

# New

## Senate mum on Obasanjo's corruption allegations

From **Alifa Daniel, Azimazi Momoh Jimoh, Terhomba Daka, Abuja**

**M**UM was the word from the Senate yesterday over the allegations by former President Olusegun Obasanjo that it was a corrupt drain on the country's purse, even as it emerged yesterday that not less than N61 billion has been disbursed to the 469 federal lawmakers in the National Assembly this year alone for their operations.

Senate spokesman, Senator Ayogu Eze, said yesterday evening that the Upper House was not ready for now to engage the former leader in any argument over his comments, but some minority members in the House of Representatives took on the former President and accused him of singling out the National Assembly in a system where officers in the Executive arm spend more on themselves than lawmakers.

Obasanjo had said in Abuja last Wednesday that federal lawmakers are costing the Federal Government to maintain.

"We should look closely at the legislature so that they can be more open and transparent in the way they do their work. Nobody knows in detail how much it costs us to maintain a senator. I believe it is more than N250 million.

"Compare what it cost in 1999 and 2000. It cost about \$1.7 million... They come up and say something is constituency project, what is this constituency project? They insert it in the budget, they would find the contractor and the contractor would work for them, that is constituency project? They then accuse some people of corruption, who are not corrupt," Obasanjo had said.

But addressing a press conference to mark the 2009/2010 legislative session, the House of Representatives Minority Leader, Mohammed Ali Ndume, said it was wrong for Obasanjo to blame the high level of corruption in the country on the National Assembly members alone.

## Delta youth leader killed over oil money

From **Chido Okafor, Warri**

**A**SKIRMISH over alleged huge sum of money released by an oil firm to the Oleh community in Isoko South Local Council of Delta State has led to the murder of the youth leader, Andrew Ato, by an unknown gang.

The Guardian gathered that the youth leader was abducted on Tuesday night by members of a suspected rival gang and was taken to a secret location where he was believed to have been shot dead.

The body was dumped in the street with wounds in the upper parts of his body.

"It's likely he was killed on Tuesday night. People woke up and saw his body on Wednesday morning. At the moment, we don't know the group that carried out the killing but what we know is that he was killed over oil money."

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