected of a Chief Security officer of the state, who ought to be a comforter to his people in the face of such horrific carnage."

Blasting Ayade, the party said: "In saner climes, the Governor would personally address the state and publicly commiserate with the families of the deceased. Governor Ben Ayade's personal silence is deafening and points to the worthlessness of human life in Ben Ayade's Cross River State.

"The People's Democratic Party condemns in no uncertain terms this avoidable ugly incident that occurred as a result of the lack of proper planning that usually goes with the Calabar carnival. It was noticeable that throughout the Bikers' carnival, taxis and other unapproved vehicles moved freely through the carnival routes without any obstruction from security agencies.

"This has never been the way the massive street party that Calabar carnival is, has been planned and executed since its inception over a decade ago. But as with everything that has to do with Ben Ayade, this is the first time any aspect of the Calabar Carnival would end in tears and sorrow, especially for fun seekers who came just to enjoy the spectacle.

"While we urge participants of the carnival to continue to enjoy the fun of the festivities, we enjoin them to exercise maximum caution in the process, including guiding themselves against possible infection from cholera that is currently ravaging the state."

Equally expressing condolences to bereaved families, the PDP governorship candidate, Sen Sandy Onor, described the incident as an "avoidable disaster and a crystal reflection of Ayade's ineptitude which has characterised his administration.

"It's pathetic to note that Ayade has systematically destroyed every legacy he met on the ground. And the only one he is poised to bequeath to us which we must resist vehemently is the phantom lies and the legion of pathological liars he has groomed as internet rats.

"This is why they were busy debunking the news of the road carnage yesterday as PDP's effort to disrupt the event until pictures started emerging from the gory scene."