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Violence mars APC governorship campaign flag-off in Lagos

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By Olasunkanmi Akoni & Monsuru Olowoopejo

LAGOS—THREE persons were, yesterday, feared dead and scores injured including journalists, as hoodlums suspected to be members of the National Union Road Transport Workers, NURTW, invaded the campaign flag-off of the All Progressives Congress, APC, held at Skypower Ground Ikeja in Lagos.



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PIX 6200: Lagos State Governor, Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode (2nd right); his wife, Bolanle (right); Chairman, All Progressives Congress (APC) Lagos, Alhaji Tunde Balogun (middle); APC Governorship Candidate in Lagos, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu (2nd left) and his running mate, Dr. Obafemi Hamzat (left) during the Flag Off Campaign of the Lagos APC at the Skypower Ground, G.R.A, Ikeja, on Tuesday, January 8, 2019.

The hoodlums invaded the venue with guns, daggers and other dangerous weapons, engaging one another in a bloody factional fight.

The campaign, however, ended abruptly as violence broke out mid-way into the well-attended programme.

Be factual in your reportage, Lagos govt admonishes journalists

The situation sent panic across the campaign ground as party members ran in different directions to avoid being hit by bullets being fired indiscriminately by the hoodlums.

Security operatives had a hectic time controlling the situation. In the ensuing confusion, many people were dispossessed of their phones, money and other valuables by opportunistic pick-pockets and other criminals.

A large number of party faithful were seen trekking to their various homes as there was a heavy vehicular traffic in the area because of the violence

Governor Akinwunmi Ambode, who was making a speech, had to leave the stage immediately and was guarded out of the venue together with his deputy, Dr. Idiat Adebule, the APC governorship candidate, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu, and other prominent members of the party.

How trouble started

Three, yet to be identified persons were feared dead, while several others, including journalists sustained different degree of injuries.

Crisis started at the Skypower Ground, GRA, Ikeja, venue of the event when fight suddenly broke out midway between two rival groups, said to be loyal to the Treasurer of NURTW, and a staunch member of the APC in Oshodi, Alhaji Musiliu Akinsanya, popularly called MC Olumo, and Kunle Poly, controlling Lagos Island Transport Union.

Lagos budget presentation suffers setback as lawmakers fail to form quorum

The thugs hijacked the campaign at around 2:45pm when Governor Ambode, was delivering his speech.

The rampaging thugs were seen freely using deadly weapons such as guns, knives, cutlasses and charms who were said to have been mobilised to the venue to disrupt the programme.

It was noticed that the thugs advanced towards the musical stage where Wasiu Ayinde was entertaining the party members and leaders as the police too moved towards the warring parties to douse the tension.

Even as the policemen made efforts to curtail the mayhem, the thugs freely launched reprisal attack on their opposing thugs who also were fully armed with guns, cutlasses, and charms.

Atiku alleges Buhari's cut deal with Yari, Masari to 'capture' Zamfara, Katsina

MC Oluomo, was beaten to stupor with dangerous weapons and was reportedly, stabbed on his cheek by some thugs suspected to be supporters of rival group.

Journalists sustain injuries

Journalists were, however, not spared as stray bullets shot by the rampaging thugs hit the Group Political Editor of The Nation newspapers, Mr Emmanuel Oladesu; the Camera man of Ijoba Ibile TV, Mr Abiodun Yusuf, and New Telegraph Reporter, Tope Ogunbanke.

The working tools of News Agency of Nigeria, NAN, reporter, Bolaji Buhari, were also carted away by thugs who also used the opportunity to rob people of their mobile handsets and other belongings.

