

How Funsho Williams was murdered

- Police quiz aspirant
- Riots in parts of Lagos



• The late Williams

Pictures from Williams's house on Thursday



A governorship aspirant on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party, Chief Funsho Williams, was killed in the early hours of Thursday in his Lagos home.

Although no official confirmation of how the

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Aide speaks of multiple stab wounds

Taiwo Rasag

AN aide of Chief Funsho Williams on Thursday claimed that the killers inflicted multiple cuts on his boss.

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politician was killed was available as at press time, our correspondent gathered that Williams's hands were tied behind his back, and his legs also, before he was stabbed many times.

He was also shot in the abdomen.

The news of the incident, which occurred at his 184, Corporation Drive, Dolphin Estate, Ikoyi Lagos, filtered into the metropolis at noon on Thursday as his loyalists trooped to the residence.

The police had, on Thursday night, arrested his Personal Assistant, who also coordinates the media and publicity of his campaign organisation, Mr. Frank Uzuegbunam; his driver simply identified as Omo; and a female cook whose name could not be ascertained.

The three were reportedly in the building with the late Williams when the incident took place.

The two policemen who were supposed to be on guard at Williams's house but did not turn up for duty on Wednesday night, were also undergoing orderly room trial.

Williams had four policemen attached to him, but they worked shifts.

His wife was said to have travelled out of the country.

As at press time, it was yet to be ascertained how the assailants got into Williams's apartment.

There were two accounts of how Williams spent his evening, leaving room for speculations.

One account had it that he met with some of his supporters in his house till about midnight before retiring to his room where he was later attacked.

The other version, which sources said was nearer the truth, was that Williams attended a reception in honour of the State Party Chairman, Chief Rasheed Williams, at the OPIC Plaza, Ikeja, Lagos.

The reception started at about 10pm and Williams was

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said to have left at about after 2am with two orderlies who had been with him all day.

He arrived home at about 3am.

Sources said that the cook and one other unidentified person were in the house when Williams returned.

The scenario bore a striking resemblance to the circumstances leading to the assassination of a former Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige, in December 2001.

All the policemen guarding him went out to eat when the assassins struck.

Popularly called Captain, Williams was said to have been murdered in the green *ankara buba* and *sokoto* he wore to the party at OPIC Plaza.

Sources said it was likely that the assailants were already in his bedroom before he got there.

Williams's killers were believed to have gained entrance into the house by scaling the fence of an unoccupied building beside his house.

This was confirmed by the actions of some detectives who were spotted opening one of the side doors besides the unoccupied building.

Attempts by the police detectives to enter the unoccupied house were resisted by a man who came in a Toyota car and said the building belonged to him.

As at press time, no one could confirm if the killers met any resistance and how they got out.

It was also not possible to ascertain the number of those that attacked Williams.

A source told our correspondent that the body of the deceased was moved from his residence around 10.45pm on Thursday.

The source also claimed that the police took the body to the Creek Hospital, Apapa for possible post-mortem ex-

amination.

He added that the body was accompanied by the Commissioner of Police, Lagos State Command, Mr. Emmanuel Adebayo and the AIG, Zone 2, Mr. Adewale Adeoye.

It was waiting all the way as hundreds of Williams's supporters wearing T-Shirts bearing 'Williams' arrived in the house at about noon after waiting endlessly for the late politician to join them for the continuation of the campaign of the PDP in Lagos Island and Eti-Osa Local Government Areas.

Most of the supporters pointed accusing fingers at his political rivals.

Unconfirmed reports had it that one of the gubernatorial aspirants on the platform of the PDP was invited for questioning by the police on Thursday.

Supporters of a former Minister of Works, Chief Adeseye Ogunlewe, and those of Williams had on Sunday clashed during the campaign of the PDP in Ikorodu and Gbagada on Sunday.

The face-off in Gbagada led to the disruption of the rally, with those present scampering to safety.

Early callers at the residence of Williams included the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Sunday Ehindero, who arrived the scene at about 4.00pm.

Ehindero entered the one storey building through the back door with some of his men and came out through the front door about 25 minutes later.

He declined to speak with journalists.

The irate supporters who accused the police of complicity in the killing molested some of the policemen who accompanied the I-G to the scene.

Detectives from the Lagos State Police Command, led by the Deputy Commissioner of

Police State Intelligence Investigation Bureau, Mr. Olayinka Balogun, were seen trying to collect fingerprints and other items for investigations.

At about 5.15pm when Balogun led out his team from the house, they carried a yellow box believed to have contained blood stained dress worn by Williams.

They also took with them a black leather cushion Williams was believed to have rested on.

At 4.45pm, the Deputy National Chairman of the PDP, South, Chief Olabode George, arrived the scene in company with the Minister of Works, Dr. Obafemi Anibaba.

About 20 minutes later, George emerged at the pent house to address the hordes of angry supporters.

George told them, "I urge all of you to calm down so that we can get to the root of this.

