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Treatment of Action Congress Party personnel by other political parties?

A report by *the United States Department of State* under the heading 'Elections and Political Participation' states:

"Political violence occurred at federal, state, and local levels, as well as within political parties. The South Africa-based Institute for Democracy claimed that as many as 280 persons were killed in the country between February and March 2007. The government made little effort to investigate or bring charges in any of these cases of political violence.

Authorities did not investigate the January 2008 clash between members of the PDP and Action Congress in Ibadan, Oyo State, which injured 10 persons." (United States Department of State (11th March 2010) *2009 Human Rights Report: Nigeria*)

It also states:

"PDP membership conferred advantages, primarily in employment. Police arbitrarily arrested opposition leaders. For example, in Oyo state, police arrested an Action Congress candidate who challenged the 2007 election results and imprisoned him for confronting the ruling PDP local government chairman. The candidate was released, but police continued to harass him." (ibid)

A report by *Freedom House* under the heading 'Civil Liberties – 3.37' states:

"Attacks on political opponents and peaceful activists have mainly been localized and have largely occurred in states where the courts invalidated 2007 election results. In early 2009, the Court of Appeal invalidated the gubernatorial election in Ekiti and called for fresh elections. It also ruled against the sitting governor in Ondo and in favor of the opposition candidate. These rulings triggered politically motivated attacks against members of opposing political parties, sometimes involving the Nigerian police." (Freedom House (7th April 2010) *Countries at the Crossroads 2010 Country Report – Nigeria – pg.3*)

A report by *BBC News* under the heading 'Soldiers quell Nigeria opposition' states:

"Nigerian soldiers have confronted opposition supporters demonstrating about an election result in south-western Ekiti state.

They fired shots and tear gas to disperse demonstrators outside the Action Congress (AC) headquarters in the state capital, Ado Ekiti.

The town is now quiet after politicians called for calm following a face-off.

Nigeria's governing People's Democratic Party (PDP) narrowly won the disputed re-run election." (BBC News (6th May 2009) *Soldiers quell Nigeria opposition*)

In a section titled 'Travesty' it states:

"Opposition AC governorship candidate Kayode Fayemi said later the result was a "travesty" and his party would challenge it in court.

"Our ballot boxes were snatched in daylight, our monitors were beaten up," he told the BBC's Network Africa programme."(ibid)

A report by *Human Rights Watch* under the heading 'The 2007 Elections' states:

"In the town of Iseyin in OyoState, Human Rights Watch interviewed several supporters of the opposition Action Congress (AC) party who said they had been beaten up by bands of young men in the employ of the PDP when they tried to intervene to stop ballot-box stuffing near their homes. One man who tried to assist a friend who was being beaten by a gang was himself set upon and likewise abused. "I had to run and they pursued me," he said. "At one corner, one of them kicked my leg and I fell down. After I fell down they continued to kick me and slap me." He filed a police report that identified some of his attackers but the police took no action on the complaint." (Human Rights Watch (11th October 2007) *Criminal Politics Violence, "Godfathers" and Corruption in Nigeria*)

In a section titled 'Police Inaction and Abuse' it states:

"Prior to the April 2007 elections, the police in Gombe detained dozens of opposition supporters, mostly Action Congress members, in the run-up to the elections. Many activists and community leaders complained to Human Rights Watch about the number of political detainees being kept in Gombe prison ahead of the elections. Even the Emir, the traditional ruler of Gombe, a government sympathizer, expressed concern about politically-motivated detentions. In an interview with Human Rights Watch he said, "These are not robbers who have committed any crime. The approach of the police is not humane, they are simply grabbing people and throwing them into jail The police should help the public, not terrorize them." [360] One opposition lawyer told Human Rights Watch that he was representing over 200 cases of opposition party members who had been unlawfully detained without trial in the months preceding the elections." (ibid)

References:

BBC News (6th May 2009) *Soldiers quell Nigeria opposition*)

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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