

Boko Haram leader's relative shot dead after meeting Obasanjo

ADELANI ADEPEGBA

THREE days after President Olusegun Obasanjo visited the family of the slain leader of the Boko Haram sect, the new head of the family, Babakura Fugu, has been murdered.

Fugu had a meeting with Obasanjo last Thursday but was shot dead by an unknown gunman in front of his house in Maiduguri on Saturday.

Fugu was with family members when he received a telephone call and went outside, but was shot dead.

The slain man was an in-law to Yusuf Mohammed, the leader of Boko Haram that was killed in July 2007.

The Borno State Commissioner of Police, Simeon Midenda who

confirmed the incident to our correspondent on the phone said Fugu might have been killed by a member of the sect.

He said investigation would reveal the masterminds of the nefarious act but that

no arrest had been made.

Medinda said, "Fugu was with his family members when he received a phone call; he went outside apparently to meet the person and was shot dead. The family members said they thought the noise

they heard was a bomb explosion, so they ran away and nobody saw the gunman that killed Fugu.

"We have commenced investigation but from the manner the act was carried out, Fugu might have been

killed by a person familiar to him, probably a member of the sect."

Fugu had after the meeting with Obasanjo given hopes that the violent attacks by the sect might soon end, but his murder may be a move to frustrate the peace initiative of the former president which some people had lauded.

Maiduguri visit, not for negotiation — Obasanjo

ADEMOLA ONI

FORMER President Olusegun Obasanjo has said his Thursday's visit to the family of Mohammed Yusuf, the slain leader of the fundamentalist Islamic sect, Boko Haram, in Maiduguri "was a learning process."

Speaking with our

correspondent on the telephone, Obasanjo explained that he had refrained from making comments on the sect's insurgence because he did not have sufficient information on the radical religious group.

The former nation's leader denied that he was in Maiduguri to represent the Federal Government.

The ex-President was reported to have visited

the family of late Yusuf last Thursday ostensibly to facilitate a negotiation between the Federal Government and the fundamentalist group.

He was said to have held a closed door discussion with some representatives of the family, led by the late Boko Haram's brother-in-law, Babakura Fugu, with a view to brokering a truce that would ensure that Boko Haram would stop its violent attacks in some parts of the country and embrace peace.

As a result of the reports, some Nigerians concluded that the former President was representing the FG in order to open a door for possible negotiations between the government and the radical sect, which had claimed responsibility for a number of high profile bombings including the August 26 attack on the UN building in Abuja, where 23 people died.

Obasanjo, however, dismissed the reports, saying he was not in Borno State for negotiation.

"No, far from it, I did not go there for negotiation; my visit was a learning process," said the former President.

"I have heard about the activities of Boko Haram but no one seems to know much about the group or its grievances. Everybody is just talking about Boko Haram. I wanted to learn and know what is actually going on so that we can know what we can do about it.

"If I have learnt, then, when I'm asked questions about what is going on in my country about Boko Haram, I can talk from the standpoint of information and knowledge. So, the visit was just to learn."

He argued that it would be difficult for a group of people to just come together and start fighting without a reason, wondering if the reasons for the emergence of the radical Islamic sect had been uncovered.

"A group of people cannot just come together and start fighting and bombing. They are not mad people. Something must be responsible for their action; that is what we need to find out," he added.

Obasanjo, however, denied that the visit was at the instance of the Presidency or the Federal Government, arguing that he had done what an elder was supposed

Employment will curb insecurity — Ahmed

KWARA State Governor, Mr. Abdulfatah Ahmed, has said youth empowerment and employment generation would reduce insecurity and youth restiveness in the country.

Speaking during the inauguration of Kwara Bridge Empowerment Scheme, in Ilorin, on Saturday, he said the creation of 2,000 jobs for the youths in the state, would boost national productivity and make the beneficiaries more useful to the society.

He charged the 2,000 beneficiaries to ensure that they exhibited high level of productivity.

The governor presented letters of employment to 16 representatives of the beneficiaries from the 16 local government councils.

Ahmed said, "KWABES is designed to ensure that our youths are properly integrated into the system instead of allowing them to roam after graduation. This will lead to reduction in youth restiveness that we have been witnessing in some parts of the country."

LG boss to give agriculture top priority

THE Chairman, Caretaker Committee, Ilesa East Local Government Council, Osun State, Mr. Olanrewaju Balogun, has pledged to



•L-R: Governor Peter Obi of Anambra State; Minister of Works, Mr. Mike Onolememe; and Anambra State Commissioner for Works, Mr. Callistus Ilozumba, during the inspection of the just started reconstruction of the Onitsha-Enugu dual Carriage way, at Onitsha axis... on Saturday