He is a civilised man, a gentle man.

"His killing is painful, unacceptable and senseless.

"And we will not condone it.

"I urge you to be peaceful in memory of this man who was an embodiment of peace himself."

Williams's younger brother, Major General Femi Williams, who spoke with our correspondent on telephone, said he was still speechless and could not say anything.

Another Nigerian killed in Lebanon as conflict worsens

NIGERIA lost yet another of its citizens on Thursday as the hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon worsened.

The Nigerian, said to be a domestic worker, died along with eight others including a gendarme. Although the victim's identity was not known at press time, agency reports said he was killed when an Israeli missile hit his motorbike while he was riding between the port city of Tyre and the neighbouring village of Jouwaya.

A Nigerian couple was killed last week when Israeli forces bombed Lebanon. Their bodies were recovered only on Wednesday.

Israel insisted on Thursday that it had been given the green light by a world meeting on Lebanon to press on with its deadly war on Hezbollah.

Aide speaks of multiple stab wounds

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The aide, who pleaded anonymity while speaking with our correspondent, said, "His two hands were tied with his legs just the way rams are tied before they are slaughtered.

"They were many cuts on his body, including his throat. You won't need to be told that

At about 4.15pm when our correspondent called him, he said he was on his way to the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, to board a plane to Lagos having been informed of the tragedy.

The Ogun State Governor, Otunba Gbenga Daniel, who came at about 7.10pm, said he had been directed by President Olusegun Obasanjo to visit the scene. Daniel quoted Obasanjo as saying that the killing was one that must be unraveled.

The Lagos State Governor, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, offered a N10million reward for anybody who volunteered information that leads to the arrest of the murderers of the late Williams.

Tinubu, who spoke in his office in Alausa, Lagos, on Thursday, condemned the killing, adding that political assassination had never been witnessed in the state.

He condoled with the family of the deceased and described the murder as a threat to the cordial political atmosphere in the state.

He said the state government would collaborate with the police to ensure that the mystery was unraveled.

Tinubu said that Williams would be missed because of the values and virtues he exhibited.

He added, "I appeal to all to suspend every political ac-

tivities throughout the state for the next two weeks.

"All political leaders should also re-orientate their members, political violence undermines our democracy."

But there was a gale of protests in Lagos following the death of Williams, just as Ehindero engaged senior police officers in a meeting that did not end until press time.

It was learnt that Ehindero might stay back in Lagos to personally handle investigation into the killing and monitor security situation in the city.

His arrival coincided with the disclosure by the Force Public Relations Officer, Mr. Haz Iwendu, that the policemen on duty at the late politician's residence were being quizzed over the murder.

As the news of Williams' killing filtered through the metropolis, some youths took to the streets in Lagos Island, Ikorodu, Ojota, and Oshodi in protest.

A combined team of riot policemen from MOPOL 20 and 22, Ikeja, as well as those of PMF, Keffi, was drafted around 3pm to the trouble spots.

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tion to continue our operations until Hezbollah is no longer present in southern Lebanon." He spoke against the backdrop of a 15-nation conference held on the Middle-East crisis in the Italian capital on Wednesday.

The Israeli army said Hezbollah launched 40 more rockets into northern Israel on Thursday, damaging buildings but causing no casualties.

Warplanes also fired more than 400 missiles overnight at the hilltop town of Khiam, the site of a former notorious Israeli prison where four United Nations peacekeepers were killed.

At the insistence of Beijing, China, which had a national among the dead, the UN Security Council was to resume deliberations on Thursday on a resolution or statement on the deaths.

were bought over to perpetuate the dastardly act.

"The door must have been opened for them by an insider."

He, however, enjoined the police to get to the root of the matter by extending their searchlight beyond Williams's household.

Family member provides intimate last-minute account

Kemi Obasola

A member of Funsho Williams' family said, on Thursday, that the politician was murdered at his Dolphin Estate, Ikoyi home shortly after returning from a political meeting.

According to the family member, who demanded anonymity, there were indications that the politician was attacked with a knife after being strangled.

Williams had reportedly returned from a political meeting at about 3am and had gone straight to his bedroom.

Another member of the family said the governorship aspirant was possibly murdered between 6am and 10am.

His cook reportedly wanted to go and invite him for his breakfast, only to be turned away by one of Williams' political aides, who allegedly told the cook that the late politician was dressing up.

Following Williams' murder, the Deputy National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party, Chief Olabode George, ordered the cancellation of the party's political rally slated to hold at Eti Osa Local Government Area on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner of Police, Lagos State Command, Mr. Emmanuel Adebayo, joined sympathisers who thronged Williams' house to condole with the family members.

Williams veered into politics after his career in the Lagos State Civil Service in the 90's.

He was a gubernatorial aspirant in the defunct United Nigeria Congress Party under the regime of the late Gen. Sani Abacha.

He was the 1999 Alliance for Democracy governorship aspirant in Lagos, as well as a former Works and Housing commissioner in the state.