

# Kalu, Saraki, Bankole express regret over Awoniyi's death

**T**HE former deputy national chairman of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), Chief Alani Bankole, yesterday described the death of Chief Sunday Awoniyi as a colossal loss to the nation.

Bankole father of the Speaker, House of Representatives, Dimeji Bankole, also described Awoniyi's death as "unbelievable".

"This news is unbelievable; Chief Awoniyi was an embodiment of straight-forwardness, he was an accomplished technocrats, successful politician and statesman of international repute," said Bankole.

He added: "The loss, if it is true, is a colossal one and it's unimaginable; I cannot believe his death. It is a

■ **Femi SHODUNKE** ■  
Abeokuta

great loss to this country, to political and social development of this country. He will be remembered by a lot of us who worked with him.

"He was a leader of high repute, he led by example, and he was a great pillar to his friends; indeed he was a great family man and true Nigerian."

Bankole said that the nation would miss Awoniyi, the man he described as a nationalist to the core.

His words: "Nigeria will miss his straightforwardness, transparency and leadership by example style, both in politics, in government and general life. He was an all rounder, he was second to none."

Former Senate Leader, Dr Olusola Saraki, described his death as sad "to members of the Northern Union, the political class and the entire citizenry of our country."

"Late Awoniyi was a honest politician who loved his country and cared so much about the peculiar problems of the North and of Arewa Consultative Forum. He worked so hard to help improve on the quality of governance in the area. We last met at an ACF meeting in Kaduna earlier in the year. The nation will surely miss his contribution. I pray that Allah will take care of his family and grant us all the fortitude to bear the loss."

Also the presidential candidate of the Progressive People's Party (PPA) in the

last general elections and chairman of the Board of Trustees of the party, Chief Orji Uzor Kalu has expressed shock over the death of the frontline politician.

In a condolence message issued by Kalu's media adviser, Mr. Emeka Omeihe, he regretted the death of Chief Awoniyi especially at this critical stage of the nation's political evolution when his services are most needed."

He described the late ACF leader as a great Nigerian who placed the interests of the nation over and above all other considerations.

He recalled the wonderful and patriotic roles of Chief Awoniyi at the formative stage of People's Democratic Party and regretted that the nation had lost one of its most dependable, detribalised and patriotic citizens

## We'll miss Awoniyi's sagacity - Apugo

**A** member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Board of Trustees and chairmanship aspirant, Benedict Apugo, on Thursday declared that Nigeria would miss the immense political experience of the late chairman of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), Chief Sunday Bolorunduro Awoniyi.

The former PDP chieftain died on Wednesday in a London hospital where he had been flown following injuries he sustained in an auto crash on his way to attend an ACF meeting in Kaduna on Monday, November 19.

Apugo described Awoniyi as highly principled and a believer in fair play in politics.

"I am personally shocked. He was a man of principle. He believes so much in playing the game according to the rules. He is politically sagacious and I think Nigeria really still needs to learn one or two things from him on how to

co-habit. Don't forget that he is Yoruba and a christian but geographically a northerner. He was able to strike a compromise and find enough time for his Yorubanness, his christianity and perform his role as chairman of the Arewa Consultative Forum. From that point of view you see immediately that he was a man of no mean stature."

Apugo said his days in the PDP were marked by openness and cohesion.

He said had the ACF leader emerged the chairman of the party when the presidency then scuttled it, he would have better positioned the party such that all the ills that people associate with the party today would not have been mentioned at all.

He emphasized the determination to restore the vision of the founding fathers of the PDP if he emerged as the chairman of the party in the convention that is to take place later in 2008.

## He was a bridge builder- Balarabe

**F**ORMER civilian governor of the old Kaduna State, Alhaji Balarabe Musa, has described the late chairman of Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), Chief Sunday Awoniyi, as "a bridge builder". Speaking with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Kaduna yesterday, Musa advised members of the ACF to view Awoniyi's death as a challenge to all those struggling for the unity of the country.

He conceded that although

he never had the opportunity of working with Awoniyi, he could still testify that he was "a dedicated civil servant, a very organized, responsible and patriotic citizen".

He said that Awoniyi's death was a loss to the nation, particularly the North, whose interests he had fought for throughout his lifetime.

