

3 feared dead in attack on ex-Gov Ladoja's house

By Ola Ajayi

I**BADAN — ATTEMPTS,**
yesterday, by some sus-

pected political thugs to attack the residence of the former Governor of Oyo State, Senator Rashidi Ladoja, were

foiled by security operatives attached to him. The attack reportedly left three people dead.

Though the former governor was not around when the hoodlums numbering about

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50 stormed the building at Ondo Street, Bodija, Ibadan,

Committees' delay

ous and I think it is a clear indication that we should get more organised and the way to that is to put our Committees in place immediately so that things that are supposed to go to Committees will go to Committees immediately," he said.

Senator Ayogu Eze (PDP, Enugu North) also speaking on the development said: "We are only trying to see that the right thing is done. People will go back, sleep over the notices and research into them and come up better prepared to make contributions tomorrow (today)."

Ali, PDP chairman, blasts Obasanjo

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sation policy of the immediate past administration, especially as it affected national security. "This is an age when they sell off everything including the family silver. I don't encourage all these things. I don't see why my Federal Government Colleges should be sold. I don't also see why certain things that are of national security should be sold.

"But we have not gone round to selling everything yet. So, maybe at one point you must designate certain things for the purpose of national security or otherwise.

"Agriculture is a very difficult problem for us. All those who have gone into farming, very few of them survived, I have not survived, I went into farming, but I am not a good example of a farmer.

"When the villagers where I was farming decided to steal my farm crops and after investigation, I carried them to the police. The local chief called me and said, "come my son.

it was gathered that the attackers would have succeeded in setting the residence of the ex-governor ablaze if they had not met stiff resistance from the security agents.

The area was smeared with blood. Also, the wall adjacent to the ex-governor's house was riddled with bullets.

One of the residents of the area who preferred anonymity said the hoodlums stormed the area around 1 a.m. yesterday, shooting sporadically into the air, adding that when he woke up, he saw a dead body at Osuntokun Junction. The corpse was there till 9 a.m.

When they arrived Ondo Street where the former governor resides, the attackers were quoted as saying: "You landlords on this street, you don't have anything to be afraid of. We are not armed robbers. We are looking for

Ladoja. Our mission is to burn down the house of Ladoja, so don't interfere and don't panic. You are all safe. It is Ladoja that we want. Those of you in Ladoja's house, we will kill all of you."

According to the source, the hoodlums parked their vehicles on the road and walked to Ladoja's house, shooting as they proceeded.

But, the security men attached to the ex-governor, having heard of the mission of the attackers, resisted the onslaught. They reportedly returned fire to keep the invaders at bay. When the miscreants could not withstand the firepower of the security men, they fled.

A resident added that some other plain-clothes security operatives attached to the ex-governor chased the hoodlums who reportedly escaped with injuries.

The shooting lasted about 45 minutes.

In the ensuing crossfire, three of the hoodlums were reportedly killed while some sustained various degrees of injury. But none of the mobile policemen was injured in the gun duel.

Contacted, the state Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mr. Olatunji Caulcrick, confirmed that there was evidence that some people actually visited the ex-governor's residence but was skeptical if it was an attack.

He said: "There was an incident. A group of unidentified persons came around 1 a.m. shooting and shouting. The police attached to the ex-governor challenged them and they replied and the people scampered away."

On the blood stains on the road, the police boss said it was not certain the blood emanated from injuries. "I am convinced it is not likely to be blood stains," he said.

He told journalists that it looked as if some people splashed some contents on the road, adding that if it was blood stain from injuries, there would be continuous flow. It looked as if it was a premeditated plan by the people. Before we can actually confirm that it is a blood stain, there has to be some scientific test to prove that."

Worried by the development and insecurity of lives and property in the state, Chairman, Action Congress Caretaker Committee, Chief Jacob Adetoro, said a reasonable person would feel very sad. "I can't understand what people are looking for. The election is over, people can't still sleep peacefully in their residence. If somebody of Ladoja's calibre can be attacked, it means nobody is safe in Oyo State.

"I think President Umaru Yar'Adua should look into what is happening in Oyo State. Just look at the police station behind us, I think the DPO in that station should have mobilised some men to help the men on ground. Not that after an event has taken place somebody would come and be asking what happened.

"We had thought that with the transfer of the state Police Commissioner, Mr. Jonathan Johnson, there would be an end to this act of lawlessness and thuggery, but this attack, unprovoked as it was, came to me as a surprise and we wanted the police authorities to investigate it," he said.

On what could have led to the attack, Chief Adetoro said it definitely had some political undertone. "The attackers could not have been the neighbours of the ex-governor with whom the ex-governor has been living for many years. It has political undertone. We know the position of Ladoja," he said.

At the time of filing this report, the residence of the ex-governor had been fortified with more security operatives to prevent a fresh attack.

Navy declares 3 Ratings missing after militants' attack

LAGOS — THE Nigerian Navy yesterday said three of their men were missing after Niger Delta militants attacked them while on patrol on the Okrika channels in Rivers state.

"The militants attacked our men who were on patrol Monday night. Three of our

men are missing," Navy spokesman, Obiora Medani said.

Medani said the militants were in 12 speedboats.

An upsurge in violence and hostage-takings by militant groups in the oil-rich Niger Delta has cost Nigeria a quarter of its total output of 2.6

million barrels per day in the past 18 months.

Since the beginning of last year almost 200 expatriates — most of them with links to the oil industry — have been kidnapped. Most were released unharmed after periods in captivity ranging from a few days to a few weeks.