

Police arrest five over murder of PDP Rep

From Iyabo Lawal, Ibadan

THE manhunt has begun. And no fewer than four persons have been arrested by the police in Oyo State for the murder of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chieftain and member of the House of Representatives, Segun Oladimeji.

The arrest came as the state Police Commissioner, Udom Ekpoudom appealed to Nigerians to exercise patience as they strive to unravel the perpetrators of the act.

The police chief did not give names of those being held. But The Guardian learnt that the fourth man, and even a fifth one arrested but yet to be interrogated are all members of an opposition party. Almost all of them were either candidates in the last election or are running in the forthcoming council polls.

Oladimeji (a.k.a. Segelu), a close associate of controversial Ibadan politician, Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu, was murdered on Friday night at Ejioku area of Lagelu local council in Oyo State.

The 61-year old politician who arrived from Abuja last Thursday to pursue his petition before the tribunal on Friday as well as attend the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Lagelu local council meeting was shot by two gunmen at a relaxation spot in the sleepy suburb. They had demanded to see 'Baba Agba'.

After introducing himself as the person they wanted, the gunmen fired at Oladimeji several times. They also shot two of his aides and a female companion with him at the time.

The police chief while giving an update on Oladimeji's killing in an interview with The Guardian said the lawmaker's death was a pure case of murder as nothing was taken away from him when he was shot by the assassins last Friday.

Ekpoudom noted that the four suspects were being interrogated and he was optimistic that the killers would be nabbed.

"Four people have been arrested so far in connection with the murder of Oladimeji. They are currently being interrogated by my men. I hope you are aware that he came in from Abuja last Thursday for his case before the election tribunal before he met his untimely death on Friday. He was even shot in front of the PDP

secretariat in Lagelu. This and other details available to us show that it is a clear case of murder with political undertone," Ekpoudom stated.

While pleading for time and patience, the police chief noted that Nigerians were always in a haste.

He, however, assured that with the clues available at their disposal at the moment, chances are high that the police would get the culprits.

"Chances are high that we are going to get the culprits but we enjoin people to give us time, Nigerians are always in a haste, they want things done overnight but they must bear it in mind that police are not magicians. It may take time but we will surely get them," Ekpoudom said.

At the new Ife road residence of the deceased, sympathisers came in droves to commiserate with the family over the death.

The Police Commissioner also paid a condolence visit to the family and assured them that all would be done to bring the murderers to book.

Family members led by Oladimeji's eldest wife, Janet, expressed confidence in the ability of the new Police boss to do justice to the case.

The police investigation team headed by Assistant Commissioner of Police Taiwo Lakanu has been combing the entire state for clues on the assassination case.

One of his colleagues, Depo Oyedokun, said the late Oladimeji advised the nine-man panel looking into the alleged contract scam in the House of Representatives to allow due diligence and their conscience to guide them.

Oyedokun, who is a member of the investigating panel said: "We saw last on Thursday last week when he told me that he was going to Ibadan and I advised him to postpone the trip till Friday because that was the start of the weekend and because most people travel on Fridays but he told me he had to attend to some urgent things the next day."

"No, there was no sign in him that he won't return. I recall that he gave what I could describe as a parting advice to me as a member of the panel looking into the award of contract for the Hon. Speaker and his deputy's residences in Abuja.

"He had sought to know how far we had gone on the panel activities and as someone I respected, I opened up to him and he said that whatever happened, I should try to observe due diligence and be true to my conscience."

Oyedokun, who expressed shock over the incident, described the slain lawmaker as a seasoned politician whose contribution to the success of the party at the last polls was immeasurable.

He charged the police and other security agencies to ensure that the killers of the lawmakers were apprehended and brought to book.

"It is not comforting if one recalls that previous murder cases in Ibadan like that of Alhaja Suliya Adedeji and Chief Layi Balogun remain unresolved till now and I want to strongly appeal to the police not to allow the murder of our leader to follow the same pattern."