He, nonetheless, urged members of ACF to promote the larger Nigerian interests, rather than those of the

North, saying: "That would be a way of immortalising the late elder statesman."

The former governor said that although he was not a member of ACF, he still believed that its promoters were out to draw the attention of the entire Nigerian society to the positive qualities of the North.

"Awoniyi felt that he could act as a bridge, being a Christian and a Yoruba leading the ACF, he could make the South understand the North better."



• Wife of the vice president, Mrs Patience Goodluck-Jonathan (r) chatting with Minister of State for Health Mr Gabriel Aduku (l) and NAFDAC DG. Prof Dora Akunyili on arrival for the flag-off of national News conference on the outcome of NAFDAC vitamin A capsules and Mectizan raid and retrieval in Abuja on Thursday.

## Awoniyi loved a united Nigeria - Yar'Adua

**P**RESIDENT Umaru Yar'Adua yesterday expressed deep sorrow over the death of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) Chairman, Chief Sunday Awoniyi.

He recalled the elder states-

man's contributions to the growth of the Federal Public Service, where he rose to the rank of permanent secretary.

Yar'Adua also recalled Awoniyi's active participation in party politics and "his abiding faith in a united and prosper-

ous Nigeria".

The President's tribute was conveyed in a statement in Abuja by his Special Adviser on Communications, Mr Segun Adeniyi.

Yar'Adua challenged Nigerians, especially the younger gen-

eration, to learn from Awoniyi's "legacy of dedication to the ideals of democracy and the virtue of displaying integrity in the public arena".

He prayed God to grant the family of the deceased, his friends and the entire nation the fortitude to bear the loss.

## Fashola says Awoniyi's death shocking

**L**AGOS State governor, Mr. Babatunde Fashola (SAN), Thursday expressed shock over the death of elder statesman and Secretary General of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), Chief Sunday Awoniyi.

Chief Awoniyi, who was involved in a fatal accident recently while returning to Abuja from Kaduna, died in a London hospital on Wednesday.

According to a statement signed by the Senior Special Assistant to the governor on Media, Mr. Hakeem Bello, Governor Fashola said it was deeply sobering that the elder statesman passed on even after it was reported that he was in a stable condition after the accident.

Describing Chief Awoniyi as a principled politician who stood firm by his convictions throughout his lifetime, Governor Fashola said the

nation's polity would be the better for it if the political class showed more consistency in their thoughts and actions.

Fashola also described

the late elder statesman as a seasoned administrator and politician who rose from being a District Officer (DO) to Senior Assistant Secretary (Security) in

## 'Awoniyi was a true patriot'

**C**HIEF Sunday Awoniyi, the late elder statesman and Aro of Mopa has been described as a true Nigerian patriot and rare gem that spent his lifetime in the service of the nation and humanity.

Reacting to news of the death of Chief Awoniyi in Abuja yesterday, chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Media and Public Affairs, Hon. Eziuche Ubani, said the news of the death of Chief Awoniyi was received

with shock, adding that his death marked the end of an epoch in Nigeria's history.

"We received the news of the death of the amiable Chief Awoniyi with shock. It is a national tragedy, which has thrown the entire nation into mourning. The late elder statesman was friendly and passionate about this country. He fought for a better Nigeria, where equity and justice would be the order of the day."

"Chief Awoniyi lived a good life, was every-

thing one could be in this country. If he had any regret, it must be that this country could change for good despite his contributions and prayers," he added.

"We wish to send our sympathies to his immediate family, colleagues and indeed all Nigerians whose life he touched in so many ways. We take solace in the fact that he left behind, a legacy worthy of emulation by all Nigerians".

## Four militants convicted in Bayelsa

**F**OUR suspected militants that recently kidnapped the mother of Barr. Dickson Seriake, the lawmaker representing Sagbama/Ekeremo Federal constituency in Bayelsa State were convicted and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.

The judge presiding over the trial, Mr. Joseph Ebagon Khatu, said the four were charged with kidnapping the mother of Barr. Dickson Seriake, the lawmaker representing Sagbama/Ekeremo Federal constituency in Bayelsa State, and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.

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■ **Isaac OMBE-Yenagoo** ■

not objected to by the prosecuting counsel, Mr. Joseph Ebagon Khatu, the presiding judge sentenced the accused to 10 years imprisonment.

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