

Political thugs butchered my worker, dumped his body in casket —Lagos chairmanship aspirant

A chairmanship aspirant for the Ijede Local Council Development Area in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Mr Oluwatosin Onamade, narrates his traumatic encounter with alleged political assassins, who killed one of his staff members, in this interview with **TOBI AWORINDE**

Please, tell us a bit about yourself.

My name is Oluwatosin Onamade. I am a native of Oke Eletu community in the Ijede Local Council Development Area, Ikorodu Local Government Area of Lagos State. I am running for the post of chairman of Ijede LCDA under the All Progressives Congress in the forthcoming election.

There was a reported attack at your office recently. Can you explain what happened?

The day the incident occurred was Friday, April 16, 2021. But the Sunday (April 11) before that day, somebody called me (on the phone) to say they were coming to destroy the APC leadership meeting which usually holds in my house. I said, 'From who?' The person told me it was from 'the top,' sponsored by a leader in the LGA and I said, 'No problem, if that is the case, I have to hire some military men and other security officers to secure the entrance of my house.'

On that day, when they (the assailants) couldn't gain access to my compound, they went ahead to destroy all the (campaign) banners I had put up in the community. They went to the party secretariat in Ijede LCDA and maliciously destroyed the big box banner that I had erected in that place.

After the meeting, I went to examine the scene. Along with a police officer, I took pictures of the damage they had done to the banner. Immediately I left the place. I went to the police station to lodge a report. After that, I called all the party leaders in Ijede LCDA and informed them; because when you have a quarrel and it is political, it is an internal issue, and you need to inform all the leaders in the jurisdiction. The ones I couldn't reach by phone, I had to go to their houses to explain to them how the banners I had put up were being destroyed. I told the leaders that some people were attacking my people all over the place.

What is the reason for the vandalism?

The reason is that I have many loyalists that are ready to support me to get to the chairmanship seat.

After I reported the matter to the party leaders, they told me they would caution him (the alleged mastermind).

On that black Friday, April 16, I had just come back to the office (Western Funeral Home Limited) and unknown to me, all those thugs sponsored by that party leader with his brother were lying in ambush around my office. When I arrived at the office, I didn't know they had surrounded the entire perimeter of my office. I entered and I asked somebody to go and get me food.

There is a closed-circuit television camera in that place and as I was watching the monitor, I asked myself, 'What is going on? Who are those people that are gathering all over the place?' All of a sudden, some of the gang members arrived in a sport utility vehicle, which was bought by the leader in question. They parked in front of my office and destroyed another big banner there. They damaged all the fence lights and started shooting indiscriminately.

I went out and shouted, 'What is going on?' I didn't know these people had come to the office with an assignment to kill me.

My brother, Oluwafemi, who was in the second office, resisted their attempts to get in and they left. Once they left, I came out to examine the damage. I started calling the police but no policeman showed up; even though they were not far from my location.

Then the thugs came back and immediately they saw me, they said, 'So, he was inside.' They then forced their way in. In the process, they began to hack my brother with a machete. They even wanted to cut his hand off.

They killed one of my staff members, Mr Ifeanyi Godfrey, who was also an executive member on my campaign committee. They butchered him, shot him in the head and threw his body in an empty coffin, where he worked in a funeral home.

I was at the back (of the building). A well-known



gang member shot at me but I dodged and hid myself. They were shouting, 'This man is escaping again; we are going to find him and kill him.' It was so barbaric; it was something I could never have imagined.

Did your brother survive the attack?

I thought my brother was dead already because he went into a coma. But we thank God that he came back to life.

But these people came back the following day, when they heard that the CCTV had captured them; they came to my house to try to steal the footage.

I was standing next to the gate when all of a sudden, they showed up and began to shoot in my direction. I managed to escape. Immediately, I called the police and explained everything to them. Right now, my life is in danger.

Was that the first time you would be attacked like that?

That was not the first time. These people had been coming to my house to attack me. There is a particular person the party leader gave the job to eliminate me. But the person is in Kirikiri

(Correctional Centre) now.

Where are the remains of your staff member who was killed?

When the police in Ijede came for the rescue operation, they took the body to the mortuary in Ikorodu and they also took my brother to the general hospital in Ijede for treatment. When they got a hint that those guys were planning to come and finish the job by killing him (my brother) they transferred him to the General Hospital, Ikorodu. But the body (of my staff member) is in the mortuary.

Has your brother been discharged from the hospital?

No, but he is getting better.

Did the assailants tell you they were sent by someone or how did you confirm that they were political thugs?

I know the attack was politically motivated because I am gaining more support in the party. They said I should be eliminated so that I won't get that chairmanship position. That is just the truth.

Are there other aspirants for that position?

Yes, there are four of us. I have the highest number of registered party members supporting me. Without even conducting an election, the biggest loser knows what the outcome will be. That is why they want to kill me.

Have you taken the matter to a higher level of the party?

The matter is at the State Criminal Investigation Department, Panti (Lagos), as we speak. They have apprehended four of them (attackers). I am not a law enforcement agent who can tell you how the matter is going, but I believe justice must be served.

Going forward, how are you ensuring the safety of yourself and your staff?

I've spoken with the Commissioner of Police and the Inspector-General of Police and they have promised to put things in place for me to be secured.

How are the family members of your staff member dealing with the loss?

The wife is pregnant. She is even close to delivery. The family of the deceased wants justice. The deceased just came back from Germany. They just killed him for nothing, just because of politics. He was a good and peaceful person.

For how long had he been working with you?

It had been long. I can't really say, except I look at the files. He was the manager (of the funeral home). That is the little I can say.

How long have you been in the APC?

It has been long. All I can tell you is that I am a registered member of the APC.

Is this your first campaign as a party member?

I have campaigned for chairmanship under the APC before now.