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How Dina was killed, by police

- o AIG visits crime scene
- o Jonathan, Daniel, others condemn killing
From Madu Onuorah (Abuja) Charles Coffie Gyamfie (Abeokuta) and Kamal Tayo Oropo (Lagos)

THE killing of Otunba Dipo Dina, Action Congress (AC) governorship candidate in the 2007 elections "has some elements of robbery and assassination," the Ogun State Commissioner of Police (CP), Mr. Musa Daura, declared yesterday.

Meanwhile, the Assistant Inspector-General of Police Zone 2, Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar, yesterday visited the scene of the crime, as there were speculations that the killing might have been politically motivated. After the visit, Abubakar gave assurance that the police would get to the root of the matter.

The Ogun State CP spoke while answering reporters' question in Abeokuta at his maiden press briefing on Dina's murder.

The Police chief had earlier told reporters that the murder was a case of robbery. His reason was that he had been told by a woman and the deceased's driver who were with Dina when the incident happened that he (Dina) "struggled" with his assailants.

But reporters at the briefing had strongly disagreed with Daura, arguing that since the police were yet to investigate, it would be wrong to draw any conclusion.

Daura now said: "There were some elements of robbery and assassination."

Meanwhile, reactions to the murder started pouring in yesterday. They all agreed that it was a murder too many, with some expressing regrets that the country has virtually become a gangsters' paradise--- where killers are beyond the reach of the law.

According to the Police Commissioner, the woman whose name he gave simply as 'Funmi', and who was with the deceased at the time of the incident, told him that Dina, herself and driver were travelling from Lagos to Agbara in a Toyota camry when some four persons in an unmarked vehicle blocked their way at a spot near the Covenant University, Ota, forcing them to stop.

Daura said the woman told him that the suspects ordered all the occupants in Dina's car to enter their vehicle and as Dina was about to enter the vehicle, he engaged them in an argument, so they shot him.

The driver and Funmi were taken away in the suspects' vehicle



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and were later abandoned at a spot far from the scene of the incident, the commissioner disclosed.

Besides the driver and Funmi who are now in custody at the Police Command Headquarters, Elewera, Abeokuta for questioning, no other suspect had been arrested in connection with the incident as at 1 p.m. yesterday .

The police boss gave assurance that the police would do everything to unravel the mystery behind the killing.

Vice President Goodluck Jonathan yesterday expressed "shock and dismay" over the murder.

A statement from the Senior Special Assistant to the Vice President (Media and Publicity), Mr. Ima Niboro said that "the Vice President views this incident seriously, and has directed the Police, in concert with the other intelligence agencies, to find and arrest the killers of Otunba Dina without delay. He has also directed the Inspector General of Police to furnish him with the preliminary report of the investigation within the next one week, and do so weekly, until this murder is solved.

Mr. Niboro quoted Vice President Jonathan as saying: "We are committed to ensuring that the days where our citizens, whether prominent or not, are casually felled by gunmen of whatever description, are gone forever. The relevant intelligence agencies must rise to the occasion. They must find and arrest those behind this dastardly act, and by their punishment, signal to their kind that this administration will not tolerate killings of any sort."

The Vice President also extended his "deep condolences to the entire Dina family and prays the Almighty God to give them the fortitude to bear this irreparable loss."

Meanwhile, Ogun State Governor, Gbenga Daniel, has expressed "shock and utter revulsion" over the killing.

In a statement signed by his Chief Press Secretary (CPS), Mr. Adegbenro Adebajo, Daniel described the murder as heinous and a criminal act for which the perpetrators must be made to pay.

"I am saddened by the reprehensible and ungodly act. It is a condemnable act and those responsible must be speedily brought to justice by security agencies. This is one case that the Police must do all that is possible to crack.

"On behalf of the government and people of Ogun State, I commiserate with the family and friends of Otunba Dipo Dina and pray that God will give them the fortitude to bear this irreparable loss," the governor said.

The governor has meanwhile directed the CP and other security agencies to do every thing possible to fish out the culprits.

