April Polls: **Mimiko reads riot acts to election riggers, receives 10,000 PDP members in Agagu's town**

Bristling with livid anger, the Ondo State Governor, Dr Olusegun Mimiko at the weekend read the riot act to politicians preparing the ground for rigging of the polls and fanning the embers of violence to desist from such unlawful acts or face the penalty.

Mimiko, himself a victim of stolen mandate for which he fought in the law courts for 22 months before he wrest his mandate from the Olusegun Agagu government used the occasion of the defection of over 10,000 staunch members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Okitipupa, one of the local governments where the legal battle was fought in his bid to reclaim his stolen mandate stated that never again would election riggers have a field day in the State.

Rather, Mimiko admonished those who wish to contest to play the game according to the rule, eschew violence, promote peace in the overall interest of democracy in the country or face the full wrath of the law.

"We were all aware how election was rigged in this State in 2007. How they snatched ballot boxes and other materials at gunpoint and falsify results. We all remember how all manners of people who have died, like late founder of the Christ Apostolic Church, Apostle Ayo Babalola foreigners, including the American pugilist, Iron Mike Tyson, top government officials in the nation, infants, stones, trees, curtains and even dogs and goats voted for the ousted government until we went to court to get them booted out. Okitipupa was one of the worst place were such heinous crimes took place. But we are happy today that our people are wiser, they have seen what it means to have a government chosen by them and one with a caring heart, one that is bringing the dividends of democracy to our dear State.

"We want to warn those planning to rig election next month to perish the thought or be ready to face the full wrath of the law. Never again would there be democracy at gunpoint in Ondo State, the best candidate must be allowed to represent us. Henceforth, it shall be the principle of one-man, one vote and our people have vowed that never again would rigging, electoral violence be the order of the day in our State. For those who are regrouping and making moves to subvert this process in next month's election should desist as they will surely meet their waterloo. We must play the game by the rules," Mimiko stated.

The Governor handed down the warning while addressing a rally in Okitipupa, the hometown of former Governor, Dr Olusegun Agagu, when Mr. Yele Akinya, the Deputy Chief of Staff and Senior Special Assistant to ex-Deputy Governor in the government of the immediate past governor, Dr Olusegun Agagu led about 10,000 leaders and members of the Peoples democratic Party (PDP) and others parties into the Labour Party (LP).

According to the Governor, the do-or-die politics of the past was gone in Ondo State because his administration would not close its eyes or fold its arms and watch some desperate politicians who are bent on stealing votes by all means to turn the state into a battle ground in their quest to return and continue their mission of milking the state dry.

His words "the former PDP government in Ondo State had one of the best opportunities that abound in the political life of the state for six years to turn the lives of the impoverished people around for better, but rather chose to fritter away the chance. They failed woefully. For God to have given us abundant resources means that He doesn't want us to suffer, but unfortunately, our past leaders decided to make wrong choices."

Mimiko reiterated that in just two years in office, his administration executed over 266 community-based developmental projects in different parts of the State and assured the electorate to expect more positive actions from his government in the second half of this tenure.

Receiving those who dumped the PDP, the LP National Chairman, Mr. Dan Nwanyanwu praised the party leaders in the South Senatorial Zone for their remarkable leadership qualities which he described as one of the factors that attracted more devotees into the party. He urged the new members to bring to bear their wealth of experience and work for the success of the LP in the forthcoming election saying that the party remained focused in its resolve to make the State a reference point in the nation.

Earlier, Mr. Akinya had disclosed that he chose to dump the party that he served for six years due to lack of internal democracy and wrangling. He commended Governor Mimiko for his yeoman's efforts at turning the State into a vibrant State as oppose to the provincial status he met it. Akinya assured that he and his colleagues would deliver their areas to the LP in next month's election.

- *Olawole Olabisi,*
  Chief Press Secretary to the Governor of Ondo State, Governor's Office. Akure, Ondo State