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### **APC Registration: One Killed, Many Injured in Rivers**

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**APC logo**

*Leadership crisis threatens exercise in Gombe*

Ernest Chinwo and Segun Awofadeji

In what looks like a fore taste of the violence to come, a man was shot dead and many others injured Thursday in Degema, and other towns in Rivers State, causing the All Progressives Congress in the state alleging that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state as having declared war on the party by resorting to violence to disrupt the party's registration exercise in the state.

The party alleged that people suspected to be hired thugs of the PDP shot at people who tried to register for the APC.

The Senior Special Adviser, Media and Public Affairs, to the Interim State Chairman, APC Rivers State, Chief Chukwuemeka Eze, in a statement issued last night in Port Harcourt accused the PDP of desperation to sabotage the registration exercise.

He listed areas where thugs disrupted the exercise to include Port Harcourt, Obio/Akpor, Ogu/Bolo and Degema, where a man, simply identified as Andy was shot dead by the hoodlums and six others fled with bullet wounds. They are being treated at BMH in Port Harcourt, according to the statement..

According to him, "In PHALGA Wards 11, 14 and 16 one Vandam and one Noso led 50 other hoodlums to shoot sporadically and hijacked the registration materials, handsets and cameras of APC registration officials."

He also said: "The same scenario played out in Ogu/Bolo and several other parts of the state."

He recalled that the party had on Wednesday alerted the public of plans by the PDP to disrupt the registration exercise through violence

Eze also alleged that there were plans by some politicians in the PDP to assassinate some leaders of the APC.

He insisted that there was no need for violence in the state.

"While we understand PDP's frustration at being roundly rejected by the people of Rivers State, this is surely not an excuse to plunge the state into chaos and rob the people of their constitutionally-guaranteed right to freedom of political association," he said.

The state Commissioner for Information and Communications, Mrs. Ibim Semenitari, also added that there was violence in Okrika, adding that six persons who were arrested by the police with arms had already been released.

She decried the spate of violence that had trailed the exercise in the state and dismissed claims by the PDP that factions within the APC were responsible for the violence.

The commissioner said: "It is curious that mere party membership registration exercise will lead to atrocities such as this. One wonders why the PDP is worried and is resorting to violence. These are people who enjoyed freedom of association few years ago when they were in the ACN (opposition) while Amaechi was in PDP."

She said the PDP was panicking "and so they are resorting to violence. They can see the masses moving, so they are reacting instead of using superior argument. This is mere membership registration. Using violence is sign of accepting defeat."

Similarly, crisis is threatening the registration exercise in Gombe State where leadership tussle is tearing the party apart

Addressing a press conference yesterday, Hon. Khamisu Ahmed Mailantarki, the member representing Gombe/Kwami/Funakaye federal constituency in the House of Representatives, said the legacy parties, comprising ANPP, CPC and ACN in their merger would step aside if the National Secretariat of the party refuses to address the lingering feud as soon as possible.

The lawmaker who, before the merger was the leader of the defunct Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) in the state, accused the immediate past governor, Alhaji Muhammad Danjuma Goje, now a serving senator who recently defected to the APC from the PDP of hijacking all the machinery of the party and leaving them with nothing.

According to him, they raised objections to the National secretariat before the inauguration of the State Interim Management Committee but were told by the National Headquarters to go ahead with the inauguration but not to assign roles.

Alhaji Khamisu Ahmed Mailantarki, who was in company of all the former party chairmen of the CPC, ANPP and the ACN alongside all the three APC members in the Gombe State House of Assembly, said they were the genuine members of the APC and would not allow those coming from the PDP to dislodge them from a house.

According to him, "we are not going to defect to another party because we are ready to die in the APC. Those from the PDP don't have a genuine cause to move the party forward and we have doubt in our relationship with them. Their actions are just anti-party to the APC."

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