The AC described the killing as the latest indication of a rising culture of intolerance and insecurity in the country.

In a statement issued in Lagos yesterday by its National Publicity Secretary, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, the party said indications are that the killing was not as a result of armed robbery, especially given the late Dina's political battles in Ogun State and the fact that the other two occupants of his car were reportedly unharmed by the killers.

According to the party, whatever the motive for the killing, it

signals a dangerous trend that must be curbed urgently and the Police must start by finding Dina's killers and bringing them to book.

"We know the antecedents of the police, vis-à-vis unravelling high-level killings in Nigeria, does not give room for much optimism, but since we remain a country governed by law, we are left with no choice than to call on the Police to do whatever they can to find Dina's killers and make this the last such killing in our country," AC said.

The party also called for tolerance, saying no disagreement, no matter how grave, could justify the termination of a human life.

"Our country has witnessed a series of high level killings in recent times, which gives an impression that we do not attach much premium to human life and dignity. These killings, together with the rising spate of kidnappings, armed robberies as well as ethno-religious violence, do not portray us in good light in the comity of nations.

"A nation that is not at war and yet loses a high number of its prominent and non-prominent citizens to senseless killings cannot and should not expect to be taken serious by civilised nations. This madness must stop!" AC said.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dimeji Bankole, has also expressed shock at the killing.

In a statement issued in Abuja yesterday, he commiserated with the family of the deceased and the people of Ogun State and called on the Nigerian Police and other security agencies to fish out the perpetrators of the murder which he described as one too many in the state and Nigeria.

He prayed for the deceased's family for the fortitude to bear the irreparable loss and peaceful repose of Dina's soul.

Also in its own reaction, the Yoruba socio-cultural and political organisation, Afenifere Renewal Group (ARG), described the assassination as one murder too many and challenged the Police to ensure that the murder does not join the growing list of unresolved killings in the country.

The ARG, in a statement by the group's Publicity Secretary, Mr. Yinka Odumakin declared: "Our hearts go to Dina's wife and children, his community in Ijebu-Ode, the good people of Ogun State and all his political associates all over Nigeria on this sad loss. May the Great Comforter wipe away their tears. We also pray that the soul of Dina torments his assailants until they are brought to the temple of justice.

"Dina has now joined the long list of the assassinated-in the league of Chief Bola Ige, Dr. Ayodeji Daramola, Engr. Funsho Williams, Jide Arojo and so many other non-prominent people who have lost their lives since the inception of civil rule."

The group noted that a common thread in all these assassinations is the inability of the police to bring to book the perpetrators of the crime. "We have always posited that a crime not punished is an incentive for other criminals to do an encore. The time has come for us to insist that 'Enough is Enough' of these murders without murderers. It is time to burst the nest of killers. The Inspector-General of Police must get cracking immediately and go after the perpetrators of this heinous crime. Failure to do this will further strengthen the belief that the

Nigerian state condones terrorism against its own citizens and can therefore not justifiably make its case for Nigeria's de-listing from the Terror Watch-List."

Dr. Lateef Adegbite, speaking to The Guardian on phone, condemned the incident saying: "It is a very frightening development and a great worry to everyone."

He urged the authorities not only to strengthen the security system in the country but to "swiftly fish out the perpetrators and bring them to book."

The PDP, Ogun State chapter also in a statement by its Publicity Secretary, Mr. Deji Kalejaiye, in Abeokuta said the news came to it as a rude shock and "we condemn the circumstances surrounding his death totally."

Describing Dina as an accomplished accountant and astute politician, the statement said that the deceased practised politics without bitterness.

The party challenged security agencies to do everything to bring the culprits to book.

Several sympathisers and mourners yesterday trooped to the deceased's Ijebu-Ode private residence wailing and cursing those who killed one of their prominent sons.

Dina contested the 2007 gubernatorial election in Ogun State and was beaten to the third position by the incumbent Governor Daniel. Dina challenged the outcome of the election in court, but lost.

The AC gubernatorial candidate said in a recent interview that if there were credible electoral reforms, he would contest the gubernatorial election in 2011.

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