



Sympathisers and supporters at the home of the slain PDP gubernatorial aspirant Funso Williams yesterday.

By UDO OGBONNA

Funso Williams murdered

JOSHUA BASSEY

Aspiring gubernatorial candidate of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for Lagos State, Funso Williams, was yesterday found dead in his bedroom with his hands and legs tied, raising suspicion of another political assassination.

Party faithfuls, supporters, relations and political associates, who trooped in their hundreds to the 184 Corporation

Road, Dolphin Estate home of the slain aspirant, could not hold back tears.

Williams, 58, former commissioner for works in the state and two-time PDP flag-bearer in 1999 and 2003 general elections, was found dead in his bedroom early yesterday.

He is suspected to have been murdered by unknown assailants, who tied his hands and legs before apparently strangulating him with a towel.

None of his fellow con-

testants for the gubernatorial ticket in the state was seen at his home yesterday, and there were speculations that they might have gone underground for fear of attacks by Williams's supporters who suspected a political assassination.

Following the murder of Williams, Inspector-General of Police Sunday Ehindero is in Lagos to personally take charge of investigations, even before President Olusegun Obasanjo directed through

Ogun State governor, Gben-ga Daniel, that Ehindero must fish out the suspects, using pathologists to get to the bottom of the killing.

Force Public Relations Officer and Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Haz Iwendi confirmed the death of the politician yesterday in Abuja and told BusinessDay that: "The IG is now in Lagos to assess the situation himself and give further directives."

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Funso Williams

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As at press time yesterday, nine persons that worked for the late politician, including four policemen, two cooks, two private security agents and one personal aide were in police custody for questioning.

Meanwhile, the ruling peoples Democratic Party (PDP) last night expressed deep shock at the assassination of Williams and tasked security operatives to fish out his killers.

The party at the end of its weekly National Working Committee (NWC) meeting in Abuja yesterday asked its Lagos chapter to forward a comprehensive brief on the incident.

National publicity secretary of the party, John Odey, said the meeting was shattered when the news of Williams's death filtered into town.

Observers wondered how the assailants gained entrance into the house of the late politician where two mobile policemen and two civil security personnel were said to be on duty. Neither the main gate nor the entrance to the house was damaged.

The deceased was billed to address political rallies at two locations in Lagos Island and Eti-Osa local government areas of the state yesterday in his continued warm-up to

secure the nomination of the party again for the gubernatorial race in the 2007 general elections.

The news of his gruesome murder which hit the air waves at about 11.30 a.m. yesterday jolted party faithfuls and loyalists most of whom were already enroute the venues of the rallies.

The rallies had so far been held in 10 local governments in the state including Kosofe and Ikorodu, where the William faction clashed last Sunday with the faction loyal to former minister of works Seye Ogunlewe, also an aspirant on the PDP platform.

Party faithfuls at William's home yesterday described his death as politically motivated.

A chieftain of the party, Ajayi Femi, who spoke to journalists yesterday, said the death was political. "What has happened is PDP against PDP," he said.

It was gathered that the PDP hierarchy in the state was favourably disposed to having William fly the flag of the party in the 2007 election, a development many at the late politician house yesterday said might have made others uncomfortable and raised fear of imposition of a candidate over them.

The national chairman of the PDP

in the South West, Bode Gorge, who called at the home of the deceased along with Minister of Works Femi Anibaba, also an indigene of Lagos, at about 4.30 yesterday urged party faithfuls to remain calm vowing that the party and indeed security agents would get to the root of the matter.

"This is unfortunate and unacceptable. He was a hardworking man with much of human milk flowing from him to thousands of the people. I have the mandate of the party to tell you to remain calm as no stone will be left unturned to unravel those behind this wicked act.

"We don't want any violence or confusion as that will not allow us to get to the root of this matter. I can assure you that we will never accept this," he said.

Also at the home of the Williams yesterday was the Inspector General of Police Sunday Ehindero who also assured that investigations would start.

The body of the late politician was yet to be removed by the time of filing this report, although the police had carried out forensic test. A brown coloured ambulance with registration number BM 01 ABB was waiting to convey the corpse to a morgue.