

Four journalists, others injured as hoodlums attack Akala's convoy

By Ola Ajayi

IBADAN—THE convoy of the Oyo State Governor, Otunba Adebayo Alao-Akala was, yesterday, attacked by suspected hoodlums at Iso Pako in the popular Bodija Market, Ibadan.

Though the governor escaped unhurt, four of the journalists on his entourage sustained injuries when the hoodlums hurled stones at the convoy.

Vanguard gathered that two persons were hit by bullets when security operatives fired gun shots to scare the hoodlums away, but it could not be ascertained if they died.

The press crew bus which Akala bought for newsmen during his 11-month reign and a Toyota Corolla car marked ABUJA XC 623 ABJ belonging to AIT crew were among the six vehicles damaged in the attack.

But in his response, the Special Adviser on Public Communication, Prince Dotun Oyelade denied the incident, saying the miscreants did not stone the governor's car but only damaged the press crew bus.

One of the injured journalists, Mr. Gbenga Abegunde of the *Daily Independent* was hit in the chest when stones were hurled at the convoy.

He said, "four of us were injured when the hoodlums threw stones at us. Out of four of us, my own injury was more serious. I was hit in the chest. The first aid crew attended to me. I was moved from the Press crew van into the first aid car. They offered to do X-ray for me to ascertain that there was no blood clot in my chest. But I told them to excuse me and allow

me to go and send my story first", he said.

According to an eyewitness, the hoodlums who were reportedly hired to shower encomium on the governor at the commissioning of the rehabilitated 3.1km Bodija Market-Isopako Express road, were carrying a banner with the picture of the Strong man of Ibadan politics, Chief Lamidi Adedibu.

After the commissioning, it was learnt, that the governor was about leaving when the hoodlums demanded money for the service they had rendered.

But the governor went into the waiting car and sped off.

The neglect infuriated the miscreants who reacted violently by hurling stones at the remaining vehicles on the convoy.

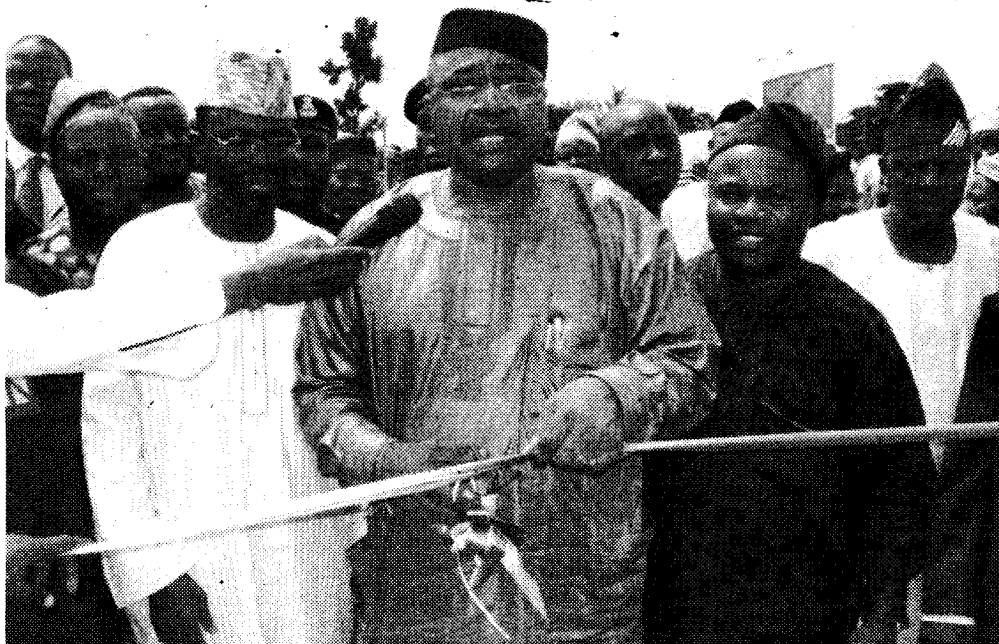
When they saw the seriousness of the hoodlums, the security aides shielded the governor and allegedly shot at the hoodlums. Overpowered by the security agents, the hoodlums ran in different directions.

Earlier at the commissioning, Governor Akala said he had proved his critics wrong who thought nothing good could come out of him.

His words: "They wanted to destabilize my government, but I have surprised them.

They did not know that this government was ordained by God himself. They are using the state workers to fight me."

On the lingering workers' strike he explained he did not have any problem with the workers. "I am not fighting the workers, they are the ones fighting me. I have never heard of anywhere where servant fights with his master. Don't let them deceive you. I am not saying I will not pay their salaries. What we are saying is that what they are demanding for is too much. Civil servants are not as much as non-civil servants in the state. If we use all the state money to pay only their salaries, how would dividends of democracy get to others in the state", he asked.



COMMISSIONING—Governor Adebayo Alao-Akala of Oyo state (middle) cutting tape to commission road network of Samonda G.R.A. He is flanked by his deputy Alhaji Taofeek Arapaja (left); the Chairman/Managing Director of Dutum Coy Ltd, Pastor Tunde Runsewe and others at the event.