

CRIME & OTHER STORIES

Fadipe: Mother-in-law dies from injuries sustained during attack

■ Kunle AKINRINADE ■

A few days after Lagos lawyer, Kunle Fadipe, was killed, another tragedy struck the family as his mother-in-law, Madam Cecelia Owolabi (nee Ogunleye), who was also stabbed by Fadipe's assailant died shortly before he was buried.

The 74-year-old woman was stabbed in her left breast at Fadipe's Harmony Estate, Ifako residence in Lagos on July 4, while on a visit.

An impeccable source, who spoke in confidence, said: "She was admitted to a private hospital and discharged two days later. She was subsequently taken to Ibadan, Oyo State, by Fadipe's wife's relatives for further treatment."

It was gathered that the woman later died on July 14 even though this was not disclosed to Fadipe's wife.

"She died on July 14, but her death was not revealed to Fadipe's wife, Kemi, who was still grieving over the loss of her husband. Although the woman's health had improved, it suddenly relapsed as a result of the trauma she suffered, having witnessed the incident. She was complaining of recalling the horrific scene and at a point expressed reservation about continuing with her treatment. At a particular point, she stopped responding to treatment and that was when her health began to deteriorate. In fact, she told some of those around that it was better for her to die than to battle with the trauma of the incident for live," the source said.

Fadipe's widow began to suspect that something was amiss at the burial of her husband when her siblings who were supposed to be taking care of her mother showed up in Ile-Ife, Osun State.

"Her worst was confirmed last Sunday when her siblings along with their pastor visited her at her Lagos residence to break the news of their mother's death," he said.

Fadipe's mother, who is said to be unaware of her son's death, according to a source, is already becoming suspicious that something is amiss.

He further said: "Fadipe is survived by an aged mother who should by now be 85. Kunle(Fadipe) was so fond of his mother that he ate his lunch on Sundays in her residence in the Haruna area of the Ifako-Ijaiye Local Govern-



• Late Kunle Fadipe



• Fadipe's widow and her children

ment Area. In fact, the house where the woman lives was the first house built by the late lawyer before he moved into his house in Harmony Estate."

It was emotions all the way last Thursday at a wake held for the deceased at his residence. Not a few sympathizers who had tasted from his legal benevolence expressed shock at his gruesome death.

"When I had problems with some people a few years ago and was to be detained by police, he came to my rescue without collecting a kobo from me. He was courageous and forthright. He believed that the poor should have access to justice, despite their limited financial resources and he worked in tandem with that principle till death," said a sympathizer who simply called himself Tade.

Another sympathizer, Deacon Babatunde Opawunmi, said: "He defended me free of charge when I was charged to court with three others on trump-up charges. We were to be remanded in prison when I got in touch with Kunle (Fadipe) through a friend and he quickly responded by defending us in court. We were granted bail and he challenged the suit till it was dismissed."

The late lawyer was buried last Saturday in Ile-Ife amid tears by sympathizers who witnessed the burial. His remains were interred at his residence in the Parakin Estate, Ile-Ife. The brief funeral service started about 12 pm and ended at 1.30 pm, following which his body was lowered into the grave.

Until his death, the Ile Ife, Osun State-born legal practitioner was seeking compensation for some female members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Lagos State chapter, who were injured in a ghastly motor accident in 2011, while travelling to Abuja for the final lap of President Goodluck Jonathan's campaign.

The women were among 50 enthusiastic members of the PDP who had left the party's secretariat in Ikeja, Lagos on Friday, March 25, 2011 to take part in the campaign rally of President Jonathan at the Eagle Square, Abuja, the next day.

But tragedy struck as the travellers approached Ikire, an ancient community in Osun State. The driver of the luxury bus that conveyed them lost control of the vehicle, leading to the death of a passenger while scores of other passengers sustained various degrees of injuries that have refused to heal till date.